

## **UC Merced**

### **The Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced**

**Title**

Volume 2,no. 1 Fall 2014

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/66n9s4xt>

**Journal**

The Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced, 2(1)

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**Publication Date**

2014

**DOI**

10.5070/H321025686

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THE  
UNDERGRADUATE  
HISTORICAL  
JOURNAL

AT UC MERCED

Volume 2 Issue 1 2014

# The Undergraduate Historical Journal At University of California, Merced

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This issue is dedicated to those individuals whose support  
and guidance made this project possible.

Thank you.

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Andrew J. O'Connor

## Letter from the Editors

We are extremely proud to present the first issue to the second volume of the Undergraduate Historical Journal at the University of California, Merced. We celebrate the completion of yet another great issue, and it is extremely gratifying to finally see the fruit of our labors make it to publication.

This journal is the result of the tireless work of many individuals: our passionate authors who share our love for history, who not only worked so hard on their original papers but demonstrated great courage to submit those papers for publication. And we cannot forget the dedicated and tireless editors who went through countless hours of editing to help produce this issue. Unfortunately, some papers did not make it to publication, but we were greatly impressed with the wide range of submissions that we received nonetheless. After assembling these articles and formatting them in the Journal, we are proud to say that we have created an issue that both reflects our diverse student body and represents the proud history majors and enthusiasts on campus.

Ranging from ancient China to the Cold War and beyond, the editors of the UHJ present our readers with a diverse collection of subjects and themes that will undoubtedly kindle the interest of all history readers and enthusiasts. From novice students to veterans of academia, our contributors showcase a true passion for history in areas including: international politics, war, ancient civilizations, and the arts to name a few.

The future of the Journal is full of possibilities and open to constant change and improvements, and as UC Merced grows, this Journal has the potential to grow to the full recognition that it deserves. We thank all the individuals who helped us along our journey and made it possible for the Journal to make it to publication once again. We at the UHJ hope that our readers enjoy this issue, along with the future issues that we plan on producing in the future, and we invite you to watch the Journal grow and prosper in the following years to come.

Congratulations to the authors and our sincerest gratitude,  
The Undergraduate Historical Journal Editorial Board at UC Merced (Fall 2014)

Havilliah J. Malsbury  
Ramon Barragan  
Joshua Lourence  
Chul Wan Park  
Juan Pirir  
Rebecca Weston

## **Bounded Empires: Ecological and Geographic Implications in Sino-Tangut Relations, 960-1127**

*By Rocco Bowman*

**T**he Tangut Western Xia empire, a state built by semi-nomadic migrants, and the Northern Song (960-1127) shared a dynamic century upon the stage of northwest China.\* Though major war broke out in 1038 and 1069, organized military conflict was only one way in which either side jockeyed for power, economic advantage, and loyalty; empire building resulted from carefully planned statecraft. However, both empires found expansion upon or beyond the crumbling, eroding Loess Plateau and the harsh Ordos Desert to be extremely difficult. Winning territory and subjects in the region became a quagmire, forcing the empires not only to defensively adapt internal state institutions in significant ways but to realize the bounds of their respective imperiums.<sup>1</sup>

The politically savvy Tang Dynasty helped create the circumstances for the consolidation of nomadic power in the north, but one dynasty's successful policies are another's "nomad problem." Tang emperors ameliorated mounted incursions from the Mongolian steppe by allying with peoples who could fight on equal terms, creating a military buffer; however, the rise of the centralized, Confucian Song state engendered antagonisms between these two previously cooperative regions. Here, Sino-Tangut history enters an era of frantic activity. This dynamic interaction was not so much the result of a shared border in which culturally distinct populations vied for supremacy but quite the opposite—an unsettled, ecologically vague borderland with equally diverse populations embracing competing loyalties.

Imperial logic and prerogative were clear motivators in the conquest of cities and trade routes; however, the ecology and geography of the Loess Plateau within the Yellow River (hereafter referred to as the Ordos Loop, consisting of the land circumscribed by the Yellow and Wei Rivers) presented particularly unique advantages, disadvantages, and cultural perceptions which aided and fettered imperial projects. The Ordos Loop is an anomaly on the otherwise linear West-East natural boundary between agrarian China and the northern steppe.<sup>2</sup> Within the bounds of the river, no clear ecological boundary existed as a natural way to separate political bodies and the balance between agrarian and nomadic economies<sup>3</sup> became a political and cultural struggle. During the 11th and 12th centuries, the Western Xia and Song empires attempted to establish control over the region for various economic and political reasons, but the nature of the stage on which they interacted challenged traditions, subverted treaty making, and generated new

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\* Dr. Ruth Mostern aided my efforts with this paper from beginning to end with unwavering support and advice. It would neither have been as enjoyable nor as informative without her generous comments and resource tips. Any errors within the paper are, of course, my responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> Michael C. McGrath, "Frustrated Empires: The Song-Tangut Xia War of 1038-44," in *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period*, ed. Don J. Wyatt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 151. "Both emperors had to accept narrower conception of empire than the ones they had dreamed of having."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Clinton: The Colonial Press, 1940), 23.

state imperatives in the Western Xia.<sup>4</sup>

### The Natural History of the Loess Plateau and the Ordos

A summary of the natural history of the Loess Plateau and the Ordos are necessary in order to explain the effects it had on human history in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The most important transformations—accumulation of loess, movement and melting of glaciers—occurred before the end of the Pleistocene Era (from 2,558,000-11,700 years ago). The greatest accumulation of loess (a fine, rich soil of a pale yellow color) in the region began about 2.5 million years ago and greatly accelerating about 1.2 million years ago.<sup>5</sup> The region has experienced an oscillating climate between warm/wet and cold/dry; the latter variation contributed to significant displacements of non-glacial loess from north and western deserts via wind action.<sup>6</sup> Due to these developments, the Loess Plateau contains the most abundant sources of loess on Earth, covering an area up to 640,000km<sup>2</sup> and reaching an average thickness of 50-80m. Climactic variation has contributed to further loess deposition during the Holocene Era (the period in which human civilization began and our current climatological period) as witnessed and recorded by Chinese officials.<sup>7</sup>

The Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin provides an account of how the Loess Plateau appeared in 1935 as he led a motor-car caravan from Gansu to Changan in the shadow of the Great Wall.<sup>8</sup> The road was not yet paved for motor vehicles “with dales on either side” and “surrounded in every direction by wide spaces, yellow, rounded loess hills with no solid rock.”<sup>9</sup> Everything was remarkably mono-toned as well. “Everything was yellow,” he writes, “the loess cliffs had assumed picturesque shapes – houses, walls, fortresses and towers.”<sup>10</sup> The fortifications belonged to many successive Chinese dynasties, but the yellow, dusty loess soil has been a permanent resident. The caked loess on structures built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century reveal loess

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<sup>4</sup> Compared to the Song Dynasty, Western Xia has received little attention by scholars for obvious reasons. Modern scholarship regarding the Tangut state and society began in the early 20th century with the discovery and exploration of the Khara Koto ruins on the edge of the Gobi Desert by Russian, German, and Chinese archaeologists. Subsequent Chinese discoveries followed in Ningxia. Thus most of the primary documents related directly to the Tanguts were collected and studied by those who had both a more relevant interest in Western Xia history as well as a more favorable geographic proximity. Some Anglophone scholars had access to documents from Khara-Khoto but translation did not follow until later still. Due to the complications of World War II, the Cold War, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, scholarship was difficult and the texts that were recovered were fragmentary. It was not until Nikolai Aleksandrovich Nevsky's (1892–1937) posthumously published Tangut dictionary that a new generation of scholars could study Tangut texts and history. Still, Anglophone scholars did not flock to the esoteric field of Tangutology. Most translation of Tangut documents was done in the 1970s and 1980s. Ruth W. Dunnell has become an expert in the West writing the only full-length monograph on Tangut history, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia*.<sup>4</sup> While Dunnell provides an effective overview of Xia history and most scholars likewise give a general overview, little has been written synthesizing geographic, ecological, and interstate factors into Xia history let alone a monograph on Xia-Song relations.

<sup>5</sup> David Anderson, Andrew Goudie, and Adrian Parker, *Global Environments Through the Quaternary: Exploring Environmental Change*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 95.

<sup>6</sup> Pi-Ting Ho, “Loess and the Origins of Chinese Agriculture,” *The American Historical Review* 75, no. 1 (October 1969), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Pi-Ting Ho, “Origins of Chinese Agriculture”, 4.

<sup>8</sup> At the very end of Sven Hedin’s Sino-Swedish Expedition, he traversed what would become a highway between Beijing and Xinjiang. He suggested the project would connect peoples as the ancient Silk Road did centuries before. However, the project also contributed to Beijing’s repression efforts in Xinjiang.

<sup>9</sup> Hedin, *Through Asia* vol. 2 (London: Methuen & Co., 1898), 290.

<sup>10</sup> Hedin, *Through Asia*, 291, 295.



deposition during recorded history.

The Ordos in the northwest corner of the plateau followed the same climactic variation as the Loess Plateau, trending more arid. During drier times, the Ordos was experienced significant desertification with moving sand predominant while in warmer, wetter times the region resembled a steppe grassland.<sup>11</sup> Since this region is also part of the Loess Plateau, concentrations of loess is common. During the Holocene Era, the bounds of desert in the Ordos have waxed and waned due to climate variation.



Figure 1: A map of relevant geographic features, cities, and places of interest around the epicenter of the Tangut state. (Source: *Google Earth*)

Another European has provided a description of the Ordos in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Major George Pereira, a British military officer, made a southwesterly journey across the Ordos from Inner Mongolia in 1910. He describes the northern boundary is a tall sandy ridge, “running roughly parallel to the Yellow river.”<sup>12</sup> Moving further away from the river, “it is a desolate waste of dry grass and weeds, with dwarf scrub 2 or 3 inches high” and “very thinly inhabited,” as water is scarce.<sup>13</sup> Though the Major complains that the trip is not worth making twice, the land is not as desolate as the stereotypical desert—wild flowers, lizards, brown rats, deer, hares, and several types of birds can live in the area.<sup>14</sup> Pereira also found loess the further south he traveled,

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<sup>11</sup> Jeanne X. Kasperson, Roger E. Kasperson, and B.L. Turner II, eds., *Regions at Risk: Comparisons of Threatened Environments* (New York: United Nations University Press, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> George Pereira, “A Journey Across the Ordos,” *The Geographical Journal* 37, no. 3 (March 1911), 261.

<sup>13</sup> Pereira, “A Journey,” 262.

<sup>14</sup> Pereira, “A Journey,” 263.

capturing a photo of loess cave dwellings carved into the sides of hills.<sup>15</sup> Pereira's observations illustrate the harsh but still inhabited Ordos region, bounded on the north and west by fertile Yellow River plains.<sup>16</sup>

The natural evolution of the Loess Plateau and Ordos created a set of conditions that existed even before significant human settlement as well as characteristics that are being discovered today. Modern environmental knowledge and consciousness has become part of historical methodology whether sea or land and, in this case, the Loess Plateau. Donald Hughes, professor emeritus at University of Denver and environmental historian, defines an ideal method as one that uses ecological analysis as a means of understanding human history: an account "that seeks understanding of human beings as they have lived, worked and thought in relationship to the rest of nature through the changes brought by time."<sup>17</sup> Though environmental cycles are long—comprising of 10,000 years at a time—"the causes of environmental change that stretch back in time may be dealt with socially over a comparatively brief period" says Stephen Dover, another prominent environmental historian. Therefore, applying this framework, historians are able to place environmental factors in the forefront of historical studies. Specifically, the Ordos Loop has had considerable historical importance for the peoples living in and adjacent to it, necessitating a new perspective beyond just the political one.

### **Chinese and Nomadic Ecology in the Ordos Loop and the Nomadic Advantage**

Given the environmental profile, human societies used the land of the Ordos Loop in the Mid-Holocene as agrarians and nomadic pastoralists. The loosely compacted loess in the south allowed early farmers to plough with basic wooden implements and the Yellow River floodplain naturally irrigated crops. Loess was also beneficial for the arid northwest due to its porousness, absorbing necessary moisture. Its alkaline chemical profile made it particularly fertile as well. These characteristics were not only foundational for a birth of agriculture in East Asia, but a second after that of the Yangtze River valley.<sup>18</sup>

The Ordos was intimately connected to climatological changes of the south, and had repercussions for human land use. For example, the Mid-Holocene Climactic Optimum, a time of unusually warm and wet conditions occurring some 5000-7000 years ago, pushed the bounds of agricultural sustainability north, subsuming the Ordos desert. During this time, before true nomadism developed, humans practiced agriculture in what is today the Ordos desert. Eventually, the cold, dry climate became dominant and steppe gave way to recognizable desert conditions more amenable to emergent nomadic societies. However, the Ordos Loop was split between agrarians and nomads and thus an ecological borderland.

The tension of competing human ecologies became more acute as the societies of the steppe embraced their specialized brand of nomadism and agrarians developed technologies to farm previously uncultivated areas. Steppe economies rely not on the land directly, but on the animals herded which convert grass into animal products such as milk, meat, hides, and furs. Pastoral nomadism is an extensive economy with poorer iterations (e.g. those subsisting on

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<sup>15</sup> Pereira, "A Journey," 264. Humans have carved dwellings into loess caves for centuries as they continue to do today. The structure of loess particles allows caves to be carved but erosion imperils those who live in them.

<sup>16</sup> The plain to the west, bounded on its west by the Helan Mountains, was the seat of the Xi Xia Empire.

<sup>17</sup> J. Donald Hughes. *What is Environmental History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Pi-Ting Ho, "Origins of Chinese Agriculture," 28.

poorer grasses) needing even more space.<sup>19</sup> Animal husbandry requires far more space than plant agriculture in which crops can be manipulated to produce more per year and produce more times each season. Thus, while the Ordos generally has poor grasses at the best of times, nomadic tribes and confederations such as the Xiongnu and Eastern Turks moved into the area as a matter of necessity and political expansion.

Nomadic chieftains, and especially those originating outside the Ordos, mostly valued the region for its human value—trade. The Ordos is the doorstep into the greater Loess Plateau and an insertion point into China proper but, equally important, the Gansu corridor was the main artery of trade to and from the West. In fact, nomadic “states” including the Xi Xia may have arose simply to extort or trade more effectively the goods passing through sedentary civilizations.<sup>20</sup> By taking advantage of the Ordos and by extension the Gansu corridor, the Tanguts could trade abundant livestock for otherwise unobtainable items such as grain and metal required for warfare. The Ordos formed one node in a geographic triad which included the Ordos, Tarim Basin, and Liao Valley. This trio of important areas rewarded that nomadic empires that controlled them an edge on their nomadic neighbors and leverage against the powerful sedentary civilizations of the lower latitudes.<sup>21</sup>

The Song, and for the most part dynasties and kingdoms before them, struggled to control or in the least suppress the Ordos. To the Chinese, the Ordos represented a geopolitical, not an economic, imperative. The Ordos and the bend in the Yellow River, in general, presented a historic vulnerability. The weak ecological boundary meant nomads, with their ability to leverage their small numbers, could frequently raid with relative ease. The Tanguts were semi-nomadic and successfully employed swift cavalry,<sup>22</sup> a foe that the Chinese could not always fight on equal terms.

Sometimes settling with the nomads meant simply paying them off, but sometimes the Chinese created new iterations of defensive walls (from the Qin to the Ming Great Wall) in order to create a clear boundary between the agrarian and nomadic ecological-cultural zones. Chinese cultural universalism was established in the centuries before true mounted nomadic warriors rode up to China's northern reaches. When nomads finally began pressing their advantage (such as the Xiongnu in Han times) they upset an otherwise well-formed Chinese identity, forcing politicians and philosophers (such as Confucius) to either rethink their cosmology or find new ethics in the new, threatening epoch.<sup>23</sup> Walls were one solution to the problem but they were neither the

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<sup>19</sup> Lattimore, *Frontiers*, 67.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press), 36; Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 7,9. According to Barfield, because nomadic states were created on the basis of taking advantage of sedentary wealth, as the sedentary Chinese dynasties fell so did the nomadic states that depended on them.

<sup>21</sup> Waldron, *The Great Wall*, 61-62; Michael C. McGrath, “Frustrated Empires: The Song-Tangut Xia War of 1038-44,” in *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period*, ed. Don. J. Wyatt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 151. McGrath explains that controlling at least two of the three regions was requisite for establishing a successful nomadic state. The Tarim Basin provided trade wealth, the Ordos geopolitical power, and the Liao Valley agricultural surpluses.

<sup>22</sup> Michael C. McGrath, “Frustrated Empires,” 153.

<sup>23</sup> Waldron, *The Great Wall*, 33. This period of time is also called the “Axial Age” by Karl Jaspers due to an explosion of innovative thinkers across Eurasia that laid the foundations for current intellectual, cultural, and spiritual thought. Waldron argues that invading nomads, armed with bows and adequate saddle technology, became a significant threat around this time, thus shocking the sedentary world into reformulating their intellectual cultures. While the Axial Age is an elegant idea, and nomads *did* affect state development, I believe Jaspers’ original idea is too broad.

cheapest nor most effective.<sup>24</sup> The Song managed to build effective barriers between themselves and the Khitan Liao in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century by creating a system of water obstacles, “The Great Ditch,” between the Taihang Mountains and the coast in Hebei province. The tactic served a greater strategy unlike the Great Wall which simply excluded. The water obstacle changed the psychological game more than grand strategy, leading to a diplomatic peace.<sup>25</sup> However, in the Ordos Loop, bottlenecks are nonexistent to make a water obstacle feasible nor an abundant supply of water. In addition, loess soil is highly erodible, and such an effort might have simply crumbled and washed away.

Chinese history makes clear the anxieties arising in the Ordos Loop, the most open incursion route into China and also the most problematic for a terrestrial, agrarian empire to defend. Further, the north was firmly the domain of nomadic peoples who sought to raid the frontier and control valuable oasis trade. Nomadic empires, like their agrarian counterparts, were vulnerable to decline and other nomadic, or semi-nomadic, peoples could take their place. The Tangut Xi Xia was one such state which arose to challenge Chinese supremacy in the Ordos, wielding their nomadic advantage with considerable, if limited, success.

### **The Xi Xia From Early Times to the Song**

The state that came to be known to the Chinese as Xi Xia (西夏) or Western Xia, Great Xia (大夏) as declared by Tangut Emperor Yuanhao, or the Great State of White and Lofty (禿鷲鞬) to the Tangut, was the creation of a diverse group of people ruled by a Tangut majority. The Tanguts, or Mi-ñag in Tangut, appeared in history as a distinct people as early as the seventh century friendly to the Tuyühun Kingdom, a relatively powerful confederation of nomadic peoples, based in the Kokonor region. The kingdom was vulnerable by the 7<sup>th</sup> century as the first Turkic Empire crumbled and became prey to the Chinese Tang and Tibetan empires. Naturally, the rising empires vied for dominance in the primary vein of trade—Hexi (modern Gansu). The Tibetans attacked Tuyühun from the southwest scattering the various peoples and forcing the Tanguts, among others, to flee east.<sup>26</sup> From this point onwards, several waves of migration displaced Tangut populations into the southern Loess Plateau and Ordos region. While Tangut chieftains were generally unwilling to submit to Tang authority, they reluctantly agreed to submit in 635 CE.<sup>27</sup> The Tang then organized the Tanguts into special tribal prefectures in the Loess Plateau region. Owing their stability to the Tang, these peoples became semi-autonomous allies of the Tang and a buffer between the core Chinese lands and the Mongolian steppe—home to several potentially hostile nomadic peoples.<sup>28</sup> Another 200,000 Tanguts migrated into the Southern Ordos in 692 and 340,000 were settled in Hexi.

Migrations and competing loyalties resulted in a nation divided; some Tanguts were absorbed by the Tibetans; some sided with the Tibetans in war, raiding the Tang where it was

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<sup>24</sup> Waldron, *The Great Wall*, 33.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Lorge, “The Great Ditch of China and the Song-Liao Border,” in Wyatt, 72. According to Lorge, the Great Ditch provided a defense zone which turned the war into a battle of attrition but more importantly created the psychological (indeed a geographic perception of separation or boundary) which was useful in settling on recognizable borders.

<sup>26</sup> Ruth W. Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. by Herbert Frank and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 157. Dr. Dunnell’s entry into this volume informs much of my knowledge on Tangut chronology and events.

<sup>27</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 158.

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Frank and Denis Twitchett, “Introduction,” in Frank and Twitchett, 8.

weak (such as during An Lushan Rebellion of 755); and still others, the a group identifying under the title of Tuoba, petitioned to be absorbed into the Chinese Sui empire in 680. When a Sogdian-funded Turkic revolt erupted in the Ordos (where 100,000 eastern Turks had been resettled by the Tang), the Tanguts helped the Chinese quell the rebellion and were rewarded. The Sogdians and Turks were subsequently weakened in the Ordos allowing the Tanguts to claim more authority in the region. In 880, when Chang'an fell to Huang Chao, Tuoba Sigong led a Sino-Tangut coalition army to help Tang forces in driving out the rebels.<sup>29</sup> Tuoba Sigong was promoted as the acting military governor of the Xia, Sui, Yin, and Yu prefectures and given the Tang imperial surname Li (李) thus beginning a close, reciprocal relationship between this influential Tangut group and the Tang. Sogdian, Turkic, and Tibetan influence waned, giving the Tanguts the ability to organize themselves more successfully. Only the Uighurs were left to rival the Tanguts in the Central Asian horse trade along the Gansu corridor.

The Ordos Tanguts prospered as allies of the Tang but the rebellions forever weakened the Chinese dynasty until it eventually collapsed in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, bringing an end to the inclusive, open empire. The Tang system largely ameliorated the northern nomad “problem” by not only voluntarily settling and incorporating nomadic and semi-nomadic people in into the imperial fold, but also recruited tribal auxiliaries to fight hostile nomads on their own terms.<sup>30</sup> After the fall of the Tang, the Tanguts found security in the northern states of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, especially the Liang against the Later Han and aligning with the Later Han once they had conquered territory on the China plain.<sup>31</sup>

Although the Song paradigm and policy for the northern frontier would become a radical departure from the Tang, Sino-Tangut relations were relatively peaceful in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. The centralization and territorial aspects characteristic of Song administration had not yet been established, especially in the North. In 967, when the Tangut military governor of Xiazhou died, he was posthumously awarded the title of Wang (王), or king, of Xia and his son, Li Guangrui, stepped into office, despite the court's decision not to award garrison commanderies to non-Chinese along the northwestern border of Shanxi.<sup>32</sup> In 962, The Tangut chieftain sent 300 horses to the Song capital, Kaifeng, in order to defeat the Northern Han; the latter kingdom fell in 979.<sup>33</sup>

Tangut leaders, whether legitimate or not, continued to submit to the Song court but not without internal friction. Though at peace, the Song attempted to settle the Tanguts in the Chinese interior, but Li Jiqian, a Tangut chieftan, and his followers fled north while Song loyalists moved into China.<sup>34</sup> Again, like the 7<sup>th</sup> Century split between Chinese and Tibetan loyalties, the Tanguts were split again now with a new core population settling in the Ordos—a schism made possible by moving outside of Chinese reach. A move towards the steppes and away from China culturally and politically reintroduced this faction of Tanguts to nomadic, tribal priorities and created a foundational separation which necessitated a separate state.

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<sup>29</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 163.

<sup>30</sup> Waldron, *The Great Wall*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, trans. Richard L. Davis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), lxvii.

<sup>32</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 167.

<sup>33</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 167.

<sup>34</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 168.

## Beginning of the Xia State in the Ordos

The Song court became better established by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and sought to redefine its relationship with the Tangut tribes on its own terms. The Tangut schism formed the foundational imperative for the creation of a state to protect power and cultural identity. In addition, Song encroachment (fueled by imperial aims informed by low opinion of nomads) provided the opportunity for Li Jiqian (963-1004) to capitalize on nomadic heritage, claiming that it was in danger of Song oppression.<sup>35</sup> Just as the relationship with the Tang state allowed the Tanguts to claim a niche in the Sinocentric world order, the young Tangut state further defined itself in relation to the Song state—one polity among many.<sup>36</sup>

Loyalty was not a simple problem for the Ordos Tanguts; ethnicity and language, let alone nationality, were not enough to secure political cooperation or warriors. Loyalty was based on, quite practically, wants and needs.<sup>37</sup> The nomadic Tanguts had relied on trading their abundant horse stocks for Chinese tea or silk, supplementing their otherwise meager resources on the steppe. Although purely nomadic Tanguts were the furthest away from the agrarian Chinese culturally, they had as much to gain for economic cooperation. To stop trading horses was contrary to their own interests economically<sup>38</sup> as well as politically; precedent had more or less taught those dwelling in the Ordos that good relations with China was favorable as in Tang times. Tangut chieftains residing closer to the Chinese in the southern Loess Plateau still provided tribal auxiliaries to the Chinese armies.

Beginning in the 980s, the Song began restricting the horse trade and only buying horses in cash to reduce the amount of metal (in coins) that entered the Ordos.<sup>39</sup> Coins were melted down by the Tanguts to provide material for weapons, otherwise difficult to make with steppe resources. Salt, the Tangut's other large export and unique to the Ordos, was outright banned; however, the policy was extremely unpopular. Becoming untenable, the policy was effectively abandoned. The situation became increasingly politicized; the Tanguts, caught between their Ordos siblings demanding loyalty and the Chinese demanding submission within their unique cosmology, likely found themselves pushed to make a decision.

Li Jiqian proclaimed himself and his nascent state as a protector of the Tangut people and other peoples in the region, even frontier Chinese farmers. The Ordos elite had their own motives as well; they needed to maintain their economic advantages gained over the years which could no longer be secure in the new climate.<sup>40</sup> Guardianship meant more than just defining human institutions: “protecting themselves meant not only resisting Chinese pressures, but, more important, stabilizing the ecological frontier where the two societies, Han and Inner Asian, agrarian and herding, overlapped.”<sup>41</sup> Without a border to denote loyalty or political stability,

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<sup>35</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 169. Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao and China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 175. Standen asserts that “when the explicitly territorial revanchism of the Song produced a need for a more sharply defined Other that could justify military aggression post-Shanyuan [the 1005 peace treaty between the Liao and Song], conditions were ripe for the conversion of cultural identity into something much more politicized.” I believe this also applies in the Tangut Xia case at the moment of Li Jiqian's departure.

<sup>36</sup> Ruth W. Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 5.

<sup>37</sup> Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, 173.

<sup>38</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 169.

<sup>39</sup> Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 170.

<sup>40</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 13.

these tactics carried favor with nomadic peoples in a non-hegemonic state environment. New claims to nationhood intensified the difference between the Chinese world and the nomadic world as well as between the Song state and nascent Tangut nation, sparking rounds of skirmishes.

As the Tangut leaders began to assert their control and ethnic peculiarities, a once loose confederation of competing tribes now had the necessity to unite. This was not new to the Tanguts; when premodern Inner Asian nomads settled on a region to establish hegemonic rule (as opposed to seasonal migration), inevitably the social structure changed concurrently to accommodate the new demands of a state and its subjects.<sup>42</sup>

### **Emperor Yuanhao, War, and Attrition**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Century experienced the most military conflicts, especially the 1038 Sino-Tangut War, and had far-reaching consequences for both empires for the next century. While Xia expansion was a continual project (often moving west) the open Ordos frontier provided the conditions for almost perennial raids and skirmishes. Geography and ecology did not cause war and conflict alone, but Song anxieties mounted as increasingly organized Tanguts with superior mobility and supply lines could force financial concessions relatively easily. However, war in the Ordos Loop yielded only ephemeral rewards due to strong Song defensive strategy.

Li Deming (r. 1005-1032), eldest son of Li Jiqian, was an influential Xia ruler who espoused policy much like early Tangut rulers. The use of limited force to antagonize the Chinese dynasty into economic and political concessions, such as the opening of border markets, payment of indemnities, or recognition of the strength of the Tangut state without utterly jeopardizing Sino-Tangut relations, were the order of the day. Just after the 1005 Song-Khitan peace agreement, Li Deming sought to gain similarly beneficial terms for his own empire.<sup>43</sup> Border clashes backed by negotiation spanned two years, netting the Tangut state silk, cash, tea, and annual donation of winter clothing, as well as the investiture of Deming as the military governor of Ting-nan, entitled Prince of Xiping (Shaanxi) and de facto sovereign of the Chinese-acknowledged Tanguts.<sup>44</sup> After the compromise was reached, three decades free of significant antagonisms ensued as Xia borders stretched wide to the west.

Deming appointed his son, Li Yuanhao, to lead the Tangut armies against the Uighur and Tibetan armies during these campaigns – the battles that would cut his teeth for the largest war the Tanguts would face before the Mongol invasions. By the time Li Deming died in 1032, Li Yuanhao had been well educated and had become an experienced military leader having just captured Liangzhou (modern Wuwei in the Gansu corridor). Yuanhao succeeded his father in 1032 and became the Xia's most well-known and provocative ruler. He broke with his father's policies, instead reflecting his grandfather's policies. Intensively independent and militarily confident, Yuanhao embraced a pride in the Tangut identity like none had done before him, which eventually led to the Sino-Tangut War of 1038.

Yuanhao's cultural and political policies that followed his inauguration are in clear defiance to the Song court's wishes. Early in his reign, Yuanhao changed the royal surname of the Xia from Li (and Zhou, which was the Song title) to Weiming (嵬名),<sup>45</sup> reflecting not only

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<sup>42</sup> Lattimore, *Frontiers*, 333.

<sup>43</sup> McGrath, "Frustrated Empires, 152.

<sup>44</sup> Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsi," 177.

<sup>45</sup> Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsi," 181.

nativism but a uniquely Tangut imperial prerogative. Also appended to his name was the title of Wuzu, the Tangut's equivalent to "khan," and thus obvious alignment to Inner Asian forms of political legitimacy. New policies also included a mandatory hairstyle to be worn by all men that purposefully differentiated not only Tanguts from all of their neighbors, but all Xia subjects in the realm whatever their ethnicity.<sup>46</sup> Dress was also prescribed for officials and civilians to follow completing the aesthetic vision. Under the reign of Weiming Yuanhao, the Tangut script was developed to translate and disseminate Buddhist texts.

The Xia state also reached an unprecedented level of sophistication during Weiming Yuanhao's reign while retaining tribal customs of deliberation. The state became more centralized, necessitating the creation of a structural bureaucracy more reminiscent of Chinese organization with complementary military districts akin to Chinese commanders. Several offices were created to administer the business of the state, again taking Chinese names. Tanguts and Chinese individuals were viable candidates for these positions. The army was also divided and subdivided and garrisoned along the frontier which cut across tribal lines, a policy regularly espoused by sedentary, not nomadic, states.



Figure 2: Relative political boundaries of the Xi Xia and its neighbors in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. (Source: *Google Earth*)

In the same vein, tribal customs such as consultation *primus inter pares*, beginning with a hunt and evolving into a council with chieftains, characterized strategic decision-making.<sup>47</sup> The army was mostly made up of cavalry as it had been for centuries and not unlike other Inner Asian powers. The Xia army consisted of 150,000-300,000 soldiers drawn from the 3 million total population of the state.<sup>48</sup> The disproportionately large military force, supported by taxation of trade, agriculture, and animal husbandry, was well-adapted to outmaneuver Chinese infantry-

<sup>46</sup> Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsi," 182.

<sup>47</sup> Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsi," 183.

<sup>48</sup> McGrath, "Frustrated Empires," 153.



based armies and seize economic assets or harass frontier towns to force concession. In sum, the government and military had a mix of influences much like many other aspects of Xia society but borrowed primarily from their adversary in the Ordos—the Song Chinese.

In 1038, Weiming Yuanhao declared himself emperor of *Da Xia* (Great Xia), changed his reign title from a Song to a Tangut one, and sent an official embassy to the Song court requesting they recognize such changes in the geopolitical landscape. His letter to Song Renzong, the Chinese emperor, is a work of subtlety; on its face, the letter seems to be convivial but softly asserts Tangut independence and strength. Yuanhao recounts the cooperative history of Sino-Tangut relations. He cites the bestowal of the “Li” imperial name to the Tuoba (despite his recent change to Weiming), the Tangut’s aid in defeating the Northern Han, and even calling himself a servant of the Song court.<sup>49</sup> Emperor Yuanhao implies that he can rule the Ordos and Gansu better than the Chinese can by stating that “not pleased with the titles of king, [they] would follow only that of emperor. Concerning without end until the mountains rang with their assembly.”<sup>50</sup> Defraying direct responsibility while also illustrating his many subjects and territory, Yuanhao asserts his political dominance.

Most important about his request for acknowledgement is the supposed collective desire for a clear border separating the Chinese and Xia empires. The Xia subjects “begged for a land of one border” and Yuanhao himself asks that he be invested as “the ruler facing south,” to “subdue disturbances along the border.” Twice a border is invoked, a border that did not yet exist and would never officially exist. Yuanhao uses the frontier problem (that is, nebulous ecological and geographical realities coupled with Chinese disadvantage) to legitimize the creation of a separate state.<sup>51</sup>

But perhaps the letter was less diplomatic, and more antagonistic, than it appears. Dr. Ruth Dunnell interprets the many allusions to kingship as blatant subversions of the Confucian world order; only one man could be ruler of All Under Heaven. Yuanhao's submissive language could also be read as mocking especially in light of his recent cultural reforms and military mobilization. Cosmologies clash (one multivalent Buddhist and one monolithic Confucian), creating a thoroughly insulting spectacle for the Song emperor.

In any case, Yuanhao was likely not instigating outright war and the Song were hardly prepared for a war themselves. The Song court wished the Tanguts to remain in the same capacity they occupied under the Tang—tribal auxiliaries—which explains why the court rejected but did not punish Tangut offenses. After rejection, Yuanhao purged his court of Song paraphernalia, further estranging his kingship from Chinese precedent. Yet again, there was no significant Chinese reaction.

Tensions escalated to military conflict in 1038-39 when Emperor Yuanhao attacked the Song frontier settlements and the Song retaliated. However, the war was a slight deviation on the usual model. Both sides evaded large, pitched battles; the Tanguts pressed their advantage with superior mobility when they could. Though the Tanguts were victorious more often by larger margins against the Song in three major battles, more time was spent in negotiation than in the war room.

The Xia army, though largely superior in almost every way, was not equipped for the conquest of walled cities. Ultimately the Song brought armed conflict to a stalemate much as they had with the Khitan Liao—static defenses. Chinese strategists pulled on past experience

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<sup>49</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 40-41.

<sup>50</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 41-42.

with the Liao, attempting to artificially establish a border where none existed. Song commanders garrisoning as many as 500,000 soldiers on the edge of the Ordos.<sup>52</sup>

Despite Tangut victories, the Chinese army's losses were relatively minimal in the aggregate. Song losses were constituted by massive expenditures of money Millions of strings were appropriated to the defensive forces in Shaanxi via the treasury as well as the emperor's private purse.<sup>53</sup> Secondary losses also took the form of political and economic concessions to the Khitan. The Song, fearing further attacks from Liao and thus a two front war, increased payments and changed the act of indemnity payment from "gift-giving" to the more humiliating "presenting an offering."<sup>54</sup> Conversely, Tangut victories eventually amounted to a Pyrrhic campaign; every loss made replacement difficult for Yuanhao who levied much of the empire's able-bodied men at the beginning of the war.

After six years of war, Yuanhao's military and economic losses had become too acute to continue his efforts while the Song had become too strongly entrenched and well-adapted to defeat tactically or strategically. In 1044, Yuanhao was forced to concede his ideal position, submitting to the title of "subject" when addressing the Song emperor. The conflict cost the Xia favorable trade relations with the Song who instead bought horses from the Tibetans and salt from elsewhere. The Song suffered greater financial impact, increasing annual gifts (255,000 units of silver, tea, and silk) to assuage the Tanguts and keep the frontier secure from large scale warfare.

### **Cartographic Diplomacy**

More time was expended in negotiations during the Sino-Tangut wars than in actual combat and, following its inception as a territorial empire, the Song engaged in a spatial project where maps became the leading tools of diplomacy. The Song dynasty sought to reorganize its political and fiscal units at the local and prefectural levels in order to stabilize loyalty, increase bureaucratic efficiency, and increase tax revenue.<sup>55</sup> The war and its own imperatives coupled with the Ordos frontier blended to justify radical changes in Song internal organization during conflicts with the Tanguts. In 1040, Ouyang Xiu critiqued Song frontier defenses; circumscription of 24 prefectures in 5 circuits increased the breadth of the defense line but left military units with too few soldiers with too few resources.<sup>56</sup> Prefectures in the frontier area were not financially autonomous in wartime and could not properly defend against the agile Tangut cavalry.

After the war, an intense cartographic initiative was ordered to reorganize the northwest frontier. The court wanted to make sense of the border, restructure the economy there, and attempt to assert control over territory by asserting their spatial visions by marking Xia controlled or contested areas as Song-controlled.<sup>57</sup> Since no Tangut maps survive, it's impossible for us to compare how symmetrical the Song maps were in comparison or to what extent the short distances claimed by the Song were contested by Xia cartography. In any case, the Song

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<sup>52</sup> McGrath, "Frustrated Empires," 153.

<sup>53</sup> McGrath, "Frustrated Empires," 156, 163.

<sup>54</sup> McGrath, "Frustrated Empires," 167.

<sup>55</sup> Ruth Mostern, *"Dividing the Realm in Order to Govern: The Spatial Organization of the Song State (960-1276 CE)"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Mostern, *"Dividing the Realm,"* 172-173.

<sup>57</sup> Ruth Mostern, "Cartography on the Song Frontier: Making and Using Maps in the Song-Xia Conflict, Evidence from Changbian and Song huiyao," *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Ancient Chinese Books and Records of Science and Technology* (Beijing: Daxiang chubanshe, 2004), 148-149.

court seemed to assert more than negotiate. One diplomat complained in 1057, “[the court] did not want to clearly define the border with the enemy.”<sup>58</sup> The Song court, though disadvantaged by the confusing border, attempted to use confusion in their favor and gain control of territory otherwise difficult to conquer and secure.

One map, the *Western Xia Topographic Map* originally created by Zhang Qian around 1108 is instructive in how the Chinese imagined and plotted the frontier. The map is included in Zhang Qian’s 1895 *Chronological History of the Western Xia* and includes the northwest territory of the Northern Song. The map reveals a premodern depiction of boundaries, represented by geographical features such as rivers and mountain passes, not lines. The Northwest section of the map, around the “Black River,” denotes Xia controlled passes in the East Gansu area with the direct West marked as “Western Barbarians.”<sup>59</sup> The Khitans occupy the Northeast with the very busy Chinese dominion south of what is likely the Yellow River.

Clearly, negotiating an agreeable “border” was difficult on this model. In 1108, the Chinese did not have a comprehensive understanding of the Xia territory beyond its edges. The map does not extend past the Southwest edge of the Tangut Empire and the Xi Xia seems to disappear amidst mountains in the distance. Xia maps may have aided the Song but none of them survive to confirm this. Also, the use of perceived geographic features would likely make changing the boundary difficult as there were no naturally defensible features the northern edge of this map, thus necessitated the construction of fortresses during the war. Intense reorganization of the northwest frontier happened again between 1068 and 1073, right around the time of a failed offensive by the Tanguts; still, no border materialized. Short of a mutually acknowledged border, (if a peaceful border was ever the object of either party) Song internal organization attempted to compensate for interstate complications.

Both empires met their economic and political limits and in the process redefined themselves and the multi-state order that became the paradigm for the next two centuries. This redefinition was largely a result of the unique nature of the Ordos frontier and the eclectic culture and administration of the Xia state not shared on the Hebei-Liao frontier just to the east. Though internal logics (Yuanhao's rise to power and the Song's reluctance to acknowledge Xi Xia as a legitimate power) played a pivotal role in the road to war, the geographic and ecological peculiarities engendered conditions that supported and propelled violent policies. War, diplomacy, and cartography failed to determine a border in the Ordos Loop, and religion was an arena in which power and legitimacy could be asserted by remote.

### **Adopting Buddhism and Proxy Ordos Politics**

The Tangut state, positioned on the primary artery of religious travel, adopted Buddhism as an imperial institution. Tangut elites filled the void of patronage left by the Tang Dynasty, taking advantage of Buddhism’s legitimizing power and positioning the Ordos state in a pan-Asian, not sinocentric, world order.<sup>60</sup> Religion, specifically the heterogeneous Buddhism located in temples and practiced by lay people in the Kokonor region in Gansu, became a site of political and cultural contest between the Chinese and Tanguts intimately linked with the imperial projects

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<sup>58</sup> Mostern, “Cartography,” 149.

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Ruth Mostern kindly helped me with translating river and prefecture names. The map provided was gleaned from <http://babelstone.blogspot.com/2013/04/a-fragment-of-tangut-geography.html>

<sup>60</sup> Ruth Dunnell’s *White and High* informs this section as a comprehensive source on Xia Buddhism and state building.

in the Ordos (insofar as a state was necessary for protection against the Song) and the creation of the Tangut script.

Tangut rulers participated in Buddhist rituals as early as the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, requesting to give offerings in Song controlled areas. Li Deming is the first recorded Tangut leader to have practiced Buddhist ritual, already bearing political motivations. At the death of his mother (possibly one of his father's wives), Li Deming requested offerings be given at temples on Mount Wutai in Shanxi—an important foundational step to receive the state protecting benefits from the bodhisattva Manjusri or at least creating the image of a patron state. The offerings were allowed by the Song but a Tangut could not physically visit Mount Wutai, instead, a nun from that Tangut's economic rivals, the Ganzhou Uighurs, was escorted to the holy site. The Song deliberately nurtured relations with Tangut enemies including the Kokonor Tibetans in 1072. Weiming Yuanhao was denied even remote access to Mount Wutai under suspicion that the Tanguts were really just interested in reconnoitering Shanxi.<sup>61</sup>

Weiming Yuanhao waged a military and ideological war with the Song supported Tibetan regime in Kokonor, established the native script required to translate Buddhist sutras into Tangut, and used Buddhist ritual to legitimate his coronation. Yuanhao attempted to establish a shared political and cosmological context between the Xia and Song while also asserting enough power to prove that the Tangut state could hold its own.

This is most clearly seen in the Buddhist Temple at Liangzhou. Originally built by the regional governor of Liangzhou under the Eastern Jin in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, the Hongzang Temple or Huguo Temple<sup>62</sup> under the Tanguts is located in the Kokonor region. The temple's name ('State Protecting') denotes its importance as a site of cultural and spiritual defense. Huguo temple was not located directly in the Ordos but, even so, acted as a proxy to a direct frontier interaction. Much like a modern embassy today, "Liangzhou served Inner Asian interests in confronting or mediating with China, culturally, politically, economically, and militarily."<sup>63</sup>

Few written records remain from the temple, but a 1094 bilingual stele dedicated to the restoration has been recovered and translated by Ruth W. Dunnell.<sup>64</sup> Her translation reveals a lofty, metaphorical tone conveyed by the Tanguts, maximizing the Buddhist identity, ingratiating of traditionally Buddhist locals, spiritual power, and differentiation from the Chinese. The Han inscription is decidedly more secular, reading much more like a traditional Chinese historical compendium. A focus on local history in relation to Song history is aimed at retaining local Han loyalties.

Though the stele is bilingual, with each passage – Tangut and Chinese – back to back, the inscriptions contained nothing necessarily critical of the other people or state. Most Tanguts could not read Chinese let alone their own language (though perhaps multilingual monks could), But more importantly the Chinese could not read the encoded Tangut script. Though the temple was a site of political legitimation and religious dialogue, any attempt to curry advantage was wholly defensive in nature much like how Buddhism was used in the Ordos to help establish a state with more inertia to stop Chinese advances (culturally and militarily), not to provide the

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<sup>61</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 35, 192.

<sup>62</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 87. The temple received many names over the centuries. "Huguo" was the name it received from the Tanguts but was called the Dayun ("Great Cloud") temple after coming under Chinese influence by decree from Empress Wu and later after Tangut influence.

<sup>63</sup> Dunnell, *White and High*, 87.

<sup>64</sup> This small section is based entirely on the second part of Dunnell's *The Great State of White and High*. I do not quote directly from the fairly long stele inscriptions simply in the interest of concision. Please consult (pg. 120-132) for the full translation.

means for conquest.

## Conclusion

Perhaps the worst diplomatic failure of the debacle was the inability – militarily and cooperatively – to demarcate a stable border.<sup>65</sup> Although a war may imply an Other (a person or persons perceived to be culturally or racially distinct), it did not mean that the Song court acknowledged the Xi Xia as a legitimate state worthy of sharing a border. And without one, the Tanguts continued policies (despite a greater degree of internal strife between centralists and tribalists, Fanness and Hanness) that aimed at trade, economic monopoly, and extortion. The Song dynasty, or rather semi-independent frontier governors and military generals seeking status, began launching revanchist attacks in the northwest, reclaiming some territory. New cycles of Tangut offensives, Song fortification, and uneasy peace treaties characterized Sino-Tangut relations until the conquest of north China by the invading Jurchens.

Studying the interaction of the Xi Xia and Song on the stage of the Loess Plateau, it becomes clear that the ecology, geography, and geo-political value created the conditions for trade, cultural borrowing, conflict, and diplomacy. The precariousness of the weak ecological boundary and perceived value of this shared space resulted in gradual, sometimes frantic changes in the relationship between the semi-nomadic Tanguts and Chinese. Internal imperial logic made historically practical policies (such as the introduction of border markets) a more complex issue than the use of stamp and ink.

Political and economic factors contributed to how and why the two cultures interacted the way they did but the imperative produced (and in response to all decisions were made) by the Ordos Loop's anomalous characteristics is not to be ignored but, in fact placed in full focus. Scholars can broaden and deepen our understanding of historical events by treating the Earth and its systems – biological and geological – as active factors (not static, blank constants) in how human cultures sustain, expand, and interact. In a way, the Xia conflict represented a traditional nomad-agrarian dynamic but in other ways, because of nature of the Ordos, it diverged from narratives of successful diplomacy and sinicization. The Xi Xia could not establish relations like the Liao had done by way of a natural border or the Jin with outright conquest and thus both the Xia and Chinese scrambled for alternatives until the Mongols settled the issue for centuries to come.

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<sup>65</sup> Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," 189.

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## **‘Your Vigilance is the Price of Your Freedom! Volunteer for Civil Defense Now!’: Shaping U.S. Public Opinion Using Television as a Propaganda Tool**

*By Manivone Sayasone*

The conclusive year of World War II showcased a terrifying reality that the people of the United States were forced to confront. Once they entered the Cold War in 1947, Americans faced an era where oceanic barriers could no longer prevent “potential aggressors” from devastating the United States with “long-range bombers, aircraft carriers, and atomic weapons.”<sup>1</sup> The majority of Americans perceived the Soviet Union as a major aggressor because the incompatibilities of their political and economic ideologies could have led the Soviet Union to attack the United States with nuclear weapons. Since the Soviet Union also felt the need to defend against the United States’ nuclear weapons, the two global powers compete to establish a national security state by creating alliances through foreign intervention and by increasing the quantity and quality of their weapons. The ability to establish a national security state was dependent on the utilization of a nation’s domestic resources including raw materials and the labor of its “citizen soldiers in farms and factories.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the U.S. government augmented its efforts to generate public support for the development of a national security state by using various forms of propaganda. One of the effective forms of propaganda the government used to shape public opinion about the Cold War in the 1950s was televised, informational films with themes that emphasized the United States’ vulnerability to communist threats, the importance of civic duty, and the preconceived undertones of capitalist and communist societies.

### **National Security Ideologies of the Truman Administration**

Many of the informational propaganda films released during the early years of the Cold War featured themes based on ideologies that are found in political documents including George Kennan’s 1946 long telegram, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct;” Clark Clifford’s and George Elsey’s 1946 Clifford-Elsey Report, and President Harry Truman’s 1947 speech, the “Truman Doctrine.”<sup>3</sup> As modern viewers would notice in U.S. televised propaganda, each document had an ideology that depicted the Soviet Union and its communist regime as terrifying and tremendous threats that must be contained by the United States before they “encroach upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world.”<sup>4</sup> If the U.S. failed to contain communism globally, Harry Truman stressed in the Truman Doctrine that the U.S. risks endangering the “welfare of [its] own nation” as well.<sup>5</sup> Many propaganda films also depicted the Soviet Union and

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10-12.

<sup>4</sup> George Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, (New York, Council on Foreign Relations, Inc.: July 1947), n.p.

<sup>5</sup> Harry Truman, “Address Before Joint Session of Congress (Truman Doctrine Speech)” (Washington, D.C., U.S. Congress: March 12, 1947), n.p.



communism as a great threat to the security of American civilians. To emphasize the strength of their threat, the films often played unsettling background music as a speaker with an authoritative voice of an older Caucasian male introduced viewers to the probability of enemy threats from international and domestic sources including American communists and nuclear attacks.

Another ideology modern viewers would notice in both televised propaganda and the documents is how both items used dualism between the United States and Soviet Union to describe their political and economic structure. In *A Cross of Iron*, Michael Hogan explains, “In the Truman Doctrine, . . . the president had declared that people ‘must choose between alternative ways of life,’ in effect, the American way and the Soviet way, and this declaration had implied that any criticism of American policy amounted to an act of disloyalty.”<sup>6</sup> Explicitly, the patriotism of an American citizen is measured by how he or she viewed the government’s foreign and domestic policies and how well he or she lived by what the government defined as American norms. Any thought or behavior that was considered un-American was immediately labeled as pro-Soviet and pro-communist.<sup>7</sup> People who were accused of possessing pro-Soviet and pro-communist thoughts and behavior were considered to be a threat, determined to destroy the democratic government and capitalist way of life. To emphasize the harm these people could bring to American civilians, propaganda films usually depicted these people to be aggressive and cruel.

Alternatively, the idea that people who demonstrated patriotism helped fulfill domestic duty derived from an ideology that claimed the United States’ “struggle for survival with the Soviet Union” required “military preparedness.”<sup>8</sup> Hogan explains how the Clifford-Elsey Report states that “[the] mere fact of preparedness’ might be enough to deter Soviet aggression.”<sup>9</sup> In addition, the report states how the Soviets only communicated militarily, “[the] language of military power is the only language which [the] disciples of power politics understand.” For this reason, the U.S. government believed that “negotiations were pointless.”<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on military preparedness is very perceptible in propaganda films, which informed viewers about the importance of civic duty. After a nuclear attack, the films stressed how able-bodied civilians should resume their occupations to contribute their labor to the war effort in retaliating against their enemy.

### **The U.S. Government’s Utilization of Television as Propaganda Tools**

Televised informational films became propaganda tools because networks generally sought sponsorship from the U.S. government as television emerged as a new medium during the early years of the Cold War. The Civil Defense Department produced many informational films that were distributed to the American public. The films that broadcasted in television focused on the United States’ subjective views on the Soviet Union and as a result, television was expansively used to generate public support for the development of their national security state.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Hogan, *Cross of Iron*, 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> The Freshy Theme. “The Cold War,” *The History of Media Use for Propaganda Purposes*. n.d. <http://manspropaganda.wordpress.com/the-cold-war/>.

Through the broadcasting of informational films that showed viewers how to protect themselves from communist threats, the government instructed the public to live in a way that supported the government and its Cold War agendas. In other words, the U.S. government controlled how the public should think and behave using propaganda that ironically promoted freedom and democracy. In addition to being sponsored by the government, a good number of informational films reached public view because they were also produced by pro-American and pro-capitalist film studios. The Motion Picture for the Preservation of American Ideals stated that “[m]otion pictures are inescapably one of the world’s greatest forces for influencing public thought and opinion” and should aim to “dedicate [their] work . . . to the presentation of the American scene” including its standards and freedoms as well as its beliefs and ideals.<sup>12</sup> By producing films that reinforced American norms, the film studios demonstrated their patriotism while informing the viewers to show their patriotism as well. Thus, not only did the U.S. government lead the public to support its Cold War policies, it also controlled the media industry and partially what the public viewed in their television sets at home.

### **The United States’ Vulnerability to Communist Threats**

When a television set was switched on during the early 1950’s, American families were treated to informational, propaganda films that dramatized communist threats including American communists and atomic bombs. One example of these propaganda films is titled “He May Be a Communist,” a 1950 Armed Forces Information Film that informed viewers of ways to recognize communists. The film begins with a non-diegetic speaker instructing his viewers with a concerned tone of voice:

In recognizing a communist, physical appearance counts for nothing. If he openly declares himself a communist, we take his word for it. If a person consistently reads and advocates the views expressed in a communist publication, he may be a communist! If a person supports organizations that reflects communist teachings or organizations labeled communists by the department of justice, she may be a communist. If a person defends the activity of communist nations while attacking the domestic and foreign policies of the United States, she may be a communist. If a person does all of these things over a period of time, he *must* be a communist.<sup>13</sup>

The speaker implies that it is safer to assume people who do any or all of the activities the speaker mentioned are either communists or have a probability of being communists than it is to make any further observations of which economic ideology the people in question truly favors. By analyzing the first set of scenes in the film, one can see how the film depicts communists as dangerous people the American public must recognize for the sake of their own security and the United States’. Since the United States frequently associated communism with the Soviet Union, the public saw individual communists as threats determined to divide the U.S. by influencing members of the public with communist ideologies. In addition to labeling communists as a dangerous group, the speaker’s way of labeling a person who “defends the activity of communist

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Honsa, "Dr. Benson's Cold War Prescription: How a Cartoon Series Presaged America's Cold War Lifestyle." *Journal Of Popular Film & Television* 40, no. 4 (December 2012): 204.

<sup>13</sup> Armed Forces Information Film. “He May Be a Communist,” YouTube video, 3:17, posted by “rdekema,” March 32, 2007, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWeZ5SKXvj8>.

nations while attacking domestic and foreign policies” as a communist demonstrates another way the U.S. government used propaganda films to shape public opinion. The speaker indicates that a person who voices his or her opinion may risk being a communist. More specifically, the person could be considered a possible threat to the United States. Therefore, most members of the public preferred to keep their opinions private than to risk being labeled a communist and as a result, there were not many people who had the audacity to question or comment on the government’s Cold War policies.

The government also scared the public into thinking and behaving in ways that supported its policies with a 1953 informational propaganda film titled, “Target You.” The film begins with unsettling background music that helps viewers “interpret the mood” of the frightening message the speaker is about to give.<sup>14</sup> The speaker’s authoritative tone is likely used to lend credibility to the information being provided, thus warning his viewers of their vulnerability as a black crosshair centers on the television screen:

You are the target of those who will trample over the liberties of free men. You are in the crosshairs of the bomb site, an enemy centering on you. You are the citizen of the free world. A citizen of the United States of America. . . Our president has told us that even with the most powerful defense, an aggressor in possession of an effective number of atomic bombs could cause hideous damage.<sup>15</sup>

The ominous message and the animated crosshair is meant to arouse fear in the viewers because the viewers are consistently being addressed by the speaker as “you” as they follow the crosshair, an object that often evokes an image of something being shot or even killed. The film attempts to instill fear in its viewers as a way to motivate them to watch for advice on how to reclaim their security from foreign threats. A minute and a half into the film, the speaker begins to provide advice on how to reclaim security from foreign threats by giving instructions on what to do before and during an incoming nuclear attack. After the speaker finishes providing instructions, he expresses how the efficiency of his instructions enables his viewers to help themselves and those who require aid, stating “This is the plan to help you and others who need you. A plan to live, to work, and fight as did your forefathers.”<sup>16</sup> The speaker attempts to empower his viewers by making a reference to early U.S. history to indicate that his viewers can overcome their obstacles as triumphantly as the Americans who fought against British imperialism in America. Precisely, the speaker implies that his viewers can have as much capacity and can show as much patriotism as their forefathers as long as they follow his instructions on how to act before, during, and after a nuclear attack. The speaker then shows his confidence in the viewers at the conclusion of the film: As an optimistic background music plays to express hopefulness, the speaker concludes, “You will be prepared. You will know what to do instantly to help ensure the survival of you, your family, your country.”<sup>17</sup> Since the film authoritatively instructed its viewers to act in a way that demonstrates patriotism, “Target You” is another propaganda film

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<sup>14</sup> Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis. *Film: A Critical Introduction*. (London: Laurence King, 2005). 257.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Ragan Production. “Target You (1950s Nuclear propaganda US Govt. film)” YouTube video, 8:37, posted by “Thom Bone,” Nov 4, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOQswEHV5hE>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p.

that is part of a “psychological ‘scare campaign.’”<sup>18</sup> Conclusively, “Target You” and “He May Be a Communist” were used by the government to not only manipulate public opinion to eradicate communist influence and fear of attack, but to heed the government’s warning in exchange for national security.

### **The Importance of Civic Duty**

The government also generated public support by televising propaganda films that provided “public information” about emerging victorious in the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> Guy Oakes explains in “The Cold War Ethic: National Security and National Morale” how public information intended to inform its viewers that “victory in the Cold War depended upon the American people” and their ability to “conquer the new and terrible fears created by the possibility of nuclear destruction.”<sup>20</sup> Overcoming fears of nuclear destruction enabled the public to fulfill their civic duty by returning to their occupations after a nuclear attack. Ultimately, the fulfillment of civic duty enabled the public to maintain their democratic and capitalist lifestyles as well as the United States’ political and economic structure.

The importance of civic duty is emphasized in a 1951 informational film titled, “Our Cities Must Fight.” In this film, a newspaper editor and his friend, Fred, discuss reasons why civilians should not desert the cities for fear of an atomic attack. During the men’s discussion, the film shows well-directed dramatizations of events civilians would encounter after an attack. Fred says, “After an attack, our first responsibility will be to keep our heads and get back to our jobs. For each of us have a job to do. And no matter what happens, the people of our city must be fed, clothed, supplied with electricity and heat. The city must be kept alive.”<sup>21</sup> Here, Fred uses an emotional appeal to argue that every American civilian is obligated to perform a task. With his argument, he is motivating viewers to think about the necessities of others because it is the goodness of the American public as a whole who makes the United States the country they glorify. His usage of an additional emotional appeal in his argument aims to keep viewers of 1950s from deserting the cities and to keep them contributing their efforts in maintaining a stable society in the United States. Additionally, Fred reveals the reason civilians to return to their occupations:

The enemy knows that a city deserted by its people, is a city robbed of its power to resist, its power to produce ... Our biggest job will be to continue to putting out equipment and fighting gear our nation depends on. To desert will be to throw away our most feared weapon: America’s power to produce.<sup>22</sup>

Hence, not only will civilians fail to maintain their lifestyle and a stable society in the United States if they desert the cities, they will also fail to retaliate against the enemy and emerge victorious through “military preparedness.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Guy Oakes, “The Cold War Ethic: National Security and National Morale,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Spring 1993, 401.

<sup>19</sup> Oakes, “Cold War Ethic,” 401.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>21</sup> Archer Productions Inc., “Our Cities Must Fight (1951)” 1951. YouTube video, 8:56, posted by “rx,” Sep 4, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2kdpAGDu8s>.

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

<sup>23</sup> Hogan, *Cross of Iron*, 13.

Another 1951 film presented by the Civil Defense Administration, “Survival Under Atomic Attack,” delivers a similar argument made in “Our Cities Must Fight.” The speaker announces the importance of civic duty as an unsettling background music plays:

...mass evacuation is disastrous. An enemy would like nothing better than to have our cities empty and unproductive. If an emergency would come, our factories will be battle stations. Production must go on if we're to win. Our offices and homes will also be posed to duty, not to be deserted.<sup>24</sup>

The speaker indicates that evacuation of the city is a form of surrender to the enemy. To fulfill their civic duty, the speaker states that civilians are obligated to return to their occupations for the United States to win the Cold War. At the end of the film, a message appears as patriotic music plays in the background, revealing that the viewers can also fulfill their civic duty by volunteering for civil defense. The message reads, “If we are prepared, we can come back fighting. Your vigilance is the price of your freedom. Volunteer for civil defense now!”<sup>25</sup> Although the message is short and straightforward, it may have led viewers to imagine jeopardizing their freedom if they did not volunteer as the film recommended. When examined, the message at the end of the film, the argument the speaker makes in the same film, and the argument Fred makes in “Our Cities Must Fight” all aimed to motivate their viewers to avoid “[acts] of disloyalty” and show their patriotism through their fulfillment of civic duty as defined by the Civil Defense Administration.<sup>26</sup> Like the films that emphasized the U. S.’ vulnerability towards communist threats, “Our Cities Must Fight” and “Survival Under Atomic Attack” aimed to shape public opinion in ways that would lead the viewers to help increase the military power the U.S government needs to enforce its foreign policies.

### **The Preconceived Undertones of Capitalist and Communist Societies**

The U.S. government’s and its citizen’s strong determination to retain their American values of democracy and capitalism are the reasons why there were many propaganda films that emphasized the United States’ vulnerability towards communist threats and the importance of civic duty to counter it. In addition to broadcasting informational films that instructed civilians how they should defend themselves against communist influence and attacks in ways that proved their patriotism, television networks also showed animated films that celebrated the benefits of the United States’ democratic and capitalist society. John Sutherland Production’s “Make Mine Freedom,” for example, aimed to “create a deeper understanding of what has made America the finest place in the world to live.”<sup>27</sup> The film begins with tranquil background music and a speaker explaining to its viewers how different people perceive America as the film present cartoonish and humorous depictions of American civilians:

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<sup>24</sup> Castle Films. “Survival Under Atomic Attack 1951.” 1951. YouTube video, 8:51, posted by “industryfilmarchive,” May 7, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAtDpr0KcsU>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Hogan, *Cross of Iron*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> John Sutherland Productions. “Make Mine Freedom – 1948 Anti-Communist Propaganda Cartoon” 1948, YouTube video, 9:30, posted by “Charles Nuckolls,” Aug 5, 2012, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D6d6\\_Vngo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D6d6_Vngo).

American is many things to many people ... It's freedom to work at the job you like. Freedom of speech and to peacefully assemble. Freedom to own property. Security from unlawful search and seizure. The right to a speedy and public trial. Protection against cruel punishments. The right to vote. And to worship God in your own way. It is these freedoms that have made America strong.<sup>28</sup>

Not only does the film introduce its viewers to the benefits that make America a preferable country to live in, it reflects the benefits its viewers value as well. The film emphasizes that the United States grants its civilians self-determination, private ownership, and legal protection. By placing emphasis on these three aspects, viewers become more aware and appreciative of their American privileges, which in turn ripens their determination to safeguard them from communist threats through their fulfillment of civic duty. Subsequently, the film presents additional benefits enjoyed by civilians under the United States capitalist economic system. As the character, John Q. Public lectures five other characters in the film, he talks about the benefits America's "system of free enterprise" has created.<sup>29</sup> For example, Public explicates how the system "sends more young people to high school and college than all of the rest of the world combined" and how the United States "has a national income equal to the total national income of any six nations in the world..."<sup>30</sup> Public's explications help the film's viewers develop a greater awareness and appreciation for benefits that were made possible by the United States' economic system.<sup>31</sup> As a result, viewers would be motivated to safeguard their democratic and capitalist lifestyles.

Public information the government distributed to its civilians, however, were often in the form of fear-mongering propaganda. An early example of a fear-mongering propaganda is a 1947 film simply titled, "Cold War Anti-Communism Propaganda." The film presents a dramatization of how the United States would look like if communism became the nation's political structure. As dramatic, unnerving music plays, the film's speaker forebodingly presents how the town of Montney, Wisconsin would look under the communist rule:

...the chief of police is hustled off to jail. Banks, public utilities are seized by communists. Watch carefully what happens to an editor who operates under a free press. He goes to jail, too, and his newspaper is confiscated. Exit: freedom of thought. Yes, this is life under the Soviet form of government. The little town of Montney is made this experiment of 24 hours of public service to all America. It can happen here. Well, this is what it looks like if it should.<sup>32</sup>

As the speaker narrates the dramatization, the communists who drag the policeman and editor to jail are portrayed as aggressive and cruel people. The civilians of the town are then shown living in poverty as they line up at an outdoor soup kitchen. Despite living in poverty, the following scene shows civilians praising communism as they march on the town's streets. As the music switches to a much ominous score, the film then treats its viewers to a scene with a metaphoric depiction of how communists would destroy the United States. The scene begins with an

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "Cold War Anti-Communist Propaganda," YouTube video, 2:04, posted by "Footage File," Feb 22, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF5YFiCyX2A>.

explosion of the Statue of Liberty. Afterwards, the film shows an animated colossal hand with a Red Army star on its sleeve smashing buildings including the White House and a church. The final shot shows a man triumphantly holding a black flag with the communist symbol of the hammer and sickle and the word, “leadership” under the symbol.<sup>33</sup>

Overall, the film argues that the Soviet Union’s communist regime could destroy the United States. The live-action dramatization enables its viewer to experience fear as they imagine living in a town with no legal protection, no free speech, and no escape from poverty. The metaphoric depiction uses symbols like the Statue of Liberty, White House, and church to symbolize valued American freedom, democracy, and faith while explosions, the crushing hand with a Red Army star, and the hammer and sickle symbolize communist aggression and communist rule. By using a live-action dramatization and a metaphoric animation that depicted communist rule in the U.S., the film built resentment among its viewers against communists and communism.

### Conclusion

The preconceived undertones of capitalist and communist societies expressed in “Cold War Anti-Communist Propaganda” and “Make Mine Freedom” are ideologies that resonated in the United States before the Cold War.<sup>34</sup> For this reason, the government was able to use propaganda films to motivate citizens to defend against communist threats through their fulfillment of civic duty in ways that supported the government’s Cold War policies. Televised informational films were effective propaganda tools because the films notably use authoritative voices of older Caucasian males, a great quantity of information viewers believed would help them outlast communist threats, well-directed dramatizations that gave viewers reasonable visualizations, and symbolic imagery and sounds that evoked strong imageries of capitalism and communism. Like many other forms of U.S. propaganda during the Cold War, informational films were used to shape public opinion because it created “the fear of losing . . . cherished values” made possible by U.S. democracy and capitalism.<sup>35</sup> Most significantly, the U.S. government’s utilization of propaganda and the public’s wiliness to accept ideologies presented in the propaganda showcased the government’s and public’s desperate effort to ensure their security through what they conceived as civic duty. As a result, televised U.S. propaganda became one of the major factors that contributed to the historiography of the Cold War.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Anup Shah, “War, Propaganda and the Media,” *Global Issues*, March 31, 2005.

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**Hidden Histories and the Appropriation of the Holocaust in the American Narrative**  
By Rebecca Weston<sup>1</sup>

“Human beings are members of a whole,  
In creation of one essence and soul.

If one member is afflicted with pain,  
Other members uneasy will remain.

If you have no sympathy for human pain,  
The name of human you cannot retain.”

—Sa’dī

**Introduction**

When confirmed stories and photos of liberation reached the West in 1945, the horrors of Nazi atrocities in concentration camps were undoubtedly shocking to an unknowing American public. Subsequent questions of *how* and *why* such barbarity could take place in a civilized world were surely demanded by its empathetic citizens. Yet as Laurel Leff, author of *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* writes, this simply was not so and it proved to be an erroneous assumption that nation-wide press reports, including the *New York Times*, delivered direct evidence of Germany’s crimes against European Jews; to believe that their unique tragedy emerged vis-à-vis liberation is simply untrue.<sup>2</sup>

On the contrary, it appears that the contemporary American narrative of the Holocaust has risen prominently in recent culture, over half a century removed from the culmination of World War II. As Alan Mintz argues in *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*, a heightened consciousness has materialized in and beyond European and American

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<sup>1</sup> The author, being also an editor, recused herself from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Jewry<sup>3</sup> to dominate American discourse at large.<sup>4</sup> Museums, commemoration, cinematic blockbusters, and countless documentaries continue to fill voids of general knowledge for adults and students alike, albeit limited in depth, thus leaving the need for further analysis of events at the periphery of academic inquiry. It is within this dynamic that underlying notions of American altruism and obliviousness converge with tacit reality, producing a romanticized image of United States involvement surrounding the aggressive objectives of Nazi Germany; that American democracy, ethics, and freedom stands in stark contrast to Hitler's persecution of the Jews. After all, it is more appealing to believe that Americans were humanitarians, liberators, and ultimately unaware of the genocide carried out by the Third Reich.

Here, an ethical dilemma thus emerges: is there an undercurrent of American culpability that has, over time, melded with our desire to keep our own "hidden histories" at bay by taking on the benign role of commemorating the Holocaust to the fullest extent? Many arguments can certainly be made that a problematic connection exists between our little-known history surrounding the Holocaust and how the American people have eagerly appropriated the event into cultural consciousness. It is important to note that the research presented is without intention to vilify the American people or the government, but rather to question the historical integrity of America's past and present state, one that challenges both the pedagogy and scholarship of genocide in a broader context of American history.

Questions are raised of what information is *missing* within this context: what fundamental elements of our own dark pasts have been overlooked, buried, or simply forgotten in the scope of this catastrophic history? To answer this question, it is necessary to explore issues relevant to the American historical record, such as pervasive anti-Semitism and immigration policies that influenced reactions to both German aggression and ideology; to consider evidence surrounding the United States government's handling of initial rumors, verified evidence, and press coverage of mass murder in Europe. Likewise, it is necessary to briefly consider the influence of competing political powers that frequently encumbered Jewish rescue efforts of the Roosevelt Administration both before and during the war. In light of these topics, fierce debates among scholars of the Holocaust have emerged, questioning whether or not American efforts could have had a greater effect on the fate of the Jews. Although this question cannot be definitively answered with hindsight alone, it is one that nonetheless demands scrutiny. Indeed, a compelling collection of research has been conducted in the past fifty years. One of the first works to be published was in 1967 by Arthur D. Morse, aptly titled *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy*, concerning the very issues being questioned in this study.

To be sure, a multitude of scholarly research has surfaced, particularly between the 1970s and 1980s, which has since raised unconventional inquiries regarding the Roosevelt Administration and rescue operations. Groundbreaking works by Henry L. Feingold (*The Politics of Rescue*) and David Wyman (*The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-195* and *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941*) stand as leading reproaches to administrative complacency and abject failure of the American government to save the Jews of Europe. Similarly, Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut (*American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*) offer insight into the anti-Semitic influences of policy-making and public opinion towards Jewish refugees, whereas Sharon R. Lowenstein (*Token Refuge: The Story of the Jewish Refugee Shelter at Oswego, 1944-1946*)

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<sup>3</sup> Viz., Jewish communities.

<sup>4</sup> Alan L. Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

explores marginal acts of refuge implemented by the U.S. government.<sup>5</sup> Further studies stemming from the public perspective have given way to works by Deborah E. Lipstadt (*Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945*) and Robert H. Abzug (*Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps and America Views the Holocaust, 1933-1945: A Brief Documentary History*). In these publications, Lipstadt demonstrates the negligence of the American Press while Abzug's former work delivers first-hand accounts of horrific liberation scenes as witnessed by Americans—and subsequently, absorbed by the public—while his latter chronicles “the varied texture of Americans’ reactions as they witnessed what we now call the Holocaust.”<sup>6</sup> Beginning in the late 1980s through the 2000s, a cadre of topics surfaced surrounding America and the Holocaust that were attempts to re-analyze previous research as well as present innovative arguments concerning the manifestation of Holocaust popular culture. In these respects, the works of Haskel Lookstein (*We Our Brothers' Keepers: The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust, 1939-1944*)<sup>7</sup> and Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman (*FDR and the Jews*) prudently re-examines “the contemporary reality of FDR and other leaders” and how not only personal sentiments of the president and officials factored into crucial decision-making policy, but reconsiders the stance of Jewish leadership as a significant yet equally indolent force during the war years.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the work of Laurel Leff revisits the issue of inattention given by the most prestigious national newspaper, *The New York Times*, and its inefficiency to convey not only the urgency of Jewish persecution but overall severity by its [Jewish] publishers.<sup>9</sup> Today, controversial topics that question the avid engagement of memorialization, discussion, and apparent “Americanization” of the Holocaust are presented by authors Hilene Flanzbaum (*The Americanization of the Holocaust*), Alan Mintz (*Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*), and Judith Miller (*One By One By One*), offering new insights into how and why the Holocaust has become intrinsic to the modern American psyche.<sup>10</sup>

Although these works are but a small representation of the extensive interest in subjects related to America and the Holocaust, they nonetheless remain in a relatively limited scope beyond academia—one which rests in either half-truths concerning role of all participants involved or consists of a cherry-picking of specialized themes that sideline other, yet pertinent information. Our individual and collective reluctance—deliberate or not—to acknowledge and broadly include our own history of involvement perpetuates a kind of storybook account; that we were simply unable to react (let alone prevent) what would come to be colloquially known as “the Holocaust.”<sup>11</sup> Despite extensive scholarship that has surfaced within the last few decades surrounding the Roosevelt Administration’s alleged negligence of the “Jewish Question” (a

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<sup>5</sup> Deborah E. Lipstadt, “America and The Holocaust,” *Modern Judaism* 10 (October 1990): 285-86. Compare with Lawrence Baron, “Haven from the Holocaust: Oswego, New York, 1944–1946,” *New York History* 64 (January 1983).

<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust, 1933-1945: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), vii. See also Deborah E. Lipstadt, “America and The Holocaust,” 293.

<sup>7</sup> Lipstadt, “America and The Holocaust,” 290.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 2, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 28-30.

<sup>10</sup> Lipstadt, “America and The Holocaust,” 294.

<sup>11</sup> The term ‘Holocaust’—in specific reference to Nazi genocide of European Jews—did not enter world-wide diction until the 1960s, nearly twenty-five years after the war and entrenched in the heated atmosphere of the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam War, thus emerging “as a reference point for ultimate evil.” See Robert H. Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 207-09.

question intrinsically linked to underlying anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and Social Darwinist sentiments of a nation) upon American soil, it remains detached from the question of *why* these issues have been marginalized in the overall American narrative.

## **Section II: Anti-Immigration, Anti-Semitism, and the Early Roosevelt Administration (mid-1800s – 1939)**

To better appreciate why marginalization has occurred, an examination of the American historical record of the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century is required to understand the circumstances of American involvement and the Holocaust—an examination that is not limited to a single factor, nor shies away from providing a foundation of America’s dismal and precarious histories. In this respect, racial ideologies and anti-Semitic sentiments and policies that are often marginalized or absent within contemporary, even commonplace discourse can be considered the foundation on which Americans reluctantly stood when faced with answering the “Jewish Question.” While it is easier to assume, or even logical at times to reason that anti-Jewish sentiments were solely endemic to Nazi Germany, studies of U.S. opinion throughout the 1930s until the end of the war have shed light on why both the American public and government voiced reluctance to provide assistance to those subjected to persecution. Moreover, these studies have revealed that hostilities towards not only Jews, but European immigrants as a whole were not part and parcel to German policy. An investigation of international policy, namely concerning European immigrants, reveals that negative sentiments pervaded American dialog as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century: as Americans experienced an influx of more than 400,000 European migrants by the late century, a panic of employment and land competition melded with fears that the American civilization would be subjected to “mongrelization” as towns and cities across the U.S. peaked at capacity. As Wesley Greer argues, these fears were not purely restricted to non-Jewish communities. On the contrary,

Jewish Americans feared this would bring unwanted attention and hostility towards them. American Jewish indifference to their brethren in Europe dated back to the nineteenth century. Americans Jews unwillingness to help European Jews immigrate in the 1930s and 1940s found its prelude in the 1880s.

Despite these attitudes, Americans—viewing themselves as the archetype of a civilized society—nonetheless provided aid to European Jews under the Lincoln Administration in the mid-1800s surrounding persecution of Jews in Tangier, which would continue on by the turn of the century.<sup>12</sup> Yet as the Nazis gained force in Germany during the 1920s, the well of American support would run dry and apathy towards the plight of the Jews would manifest as the status quo throughout the U.S. in a three-pronged approach that advocated immigration restriction, nationalistic nativism, and anti-Jewish diatribe.<sup>13</sup>

As previously noted, the matter surrounding Jewish diaspora and heightened immigration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were issues that, by the time of the Roosevelt Administration, had

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<sup>12</sup> Wesley P. Greer, “American Immigration Policies and Public Opinion on European Jews From 1933 to 1945” (thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2002), 7. See also “Revival of the Persecution of Them in Various Sections,” in *The New York Times [1851-2009]* (St. Petersburg: *New York Times*, 1887), 12, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>13</sup> Greer, “American Immigration Policies,” 6-8.

“haunted Western civilization for centuries.” However, under the rally-cry of nationalism in the pre-war era, the majority of [Christian] Americans came to view Jewish immigrants as a “unique and troublesome presence” as both international agitators and economic dynasts<sup>14</sup>—in short, a veritable threat to the very foundations of native Americanism. By 1924 U.S. immigration policy (specifically, the National Origins Act<sup>15</sup> which established immigration quotas) reflected both official and public reception of Western and Northern Europeans and their contrasting perceptions of Eastern and Southern Europeans. The latter were deemed a degenerate stock that, according to leading politicians and American eugenicists<sup>16</sup> would weaken the American pedigree. Based upon these pejorative views, Eastern and Southern Europeans were virtually barred from entrance as the strains of economic turmoil reverberated across the nation. As Greer states,

The implementation of the strictest provisions of the National Origins Act coincided with collapse of the American economy that plunged the United States into the Great Depression. The strict enforcement of this act worsened the Great Depression because immigrants were not allowed to secure jobs before they entered the country as was allowed by the Alien Contract Law of 1885.

Underlying the Great Depression, however, was the notion that the ‘Jewish banker’, espoused by widely-received radio personality Father Charles E. Coughlin<sup>17</sup> and businessman Henry Ford, was an anti-national and economic opportunist “at the heart of the problems that disturb the world today.” Moreover, the ‘Jewish Idea’—the replacement of American values with deleterious Jewish ideals—remained, according to Ford, at the core of not only immigration problems, but symbolized a destructive influence upon American life as a whole.<sup>18</sup> Within this context, it becomes apparent that dominant corporate, political, and religious voices throughout

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> The Immigration Act of 1924 contains a subdivision for natural origins and quotas that is found under the ‘Numerical Limitations’ heading, Sec. 11 (a). It states: “The annual quota of any nationality shall be 2 per centum of the number of foreign-born individuals of such nationality resident in continental United States as determined by the United States census of 1890, but the minimum quota of any nationality shall be 100.” For a digital copy of the original document, see “U.S. Immigration Legislation: 1924 Immigration Act,” U.S. Immigration Legislation Online, accessed April 23, 2014, [http://library.uwb.edu/guides/usimmigration/1924\\_immigration\\_act.html](http://library.uwb.edu/guides/usimmigration/1924_immigration_act.html).

<sup>16</sup> Although many accept Germany as the precursor to compulsory sterilization, study has proved that the U.S. preceded German policy; moreover, ‘The Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Progeny’ passed by the Nazi Party “was based on a draft by the American eugenicist Harry Hamilton Laughlin (1880-1943) and on sterilization laws already enacted in some states in the United States.” For further reading, see Thorsten Noack and Heiner Fangerau, “Eugenics, Euthanasia, and Aftermath,” *International Journal of Mental Health*, 2007, 114-15.

<sup>17</sup> Greer, “American Immigration Policies,” 8-9. As Greer states, Father Charles E. Coughlin was an eminent Roman Catholic priest who would “instigate and antagonize immigration proposals” through his national radio broadcasts and publication of his magazine, *Social Justice*. With these methods, Coughlin succeeded in bringing anti-Semitic issues surrounding immigration to the heart of American homes during the early 1930s. For additional information on Coughlin and his influence on anti-Semitism in America, see *Am I an Anti-Semite?* in Robert H. Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 79-82.

<sup>18</sup> Mark A. Stoler and Melanie S. Gustafson, eds., *Major Problems in the History of World War II: Documents and Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 324-25. In the article *Dearborn Independent*, American automaker Henry Ford revealed his blatant anti-Semitic opinion concerning the negative effect the ‘Jewish Idea’ had not only on labor markets, but world capitalism. Here, Ford draws a division between the Jewish notion of ‘getting’ versus the Anglo-Saxon value of ‘making’—a differentiation that was “a vicious, anti-social and destructive idea” when separated from the integrity of American values.

the 1920s and 1930s channeled a direct line to domestic mentalities surrounding Jewish presence within the U.S. In this heated atmosphere, one must to question the relationship between the American government and its constituents—who was influencing whom when it came to domestic and international policy?

Symptomatic to this native nationalism, the preservation of American resources and employment formed the backbone of restrictionist ideology at both state and public levels. Heightened by a crippling increase of unemployment in the 1930s, problems surrounding foreign immigrants took center-stage as a pressing issue in the Roosevelt Administration in 1932.<sup>19</sup> Augmented by the advent of racial ideology and religious and political persecution of Jews by the Nazi Party, Roosevelt stanchly “agreed with Hoover’s Executive Order of 1930 limiting immigration.”<sup>20</sup> It was a widely shared sentiment that would have dire consequences for European Jews attempting to escape Nazi-controlled territory in coming years. Regardless of efforts by American Jewish advocates to call attention to the mounting crisis in Germany and circumvent tightened restriction policies against immigration, the quota limits set under the former Hoover Administration remained relatively firm due to America’s own economic crisis. However, in spite of escalating reports of Nazi violence from Jewish informants, the president charged he “would not intervene in domestic affairs of foreign powers,” particularly at the cost of jeopardizing U.S. domestic reforms outlined in the New Deal.<sup>21</sup>

Jews by and large formed a minority within the U.S., comprising roughly 4 percent of the total population. By 1934, they were nonetheless viewed as the catalyst for political upheaval within the U.S. and subjected to slanderous allegations by American anti-Semitic groups. The largest and most persuasive was Friends of New Germany and the German-American Bund,<sup>22</sup> which vehemently accused Jews of inciting governmental subordination to the contentious “Jewish Question.” Notwithstanding, Jewish organizations and newspapers attempted to pacify intensifying anti-Jewish rhetoric within political and public spheres by pointing out that:

no Jews headed any of the twenty-five independent offices of government or the twenty emergency relief administrations. No Jews held high positions in the

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<sup>19</sup> Congressional Report No. 1016 was submitted by the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Congress, detailing proposed amendments to the Immigration Act of 1924 which would subsequently restrict European immigration by 90 percent. To read the document, see Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Restriction of Immigration: April 7, 1932 – Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and Ordered to Be Printed*, by John W. Moore, 72nd Cong., 1st sess., Cong. Rept. 1016, vol. 2 (Washington, DC), 1-5, accessed February 13, 2014, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>.

<sup>20</sup> Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 14.

<sup>21</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 67-71, 83, 85. As Breitman and Lichtman state on page 64-65, Roosevelt’s New Deal was an ambitious series of economic reforms geared towards not only social conservatism but a means to placate northern industrial laborers and southern working class citizens. Moreover, many of these supporters of the New Deal harbored deep-seated “suspicions about Jews, foreigners, and racial minorities”—a significant factor that prevented Roosevelt from publicly confronting racial or religious prejudices among American voters.

<sup>22</sup> Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 11-12. According to Greer, the German-American Bund, a pro-Nazi group that claimed approximately 25,000 members “spread their hatred to the masses used the media outlets of radio and newspaper print.” Although this particular group’s influence would dissolve following the outbreak of war, they nonetheless laid the foundation for the formation of other anti-Semitic groups in the United States such as the ‘Silver Shirts’ led by William Dudley Pelley. For additional information on Friends of New Germany, see Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 76.

departments of justice, war, the navy, and commerce, and few Jews represented America abroad.<sup>23</sup>

Attached to scathing accusations that Jews were puppeteers to the Roosevelt Administration, the rising anti-Semitism of the 1930s was later echoed in public opinion polls conducted concerning European Jews, refugees, and immigrants which reveal the prevalence of anti-Jewish rhetoric among Americans; by November of 1938, one year prior to the outbreak of war in Europe, 77 percent of Americans did not believe that more Jewish exiles should be granted admission into the U.S.<sup>24</sup> For American and European Jewry alike, it appeared that expectations of any attempts at rescue from Nazi persecution rested on the beleaguered shoulders of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wayward cabinet.

In light of pervading anti-Jewish sentiments in America and escalating turbulence in Germany, American Jews—ostensibly recognized as economically, politically, and socially loyal to the Roosevelt Administration—found themselves pleading at the feet of an indisposed president for their European brethren, in the hope that “American influence and power might again offer some hope for deliverance, as in the past.” Although Roosevelt personally preferred to handle foreign policy in the style of back-room negotiating as opposed to head-on open debate, the sudden *Anschluss* of 1938<sup>25</sup> produced yet another wave of immigration concerns demanding immediate attention, namely facing the prospect of 190,000 Austrian-Jewish emigrants. Nevertheless, the president responded with an ambitious proposal to enable the relocation of German and Austrian “political refugees”—a phrase shrewdly coined to minimize further association with undesirable Jewish exiles—to the U.S. and sympathetic countries of Latin America and Europe. Yet as a steady stream of visa grievances reverted to Washington, stymied by the bureaucratic red tape of obstinate State officials, it “became apparent that the Administration’s good intentions remained largely rhetorical.” Despite Roosevelt’s up-hill battle with his conservative opponents in the Administration, another effort would be made to confront the worsening refugee situation in Europe. Fresh on the heels of the *Anschluss*, recession, and mid-term elections, Roosevelt acted in unprecedented fashion by organizing the Évian Conference in early July of 1938; without partisan motive and little to gain politically, it appeared that the president’s undertaking was based upon humanitarian merit alone. Yet as Breitman and Lichtman conclude, it was apparent the “circus atmosphere” of roughly 200 delegates from countries around the world offered only a façade of empathy and benevolence by assembling on behalf of Roosevelt’s token gesture to address the “Jewish Question.” Although the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (ICR) was established to consider the plight of the Jews remaining in Germany, beyond German and Austrian borders it was made clear that “no one wanted the Jews.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Palestine was not only deemed off limits by British delegates but remained a divided issue for Jewish organizations; for many Jews in attendance at Évian, the Conference represented nothing more than “a beleaguered world Jewry surrounded by a murderous world community.” Indeed, mounting tension in Czechoslovakia and Poland would soon elevate the crisis to new heights for “political refugees,” creating a paradoxical impediment

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<sup>23</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 75-76, 78.

<sup>24</sup> Stoler and Gustafson, eds., *Major Problems*, 327.

<sup>25</sup> On March 12, 1938 German troops marched into Austria uncontested, an act that effectively unified Germany and Hitler’s native homeland of Austria which housed over 200,000 Jews. See Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 100-01.

<sup>26</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 83, 100-02, 108-10.

to rescue efforts by serving as political camouflage for news of the ‘Final Solution’ in the coming years.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of 1938, it was evident that the Roosevelt Administration was caught between polarized domestic and international powers competing for legislative clout while at once attempting to remain politically adrift of foreign controversy. As Henry L. Feingold writes,

On one hand, there existed strong restrictionist sentiment generated by the Depression, and on the other a particularly loyal Jewish community allied with other liberal elements which was urging that the tradition of asylum for the persecuted of Europe be at least nominally maintained.

As the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization gained anti-alien momentum, coinciding with the violent Nazi pogroms in early November of 1938, Roosevelt’s public decree to extend visitors’ visas to roughly 15,000 Jewish refugees was again tersely challenged with restrictionist-driven roadblocks implemented by American representatives.<sup>28</sup> Although it can be said that Roosevelt’s attempts to aid European Jewry were typically genuine, it was clear that the mounting crisis in Nazi Germany had little influence over the dominant objectives of conservative politicians in Congress.

For the Western world, the November pogroms (a three-day episode of Nazi brutality that would come to be commonly known as *Kristallnacht*<sup>29</sup>) delivered a distressing jolt to the American people as national newspapers<sup>30</sup> covered the attacks against German Jews, detailing the violent acts of Jewish humiliation, arrests, and deportations to concentration camps. Despite alarming news dispatched by the American press, the immediate possibility of American response or rescue was stalled by November congressional elections, resulting in the isolationist-ridden House members not only doubling in numbers, but enlarging their resolve to prevent liberalized immigration in the wake of the Nazi pogroms. Answering to the pressures of partisan whims at a press conference on November 16, Roosevelt deftly sidestepped referencing the word ‘Jew’ when he declared the reports from Germany were “scarcely believable in a twentieth-century civilization.” Moreover, the president failed to pose any new measures to relocate the persecuted Jews of Germany. In light of this omission, the austere quota limit inhibiting an increase in German immigration was implicitly upheld.

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<sup>27</sup> Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 33-35.

<sup>28</sup> Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*, 6, 9, 17-18.

<sup>29</sup> The term *Kristallnacht* is colloquially translated from German as ‘night of crystal’ or ‘night of broken glass’—an event defined by the shards of glass lining German streets as a result of the smashing of Jewish store windows, homes, and synagogues by Nazi Party members, the SA, and Hitler Youth. For a more detailed account of the event, see “Kristallnacht: A Nationwide Pogrom, November 9-10, 1938,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed April 16, 2014, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005201>.

<sup>30</sup> “Berlin Raids Reply to Death of Envoy: Nazis Loot Jews’ Shops, Burn City’s Biggest Synagogue to Avenge Paris Embassy Aide,” in *The New York Times [1851-2009]* (Berlin: New York Times, 1938), 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. In this wireless report from Berlin, detailed accounts from November 9-10 are given of men roaming the streets in the main shopping districts “breaking windows with metal weapons, looting or tossing merchandise into the streets” while both Party members and onlookers observed the “spontaneous demonstrations.” Compare with “Mobs Wreck Jewish Stores in Berlin: Raiders Loot Shops; Carry Off Occupants,” in *Chicago Daily Tribune [1851-2009]* (Berlin: Chicago Daily Tribune, 1938), 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.



Although Americans were outraged by the news of the Nazi violence of November, they remained unwilling to increase German immigration for Jewish victims. On the contrary, a Roper/Fortune poll taken in January of 1939, a mere two months after *Kristallnacht*, revealed that:

83 percent of respondents opposed ‘a bill to open the doors of the U.S. to a larger number of European refugees than now admitted under our immigration quotas.’ Only 9 percent supported such a bill, with the remainder undecided.

Two months later, the same poll indicated only 5 percent of Americans were in favor of raising quota limits. Clearly, Roosevelt had good reason for concern surrounding the opinion of both his cabinet and citizens.<sup>31</sup> In a global context, the president was not alone in his reluctance to address the issue of immigration. To the despair of German Jews, nearly every other country outside of the U.S. maintained restrictions, exposing “a harsh contrast to the unwillingness of the rest of the world to act on their behalf”<sup>32</sup> in the face of mounting evidence involving the persecution and murder of European Jews.

### **Section III: Preface**

An assumption is made that ordinary people within the United States have a rudimentary knowledge of World War II; for instance, September 1<sup>st</sup> of 1939 marks its beginning between the Allied and Axis powers—that is, between Great Britain and the Soviet Union positioned against Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan. Most Americans can also acknowledge that December 7<sup>th</sup> of 1941 was the entrance of the United States into the war following the bombing of Pearl Harbor—a day that was etched in infamy.<sup>33</sup> These dates are more or less common, to be sure; however, there are many between 1933 and 1945 that may not be familiar, especially if referencing events occurring in Europe such as the Nazis coming to power in 1933, the November Pogroms of 1938, or Allied liberation of concentration camps in 1945. For these reasons, Section III will briefly explain more ambiguous events by use of footnotes or simply direct the reader to the actual source or document for further clarity. Attempts are made to cover as much territory as possible between 1933 and 1945, yet not every issue can be addressed. Hence, events, such as the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Polish liquidations, and deportations of Jews in Axis territory, will generally be omitted from the overall narrative but presented in the catalog of newspaper headlines (refer to figures 4-6). Specific to the theme of this paper, the following issues

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<sup>31</sup> Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 114-16. Compare with Robert H. Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 54.

<sup>32</sup> Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 54, 75.

<sup>33</sup> This reference is an allusion to Franklin Roosevelt’s famed ‘Day of Infamy’ speech to Congress following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, delivered on December 8 of 1941. For the full document, see House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *State of War Between the United States and the Japanese Empire. Address from the President of the United States Before a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress Requesting That Congress Declare That There Exists a State of War Between the United States and the Japanese Empire. December 8, 1941.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Ordered to Be Printed.*, by Franklin D. Roosevelt, 77th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 453, vol. 22 (Washington, DC, 1941), 1-2, accessed May 11, 2014, [www.infoweb.newsbank.com](http://www.infoweb.newsbank.com).

presented will center on the American press and the Roosevelt Administration and how these elements often undermined public knowledge of the Holocaust.

**Section III:  
The American Press, the Roosevelt Administration, and the Politics of Knowledge  
(1933 – 1945)**

A more troubling issue surrounding public knowledge of Jewish persecution is the prevalence of American antipathy relative to the amount of information that was transmitted by the international press, and given the sheer amount of coverage that had been documented it raises dubious questions as to why adequate action was not taken to allay the desperation of European Jews. Surely arguments can be made that the greater public—those who were not privy to information circulating in government spheres—was more or less oblivious to Nazi atrocities. Yet as Deborah E. Lipstadt writes:

an astonishing amount of information was available long before the end of the war. There was practically no aspect of the Nazi horrors which was not publicly known in some detail long before the camps were opened in 1945.

As research has revealed, Lipstadt's argument indeed carries significant weight, and while the press is not responsible for deciding the public's opinion, it does help determine what is or is not relevant to the public. In this respect, the "space allocated, the location of the news in the paper, and the editorial opinions" played an integral role in shaping both knowledge and reaction to Nazi anti-Semitism throughout the U.S.<sup>34</sup> As Leff argues, the problem was not that national newspapers in the U.S. lacked reporting on the persecution of European Jews, but that it did not receive adequate attention let alone certifiable information,<sup>35</sup> at least enough that might have produced a more positive outcome for Jewish victims by the end of the war.

Between the integral years of 1933 and 1945, stories transmitted by American press correspondents within Nazi and Ally territory garnered ample public awareness via national newspapers across America. As Leff points out,

From the start of the war in Europe on September 1, 1939 to its end nearly 6 years later, the *New York Times* and other mass media treated the persecution and ultimately the annihilation of the Jews of Europe as a secondary story. They reported it. In fact, from September 1939 through May 1945, the *Times* published 1,186 stories about what was happening to the Jews of Europe, or an average of 17 stories per month.

However, this does not imply that information regarding Jewish persecution, deportation, or extermination made it to the front page; on the contrary, these subjects appeared on the front page of the *Times* less than thirty times in pre- and wartime years and never ran consecutively nor as the leading editorial. What is more, Jews were later minimized as the primary victims of the Nazis following liberation and referred to simply as "refugees or persecuted minorities."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 2-3.

<sup>35</sup> Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 2-3.

My own research relating to the regularity of front-page editorials of Jewish persecution and extermination within specific periods (those marking significant events such as the rise of the Nazi Party, *Kristallnacht*, the outbreak of war, and subsequent war years) produced results that can be deemed as nothing less than shocking when compared to the sheer amount of information coming into the U.S. To illustrate this argument, a combined search on ProQuest Historical Newspapers was conducted using the parameters only between 1933 and 1945 including the keywords ‘Jews’ or ‘Jewish’ and ‘Nazis’ or ‘Germany’ and ‘Poland’. Out of 57,474 results, 120 headlines<sup>37</sup> were meticulously pulled from 4 prominent newspapers in major metropolitan cities: *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and *The Washington Post*.<sup>38</sup> Here, careful selections were made out of thousands of headlines and accompanying articles that chronologically detailed the publication date, newspaper, full headline, and more importantly the page number the article was located on—a noteworthy detail that is indicative of how the location of editorials within newspapers were relative to the response of Americans throughout the nation.

To clarify, the process of my headline selection was based upon the claims of Laurel Leff and Deborah E. Lipstadt: that the *New York Times* and the American Press at large systematically and strategically moderated or downplayed news of Nazi aggression against the Jews (and consequent slaughter between 1938 and 1945), which purportedly formed a direct line to policy makers within the Roosevelt Administration.<sup>39</sup> Surely, such claims by the authors had to be an exaggeration, or at best influenced by the desire to make a provocative argument. After all, it is difficult to believe that Americans were deliberately negligent to glaring reports of Nazi atrocities, verified or not. Yet as my research took shape—what began as a modest attempt to disprove Leff and Lipstadt’s work—an unsettling truth manifested in the face of doubt.

Out of 8 selected years, a total of 29 front-page headlines were catalogued, leaving a staggering 91 headlines dispersed on alternate pages. More revealing, however, is the foci of headlines and content of articles (emphasized by the unwillingness of major newspaper publishers to place the stories on the front page), which raises a critical question of *why* this occurred, particularly given the gravity of not only mounting persecution throughout the 1930s but open reporting of Nazi extermination of European Jews between 1941 and 1945. Looking at figures 1 and 2 of the catalog, it is important to note that front-page headlines in 1933 and 1938 coincided with first the rise of the Nazi Party and later the shocking event of *Kristallnacht*; here, it can be argued that 1933 marked a year of uncertainty, in that Hitler’s expanding power was viewed with both anxiety and optimism within the U.S., often delivering contradictory or misleading information surreptitiously placed within the inner pages of the newspapers in question. For instance, on March 3, 1933 *The Los Angeles Times* reported on page A12, “Pogroms Held Plan Of Nazis: Slaughter of Jews Declared Impending in Germany,” whereas on March 27, 1933 *The New York Times* reported on page 1, “Nazis End Attacks on Jews in Reich, Our Embassy Finds.” While the former headline could easily fall under the category of informal information, such being the common problem argued by Leff, the latter headline was 1 of 3 found in 1933 that informed the American public Jewish victimization was subsiding, if not

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<sup>37</sup> This amounted to 15 headlines apiece for each chosen year (1933, 1938, 1939, and between 1941 and 1945, thus yielding 36,264 total results for these exact dates.

<sup>38</sup> For a complete catalog listing, see figures 1-8.

<sup>39</sup> Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 4. See also Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 4.

suppressed altogether by Nazi perpetrators themselves.<sup>40</sup> This, of course, proved to be the opposite, as the winter of 1938 gave way to an unprecedented and horrifying surge in Nazi persecution: *Kristallnacht*. Although Americans' sentiments towards Germany were growing increasingly negative despite press reports of the Nazis' inhumane treatment of Jews,<sup>41</sup> attitudes towards refugees, rescue, and immigration rapidly hardened as the U.S. faced a potentially large number of Jewish evacuees fleeing the Reich. Anticipating a more disastrous situation for native-born Americans,

various papers noted that in light of the increased pressure on Jews to emigrate, now was the time for America to *raise*, not lower, its protective barriers; now was the time for increased vigilance...[t]he press did not permit its disdain for Germany to compromise its conviction that there should be no change of our immigration laws.<sup>42</sup>

Although the event of *Kristallnacht* gained ample attention throughout the nation, it is evident in this account by Lipstadt that the press exerted considerable influence regarding what the American public knew (even dictating the degree of importance relative to page placement in newspapers) and how Americans both processed and interpreted the information in the context of restrictionist ideals.

Yet for the years 1939, 1941, and 1942 only two notable headlines out of hundreds appeared as front-page news: "Nazis Warn Foreign Jews of Reprisals Over Shootings" (*The Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 1939) and "U.S. Refuses French Plea to Take Refugees; Reich Curb Called Bar to Orderly Emigration" (*The New York Times*, January 9, 1941). Again, one must question why little attention was given to the Jewish plight, particularly when other alarming headlines read "2 Million Jews Face Exodus to Camps in Poland: Germany Completes Plans for Strict Segregation" (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 3, 1939, only three months after war was declared) or "Himmler Program Kills Polish Jews: Slaughter of 250,000 in Plan to Wipe Out Half in Country This Year Is Reported" (*The New York Times*, November 25, 1942). What is most disturbing, however, is the 1942 *New York Times* article right away stating:

Old persons, children, infants and cripples among the Jewish population of Poland are being shot, killed by other various methods or forced to undergo hardships that inevitably cause death as a means of carrying out an order by Heinrich Himmler, Nazi Gestapo chief, that half the remaining Polish Jews must be

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<sup>40</sup> "Goering Says Jews Will Be Protected: Asserts Some Excesses in Germany Were Unavoidable and Were Quickly Curbed," in *The New York Times [1851-2009]* (Berlin: New York Times, 1933), 28, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. See also "Jews' Mistreating Abated, U.S. is Told: Embassy and Consulates in Germany Report After Protests Here," in *The Washington Post [1877-1995]* (Berlin: The Washington Post, 1933), 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>41</sup> Between November 9-13 of 1938, stories of vandalism and brutality were printed on the front pages of national newspapers, with many bearing headlines such as "Hitler Seizes 20,000 Jews: Homes Burned; Stores Looted; Terror Reigns: Mobs Run Wild in German Streets—Jews Flee from Terrorists in Germany" and "Arrests Continue: Insurance Settlements to Be Confiscated for Reich's Benefit—Germany issued a new series of decrees yesterday to complete 'the liquidation of the Jews.'" For additional headlines, see figure 2.

<sup>42</sup> Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 86.

exterminated by the end of this year, according to a report issued today by the Polish Government in London.<sup>43</sup>

Although headlines of comparable Nazi atrocities preceded this editorial,<sup>44</sup> it nonetheless serves as viable testament to the muted reaction of both the U.S. government and the American people; by 1942, the Nazis' extermination of European Jews had evolved from an allegation into a world-wide documented fact.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, in what would become a near-standard for the American press and reports of Nazi mass extermination of European Jews, news publishers routinely "placed various stories on inner pages and allotted them but a few lines," leaving "readers free to accept this news as valid or dismiss it as unverified information."<sup>46</sup> Key to such a dilemma is the perceived difference between substantiated and unsubstantiated reports; in all likelihood, it was a judgment many Americans were either ill-equipped or unwilling to make.

Research conducted for 1942 yielded results similar to Lipstadt's findings: out of hundreds of headlines examined, no front-page editorials could be found detailing the Nazi murders being reported in Poland (see figure 5). Although it is reasonable to want to question such incredulous findings, numerous headlines reading "Million Polish Jews Perish: Mass Executions and Gas Wiping Out All but Able-Bodied" (*Los Angeles Times*, November 26, 1942) and "Poland Called Vast Center for Killing Jews" (*The Washington Post*, December 20, 1942) for example, were instead found on the inner pages of all four newspapers in the catalog. What is more, an editorial in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* proclaimed the slaying of 2,000,000 Jews as part of an "extermination campaign" in Poland, accrediting the information to Rabbi Stephen B. Wise, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, via the State Department.<sup>47</sup> Although Wise's claims were ran on a handful of front pages of newspapers in the U.S. and certainly telling of Hitler's 'Final Solution' now well underway, "most major papers treated this as a story released by a Jewish source and an interested party," thus rendering Wise's confirmations fairly

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<sup>43</sup> "2 Million Jews Face Exodus to Camps in Poland: Germany Completes Plans for Strict Segregation," in *Chicago Daily Tribune [1849-1988]* (Berlin: Chicago Daily Tribune, 1939), 4, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. See also "Himmler Program Kills Polish Jews: Slaughter of 250,000 in Plan to Wipe Out Half in Country This Year Is Reported," in *The New York Times [1851-2009]* (London: New York Times, 1942), 10, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. For more information of Jewish extermination reported by the American press, see 'Polish Confirmation and Press Reaction' in Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 162-76.

<sup>44</sup> See "Nazis Seek to Rid Europe of All Jews: Mass Transportation to Polish Zone Continues Unabated," in *The New York Times [1851-2009]* (Berlin: New York Times, 1941), 10, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. In this article, it is stated that the "Complete elimination of Jews from European life now appears to be fixed German policy." However, it can be argued that the ambiguity of the phrase 'elimination of Jews from European life' is not suggestive of Hitler's 'Final Solution', but rather understood as a measure to isolate Jews in Polish ghettos.

<sup>45</sup> According to David S. Wyman, the Jewish Labor Bund in Poland released a document in May of 1942 summarizing verified massacres throughout Polish cities, which was then transmitted to London's Polish government. Upon their persistent demands for action, leaders of the party succeeded in forcing American and British government officials to acknowledge the information. As a result, "the Bund report became the decisive factor in the first breakthrough of extermination news." However, as Wyman asserts the "news of the existence of a plan" for the systematic extermination of European Jews did not reach the U.S. until August of 1942—this information was not released to the press until November and only after it had been confirmed by the State Department. For more information on the topic, see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: New Press, 1984), 21-22, 42 and Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 162.

<sup>46</sup> Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 164.

<sup>47</sup> "2 Million Jews Slain by Nazis, Dr. Wise Avers: Extermination of All in 1942 Held Hitler Aim," in *Chicago Daily Tribune [1849-1988]* (Washington, D.C.: Chicago Daily Tribune, 1942), 4, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

unreliable by comparison to non-Jewish accounts.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of 1942 reports from underground operatives in Poland were transmitted to London via the Polish government that “included graphic descriptions of Jews packed into freight cars and deported to ‘special camps’ at Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor,” where many victims “died of suffocation or lack of water en route; the rest were murdered at the camps.” While information of the Nazis’ plan to annihilate European Jewry was more or less authenticated by Allied government in November of 1942, it was only after the war that the world fully understood the scope of Hitler’s ‘Final Solution’.<sup>49</sup>

By November of 1942, Rabbi Wise’s desperate efforts to inform the world of Nazi atrocities marked a decisive turning point in the course of the Holocaust; from that point on, “the news of Hitler’s plan to annihilate the Jews was available to anyone in the democratic world who cared to know.” However, the determination of the media to not only provide adequate coverage of Germany’s extermination plans but stimulate concern and anger among the public remained close to nil despite recent revelations by both Wise and the State Department. As a result of this oversight, the ability of rescue advocates to pressure the American government into providing aid for European Jewry was undercut by the refusal of the press to firmly address the issue. More importantly, neither the media nor Roosevelt himself made any attempts to bring the plight of the Jews to the forefront of public knowledge during press conferences. Regardless, by December of 1942, the president was fully aware of Germany’s extermination program that had already been confirmed by Wise. As American and international Jewish organizations<sup>50</sup> tried in vain to raise support among other faiths and non-Jews, pleas and demands for U.S. and Allied action against the murder of European Jews fell largely on deaf ears as the world transitioned into 1943.<sup>51</sup>

Yet in early March of 1943, a shift in public disapproval of Germany is clearly detected in newspaper captions: of the 15 articles listed in figure 6, there are 7 that contain both beseeching and accusatory messages; Americans were not only demanding action and rescue operations but voicing overt criticism of the Roosevelt Administration’s failure to aid European Jews. Here, headlines such as “20,000 Plead: ‘Act Now to Rescue Jews’ – Tragic Call Heard at Mass Meeting” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 15, 1943), “Buck Passing is Blamed for Plight of Jews: Roosevelt Criticized for Failure to Act” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 7, 1943), and “Step to Save Jews Urged in Congress: Measure in Both Houses Advocates Creating a Presidential Body to Act Now” (*The New York Times*, November 10, 1943) can be found amidst mounting reports of the mass extermination of Jews conducted by the Nazis in Poland.<sup>52</sup> As research shows, these headlines coincided with the American Jewish Congress’ “Stop Hitler Now” mass demonstration at Madison Square Garden on March 1<sup>st</sup>—an event that generated a “wave of publicity and activity” surrounding the issue of Jewish rescue.<sup>53</sup> Although the State

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<sup>48</sup> Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 180-81.

<sup>49</sup> Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 52-53.

<sup>50</sup> For a complete list of the seven Jewish organizations—the Joint Emergency Committee on European Jewish Affairs (also known as the ‘Temporary Committee’ prior to March, 1943)—that worked to raise international awareness of the Holocaust and incite American response, see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 67-68.

<sup>51</sup> Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 61-63, 72.

<sup>52</sup> “All-Europe Purge of Jews Reported: Hitler Said to Have Ordered Continent Cleared Before End of the War,” in *The New York Times* [1851-2009] (Stockholm: New York Times, 1943), 5, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>53</sup> Tens of thousands attended the Madison Square Garden rally while thousands more listened to speeches in surrounding areas. The demonstration attracted, according to police estimates, approximately 75,000 people. For

Department made small-talk about rescue operations in the spring of 1943, Roosevelt and conservative legislators consistently rebuffed requests by Jewish leaders to discuss the matter at greater length.<sup>54</sup> Taking this detail into consideration, the prevalence of headlines calling for rescue can be interpreted not as active responses by the U.S. government to finally give aid to millions of European Jews falling victim to the Nazis, but instead as frantic appeals for rescue by American Jewry and local supporters—a matter that was discreetly exposed to those associated with the Bermuda Conference.

On April 19, under the heading of U.S. and British delegates, the issue of *refugees* in Europe was presented in a series of proposals by international officials and largely to an excluded public: the press was firmly restricted to five correspondents (representing only wire services) in attendance while “no individual newspapers were permitted to send reporters.” Moreover, it was agreed by the delegates that emphasis on the Jewish plight was banned and special steps were not to be taken on their behalf. As Wyman asserts,

The positive objectives [of the Conference] were three. First, to devise steps to encourage neutral European nations to accept more escaped refugees. Second, to seek temporary havens in United Nations territories in Europe and Africa and to locate transportation to them. Third, to call an early meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees to implement the decisions reached at Bermuda.

Regardless of professed aims to solve the issue of refugees, the outcomes of the Bermuda Conference were as insignificant as the press coverage, which remained under the strict control of government officials. Of the few correspondents allowed to attend the Conference, ultimately none were privy to the secret deliberations and final reports of what was deemed the “no news conference.”<sup>55</sup> The failure to act by U.S. and British governments was further compounded by new immigration restrictions and refugee amendments in 1943; in addition to lengthened forms, background checks, and time required for visa application screening,

State Department officials added the provision that the refugee had to be in acute danger before a rescue attempt was a reasonable option. This virtually allowed the State Department to close its doors at will because it claimed that no one who applied for visas was in danger.<sup>56</sup>

As 1943 came to a dismal close, it was clear that the politics of rescue did little more than bury the urgent requests for congressional response in the inner-pages of news reports and more importantly, it placed the fate of European Jewry in further dire straits. By January of 1944,

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more information, see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 87-88 and “Save Doomed Jews, Huge Rally Pleads: United Nations Must Halt Nazi Murders Now, Leaders Tell 21,000 at the Garden,” in *The New York Times* [1851-2009] (New York: New York Times, 1943), 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>54</sup> Seven Jewish congressmen, headed by Emmanuel Celler, obtained a meeting with President Roosevelt and staunch restrictionist Senator Breckinridge Long in the spring of 1943. However, the congressmen focused on the issue of loosening immigration restriction and quotas rather than rescue operations. This emphasis on immigration restriction highlights the failure of American Jewish leaders to firmly press the issue of rescue upon the State Department, thus allowing a crucial opportunity for discussing action to escape. For more detail, see Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 45.

<sup>55</sup> Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 113, 119-20.

<sup>56</sup> Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 48-49.

mounting pressure of cabinet members in the Roosevelt Administration<sup>57</sup> to take direct action against the continued extermination of European Jewry catapulted the issue of rescue into the political limelight.<sup>58</sup> By March, newspapers began printing stories of assured rescue; looking at figure 7, *The Washington Post* confidently declared, “Rescuing Refugees – and in Time!: New Board Is Striving to Get Victims Out Europe ‘In Mass’” (*The Washington Post*, March 12, 1944).<sup>59</sup> But what would surface as a three-way clash between meagre government funding, understaffing, and internal opposition over the next few months, the newly-established War Refugee Board remained an open question to its overall effectiveness for a better part of the year.<sup>60</sup>

On June 12<sup>th</sup> of 1944, President Roosevelt issued an official message explicitly notifying the 78<sup>th</sup> Congress that the legislature had:

repeatedly manifested its deep concern for the plight of the persecuted minorities in Europe whose lives are each day being offered in sacrifice on the altar of Nazi tyranny...the unprovoked murder of innocent people simply because of race, religion, or political creed is the blackest of all possible crimes.

Within the pages of the document, Roosevelt not only established the War Refugee Board but professed its efforts had brought “new hope to the oppressed peoples of Europe”—a declaration made of not out of conjecture, but attested fact. Moreover, the president noticeably stressed the continuous appeals and efforts made by Congress to find safe havens for Europe’s “oppressed.” Unfortunately, Roosevelt’s candid efforts would remain indefinitely destabilized by the Nazis’ fervent extermination program, ultimately preventing the persecuted from escaping extinction. Nevertheless, Roosevelt’s message was delivered with a promise to harbor roughly 1,000 refugees within the U.S.<sup>61</sup> It is evident that Roosevelt’s message exhibited his readiness to not only listen to appeals of rescue within his own Administration but to finally lend aid to the “oppressed” of Nazi Germany; the inability to explicitly use the term *Jew*, however, would remain an vital omission in the catastrophic wake of liberation. Ultimately, and not without struggle, the War Refugee Board “[played] a crucial role in saving approximately 200,000 Jews” from the clutches of complete annihilation, made possible not only by evacuation, underground

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<sup>57</sup> Seven Jewish congressmen, headed by Emmanuel Celler, obtained a meeting with President Roosevelt and staunch restrictionist Senator Breckinridge Long in the spring of 1943. However, the congressmen focused on the issue of loosening immigration restriction and quotas rather than rescue operations. This emphasis on immigration restriction highlights the failure of American Jewish leaders to firmly press the issue of rescue upon the State Department, thus allowing a crucial opportunity for discussing action to escape. For more detail, see Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 45.

<sup>58</sup> Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 49-50.

<sup>59</sup> “Rescuing Refugees – and in Time!: New Board Is Striving to Get Victims Out Europe ‘In Mass’,” in *The Washington Post [1877-1995]* (Berlin: The Washington Post, 1944), B1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>60</sup> Under the urging of Henry Morgenthau Jr., his staff, and members of Congress, Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board as a compulsory response to curtail anti-immigration and rescue barriers set by conservative members of the State Department. See Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 263 and Greear, “American Immigration Policies,” 49-50.

<sup>61</sup> House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Caring for Refugees in the United States. Message from the President of the United States Notifying the Congress that Arrangements Have Been Made to Care for Approximately 1,000 Refugees in the United States: June 12, 1944 – Referred to the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization and Ordered to Be Printed*, by Franklin D. Roosevelt, 78th Cong., 2d sess., H. Doc. 656, vol. 15 (Washington, DC, 1944), 1-3, accessed February 13, 2014, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>. See also Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 265-66.



efforts, and protection within Axis territory, but by publicly issuing warnings to the perpetrators of war-crimes<sup>62</sup> and shipping foodstuffs to concentration camps during the final months of the war. Although the staff's steadfast achievements in saving the lives of tens of thousands of victims cannot be diminished by hindsight, the Board's greatest downfall was its establishment far too late in the proverbial game.<sup>63</sup> However, these revelations are best understood in retrospect, as appeals of rescue made to the Roosevelt Administration were obstructed by an unexpected obstacle a mere two months prior to the establishment of the War Refugee Board: the War Department. Here, the shattering failure of Allied powers to bomb Auschwitz would reverberate into future decades, again calling into question the objectives of the U.S. government to aid the Jews of Europe.

By mid-April of 1944, the Roosevelt Administration was again challenged with the option of taking a pro-active stance to save Europe's Jews: bombing the vital railways of concentration camps. As the month came to a close, a report carried by two Hungarian escapees (a document that detailed the extermination plan for Hungarian Jews, gassing methods and crematoriums, the physical layout of Auschwitz, and statistical records of the Nazis' murder) made its way to Allied hands. Around this time the newly-established War Refugee Board obtained the information, which was immediately corroborated by evidence from external sources received earlier in the year. By June, the Allied governments and press had relayed the contents of the report—"the truth about Auschwitz, along with descriptions of its geographical location and layout"—to the wider world. Nevertheless, appeals for the bombing of Auschwitz and contiguous railways would prove unsuccessful. Over the course of 1944, appeals transmitted to War Department for immediate action were consistently rejected on the basis of impracticability. For the American military, assistance was considered an effort that "would require the 'diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of [their] forces now engaged in decisive operations elsewhere'." Further proposals to bomb Auschwitz and rail lines faded with the closure of 1944. By mid-January of 1945, the remains of Auschwitz was captured by the Russian army.<sup>64</sup>

#### **Section IV: From Auschwitz to Americana and Conclusion\***

Upon the discovery of Nazi death camps, America viewed itself as the "shocked and innocent liberator" in the highly-publicized aftermath of Hitler's slaughter of European Jews, adopting an attitude of outrage and heroism that would ultimately persist for nearly twenty-five years after the war's end. Regardless of this obstinate mentality, the horrific reality of the 'Final

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<sup>62</sup> In late March of 1944, the *New York Times* ran a front page article, declaring that "All guilty must pay for atrocities and asks people to assist refugees." Significantly, the piece specifically uses the phrase "Jews and other victims," unlike the Presidential Message issued three months later. For the full article, see "Roosevelt Warns Germans on Jews: Says All Guilty Must Pay for Atrocities and Asks People to Assist Refugees," in *The New York Times* [1851-2009] (Washington: New York Times, 1944), 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>63</sup> Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 285.

<sup>64</sup> In November of 1944, Himmler had already ordered the gassing chambers and crematoriums to be destroyed. Much debate has centered on the issue of bombing the rail lines and camp itself, ranging from feasibility to moral imperatives of sacrificing additional lives of inmates. However, those who supported the bombing concluded the means would justify the end, and "although those who appealed for the bombing did not know it, many Auschwitz prisoners shared their viewpoint." See Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 289-303.

\* The title *From Auschwitz to Americana* is borrowed from Gerald E. Markle et al., "From Auschwitz to Americana," *Sociological Focus* (August 1992).

Solution’—the callous murder of six million men, women, and children on the basis of religious conviction—quickly faded into the annals of history in the immediacy of the Cold War and few questioned the detrimental role of the U.S. within this capacity. Moreover, “no new generations of Americans had yet come along to challenge the image that those who fought the war had created themselves.” But for many, the advent of the Eichmann trial in the 1960s served as a catalyst to the resurrection of America’s ignoble past, and although the horrors of the Holocaust were already known to the public, it challenged American notions of virtue and benevolence with the blinding hypocrisy of a culture in crisis. By the decade’s end, a period of national self-examination, cultural renewal, and re-interpretation thrust the history of Nazis genocide into a new light: it had become the *Holocaust*.<sup>65</sup>

For average Americans today, knowledge of the Holocaust relies heavily on representations, whether it is in books (*The Diary of Anne Frank*), movies (*Schindler’s List*), or documentaries found on television (*The Holocaust*), to name but a few examples. Even those who have not read or viewed these materials, they stand as benchmarks for its reception into the American narrative—to the Americanization of the Holocaust. Yet it is the persistent ordinary and academic discourse, scholarship, and commemoration that prove American perceptions of the Holocaust are far from static, but rather intrinsic elements that have “evolved in concert with larger social, cultural, and political movements.” As Hilene Flanzbaum further argues,

representations of the Holocaust in America takes place on an embattled stage, where a seemingly small gesture seems to take on cataclysmic resonance. With each important touchstone of Americanization—whether it is the radio broadcast of Adolf Eichmann’s trial for war crimes in 1961, commonly recounted as a formative moment of awareness; NBC’s televising of the miniseries *Holocaust* in 1978...the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993; or the huge success of *Schindler’s List* that same year—the discussion gets louder and more heated, rather than more muted and moderate as time passes.<sup>66</sup>

In recent years, even the term *Americanization* spurs debates of “vulgarization” or “selling out” when placed in the framework of memorialization, academia, mainstream publications, and blockbuster releases. The history of the Holocaust has become saturated through these mediums and inadvertently imbedded into the very fabric of Americana, to the point that it is now socially acceptable to make a causal reference to some aspect of its history in mundane conversation, whether expressed as a pun or recycled fact, or to associate other acts of genocide freely.<sup>67</sup> Based upon contemporary vernacular alone, representations of the Holocaust have entered into an era teetering between hackneyed and obscurity; images of Auschwitz have become either detached in American minds or a symbol of monotony in media depictions, whereas phrases such as “grammar Nazi” surface in modern vocabulary with mild insensitivity. Yet for all, the word *Holocaust* remains an integral part of collective consciousness; a hallowed metaphor bereft of callousness and tantamount to humanity’s malevolence.

In reality, Americans readily venerate this tragic event that is not only more than half a century removed but one that is not technically fundamental to American experience. While

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<sup>65</sup> Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 207-09.

<sup>66</sup> Hilene Flanzbaum, *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 1, 4-5.

<sup>67</sup> Flanzbaum, *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, 5, 7.

anti-Semitism existed within the U.S. it was nowhere near the horrors inflicted upon European Jewry. Although many American lives were lost at the expense of Nazi Germany, U.S. cities and towns remained intact and spared from the unremitting bombing which left much of Europe in ruins. Many Americans remained oblivious or indifferent to Nazi genocide, as U.S. objectives were primarily geared towards defeating Axis powers; the rescue of “refugees” remained a secondary issue until the final years of the war. Holocaust survivors, descendants, and American Jewry remain a small percentage of the population today.<sup>68</sup> Considering such glaring inconsistencies, the zealous nature of Holocaust remembrance demands the question: why here, and more importantly, why *now*?

In recent years, scholars have asserted that the period of self-examination Americans experienced following the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War facilitated our own introspection concerning U.S. actions during the Holocaust; Americans questioned their own moral and ethical imperatives as a reflection of Nazi atrocities, while persecution and genocide became the magnifying glass to scrutinize the faults of society.<sup>69</sup> But can we even compare the Holocaust to other atrocities, such as that experienced by Native Americans, Rwanda, or Cambodia? After all, persecution and genocide did not begin with the Holocaust, nor was it vanquished following the war. In retrospect, the Holocaust is often considered a unique episode in history not only by modern or “civilized” standards but as the defining moment which separates the subjective and societal notions of “good” from “evil.” From here, valuable lessons imparted on humankind at the expense of innumerable Holocaust victims should be assured, but as Peter Novick suggests, such a connection is unlikely “not because of its alleged uniqueness, but because of its extremity.”<sup>70</sup> While it is judicious to raise virtuous questions about the deplorable nature of humanity, the Holocaust should *not* be invoked as a comparative study—it remains unparalleled in the sense that genocides apart from Nazi Germany do not equate with extenuating conditions that enabled the culmination of the Holocaust. As Roosevelt stated, it was “scarcely believable in a twentieth-century civilization” such a degree of ruthlessness could exist. Comparisons to Native American genocide (largely caused by disease and perpetrated by a people far removed from a developed society) to that of Germany ultimately fails to accurately translate when placed in the continuum of human advancement. It must be stressed that such a contentious claim is not an effort to decry past, present, or even future genocides but to emphasize that distinct circumstances allowed the Nazis to physically and psychologically destroy an entire people as the western world remained blinded by its own objectives.

Accountability for the Holocaust, more often than not, is consigned primarily to the Axis powers—a partial truth at best. As this study has demonstrated, the inadequate responses of the U.S. government, American press, and public played an integral role in shaping the outcome of the Holocaust. Although scholarly accusations surrounding the deficiency of American refugee and rescue operations did not appear until the 1960s, they have since become the crux of assigning responsibility beyond the margins of German history, primarily in respect to repeated hollow gestures made by Franklin Roosevelt and his wayward administration. As Henry L. Feingold aptly states, “on those occasions during the Holocaust years when mass rescue appeared possible, it required of the nations a passionate commitment to save lives,” and although there were individuals in Congress, Jewish organizations, and public spheres who

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<sup>68</sup> Stoler and Gustafson, eds., *Major Problems*, 462. See also Flanzbaum, *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, 32.

<sup>69</sup> Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 208-09.

<sup>70</sup> Stoler and Gustafson, eds., *Major Problems*, 467.

strived to do more, the overall consensus of the Roosevelt Administration and national community was consistently at odds with abetting European Jewry. However, this does not imply that fault rests squarely on the shoulders of the American government, nor the public; on the contrary, disunity among American Jews between 1938 and 1943 often undermined efforts to pressure the president to take a stronger stance for refugees and rescue plans, despite overall favorability of Jews within the Administration itself. As hindsight suggests, failure to act by not only American Jewry but world-wide Jewish leaders proved to be one of many catastrophic missteps for their European brethren.<sup>71</sup>

Within this web of dismal circumstances, deep-seated threads of anti-Semitic and restrictionist ideology bound public and political circles as a defiant force against foreign intrusion. Coupled with economic turmoil of the Great Depression, the threat of Eastern European refugees provided ample leverage for the U.S. legislators to bar the doors to immigration—a deed which more or less sealed the fate of Jews throughout the Reich. Adding to these issues, the role of the American press and public response (or lack thereof) was interwoven as binary elements of counter-productivity that was evident in bureaucratic silence in media discussions and burying information within the inner-pages of national newspapers. Here, confounding reports of persecution and extermination fused with general antipathy and reluctance of the State Department to place Nazi operations at the forefront of political agendas, thus rendering reports of Jewish extermination negligible in the broader context of winning the war—an objective that neither Roosevelt nor the War Department was willing to compromise.<sup>72</sup> With all things considered, it can be argued that each noxious factor formed an integral part to a complex equation, one that ultimately rendered the ‘Final Solution’ a tragic answer to the “Jewish Question.”

To date, the subject of the Holocaust evokes an array of emotions and opinions; when surfacing in conversation or academic circles concerning society, it invariably becomes “the yardstick by which modern examples of mass murder are measured,”<sup>73</sup> and we as Americans make sure to do so at a safe distance. But perhaps it is the distance we have placed between U.S. involvement and the Holocaust that has augmented our ability to eagerly embrace it in an almost cult-like fashion, as means of displacing our own accountability. From an ethical standpoint, Americans indubitably share a part of that responsibility and to deny this in the face of fact is an affront to the very memory of the millions who perished at the hands of Nazi Germany. If by re-evaluating the American narrative so that it *correctly* reflects our collective failure to act on behalf of European Jews, it is not only our duty as scholars, educators, and historians to provide the full story of our “hidden,” omitted, or forgotten past, but to ensure the truth does not get lost in the obscurity of the present.

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<sup>71</sup> Stoler and Gustafson, eds., *Major Problem*, 341-42.

<sup>72</sup> Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 293.

<sup>73</sup> Abzug, *America Views the Holocaust*, 2.



**Catalog of ProQuest Historical Newspapers Combined Search:**  
The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, Chicago Daily Tribune, and The Washington Post

**Fig. 1**

	Newspaper	Headline	Page
3/3/1933	Los Angeles Times	Pogroms Held Plan Of Nazis: Slaughter of Jews Declared Impending in Germany	A12
3/20/1933	Los Angeles Times	Reich News Censored: Nazi Terrorism Rules Press, Americans Fleeing Germany Recount Amazing Tales of Oppression	1
3/21/1933	New York Times	Jews Here Demand Washington Action: National Leaders Ask "Proper Representation" to Berlin on Anti-Semitic Activities	1
3/26/1933	New York Times	Half Million Jews Affected By Hitler Furor in Germany	XX4
3/26/1933	New York Times	Goering Says Jews Will Be Protected: Asserts Some Excesses in Germany Were Unavoidable and Were Quickly Curbed.	28
3/27/1933	New York Times	Nazis End Attacks on Jews in Reich, Our Embassy Finds	1
3/27/1933	Washington Post	Jews' Mistreating Abated, U.S. is Told: Embassy and Consulates in Germany Report After Protests Here	1
3/31/1933	Los Angeles Times	Nazis Charge Jews Started World War	2
3/31/1933	Chicago Daily Tribune	Hitler Nazis Declare War on World Jewry: Race Blamed for Starting Last Conflict	1
4/15/1933	New York Times	10,000 Jews Flee Nazi Persecution: German-Born Refugees Settle in Near-By Lands, Hoping Conditions Will Change	6
4/18/1933	New York Times	Nazi Drive on Jews Felt Beyond Reich: Reports Indicate Revival of Anti-Semitism in Lands of Central Europe	10
5/23/1933	New York Times	Roosevelt Asked to Champion Jews: Jewish Congress Calls for Help	23
8/30/1933	New York Times	Nazis Imprison Jews in Concentration Camp After French Paper Charges Abuses There	1
9/5/1933	Chicago Daily Tribune	Germany Seeks to Settle Jews in One Land: Hitler Aid Argues They Are Alien Race	8

**Fig. 2**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
10/29/1938	New York Times	Germany Deports Jews to Poland; Seizes Thousands: Police Carry Out Nation-Wide Raids on Basis of Warsaw Passport Validizing Law	1
11/1/1938	New York Times	Nazi Guns Forced Jews Into Poland: Deportees Were Shot at From Rear as They Trudged From Reich	18
11/9/1938	Chicago Daily Tribune	Germans Attack Jews To Avenge Paris Shooting: Vicious War of Reprisal Led By Hitler	18
11/9/1938	Los Angeles Times	Hitler Speech Blames Jews: He Says They Caused Germany's Collapse at World War's End	10
11/9/1938	Washington Post	Nazis Burn Synagogue As Rath Dies: French Agency Closed -- Dessau Riots Break Out Jews' Expulsion Seen	7
11/10/1938	New York Times	Berlin Raids Reply to Death of Envoy: Nazis Loot Jews' Shops, Burn City's Biggest Synagogue to Avenge Paris Embassy Aide Nazi Guards Watch Vandalism Jewelry Shop Looted	1
11/10/1938	Chicago Daily Tribune	Mobs Wreck Jewish Stores in Berlin: Raiders Loot Shops; Carry Off Occupants, Synagogue Smashed and Set Afire	1
11/10/1938	Los Angeles Times	Berlin Jews Attacked As Envoy Dies in Paris: Shop Windows Smashed and Munich Synagogues Fired in Revenge for Slaying	1
11/11/1938	New York Times	All Vienna's Synagogues Attacked; Fires and Bombs Wreck 18 of 21: Jews Are Beaten, Furniture and Goods Flung From Homes and Shops -- 15,000 Are Jailed During Day	1
11/11/1938	Chicago Daily Tribune	Hitler Seizes 20,000 Jews: Homes Burned; Stores Looted; Terror Reigns: Mobs Run Wild in German Streets -- Jews Flee from Terrorists in Germany	1
11/11/1938	Los Angeles Times	Nazi Mobs Riot in Wild Orgy: War on Jews Spreads in All Germany Despite Goebbels' Orders Calling Halt to Terrorism and Destruction	1
11/13/1938	New York Times	Arrests Continue: Insurance Settlements to Be Confiscated for Reich's Benefit -- Germany issued a new series of decrees yesterday to complete "the liquidation of the Jews."	1
11/18/1938	Washington Post	Raised Quota Studied -- Senators Hit Nazis -- Attache Called Home: U.S. Studies Relaxing of Quotas on Immigrants from Germany	X1
11/29/1938	New York Times	Arrests of Jews Go on in Germany: Those Who Escaped Seizure After Slaying Are Reported Being Rounded Up Now	18
12/25/1938	New York Times	Fear Bred in Reich by Course of Nazis: Many Hoping for Action From Abroad -- Ruthlessness Linked to Easy Foreign Triumphs	10

**Fig. 3**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
1/12/1939	Los Angeles Times	Nazis Warn Foreign Jews of Reprisals Over Shootings	1
3/5/1939	Chicago Daily Tribune	Nazis to Force Labor by Jews at Minimum Pay: Emigration Passports Meet with Delay	9
3/19/1939	New York Times	Hitler Drives On: Hitler's Push to the East -- And Five Momentous Questions	63
5/19/1939	New York Times	Roosevelt Urged to Act for Jews: Zionist Leader Presents Plea to Hull for Intercession on British Proposals	6
5/19/1939	New York Times	Reich Orders Ouster of 'Stateless' Jews: 1,000 in Munich Must Leave by July 31 or Go to Dachau	7
3/26/1939	Los Angeles Times	Mein Kampf Displays Ignorant Emotionalism	C6
9/1/1939	Chicago Daily Tribune	A House Painter Rises to Power: Hitler's Career -- Dictator's Progress Told Step by Step	10
9/2/1939	Chicago Daily Tribune	The War the World Feared	10
9/3/1939	Los Angeles Times	Where America Stands	A4
9/3/1939	New York Times	Hails Jewish New Year: Mayor Hopes It Will Mark End of Persecution and Bigotry	15
9/10/1939	Chicago Daily Tribune	What Chicago's Women Think of War and Hitler: Leaders of 5 Races Tell Their Views	11
11/6/1939	Chicago Daily Tribune	1,500,000 Jews in Poland Face Death by Hunger: Fare Worse than Brothers in Reich, Paris Hears	5
11/27/1939	Washington Post	Nazis Herd 500,000 Jews Into Poland	9
12/3/1939	Chicago Daily Tribune	2 Million Jews Face Exodus to Camps in Poland: Germany Completes Plans for Strict Segregation	4
12/10/1939	New York Times	Jews' Plight Held Critical in Poland: Warsaw Community Official Says All Live in Terror of Gestapo and Nazi Chiefs	56



**Fig. 4**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
1/5/1941	Los Angeles Times	Chile Turns Back Jewish Refugees: Thirty-seven Denied Permission to Land	21
1/8/1941	Washington Post	Jersey Convicts Bund Leader And 8 Others: State Charges Them With Promoting Hatred Against Jews	5
1/9/1941	New York Times	U.S. Refuses French Plea to Take Refugees; Reich Curb Called Bar to Orderly Emigration	1
1/23/1941	Washington Post	Purge Intolerance, President Urges	7
2/20/1941	New York Times	Nazi Deportation of Jews Resumed: 10,000 Rounded Up in Vienna for Transportation to East Poland, Berlin Says	8
2/28/1941	New York Times	Vienna Jews Plead for Help to Escape: Visa Holders Lack Funds to Go to the United States or Other Countries	4
3/14/1941	Chicago Daily Tribune	U.S. Bound Jews Quit Germany in Sealed Trains: Under Nazi Guard on Way to Portugal	6
5/15/1941	Washington Post	Jewish Youth Urged to Dispel Spirit of Defeat	10
5/26/1941	Los Angeles Times	Two Million Jews Starving in Poland, Refugee Asserts: Banquet Told Elders in Nazi-Ruled Country Look to Americans to Rescue Young People	9
6/7/1941	New York Times	One-Third of Jews Found in Nazis Grip: Joint Distribution Official Puts Figure at 5,000,000	5
6/9/1941	Chicago Daily Tribune	Jewish Outlook is More Hopeful, Chicagoans Told: Goldmann and Wise Speak at Benefit	22
9/7/1941	New York Times	Nazis Order Jews Over Six Labeled: All Above That Age Must Wear the Star of David, Secret Police Chief Rules	14
10/22/1941	New York Times	Anti-Jewish Drive Renewed in Reich: Thousands Reported Sent Into Poland From Berlin and Bohemia Protectorate	11
10/28/1941	New York Times	Nazis Seek to Rid Europe of All Jews: Mass Transportation to Polish Zone Continues Unabated	10
11/15/1941	Los Angeles Times	Reich Outlines Stand on Jews: Goebbels Issues 10 Points to Govern Nazi Treatment of Race	6

**Fig. 5**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
6/30/1942	Chicago Daily Tribune	Estimate 1,000,000 Jews Died Victims of Nazis	6
7/2/1942	New York Times	Allies are Urged to Execute Nazis -- Report on Slaughter of Jews in Poland Asks Like Treatment for Germans	6
7/9/1942	Chicago Daily Tribune	Rescue Poland from the Nazis -- Patriots Ask Strong Action by U. S. and Britain	6
7/10/1942	Chicago Daily Tribune	Claim Germans Kill 5,000 Jews in Polish Town: 700,000 Massacred in Nation, Prelate Says	7
11/25/1942	Chicago Daily Tribune	2 Million Jews Slain by Nazis, Dr. Wise Avers: Extermination of All in 1942 Held Hitler Aim	4
11/25/1942	Los Angeles Times	Nazis Wiping Out Jews in Cold Blood: Ration Cards Issued for 433,000 Last March, but Only 40,000 Handed Out Last Month	2
11/25/1942	Los Angeles Times	Half of Jews in Europe Dead: Rabbi Wise Declares 2,000,000 Killed in Occupied Areas	2
11/25/1942	New York Times	Himmler Program Kills Polish Jews: Slaughter of 250,000 in Plan to Wipe Out Half in Country This Year Is Reported	10
11/26/1942	Los Angeles Times	Million Polish Jews Perish: Mass Executions and Gas Wiping Out All but Able-Bodied	2
11/26/1942	New York Times	Slain Polish Jews Put at a Million: One-third of Number in Whole Country Said to Have Been Put to Death by Nazis	16
11/27/1942	New York Times	1,000 Jews Sent Out of Norway by Nazis: Placed on Freighter Bound for Undisclosed Reich Port	3
12/3/1942	Los Angeles Times	Plight of Jews Under Hitler Truly Terrible	A4
12/9/1942	New York Times	President Renews Pledges to Jews: He Tells Group Every Effort Will Be Made to Fix Guilt in Axis Crimes Against Race	20
12/11/1942	Washington Post	Plight of Jews Horrifying, Polish Government Says	16
12/20/1942	Washington Post	Poland Called Vast Center for Killing Jews	8

**Fig. 6**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
3/2/1943	New York Times	Save Doomed Jews, Huge Rally Pleads: United Nations Must Halt Nazi Murders Now, Leaders Tell 21,000 at the Garden	1
3/21/1943	New York Times	Jews of Five Towns Killed in Poland: 35,000 Persons Reported Slain in German Liquidation of Cities' Ghettos	10
3/29/1943	Washington Post	All Warsaw Jews Slain by Nazis, Rabbi Declares	10
4/15/1943	Chicago Daily Tribune	20,000 Plead: 'Act Now to Rescue Jews' -- Tragic Call Heard at Mass Meeting	1
5/5/1943	Los Angeles Times	Conference Seen as Second Munich: Bermuda Meeting's Failure to Give Adequate Aid to Jews Decried by Jewish Historian	A12
7/23/1943	New York Times	Wise Asks Roosevelt Aid: Jewish Congress Head Estimates Axis Killings at 3,000,000	11
8/1/1943	New York Times	French Jews Sent to Nazi Oblivion: One Who Escaped Terror Says 'Death Convoys' Take Them to Unknown Fate in East	2
8/7/1943	Chicago Daily Tribune	Buck Passing is Blamed for Plight of Jews: Roosevelt Criticized for Failure to Act	9
10/8/1943	New York Times	All-Europe Purge of Jews Reported: Hitler Said to Have Ordered Continent Cleared Before End of the War	5
11/8/1943	New York Times	Germans Wipe Out Jews of Austria: Almost All the Original 200,000 Have Been Killed or Sent to Eastern Ghettos	6
11/10/1943	New York Times	Step to Save Jews Urged in Congress: Measure in Both Houses Advocates Creating a Presidential Body to Act Now	19
11/18/1943	Washington Post	Nazi's Mass Slaughter of Jews Pictured by Kiev Eyewitness	3
11/29/1943	Los Angeles Times	Slaughter of 125,000 by Nazis in Kiev Told: Thousands More Die From Hunger and Disease and Only Six of 200,000 Jews in City Alive	1
12/14/1943	Washington Post	Program Of Death: Jewish Persecutions	14
12/31/1943	New York Times	Refugee Figures Questioned: Faults Found in Testimony of Under-Secretary of State Long	14

**Fig. 7**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
2/19/1944	New York Times	Poles Charge Nazis Wipe Out Children: Campaign to Exterminate Jewish Young Is Reported	9
3/12/1944	Washington Post	Rescuing Refugees -- and in Time!: New Board Is Striving to Get Victims Out Europe 'In Mass'	B1
3/25/1944	New York Times	Roosevelt Warns Germans on Jews: Says All Guilty Must Pay for Atrocities and Asks People to Assist Refugees	1
3/29/1944	Los Angeles Times	Polish Jews Describe Nazi 'Forest of Death'	8
3/29/1944	Washington Post	2 Lwow Jews Tell of 'Death Forest': Husband and Wife Who Fled Say Nazis Killed 100,000 There -- One Crucified	2
3/30/1944	New York Times	Elimination of Nazi Practices in Europe Called U.S. Policy	5
4/25/1944	Los Angeles Times	Story of Death in Poland Relayed by Underground	8
5/18/1944	New York Times	Savage Blows Hit Jews in Hungary: 80,000 Reported Sent to Murder Camps in Poland -- Non-Jews Protest in Vain	5
6/18/1944	New York Times	Jews to be Freed, Roosevelt Asserts: Liberation in Poland Stressed in Message to 400 Delegates of Federation Here	14
7/3/1944	New York Times	Inquiry Confirms Nazi Death Camps: 1,715,000 Jews Said to Have Been Put to Death by the Germans Up to April 15	3
7/17/1944	New York Times	Hitler Foretold Slaughter: Revealed Purpose to Exterminate Jews in Private Talk in 1933	14
10/6/1944	New York Times	Nazi Death Camp a Scene of Horror: Story of Massacre of 3,000 in Estonia Evident in Piles of Burned Bodies	6
10/11/1944	Los Angeles Times	U.S. Warns Nazis to End Killings	6
10/27/1944	Washington Post	Rescuing Refugees	6
11/26/1944	New York Times	U.S. Board Bares Atrocity Details Told by Witnesses at Polish Camps	1

**Fig. 8**

Date	Newspaper	Headline	Page
4/12/1945	Washington Post	Liberated by Yanks: Extermination Camp Gassed 5 Million Jews, Survivor Says	1
5/2/1945	New York Times	All Jews Hounded Under Hitler Rule: More Than 3,000,000 Slain in Germany and the Nazi-Occupied Countries	9
5/14/1945	Los Angeles Times	6,200,000 Jewish Deaths Laid to Nazis: Welfare Group Says One 'Mein Kampf' Plan Carried Out	1
5/27/1945	New York Times	Army Curbs News in Reich as Result of Goering Report: Stricter Censorship Prevents Reporters From Interviewing Captured Enemy Officials	1
6/10/1945	New York Times	80% of Reich Jews Murdered by Nazis: All Those Left in Europe Were Marked for Death by 1946, AMG Investigation Shows	13
8/26/1945	New York Times	Jews in U.S. Zone of Reich Find Conditions Improving: Repatriation, Relief Expedited, Although Some Faults Exist	1
9/30/1945	Chicago Daily Tribune	Truman Tells Ike: Give Jews Better Deal	1
10/2/1945	Washington Post	Jews Ridicule Camp Report By Harrison: Conditions Never Nazi-Like and Even Better Now, They Tell Reporters	1
10/17/1945	Washington Post	Eisenhower Defends Handling Of Jews in Letter to Truman: IKE	1
11/20/1945	New York Times	Displaced Jews in Worse Plight: Conditions in Camps in British and American Zones of Germany Decline	6
11/25/1945	Chicago Daily Tribune	Tell How Naked Women Waited Nazi Gas Death: Nightmarish Horror Scene Depicted in Court	5
11/30/1945	New York Times	President Orders Eisenhower to End New Abuse of Jews: He Acts on Harrison Report, Which Likens Our Treatment to That of the Nazis	1
12/15/1945	Los Angeles Times	Nazi Plan to Kill All Jews Disclosed: Germans Admit Millions Destroyed and Slave Status for Poles Set Up	2
12/15/1945	New York Times	Trial Data Reveal 6,000,000 Jews Died: Evidence at Nuremberg Cites Brutality Used by Germans in Extermination	8
12/15/1945	Washington Post	6 Million Jews Slain by Nazis, Tribunal Told	5

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## The American Empire in the Congo: The Assassination of Patrice Lumumba

By Nicholas Langer

American Cold War Imperialism spanned the globe, crossing oceans and continents to enforce the iron will of the United States. Following the Second World War, Africa and Asia were seeking to dislodge the influence of Imperialism. In the case of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh's rebels were sadly mistaken in believing that the United States would support their bid for independence from the French. The United States had overthrown the democratically elected president of Guatemala, along with Mohammed Mosadegh in Iran, and had inserted 15,000 advisors in support of the Diem puppet government in Vietnam by the time of the Congo Crisis in the early 1960's.<sup>1</sup> So, American intervention in the affairs of Third World countries was far from unprecedented by the time that Patrice Lumumba took power in the Congo and sought to extricate the country from the shadow of European colonialism. It is my argument that American involvement in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba followed the pattern of intervention which was well established in Latin America and elsewhere.

The Congo Crisis of 1960 represented the beginning of widespread western involvement in the newly independent Congo. In analyzing the Congo crisis we can see the final death throes of Belgian imperialism and the beginning of American involvement in the region, as well as the role that the United Nations would play in decolonization and the Cold War. The orthodox view argues that the United States maintained purely altruistic motives of decolonization and anti-communism in the Congo and that any unrest was the result of factors which the United States was unable to control. The revisionist standpoint argues the opposite: that the United States actively intervened in the Congo and promoted its own interests. These arguments introduce the general narrative of the Congo Crisis and the Cold War ideology of the United States in addition to validating the revisionist line of argument.

### America in the Congo in Two Accounts: The Orthodox and the Revisionist

The article "The United States, Belgium, and the Congo Crisis of 1960," written by Lawrence Kaplan and published in *The Review of Politics* in 1967, represents a summation of the orthodox view of American involvement in the Congo Crisis.<sup>2</sup> The article was written well before the Church Committee hearing—a Senate committee which investigated American covert actions during the Cold War and which published their findings in 1975—that would confirm active American involvement in a plot to kill Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, and thus its arguments relied heavily on the official policy statements and news material that was available at the time. The main objective of Kaplan's argument seems to be an effort to apologize for American dedication to anti-colonialism to an imagined Belgian audience. In doing so, Kaplan paints American intentions as purely chivalrous and rejects any argument that the United States was acting on ulterior motives. He further washes America's hands of involvement in the breakdown of authority and places that blame back on the Belgians, who act as a foil to

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<sup>1</sup> Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut, "Vietnamese Decolonization and the Origins of US Involvement 1960" (Lecture, *US Foreign Relations, 1945-1991*, University of California Merced, Merced, CA, September 26, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan, Lawrence S. "The United States, Belgium, and the Congo Crisis of 1960," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Apr., 1967), 239-256.

America's strident support of anti-colonialism. Kaplan's sources and his analysis represent a quintessential orthodox interpretation of American involvement in the Congo.

In reviewing the American involvement in Congo, Kaplan hits upon three key issues that point to benevolent American intentions in the Congo. The first point is the American perception of itself as a product of colonialism and a strident supporter of former colonies in their struggle to decolonize. The United States perceived itself as "a new land, itself a product of colonialism, and thus incapable of resisting the claims of other former colonies" and that "America's first reaction instinctively would be, and had to be, to support the colony against the European colonizer."<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that at no point in the article does Kaplan refute this claim that American policy makers sympathized with the plight of former colonies. It is thus reasonable to conclude that Kaplan was promoting this conception of American policy.

American sympathies for decolonization were meant to explain a second point: that the United States supported a United Nations presence in the Congo in order to facilitate the removal of Belgian influence and protect the sovereignty of the Congo. Kaplan contends that American policy in the Congo was threefold: "First was the recognition that the Belgian presence must be removed for the immediate future; second, that the United Nations fill the vacuum to be left by the Belgians as peacemakers and conduits for technical and economic aid; and third, that the unity of the Congo must be preserved at all costs."<sup>4</sup> Thus, United Nations intervention perpetuated American altruism. Consequently, one may conclude that the United States was willing to allow the United Nations to take the lead from a beleaguered Belgium while at the same time stepping back, leaving the business of decolonization in the trusted hands of the international community.

Kaplan made clear in his third point that this deferment of power to the United Nations was not an abandonment of the Congo to the threatening evils of communism: "From the beginning American action was designed to restrain Soviet impulses," thus, "continued affirmation of the United Nations' actions in the Congo" was "certainly not an unwilling surrender to communist intrigue."<sup>5</sup> So we see that Kaplan consistently promoted the idea that American action in the Congo was calculated to be benevolent in nature. First, the United States was naturally inclined to sympathize with the Congo as a former colony itself. Secondly, the United States promoted the replacement of Belgian troops by the United Nations in order to suspend Belgian meddling. Thirdly, the United Nations presence also represented the unwillingness of the United States to abandon the Congo to the evils of communism. In no way were the best interests of the Congo not in minds of American policy makers.

If Kaplan's "The United States, Belgium, and the Congo Crisis of 1960" represents the orthodox perspective, then David Gibbs' "Let us Forget Unpleasant Memories: The US State Department's Analysis of the Congo Crisis" represents a complete rejection of that orthodox viewpoint.<sup>6</sup> "Let us Forget Unpleasant Memories" was written in response to a State Department compilation of documents published in Volume 14 of the *Foreign Relations* series.<sup>7</sup> Gibbs is critical of the volume because of its lack of material concerning "US efforts to assassinate Patrice Lumumba."<sup>8</sup> Gibbs, then, is responding to a sanitized version of events in

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<sup>3</sup> Kaplan, "The United States, Belgium, and the Congo Crisis of 1960," 245.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 252.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan, "The United States, Belgium, and the Congo Crisis of 1960," 252.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbs, David N. "Let us Forget Unpleasant Memories: The US State Department's Analysis of the Congo Crisis," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33, 1 (1995), 175-180.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 175-176.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

the Congo, a version of events very similar to that espoused by Kaplan through the light of the Church Committee reports that exposed the involvement of the CIA in the plot to assassinate Lumumba. “Let us Forget Unpleasant Memories,” consequently, is a direct counter to the arguments made by Kaplan.

As far as the benevolence of American involvement in the Congo, Gibbs dispenses with that notion almost immediately. The assassination plot against Lumumba is the main criticism of the rosy orthodox narrative of the United States in the Congo. That “many of Lumumba’s ‘Congolese enemies’ were in fact working for the CIA” indicates clearly that the United States played an active role in the downfall of Lumumba, seriously distorting the image of the United States as a Good Samaritan.<sup>9</sup> Thus, “there seems little doubt that the Congo was targeted by one of the largest covert operations in the history of the CIA” and that “Americans in both the CIA station and the embassy directly intervened in Congolese affairs.”<sup>10</sup> The image of American benevolence is further complicated by the fact that the supposedly neutral “United Nations peacekeeping force... [acted] as a conduit for US influence.”<sup>11</sup> Granted, the US was concerned with stopping the spread of communism. However, other than that, it is clear that in actuality American actions deviated drastically from the orthodox narrative that Kaplan espoused.

From Gibbs’ article it is clear that the orthodox argument is a myth. Not only was the United States actively involved in the assassination of the Congolese Prime Minister but it completely acted counter to the orthodox priority of ensuring the independence of the Congo. The independence of the Congo was clearly not a priority as the United States used the United Nations to expel formal Belgian influence from the region and then proceeded to control its actions, replacing Belgian colonialism with American colonialism under the guise of noninvolvement. Gibbs’ radically differing perspective of events can be explained through the availability of the Church Committee reports to provide a counter argument to the orthodox argument. Gibbs’ main evidence, after all, was the committee reports, while Kaplan used the only evidence available to him at the time—besides writing during the height of the Cold War, without the benefit of hindsight.

### **The Details of American Involvement in the Assassination of Patrice Lumumba**

Understanding how the assassination of Patrice Lumumba fits within the framework of American foreign interventions during the Cold War requires a firmer understanding of the logistical circumstances surrounding the assassination itself. The first issue that must be addressed is who actually performed the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. In the weeks leading to his assassination, Lumumba and his cabinet had been captured by the US and Belgian backed Mobutu Seko—leader of the separatist Katangan government. However, the direct role of the Belgian government in the assassination is extremely apparent; for as Lumumba and his cabinet were prepared for their execution, “[Commissioner Frans] Versheure [Belgian advisor to the Katangan police] removed the handcuffs” himself.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, “the police [who carried out the execution] had Vigneron sten guns, [while] the [three Belgian] soldiers FAL rifles.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gibbs, “Let us Forget Unpleasant Memories”, 175.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ludo De Witte “The Final Hours of Patrice Lumumba, Maurice Mpolo, and Joseph Okito,” (1961), in *Africa and the West: A documentary History: Volume 2: From Colonialism to Independence, 1875 to the Present*, ed. William Worger, Nancy Clark, and Edward Alpers. (Oxford University Press, USA; 2nd edition, 2010), 141.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

This account, taken from the research of Belgian author Ludo de Witte, indicates clearly that the assassination of Patrice Lumumba was not carried out simply by some proxy of America's Belgian ally, but was committed with the express consent and participation of the Belgian government. While this evidence still does not directly implicate the United States in the killing of Lumumba, it does serve to place the United States at only a single degree of separation from the assassination.

The second which requires deeper understanding is the precise role the US played in the assassination of Lumumba. The Church Committee Senate investigation into American interventions abroad provides the most damning evidence of America's candid role in the assassination of Lumumba:

It is clear that the Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, authorized an assassination plot and that [strong] expressions of hostility toward Lumumba from the President and his national security assistant, followed immediately by CIA steps in the furtherance of an assassination operation against Lumumba, are part of a sequence of events that, at the least, make it appear that Dulles believed assassination was a permissible means of complying with pressure from the President to remove Lumumba from the political scene.<sup>14</sup>

This quote pertains to a planned assassination attempt that the CIA station chief in the Congo was authorized to carry out. However, the plan was never carried out by the CIA but by Mobutu Seko. This would seem to absolve the United States from involvement in the assassination via plausible deniability, except for the fact that "the day after Mobutu's coup, the [CIA] Station Officer reported that he was serving as an advisor to a Congolese effort to 'eliminate' Lumumba..."<sup>15</sup> This clear indication of involvement with the Seko regime, then, throws open the veil of plausible deniability. Far from only talking about assassinating Lumumba, the United States had provided personnel to advise the would-be assassins.

Although the nature of American involvement in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba is clear, the motivations for his removal remain less so. If we were to follow the orthodox line of argument, we would assume that Patrice Lumumba was threatening to move towards communism or had made overtures to the Soviet Union that would indicate that the Congo was on the path toward becoming a Soviet proxy. But the revisionist line of argument would consider that Lumumba was motivated by nationalism and that he was simply adhering to the path that would lead to a Congo independent of western colonial influences. The final lines of Lumumba's farewell letter to his wife suggest the extent to which his actions were motivated purely by nationalism: "Do not weep for me, my dear wife. I know that my country, which is suffering so much, will know how to defend its independence and its liberty. Long live the Congo! Long live Africa!"<sup>16</sup> Nowhere does Lumumba mention a forthcoming workers uprising that would vindicate his death, which one might expect in a hardline communist revolutionary. Rather, he speaks of the liberty of his country as a whole.

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<sup>14</sup> United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. *Church Committee Reports*. "Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders." AARC Public Library. November 20, 1975. 52.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> "Patrice Lumumba Writes his last letter to his wife." 1961, *Africa and the West: A documentary History: Volume 2: From Colonialism to Independence, 1875 to the Present*. Edited by: William Worger, Nancy Clark, and Edward Alpers. Oxford University Press, USA; 2nd edition, 2010. 141.

The position of Belgian security forces in the Congo further refutes any allegation of Lumumba holding communist sympathies or of a Soviet threat existing in the Congo. Such a position comes from Colonel Vanderwalle, who was head of the Belgian Colonial Intelligence Service during the Congo Crisis, for he “openly [dismissed]...even the existence of a ‘Soviet threat’ in the Congo at the time.”<sup>17</sup> This situation, then, would seem to fly in the face of any stated American foreign policy position. Lumumba did not represent an apparent communist or Soviet threat, so why would the United States have an interest in intervening in the Congo? To understand American motivation to intervene in the Congo—as well as the tactics involved—we shall now turn to the pattern of American intervention in Latin America. The example of Latin America will serve to shed some light on the methodologies and reasoning behind American intervention in the Third World at the time of the Congo Crisis.

### **Assassination in Context: Latin America as Microcosm for US Doctrine**

Taken without larger context, the reasoning behind the American assassination of Patrice Lumumba is murky at best. However, when we examine Lumumba’s assassination in light of Latin America, the reasoning behind the assassination seems more congruent with broader American foreign policy. Latin America had long been the workshop of American intervention abroad. The development and execution of American interventions in Latin America is the subject of Greg Grandin’s book *Empires Workshop* in which he explores the process through which the United States created its strategy for interacting with the Third World. As we will also see, the techniques that were being developed in Latin America during the Cold war were also applied in the Congo to assassinate Lumumba.

By the time Lumumba was assassinated, the United States already had a strong precedent of intervening when regimes began to take any leftward leaning action. Through this lens we can see that the reasoning behind the assassination of Patrice Lumumba was similar to the reasoning employed to justify earlier interventions in Latin America. Such was the case in 1954 when the US “[executed] its first full-scale covert operation in Latin America.”<sup>18</sup> Guatemalan president “[Arbenz’s] only crime [had been] to expropriate...fruit company land and legalize the communist party,” yet this was enough to justify American intervention.<sup>19</sup> The action taken against Guatemala amounted to the establishment of a first strike doctrine in which any potential communist ally of the Soviet Union was ousted. Similarly, Lumumba had aroused suspicion by making diplomatic overtures to the Soviet Union in order to better withstand the encroachment of western imperialism. In fact, within a year of Lumumba’s assassination, President Kennedy reaffirmed the policy “to respond preemptively to potential communist subversion in the third world.”<sup>20</sup>

As Grandin asserts, “extrajudicial assassinations,” of the kind Lumumba was trapped in, “were becoming a standard feature” of American intervention in the third world by the 1960’s.<sup>21</sup> The assassination of Patrice Lumumba, then, was part of a trend of American interventionist

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<sup>17</sup> Bustin, Edouard. “Remembrance of Sins past: Unraveling the Murder of Patrice Lumumba,” *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 29, No. 93/94. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Grandin, Greg. *Empires Workshop: Latin American, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company LLC, 2006. 43-43.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Grandin, Greg. *Empires Workshop: Latin American, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*, 95.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid,96.

action that continued well into the 1960's in both the Congo and Latin America. Therefore, assassinating Patrice Lumumba was in no way outside the norm of American action in the Third World. So if "throughout the 1960s, Latin America and Southeast Asia functioned as the two primary campuses for" American intervention in the Third World, as Grandin points out, the assassination of Patrice Lumumba may be seen simply as a field trip which proved that these lessons were applicable in Africa as well.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, it is easily conceivable to extrapolate that the techniques employed by the CIA in Latin America were exported to the Congo, where they were employed to similar effect.

### **Summation**

From the orthodox perspective, the United States faced an immediate danger in the spread of communism, and thus the United States was morally justified in taking whatever action was necessary to arrest that spread. Furthermore, the United States represented hope for nations that were newly freed from their European colonial ties. American intervention in the Third World, then, was a clear-cut case of the United States looking out for weaker regimes that would otherwise fall to the dangers of communism and imperil the United States in the process. With the revisionist school, though, the lines are not so clear-cut. In the case of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, there was no real communist or Soviet threat to motivate American intervention in the first place. There was simply the predisposition to take action against any regime that had the potential to undermine American hegemony in a region that had gained precedence through constant American intervention in Latin America. The lessons learned in Latin America were carried over to American actions in the rest of the Third World and it is this connection that explains American intervention in the Congo. Taken in this context, it is completely reasonable to extrapolate the assassination of Patrice Lumumba as a continuation of the policy of removing any leader that refused to bow before the interests of the United States or its European allies.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid,97.

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# Arsenal Of Chemistry: The Haber Bosch Process and the Great War

By Andrew J. O'Connor



Fritz Haber's Nobel Prize diploma for the fixation of nitrogen



**T**hough the First World War culminated in unprecedented industrialized destruction, its foundations were rooted in scientific achievement, without which the Great War, or ‘the chemists’ war’ would have been comparatively brief and innocuous. The sheer carnage of this total war generally precludes any discussion of its origins beyond nationalism and political revanchism, favoring intrigue over logistics to the detriment of this inflection point. Yet even when drastic improvements in the capacity and efficiency of warfare are acknowledged as prime factors of its protraction the study of this scientific coup is limited to the role of machine guns and poison gas— myopically favoring symptoms to causes. The field of applied chemistry predicated the modernization of warfare by removing one of nature’s fundamental limiting factors, access to fixed nitrogen, with the Haber-Bosch process. Patented in 1908 and awarded the Nobel Prize a decade later, the Haber-Bosch process provided Germany with a uniquely domestic source of nitrates uninhibited by the allied blockade, enabling the simultaneous production of guns and butter<sup>1</sup> that led to four years of war. Following the war the United States Congress declared that “the present European war could not have been possible, in so far as least as Germany was concerned, had it not been for the modern inventions [Haber-Bosch process] making it possible to extract nitrogen from the air.”<sup>2</sup> While the Allied Powers capitalized on the extensive, far-flung resources of their colonies, Germany mobilized her academia to compensate for disadvantages in men and materials, proving the integral role of science in a war increasingly defined by attrition.

Germany’s scientific resources played a key role in industrialization prior to the war; the dye industry in particular demonstrates the early advantages of chemical engineering to industrial production. The discovery of synthetic indigo by the German conglomerate Badische Anilin- und Soda-Fabrik, or BASF,<sup>3</sup> late in the 19th century quickly led to market dominance by corporations which had created industrial laboratories. By 1913 German firms controlled 85% of world market shares in dyes and pharmaceuticals,<sup>4</sup> ‘tolerating’ Britain’s domestic chemical industry to monopolize one of the worlds most profitable enterprises.<sup>5</sup>

Critical to the success of German firms was their investment of significant profits into universities and research laboratories, reinforcing the bond between scientific advances and an educated workforce. By investing heavily in mutually reinforcing fields like dyes, chemicals and pharmaceuticals individual German firms were able to carve out distinct markets and research programs, rapidly outperforming foreign rivals. BASF and its domestic competitors vertically

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘guns and butter’ refers to the product possibility frontier demonstrating a country’s opportunity cost in gearing its economy towards either defense or humanitarian goods. The choice between these goods was mutually exclusive while nitrates were scarce, but with the advent of nitrogen fixation the opportunity cost for each good diminished considerably. The term was coined in direct reference to the nitrogen fields of the Chinchas Islands, as an argument for isolationist, anti-war sentiments prohibiting America’s entry into WWI. See Vaclav Smil, *Enriching the Earth: Fritz Haber, Carl Bosch, and the Transformation of World Food Production* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Senate Report No. 69th-119 (1925), 4.

<sup>3</sup> BASF was one of the first companies to use coal tar for synthetic dye, and played a leading role in developing applied science laboratories.

<sup>4</sup> Arora Ashish, *Chemicals and Long-Term Economic Growth: Insights from the Chemical Industry* (New York: Wiley, 1998), 31.

<sup>5</sup> L. F. Haber, *The Chemical Industry, 1900-1930: International Growth and Technological Change* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 147.

integrated their production through competition, rapidly outpacing foreign firms and accruing peerless expertise in complex operations. This marked advantage in human resources and industrial science, critical to the development and adoption of the Haber Bosch process, was fundamental to German industry while the rest of the world struggled to accumulate the intellectual and industrial resources required to support chemical industries.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis will demonstrate the centrality of the Haber-Bosch process to Germany's military capacity during the First World War, as nearly half of all her munitions were derived from the process, a technological advantage without which the German war effort would have succumbed to embargo. The birth of modern industrial chemistry during the Great War is one of the most decisive yet neglected developments in the history of warfare, comparable to mastery of nuclear fission. Indeed the creation of nuclear weapons during World War II stands upon the proverbial shoulders of the Haber-Bosch process, capitalizing on the marriage of industry and professional research that presages the phenomena of "the industrial-military complex and 'Big Science'... 'a kind of Manhattan Project before its time'."<sup>7</sup> Historiography of Haber-Bosch process remains the single greatest blind spot in contemporary comprehension of the First World War, as Germany's scientific prowess trumped economic sanctions to achieve parity and eventual superiority in the procurement of munitions. It is my assertion that the Haber-Bosch process enabled Imperial Germany to sustain war efforts more effectively than the combined capacities of her European opponents, waging wholesale industrial warfare despite international embargo.

Historiography of the Haber-Bosch process itself is relatively sparse; most astonishingly it is completely absent from the vast majority of historical literature on the First World War, including most works dedicated to scientific and economic aspects. Among the primary sources true to the topic of nitrogen fixation there are Haber's own works, including his Nobel Prize acceptance speech and his address to The Franklin Institute in 1924 concerning *The Practical Results of the Theoretical Development of Chemistry*.<sup>8</sup> A propaganda pamphlet distributed by Dresdner Bank in New York circa 1916 titled *Germany's Economic Forces During the War* cites "nitrogen drawn from the air" as one of the key industrial developments granting Germany a competitive edge in the war,<sup>9</sup> a salient fact broadcast internationally yet somehow unacknowledged during and after the conflict. The United States Senate proved one of the few sources of credible, incisive debate and patent regulation on the Haber-Bosch process, with three reports: *The Nitrogen Situation of 1924*, *Majority and Minority Reports on the Muscle Shoals Inquiry of 1925*, and the *1936 Munitions Industry Report*,<sup>10</sup> proving practically invaluable.

A few biographies of Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch, as well as scientific literature on the establishment of Germany's chemical industry provide context for the breakthroughs in synthetic products and the opening of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes. Among the most useful biographies were *Master Mind: The Rise and Fall of Fritz Haber* by Daniel Charles<sup>11</sup> and *The Alchemy of Air*

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<sup>6</sup> Ashish, *Chemicals and Long-Term Economic Growth*, 31.

<sup>7</sup> John Cornwell, *Hitler's Scientists: Science, War, and the Devil's Pact* (New York: Viking, 2003): 54.

<sup>8</sup> Fritz Haber, *Practical Results of the Theoretical Development of Chemistry* (Philadelphia: Franklin Institute, 1924), 1-13.

<sup>9</sup> *Germany's Economic Forces During the War* (New York: Dresdner Bank, 1916), 3.

<sup>10</sup> United States Senate Report No. 68th-88 (1924). See also United States Senate Report No. 69th-119 (1925) and United States Senate Report No. 74th-944 (1936).

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Charles, *Master Mind: The Rise and Fall of Fritz Haber, the Nobel Laureate Who Launched the Age of Chemical Warfare* (New York: Gale Ecco, 2005), 4.

by Thomas Hager, which document the efforts of Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch within the context of First World War.<sup>12</sup> *Enriching the Earth* by Vaclav Smil sets the standard for a worldly biography still intimately connected to the contemporary issues of synthetic nitrates.<sup>13</sup> In John Cornwell's *Hitler's Scientists* the link between Haber's research and the birth of industrial giant IG Farben are succinctly demonstrated.<sup>14</sup>

Though biographies provided insight into the human aspect of the process, those works analyzing the Haber-Bosch process in terms of economics and science furnished more concrete data, like *Prometheans in the Lab* by Sharon Bertsch McGrayne.<sup>15</sup> *Chemicals and Long Term Economic Growth* by Ashish Arora (et al) details the inception of the chemical industry and its utility in peace and war.<sup>16</sup> Some works on the economic aspect of the war provided critical data, *The First World War and the International Economy* by Chris Wrigley details the finance of international finance and embargo<sup>17</sup> while *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* by Gerald Feldman discusses the domestic economic conditions that Germany faced through the war.<sup>18</sup> In *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918*, David Stevenson focuses on various forces of industry to reinforce the popular notion that ultimately superior industrial capacity led to allied victory,<sup>19</sup> yet production of nitrates is barely noted. The dismal failure of all belligerents to form coherent fiscal policy is a core tenet of *Financing the First World War* by Hew Strachan,<sup>20</sup> a large topic sub-divided by country in Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison's *The Economics of World War One*.<sup>21</sup> In *Frontline and Factory: Comparative Perspectives on the Chemical Industry at War, 1914-1924* chapters by Jeffrey Allan Johnson and Roy MacLeod provided analysis of Germany's 'dual use' chemical industry as it transitioned to wartime manufacturing.<sup>22</sup> The 'controlled implosion' of international finance is the topic of *Planning Armageddon* by Nicholas Lambert,<sup>23</sup> which greatly improves (and compromises) the validity of Norman Angell's monumental *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to*

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hager, *The Alchemy of Air: A Jewish Genius, a Doomed Tycoon, and the Scientific Discovery That Fed the World but Fueled the Rise of Hitler* (New York: Harmony Books, 2008), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Smil, *Enriching the Earth Food Production*, 61.

<sup>14</sup> John Cornwell, *Hitler's Scientists: Science, War, and the Devil's Pact* (New York: Viking, 2003), 25.

<sup>15</sup> Sharon B. McGrayne, *Prometheans in the Lab: Chemistry and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 58-78.

<sup>16</sup> Ashish Arora, Ralph Landau, and Nathan Rosenberg, *Chemicals and Long-Term Economic Growth: Insights from the Chemical Industry* (New York: Wiley, 1998), 27.

<sup>17</sup> Chris Wrigley, *The First World War and the International Economy* (Cheltenham, UK: E. Elgar, 2000), 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 7.

<sup>19</sup> D. Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Hew Strachan, *Financing the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, *The Economics of World War One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey A. Johnson and Roy M. MacLeod, *Frontline and Factory: Comparative Perspectives on the Chemical Industry at War, 1914-1924* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 20.

<sup>23</sup> Nicholas A. Lambert, *Planning Armageddon: British Economic Warfare and the First World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 11.

*National Advantage*, a prewar best-seller which sought to demonstrate the impossibility of sustained war between European belligerents.<sup>24</sup>

Studies of Germany's industrial productivity became prevalent after the war as victorious allied historians and generals attempted and failed to document the factors favoring Germany's industrial capacity. The most splendid failure of this genre is *The Triumph of Unarmed Forces* by rear-admiral M. Consett, which cites the painstaking reconstitution of animal fats as a key element of Germany's munitions program while the Haber-Bosch process is entirely neglected.<sup>25</sup> Consett was not alone in his misconceptions; practically all of the literature on the Great War dismisses the influence of the Haber-Bosch process.

This thesis is divided into three sections demonstrating the importance of the Haber-Bosch process. Section one, *Chemistry's Finest Hour*, explores the international effort to synthesize nitrogen from the atmosphere and the primacy of the Haber-Bosch process among the many contending patents, the success of which fostered the creation of industrial laboratories and the rapid ascent of applied science in Germany. The second section, *The Synthesis of War*, focuses on the chemical industry's pivotal role in munitions production during the Great War, with the Haber-Bosch process nullifying international embargo and outperforming the combined Allied chemical industry. The concluding section discusses the impact of munitions production on attritional warfare, comparing Germany's domestic synthetic nitrogen production to the Allies' resources. In the conclusion I reaffirm my thesis while arguing that previous attempts to analyze the Haber-Bosch process have only contributed to its misunderstanding and disregard.

## I. Chemistry's Finest Hour

$3 \text{H}_2 + \text{N}_2 \rightarrow 2 \text{NH}_3$  Painted on a cloud in the corner of Fritz Haber's Nobel Prize diploma is this deceptively simple equation.<sup>26</sup> It represents one of mankind's greatest triumphs in his attempt to imitate the workings of nature, a building block of life that perplexed the greatest minds of the early 20th century. To fully appreciate the benefits of nitrogen fixation it is necessary to understand the context in which the Haber-Bosch process was developed.

The element nitrogen was discovered in the 18th century by Daniel Rutherford when lab tests combusting atmosphere left behind substantial amounts of an unknown gas, later identified as nitrogen, now known to comprise approximately four fifths of the earth's atmosphere.<sup>27</sup> This abundant store of nitrogen is as plentiful as it is troublesome, although we breathe nitrogen it remains inert—chemically isolated and stubbornly resistant to change. Atmospheric sources of nitrogen were left practically irrelevant as a consequence of the seemingly insurmountable barriers to procurement, especially in relation to the bounty of readily available 'fixed' nitrogen forming on the earth's surface. Naturally occurring nitrogen is most commonly found in saltpeter, a compound consisting of nitrates fused with potassium, a catalyzing process that occurs in two

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<sup>24</sup> Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (London: W. Heinemann, 1910), 2.

<sup>25</sup> M. W. W. P. Consett, *The Triumph of Unarmed Forces: An Account of the Transactions by Which Germany during the Great War Was Able to Obtain Supplies Prior to Her Collapse under the Pressure of Economic Forces* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1923), 3.

<sup>26</sup>"Nobel Diploma" *Nobel Prize Committee*,  
<[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1918/haber-diploma.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1918/haber-diploma.html)>

<sup>27</sup> Antoine Laurent De Lavoisier, *Elements of Chemistry* (Gale Ecco: 2010)

radically different climates. Saltpeter forms in dark, damp caves and cellars where it crystalizes on walls, allowing it to be harvested locally in small quantities. The second source of natural saltpeter is bountiful but relatively inaccessible, forming mountains of nitrates along the arid deserts of western South America, namely “the Chinchas Islands, a sprinkling of rocks six miles off the coast of Pisco, Peru, which constituted, in 1850, acre for acre, the most valuable real estate on earth.”<sup>28</sup> These obscure islands only entered onto the world stage by chance after they were sought out by the great naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, who heard rumors of powerful fertilizer used to grow crops in the searing deserts of South America. His determination to understand the chemical basis of these claims led him to further analyze the saltpeter, identifying its high levels of urea and phosphates (the basis for its potency as a fertilizer) at the turn of the 19th century. This critical breakthrough would not be capitalized on for another quarter century, until imperiled agronomic productivity prompted a revolution in agriculture. The discovery of Chilean nitrates would remain unexploited for decades before reemerging as the temporary guarantor of food security, and by extension civil society at large.

Europe was no stranger to famine by the 19th century, as ever increasing populations threatened to outstrip their narrow agricultural base the danger to governments took a political dimension, and guaranteeing the public health became intimately tied to the survival of the regime. In 1848 the ‘year of revolutions’ shook Europe’s power structure to the core, when the scarcity of basic food staples led to price increases and subsequent violent uprisings among the urban and rural peasants.<sup>29</sup> This was due to a *moderate* decrease in the food supply which increased prices, making Malthusian predictions of famine even more threatening:

While every man felt secure that all his children would be well provided for by the general benevolence, *the powers of the earth would be absolutely inadequate to produce food for the population which would inevitably ensue*; that even if the whole attention and labor of the society were directed to this sole point, and if . . . the greatest possible increase of produce were yearly obtained; yet still, that the increase of food would by no means keep pace with the much more rapid increase of the population.<sup>30</sup>

These dire predictions were amplified in the scientific community by Sir William Crookes, whose inaugural speech as the president of the British Academy of Science awakened Europe’s community of scientists to their new challenge.<sup>31</sup> Recognizing the ‘stubborn facts’ that the world’s arable land had already been claimed and that efficient cultivation was western society’s only recourse, Crookes identified the creation of artificial fertilizer via atmospheric nitrogen as the greatest technological challenge facing humanity.<sup>32</sup> The only means of fortifying exhausted farmland was nitrogen-rich fertilizer and with single greatest source of nitrogen sequestered in the atmosphere, all that remained was to chemically alter or ‘fix’ the ubiquitous element.

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Hager, *The Alchemy of Air: A Jewish Genius, a Doomed Tycoon, and the Scientific Discovery That Fed the World but Fueled the Rise of Hitler* (New York: Harmony, 2008), 27.

<sup>29</sup> David Parker, *Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition: In the West 1560-1991* (London: Routledge, 2000), 114.

<sup>30</sup> T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 56, emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 9.

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

Germany's motivation to find a replacement for Chilean nitrates also rested upon the calculations of national security, as international disputes increased the frequency and impact of 'gunboat diplomacy'<sup>33</sup> which threatened to flare into full-scale war. During the Agadir crisis Germany's interjection into French colonial affairs severely impacted her economy, as other powers reprimanded her for threatening European peace and trade relations.<sup>34</sup> This market shock, a portent of economic destabilization experienced during the First World War, eventually convinced the government to seek a peaceful conclusion, though the incident only amplified public support for martial adventurism. The powerful combination of saber-rattling and increased military spending only fueled nationalist sentiments, reinforcing mutual distrust among the great powers and further threatening the Reich's tenuous supply of nitrates, already recognized as "a nightmare scenario in which a British naval blockade of Germany would cut the flow of nitrate from South America, cripple German farms, starve German citizens, and silence German guns."<sup>35</sup> Nationalism had compromised Europe's fragile peace, only Germany's chemists could free the state from dependence on foreign nitrates.

Though Germany's status as the rising industrial power of Europe was imperiled by the growing scarcity of organic nitrates she was uniquely positioned to capitalize on her preeminent industrial and scientific resources to solve this issue. Both France and Britain possessed vast colonial empires, sources of raw materials for their industries and markets for finished products which gradually came to dominate their industrial capacity. Germany had no profitable colonies to speak of, but what she lacked in resources was actively compensated by technological prowess in the burgeoning field of industrial chemistry, exemplified by the development of the synthetic dyes.<sup>36</sup>

One of the first breakthroughs in applied chemistry was pivotal in transforming the dye industry—a market dominated by British and French firms whose access to indigo plantations frustrated German competitors. Beginning in the mid-19th century, German firms started experimenting with coal products to replace organic dyes, discovering a wide variety of colors and hues which could be derived synthetically at a fraction of the cost.<sup>37</sup> Success fueled further endeavors and before long the process of identifying and patenting these lucrative chemicals gave rise to fledgling industrial science labs. BASF was one of the first companies to hire professional chemists and devote significant resources to its industrial laboratory, intent on being the first company to synthesize indigo. Guided by a young technical director named Heinrich von Brunck, BASF instigated a race between German firms to recruit renowned chemists and establish large-scale, competitive laboratories. These well financed laboratories rapidly diversified into niche industries including pharmaceuticals, photographic chemicals, and agriculture.<sup>38</sup>

Although synthetic indigo was Brunck's immediate goal it eluded BASF for decades, prompting the company to restructure its manufacture of chemicals to in-house production while expanding the range and quantity of chemicals in its repertoire. This seemingly inconsequential

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<sup>33</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Apolitical Doomsday Machine: European Diplomacy Before the First World War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 168-200.

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

<sup>35</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 78.

<sup>36</sup> Kissinger, *Apolitical Doomsday Machine*, 168-200.

<sup>37</sup> Haber, *The Chemical Industry*, 123-124.

<sup>38</sup> Sharon Bertsch McGrayne, *Prometheans in the Lab: Chemistry and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001) 64.

decision ensured the complete vertical integration of Germany's chemical industry before such a concept had even emerged; out of competitive necessity the German dye industry had invented the nascent chemical company. Recognizing that BASF's industrial capacity increasingly relied on the efficiency of its machines, Brunck "paid attention to the required engineering as well as the chemistry, seeing the two as inextricable, pioneering the field of chemical engineering before people ever used the term", and had composed the world's single largest staff of chemists by 1899.<sup>39</sup> In 1897 BASF finally perfected the synthesis of indigo from coal, and by 1904 German firms were exporting 9,000 tons of synthetic indigo a year, collapsing the British and French indigo industries to monopolize international dye markets.<sup>40</sup> Once the pinnacle of imperial aspirations and an enviable source of revenue, colonies quickly forfeited their economic preponderance to the new synthetic products that Germany was inventing. The 'king of dyes' had transformed BASF into the king of chemical engineering and Brunck into the CEO of the world's most powerful chemical corporation.<sup>41</sup>

Such was the state of German industry and chemical engineering when Fritz Haber began his monumental effort to 'fix' atmospheric nitrogen. Unlike most classically trained chemists, Haber began his professional academic career at a humble technical school, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, a new type of university which combined education and applied research rather than focusing on 'pure' research. While this did not provide him with the same credentials as many of his peers, it afforded him the opportunity to teach industry-specific courses and apply his restless mind to various practical issues. Haber sought out complex industrial problems and attacked them from different angles, applying theoretical concepts to study mechanical problems like Karlsruhe's corroded water and gas mains, relentlessly developing and applying theoretical chemistry until "he had contributed basic scientific insights to almost every area of physical chemistry."<sup>42</sup> The importance of hands-on education to Haber's research methodology is hard to quantify, though his time at Karlsruhe undoubtedly provided him with the perfect opportunity to immerse himself in the field of applied chemistry and raise his brazen curiosity to the level of academic rigor.

In 1902 Haber was chosen to lead a five-month fact finding mission to the United States by the German Electrochemical Society, where he toured numerous industrial plants and educational programs like the Rockefeller and Carnegie Institutes. Entranced by these sprawling, well-funded institutes, Haber lectured on the benefits of such scientific meccas when he returned home, convinced that Germany required the same infrastructure to support its industrialization. The most immediate benefit of Haber's trip was that it further honed his capacities as a specialist in the merging fields of mechanical and chemical engineering, marking him as one of the world's foremost experts. In light of his unique qualifications, Haber was hired in 1905 to determine the feasibility of synthesizing ammonia from atmospheric nitrogen. Rather than launch himself into a frenzy attempting to find the miracle combination of elements as his peers had, Haber approached the problem as he had taught himself to, with both the chemical process and engineering requirements in mind.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Haber, *The Chemical Industry*, 31.

<sup>40</sup> Dunikowska, Magda, and Ludwik Turko, *Fritz Haber: The Damned Scientist*, (Angewandte Chemie International Edition, 2011), 1-17.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> McGrayne, *Prometheans in the Lab*, 50-60.

<sup>43</sup> Haber, *The Chemical Industry*, 87.

In 1903 Adolf Frank and Nikodem Caro patented one the first moderately successful process for extracting atmospheric nitrogen, referred to as the Cyanamide process.<sup>44</sup> The Cyanamide process required large amounts of electricity to produce meager amounts of nitrogen, and would be replaced by the Haber-Bosch process in Germany—an inestimable advantage during the war. Nitrogen could also be siphoned from the waste products of coal burning facilities, the only readily available source of nitrogen for many countries apart from imported Chilean nitrates. Although both of these processes were patented before the Haber-Bosch process they were completely insufficient as sources of nitrates, and even if they did not have serious shortcomings the Haber-Bosch process was “so much cheaper than the Cyanamide process that many great foreign companies are [circa 1925] transforming their old factories to adopt this new Haber-Bosch process.”<sup>45</sup> While the retrofitted coal plants did indeed produce decent quantities of nitrates, reaching a peak of 700,000 tons in Germany,<sup>46</sup> production was entirely contingent on the consumption rate of the plant. Nitrates harvested as the runoff from coal plants were an intermittent and unreliable source of nitrates, especially at a time when coal power was being challenged by oil. Both of these methods were put into production- the Frank-Caro process before there was any competition, and coal siphoning method in factories that could afford to retrofit. Neither was practical as an industrial process though, and imports of Chilean nitrates were not challenged. Research on nitrogen fixation was increasing as demand grew, but efficient synthesis would require the knowledge of multiple disciplines working in concert.<sup>47</sup>

Competition to synthesize ammonia was tremendous. When one of Haber’s chief critics derided his results as “erroneous,” the slight caused him considerable anxiety, forcing the self-taught chemist to painstakingly compare test methods in an effort to vindicate his methods.<sup>48</sup> Not only did Haber soundly reaffirm his methodology, but the comparison proved immeasurably valuable as it prompted Haber to adopt high-pressure gasses in his experiments. As perhaps the world’s first true chemical engineer, Haber understood that the application of increased pressure to chemical reactions presented a new tool in the chemical manipulation of elements: increased pressure allowed for lower temperatures and greater force to break the stubborn N<sub>2</sub> bond. In order to increase the maximum pressure of his test machine, Haber hired Robert Le Rossignol, a young engineer whose ingenuity and aptitude for manipulating machinery mirrored the uncanny instincts of his superior.<sup>49</sup> Their partnership proved hugely successful; Haber experimented with the chemical composition of tests and Le Rossignol designed ingenious new fittings and valves to increase pressure inside the reactor. Together their machine yielded ever increasing amounts of pure ammonia directly from the atmosphere. At this point Haber realized that he required the resources of a major company in order to move his experiment from the laboratory to the industrial scale—a risky transition that required immense financial support and keen understanding of nitrogen fixation’s potential.

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<sup>44</sup> Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1966), 45-56.

<sup>45</sup> Senate Report No. 69th-119 (1925) 638.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 850.

<sup>47</sup> Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1966), 35-44.

<sup>48</sup> McGrayne, *Prometheans in the Lab*, 60-65.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 60-72.



In 1908 BASF hired Fritz Haber to perfect the fixation of ammonia from the atmosphere, a decision that would lead to one of the most spectacularly successful commercial ventures in history. Once Haber and Le Rossignol acquired BASF's resources their incremental successes began to increase in frequency, leading to record-setting pressure levels in the machines. Pressure, they both came to realize, was the key to efficient synthesis. In "an elegant study of thermodynamics", Haber and Le Rossignol determined that isolated hydrogen and nitrogen molecules would only remain combined as ammonia molecules "under extraordinarily harsh conditions: temperatures of 200°C (390°F) and atmospheric pressure 200 times stronger than normal [atmospheric pressure at sea level]".<sup>50</sup> At even higher pressures the temperature required for the reaction of ammonia and its catalysts decreased, improving yields substantially. During their first months at BASF, Haber and Le Rossignol had decreased the operating temperature of their machine from 1000°C to 600°C (~1832°F to ~1112°F), and discovered successful catalysts in osmium and uranium. Their next challenge was to turn their table-top machine into a full-sized model, but scaling a high-pressure model to industrial size would inevitably multiply minor mechanical issues.<sup>51</sup>

The task of appraising Haber's machine for use on an industrial scale was assigned to Carl Bosch, a young engineer whom BASF had recently employed to test another method of nitrogen fixation. Bosch's rigorous trial of this rival method of nitrogen fixation determined that impurities in the catalyst were responsible for its limited success, much to BASF's disappointment. Bosch had demonstrated great aptitude and skill in analyzing and identifying the process's failures, a penchant for technical scrutiny and exhaustive examination which solidified his place as BASF's unofficial chief of trials. When Haber submitted to BASF that his process was ready for full-scale trials, Bosch was assigned the task of determining its efficacy.<sup>52</sup>

At this point the history of nitrogen fixation transitioned from chemical engineering to industrial manufacturing, as Fritz Haber's epochal discovery grew into Carl Bosch's industrial juggernaut. Both halves of the Haber-Bosch partnership deserve credit for turning this multifaceted experiment into one of the most stable and long-lasting chemical processes in existence. After years of steady development the scientific basis of Haber's work was prepared for industrial augmentation, and one of the first steps was to identify a readily available catalyst. The first effective catalyst Haber discovered was osmium, an extremely rare element which BASF had quietly purchased the entire world's known supply of, amounting to a few hundred pounds, upon Haber's request.<sup>53</sup> The other viable catalyst, uranium, was equally insufficient in quantity to support long-term ammonia synthesis. What Bosch eagerly awaited was a cheap alternative that would provide the last piece of the scientific puzzle, enabling industrial-scale manufacture of ammonia to proceed unimpeded.

The search for a replacement catalyst required a different approach than that of Haber and Le Rossignol, analyzing thousands of materials demanded a much higher volume of tests. Bosch appointed Alwin Mittasch the task of finding a suitable catalyst, without which the entire project was in jeopardy. The appointment of Mittasch bears some irony; he was one of the few engineers who accompanied Bosch to Haber's first demonstration of the machine, which blew a gas-

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<sup>50</sup> McGrayne *Prometheans in the Lab*, 64-67.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-72.

<sup>52</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 72-99.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 72-90.

ket and had to be jury-rigged on the spot. Though Carl Bosch left the laboratory early convinced of its failure, Mittasch remained to see the machine in action—a stay of execution which saved the Haber-Bosch process. As the head of his own department, Mittasch displayed remarkable ingenuity by designing his own catalyst test machines to heat and pressurize each material, allowing him to conduct several tests concurrently, expediting the project. These machines played a dual role in determining catalysts while also stress testing new components; whenever a test machine failed the wreckage was analyzed to improve the next model, incrementally improving them as a system of stress testing crucial components emerged.<sup>54</sup> By this method, new valves, pumps, and other devices were further improved during the search for catalysts, providing crucial data on components subjected to previously unobserved temperatures and pressures. Over several weeks a combination of cheap and effective catalysts were identified, complimenting a final cocktail of ingredients that “opened a new era in catalytic chemistry, with an emphasis on promoters rather than pure elements”.<sup>55</sup> When it was over, Mittasch had completed more than 20,000 tests in a few weeks, literally setting the industry standard for materials testing, and arriving at a combination of catalysts including iron, aluminum, calcium and potassium—a recipe virtually unaltered to this day.<sup>56</sup> Mittasch’s frenzied screening of catalysts and promoters provided a glimpse of the scientific methodology he and Haber would leave in their wake, highly efficient with ever greater impacts upon society at large.

By 1911 BASF had a full-scale prototype of the Haber-Bosch machine producing more than a ton of ammonia a day, with plans to create an industrial park capable of rapidly converting the ammonia into various forms of nitrate for farmers, its intended purpose. Before the process was scaled to industrial production Bosch had formed such extensive research teams that he reasoned “It is probably true to assert that such numbers [of scientists] have never before been engaged on one single problem.”<sup>57</sup> It was certainly the largest scientific endeavor of its time, openly acknowledged as a precursor to the Manhattan Project of the Second World War. Haber had invented, and Bosch had constructed the most technologically complex machine to date, fulfilling the promise that science would alleviate the looming threat of famine. What they could not predict was the incredible effect their work would have on the coming war, “it would be very difficult for an inventor to stop at being a benefactor of mankind. No society can restrict, or could have restricted, a new, promising technology to serve peaceful development only. . . .”<sup>58</sup>

## II. The Synthesis of War

For the first few months of 1914, Carl Bosch had been overseeing the construction of a new ammonia factory in the city of Oppau, intent on bringing the Haber-Bosch process into full production. BASF wanted to capitalize on their advantage as the sole owner of the Haber-Bosch process the same way they had with their wildly successful synthetic dyes, by rapidly scaling their production to outperform the inferior processes of their competitors.<sup>59</sup> All of BASF’s in-

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<sup>54</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 101-105.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 101-110.

<sup>56</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 107.

<sup>57</sup> Cornwell, *Hitler's Scientists*, 54.

<sup>58</sup> Dunikowska, *Fritz Haber: The Damned Scientist*, 14-17.

<sup>59</sup> Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany*, 41-48.

vestments in research and equipment would be paid back with dividends, and Europe would never fear famine again.

However, all of BASF's plans would have to be put on hold. In July of 1914 the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria quickly led to the declaration of war between Europe's great powers, all of whom rapidly mobilized for what was assumed to be a quick and decisive conflict. The possibility of a lengthy war was inconceivable to all parties, the feasibility of war itself was even doubted for a number of reasons. One of the best-selling books of the day, Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*, made the assertion that a continental war was highly unlikely due to the economic cohesion of European states, none of which would prosper from capturing the others' territory or resources.<sup>60</sup> Angell denounced conflict between states, alleging:

[international conflict] belongs to a stage of development out of which we have passed, that the commerce and industry of a people no longer depend upon the expansion of its political frontiers; that a nation's political and economic frontiers do not now necessarily coincide; *that military power is socially and economically futile, and can have no relation to the prosperity of the people exercising it*; that it is impossible for one nation to seize by force the wealth or trade of another — to enrich itself by subjugating, or imposing its will by force on another; that in short, war, even when victorious, can no longer achieve those aims for which people strive<sup>61</sup>

Angell's reasoning may seem faulty in hindsight, but for a nation like Germany, trade provided a huge portion of national and personal wealth, without which a war theoretically could not be funded. The procurement of staple foods also weighed heavily on calculations of war, as all of the great powers relied on importation of food to satisfy their growing populations, a critical fact which Malthus cited.<sup>62</sup> These facts of national survival, driving Germany's utilization of science to unprecedented economic prosperity, could not compete with allure of nationalism. By August 1914 all of Europe was at war, though *industry* would displace nationalism as the barometer of victory.

Germany's victory plan relied on rapid mobilization, enabling her to capture Paris and secure the western front before turning to deal with the monolithic power of Russia. The German general staff's obsession with a quick war, based on the vaunted theories of field marshal Alfred von Schlieffen, failed to account for the possibility of a lengthy war, and plans for the continued production of munitions were non-existent. Indeed, Germany only had enough ammunition on hand to wage war for approximately six months—a striking lack of organization and foresight that became apparent as the intensity of fighting and daily ammunition expenditure increased exponentially.<sup>63</sup> At the outset of the war German war planners had estimated that twenty nine kilotons of fixed nitrogen would make enough gunpowder to supply the military for one year of warfare. The following year, the imperial army was expending that amount every ten weeks.<sup>64</sup> The rate of expenditure continued throughout the war, surpassing all expectations and transform-

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<sup>60</sup> Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913) 11.

<sup>61</sup> Angell, *The Great Illusion*, 9, emphasis added.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-13.

<sup>63</sup> Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918*, 50-52.

<sup>64</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 138.

ing the conflict into a war of production. Angell had been incorrect about the ability of European states to sustain internecine warfare but his estimation of the damage to the belligerents' economy was correct, after a year of war Germany's exports had nearly halved and her ability to import food and war munitions was severely compromised.<sup>65</sup> If Germany was to sustain war industries she desperately required a domestic source of nitrates to feed and arm herself.

In the initial sea battle of the war, a German flotilla cut Allied access to the Chincha Islands, the Allies major source of nitrates, critically threatening their ability to wage war. With one minor skirmish off the coast of South America Germany had severed the enemy's greatest source of nitrates, as an American observer stated, "to strike at the source of allied nitrate supply was to paralyze the armies in France. The destruction of a nitrate carrier was a greater blow to the allies than the loss of a battleship".<sup>66</sup> Thus, the critical importance of nitrates production was understood through the absence of the only reliable source, belatedly prompting both sides to reappraise their tenuous means of production. Ironically, attempts to inform the German officer corps of the extreme utility of domestic fixed nitrogen plants had been ignored, despite glaring necessity, due to the military's focus on a rapid war.<sup>67</sup> Haber and several leading chemists argued that a domestic source of nitrates would prove critical to the prosecution of any war, but efforts to convince military planners of this looming catastrophe failed.<sup>68</sup> Despite this initial mistake Germany was still far ahead of her adversaries, possessing the largest and most sophisticated chemical industry in the world.

Germany possessed two major processes for producing the required nitrates: the common Cyanamide process, and the newly-minted Haber-Bosch process. The only reason the German government even entertained the idea of the inferior and more expensive Cyanamide process was because it produced pure calcium Cyanamide which was easily converted into various nitrates including gunpowder, while pure ammonia required another step to arrive at the same point. A method of turning ammonia into white salt (or saltpeter) was already known, but it would be costly to retrofit existing plants to incorporate this last step, BASF's ammonia factories were designed to produce mountains fertilizer in peacetime, not munitions in war.<sup>69</sup>

Bosch's proposal to the German war ministry was radical: he asked them to fund another plant to process the ammonia being produced at BASF's largest plant at Oppau, further promising that production of white salt would begin within six months.<sup>70</sup> Haber was assigned the task of garnering political support for the venture, dining with politicians and boasting about the efficiency of his process. There was a substantial financial incentive for Haber as he pocketed a few dollars for every ton of ammonia produced by BASF, before long he had brought most of government officials to his side. Bosch's gamble paid off, and a deal known as the Saltpeter Promise was signed, guaranteeing the delivery of five thousand tons of white salt per month, expanding to over seven thousand in the future. The plant worked ceaselessly, all day every day without exception, with production only pausing to replace worn parts. In fact the plant at Oppau was so efficient that within a matter of weeks the war ministry asked BASF to expand its operations,

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<sup>65</sup> Chris Wrigley, *The First World War and the International Economy*, (Cheltenham: E. Elgar, 2000), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Hager, *The Alchemy of Air*, 141.

<sup>67</sup> Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918*, 48-52.

<sup>68</sup> Jeffrey Allan Johnson and Roy M. MacLeod, *Frontline and Factory: Comparative Perspectives on the Chemical Industry at War 1914-1924*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Johnson and MacLeod, *Frontline and Factory*, 7-11.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

offering to fund a facility more than twice the size of Oppau. It would be massive, and it would be exorbitantly expensive, but it would grant Germany the unique position of being the only nation on earth self-sufficiently producing all of its own nitrates.<sup>71</sup>

Haber's departure from BASF coincided with the construction of the Leuna Works,<sup>72</sup> he moved on to his infamous work in the realm of poison gas, while Bosch oversaw the creation of the world's most complex factory. Every system and component would be designed as large and efficient as BASF's engineers were willing to build it, and as quickly as possible. Bosch considered the Leuna Works his crown jewel and raced to complete its construction in time to impact the war, which was turning in favor of the Allies with the entrance of the United States. He oversaw every detail of its design and construction which took a mere seven months to complete—an incredible feat in itself considering the massive shortages of labor in Germany at the time. Only one year after groundbreaking the Leuna Works began shipping explosives to the front, with output rising drastically from 36,000 tons per year to over 160,000 tons by the end of the war.<sup>73</sup> The Leuna Works had transformed BASF from a dye company into a munitions cartel; it was larger than any automotive plant and used technology so advanced that no other country could replicate it.

With the Leuna Works providing massive quantities of nitrogen to the German army there was finally enough for agricultural use, a critical field of the war effort long neglected. Nitrogen critical to the productivity of German farms had been diverted to industry since the outbreak of the war, leading to diminished harvests. By the end of the war Germany was only producing foodstuffs at 57% capacity compared to 1914.<sup>74</sup> As the Leuna Works shouldered an increasing portion of war production the nitrogen of Cyanamide plants were diverted to the agricultural sector, "In this manner the development of the Haber-Bosch process between 1915 and 1918 enabled Germany to continue the war at home and at the front."<sup>75</sup> The reallocation of nitrogen to agriculture would not be enough to prevent Germany's capitulation, though the efficiency of nitrogen plants using the Haber-Bosch process was a clear advantage contrasted with reliance on Chilean nitrates.

By the end of the Great War Germany's munitions production had outpaced every adversary. BASF's two facilities at Oppau and Leuna accounted for fully half of all munitions production between them, as one industrialist noted, "without this contribution, the war would undoubtedly have ended sooner."<sup>76</sup> The Haber-Bosch process significantly reduced the cost of munitions while drastically increasing production, a major factor in Germany's economic competitiveness during the war. While all nations suffered a loss of productivity German only spent an average of 40% of its national income on the war effort, as compared to 50-60% in Britain and even higher rates among other nations.<sup>77</sup> While Britain and France relied on colonies to prop up their war economies Germany had constructed the largest factory on earth to domestically synthesize all of her nitrates, a feat recognized by the US congress in its 'Nitrogen Report':

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<sup>71</sup> Johnson and MacLeod, *Frontline and Factory*, 11-15.

<sup>72</sup> Located in the town of Leuna, the factory became known as the Leuna Works.

<sup>73</sup> Johnson and MacLeod, *Frontline and Factory*, 11-13.

<sup>74</sup> S. N. Broadberry and Mark Harrison, *The Economics of World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 46.

<sup>75</sup> Haber, *The Chemical Industry*, 202.

<sup>76</sup> Broadberry, and Harrison, *The Economics of World War I*, 42.

<sup>77</sup> Broadberry, and Harrison, *The Economics of World War I*, 45.

The World War brought home to all the belligerent nations the danger of relying on the Chilean nitrate supply for a material so intimately related to national security, and the remarkable achievement of Germany in arriving at independence of the Chilean supply through intensive development of her air-nitrogen industry during the war . . . [and the] *inestimable value* of [fixation plants] as a unit in our national defense equipment . . . it is without the shadow of a doubt of greatest importance to hold this great nitrogen-fixing capacity in readiness.”<sup>78</sup>

German Industry had not only weathered the Great War but as the armistice was signed in 1918 it stood stronger and potentially more profitable than ever, due largely to the preeminence of the Haber- Bosch process. With the close of the war the mystery of German industry was fast becoming the topic of international scientific and industrial communities, which had stolen patents for the Haber-Bosch process but were unable to replicate its success. US government reports openly acknowledge the superiority of the Haber-Bosch processes to organic nitrates and the inferior processes the Allies relied on, congressional hearings on the wartime chemical industry note:

in a memorandum . . . found in the du Pont Co. files, the military advantage inherent in the explosives capacity of the great German chemical combine — I.G. Farben — was throughout to be comparable to ‘a large, rapidly mobilizable force, or a large number of guns, or a fleet’.<sup>79</sup>

German monopolies of synthetic nitrates were a threat not only to Allied economic policy after the war but in future wars as well, acknowledging the strategic advantage of centralized, domestic nitrates production. The senate committee believed that “there could be no complete disarmament [of Germany] without control of the chemical industry,” a fact uniting the Allies in breaking BASF’s monopoly on the Haber-Bosch process.<sup>80</sup>

The economic potency of the Haber-Bosch process trumped the strategic implications so recently acknowledged by the United States Senate. Finances were thought to be the determining factor of the war’s viability, in fact Angell had based most of his assumptions on the belief that countries required international trade to prosper and maintain armed forces. This notion was disproven at length, as the war stretched on for 4 years the authority of finance was replaced with that of industry. Somehow this single aspect— the economic superiority of the Allies and the United States in particular— is held to be the determining factor of the entire war, although most reports (including the US Senate) reaffirm that finance was a relatively minor concern. Each country had only to manage internal finances in order to procure weapons as debt would be paid after triumphal victory. As Strachan argues, “what mattered was the ability of industry to produce armaments . . . the monetary implications of the war were therefore postponed until after its conclusion”.<sup>81</sup> Nitrogen fixation had supported Germany during the war, in peace this signal industrial advantage would determine both the economic and martial strength of states.

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<sup>78</sup> Senate Report No. 69th-119 (1925), emphasis added.

<sup>79</sup> Johnson and MacLeod, *Frontline and Factory*, 255.

<sup>80</sup> Senate Report No. 69th-119 (1925).

<sup>81</sup> Strachan, *Financing the First World War*, 11.

### III. Conclusion

By underestimating the importance of the Haber-Bosch process our understanding of WWI reverts to a facile narrative: that the entire conflict was merely disastrous miscalculation, or industrialized folly. Even historical accounts of Haber's life and the marvel of scientific engineering manage to discount the impact of synthetic nitrogen, dismissing decades of scientific breakthroughs as an extended precursor to all-important war. As author Daniel Charles states:

Even Haber's most important technological triumph, the ammonia factories that delivered munitions to German soldiers and fertilizer to German farms, is in hindsight of *deeply ambiguous significance*. *Those factories didn't change the outcome of the war, but prolonged it by three years*, piling horror on top of horror. That brutality bred more brutality<sup>82</sup>

Some revisionist historians like Charles, keen to reiterate the bathos that dominates most scholarly writing on the Great War, maintain that the only lesson to be learned from the conflict is the hubris of war. This is much more than scholarly negligence; linking the importance of the Haber-Bosch process to Germany's eventual defeat in the war is *reductio ad absurdum*, or reduction of a major argument to absurd standards. It is clear that although several authors do recount the development of the Haber-Bosch process it remains to them an oddity at best, simply another story of scientific genius stranded at a time history devoted solely to the bemoaning of conflict.

The implications of the Haber-Bosch process are tantalizing and practically disregarded, with particular reference to how it prolonged the Great War, enabled industrialized total war, and led to other inventions like poison gas. The timely discovery of the Haber-Bosch process allowed Germany to mitigate the effects of the international embargo that threatened her food security and access to Chilean nitrates. As Chris Wrigley, a Great War economist noted, "a major lesson of the First World War was the extent to which industrialized states could be self-sufficient if public policy prioritized achieving this."<sup>83</sup> Germany's production of gunpowder surpassed the production of guns before the end of the war, alleviating one of the greatest bottlenecks of the conflict. How could this feat possibly be misconstrued as insignificant when it singularly sustained one of longest and bloodiest wars in history?

Haber's breakthrough discovery of nitrogen fixation was "a powerful exemplar for the notion that science was value-free, neutral, apolitical: the scientist discovered the laws of nature and invented applications; the good and evil perpetrated by those applications was on the conscience of others"<sup>84</sup>. The Haber-Bosch process was a prodigious yet discreet force throughout the war, too broad and all-encompassing to be counted among the wonder weapons it supplied. The fixation of atmospheric nitrogen shortly before the war granted Germany the ability to domestically sustain its war effort while nations relying primarily on foreign nitrates struggled to supply their forces. This competition between each nation's chemists and industrialists was far more relevant to ultimate victory than timetables; one determined the ability to wage and sustain war, the

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<sup>82</sup> Daniel, *Master Mind*, 183.

<sup>83</sup> Wrigley, *The First World War and the International Economy*, 9.

<sup>84</sup> Cornwell, *Hitler's Scientists*, 55.

other scrutinized the efficiency of deployment. By ascribing the horror of the Great War to nationalism and folly we naively disregard the role of chemistry, conflating the efficacy of applied science with politics and violence. Focusing on the war's futility to the exclusion of all other factors is a simplistic, satisfying hubris which must be rectified.



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## *The Huntsville Gazette: The African American Perspective*

By Mike Steele

The Reconstruction era of the United States, after the Civil War, was one of the most tumultuous and uncertain times in American history. This period could best be described as a perpetual roller coaster ride of hope, fear, triumph, failure, optimism and angst. For the first time in their collective history, African Americans would have no master beyond themselves. Adjusting to a life of emancipation however, was by no means a simple task. It can be argued that moving on from a life of servitude and hopelessness to a life of equality and advancement was akin to washing away a mountain, especially given that when the Reconstruction Era ended, any hope of creating a new and better world for the African American in the South was effectively extinguished. However, in the case of *The Huntsville Gazette* of Huntsville, Alabama an African American newspaper that was every bit as informative and engaging as any white newspaper of the day can be observed. This acts as a direct contradiction to the belief that African Americans were racially inferior and unable to advance themselves to the point that they could compete with whites. Still, there are still questions that warrant further investigation such as: what messages or attitudes did the paper try to express, if any? What matters did the paper consider important at the time? In addition, other topics of interest were encountered over the course of my research such as: the lack of condemnation for violence committed against African Americans in the city and how the paper was able to cater to a population that had a staggering illiteracy rate. A combination of the efforts of the stories told in this paper, the efforts of prominent names in the field of race and ethnicity and personal theories will attempt to address each of these issues while at the same time providing a unique window into the past.

*The Huntsville Gazette* began its publication in 1881 and operated until 1894, covering a wide range of topics from domestic and international affairs to politics and advertisements. The year 1881 was an interesting one for the United States and the beginnings of several important chapters in American history such as the beginning of what would become Prohibition in Kansas, the creation of the Red Cross by Clara Barton, and the forming of the Oriental Telephone Company by Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell. The Reconstruction Era in the post-Civil War South formally ended in 1877, and the white population wasted little time in engineering the near complete disenfranchisement of African Americans. Alabama during this time had experienced social and economic hardships that were similar to several southern states but in time, unfortunately, Alabama would emerge as a shining example of life under the Jim Crow laws, which established the segregation of blacks and whites on the social level. As outlined by Rob Dixon in the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, “The period is also characterized by civil and social upheaval; farming hardships and exploitative labor practices led to the emergence of labor unions, and Jim Crow laws allowed racism to flourish under the guise of a policy known as ‘separate but equal’.”<sup>1</sup> Over the course of this research eight consecutive issues of the paper were consulted and the results consisted of stories that covered a wide range of topics that reached beyond domestic affairs in the South, such as the story about how “Belgium promises to become the great industrial teacher of Europe. She has fifty nine technical schools, thirty two industrial schools and a higher commercial school, all receiving funds annually from

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<sup>1</sup> Rob Dixon, “New South Era” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. Accessed November 20, 2013. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-2128>

the State.”<sup>2</sup> The gazette also provided political commentary on affairs that went beyond the domestic politics of Huntsville, such as the following story: “The New York Legislature after seven weeks of balloting and canvassing succeeded on the forty eighth ballot in electing Hon. Warner Miller for the long term in the United States Senate as a successor to the Hon. Thomas C. Platt, resigned”<sup>3</sup>. Such a variety of stories indicate the wide array of interests expressed by the audience of the paper. The dominant story that was covered in multiple issues was the monitoring of President James Garfield’s health after an assassination attempt by James Guiteau left the President alive but bedridden. His health however fluctuated constantly making any updates front page news. These are only a few of several similar stories that all together paint a vastly different picture than the one that was shown to the world by the white supremacist element of the South. The powers of the antebellum South had long sought to paint the African American as a racially inferior species incapable of higher forms of learning or equal co-existence with whites. As DeGenova argues, this concept was “Forged through chattel slavery, whereby African Americans were denied any semblance of juridical personhood or collective representation and were generally compelled to exist as the mere property of white men”<sup>4</sup>. Yet in spite of this supposed inferiority the writings of this paper depict a learned, well-informed community that offers a stark contrast to the notion of white superiority. In truth it is something of a miracle that an African American newspaper of any kind existed at all in the social climate that existed in the South during this time.

The slave codes that were in place in the United States prior to the Civil War made any attempt for African Americans to gain an educational foothold a virtually impossible undertaking. For example, section 31 of the 1833 code in Alabama stated that “Any person or persons who attempt to teach any free person of color, or slave, to spell, read, or write, shall, upon conviction thereof by indictment, be fined in a sum not less than two hundred and fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars”<sup>5</sup>. It could be said that such fines and punishments were quite lenient in comparison to the slave codes that were in other southern states which were much less forgiving. For example one of the slave codes in South Carolina dictated that “any slave who evaded capture for 20 days or more was to be publicly whipped for the first offense; branded with the letter R on the right cheek for the second offense; lose one ear if absent for 30 days for the third offense; and castrated for the fourth offense”<sup>6</sup> To add further fuel to the proverbial fire after the Civil War, the environment became all the more dangerous for southern African Americans because ironically slavery acted as a kind of shield for African Americans since few slave holding whites were willing to injure or kill what they considered valuable property. With the abolition of slavery many whites saw a great threat in the emancipated African American population. In the novel *How Free is Free: The Long Death of Jim Crow* by Leon F. Litwack, the author mentions “That memory of the past, black men learning the uses of political power went far to shape the racial boundaries and ideology of the New South and encouraged the use of terrorist violence to rout any further challenge to white supremacy”<sup>7</sup>. In

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<sup>2</sup> *The Huntsville Gazette*, July 2, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> *The Huntsville Gazette*, July 23, 1881.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas De Genova, *Racial Transformations: Latinos and Asians Remaking the United States*, (Duke University Press 2006), 2.

<sup>5</sup> *The Slave Codes. Alabama 1833*. Accessed November 19, 2013. <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/teacher/slavery/lesson1/doc1-9.html>

<sup>6</sup> *Slave Codes*. Accessed November 20, 2013. <https://www.boundless.com/u-s-history/slavery-and-reform-1820-1840/slavery-in-the-u-s/slave-codes/>

<sup>7</sup> Leon F. Litwack, *How Free is Free: The Long Death of Jim Crow*, (Harvard University Press 2009), 6.

the end, however, it seems that the utilization of violence by whites on African Americans was not motivated by a desire to uphold a belief system but were motivated by fear that their political and social supremacy was being challenged.

The time was chronicled on several occasions in *The Huntsville Gazette* as seen in the following articles: “Two negroes were recently lynched at Danbury, Stokes County, N.C., their crime being against white women.”<sup>8</sup> In a similar story, “Houston Turner, colored, was hanged by a mob near Nashville, Tenn., for an assault committed against a young Irish girl”<sup>9</sup>. The *Huntsville Gazette* reported on a similar case that took place in North Carolina “During the eclipse on the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> about 200 men rode up to the Jail at Greensboro, N.C., and demanded the keys. The Jailer refused to comply with their demands, they broke open the doors and seized John Taylor, a negro confined for an assault upon a white woman, whom they took off a distance of several miles and hanged to a tree”<sup>10</sup>. These stories also tie in with a topic of interest concerning those who ran the paper, why were those who were in charge of the paper silent in their condemnation of these acts of violence? The answer to this question may lie in fact in that silence. Being that the political and social climates were dangerous enough to the point that an African American could be put to death for the slightest “offense” the editors and writers knew that any form of condemnation of what the white population was doing would provoke similar acts of violence against either them or the paper. As a result of potential reprisals, all newspapers could do was report the story and keep quiet about anything else. It may also be that the paper was adhering to the beliefs of Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama that consisted of building long term economic and educational foundations without provoking aggression from the white community over the lack of rights in the African American community.

The stories and reactions discussed above lead us to the question of what message or attitude was the paper expressing? The best that can be done is form theories and conjectures about the personal motivations of the editors and writers, but there are a couple of clues that hint at what those motivations might have been. One fact to consider is that every issue of the paper had the phrase “With Charity for All, and Malice towards None” which was a famous quote delivered by President Abraham Lincoln during his second inaugural address. It is well known that during this time Lincoln had immense popularity among African Americans; combined that with radical changes that the Republican Party initiated in the South during Reconstruction, the use of the quote in each issue may be an expression of allegiance to the Republican Party. As most papers of the time had political leanings of some sort, this theory is plausible at the very least. It may have also been a sign to the readers that there was a place where African Americans with allegiance to the Republican Party could congregate away from the whitewash of the white supremacist Democrats who had regained control of the South during the 1880s.

Another aspect of the time period that is of interest was the question of how did this paper market to a demographic that was largely illiterate? According to Kimberly Sambol-Tosco and *The Slave Experience: Education, Arts & Culture*, “Concerned that literate slaves would forge passes or convince other slaves to revolt, Southern slaveholders generally opposed slave literacy”<sup>11</sup>. As stated earlier the punishment for giving slaves any form of formal education were

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<sup>8</sup> *The Huntsville Gazette*, July 2, 1881.

<sup>9</sup> *The Huntsville Gazette*, July 23, 1881.

<sup>10</sup> *The Huntsville Gazette*, June 18, 1881.

<sup>11</sup> Kimberly Sambol-Tosco, *The Slave Experience: Education, Arts & Culture*. Accessed November 22, 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/education/history2.html>

severe for all parties involved but there were times when either exceptions were made or the rule was broken. Education was considered a communal affair among slaves with parents, spouses, and other family members sharing their wisdom and experiences amongst themselves. There were other times, when various forms of formal education were unavoidable if a slave was going to be properly equipped to do certain work as stated by *The Slave Experience* “Slaveholders were motivated by Christian convictions to enable Bible-reading among slaves and even established informal plantation schools on occasion in part because of slaveholders' practical need for literate slaves to perform tasks such as record-keeping”<sup>12</sup>. In addition, through the efforts of benevolent Northern societies, organizations such as the Freedmen’s Bureau and state governments provided funding for African American schools to be built, thus creating the first formally recognized foundation for African American education.

The unique insights and perspectives provided by *The Huntsville Gazette* should not be underestimated. The paper serves as prime example of what African Americans could achieve standing in stark contrast to everything that white society of the time wanted Americans to believe. The existence of this paper and others like it is one of countless testaments to the endurance and resourcefulness of African Americans and lends serious weight to the words of Michael Omi and Howard Winant in that we can and should see race for what it is “as a mere illusion, which an ideal social order would eliminate”<sup>13</sup>. So let us look to the *Huntsville Gazette* as a confirmation that the concept of race as just that, an illusionary byproduct of a society that wished to preserve its power at the expense of African Americans and failed.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960's to 1990's*. (Routledge, New York; 2nd edition March 24, 1994) 18.

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Pascoe, Peggy. *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

In *What Comes Naturally*, Peggy Pascoe examines the implementation of American miscegenation law. She argues that miscegenation law “laid the foundations for the projects of white supremacy and white purity,” (p. 14). In doing so, Pascoe argues that the production of miscegenation law also was produced through an amalgamation of various processes from the decisions of local courts to assertions of white male property rights.

In chapter one, Pascoe opens with a discussion of the original motivations for the production of miscegenation law by colonial Americans. Those motivations were the justification of African enslavement and the prevention of slave wives gaining a foothold by which to claim their master’s property. In the context of Reconstruction, this notion of protecting white male property rights manifested itself in the protection of interracial marriage as a means to assert the will of white male property owners.

Chapter two analyzes the dismantling of the defense of interracial marriage by first placing marriage under the jurisdiction of state law and then by making interracial marriage illegal at the state level. This is the process that occurred in Indiana and served to stigmatize any interracial romantic involvement as illicit sex, the court decisions made there also served as legal precedents by which southern states sidestepped the Fourteenth Amendment.

In chapter three, the concerns of white male property owners again motivated the expansion of races which were included in miscegenation laws. The myth of the constitutionality of miscegenation laws was perpetuated by Western states that expanded the list of races that were supposedly treated

equally by way of equal punishment to that of whites who broke the law.

Chapter four examines the haphazard methods by which courtrooms attempted to enforce miscegenation. This chapter serves to demonstrate that the need to definitively classify the race of defendants led to an ultimately futile effort to create definitions and indicators of race.

Chapter five examines the shift in the responsibility of delineating race definitions to the issuers of marriage licenses, and again emphasizes the confusion and arbitrary nature with which race was classified.

Chapter six details the rise of organized opposition to miscegenation law by the NAACP in the first decades of the twentieth century and explains the NAACP’s unwillingness to challenge miscegenation laws outside the North as resultant from fear that public outrage would hamper the NAACP’s ability to challenge other forms of segregation.

Chapter seven goes on to detail the cases by which miscegenation law would first be declared unconstitutional by state courts, opening the way for challenges to miscegenation law by way of repeal by state legislatures. Pascoe emphasizes, however, that these successes failed to gain traction in the South or address the notions of illicit sex.

Chapter eight chronicles the softening of cultural support for anti-miscegenation which made possible the Supreme Court decision to declare miscegenation laws unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Chapter nine finishes the book by observing that the *Loving* case was misconstrued as advocating colorblindness and has since been harnessed to argue for the end of discrimination in all forms but has also been retooled to serve the rhetorical devices of conservative Americans.

The importance of *What Comes Naturally* in understanding the roots of



American racism cannot be understated. Pascoe illuminates the importance of miscegenation in the maintenance of white superiority. The economic and gender analysis Pascoe offers also serves to make her book essential reading for students of American race relations.

Nicholas Langer

Matthee, Rudi. *The Pursuit of Pleasure Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History (1500-1900)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

In *The Pursuit of Pleasure* Matthee studies the role of wine, opium, tobacco, tea and coffee during the Safavid and Qajar periods of Iranian history. Through his analysis, he reveals deeper insights into the cultural and social shifts of early modern Iran.

The book is divided into two sections: the first, which includes chapters one through six covers the Safavid period. This portion of the book is especially focuses on wine consumption and production. The second portion (chapters seven through ten) studies the Qajar period and it focuses mainly on the “new stimulants” (coffee and tea) as Iran became more integrated into global trading networks.

The first chapter briefly describes the political structures within Iran during the Safavid and Qajar periods, giving particular attention to important leaders and the struggle for power between secular and religious authority.

The second chapter focuses on the impact of wine in the Safavid period, especially the role it played in courtly life and its slow evolution from a beverage publically flaunted by the Shah to a private one.

Chapter three traces the history on the prohibitions on wine, demonstrating that religious leaders had relatively little power for most of this period, and that bans on

alcohol were always designed with a political motivation.

Chapter four discusses opium use, pointing out that unlike wine, opium was commonly used in all strata of society (115) and it was rarely banned by the ruling elites despite its widespread usage and damaging effects.

Chapter five discusses the early spread of tobacco. While secular and religious authorities initially resisted tobacco, they both tempered their criticism when the Shah began to tax tobacco and the clerics began to use it.

Chapter six focuses on the coffee trade and the difficulty that foreign trading companies had in penetrating the Iranian market. It also emphasizes the role that coffeehouses played as social gathering places to discuss politics and culture.

Chapter seven details how the ruling Qajar dynasty attempted to portray an image of sobriety because their source of authority was the protection of the Islamic faith. It continues to show how despite this official attitude, drinking was still practiced and had in fact expanded to the urban poor and came to symbolize resistance to orthodoxy.

Chapter eight explores the role that tobacco and opium played in the Iranian economy, particularly in the conversion of farmland from cereals to cash crops, and in the role of a tobacco concession in the Tobacco Revolt. This chapter also contrasts the increasingly public nature of opium consumption versus the more private nature of tobacco consumption (235) revealing the difference that Iranians perceived between public and private space.

Chapter nine examines the worldwide economic and political changes that caused the Iranians to slowly shift from being a coffee drinking society to a tea drinking society. Matthee, puts special focus on the role that falling prices (due to increased production and competition between importers) played in turning tea from an

elite drink to one that even the poor could enjoy.

Chapter ten chronicles the resurgence of coffee houses, which actually served tea at this period. It also details two periods in which the government decided to crack down on coffee houses as sources of immorality, as well as an entrance point for Western corruption.

Matthee's work was thoroughly researched but it deserved better editing. The author also switches from western to Islamic dates without warning creating unnecessary confusion. Otherwise, this study was highly effective in using an analysis of intoxicants to reveal the deeper values social changes in early modern Iran.

Joshua Lourence<sup>1</sup>

Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2011.

In *The Art of Not Being Governed*, Scott develops his theory that state-averse peoples use mountainous terrain and sheer altitude to avoid incorporation into valley regimes. The central focus is on Zomia, the largest extant autonomous region, where "location at the margins, physical mobility, their flexible social structure ... are better seen on a long view as adaptations designed to evade both state capture and state formation"(p. 9). Scott's exploration of Zomia reveals the glaring flaws of centralized government, noting that the utility of anarchy in hill society is not barbarism, but strategic

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<sup>1</sup> The author, being also an editor, recused himself from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

nonalignment to the interest of the nation-state.

Spanning eight southeastern countries, numerous religions, and hundreds of languages, Zomia is a collection of diverse peoples and cultures bound by their geographical locality and desire to avoid incorporation into the valley states. Refusing to adopt the customs of valley states affirms independence, and their "agricultural and social practices ... can best be understood as techniques to make good this evasion, while maintaining the economic advantages of the lowland connection"(p. 25).

Chapter two concerns state appropriation of the land politically and the 'friction' that inhibits central administration. The state's ability to project power was enhanced by wet-rice cultivation; concentrating manpower and food production meant the state exerted tremendous power over citizens, making Zomia a refuge for those avoiding state control.

Chapter three explores the relationship between arable land and manpower, noting that state power rested more upon control of labor than territory in Southeast Asia. The mixed farming practices of hill peoples, mainly swidden agriculture, enhanced their liberty and mobility while subverting coercive taxation by the state.

Chapter four covers interaction between the state and ungoverned frontier, where Scott argues that certain markers like language and ethnicity define the shifting boundary. Chinese definitions of civilization contrast with barbarism to inform this concept, denoting that city life as natural meant "[altitude] could then be coded primitive"(p.103) and civilizing efforts were progressive.

In chapter five the use of Zomia as a refuge from the valley states is explored and correlated with similar instances outside Southeast Asia; in the New World and

Mesopotamia, native peoples fled fertile farmland for the safety of shatter zones.

Chapter six focuses on what Scott terms 'escape agriculture', a decentralized and highly malleable farming regime that allowed hill people to avoid confrontation with valley states. Deemed primitive and inefficient, escape agriculture was an effective form of resistance to state control. A half chapter, 6 1/2, discusses the oral tradition of Zomia as a response to the writing-literacy of valley states and the usefulness of 'Lisu forgetting' in refusing to cooperate with traditional historical narratives. Both are efforts by hill peoples to resist cultural conformity with the valleys, which disengage on the level of communication and memory.

Chapter seven discusses ethnogenesis, described as the fluid nature of ethnicities and identities which impeded efforts to compartmentalize and politically arrange hill peoples.

Chapter eight explores the litany of rebellions, or perpetual resistance, to political domination by various Zomians. Prophetic movements operate within Zomia's diffused social climate, creating what Scott terms "the ultimate escape social structure"(p. 311). The Conclusion questions the longevity of the various anarchic traditions in the face of modernization and friction-eliminating technologies.

Scott effectively promotes the existence and success of Zomia as a socio-political geographic entity, confirming the utility of shatter zones against the oppression of valley states. By rejecting the nation state Zomia created a new social organization based on shared cultural values and ecology, unilaterally repulsing efforts of enclosure and taxation.

Andrew J. O'Connor