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Historical Perspectives

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Volume X of *Historical Perspectives* is the fifteenth journal published by Santa Clara University's Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. This edition continues the tradition of providing its readers with articles that reflect the caliber of student scholarship at Santa Clara.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Articles

Kate Chopin, Unfiltered: Removing the Feminist Lens

Chelsea Zea 1

The Many Leni Riefenstahls: Inventing a Cinematic Legend

Ashley Bunnell Ritchie 24

Franco and the Jews: The Effects of Image and Memory on Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation

Rene H. Cardenas 47

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Rehabilitates Her Image

Kelsey Swanson 70

A Calculated Crusade: Venice, Commerce, and the Fourth Crusade

James B. Hooper 87

Delayed Success: The Redefined Anti-Imperialist Movement of 1898-1900

Brian Hurd 113

Getting Defensive: Excuses for the Construction of the Alaska Highway

Dane Skilbred 135

Their Genocide and Ours: International Influence in 1994 Rwanda

Maggie Penkert 151

Introduction

This year's *Historical Perspectives* reflects the varied interests and expertise of the Santa Clara University History Department and its students. The topics chosen, though primarily modern, represent a wide range of geographic areas and thematic pursuits. Despite the diversity of topics, each author displays proficiency in detailed research, critical analysis, and intellectual excellence.

This year's entries highlight the limitations of perception in accurately portraying history. The first four essays focus on cultural and historical icons, and consider how public perception affected each individual's historic image. By reexamining the lives of these figures, the authors successfully shed new light on each individual's legacy, and provide valuable contributions to the existing scholarship. The remaining four essays examine major historical events, ranging from the early Crusades to the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Not content to accept prevailing attitudes, the authors look to reevaluate the relevant facts and reach new conclusions. These past events are given new life and meaning through the fresh perspective offered by the authors.

All the *Historical Prespective* authors have created pieces that view conventional history with a critical eye. In line with Santa Clara's longstanding tradition of academic distinction, these essays are convincing, entertaining and impressive. Although many histories do more to muddle the record than elucidate it, we hope that the readers will appreciate these works as exemplars of historical precision and outstanding scholarship.

Kate Chopin, Unfiltered: Removing the Feminist Lens

Chelsea Zea

“The little glimpse of domestic harmony which had been offered her, gave her no regret, no longing. It was not a condition of life which fitted her, and she could see in it but an appalling and hopeless ennui.”

(*The Awakening*, Chapter XVIII)

In this brutally straightforward manner, Catherine O’Flaherty Chopin introduced her middle-class protagonist of *The Awakening*, Edna Pontellier, to her astonished readers in the 1890s. Several of Chopin’s female characters wonder if life beyond marriage and children offers greater satisfactions. Contemporary readers naturally wonder how Chopin could have known then about the social ills commonly recognized today in troubled families and especially about their emotional effects on women.

Many feminist readers and scholars claim Chopin as an early version of themselves. This essay will argue, instead, that Chopin’s outlook had little in common with feminism as it is understood today. Not believing in political, social, and economic equality of the sexes, none of the issues for which contemporary feminists fight were of concern to her. Those aspects of her life used to label her in this way, rather than feminist in inspiration, are better suited to understanding her as a writer. Chopin used writing as both a liberating and healing experience, a venue for self-expression and exploration. The very act of writing gave her a sense of personal identity. Viewing Chopin

simply as an author puts an entirely new perspective on her life and reveals a fuller, more authentic person—one that burst the limits of any label for her outlook or her work.

Though Chopin died in 1904, it was not until 1932 that Daniel Rankin wrote her first biography. More than thirty years would pass before the next one, by Per Seyersted, appeared.¹ Both of these biographers felt that Chopin only had value as a regional author. Chopin's first woman biographer saw her differently. In her 1972 dissertation, Peggy Dechert Skaggs was the first to interpret *The Awakening* as "a feminist plea for sexual freedom."² This description helped to revive interest in Chopin's work and that same year the novel was reprinted in its entirety in *Redbook* magazine.³ But it is not surprising that *The Awakening* caught readers' attention at the time it did. Members of the budding women's liberation movement were fascinated with a woman writing in 1899 who could sound so current. Interest in Chopin spread through word of mouth, and in the 1980s and 90s *The Awakening* was assigned as required reading in many college and high school classrooms. Today *The Awakening* is considered one of the great American novels, and the interpretation of Chopin's life through feminist criticism continues. The most recent biography, *Unveiling Kate Chopin* (1999) by Emily Toth still ponders this seeming anom-

¹Lynda S. Boren and Sara deSaussure Davis, eds., *Kate Chopin Reconsidered: Beyond the Bayous* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 15.

²Bonnie Steppenoff, "Freedom and Regret: The Dilemma of Kate Chopin," *Missouri Historical Review* 81 (4 1987): 449.

³Barbara C. Ewell, *Kate Chopin* (New York: Ungar Publishing Group, 1986), 2.

ally of a woman in terms of the feminist tones of her writing. This paper differs from these authors because it takes Chopin out of both the “local colorist” and “feminist” contexts in which she has been placed and identifies her in the way she identified herself: as a writer. Connecting events from Chopin’s entire life to her writing, as earlier biographers failed to do, and removing her from a feminist context that Skaggs and Toth put her in, serves to flesh out a very private person.

Catherine O’Flaherty was born on 8 February 1850 in St. Louis, Missouri. She spent her very early years with her family at home, but at the age of five her parents sent her to board at St. Louis Academy of the Sacred Heart. It was rare for a wealthy family to send such young children to a boarding school, and the reason the O’Flahertys did so is uncertain. Toth suggests that Chopin’s mother, Eliza Faris O’Flaherty, suspected her husband, Thomas, of having affairs with slaves, and did not wish to answer the questions of an inquisitive and precocious five-year-old.⁴

Shortly after Chopin moved to the academy, she suffered the first great tragedy of her life. As a St. Louis dignitary, her father was eligible to participate in the inaugural train ride over the Gasconade Bridge on 1 November 1855. When the bridge collapsed and ten cars plunged into the ravine, Thomas O’Flaherty was one of the thirty men killed.⁵ Because he left no will or other instructions, Eliza immediately brought Chopin back home. Eliza realized the increased control over

⁴Emily Toth, *Unveiling Kate Chopin* (Jackson, MI: U. Press of Mississippi, 1999), 8.

⁵Boren and Davis, *Kate Chopin Reconsidered*, 22.

her life she would have as a widow. "Widows controlled their property, as wives did not; widows also had legal control of their own children, as wives did not."⁶ Thomas' death meant that Chopin would have no patriarchal influence until she was past adolescence. Chopin would never witness marital violence or fighting, money disputes, or any other negative aspects of marital relations. Suddenly finding herself a wealthy woman and in charge of her own and her family's affairs, Eliza invited her grandmother, Madame Victoire Verdon Charleville, to live with the O'Flaherty family and serve as Chopin's teacher.

Chopin's great-grandmother would prove to be her earliest source for "spicy" storytelling and French culture.⁷ One of the greatest gifts Madame Charleville passed on to her eager great-granddaughter was a love for gossip and storytelling, especially about women. Through her, Chopin discovered "a subject for intense, lifelong fascination, contemplation and delight: the lives of women."⁸

Madame Charleville taught Chopin piano, French, reading, and writing. These four interests would remain with Chopin throughout her life and work their way into her stories. Chopin loved music and was known for her ability to play any piece by ear.⁹ It was a way to express her emotions, and several of her characters share this trait—including Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening*. Because she was "fervently commit-

⁶Toth, *Unveiling*, 9.

⁷Steppenoff, "Freedom and Regret," 451.

⁸Toth, *Unveiling*, 13.

⁹*Ibid.*

ted to the life of the mind,”¹⁰ Madame Charleville imbued in her great-granddaughter a love of reading and writing and the belief that history was the stories of women “torn between duty and desire,”¹¹ a classic French literary theme. This premise permeates much of Chopin’s writing. She was influenced not only by her great-grandmother but her mother’s example as well—Eliza had married her philandering husband out of necessity, with unfortunate consequences. Other beliefs Madame Charleville passed on to Chopin included the idea that marriage was meant to be a practical arrangement, with romantic love to follow later; that God alone may judge the actions of others;¹² and perhaps most importantly, that life must be faced “clearly and fearlessly.”¹³ This last injunction would get Chopin through the difficult periods of her life, including the death of her beloved great-grandmother.

After Madame Charleville passed away in 1863, Chopin returned to the Sacred Heart Academy, a school staffed by French nuns, who espoused teachings similar to those that she had learned from her great-grandmother. It was there that Chopin first found encouragement to write for her own pleasure. She excelled in her studies and was “acclaimed for her essays and story telling.”¹⁴

The school raised well-rounded students “in the tradition of French intellectual women,” with a curric-

¹⁰Emily Toth and Per Seyersted, eds., *Kate Chopin’s Private Papers* (Indianapolis: Indiana State University Press, 1998), ix.

¹¹Toth, *Unveiling*, 13.

¹²Ewell, *Chopin*, 7.

¹³Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 2.

¹⁴Emily Toth, ed., *A Vocation and a Voice: Stories by Kate Chopin* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), x.

ulum for the older girls dedicated to creating “intelligent, active, unselfish women, with minds and hands trained for the sphere in which God has placed them, whether it be home-life or some wider social field,” as expressed in the school’s prospectus.¹⁵ The last phrase is extraordinary in that the Sacred Heart nuns gave their students options beyond matrimony and children.

At Sacred Heart, Chopin met her lifelong friend Kitty Garesché. Kitty would become a subject for Chopin’s future writing. The two were best friends and spent all of their time together, talking, reading, and climbing trees. They resembled each other in many ways, including their aristocratic French ancestry. With her unconventional family life, it is no surprise that Chopin liked to spend time with the Garesché family, which followed traditional patriarchal mores. Kitty’s father ran the household, and in spending time with them, Chopin discovered the family life of most American girls her age. Chopin would use contrasting versions of the family unit in many of her stories. Chopin also developed her love of gossip through her friendship with Kitty.

During her early years at Sacred Heart, Chopin kept a small autograph book entitled “Leaves of Affection,” in which her friends copied down favorite poems and quotes. Most of these had to do with romance. However, Chopin added at a later date (distinguished by different types of handwriting) certain phrases that indicated her growth as both an interpreter of poetry and as a writer. Next to several of the poems are notes such as “very pretty but where’s the point?” and

¹⁵Toth, *Unveiling*, 15, 36.

“foolishness.”¹⁶ The important aspect of “Leaves of Affection” is that it represented Chopin’s first attempts at self-expression in writing and that it showed how important she deemed feminine friendship to be. That she saved this little book of misquoted, “foolish” poetry for her whole life illustrates its value to her.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Chopin was removed from school. As a result of a traumatic experience with Union soldiers, Chopin experienced what psychologists now refer to as a “loss of voice,” a common occurrence among adolescent females. A “loss of voice” is not only a refusal to talk but also a sign of trauma that may include depression, insecurity, and a desire for solitude. To make matters worse the Garesché family had left St. Louis because Kitty’s father refused to take the Union oath of allegiance. Chopin might never have recovered—certainly not as quickly—had a teacher at Sacred Heart not intervened.

To encourage her talent in writing, Mother Mary O’Meara assigned Chopin to keep a “Commonplace Book,” where Chopin would copy down passages from books she read or whatever else caught her attention.¹⁷ The very first passage in Chopin’s “Commonplace Book” is an excerpt from Bulwer’s “My Novel.” Chopin copied the author’s opinions on writing:

When we look back upon human records, how the eye settles upon Writers as the main landmarks of the past! ...And yet, strange to say, when these authors are living amongst us, they

¹⁶Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 5.

¹⁷Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 9.

occupy a very small portion of our thoughts....¹⁸

Chopin, at the age of seventeen, may already have been thinking of what it meant to be an author. Subsequent copied passages include excerpts from Macaulay, Longfellow, Goethe, Hugo, and various definitions and paragraphs describing contemporary world leaders. Each of the authors she so copied was a romantic, revealing Chopin's specific interests at the time. The Commonplace Book also contains her first recorded original poem, called "The Congé," which highlighted her originality and ability for introspection. Some of the choices Chopin made in her recordings also reveal an attraction to realism and a disdain for bombastic writing styles—foreshadowing her later love of French author Guy de Maupassant. She also exhibited her interest in the French language. Several of the passages she chose to copy were in the original French. Significantly, there is scarcely anything in the book that directly correlates to women's rights. After her graduation from Sacred Heart, Chopin would use this book as her diary and travel journal for her honeymoon. Because Kitty, her personal confidante, was absent during this time, Chopin filled her Commonplace Book with pieces that reflected feelings she could not otherwise confide. But it was also during this time that she began growing closer to her mother.

A descendant of two of St. Louis' oldest and most respected Creole families,¹⁹ her mother presented a unique picture of marriage to Chopin. Eliza's father had died when she was sixteen, leaving a large family

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 13-4.

¹⁹Ewell, *Chopin*, 6.

in need of support. As she was the oldest and their mother was ill, it fell to her to find a solution to their financial straits. The most obvious option was marriage, but she still needed a good match. Thomas O'Flaherty was more than twice her age and an immigrant from County Galway, Ireland, both conditions that normally would have eliminated him as a suitable husband—but he had money. O'Flaherty's first wife had just died, leaving him with a young son. Marrying Eliza would give him prestige in St. Louis unavailable to him elsewhere, and she would find the support she needed for her family. This arrangement showed Chopin one type of marital calculation. She had a firsthand view of an unromantic, economic marriage. It also gave Chopin a subject for her writing. Her stories show many mother-like figures, all given positions of importance. Near the conclusion of *The Awakening*, Edna chooses to care for her maternalistic friend rather than heed the request of her husband to return home. This may indicate Chopin's own feelings about her mother; for like Edna, Chopin would leave her own husband at home for long periods of time to tend to her mother in St. Louis. Eliza was to prove the only constant source of comfort throughout Chopin's life.

Chopin's relationships with her great-grandmother, the teachers at Sacred Heart, Kitty Garesché, and her mother are used by scholars to show her feminist roots. Though these relationships were extremely important to Chopin's growth as a young woman, to turn them into the foundation for a purported feminism narrows their significance for her. These bonds contributed above all to her development as a writer.

After the Civil War, Eliza moved her family to a new

house filled with relatives. The move also allowed Chopin to witness other marriages and families first-hand. Eliza's sisters, Amanda McAllister and Zuma Tatum, lived in the new house with their husbands and children. Suddenly, Chopin, who had just reached puberty, no longer resided in "a women's household. ...Roger McAllister...was the kind of man who came home at night, and commanded family meals."²⁰ Chopin examined closely the practical marriage of her Aunt Amanda and the romantic one of her Aunt Zuma. She witnessed how an impetuous marriage like the Tatums' might start out beautifully but could just as easily and abruptly end in sadness. The uneventful, but solid foundations of the McAllister family were also not lost on Chopin. Both women were in their early thirties when Chopin first moved into their crowded home, which is the age she would give to the discontented wives appearing in her fiction.²¹ Her aunts represented the two types of wives that Chopin portrayed in her writing.

Upon her graduation, Chopin planned to make her debut into society. But this was not foremost on Chopin's mind because even more exciting for her was the fact that after a five-year absence, Kitty Garesché and her family had returned to St. Louis. The two had kept their friendship alive through correspondence and had planned to make their social debut together. Then another tragedy struck—this time, it was Kitty's father who died. Instead of celebrating her entrance into adulthood, Kitty would pass her first year after graduation in mourning. Chopin would once again be alone.

²⁰Toth, *Unveiling*, 35-6.

²¹*Ibid.*, 36.

But, unlike Kitty's departure the first time, Chopin was better equipped to face the world unaccompanied now.

As an intelligent and guileless young woman, Chopin was "already fast acquiring that knowledge of human nature which her stories show. ...She was a bit too smart, or too forthright, for high society."²² Chopin confided in her *Commonplace Book* that she detested all the balls that she had to attend and the artificial people she met there. She wrote:

there is no escaping—I dance with people I despise. ...I am diametrically opposed to parties and balls...I had a way in conversation of discovering a persons characteristics—opinions—and private feelings—while they no more about me at the end than they knew at the beginning of the conversation.²³

This method of entertaining herself during otherwise tedious events would no doubt serve her later as a writer. Without even trying, Chopin would become quite popular because she knew how to talk to people. She had acquired a reputation for cleverness, which in that era was not necessarily a compliment. A clever woman meant one who was neither afraid to speak her mind, nor afraid show her intelligence.²⁴ Chopin's unwillingness to hide the fact that she could think for herself may have gotten her into trouble.

In 1869 Chopin met and fell in love with her future husband: Aurelius Roselius Oscar Chopin, a hand-

²² *Ibid.*, 45.

²³ Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 82-3.

²⁴ Toth, *Unveiling*, 45.

some Frenchman from Louisiana. She never mentions his name in her diary, but writes that she had found the “right man”²⁵ for her. In the diary entries very early in the marriage, she does seem happy, if a bit subdued. Possibly, this was because she realized “she would now be, forever, defined as a wife, and take her assigned, and much more narrowly defined, place in a patriarchal world. She was now, as she wrote, ‘Mrs. Chopin and not Miss Katy.’”²⁶

Oscar had been born in 1844 to a wealthy, aristocratic French family. His father, Dr. Victor Jean Baptiste Chopin, was an abusive, “angry, unregenerate Frenchman who loathed everything ‘American.’”²⁷ The only thing American of which he expressed approval was money. “One of his determinations was not to marry unless he could have a wife of genuine French lineage,”²⁸ and so he selected Oscar’s mother, Julie Benoist, a Creole heiress who had had both the required pedigree as well as a large plot of land.²⁹ As the master of the plantation, Dr. Chopin soon gained notoriety for his cruelty to his slaves and to his wife. It was his opinion, based in the Napoleonic Code of his homeland, that his wife and slaves were simply creatures he possessed.³⁰ After bearing five children, Julie finally had had enough, and escaped from her husband for a period of several years—most likely with the help of Oscar, her eldest son.

²⁵Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 99.

²⁶Toth, *Unveiling*, 56.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 63.

²⁸Daniel Rankin, *Kate Chopin and her Creole Stories* (1932): 84, quoted in Boren and Davis, *Reconsidered*, 29.

²⁹Toth, *Unveiling*, 63.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 63-4.

Luckily, Oscar did not inherit any of his father's blatantly abusive tendencies, although he may have been a user of women, having had several affairs while he was abroad. He had spent the Civil War years in France, going to school and romancing all types women. "Oscar claimed to dislike aristocratic women ('prudes') and to prefer 'working girls' with their 'noisy and natural laughter and their bold looks.'"³¹ It may have been that he was too busy chasing women to study—he failed his baccalauréat exam, which made him ineligible to graduate. Upon his return to the United States, Oscar proved to be the perfect match for Chopin, partly because their similar backgrounds gave them compatible outlooks on life. "Oscar evidently had truly French values—for he appreciated not only the beauty of young women, but also their intellectual agility."³² Chopin chose Oscar because he allowed her to think, unlike the other men who courted her. He was not intimidated by the fact that she was clever; in fact, he appreciated this about her. In this way they were fairly unconventional, but not surprisingly perhaps, since they each had had an unusual childhood.

Chopin and Oscar were married in June 1870. Setting off on a three-month honeymoon in Europe, Chopin took her Commonplace Book with her and recorded everything that she found interesting. Her journal entries were like a writer's exercise—she was developing a personal style, a voice, and her own techniques. Her ability to "draw" people and places with words remained her greatest strength through the

³¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

³² *Ibid.*, 53.

following years, a talent that first became evident during her honeymoon. She also continued to dislike all that was phony in people: "The new Mrs. Chopin liked to record colorful events, and especially things that were pompous, ridiculous, or venal."³³ Her penchant for authentic behavior and real people had followed her to Europe. One Chopin biographer is surprised that her honeymoon diary "discloses more about her itinerary than about herself,"³⁴ but this facet of her journal is actually very revealing of Chopin's character. It was more important for her as a writer to focus on her surroundings on her honeymoon than on herself and how she felt.

During her honeymoon, Chopin showed early signs of her later independence as a married woman. She did not spend all her time with Oscar; she even went out alone one day to row a boat, for which she congratulated herself: "I find myself handling the oars quite like an expert. Oscar took a nap in the afternoon and I took a walk alone. How very far I did go."³⁵ Chopin also developed a fondness for smoking while in Europe, a habit that would get her in trouble when she returned to the United States. From the evidence presented in her journal, it is not apparent that Chopin would have the experience to write about unhappy marriages. But she had had so much experience within her own family, and now stories about Oscar's, that it did not matter that her own marriage was a happy one. She had a talent for empathizing, and used this to her advantage when writing. "With

³³ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁴ Ewell, *Chopin*, 11.

³⁵ Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 114.

Oscar, she was learning about the men's world that had been mostly invisible while she was growing up, and that knowledge helped her to develop a certain empathy with men, and especially with boys."³⁶ Oscar was good for her because he taught her that men too could offer friendship.

Chopin continued to assert her independence when the couple returned home from Europe. They moved to New Orleans, where Oscar worked as a cotton merchant. Though she did not feel it immediately, living in the city gave Chopin her first experience as an outsider. Even in Europe, she had felt socially at ease because she had her husband for company and because they had met friends, old and new, along the way. But "the new Madame Chopin was a thorough outsider in the eyes of Oscar's family. ...They regarded her with great suspicion and disapproval."³⁷ Chopin did not like most of her husband's family. She amused him by mocking and imitating them with great delight, and Oscar would only laugh—he liked her sense of humor.³⁸ Because his relatives lived in the country, Chopin was sheltered from their opinions while in New Orleans. Oscar also protected his wife. He "was a rare man who preferred an original woman, one who was neither quiet nor stay-at-home."³⁹ So for the time being, Chopin did not know how odd her habit of taking long walks seemed to her new relatives. Nor did she realize how they viewed her un-ladylike smoking. While in New Orleans, she lived her life the way she

³⁶Toth, *Unveiling*, 62.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 66-7.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 81.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 67.

wanted it, which involved frequent trips to visit her mother in St. Louis. The normal expectation of the era was that she would remain at home with her husband. When the delivery date for her first child approached, her mother, on whom she continued to rely, came to New Orleans to help.

When Chopin became a mother herself, she “entered a new phase of her life with joy and doubt and fear, emotions she describes over and over in her fiction.”⁴⁰ She pondered how the presence of a child cramped a mother’s space and stole her solitude. Chopin loved privacy. She almost always used the word “solitude” in a positive context, so her appreciation of time alone must only have increased as her family grew. In the fall of 1879, Chopin was expecting her sixth child and on the cusp of another life altering change of residence. After several years of poor cotton harvests, the family could no longer afford to live in New Orleans, and so retreated to Oscar’s family farm in the small village of Cloutierville. Chopin’s adjustment to small-town living would not be easy.

Now Chopin lived among the family members whom she had loved to ridicule. For the first time in her life, she had no other women to support her. The only friend she had in Cloutierville was Oscar, and he was often away. She was a big-city woman stuck in a small town, and whatever she did to console herself scandalized the local gossips. Though she had some blood relations among Cloutierville residents, “anyone not born and raised in Cloutierville would always be a foreigner, an...‘étrangère.’”⁴¹

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 70.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 83.

Chopin tried at first to fit in. She and Oscar began attending church regularly and “did conform to Catholic expectations,”⁴² even giving her sixth child a saint’s name. Presenting herself as a good Catholic, and a French one at that, should have been enough to get Chopin into the good graces of the people of Cloutierville. It might have worked had she not insisted on wearing her fashionable city clothes, often a becoming purple, or taking her long walks, or riding horses, or smoking Cuban cigarettes. Some scholars describe Chopin’s eccentric behavior as the result of her feminist upbringing—she did what she wanted because she was strong and independent. But this only partially explains her actions. She did such seemingly odd things at first because she really did not know any better. Having spent her entire life in big cities, she failed to grasp what kind of statement her clothes and habits made. People of the area “measure[ed] a woman’s worth by her devotion to family, her self-abnegation, and her graciousness and charm in performing her social duties,”⁴³ while Chopin gauged people’s worth by how genuine she judged them to be. Though she did care for her family deeply, Chopin had never believed in self-denial for its own sake. The only thing she had to amuse herself was her reading. Among the more challenging authors she read were Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, but the only person with whom she could discuss them was her husband. Reading Darwin was

⁴²*Ibid.*, 84.

⁴³Pearl L. Brown, “Awakened Men in Kate Chopin’s Creole Stories,” *The American Transcendental Quarterly* 13 (March 1999): 69.

a form of intellectual escape—another thing Chopin did not share with her in-laws.

However difficult her life in Cloutierville, nothing equaled the tragedy that befell her in 1882. Oscar fell severely ill with what the doctors called “swamp fever” and died on December 10—not due to the illness, but to an overdose of quinine.⁴⁴ Chopin had to rely on her mother Eliza’s example after her father’s death. But the gravity of the situation exceeded what her mother had to face: not only was she a single mother of six young children, but Oscar had left huge debts—more than \$12,000. Widows of that era had two options when dealing with debt: either to remarry and let the new husband handle the money, or else to ask a male relative to handle finances for her. Because she had been around husbandless women all her life, Chopin took a different route. She assumed responsibility for her husband’s finances, and even for managing their general store in Cloutierville. She sold some land and called in debts owing to Oscar, thereby making herself even less popular in the town.

She did not act entirely alone. Chopin became friendly with a man from town by the name of Albert Sampite. They had known each other before Oscar’s death, and after began seeing each other frequently.⁴⁵ Conducting an affair with someone so soon after her husband’s death would have scandalous enough, but to compound problems, Sampite was married. Chopin later vented her frustration over the affair in her writing. Both Sampite and his wife, Loca, would become characters in Chopin’s fiction. Albert turned

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 92.

⁴⁵Toth, *Unveiling*, 97.

into Alceé, a name Chopin used in several stories. Loca became Loka, an ugly and unredeeming character. Her Alceé characters were always the same: handsome, rugged, and sensual. Despite some fond memories of Sampite, she ended up leaving Cloutierville. Responding to her mother's pleas to return home to St. Louis to be with her family, Chopin also knew that St. Louis had the best public schools in the nation. When decisions involved her children, their best interests always guided her. She spent the remainder of her life with her family and friends in St. Louis; perhaps owing to her unhappy affair with Sampite, she never remarried.

After paying off Oscar's debts, Chopin no longer worried about money. She could live off the revenues of the land they owned in Louisiana. She spent her time caring for her mother and her children, until in 1885 her mother died of cancer, leaving her "literally prostate with grief."⁴⁶ She never quite recovered from the great tragedies of her life, according to her daughter: "I think the tragic death of her father early in her life, of her much loved brother, the loss of her young husband and her mother, left a stamp of sadness on her which was never lost."⁴⁷ She needed some distraction to see her through her grief, however. Writing, a passion she had cultivated for years, came to her rescue. Once back in St. Louis and settled into a familiar setting, among people who had not witnessed

⁴⁶Heather Kirk Thomas, "A Vocation and a Voice': A Documentary Life of Kate Chopin." (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1988): 298, quoted in Emily Toth, *Unveiling Kate Chopin* (Jackson, MI: U. Press of Mississippi, 1999), 102.

⁴⁷Ewell, *Chopin*, 17.

her troubles in Cloutierville,⁴⁸ Chopin began to write.

In January 1889, she published her first literary work, the poem "If It Might Be," in *America* magazine. In December 1889, nearly a year later, she finally sold a short story, "Wiser than a God," to *Philadelphia Musical Journal*. She then began behaving like a professional writer, following a certain routine each day. She even had her own writing studio. Her personal journals from this era are account books, recording each sale she made. Chopin quickly found that writing was more therapeutic than profitable, and she worked out many of her past difficulties through her stories. Her father and husband's deaths reappear in "The Story of an Hour" as she pondered what it meant to be a widow. Still unsure of her own position no doubt, Chopin wrote about a woman who has a weak heart and dies from the emotional turmoil caused by the death of her husband. Chopin realized that her freedom came at a price. Writing helped her overcome its obstacles.

Unfortunately, Chopin soon became disenchanted with her stories. She wanted something to distinguish herself from other authors—she did not want to become the pretentious sort of writer that she so thoroughly detested. It was then she discovered the French author Guy de Maupassant and his novels. Captivated by his style, she admitted to a literary revelation: "I read his stories and marvelled at them. Here was life, not fiction; for where were the plots, the old fashioned mechanism and stage trapping that in a vague, unthinking way I had fancied were essential to

⁴⁸Toth, *Unveiling*, 102.

the art of story making.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, Maupassant wrote about topics that interested her, like insanity, adultery, and suicide—hardly the sort of subjects stocked in the local public library. American writers avoided such topics, but Chopin intended to change that. What she especially liked in the French author was his refusal to judge his characters’ morals, telling “stories the way she wanted to...with a clear-eyed and unsentimental focus on reality.”⁵⁰ She learned from him to use clear prose and telling details. Because of him, Chopin found she could write about genuine, authentic people she met in her real life. She even adapted Maupassant’s signature surprise ending for her own purposes.⁵¹

As Chopin grew more confident in her writing, she also learned how to market herself. Unable to find a distributor for her first novel, *At Fault*, she published it herself. When a reviewer made a mistake in reviewing the contents of her novel, she was not above writing to admonish him. *Bayou Folk*, a collection of short stories, appeared in 1894 and received warm praise. Critics called it “charming,” “fresh,” and “glowing with intensity.”⁵² *A Night in Acadie*, Chopin’s second collection, appeared in 1897 and received similar praise—her style is even described as “delicious.”⁵³ Her remarkable usage of the Creole dialect and the imagery of the foreign bayou landscape earned

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 123.

⁵⁰Toth and Seyersted, *Private Papers*, 130.

⁵¹Ewell, *Kate Chopin*, 19.

⁵²Marlene Springer, *Edith Wharton and Kate Chopin: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1976), 180-1.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 181.

the most laudatory comments.⁵⁴ People loved her stories. They looked into a fairy-tale land and felt they knew what it was about. So when *The Awakening* appeared in 1899, written in the harshly realistic style of Maupassant, the public was shocked. To her dismay, her most ambitious work met more surprise and disapproval than admiration.

Critics called *The Awakening* "gilded dirt." Though they still approved of Chopin's writing techniques, they no longer cared for her subject matter. She had not intended to convey anything world-shattering, but something more subtle: "a rarely expressed truth that Kate Chopin knew: that in many women's lives, including her own, ambition is a bigger secret, and a greater spur, than adultery."⁵⁵ Critics condemned the work as "morbid," a "story not worth telling," "brilliant but unwholesome," and "totally unjustifiable."⁵⁶ Though disappointed by the reviews and sales of the book, Chopin kept writing. Unfortunately, her publisher canceled her forthcoming book, *A Vocation and a Voice*, without explanation. No magazines would accept her stories for publication. Despite her continuing efforts, the only work she managed to get published was very conventional.⁵⁷

Perhaps what kept her going despite this rejection was the fact that, even if critics hated her new style, she had an effect on real women. She received letters from fans, telling her what a difference she had made

⁵⁴"Mrs. Kate Chopin, Author of Bayou Folk," *Current Literature* (1888-1912), XVI (Aug. 1894), 106.

⁵⁵Emily Toth, "Kate Chopin's Secret, Slippery Life Story," *The Southern Quarterly* 37 (Spring-Summer 1999): 45.

⁵⁶Springer, *Wharton and Chopin*, 182-4.

⁵⁷Ewell, *Chopin*, 26.

in their lives. She was invited to speak at a women's club luncheon in St. Louis, where she received congratulations on her work. Despite this encouragement, her ambition began to decline. She concentrated on taking care of sick relatives, until she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died in 1904.

However misguided their interpretation of her motives as a writer, Chopin's feminist admirers are owed a debt of gratitude. Without their attraction to her work, Chopin might have remained undiscovered by a public not interested in regional authors. But it does a disservice to the complex and many faceted forces that shaped this unconventional woman and author to see her only through the feminist lens of modern scholars. Chopin exhibited in 1899 what we would call a feminist consciousness today, not because of some kind of precognition, but rather owing to her unique life experiences. Although it was the feminist label that rescued Chopin from obscurity, that same label threatens to relegate her to the ghetto of "feminist authors." Chopin took what she saw around her: powerful women, a rich French heritage, and Catholic and Creole influences, and transformed all those forces into stories that remain powerful and timeless. To pigeonhole her as "feminist" is to miss the profound and universal themes of her work, and to diminish the uniqueness and complexity of her circumstances and her outlook.

The Many Leni Riefenstahls: Inventing a Cinematic Legend

Ashley Bunnell Ritchie

Leni Riefenstahl, an aspiring German actress turned director/producer is best known for her remarkable skills in directing documentary films for Adolph Hitler before World War II. After the war, her success as a director faltered as the public and the film community shunned her for her involvement with the Nazi regime. Many of those attending or watching the 2003 Academy Awards, where Riefenstahl was honored as one of the greatest filmmakers of her time, failed to understand how the Academy could honor a woman who had been so heavily involved with Hitler. The anger some expressed raises the issue of how people need to remember Leni Riefenstahl. There was little doubt about her genius as a filmmaker, but the controversy focused on whether or not she deserved to be recognized by the Academy given her notorious past. Some interpreted her recognition as an insult to public opinion since, in their view, her artistic demise after World War II was a punishment administered by a public outraged at her Nazi sympathy. Yet, the enigma of her career before and after the War remains.

Who was the *real* Leni Riefenstahl? Was she a Nazi collaborator or an unassuming victim? Was she a naive film genius who did not foresee the consequences of her actions or an ambitious woman who did not mind sweeping her morals under the carpet for success? Was she really a cinematic genius? Would she have continued to create masterpieces

had she not been shunned?

To arrive at a fair assessment of the woman and her talents is not easy. In the literature surrounding this enigmatic presence in film history, several Leni Riefenstahls appear. To judge from current scholarship about her, it is evident that she meant different things to different people. However, few question her ability. Though commentators almost universally attribute the demise of her artistic career to her notorious reputation, this may not have been the case. Perhaps the failures of her post-World War II films are better explained by her inability to adapt to the evolving pace of films. Perhaps the “punishment” that was inflicted on her had no role in the downward spiral of her career. Leni Riefenstahl, “the limited talent,” is one possible depiction of this controversial woman very few individuals have constructed, but it will be a serious consideration in the latter part of this paper.

How Riefenstahl came to be known as a ‘cinematic genius’

In order to better understand the public’s perception of Riefenstahl, it is crucial to examine how she earned her reputation as a cinematic genius. Riefenstahl was fascinated with the entertainment industry at an early age. Relentless in her pursuit of getting what she wanted, Riefenstahl was convinced she could do anything and everything.¹ Thus, she pursued dancing as a child, even when though it horrified her father. When she suffered a knee in-

¹Rainer Rother, *Leni Riefenstahl: The seduction of genius*. (London: Continuum, 2002), 11.

jury, Riefenstahl made the decision to transition into acting, a dream she would carry for the rest of her life. She often described her move into cinema as “a classical moment of revelation,”² and after gaining notoriety for her work in smaller budget films, she got the chance to work for a director whom she had long admired: Arnold Fanck. She used her time with Fanck to familiarize herself with every aspect of film production and then made the decision to move behind the camera to explore directing.

When Riefenstahl became a self-proclaimed director, she quickly established herself as a household name. Her two documentaries, “Triumph of the Will” and “Olympia,” brought the standards of documentary films to a level never seen before and surpassed any of the artistic works she had created or ever would create in the future. “Triumph of the Will,” Riefenstahl’s best known film, gained its reputation for its original and brilliant techniques. However, today it is judged for its effectiveness in promoting the Nazi regime.

Riefenstahl got her chance to direct “Triumph of the Will” after Hitler saw her film, “The Blue Light,” and was impressed with her original style. He asked her first to film a small Nazi party meeting. The results, “Sieg des Glaubens,” pleased Hitler. Thus, when the Nuremberg rally was in the works, Hitler knew just whom to call on. Although she lacked experience with documentary films, Leni Riefenstahl displayed artistic techniques Hitler had not seen in other directors. As with everything he did, Hitler was unrelenting in his pursuit of her as a director. In

²*Ibid.*, 22.

fact, when initially petitioned to direct the movie, Riefenstahl refused and referred the Chancellor to someone she thought could do a better job. This was unacceptable to Hitler. Eventually, through power of persuasion and might, Riefenstahl hesitantly accepted the daunting task.³ Despite her initial reluctance to work with Hitler on the film, Riefenstahl knew that she would open up doors she never thought possible by working in such close proximity to the Third Reich. Directing the film gave Riefenstahl her first opportunity to direct as if she were making a “big studio production.”⁴

The brilliance of Riefenstahl’s film of the Nuremberg rally lies in the authenticity of her cinematic techniques and their tremendous effect upon the audience. According to author Rainer Rother, Riefenstahl’s “stylistic ideal” was remarkable in two ways. “On the one hand, she employed cuts modeled on narrative films in an attempt to place the audience in the position of the ‘ideal spectator’.” On the other hand, Riefenstahl made certain to “heroize” the main subject of her film. In “Triumph of the Will,” this “subject” was none other than Adolph Hitler. Riefenstahl perfected the idea of placing the viewer in the location of an “ideal spectator” at the beginning of the rally. She positioned the camera in such a way that it appeared to be inside Hitler’s head as if he descended from the clouds onto the Nuremberg rally. The audience saw through Hitler’s eyes as he descended closer to the people and witnessed “the

³Glenn Infield, *Leni Riefenstahl: The fallen film goddess*. (New York: Crowell, 1976), 62.

⁴Rother, 66.

sheer subjugation of will as untold thousands relinquish[ed] minds and individuality to a single, mesmerizing fanatic.”⁵ This technique became known as seeing through the “eye of the Fuhrer: the same buildings, the same misty atmosphere of a new dawn.”⁶ Seeing the rally through the eyes of their hero allowed the audience to feel a closer connection and more intimate relationship with Hitler.

The film’s journey from the airport to the hotel also includes “genuine narrative forms” in which Riefenstahl displayed truly remarkable originality. This specific sequence “ends with an emphatic fade, and includes approximately ninety shots within about five minutes.”⁷ Thus, the shots are only about three seconds each. Riefenstahl also used a variety of camera angles when shooting the eye contact between Hitler and members of the cheering crowd to construct the idea of their bonding. However, “the hierarchy of the eye contact” remained uniform throughout the film. “The ‘people’ are always shown in high-angle shots; Hitler from a low or eye-level angle...Their function is one of orientation, clarifying the distance already covered.”⁸

Riefenstahl wanted to portray Hitler as the savior of the people and did so by constructing the framing of her shots carefully and closely considering who was in them. One example of this placement is seen in the abundance of women and children in “Triumph of the Will.” Rother notes the prevalence of

⁵Audrey Salkeld, *A portrait of Leni Riefenstahl*. (London: Jonathon Cape, 1996), 140.

⁶Rother, 58.

⁷*Ibid.*, 66.

⁸*Ibid.*, 67.

women and children cheering in the crowd. Only occasionally did the film show any other kind of onlooker. Such emphatic moments in the film would help promote its object “as the champion of women and children,” an untapped resource for many politicians.⁹ Noteworthy also is the fact that the film never showed Hitler’s reaction to the loyalty of his followers; instead it “reflects the devotion evident in the reactions of other onlookers.”¹⁰

The political repercussions from “Triumph of Will” were profound. To put it concisely, “Triumph of the Will” was an “effective way of sponsoring enthusiasm for military service.”¹¹ The documentary, more often called a Nazi propaganda film, had a tremendous impact on the German people. Through the film, many came to see Hitler as their God, their savior. Debate over whether or not Riefenstahl intended to create such a powerful piece of propaganda loomed over the filmmaker until her death. Audrey Salkeld found it hard to believe that Riefenstahl did not see the ramifications of her highly successful film. In her portrait of the filmmaker, she wrote that Riefenstahl’s initial intention may not have been to glorify Hitler, but her feelings for him at the time were so full of adoration that she could portray him in no other light. “For Riefenstahl, in 1934, as for millions of her countrymen and women, the Fuhrer represented the savior who would restore Germany to some (imagined) former

⁹*Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 68.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 77.

glory. This is what she filmed.”¹²

Riefenstahl got another chance to flex her documentary muscles when the Olympics came to Berlin in 1936. Because of the incredible success of “Triumph of the Will,” Hitler called on Riefenstahl once again to profile the athletes throughout the competition. From the beginning, she designated certain events for special treatment. In “Olympia,” she chose the marathon and the decathlon for their epic qualities and the men’s high diving competition for its visual potential. But more importantly, she looked for individual human effort. “Physical strain depicted through pulsing temples, bow-tight muscles” became a favorite visual theme for Riefenstahl.¹³ Her focus was more on people performing greatly, rather than how great their performances may have been. Hence, she produced a film appreciated by fans of sports and cinema enthusiasts alike.

Although “Olympia” had obvious artistic qualities, its intrinsic political influence for the Third Reich was perhaps the film’s strongest accomplishment. Masked behind the glistening bodies of Olympic athletes was a recipe for German nationalism. “Olympia” celebrated a community spirit in which no subordination seemed apparent, the spirit of happy harmony which the German people might perceive between itself and the Führer.¹⁴ Where “Triumph of the Will” emphasized the necessity of creating a new Germany, “Olympia” presented Hitler, the party, and the people in a way that celebrated the ‘new Ger-

¹²Salkeld, 153.

¹³*Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁴Rother, 77.

many' that had been created.

Because of her highly successful documentaries, Riefenstahl was known as a pioneer in her field. No longer did men dominate the making of documentary films. If film professionals wanted to seek guidance on how to create a profoundly moving documentary film, they consulted the works of Leni Riefenstahl. What set her apart from other filmmakers were her unique style and her techniques. She approached the camera in ways no one else had, and she knew how to manipulate it in order to create whatever feeling she wanted on the screen. Riefenstahl also had an eye for images. She knew how to pick and choose useful shots for her work. Many of the shots in her films resemble photographs. In the long run, this filming style would work against her. But, for the time being, it made her a cinematic genius.

The manifestation of a self-proclaimed genius

The image of Leni Riefenstahl as a genius was not one that she refuted. On the contrary, Riefenstahl embraced the idea quite whole-heartedly. From childhood, Riefenstahl had been confident of herself and her abilities. On countless occasions she remarked on her ability to do anything that she put her mind to, as if to explain her ventures into dancing, acting, and other forms of entertainment.¹⁵

When repercussions from "Triumph of the Will" set in, Riefenstahl found herself in an unfortunate position. Suddenly, people were attacking her for being involved with Hitler and for helping advance

¹⁵Lisa H. Williams, *The Amazon Queen: A dramatic portrait of Leni Riefenstahl*. (Dissertation: Chapel Hill, 1977), 2.

and legitimize the Third Reich. She was ostracized by cinematic professionals and none of her post-War works achieved either popularity or real success. In response, Riefenstahl assumed the role of the artistic genius whose career suffered from the effects of political hatreds. According to Riefenstahl, nothing she ever did was fairly judged after 1945. Because of the attacks, she was doomed to a career with little artistic recognition. In her memoirs she used a number of examples to explain the negative effect her social exile had on her filmmaking efforts. After the War she no longer had available the most advanced film equipment the Third Reich had provided for her, which hindered her ability to create superior films.¹⁶ Even worse, the professional and social isolation she faced reached across continents. When she traveled to America to promote her films, she met resistance at every turn. Hollywood producers and studios told her that neither she nor her films were welcome. It quickly became apparent that her only supporters resided within the borders of her homeland.¹⁷ Defending herself in her autobiography, Riefenstahl even went so far as to claim that her film, "Tiefland," released in 1954, would have been a huge success had the press not publicized the allegation that gypsies from Auschwitz had been used in the film. She stated that response to the film was overwhelmingly positive at its screening, but then the "adversaries struck" and made hateful attacks in newspapers that

¹⁶Rother, 114.

¹⁷Leni Riefenstahl, *The sieve of time: The memoirs of Leni Riefenstahl*. (Great Britain: Quartet Books, 1992), 236.

destroyed any chance the film had had for success.¹⁸

Riefenstahl wrote her autobiography in 1992 to set the record straight. Almost sixty years after completing “Triumph of the Will,” she made the decision to publicly address the issues that had been “punishing” her since the War. At the end of her lengthy life story she claimed her motive for writing was to dispel “preconceived ideas and to clear up misunderstandings” about her art and her life. She admitted that it had not been an easy task since the life she had recounted “did not turn out to be a happy one.”¹⁹ Throughout these memoirs she maintained she had been cheated by society and in so claiming she reinforced the idea that the public had something to cheat her of, namely recognition of her cinematic brilliance.

The many different Leni Riefenstahls

Leni Riefenstahl is a popular subject for biographers. Her controversial and fascinating life entices authors hoping to write an interesting story, but, one biographer’s interpretation does not make a complete Leni Riefenstahl. Instead, similar to the New Biography, where writers represent their subjects in different contexts, biographers of Riefenstahl use various aspects of her life and depict her according to their individual interpretations. To some, she is a vixen, while to others she is a naïve victim. It is almost as if authors are creating a character for a day time soap opera, and in a way, they have. Many of the biographers who have chosen to write about

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 397.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 656.

her life have done so by writing screenplays for their dissertations. Most, who are working to get their Master's degree in Theater Arts, find Riefenstahl to be an intriguing figure that provides an excellent framework for a juicy play. In real life there is not one accepted version of Riefenstahl. Therefore, the plethora of screenplays and books on Riefenstahl lay out a number of portrayals, each one contradicting the other. Indeed, the many selves attributed to this woman create a history worth investigating on its own.

The sexualized Leni Riefenstahl

One version of Leni Riefenstahl turns her into a seductress who relied on sexual appeal to find professional opportunities. Lisa Williams' dissertation, "The Amazon Queen: A dramatic portrait of Leni Riefenstahl," fosters this notion of Riefenstahl. In one scene where two men discuss the up and coming Riefenstahl, one protagonist compares her to sponge. "She soaks somebody dry," he complains, "then dumps them, and moves on to soak somebody else." His comrade replies by recalling having heard she was a "nymphomaniac."²⁰ In Williams' script, Riefenstahl never met a man who did not have something to give her and she was willing to use any means necessary to get it, even if it meant enticing men with her body.²¹ Williams also calls attention to Riefenstahl's relationships with Hans, her married boyfriend and her cameraman. Although Hans and Riefenstahl often had differing views on the way a

²⁰Williams, 75.

²¹*Ibid.*, 9.

scene should be shot, Riefenstahl knew that by sexually tempting her boyfriend, she could get her way in the end.

“The Amazon Queen” makes numerous references to an alleged romantic relationship with Hitler. Williams is not alone in her opinion. Many authors have implied there was such a relationship. However, Williams is more explicit. In one scene of her play Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda and public information, has a conversation with Hitler’s mistress, Eva Braun, about the close relationship between Hitler and Riefenstahl. He tells Braun that Riefenstahl “circumnavigated” him and went directly to Hitler. He added that each had discovered something in the other they could use.²² Just what that something might be became apparent in another scene where Riefenstahl and Hans are making love and instead of looking into the eyes of her boyfriend as he kisses her, Riefenstahl’s eyes lock onto the portrait of Hitler hanging next to her bed.²³

The naive Leni Riefenstahl

Riefenstahl, as a naïve woman who really had no idea of what she was getting into, provides another possible scenario for her biographers. In this version of the woman, she appears an innocent and unknowing accomplice to an evil she fails to grasp. In the screenplay that became her dissertation, Laura Conover Wardle creates this Riefenstahl. In the play Riefenstahl defends herself from the charges of her

²²*Ibid.*, 71.

²³*Ibid.*, 79.

enemies by arguing that in 1934 no one knew what lay ahead. She could never have predicted the outcome of Hitler's Germany.²⁴ Conover has Riefenstahl refute allegations with the claim that preoccupation with her work absorbed all of her time and made her lose contact with the outside world. She did not realize until it was too late that during the 18 months (from 1935-1936) that she was in the editing room the world's opinion of Germany changed.²⁵ Since she remained a strong supporter of Hitler long after world opinion had shifted, however, this excuse fails to convince anyone in the play and, most of all, the playwright who created her.

In the opening scene of Wardle's screenplay, Riefenstahl stands in front of the International Military Tribunal to testify at the Trial of Nazi War Criminals. In her monologue she pleads her innocence and reflects on her life after the war and on the treatment she received from the public. In a direct quote from the transcript Riefenstahl tells the tribunal that she had been stripped of everything. "They have taken all of my things, my equipment, my cameras, my films, my house, everything. My friends have turned against me and they have murdered me."²⁶ Ultimately, she claims responsibility for allowing her connections with the Nazi regime to get out of hand and makes herself responsible for her isolation and ignorance.²⁷ In this version, Riefenstahl

²⁴Laura Conover Wardle, *Leni Riefenstahl: Art and propaganda in the Third Reich*. (Brigham Young University: Dissertation, 1985), 5.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 16.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 5.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 17.

acquires a certain amount of poignancy in the role of an artist completely overtaken by the situation in which she had unwittingly found herself.

The “fictitiously naïve” Leni Riefenstahl

Audrey Salkeld’s biography presents a fictitiously naïve Leni Riefenstahl who knew how and when to play dumb as a means of getting others to help advance her career. Although not quite a collaborator or outright supporter of the Nazi party, this Riefenstahl indirectly contributed to the regime for personal gain. Unconcerned with the politics of the Third Reich, she looked on the regime as an opportunity to achieve her professional goals. Hence, Salkeld’s Riefenstahl is more self-serving than vindictive. Salkeld repeatedly alludes to Riefenstahl’s tendency to play the “Hitler card” in order to maintain her artistic freedom.²⁸ By merely alluding to her close association with Hitler, Riefenstahl could count on special privileges and have access to areas to which others were denied. This Riefenstahl thoroughly enjoyed the privileges that Hitler’s favor brought her.

Another screenplay, by Dana Gillespie, adopts a similar interpretation of Riefenstahl. Gillespie’s Riefenstahl chooses to ignore atrocities occurring right in front of her in order to further her career. In this script Hans warns Riefenstahl about what the Nazis are up to. He tells her to educate herself, but she replies that she does not intend to stick her nose

²⁸Salkeld, 7.

in things she knows nothing about.²⁹ Hans tells Riefenstahl to stop looking only through a lens and to remember that another world exists that does not quite fit into the frame.³⁰ Salkeld underscores this willful naiveté when she reports that when asked to do another movie for Hitler, Riefenstahl was initially reluctant and claimed not even to know the difference between SA and SS or anything about politics.³¹

The vindictive Leni Riefenstahl

Perhaps the most common interpretation of this woman, and the one shared by many of those outraged over the Academy's recognition of her, is a vindictive Leni Riefenstahl. This Riefenstahl was an inherently evil woman who knew exactly what was going on the entire time and compromised whatever moral values she had for fame. Authors who take this interpretive slant tend also to gravitate toward the idea of a romance between Riefenstahl and Hitler.

Gillespie, who toyed with the idea of Riefenstahl as fictitiously naive, also suggests the possibility of Riefenstahl's inherent wickedness. She draws attention to her need to be in constant control and her perpetual efforts to deepen her relationship with Hitler.³² Gillespie also makes Riefenstahl's attitude toward the Jews pertinent to the character she creates. According to Gillespie's interpretation, the more favors Riefenstahl's received from Hitler, the

²⁹Dana Gillespie, *Leni: A screenplay based on the career of Leni Riefenstahl*. (Dissertation: 1988), 42.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 109.

³¹Salkeld, 273.

³²Gillespie, 31.

more indifferent she became to what was going on. She would not allow the boycott of the Jews or threats of violence against them to interrupt her own career. Other artists, such as Fritz Lang could see what was going on and when asked by Hitler to create films for the party, he refused to do so.³³ She was perfectly aware of Hitler's determination to strip the Jews of their social power and wealth and deny them the opportunity to earn a living, and she still sent in her request to be a member of the Reich Film Association.³⁴ Gillespie claims the "lure of artistic freedom and unlimited resources Hitler dangled in front of her were great enough to make her ignore the moral consequence of supporting him and his regime."³⁵

Embedded in this interpretation is the idea that Riefenstahl placed art above anything else. Whatever the moral repercussions, if something benefited art in any way it was justified. According to Gillespie, "The threat of war, the Jewish problem, the brutal policies of Hitler- all were ignored. Art, not moral responsibility, was her goal."³⁶ When the accusation surfaced that Riefenstahl used gypsies bound for Auschwitz in her film "Tiefland," she denied in her autobiography that the extras had been executed. While some accounts support her claim, others do not. In Gillespie's account, during the filming the inmates of the concentration camp received clean clothing and were forced to pose in front of a huge banquet table full of food they were not allowed to

³³*Ibid.*, 57.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 60.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 75.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 128.

eat. After the film came out rumors circulated that the prisoners were sent to Auschwitz and executed.³⁷ Once the gypsies' actual fate was learned, Gillespie's Riefenstahl maintained she did not know at the time and did not want to know about it now. "They had served her purpose."³⁸ Of course, in her autobiography she denies ever using as extras gypsies who were later executed.

The fabrication of a genius

Leni Riefenstahl became an accredited director after the release of "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympia." There is no questioning her unique and gifted style in both documentaries, and it is easy to understand how her reputation as a cinematic genius developed. However, there is not much critical discussion about Riefenstahl's work either before or after the two documentaries. Riefenstahl insisted that her work was not given a chance after the War, which explains her later failure. But, this assertion might be disputed. Perhaps Riefenstahl was not a genius after all. Apart from her famous documentaries, her films attracted little interest and a good amount of artistic criticism.

Riefenstahl's first real chance at directing came in 1932 with the film "The Blue Light." Released before the War, it did receive enthusiastic reviews at the time of its release, but it also met harsh criticism. Riefenstahl's biographer, Rother, finds the film naive, the meager "realization of a girlish dream."³⁹

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁹ Rother, 37.

He calls attention to the striking parallel between the life of Riefenstahl and that of the main character, Junta, who is ostracized by her village for climbing a mountain none of the local boys could conquer. According to Gillespie, Riefenstahl blamed the film's unfavorable criticism on the Jews. For her, says Gillespie, Jews were foreigners who did not understand her art and sought to wreck her career. Rother implies that Riefenstahl's reaction to her film's failures was a likely response to Hitler's anti-semitic laws. Riefenstahl forecasts that when Hitler came to power, he would not allow Jews to slander her work and determine the fate of her career.⁴⁰

A decade and a half after the war began in 1954, Riefenstahl finally released "Tiefland," a film that she had been working on for 20 years. Measured against "Triumph of the Will" and "Olympia," "Tiefland" was met with much disappointment. Critics panned it at the time and it goes largely unmentioned today in discussions of Riefenstahl's work. In Rother's opinion, and in this he was not alone, the "stylistic agenda overwhelms the material" creating a "discordant impression."⁴¹ He characterizes the plot of the film as "over-stylized". In the face of criticism, Riefenstahl blamed all the film's shortcomings on her limited resources when compared with what she had had at her disposal working under Hitler.⁴² Riefenstahl's problems, however, went beyond the loss of her earlier resources and her professional ostracism. There were limitations to her brilliance.

⁴⁰Gillespie, 229.

⁴¹Rother, 110.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 114.

One of her major problems seemed to be her storytelling ability. Riefenstahl was accused of being an “unoriginal storyteller” and of having “creative uncertainty.”⁴³ Of Riefenstahl, Rother says she did not have the “artistic temperament capable of conjuring up successful films from variations of her ideas.”⁴⁴ Put blatantly, she did not have the creative capabilities to tell a compelling story. Rother argues that after the War, Riefenstahl lost her touch and “lacked convincing ideas for a film.”⁴⁵ Documentaries remained her favorite and only successful genre of film. In documentaries she did not have to write scripts or tell stories, and was left to focus on her true passion: photography. But, one critic finds unoriginality even in one of her most famous documentaries: “Olympia.” According to Willy Zielke, the cameraman who shot and actually created the prologue for the documentary on his own, the prologue was the most artistic part of the film, and Riefenstahl never even admitted that he authored it.⁴⁶

No matter how “brilliant” her prior documentaries were, if Riefenstahl could not advance with contemporary film techniques she could not remain a favorite in the public eye, regardless of her involvement with the Nazis. Photography played a central role in Riefenstahl’s life. In fact, the genius displayed in her two famous documentaries lay in her photographic ability, but this passion for photography could not

⁴³*Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁶Infield, 237.

sustain her cinematic career. As time progressed, Riefenstahl could not adapt with the pacing of mainstream cinema. To view "Triumph of the Will" is to see essentially a series of pictures. The pacing was appropriate for the film's purpose and for someone who had this kind of ability. Each still image in her films tended to linger on the screen too long. In "Triumph of the Will," which was a very successful attempt at Nazi propaganda, the lingering shots were effective for captivating the minds of viewers. "The anticipation of the youthful audience is conveyed by images of boys climbing up on barriers and each other, straining, on tip-toe, to get a good vantage point."⁴⁷ Richard Corliss notes that the film's pulse, "accelerating from stately to feverish," is in Riefenstahl's master editing. She needed no narration to tell you what to think or feel; her images and editing were persuasive enough."⁴⁸ However, in a film such as "The Blue Light," where a story line *was* needed, Riefenstahl's images could not overcome the bland plot. In an age where popular cinema involved fast-paced entertainment, audiences could not relate to Riefenstahl's style, which was more like flipping through a picture book. In fact, "Last of the Nuba," a collection of pictures Riefenstahl took of an African tribe, was intended to be a film before producers decided it would be better off as a collection of pictures.

Another problem Riefenstahl encountered was

⁴⁷Linda Deutschmann, "Triumph of the Will." (New Hampshire: Longwood Academic, 1991), 67.

⁴⁸Richard Corliss, "Riefenstahl's Last Triumph," *Time*, October 18, 1993. V142, 91.

that she was unable to “limit” her artistic ambitions to her real talent. She still had a deep passion for acting and dancing and refused to put that all behind her when she transitioned into a career behind the camera. It was not uncommon to see Riefenstahl starring in one of her films. Because Riefenstahl could not disassociate herself as an actress, her films suffered. After watching “*Tiefland*,” she calls herself “obviously miscast.” She saw that her sick and pale figure on the screen did nothing to enhance the film.⁴⁹ In her documentaries Riefenstahl did not have to worry about acting and directing, she just took pictures with her camera. Thus, the documentaries displayed her tremendous ability in taking pictures. Her other films were compromised by her attempt to be more than she was.

Despite the public’s outrage at the Academy’s recognition of Riefenstahl, some people remain devoted to the idea of her brilliance. Several members of the feminist movement are committed to keeping the spirit of Riefenstahl alive because she was a powerful woman in history who, according to them, paved the way for women in cinema. Infield narrates that Riefenstahl’s popularity continues to grow even after her death because she is praised by this feminist movement. In his view, Riefenstahl was the “only important woman director in the history of cinema, and as such, regardless of her ethics or morals, is cherished by some leaders of the feminist movement.”⁵⁰

By recognizing Riefenstahl as one of the greatest

⁴⁹Riefenstahl, 317.

⁵⁰Infield, 230.

filmmakers of her time at the 2003 Academy Awards, Hollywood divided art from politics saying the two can coexist independently. But, can the two really coexist peacefully? Infield doesn't think so. He says Riefenstahl cannot be recognized without drawing attention to her involvement with the regime. Infield makes artists particularly responsible for the message they send out with their art. In his words, "an artist's skill, imagination, and the creativity give him or her the ability to touch the minds of others much more easily than the less talented person."⁵¹ No artist can ignore their need for an "ethical compass." He says, an aesthetic of mass murder is not possible. William Cook holds a different viewpoint and finds that it is art that determines whether or not something is immoral. According to Cook, "Triumph of the Will" and to a lesser extent "Olympia" prove that art is amoral. "Its morality depends purely on its context. In a moral context, it is moral. In an immoral context, it is immoral."⁵²

Of course even if art should not be judged by its political ramifications, Riefenstahl was still not necessarily deserving of the honor the Academy bestowed upon her, as only her documentaries played a prominent role in cinematic history. And, many even question the prominence of that role. Susan Sontag writes, "Triumph" and "Olympia," are undoubtedly superb films, but they are not really important in the history of cinema as an art form. No-

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁵² William Cook, "Shooting Hitler: William Cook on the contentious career of the woman who made Nazis beautiful," *New Statesman*, February 11, 2002, v131, 40.

body making films today alludes to Riefenstahl.”⁵³ Marcus Ophuls agrees with Sontag and says he does not think she is one of the greatest filmmakers in the world, Nazi or not.⁵⁴

In reality, Leni Riefenstahl was little more than a gifted documentarian. She had an eye for camera angles and a good sense of how to tell a story with a camera. But, when it came to producing a film that called for prose, she was an amateur. There is no question of her ostracism from the cinematic community after the War, but had she been allowed to continue filming without the scornful eyes of the disenchanted public upon her, it is probable she would be remembered today as a woman who once directed two spectacular documentaries and lived off the notoriety of these films for the remainder of her years.

⁵³Infield, 237.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 237.

Franco and the Jews: The Effects of Image and Memory on Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation

Rene H. Cardenas

The news of Francisco Franco's death on the morning of 20 November 1975 affected the Spanish public in various ways. Clothiers in grieving Galicia and Madrid found themselves hard-pressed to provide enough black ties and armbands to satisfy the insatiable demand, a situation vastly different from the dancing and celebrations that burst forth in the Basque provinces of Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya. Manuel Vasquez Montalban, a Barcelona novelist, chronicled the activity in the heretofore "occupied" city: "Above the skyline of the Collserola Mountains, champagne corks soared into the autumn twilight. But nobody heard a sound." Barcelona was, after all, a city of good manners.¹ As Franco's body lay in state at the Sala de Columnas of Madrid's Palacio del Oriente, nearly 500,000 people filed past; some to mourn, others to confirm that he was truly dead. Compared in his lifetime to the Archangel Gabriel, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Jesus Christ, Franco was buried on 23 November 1975 at Valle de Los Caidos, outside Madrid.² Only one noteworthy Head of State, the Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet, attended the funeral.

¹Manuel Vasquez Montalban, *Barcelonas* (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992), 175.

²Paul Preston, *Franco* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 9, 52, 329-330.

After Franco's 36-year tenure in a role of unchallenged power and authority, a significant amount of scholarship has grappled with the complex question of his *legacy*. Motivated by admiration, fascination, and disgust, foreign observers – not Spaniards – have spearheaded the task to represent and remember Franco as an archetypal dictator, megalomaniac or calculating *politico*. This study will also analyze his memory, but one that scholars have not previously emphasized – the Jewish memory of the dictator based upon Israeli policy toward Franquist Spain and the details about Franco's life that were “forgotten” in order to generate it.

The Spanish institutionalized memory of Francisco Franco is heavily influenced by a wide spectrum of Spanish politicians, intellectuals, and social commentators who collaborated in what came to be known as *el pacto del olvido*, or pact of forgetting. Franco was not necessarily forgotten post-mortem, though; instead, an immense national appetite for details about the private *Caudillo* fueled a cathartic release of diaries and memoirs for years after his death. *El pacto* only stressed no settling of accounts, no revenge. No one sought to open what was considered a Pandora's box for fear of igniting another devastating civil war like the one responsible for catapulting Franco into power forty years earlier. Thus, collective amnesia, or anti-memory, became the consensus of an uneasy Spanish public.³ In the Jewish memory of the dictator, this

³For a developed commentary on collective memory and anti-memory, see Pierre Nora, *Rethinking the French Past: Realms of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 1-23.

amnesia has a different origin - one rooted in the dictator's ambiguous stances and policies themselves.

Although *El Caudillo* publicly articulated a Catholic, knightly, warrior-based formula for Spanish identity and simultaneously sought to ingratiate himself with *Sephardim* communities (Jews of Spanish ancestry), many of whom immigrated to Palestine during or immediately after the Spanish Civil War, his duplicity was not entirely of his own design.⁴ It was also a consequence of the Jewish experience in Spanish history.⁵ According to Norman Berdichevsky, bitter memories of the Inquisition and the Jewish expulsion of 1492 dominated Jewish memories of the Iberian Peninsula for centuries.⁶ Equating Jews to Moorish "infidels in league with the devil," Spain retained this hostile posture until immediately after the French Revolution, and only after the adoption of the Constitution of 1868 did official persecution come to a halt. Immediately thereafter, a number of Spanish intellectuals started to question what Spain might have lost as a result of the Sephardic eviction and its lasting antagonism.⁷ Noting the important cultural, political, and economic contributions credited to Jews in Northern Europe, Greece, Turkey, the Caribbean,

⁴Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) 623-625.

⁵Norman Berdichevsky, "Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation: Israel's 38-year struggle to establish diplomatic relations with Spain" in *Midstream* 49:5 (2003): 2.

⁶Henry Kamen, *How Spain Became a World Power 1492-1763*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 21-22, 242-243.

⁷*Ibid.*, 3. See also Elie Kedourie, *Spain and the Jews: the Sephardi Experience, 1492 and After*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992), 1-20.

and the United States, scholars such as Angel Pulido, himself a Jew, dedicated their careers to settling the Spanish-Sephardic rift. Having spoken before the Cortes, or Spanish Senate, visited the Sephardic communities in Turkey and met with their chief rabbi, and written articles for the Spanish press, Pulido presented an image of a Spain held hostage by a fervent ultra-nationalistic, Catholic ideology during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁸ The Jewish intellectual was so well accepted among all echelons of society that King Alfonso XIII proposed the renewal of a “Greater Spain” with Sephardim reconciliation as one of his primary objectives during the first decades of the 20th century. In this spirit, Spain voted in favor of the British Mandate for Palestine in 1922, and the Republican government welcomed Chaim Weizmann, who would become Israel’s first president, in 1932. With the Star of David in the ascendant, the Catholic Church in Spain became increasingly insecure about its influence, and this discomfort would come to influence Franquist policy toward Israel later. Thus, the direction of Judeo-Spanish reconciliation, although promising, was still uncertain immediately before the largest European civil conflict since the French Revolution. To better understand how Judeo-Spanish relations continued their uncertain path after the Spanish Civil War propelled the shy Galician Franco to power requires knowing more about the array of experiences and influences in the leader’s life that, by

⁸Jose Antonio Lisbona, *Retorno a Sepharad: La politica de España hacia sus Judios en el siglo XX* (Barcelona: Silex, 1993).; See also Maria Antonio Bel Bravo, *Sefarad, Los Judios de España*. (Madrid: Silex, 1997), 349-354 qtd. in Berdichevsky, “Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation,” 2-3.

the 1930s, would turn him in his own psychology into the savior of a historic Spain.

Franco's Military Exploits and the Foundations of a Vision

Upon graduation from the Spanish Military Academy at Toledo in 1910, the 17-year-old short, frail-looking Second Lieutenant Franco volunteered to serve in combat in Morocco, where he immersed himself in Army life and paid extreme attention to personal attributes like detail and duty. While developing an interest in topography and Spanish history, Franco absorbed the idea of the Army's moral responsibility as the "guardian of the essence of the nation."⁹ According to that principle, when a government disgraced its country by allowing disorder, it was the Army officer's duty to combat that government in the name of the nation.

At the tender age of 20 and despite a growing reputation for valor in combat, the lieutenant was still withdrawn, a private contemplative with few friends. Eschewing the drinking, gambling, and philandering that dominated the leisure time of many officers in Spanish Morocco, Franco poured over supply lists and maps late into the evening. By 1917, at the age of 24, his competence and the cunning, yet fatalistic charges that won him battle after battle in Morocco warranted him a promotion to major. After a brief return to Spain, Franco again ventured across the Straits of Gibraltar in 1920 where his service to both the French Foreign Legion and the elite division of the Spanish Army launched him to the top of the military hierar-

⁹*Ibid.*, 10.

chy. When his assignment ended in 1927, he was a thirty-three-year-old brigadier and one of Europe's youngest generals. The changing political situation in Spain during the mid-1920s and 1930s, coupled with important changes in his person life, would catapult the general to yet unforeseen heights.

In 1923, Franco married Maria del Carmen Polo y Martinez Valdes, the beautiful 17-year-old daughter of an affluent Asturian businessman. She injected into their upper middle-class household a potent dose of Catholic piety. This served as a personal reawakening, since his pious youth had given way to an irreligious existence in Morocco, never attending Mass there. The apparent lull in the General's career during this period was actually of critical importance because it allowed for the synthesis of a romanticized Spanish military ideal with the reemergence of Franco's Catholic beliefs. As he helplessly watched the collapse of the monarchy and the proclamation of the Second Republic, Franco's renewed Catholicism would become important to the justification of actions to come.¹⁰

During the political turmoil between 1923 and 1936, Francisco Franco perfected the technique that several historians conclude characterized his regime – deliberate and shrewd calculation motivated by self-preservation.¹¹ On 13 September 1923, disputes over direct representation, local autonomy in Catalonia and

¹⁰Joaquin Arraras, *Francisco Franco: The Times and the Man* (Milwaukee: Brace Publishing Co., 1938), 244.

¹¹Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 622.; Chaim Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1984), 9-11.; Preston, *Franco*, 722.; Haim Avni, *Spain, the Jews, and Franco* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1982), 70, 85, 208.

the Basque Provinces, and foreign, military and social reform paralyzed the parliamentary system and ushered in the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, one of Franco's previous superiors. Five years later, Rivera established a military academy at Zaragoza for officer candidates and named Franco its Director. While the General possessed the rigid attitude necessary to provide the prospective officers with a strong foundation in Spanish military psychology and esprit de corps, his lack of experience in military technology and theoretical training obligated him to hire a comprehensive staff, and many high-ranking officers in charge after the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War were part of this group from 1928-1931. Although Rivera's administration temporarily corrected many of the breakdowns that overwhelmed the government of Alfonso XIII, it too succumbed to outside pressures and collapsed, bringing down the monarchy with it. It would not fall, however, without first leaving a lasting impression on the future *Caudillo*. Despite its imperfections, the military regime's relative internal stability persuaded Franco that dictatorship was the ideal form of government for Spain.¹²

Aware that the balance of power rested with liberal factions at the start of the 1930s, Franco took great care not to offend the new administration by deed or word. The liberals' attitude toward Franco, however, was not as conciliatory. During the initial transition from Rivera's dictatorship to the Second Republic, a

¹²Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 27, 132.; Chaim Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, 13.; See also Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (London: Unwin Lyman, 1986), 42-56.

key priority of the left-wing government entailed eliminating the vestiges of the old order by forcing the Army's older, more conservative officers into retirement, thus altering the balance of power within the Spanish army.¹³ Furthermore, many of the campaign promotions that Primo de Rivera awarded Franco were rescinded, and the general plummeted to the bottom of the officer seniority list. His silent acquiescence was rewarded in 1932, however, when the War Ministry gave him command of the garrison at La Coruña and, a year later, the important post of commander at the Balearic Islands garrison. After Centrists assumed power in 1934, relations between the military and the government greatly improved. Franco was promoted to major general and named Commander-in-Chief of the elite crack divisions in Morocco. He was then appointed Chief of the General Staff in May 1935, after he publicly aligned himself with CEDA, a coalition of moderate, conservative, and clerical parties. Franco took advantage of his role to appoint anti-leftist officers, but the ensuing crisis caused by the leftist Popular Front's victory in February 1936 elections brought forth newer, far more important priorities.¹⁴ Although conservative leaders urged Franco and the War Ministry to annul the leftist victory and declare martial law, the General refused. Removed as Chief of Staff and, in effect, exiled to the garrison at Tenerife in the Canary Islands, Franco watched as liberal officers

¹³Stanley Payne, *Franco's Spain*, 5-9.

¹⁴Preston, *The Politics of Revenge*, 8-12.

replaced his conservative nominees for important posts.¹⁵

With tensions increasing between Left and Right, whispers of a broad military conspiracy to overthrow the government grew louder. Led by Brigadier General Emilio Mola, a cadre of mid-level officers championed the effort. Although they represented a broad cross-section of the political spectrum – monarchists, fascists, clerical reactionaries, and a collection of officers without ideological leanings, the primacy of liberal officers in senior positions put the conspiracy in a difficult position. For this reason, Franco's conservative reputation and respected accomplishments made him an important potential candidate to represent the diverse anti-liberal, anti-socialist Junta. Nevertheless, the exiled General kept his distance. He had no desire to destroy a storied career because of an uncalculated blunder. On 25 June 1936, he wrote a letter to President Azaña actually warning him of the Army's eroding loyalty, but it went unanswered.¹⁶ Only after the Popular Front government created a Marxist-leaning militia did Franco cast his lot with the conspirators in July 1936. Although the General only had a basic understanding of Spain's economic and political intricacies, he was keenly aware of current public unrest and leftist revolutionary organizations.¹⁷ The chaos in Spain had become so problematic that sitting back any longer and watching matters deteriorate was worse than joining the rebels. Franco also

¹⁵Alan Lloyd, *Franco* (London: The Longman Group, 1970), 58-69.

¹⁶Payne, *Franco's Spain*, 9.

¹⁷Lloyd, *Franco*, 59-69.

thought it advantageous to side with the Republican faction than to face a potentially stronger Leftist menace later. Thus, the first phase of a life-long anti-Communist crusade - the fight against the Popular Front - had begun. It was one battle in a campaign that would deeply impact the way he would be remembered later.

El Caudillo Emerges

Franco's eventual emergence as the Nationalist leader was due to a combination of his successes, his vision, and luck. Although General Emilio Mola and other leading conspirators had been eager for the general to hold an important role in the revolt, General Jose Sanjurjo had been tapped as its primary leader. On 20 July 1936, however, Sanjurjo's plane burst into flames as it departed from Lisbon and the team of generals in the *Junta de Defensa Nacional* invited Franco to become its ninth member on 3 August 1936.

As the Junta consolidated its coalition of conservative elements under a unified body, Franco emerged as the strongest individual member of the movement, because he commanded the most important of the Nationalist forces - the Armies of Africa and the South of Spain. In an interview a week after he joined the Junta, Franco categorically announced: "Spain is Republican and will continue to be so. Neither the regime nor the flag have changed. The only change will be that crime is replaced by order and acts of banditry by honest and progressive work. Spain will be governed by a corporative system similar to those installed in Portugal, Italy, and Germany."¹⁸ However,

¹⁸Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 111.

five days later, Franco replaced the Republican flag with the traditional monarchical yellow and red standard, hailing it as *the* flag for which patriots had given their lives in a hundred battles. A public announcement of Franco's leadership, the Junta's Decree of 29 September 1936 read: "In accordance with the resolution adopted by the Junta de Defensa Nacional, General Francisco Franco Bahamonde is named Chief of the Government of the Spanish State, and will assume all the powers of the new State."¹⁹ His investiture speech in Burgos in early October declared: "You are placing Spain in my hands. My hand will be firm, my pulse will not tremble, and I shall try to raise Spain to the place that corresponds to her history and her rank in earlier times."²⁰

Franco possessed a basic set of beliefs whose fundamental values changed little in comparison to the evolution of the regime.²¹ Franco's belief in the Spanish "essence" resonated with a sense of a mythical national, Catholic past superseding Jewish and Muslim identities, one that could resurface as a force behind the modern Catholic "Spanishness" for which he lobbied. He had also come to the conclusion that Spain could not adapt to a parliamentary system, and he saw himself as a bulwark against all that he abhorred: Communism, Marxism, Masonry, materialism, and internationalism.

The Church provided Franco with much of the propaganda he would adopt to publicly define himself after the Nationalist victory. The image of Franco as a

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 116.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Preston, *Franco*, 10.

modern Catholic crusader was promoted by Enrique Pley y Deniel, Bishop of Salamanca. A letter on 30 September 1936 quoted Augustine of Hippo and compared the “earthly city,” or Republican zone, where Communism and anarchy reigned, with the celestial, or Nationalist zone, where heroism and love of God prevailed. Toward the end of the war, on 16 April 1939, Pope Pius XII gave Franco his apostolic blessing and praised him for his “noble and Christian sentiments.”²² Feverishly committed to retaining power and now backed by the Church, he believed that the Nationalists had an absolute right to suppress Republican supporters. Victory, according to Franco, had to be complete.

Consequently, one of his first acts as Head of State was to ban all leftist and liberal parties. The Falangist state was to be a “national syndicalist state” in which “the state, to discipline the economy, employs the instrument of the syndicates.”²³ He admired the social programs of those regimes that had helped his victory over the Leftists – Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.²⁴ Yet, Spanish authoritarianism, as Franco called it, was not derived from Hitler’s National Socialism or Mussolini’s *fascismo*, but instead from the centralized monarchy of Ferdinand and Isabella. This revived “integral nationalism” would somewhat base itself upon Franco’s perceptions of the Spanish Golden Age, including the intolerant conventions of Spanish government and society, such as the “Black Legend” – the myth of the Inquisition’s genocidal barbarism.

²²*Ibid.*

²³Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 117, 119, 169.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 22.

The Emerging Dictatorship, Jewish Memory, and the Heyday of National-Catholic Identity

While much can and has been said about the brutal character of Franco's regime, this study analyzes the generally overlooked and vexing problem of how his policy toward Jews complicated the Jewish response to his regime and his person. The devastating war between 1936 and 1939 was arguably largely responsible for the image of Franco that would thwart attempts at Judeo-Spanish reconciliation thereafter. His fascist coalition derided in orchestrated campaigns the radical and "communist Jews" who had championed the Republican cause that Franco considered impious and anti-Spanish. A strong intellectual and financial base for the Republican movement, liberal Jews proved a formidable foe for the fascist Nationalists. However, by strategically linking a Jewish Republican plot with long-disliked progressive Catalan separatists, the *Falange* was able to galvanize Spanish public opinion in its favor. Ultimately, it is debatable whether Franco himself stirred up anti-Semitic sentiment among the *Falange* or whether he allowed them to decry the "Judeo-Catalan" conspiracy in order to sustain its popularity. Although anti-Semitic epithets can be found in the general's speeches, they are remarkably few by comparison with the virulent anti-Jewish rhetoric in fascist newspapers.²⁵

Domestically, the 1940s and early 1950s marked the heyday of Franco's image of a Spain based on an anachronistic amalgam of medieval romanticism, nationalism and a re-born sense of destiny. Having acted to outlaw opposition parties, control all media

²⁵Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, 16-20.

and insert pro-Franco rhetoric into the educational curriculum, El Caudillo monopolized the discourse about Spanish identity. His 1942 *Raza*, a semi-biographical novel, exalted a nation and people born out of the ashes of fierce conflict. As for Franco himself, it presented him as a “gift from God,” a popular theme in the period’s educational curricula, that protected Spain’s Catholic roots. Jose Churruca, the story’s main character, incarnated the dictator’s idea of his nation - resilient, crusading, protective, and spiritual.²⁶ The Nationalist fervor born out of victory in the Civil War also influenced the regime’s economic policy. Eschewing international trade, Franco’s autarkic measures played a dual role during the administration’s early years. While these served as an economic manifestation of Spain’s independence and a post-World War II response to international ostracism, the harsh realities of running a country trumped the ideological constructs of Spanish identity. As starvation became a tangible problem, Franco’s coffers suffered. It was in this context that Franco courted limited diplomatic relations with Israel in hopes of easing Spanish international isolation.²⁷

The only clear evidence of any personal ill will toward the Jewish people was Franco’s reaction to Israel’s 1949 U.N. vote against admitting Spain to that body as punishment for his alliance with Hitler in the Spanish Civil War and Axis sympathy in World War II. On 16 May 1949, Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Abba Eban responded to a proposal by several

²⁶ Jaime de Andrade [pseu. Francisco Franco Bahamonde], *Raza* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1997), 1-20.

²⁷ Berdichevsky, “Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation,” 3-5.

Latin American countries to lift the U.N.'s diplomatic boycott against Franco's regime:

The United Nations has arisen out of the sufferings of a martyred generation, which included six million dead...That memory alone will determine Israel's attitude. While the Israeli delegation would not for one moment assert that the Spanish regime had any direct part in the policy of extermination, it does maintain that Franco Spain had been an active and sympathetic ally of the regime that had been responsible for that policy and thus contributed to its effectiveness...For Israel, the essential point is the association of the Franco regime with the Nazi-Fascist alliance that corroded the moral foundations of civilized life and inflicted upon the human race its most terrible and devastating ordeal...²⁸

While Franco did not officially recognize Israel in 1948 because of personal ties to Arab states dating back to his career as a leader of a Muslim brigade in Morocco, his regime approached the nascent nation as part of a strategy to overcome the barriers keeping it out of the United Nations. For example, prior to the aforementioned vote, Franco authorized a Jewish synagogue to operate in Spain for the first time since

²⁸United Nations, *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1948/49 (New York: UN, 1950), 311-315.; United Nations, *Official Records of the Third session of the General Assembly*, pt.2., Plenary Meetings of the General Assembly, Summary Records of Meetings, April 5-May 18, 1949 (Lake Success, N.Y, 1949), 500.; Minutes of the United Nations General Assembly, May 16, 1949.

the Civil War. The Israeli critique above ignored not only Franco's efforts in saving 20,000 to 60,000 European Jews during World War II and after it, but also the delicate political situation that Franco successfully navigated to avoid joining the Axis at Germany's behest.²⁹ In the complicated history of relations between Spain and the Jewish people, Franco's rescue of the Jews during World War II had little recognizable effect on the official Israeli stance toward him later. By labeling *El Caudillo* as a Nazi collaborator and disregarding his pro-Jewish actions, the Israeli government crafted a dubious place for him in Judeo-Spanish history.

El Caudillo's rescue of thousands of Jews had a prior legal basis. The 1924 Primo de Rivera law provided that any individual of Spanish ancestry living outside Spain was entitled to the privileges of Spanish citizenship without ever having to set foot in the country. Franco first oversaw the execution of this law in 1924 and 1925 when, as an army major, he evacuated several hundred Jews from the Moroccan port city of Tetuan. This law did more than simply entitle Sephardic Jews to Spanish citizenship; it afforded them the protection of the government.³⁰ Sephardim living abroad were under the authority of Spanish sovereignty. The Germans accepted Franco's law almost without question, because in the Spanish-Nazi relationship, *El Caudillo* had leverage over his German counterpart.

²⁹Estimates by Yad Vashem, Haim Avni, Chaim Lipschitz, and others give a range of lives saved. The secrecy, in many cases, of the various operations led to an inaccurate reporting of numbers.

³⁰Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, 9.

Germany expected Spain to enter World War II on the Axis side after aiding Franco in his defeat of the Republicans. Franco, however, was not eager to win one war just to enter a larger war against the Allies. The regime's quarrel did lay with the Communists and their sympathizers, but not to the extent that Franco could realistically charge into the Axis camp. It would not have been popular among his supporters, and the Head of State would not plunge Spain into a new round of political and social turmoil. Although Spain allowed Nazi u-boats to patrol its waters, its assistance to the Fuhrer would not amount to much more than mouthing the party line at the onset of the war in order to keep the *Wehrmacht* out of the Pyrenees. Hitler could not force Spain into the war against her will either. Risking a guerilla war on his rear should he cross the Pyrenees into the Basque country was too great a risk for Germany to take while Franco at least appeared to be an active sympathizer. Franco constantly put off entering the war, much to Hitler's annoyance, by requesting items like large quantities of gasoline that he knew Germany could not dispense with. When, in the early months of 1943, the Germans concluded that Spain would never enter the conflict, they had no alternative but to curse themselves.³¹ The Spanish leader's policy of issuing visas to claimants of Sephardic ancestry in occupied territories and letting others cross the Pyrenees and reach refugee camps in Navarre annoyed German authorities, and there was a faction of German generals advocating attacking Spain. The German Navy actually sunk a Spanish vessel as a warning shot to the dictator, but Franco

³¹*Ibid.*, 24-38.

did not alter his outwardly ambiguous stance. After the war, official Israeli policy, by indicting Franco, would fail to evaluate the complex political situations that he overcame domestically during the Civil War and internationally during World War II.

Cold War Politics and Israeli-Spanish Reconciliation

Israel's initial rejection of Franco's Spain resulted partly from its own internal political complexities. In 1950, the leaders of the Sephardic communities in a dozen cities worldwide telegraphed Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in another vain attempt to get Israel to lift the Spanish blockade. Their efforts were blocked by what they saw as the Ashkenazi-dominated government's move to display its supremacy over the Sephardim. The Ashkenazi (Jews of eastern European descent) Mapai and Mapam parties, both socialist and committed to left-wing causes, preserved the image of Franco as a Nazi sympathizer regardless of signs of a more sympathetic Sephardic perspective.³² During the mid-1950s, when Spain was finally admitted into the U.N. and established an overt alliance with the United States, Franco had the opportunity to combine the rebirth of the crusade, now versus Communism, which was always central to his interpretation of Spanish history with a move to improve his relations with Israel. The two nations found themselves in the same geopolitical situation. Both buffers against Communist expansion, Spain would be for the western Mediterranean what Israel was for the eastern Mediterranean – a strategic out-

³²Berdichevsky, "Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation," 5.

post.³³ Even though Spain had finally been released from its forced diplomatic obscurity and was modernizing its economy based on an increasingly sophisticated technocracy in the late 1950s, the memory of Spanish volunteers fighting on the side of the Axis during the Second World War still kept the possibility of an Israeli reconciliation remote.

Franco's rescue of the Jews was not finished in the 1940s, however. In response to a 1956-1960 campaign to relocate 2,733 Moroccan Jews from the ports of Ceuta and Melilla to Israel via Malaga, Israeli Sephardim urged their government to court Spain.³⁴ Despite protests from Franco's Arab allies, Sephardim leaders in both countries promoted an exhibition of books on the Sephardic experience in Spain. In 1960, General Franco hosted a Sephardic delegation that included the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Great Britain, and Spain established the Institute of Sephardi Studies in the following year.³⁵ Culturally, ties between the two nations increased, but that could not derail the political stalemate reached during the Six-Day War of 1967.

This war also had a profound impact among more sensitive Spanish politicians, who thought that Israel's lightning victory over the Arab coalition called into question the extent to which Franco should follow a pro-Arab foreign policy. However, this change in opinion was neutralized by later Israeli policy toward

³³Mark Kurlansky, *The Basque History of the World*, (New York: Penguin, 1999), 228-230. Kurlansky's work also examines Basque persecution and its role in a unified, centralist, Spain.

³⁴Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, 154-158.

³⁵Berdichevsky, "Spanish-Jewish Reconciliation," 5.

Gibraltar. When the Spanish government put forth a resolution seeking to wrest Gibraltar away from British hands in December 1967, Spain's Arab allies voted in favor, but Israel abstained on the grounds that Franco had allowed volunteers to fight on Hitler's side while Gibraltar held out as an allied stronghold during World War II. Again, the influence of Franco's pro-Axis image came to bear on Cold War politics and Israeli-Spanish reconciliation. Nevertheless, cooperation did exist between the two countries' secret services, and American pressure forced Spain to make available the American base at Rota as a logistical staging point for Israeli missions during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

By this time, Franco had begun fighting a series of serious illnesses which rapidly weakened him. The consummate crusader, Franco clung to life for two years while his government decided its future. The young prince Juan Carlos II, Franco's appointed successor since 1947, welcomed establishing official diplomatic relations with Israel. Such a step would improve the image of Spain in the United States, as it was the last Western European nation without relations with Jerusalem. However, acting Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez inherited from Franco a fragile relationship with Spain's Arab allies; approximately 90% of Spain's petroleum was supplied by Iran and its neighbors. This dependency created a rift between the United States, who felt that Spain was being blackmailed, and the Spanish government, who was not yet ready to handle confronting the Arab world. In 1979, Suarez welcomed a visit from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and sparked controversy among European and American observers. Spain and Israel would not speak of diplomatic ties for another six years.

The rise of the socialist PSOE government in the mid-1980s under Felipe Gonzalez brought to fruition a process begun in the early days of Francisco Franco's regime. Although Franco was frustrated by the political nature of the Spanish-Israeli reconciliation process and viewed the plight of the Sephardim as a question of "Spanish identity," the socialist Gonzalez galvanized the voices of those repressed by Franco's regime to create an image that was congruent with the Jewish memory of El Caudillo. Those who remembered the Spanish Republic, the International Brigades, and the early anti-Franco struggle now spearheaded the creation of cultural links that led to the events of April 14, 1986. On that day, Spanish Ambassador Pedro Lopez Aguirrebengoa presented his diplomatic papers in Jerusalem and was greeted by President Yitzhak Herzog with "Welcome after 500 years!" King Juan Carlos II declared, "Spain has overcome a situation that had not corresponded with our own history nor with the present course of our country." Achieving the status of a credible, modern, parliamentary democracy required that Spain, according to its own standards, finally meet this critical goal.

Examining Franco's regime through the Jewish-Israeli lens reveals one of the General's key shortcomings; he took criticism of Spain as a personal insult. A personal bitterness toward the Israeli governments of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s arguably created yet another obstacle to reconciliation. It appears that the exit of Franco was a necessary step in the final diplomatic recognition ten years after his death. Both Franco's regime and Felipe Gonzalez' PSOE Party viewed relations with Israel as a historic problem grounded in the plight of the Sephardim. Perhaps the

Israelis needed the equivalent of a *pacto del olvido* for themselves that would erase *El Caudillo* Axis ties from the Judeo-Spanish historical record.

As Spain and Israel enjoy full diplomatic relations today, *El Caudillo*'s influence on the end result goes uncelebrated and largely unrecognized. Although Franco had the power to create and institutionalize a uniquely Spanish memory that he *felt* had been lost as Spain declined from its zenith to the backwater it became into the 19th and 20th centuries, he could not guarantee the preservation of a positive memory for himself after his death. Franco's inability to bridge the gap between a personally relevant, politically sound, economically expedient Arab friendship and an Israeli alliance probably arose from the contradiction posed for Franco's policy makers between "Spanishness" as a mythologized intellectual and cultural exclusiveness on the one hand and a nostalgic inclusiveness on the other, evidenced by the general's protection of both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews.

Ultimately, Franco may share the same fate as his suppressed domestic political opponents – remembered only by those he personally impacted. *El Pacto del olvido*, in its refusal to open a so-called Pandora's Box, forced those who were silenced under the regime to accept that there would not be any public recognition of their past lives and memories.³⁶ It can be noted here that collective memory may result from a deliberate campaign to define an identity. It does not exist without the social commentators, analysts, politicians, and historians who choose how it is

³⁶Helen Graham, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Spain's Memory Wars" in *History Today* 54:5 (2004): 31.

constructed. By either omitting or focusing on particular details about *El Caudillo's* life, contemporary Spaniards and Israelis have created a particularly complicated memory of him in the complex history of Judeo-Spanish relations.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Rehabilitates Her Image

Kelsey Swanson

It is not uncommon for people to fall from grace due to a vast array of reasons, including divorce, crime, and debt. Can the fallen possibly redeem themselves in the eyes of those who matter most? The case of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis offers a powerful example of the role that the disgraced can play in rebuilding their images. On 20 October 1968, Jacqueline Kennedy, previously beloved as the brave widow of the slain President of the United States, shocked the world, not by wearing a new Valentino or trying out a new hairstyle, but by getting married. Headlines across the globe exclaimed: "America has Lost a Saint," "Jackie, How Could You?" and "Jack Kennedy Dies Today a Second Time."¹ What heinous act caused people around the world to recoil in disbelief and disgust? The beautiful, young widow of the beloved President John F. Kennedy did not remarry a youthful, handsome American. Instead, the thirty-nine year-old Jacqueline Kennedy married Aristotle Onassis, a Greek twenty-three years her senior.² Not only was Onassis older and extremely wealthy, but he was also foreign,

¹"Mourning, Motherhood, and Ari," *People Weekly*, 6 June 1994, 48-52.

²Aristotle Onassis's age is the subject of dispute. Onassis claimed that he was born in 1906, but that as a teenager he told Argentinean officials he was born in 1900 in order to get a job, making him either twenty-three or twenty-nine years older than Jacqueline Kennedy.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 71

short, unattractive, and overweight. The American public condemned the marriage as an insult to the memory of the assassinated President.

Jacqueline Kennedy had fallen from her pedestal; overnight she had gone from national icon to villain. Yet, by the time of her death in 1994, Jacqueline Onassis had once again found her way back into the hearts of the American public. What can account for such a turnaround? It was no accident or merely the result of Aristotle Onassis's death in 1975; it was the conscious effort of a woman determined to rehabilitate her image by giving the press an alternative focus beyond her wealth and unpopular second marriage.

This paper is an examination of the calculated role Kennedy Onassis played in the revival of her image, tracing her fall from grace to her death, based on contemporary popular newspaper and magazine accounts. It compares her portrayal in popular periodicals in the period following her marriage to Aristotle Onassis (1968-1975) to her portrayal in the years after his death (1976-1994). Kennedy Onassis will be revealed as a woman who controlled her image and consciously rehabilitated it, who learned the value of being perceived in a positive light, and whose actions were sometimes calculated to benefit her public persona.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's celebrity status is unique in U.S. history. As First Lady, she was beloved for her youth, grace, and style. She was the lovely wife of the youngest President ever elected. The American public adored her as "the most beautiful and romantic

legend we had ever had in a First Lady.”³ It was not just Americans who were charmed: Charles de Gaulle, President of France, was smitten with her, as were other foreign heads of state and their populations. In fact, from 1962 until her remarriage in 1968, Jacqueline Kennedy, according to the Gallup poll, was the most admired woman in the world.⁴ Unlike her immediate predecessors as First Lady, Bess Truman and Mamie Eisenhower, Kennedy brought glamour, youth, and elegance to the White House, elevating the status of the Presidency. The Kennedys were the closest thing to American royalty. People seemed to relate to Jacqueline Kennedy, not just as the First Lady, but as “our” First Lady. After the assassination of her husband, she was depicted as the brave widow, holding the country together during its period of mourning. She became an American “saint,” clearly enduring heartache, but with the inner strength to remain poised and dignified.

As First Lady, she was admired for her selfless devotion to her husband and children. Her two children always came first, and she tried to make their childhoods in the White House as normal as possible. Her feelings about the importance of motherhood were clear: “If you bungle raising your children, I don’t think whatever else you do well matters very much.”⁵ She strove to provide her children with ordinary childhood

³Norman Mailer, “Jackie, the Prisoner of Celebrity,” *Esquire*, Dec. 1993, 188.

⁴Vivian Cadden, “Jacqueline: Behind the Myths,” *McCall’s*, July 1975, 79.

⁵Bill Adler, ed., *The Uncommon Wisdom of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: A Portrait in Her Own Words* (New York: Citadel Press, 1994), 95.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 73

experiences despite their extraordinary family circumstances. She organized a nursery school in the White House and arranged for her daughter to ride her pony on the front lawn. While she was the President's proud wife and dedicated supporter, the shy Mrs. Kennedy stayed out of the political arena for the most part, preferring to protect her family's privacy.⁶ When it came to attending a political event or staying with her children, the First Lady would often choose the latter, endearing her to the American public. In addition to being the sacrificing family woman, Kennedy was a patron of the arts and a gracious host, organizing magnificent dinners and entertainment in the White House. Her pet project was the restoration of White House furnishings, including paintings, furniture, and sculptures, to remind Americans of their nation's history.⁷ She appeared on television in February of 1962 in "A Tour of the White House with Mrs. John F. Kennedy" to explain the restoration to the public. She appeared endearingly shy, talking in her whispery voice. This TV special presented to the world a woman who cared about her family, carrying out the duties and responsibilities of home and country.

Jacqueline Kennedy's rise to fame and celebrity was not of her own choosing. She became famous for being the beautiful wife, and later widow, of a popular President. Unlike other famous women of her generation, such as Elizabeth Taylor, whose celebrity status was based on her outrageous lifestyle and beauty as

⁶Ellen Ladowsky, *Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis* (New York: Random House, 1997), 87.

⁷Paul F. Boller, Jr., *Presidential Wives: An Anecdotal History* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1988), 363.

much as her skills as an actress, Jacqueline Kennedy's celebrity was based on the man in her life, not on anything really remarkable that she had done in her own right. Consequently, she erased her virtuous image as Mrs. John F. Kennedy by remarrying. The American public was stunned and horrified, causing her popularity to come crashing down. They would not accept her as anything but the brave widow of President Kennedy, let alone the wife of a man who was his complete opposite by so many standards.

Kennedy, knowing how much the public loved her for remaining "true" to her slain husband's memory, married Aristotle Onassis anyway. Why did she take an action that would bring certain public disapproval? Robert Kennedy, President Kennedy's brother, was assassinated in Los Angeles on 5 June 1968. He was the person who had comforted and supported Jacqueline Kennedy after her husband's death. Since they had grown remarkably close, his death hit her particularly hard. After this tragedy, Mrs. Kennedy remarked, "I despise America, and I don't want my children to live here anymore. If they are killing Kennedys, my kids are the number one targets."⁸ Aristotle Onassis, who had provided her a safe, private haven in which to recuperate in August 1963 following the death of her son Patrick, was the perfect answer to her problems. With his immense wealth and power, he could protect her and her children and give them much needed privacy, especially with his army of 200 security

⁸In Christopher Andersen, *Jackie After Jack* (New York: William Morrow, 1998), 182.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 75

guards.⁹ The problem for the American public was that, in most ways, he was the antithesis of Kennedy's first husband. While John F. Kennedy was young and handsome, Onassis was old and ugly. He was not an American, but rather a Greek divorcee. He even had been arrested in the United States in February 1954 and charged with criminal conspiracy for illegally buying oil tankers.¹⁰ In the words of a seventy-year old retired bookkeeper: "She could have done better. To us she was royalty, a princess, and I think she could have married a prince. Or at least someone who looked like a prince."¹¹ In one simple act, Jacqueline Kennedy transformed herself from saint to despicable sinner.

During her marriage to Aristotle Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was portrayed as a spendthrift and a reckless woman. Aristotle Onassis was a shrewd businessman, having amassed close to a billion dollars in real estate, planes, ships, and art.¹² He owned Skorpios, a 500-acre island in the Ionian Sea, and the yacht *Christina*, both widely described in the press. The *Christina* reportedly featured forty-two telephones, faucets made out of gold, and a huge swimming pool, not to mention two El Greco paintings, a \$25,000 jade Buddha, and barstools covered with

⁹"The New First Lady of Skorpios," *Newsweek*, 28 Oct. 1968, 38.

¹⁰Willi Frischauer, "Jackie & Onassis—What Really Happened," *Good Housekeeping*, Aug. 1975, 36.

¹¹In Gloria Emerson, "Jacqueline Onassis at 45," *McCall's*, July 1974, 112.

¹²Linda Bird Francke, Seth Goldschlager, and Peter Mellas, "Legacy of a Golden Greek," *Newsweek*, 31 Mar. 1975, 32.

the foreskins of whales.¹³ He had additional homes around the globe, including a villa in Athens, a vacation home in Monte Carlo, a penthouse in Paris, and a hacienda in Montevideo.¹⁴ The couple regularly took exotic vacations to places like the Bahamas and Rome, as well as the routine flight between Greece and New York, where Kennedy Onassis still owned a fifteen-room apartment. This jet-setting woman, living ostentatiously in the lap of luxury was not the shy, selfless, and sacrificing mother the American public had come to respect.

Further proof, in the public's estimation, of Kennedy Onassis's turn to selfish materialism was her enjoyment of the lavish gifts her husband bestowed upon her. His wedding gift to her was \$1.2 million in jewelry, including two twenty-four-carat gold bracelets, a huge, heart-shaped ruby ring surrounded by diamonds, and a pair of ruby and diamond earrings that matched the immense ring.¹⁵ On her fortieth birthday, less than one year after their wedding, Onassis gave his wife a forty-carat diamond, one carat for each year of her life, estimated to cost between \$400,000 and \$1,000,000.¹⁶ In December 1969 *Ladies' Home Journal* published an article entitled "\$10,000,000 Jewels of Elizabeth Taylor and Jacqueline Onassis," which included a description of the many different pieces of jewelry Aristotle Onassis had given to his wife of, at that point, only fourteen months. Kennedy Onassis was so concerned with jewels that when she lost her

¹³"First Lady of Skorprios," 39-40.

¹⁴Liz Smith, "The New York Life of Jacqueline Onassis," *Ladies' Home Journal*, Feb. 1970, 56.

¹⁵"The Kennedys: Identity Crisis," *Newsweek*, 4 Nov. 1968, 42.

¹⁶"People," *Time*, 8 Aug. 1969, 35.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 77

wedding ring, she cried and Onassis had to console her.¹⁷ She did not weep during President Kennedy's funeral, yet she cried over lost jewelry. This was definitely not the brave, controlled First Lady of Camelot, but rather a materialistic, spoiled brat.

In addition to her obsession for jewelry were Kennedy Onassis's outrageous spending habits. Onassis gave her an allowance of \$30,000 a month to spend on whatever she liked, but he eventually cut it down to \$20,000 because she continually exceeded her limit.¹⁸ Still, \$20,000 was more than the average American made in an entire year. The \$60,000 sable coat, the 200 pairs of shoes she bought in a single outing, and the \$650,000 spent on a nine-day trip to Tehran, all noted in subsequent literature, were not written about in contemporary, popular periodicals. Other extravagant purchases, however, were detailed. Kennedy Onassis and her sister Lee Radziwill would often go shopping together in the most exclusive and expensive stores in New York, such as Lafayette on East 50th Street and Halston Ltd on 68th and Madison.¹⁹ Kennedy Onassis purchased mass quantities of furs, shoes, handbags, cosmetics, and antiques. In the first year of their marriage alone, the Onassisises spent twenty million dollars, leading Fred Sparks to write *The \$20,000,000 Honeymoon: Jackie and Ari's First Year*, calculating that the couple spent an average of \$384,615.38 per week.²⁰

¹⁷Liz Smith, "\$10,000,000 Jewels of Elizabeth Taylor and Jacqueline Onassis," *Ladies' Home Journal*, Dec. 1969, 142.

¹⁸Vivian Cadden, "Jacqueline: Behind the Myths," *McCall's*, July 1975, 119.

¹⁹Smith, "New York Life," 140.

²⁰Smith, "10,000,000 Jewels," 140.

It was as if Kennedy Onassis had no self-control or appreciation for anyone or anything beyond herself. She appeared to be the classic “shopaholic.” Although some journalists such as Gloria Emerson tried to present Kennedy Onassis as just a normal mother who took taxis rather than chauffeured limousines, even they discussed the lavish decorations in Kennedy Onassis’s apartment and the opulence of the *Christina*.²¹ Columnist Liz Smith especially tried to stress the normal aspects of Kennedy Onassis’s life, saying that she lived the “relatively simple life of any well-to-do New York matron,” yet even Smith devoted the majority of her article to Kennedy Onassis’s possessions, specifically the décor of her apartment, while noting that she had a maid, a cook, a nurse, and additional servants.²² As the marriage progressed, the couple routinely spent almost nine months out of the year apart, carrying out separate lives. It was clear to the American public that their relationship was not a love match. Onassis was Kennedy Onassis’s protector, while she was his trophy wife. Her habits confirmed the impression that she was a gold-digger who had cold-heartedly married Onassis for his money so that she could indulge in a decadent, hedonistic lifestyle.

The American public disapproved of more than just her self-indulgent materialism. She was also a “public sinner,” betraying her religion by marrying Onassis. A widowed Catholic, Kennedy Onassis violated church law by marrying the divorced Onassis. Onassis was Greek Orthodox, and the two were married in a Greek Orthodox ceremony. In an announcement covered

²¹Emerson, “Jacqueline Onassis at 45,” 91.

²²Smith, “New York Life,” 138-40.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 79

widely in Christian journals of the day, it was made clear by the Vatican that Kennedy Onassis could no longer receive the sacraments.²³ In the opinion of many Catholics, she had committed adultery by marrying Onassis, whose first wife was still alive.²⁴ Catholics chided Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, who defended the marriage by ridiculing assertions that Kennedy Onassis should be considered a public sinner.²⁵ As a result of the ongoing harassment by a public determined to denounce her as wanton, Cushing resigned at the end of the year. Even his status as bishop failed to protect him from the consequences of defending the despised Kennedy Onassis.

As Kennedy Onassis's spending habits began to take their toll on her relationship with her husband, she spent even more time in New York with her two children while he remained in Greece. There were rumors in the press that Aristotle Onassis was going to file for divorce, but when he died on 15 March 1975 in a Paris hospital, no legal proceedings had been initiated. Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis received over twenty million dollars from his estate, placing her in a financially stable position as she started her life once again as a widow in New York.

Yet, Kennedy Onassis's life seemed to change focus from her previous materialism. Although she was by no means poor, her financial status was more constrained compared to the riches she had at her dis-

²³Barbara H. Kuehn, "Catholic Embarrassment Over Jacqueline Kennedy," *Christianity Today*, 8 Nov. 1968, 37.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵"Sequel to the Onassis Marriage," *Christianity Today*, 22 Nov. 1968, 41.

posal while married to Aristotle Onassis. She could not hide on Skorpios anymore, behind Onassis's small army of guards, or recklessly spend his money. She was now on her own. What else was she left to do but to get on better terms with the public, to become beloved once again? According to one relative, "She knows exactly what she wants, she's single-minded about it and she goes for it."²⁶ Jacqueline Onassis was determined to reclaim some of her previous exalted status. She began by giving the media a new focus. She would be more of a typical woman to whom regular Americans could relate—working, caring for her family, and becoming involved in charitable causes.

One of the first steps she took was to reinvent herself as a working woman. On 22 September 1975, she started as a consulting editor at Viking Press four days a week. For a salary of \$10,000 a year, she placed her own phone calls, made her own copies, and warmed her own coffee. Magazine stories proclaimed a "new" Jacqueline Onassis, who would no longer live in the shadow of her husbands, but would instead be her own woman.²⁷ Rather than focus almost exclusively on her still considerable expenditures, these articles were primarily dedicated to her work and family. When Kennedy Onassis's material goods were mentioned, they were discussed as an afterthought. *Ladies' Home Journal* was quick to point out that she

²⁶Paula Chin, Joe Treen, and Karen S. Schneider, "Camelot After Dark; Despite Pain and Humiliation the Kennedy Women Stood by their Men—Often at Great Personal Cost," *People*, 27 May 1991, 58.

²⁷Elizabeth Peer, Lisa Whitman, and Phyllis Malamud, "Jackie on Her Own," *Newsweek*, 29 Sep. 1975, 80.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 81

had not spent \$30,000 on clothes in 1975, but rather was now a pants and T-shirt kind of woman.²⁸

After leaving Viking, she began work at Doubleday in February 1978, reminding the public that she was still a hard-working woman. Working three days a week, initially as an associate editor at \$20,000 a year, she continued to be a pleasant co-worker, keeping the door to her “spartan space” always open.²⁹ This vision of Jacqueline Onassis stood in stark contrast to the woman who had relaxed on a spacious, 325-foot yacht, always trying to keep visitors out. The “new” Onassis also received praise from *Ms.* and *Publishers Weekly*, “serious” publications beyond the circle of magazines for middle-aged women that usually featured her.

Many mothers were entering paid jobs for the first time in the 1970s. As a member of the paid workforce herself, she was able to reconnect with the American public, especially women, by sharing a common experience. She explained in an interview with the feminist *Ms.* magazine, “There they [women] were, with the highest education, and what were they going to do when the children were grown—watch the raindrops coming down the windowpane?...Of course women should work if they want to.”³⁰ She was no longer the tragic widow or extravagant whore, with her identity determined by her husbands, but a woman with significant responsibilities. Although she would never be an average citizen, Onassis appeared more grounded and accessible. She could enjoy her three

²⁸Winzola McLendon, “The New Jackie,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, Jan. 1976, 125.

²⁹“A Working Woman,” *People*, 18 June 1984, 97.

³⁰Gloria Steinem, “Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Talks About Working,” *Ms.*, Mar. 1979, 51.

million dollar beach house and continue getting her hair done at Kenneth's with impunity because she was performing paid work. Average citizens were now praising her, including a taxi driver who thought it was great that she worked even though it was not financially necessary.³¹ Entering the paid workforce was a major step in the rehabilitation of her image.

Even as she enjoyed the positive publicity generated by her new job, Jacqueline Onassis re-focused on her two children, who were eighteen and fifteen in 1975. Although her children had always been important, they seemed to take second place during her second marriage to her time spent in Greece and on her spending sprees. The "new" Jacqueline Onassis rekindled the mother-daughter bond with Caroline Kennedy, her eldest child. By 1986, an entire article was devoted to her approval of Caroline's Jewish fiancée, Edwin Schlossberg, emphasizing that she and her daughter agreed on wedding plans.³² Rather than the controlling mother of the bride who dictated every detail of the ceremony, she was the supportive parent behind-the-scenes. Following Caroline Kennedy's marriage, Jacqueline Onassis reportedly spoke to her by telephone often, visited her frequently, and doted on her daughter's three children.³³ She was no longer just a caring mother, but also a loving grandmother. In her relations with her son John F. Kennedy, Jr., she was portrayed as both a disciplinarian and a supporter. She advised him on his romances and studies,

³¹*Ibid.*, 52.

³²Sharon Churcher and Ellen Hawkes, "The Mother of the Bride," *Ladies' Home Journal*, Aug. 1986, 23-27.

³³Lester David, "Jackie Today," *McCall's*, Aug. 1988, 40.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 83

vetoing his decision to attend boarding school. When Kennedy graduated from prep school, she attended the ceremony, beaming as the proud mother.³⁴ However, when her son became interested in acting as a career, Onassis conveyed her displeasure, communicating what she felt was in his best interest.³⁵

The fact that her children turned out to be successful, well-adjusted adults, even after all the tragedies in their lives, was considered a testament to Jacqueline Onassis's maternal abilities, which were frequently praised in the press. She focused on being a more typical mother, bragging about her children, dealing with their problems, and giving motherly advice.³⁶ She had redeemed herself in the eyes of the average American as a giving, selfless mother.

Jacqueline Onassis also returned to her interest in historic preservation, serving as a board member of the Municipal Art Society. She led the "Landmark Express" train trip to gather support for the preservation of Grand Central Station, and the prevention of a proposed fifty-five-story office tower of steel and glass over the terminal.³⁷ Her association with Grand Central began in 1975, just as her marriage to Aristotle Onassis was unraveling. Whenever Grand Central was mentioned, her name also appeared, often accompanied by a quote explaining her involvement in this worthy cause. She also played an important role

³⁴Clyde Haberman, "A Kennedy Graduates," *New York Times*, 8 June 1979, C12, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁵Caryl S. Avery, "Jackie, A Mother's Journey," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1989, 198.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 144-46.

³⁷"Celebrities Ride the Rails to Save Grand Central," *New York Times*, 17 Apr. 1978, D9, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

in obtaining landmark status for the Greek Revival buildings in New York's Snug Harbor, confirming her concern for preserving American culture, a subtle echo of the White House restoration project of 1962.

Jacqueline Onassis continued to rub shoulders with the rich and famous, but, so the American public would not object, she spent her money on charitable causes as well. Instead of attending events for social purposes only, she attended benefits for the Municipal Art Society and other worthy causes. She organized a dinner for the art society in honor of the artist Isamu Noguchi, serving as the gracious hostess, another similarity to her role as First Lady. Even her private dinner parties were smaller and less frequent than before. She was seen as a contributor to society, not just a voracious consumer.

Although people could relate to her through her job, her children, and her involvement in charitable organizations, it would always be her status as a Kennedy that was most endearing. Renewed involvement in the Kennedy family was another successful part of the rehabilitation of her image. She was involved in the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, attending a number of fund-raisers and dedications in her late husband's honor, and she also reached out to other Kennedys, utilizing her Onassis ties. She helped recruit Greek-Americans in support of her former brother-in-law Edward Kennedy during his presidential campaign, although she refused to speak on his behalf, limiting herself to handshakes.³⁸ She attended

³⁸Patricia Burstein, "A Handshake, A Whisper, A View of the Valentino: It's Jackie's Gentle Campaign for Ted," *People*, 17 Mar. 1980, 30-1.

From Saint to Sinner and Back Again 85

the marriage of her niece Sydney Lawford, and the wedding of another niece, Maria Shriver, to the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger. These renewed connections with the Kennedy clan helped to remind the public of her status as the beloved wife of her first husband, the martyr, and of the time when she basked in his reflected glory.

By the time of her death on 19 May 1994, Jacqueline Onassis's campaign to rehabilitate her image was so successful that she was internationally mourned and revered as one of the most celebrated women of the twentieth century. She had once again become a "saint" in the public's estimation, overcoming the disappointment and hatred engendered by her marriage to Aristotle Onassis. She was raised in high society and was never just an average citizen, but the American people found her down to earth as First Lady. They would not, however, accept Jacqueline Onassis, the rich, trophy wife of a Greek tycoon. Although in the later years of her life she dated Maurice Tempelman, another short, fat wealthy man, they never married, keeping their relationship very private. She had learned that for a former First Lady who was famous for being the wife of a popular man, remarrying was not acceptable, nor was spending huge amounts of money, unless she was employed.

After John F. Kennedy was assassinated, his widow told historian T. H. White to "rescue Jack from all the 'bitter people' who were going to write about him in history."³⁹ Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis also did not want to leave it to the biased court of public opinion to judge her life. She took the initiative, playing an active

³⁹T.H. White, "Camelot, Sad Camelot," *Time*, 3 July 1978, 46.

role in how she would be remembered. No one could ever forget her grace as First Lady or the shock when she became Mrs. Onassis. She could never totally control the press. However, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis knew that she had the ability to transcend previous press incarnations and define her life by her actions. By consciously focusing on her job, her role as mother, her commitment to the arts, and her first husband's memory as President, she remade her image. Although she was well bred and extremely wealthy, the average American could relate to her newly formulated life. She was no longer Jacqueline Onassis, the villain, or even Jacqueline Kennedy, the saint, but rather Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, a woman Americans could pity, love, and envy, yet respect all the same.

A Calculated Crusade: Venice, Commerce, and the Fourth Crusade

James B. Hooper

When Urban II preached the First Crusade to the Council of Clermont at the end of the 11th century, he urged a pre-emptive strike against the Muslims whose military advances continually threatened the eastern boundaries of the Byzantine Empire. Exhorting his spiritual subjects to “destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends,” Urban inspired an emotional response from western Christians based on the fact that their Muslim opponents differed so greatly from them in culture, religion, and ethnicity.¹ The popular polarization of light versus dark, Christ versus Mohammed, west versus east, and good versus evil filled many Europeans with hatred and ignited the flames of crusade that would not be extinguished for hundreds of years. However, closer examination of the Crusades and the relationships developed therein reveal that a diametric reduction of the conflict is grossly inaccurate. In fact, the intimate trade relationships that the Venetians developed as a result of the early Crusades gave them specific knowledge which proved paramount in the redirection of the Fourth Crusade through Constantinople.

As the First Crusade took form and the Holy Land erupted in religious conflict, the Christians occupied

¹Fulcher of Chartres, “Urban II’s Call for a Crusade,” in S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, eds., *The Crusades: a Reader* (Broadview, 2003), 40.

a number of territories—including Jerusalem—known as the Crusader States. After stabilizing the region as much as possible, a practical problem emerged. Since all the Muslims had not been expelled from the Levant, the two sides would be forced to live in peace together. While the war had been founded on cultural incompatibility and religious opposition, neither side could justify genocide. When Christians had gained firm control of the Holy Land and had established the Crusader States, they allowed Muslims and Jews to live under their jurisdiction with relative freedom, adopting “an attitude of relative tolerance towards other creeds.”² According to Jonathan Phillips, the Christians lived side-by-side with Muslims not necessarily out of any religious concession, but simply because “it was impractical for the Franks to drive out or persecute all those who did not observe the Latin rite.”³

The interfaith communities that developed as a result of the First Crusade led to a dramatic rise in cross-cultural contact. Although there was no love lost between Christians and Muslims, out of necessity and comparative advantage, they began trading with one another. The Muslims could obtain goods from the East that were not available in great quantities in Europe, while in exchange, the westerners could offer raw materials from the countryside as well as finished goods from the more specialized urban centers of the medieval west. In addition, the Crusaders who settled

²Jonathan Phillips, “The Latin East,” in Jonathan Riley-Smith, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades* (Oxford, 1999), 115.

³*Ibid.*

in the Levant harvested such cash crops as sugar and cotton, as well as millet, maize, grapes and olives for export, making the East a thriving commercial center.⁴ Most of this economic activity took shape in the form of the Islamic *kharaj*, a tax system where the indigenous subjects of the Crusader States paid their Christian rulers from their crops.⁵

Before the Crusades, the Mediterranean was already the scene of a robust inter-cultural economy. The merchant city-states of Southern Italy, especially Amalfi, dominated trade in the Southeast Mediterranean in places such as Jerusalem and Alexandria. The Amalfitans were mostly involved in the import of luxury items from the East for the wealthy courts and monasteries throughout Southern Europe and the Byzantine Empire. These southern Italian merchants maintained a level of maritime dominance throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, and it was only later that the Venetians, the Pisans and the Genoese surpassed their southern rivals in the control of the Levant microeconomy.⁶

Nevertheless, Northern Italians did have an eastern Mediterranean presence in the pre-Crusading years. A huge collection of correspondence and contracts found in Old Cairo contains hundreds of letters pertaining to Egyptian and Mediterranean trade during the period from 900-1300. One letter written in approximately 1060 by an Egyptian merchant named Nahray ben Nissim mentions the Italians present in

⁴*Ibid.*, 116.

⁵*Ibid.*, 117.

⁶David Abulafia, "Trade and Crusade," in Michael Goodich, Sophia Menache and Sylvia Schein, eds., *Cross Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period*, (Peter Lang, 1995), 3.

Alexandria at the time. Indiscriminately referred to as *Rumi*, the Italians are mentioned in a number of other documents buying indigo and brazilwood, a material grown in India and used as a red dye for textiles. In another letter, the Italians are involved in the purchase of large quantities of flax. The author of the letters is under the impression that the *Rumi* will pay excessive prices for these commodities, and will pay the same for poor quality flax as high quality flax. This assessment seems to indicate either the value and scarcity of these products in the west, or the incompetence of the Italians. One letter specifically identifies Genoese merchants in Alexandria, so we know that the Amalfitans did not operate a maritime monopoly.⁷ But, prior to the crusades, the involvement of northern Italian merchants in Egyptian commerce was neither regular nor widespread.⁸

Interestingly enough, the advent of the crusading era undermined the Amalfitans' commercial superiority. Tied up in the politics of the turbulent region of southern Italy, the Amalfitans could not coordinate a fleet for the First Crusade, and their northern counterparts managed to obtain the privilege of the crusaders for their naval assistance and religious devotion. In exchange for their commitment to the crusading cause by 1104, the Genoese received the first honors, receiving total exemption from commercial duties at a

⁷A.L. Udovitch, "A Tale of Two Cities: Commercial Relations between Cairo and Alexandria during the Second Half of the Eleventh Century," in Harry A. Miskimin, David Herlihy, and A.L. Udovitch, eds., *The Medieval City*, (Yale University Press, 1977), 150-7.

⁸Abulafia, "Trade," 7.

number of Holy Land ports.⁹ The Venetians profited considerably from their crusade to assist King Baldwin in the defense of the Kingdom of Jerusalem from 1122-1124. They were given various rights in all the major cities of the Kingdom, and were promised one third of Tyre and Ascalon if they helped the Christians capture them.¹⁰ In the process, the Venetians encountered and destroyed Egypt's most effective naval fleet as the Muslims attempted to regain a foothold in the Levant.¹¹ Beyond that, the Venetians managed to ravage enough Byzantine holdings to scare emperor John II Comnenus into issuing a new chrysobull to Venice, renewing their inordinately advantageous commercial privileges in Eastern Europe. So, for the Northern Italian merchant states, the Crusades proved to be beneficial in more than just a spiritual dimension.

The early Crusades gave rise to Acre as a major port of the eastern Mediterranean, and the subsequent control of the coastline of the Levant achieved by the conquest of Tyre (with the exception of Ascalon) ensured the presence of western merchants in the east for years to come. The popular trade route that emerged in the mid-1100s took merchants from northern Italy with finished goods to deliver to Acre,

⁹Christopher Marshall, "The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096-1104," in Peter Edbury and Jonathan Phillips, eds., *The Experience of Crusading*, (Cambridge, 2003), 60.

¹⁰John Julius Norwich, *Venice* (Allen Lane, 1981), 113.

¹¹Jonathan Riley-Smith, "King Fulk of Jerusalem and the Sultan of Babylon," in Benjamin Z. Kedar, Jonathan Riley-Smith and Rudolph Hiestand, eds., *Montjoie: Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayor*, (Variorum, 1997), 58.

and then on to Alexandria, the more profitable market, with luxury goods and more attractive investments. In this system, Acre is merely a link point between the Frankish settlers and the Egyptians, an excuse to connect the worlds of Islam and Christianity.¹² Adolf Schaube contends that by 1150, a sophisticated monetary system had developed that transferred silver from the west into gold that was coined in Jerusalem and used to purchase goods in Alexandria. By this time, Alexandria had established itself as a major hub of economic prosperity, and both Italians and Crusaders had taken a significant interest in it.¹³

Alexandria gained such a distinct advantage over the Christian port of Acre by the 1150s, primarily because of its geographic advantage. As the main trading locus of the Egyptian region, merchants in Alexandria were able to gain access to the world of the west through the Mediterranean, and had access to the vast resources of India and the east by virtue of its proximity to the Red Sea. According to David Abulafia, "Alexandria was the interchange point between [two] otherwise largely self-contained trading systems."¹⁴ Although operating on favorable terms with easterners, the Christians of Acre could never hope to enjoy that kind of connection because of their location on the comparatively static Levant coast, and the Egyptians had control of the Red Sea.

At this point, the Muslims were regaining a significant level of military power and political control over

¹²Abulafia, "Trade," 2-3.

¹³*Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴David Abulafia, "The Role of Trade in Muslim/Christian Contact," in D. Agius and R. Hitchcock, eds., *Arab Influence in Medieval Europe*, (Ithaca Press, 1994), 6-7.

the regions they had lost to the Christians during the first quarter-century of the crusading era. After their devastation at the hands of westerners during the First Crusade, the Muslims lacked the ability to organize a cohesive political union strong enough to combat their Christian occupiers until around 1139. Around this time, the emir of Aleppo, a Muslim town just to the east of the major crusader city of Antioch (the seat of a Christian principality) began to gain control and command some military authority. His name was Zengi, and he set the stage for a dramatic re-unification of the Muslim empire when he recaptured the northeastern crusader city of Edessa in 1144.¹⁵ Under Zengi and his son Nur al-Din, the unifying message of *jihad* enabled the Muslims to take advantage of Frankish politicians who were primarily involved in internal squabbles. In addition to Christian rulers, even Muslim leaders of the northeastern portion of the Holy Land were indiscriminately swept under the control of Zengi and Nur al-Din. The rise of the Zangids was less a divinely inspired reclamation than an attempt at expanding political sway.¹⁶ This rising threat sparked a new crusade from the west, preached primarily by Bernard of Clairvaux, which met little success.¹⁷

After the conquest of Damascus by Nur al-Din in 1154 and the acquisition of Ascalon by the Frankish King Baldwin III, a period of stability followed. But, the focus of the political conflicts moved to the south-

¹⁵Ibn al-Athir, "Ibn al-Athir on the Fall of Edessa," in Allen and Amt, eds., *The Crusades*, 133.

¹⁶P.M. Holt, *The Age of Crusades: The Near East from the 11th Century to 1517*, (Longman, 1986), 38.

¹⁷Ibn al-Athir, 134.

ern region of the Levant, and Egypt came to the foreground. By mid-century, the authority of the Fatimids who controlled the Muslims in North Africa was beginning to wane.¹⁸ Around 1163 Baldwin was able to “place Egypt under tribute,”¹⁹ at least to some extent. Soon after his death, Baldwin’s successor, Amalric, mismanaged his holdings in Egypt and jeopardized his truce with Nur al-Din in Damascus by leading a number of sorties into Egypt and Alexandria over the next 4 years.²⁰ The Christian king intervened in the intra-territorial dispute between the Fatimid viziers fighting for political control, but could not make any advances because he was thwarted by the intervention of Nur al-Din’s head commander, Shirkuh, who hoped to secure the valuable Egyptian cities for his own interests.²¹ In 1167 and 1168, Amalric again attempted to take over Egypt. This time, he was completely expelled and his army was obliterated.

Amalric’s attempts at strengthening his own holdings proved to be disastrous and fatal for his future as a Levant monarch. In the process, Shirkuh took the leading role in the Egyptian government. Within weeks he would die, and his nephew Saladin, who had assisted him throughout the past years of military upheaval, would be appointed leader.²² Saladin subsequently initiated the most widespread unification of the Holy Land in history. He continued

¹⁸Holt, 46.

¹⁹Mahmoud Omran, “King Amalric and the Siege of Alexandria,” in Peter W. Edbury, ed., *Crusade and Settlement*, (Cardiff, 1985), 191.

²⁰Holt, 46.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*, 48.

to preach the message of *jihad* and aggressively sought to reclaim the Near East for Islam and his political regime. This platform reached its height with the conquest of Jerusalem in 1187, and the subsequent defense of the Holy Land against the Third Crusade led by Richard of England, Philip of France, and Frederick Barbarossa. The Levant was almost completely retaken by Muslims in this period, and the only major city in Christian hands after 1193 was the port of Acre. Upon Saladin's death in 1195, however, the empire he united quickly disintegrated. As so often happens after the unexpected death of a strong authoritarian leader, the Muslim empire suffered from a lack of organization, and factional leaders sought to use their military power to wrest control of government functions. Clan struggles followed Saladin's death, mainly initiated by his family members. Under this disorganized Ayyubid confederacy, major regions were partitioned off and given to Saladin's relatives. Eventually, in 1200, As-Adil Sayf Al-Din took some semblance of control, but the Ayyubid leaders were "frequently at odds" with one another.²³

In Rome at this time, a new, young and headstrong Pope had come into power advocating a new crusade to reclaim Jerusalem, attempting to resurrect the same religious fervor that Urban had elicited from the knights and commoners of Europe more than a century before. Innocent III called his followers to win back Christ's city, and by 1201, a treaty had been signed in Venice, officially organizing what would become the Fourth Crusade. By the turn of the century, knights and nobility interested in the military

²³*Ibid.*, 60-1.

strength of the Levant generally agreed that Jerusalem could only fall to the Christians if an army traveled first through Egypt. Once they took Egypt, the rest should fall into place. In the century since Jerusalem's first capitulation, Egypt's political strength constantly threatened the safety of the crusaders settled in the Levant. Although its leaders were not consistently hostile, Egypt remained Muslim-controlled for the duration of the 12th century, a fact that did not sit well with Europeans in the Levant. According to Mahmoud Omran, the Egyptians (especially under the Fatimid caliphate) posed "persistent opposition" that threatened the continued existence of the Crusader States.²⁴

In addition, the crusaders of 1201 had learned from the catastrophic Third Crusade of Richard Coeur de Lion in the previous decade. That King gave his opinion that Egypt was the weakest part of the Muslim empire, and that any subsequent assaults on Jerusalem must go through Alexandria in order to succeed.²⁵ Furthermore, the previous position held by Alexandria before Muslim conquest still had to be fresh in the minds of those with an interest in the strength of the Roman Church. Alexandria, along with Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch and Constantinople, had been one of the original five patriarchates of the Church. When the First Crusade was called, the prospect of reuniting the Church Empire only increased the fervor with which Europeans set out for the Levant. At that time, only two of the original five patriarchates were in "Christian" hands. The establishment of the Crusader States

²⁴Omran, 191.

²⁵Norwich, *Venice*, 151.

temporarily reunited most of the original Mediterranean Church. If the crusaders could regain Alexandria in 1204 and move north, all the patriarchates could at last be restored, along with the domination of the Christian church throughout the Mediterranean.

The chronicler Gunther of Paris, who participated in the Fourth Crusade, offered a number of explanations for the selection of Egypt as the initial target of the Jerusalem expedition. "At this time a truce between our people and the Barbarians was in effect in the regions beyond the sea. Our people could not violate what they had pledged in good faith." The contract he mentions with the Muslims in Syria would stand from 1198 to 1203, and had been negotiated in the interest of protecting the Latins who lived there. Those Europeans still living in the Levant had negotiated peace with their Islamic neighbors and hoped to keep conflict to a minimum.²⁶ Gunther also cited the unanimous agreement of the Crusade leaders Baldwin of Flanders and Boniface of Montferrat on Alexandria as the target. They firmly agreed with Coeur de Lion's military assessment of the Muslim East. Richard's statement proved to be even more pertinent due to the current economic situation in Egypt, at least as it was perceived by Gunther. The Nile had been dry for a period longer than normal, and word had spread to the west that the formerly lush harvests of the Egyptians were nonexistent because the land had become infertile. In an exaggerated estimation of the state of Egypt's citizens, Gunther remarked that "almost the

²⁶Gunther of Paris, *The Capture of Constantinople*, Alfred J. Anrea ed. and trans., (University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 77, 152.

entire population had either perished, the victim of famine, or was barely eking out a poor living.”²⁷

Although the situation was not likely this dire, the Egyptians certainly appeared to be in a vulnerable position. Donald Queller seems to agree with Gunther’s analysis, at least to some extent. The Nile could then—and still does today—weigh heavily on the physical well-being of the Egyptian people, and subsequently on their political stability. Queller also cites hints from earlier crusaders like Amalric in the 1160s and Reynaud of Châtillon, who led an expedition against the Egyptians in 1183.²⁸ For a short time Reynaud’s presence threatened the most important trade and pilgrimage routes of the Muslims. In his Ayyubid history, al-Maqrizi recognized Reynaud’s intent to take the holy city of Medina.²⁹ The 14th century Muslim scholar al-Safadi referred to Reynaud as “the most malicious, evil, and treacherous of the Franks.”³⁰ While ultimately unsuccessful, Reynaud and Amalric managed to sufficiently threaten the Egyptian Muslims and highlight the military reality that if Egypt fell, Christians would be able to live comfortably and freely in the Holy Land. Moreover, control of Egypt would split the Muslim world in two sections, divorcing the Middle East and North Africa, most likely rendering it powerless.³¹

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Queller, *The Fourth Crusade*, (University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 13.

²⁹ al-Maqrizi, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans*, R.J.C. Broadhurst, ed. and trans., (Twayne, 1980), 70.

³⁰ Holt, 56-7.

³¹ Queller, 13.

The assessment of the crusade leaders about Egypt seems to have been pretty accurate. One major implication of their decision to go to Alexandria was the necessity for sea travel. The plan involved a coastal assault on the great port city, and the crusaders needed to commission an enormous fleet to carry the proposed 33,500 crusaders necessary to sack the city. Therefore, the crusaders negotiated the Treaty of 1201 with the Venetians, who halted a majority of their commercial activities over the subsequent year in order to construct the requisite armada. The decision to involve the commercially proficient Venetians—the historically debated fatal flaw of the doomed Fourth Crusade—had many (mostly negative) implications.

The Venetians' relationship with Alexandria and the Egyptian government has fallen under great scrutiny by historians hoping to find evidence that the Venetians deliberately steered the Fourth Crusade not to Egypt, but to Constantinople, which the Christians ended up conquering by the end of their journey. In order to analyze this relationship, we must first look deeper into the commercial history of Alexandria and its involvement with the Italians. Earlier, we discussed the geographic advantage of Alexandria as the central link of the commercial chain connecting east and west. Under this advantage, Alexandria became a "major clearing-house for spices from India and the southern seas, providing in return a ready market for European timber and metal."³² In this environment merchants could exchange goods to the great economic gain of the Egyptian government. For example, cotton, pepper, and ginger were not even produced in Egypt, yet they

³²Norwich, *Venice*, 101.

would pass through the commercial registry of the Sultan and be heavily taxed.³³

The Sultan had a significant control over the trade that occurred in Egypt. In 1183, Ibn Jubayr traveled from his hometown in North Africa through the Muslim Empire, keeping a detailed itinerary the whole way. Upon arriving in Alexandria, he made note of the immediacy with which the Sultan's agents boarded his vessel in order to record all the luggage items and food stores that came with the ship. In addition, they temporarily confiscated all of the travelers' personal belongings for inspection. Jubayr was particularly upset when some of his companions' possessions were "lost" in this process, most likely stolen by the customs agents.³⁴

Some variation of this procedure occurred with every vessel that entered an Alexandrian harbor. According to Aziz Atiya, an expert on medieval commerce, the Alexandrian agents would remove the sails and rudders of any ship coming into port. They also used the common restraint of a giant chain across the breakwater, in order to keep merchants from leaving in the night without paying the fee of one gold piece to dock at Alexandria. In addition to these constraints, more restrictions were imposed on foreigners. Merchants from abroad could not travel deep into the channels of the Nile delta or far inland at all, in order to protect the Red Sea from potential danger. The sultans "zealously guarded [the Red Sea] against alien infiltration," because it was such a crucial point in the

³³Abulafia, *Arab Influence*, 7.

³⁴Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, William Wright, ed., (AJ Brill, 1907), 31-2.

protection of Mecca and Medina, and was the site of an active eastern trade hub.³⁵ In addition to travel restrictions, foreigners were kept in a *funduq* (Italian *fondaco*), a small neighborhood or simple inn. The *funduq* had to keep its doors closed from nightfall until dawn, and during Friday prayers. Highly suspicious of infidels from the west, the Egyptians enacted these measures in order to protect their domestic security against sabotage.³⁶

In addition to taxation, the state monopolized the sale and purchase of commodities that came through Alexandria, and had done so since 1052. For those raw materials imported and not marked for re-export, the *Matjar* (trade office) would purchase the whole shipment, and determine the price at which they would enter the market.³⁷ The *Matjar* was able to obtain this monopoly by charging lower duties on goods sold to the state than those purchased by private individuals. They would often resell these goods, even war materials, on the open market for a fair profit, after fulfilling state requirements. According to David Jacoby, an expert on Near Eastern commerce, the *Matjar* would offer to buy commodities such as timber, iron and pitch at prices that would attract foreign merchants. In a letter addressed to the Pisans, Saladin encourages Pisan investment trade by highlighting the potentially high profit levels.³⁸

³⁵ Aziz Atiya, *Crusade, Commerce and Culture*, (Indiana University, 1962), 194.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

³⁷ David Jacoby, "The Supply of War Materials to Egypt in the Crusader Period," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 103.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

During the late Fatimid era, and especially after the first wave of crusaders took control of the Holy Land, Egypt became particularly dependent upon the west for the supply of the war materials. Before the fall of Syria to crusaders, Egyptians could simply sail up their coast to cut timber in the abundant Cilician forests.³⁹ This advantage was lost in the 12th century, but they were able to draw western interest through the *Matjar's* monopoly, the eastern luxury items, and their own production of the minerals. Alum in particular was used abundantly in the textile and leather industries of the Europeans, and therefore in high demand. The Egyptians also secured the supply of timber, pitch and iron through contingent trade privileges granted on the condition that the merchants would supply timber and other wartime commodities.⁴⁰ Under these agreements, many records exist documenting the supply of timber to the Muslims in Alexandria from the Pisans and the Genoese during the height of crusading conflicts. The Italians rarely missed an opportunity to capitalize on a profitable opportunity.⁴¹

The Pisans seemed to have gained the upper hand in the Egyptian market in the first half of the 12th century, receiving trade privileges and a *funduq* in Alexandria before 1153, and numerous advantages in subsequent agreements. According to comments made by the geographer Zuhri around 1150, it seems that the Pisans even supplied swords to Alexandria during the crusades. Conflicts emerged when the Crusader

³⁹Abulafia, "Trade," 17.

⁴⁰Jacoby, 105.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 105-6.

State leaders began to realize that a fair amount of double-dealing had occurred. In 1156 King Baldwin III of Jerusalem offered commercial exemptions to Pisans, but only to those who did not get involved in the arms and war commodity trading in Egypt. Some responded by cutting off the Egyptians, some continued a secret trading relationship, and some decided to stay with the Egyptians after the sultan offered more incentives to keep their business.⁴²

Although the Pisans had the strongest presence in Alexandria through the opening years of crusading, the Genoese and the Venetians were certainly not excluded. A Byzantine edict shows that the Venetians may have supplied war materials to the Muslims in Alexandria as far back as 971. With abundant timber and iron resources in the region surrounding the lagoon, the Venetians were well equipped to supply Egypt with the tools of war. However, their trade focus and political allegiance lay, for the most part, with the Byzantines in Constantinople, where they had received very generous customs considerations since the chrysobull of 992. But, this relationship changed dramatically after Emperor Manuel expelled the Venetians from Constantinople in 1171, imprisoning the thousands of merchants who conducted business in his empire, and confiscating their property. As a result, trade between Venice and Egypt immediately increased. In fact, Saladin granted the Venetians a *funduq* in Alexandria in 1172 at the request of the Doge himself. In addition, large shipments of timber were regularly scheduled for Alexandrian delivery. Finally, the Venetian diplomatic embassy sent in 1174

⁴²*Ibid.*, 106.

to patch up the misunderstanding with Byzantium made a winter-long stop with Saladin in Alexandria. Coincidentally, the main ambassador on that mission was the same man who would lead the Venetians in the expedition against Constantinople 30 years later, the future doge Enrico Dandolo.⁴³

Regarding the events of 1201-1204, it is the contention of this paper that the Venetians had ultimately decided that they should try to steer the crusaders away from Egypt, and towards Constantinople or any other region where they might find economic gains. Many scholars have supported the claim that the Sultan of Egypt sent gifts and bribes to the Venetians in 1202. These scholars contend that a formal treaty assured the cooperation of the two powers in diverting the crusaders, but I see no reason to believe that this treaty was ever concluded. It did not need to be. The Venetians were smart enough to recognize that their interests would be better served if they could gain the favor of the Egyptians and secure Constantinople for the future. Even if the Crusade were successful, the Venetians could not have hoped to take the economy of Alexandria under their control, and this was made evident by their actions. Their actions also proved that their motives were driven primarily by profits and not piety. Venetian ascent to commercial dominance after the conclusion of the Crusade indicates the nature of their privileged status within the Muslim kingdom as a result of their hand in the Crusade's diversion.

In order to more fully understand the motivations of Venice with regards to Egypt, we must first address the council at Montpellier in 1162 and Third Lateran

⁴³*Ibid.*, 107-110.

Council of 1179, both called by Pope Alexander III. These councils outlawed the sale of arms, iron or lumber to Muslims, and even banned the ferrying of Muslims on Christian vessels. The punishment for breaking either of these laws was excommunication. Based on the persistence of trading activity, the Italians seemed to pay no heed to these papal threats.⁴⁴ When Innocent came to power at the end of the century, he chose to implement these policies with more authority than had his predecessors. Clearly, the Venetians in particular would have been economically devastated by these restrictions, as evidenced by their dependence on the Egyptians. When he was informed by two envoys from Venice that the Venetians could not observe the decree, Innocent wrote a letter addressed to the city itself. His letter acknowledged its dependence on trade since they did not “engage in agriculture,” and he allowed them to participate in trade with Egypt as long as only non-war materials were exchanged. He still forbade the sale of “iron, flax, pitch, sharp instruments, rope, weapons, galleys, ships, and timbers, whether hewn or in the rough.” According to this letter, Innocent simply reasserts the provisions of the Third Lateran Council, and expects the Venetians to offer their naval assistance to Jerusalem in return for his “favor.”⁴⁵

This letter is a testimony to the prevalence of the exchange in war commodities between Venice and Egypt, very late into the 12th century. Interestingly enough, the Cairo Genizah documents contained a

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 109.

⁴⁵Innocent III, “To Venice,” in Allen and Amt, eds., *The Crusades*.

letter from 1200 reporting the unconfirmed arrival in Alexandria of two Venetian ships loaded with timber. This anticipated shipment shows that the Venetians had no intention of honoring the prohibition of Innocent III.⁴⁶ Under risk of "divine condemnation,"⁴⁷ the Venetians continued to pursue profits. Claude Cahen puts it directly in his assessment of Venetian intentions: "In order to strengthen their right to trade in Egypt, the Italians succumbed to the requests of the Fatimids and the Ayyubids for armaments."⁴⁸ It is also apropos to note that, by 1200, the impending Crusade was well known throughout the west. Many prominent nobles began to take up the cross as early as 1199.⁴⁹ That the Venetians (as they had done many times before) would supply the enemy in direct defiance of their spiritual ruler shows that they acted primarily for the advancement of their commercial benefit.

After the Treaty of 1201 was signed, the Venetians began to prepare for the supposed attack on Jerusalem. Scholars such as John H. Pryor and John Julius Norwich contend that the Sultan sent envoys and bribes to Venice at this time in order to sway the entourage away from the shores of Alexandria. Norwich bases his argument on a treaty signed by the Sultan As-Adil Sayf Al-Din granting numerous privileges to the Venetians, including tax considerations,

⁴⁶SD Goiten, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jews of the Arab World as Portrayed by the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* 1, (UC Berkeley, 1967): 301.

⁴⁷Innocent III in Allen and Amt.

⁴⁸quoted. in Abulafia, "Trade," 17.

⁴⁹Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *Villehardouin and De Joinville: Memoirs of the Crusades*, Frank Marzials, trans., (JM Dent & Sons, 1955), 2.

their own quarter, and the safe passage of any pilgrims aboard Venetian ships bound for the Holy Sepulchre. The agreement also involved an envoy exchange, with each side sending an ambassador to their respective capitals. Norwich's argument is based on Karl Hopf's analysis which dates the treaty to 13 May 1202. Six western sources exist that address the treaty between the Venetians and the Sultan of Egypt. One is clearly from after 1204; another date is unintelligible, and the remaining four give the date as the 19th day of the Islamic month of Saben, but not the year. The critical element of these sources is that in them the Sultan refers to himself as "king of kings and Commander of the Faithful," a title which was not bestowed upon him until 1207-1208. In addition, the Sultan's pledge to protect Christian pilgrims would not likely have been made at a time when the westerners were organizing a crusade. The Sultan would be unlikely to make any concessions outside of the commercial sphere to Christians in such a potentially hostile climate. M. Hanotaux and Ludwig Streit convincingly discredited Hopf's analysis in a series of works published around the turn of the 20th century. Their apparently correct date of 9 March 1208 places this treaty far enough past the Fourth Crusade to render its direct implications for the Fourth Crusade meaningless.⁵⁰

Pryor's argument, based on the *Chronicle of Flanders*, presents a slightly different angle. The *Chronicle* states that the Sultan sent 1,000 gold marks to Dandolo upon hearing that Egypt was under threat of invasion. Although Pryor ultimately admits that "there

⁵⁰Norwich, 152. See also FC Hodgson, *The Early History of Venice*, (Ballantine, Hanson & Co., 1901), 428-34.

is no reason whatsoever to give any credence to [these reports],” the fact of the matter remains that these rumors did exist in the crusader camps.⁵¹ There may not be a smoking gun, but the lack of conclusive evidence does not mean that it did not exist at one point. In fact, based on the string of chance encounters that led the crusaders to Constantinople, it seems that such a rumor is suspiciously creative. Ultimately, however, it seems that the rumor was more than likely inserted into the *Chronicle* after the conclusion of the Crusade as a way of placing more blame on the Venetians, to lighten the guilt of the crusading host.

Nevertheless, the treaty cannot be so easily dismissed in this discussion. Following the Fourth Crusade, the Venetians did enjoy significant growth in the rights they enjoyed in Alexandria. The existing treaty mentioned earlier was indeed signed in 1208, and it is probable that this treaty was a reward for the actions undertaken from 1201-1204 to deflect the Fourth Crusade. Furthermore, by 1238 a royal decree from the Sultan Abu Bakr guaranteed the general security of all Venetians in Egyptian lands, exemption from any new duties, complete freedom of trade, two factories, a bathhouse and a chapel all under their own jurisdiction, the freedom to import wine, and various legal privileges including trial by their peers. In addition, the Venetians were safeguarded against any Muslim corsairs or pirates raiding Egyptian waters.⁵² Compared to the restrictions that weighed

⁵¹John H. Pryor, “The Venetian Fleet for the Fourth Crusade and the Diversion of the Crusade to Constantinople,” in Kedar, Riley-Smith and Hiestand, *Montjoie*, 113-4.

⁵²Holt, 163.

heavily on the freedom of the Venetians through the 12th century (they were held captive in Alexandria in 1195), they were now practically part of the family. Although an explicit treaty does not exist, it seems that a policy of back-scratching was certainly initiated after the Treaty of 1201. The Venetians were given more favorable treatment after the Crusade than were rival Italians from Pisa and Genoa. (It is also imperative to comment on the lack of a physical treaty. Since any agreement between Venice and Egypt would have been kept very secret, the discovery of a physical document outlining their commercial collusion is highly unlikely. Consider the Treaty of 1201—it makes no mention of Egypt either!)

Attempting to approach the decision to go to Egypt from the Venetian perspective, at first glance it would seem that conquering Egypt would serve them better than Constantinople. For example, the Venetians had just renegotiated their chrysobull of commercial privileges with Byzantium in 1198. They had a significant advantage over the Pisans and Genoese in Constantinople, and trailed behind their two main rivals in Alexandria. Taking over the Alexandrian market would have given the Venetians a monopoly on the eastern connection. However, a closer inspection into the structure of the Egyptian and Muslim society will shed some new light on the realities of a Christian assault on Alexandria.

The Venetians would have been familiar with the bureaucratic organization of the Egyptian government, primarily through their dealings in the harbors of Alexandria with the *Matjar*. With the rise to ascendancy of Islam in the Near East, Arabic metropolises would develop in stark contrast to the major cities of

the west. The primary difference between the Islamic cities and those of Western Europe lies in geography. The rise of the Islamic urban center occurred inland, primarily because the main contingent of Muslims—Arabs and North Africans—were desert dwellers. So when major cities began popping up, they were naturally distant from the coastline of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, as well as the Persian Gulf. According to A.L. Udovitch, “the sea was a menacing frontier to Muslim rulers.”⁵³ The sea was not feared for the inherent dangers it presented to all men—storms, waves, etc.—but it was a threat because it threatened the strategic unity of Islamic domination. The sea was the “one vulnerable frontier” where Muslims could potentially be conquered from the West. A perfect example is the ease with which Reynaud ravaged the coasts of the Red Sea once he was able to launch a fleet there. The Muslims’ fear grew so potent that the Caliph Umar went so far as to outlaw sea travel for his subjects, punishing anyone who traveled or conquered by water.⁵⁴

Saladin maintained Umar’s attitude of negativity toward the sea. By the time the Mamluks took control of Egypt in 1250, they set out to destroy coastal fortifications so that enterprising crusade outfits could not occupy them and threaten Islamic stability. The coastal centers in Islamic nations took the role of “frontier outposts,” and were not the focus of military or political strength. In Egypt, Alexandria was the main port, but it was still referred to as a frontier town. Cairo was the main hub of naval and military

⁵³Udovitch, 144.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 145.

activity. It also served as the financial, commercial, and economic center of the Egyptian caliphate, while Alexandria was its very distant “suburb.”⁵⁵ Based on previous encounters with the Egyptian navy (1123), the Venetians would have been confident in their ability to dominate them on the coast, but they would have also known that the heart of Egyptian power lay in waiting many miles to the south in Cairo.

The Muslims’ history of negativity toward sea-travel also meant that the Venetians knew that the Egyptians needed allies for trade in the Mediterranean. If an Alexandrian assault proved unsuccessful, as the Venetians must have believed it would, they risked losing their diplomatic ties to Egypt. Although the Crusaders could have taken Alexandria with ease, the rest of Egypt would be much more unmanageable. And, without the support of the Muslims who controlled the trade routes connecting the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf with Alexandria, those vital connections to the east would most certainly be lost as well. As a privileged client-state of the Caliphate, the Venetians could surpass their North Italian rivals and reap the benefits of an inside connection with the *Matjar*. Ultimately, this is precisely what happened.

In line with their plan to keep the coast of Egypt free from invasion, it is my contention that the Venetians did not expect to conquer Constantinople. The alliance with Alexius IV did not necessarily mean that Constantinople had to be sacked, but it would mean that the Crusaders could pass through the Byzantine Empire on their way to Jerusalem, and avoid going to Egypt at all. As it turned out, the events of the Fourth

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 146-8, 158.

Crusade played to the Venetians' immense advantage, no matter what their initial intentions. But it seems clear that the Venetians had no intention of going to Egypt, with or without an extant treaty of collusion. As a city founded on the principles of mercantilism, the Venetians dealt with all contemporary political groups as clientele, from the Pope in Rome to the Sultan in Cairo. This attitude sparked their rise to the top of the Mediterranean world, and the events of the Fourth Crusade proved paramount in this unprecedented ascension.

Delayed Success: The Redefined Anti-Imperialist Movement of 1898-1900

Brian Hurd

On 1 May 1898, the United States Navy, under the command of Commodore George Dewey, engaged and nearly destroyed the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay. This battle not only provided the United States with a decisive victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898, but it also inaugurated a new era in American expansion. No longer confined within its borders, United States growth would now continue abroad in the Pacific Ocean. At first, the American public and press welcomed the news of military advances during the Spanish-American War. However, the ratification of the Treaty of Paris in February 1899 and the annexation of the Philippines sparked a new protest movement in the United States that opposed this American expansion into Asia.

Those who favored economic expansion into Asia saw the Philippines as a new market for American industry and a possible gateway to the more lucrative Chinese markets. They also saw this expansion as an opportunity to spread civilization into the dark places of the world. Historian Fred Harvey Harrington argues that in opposition, the anti-imperialist movement, which began in 1898, objected to imperialism for political reasons. Many of the arguments found in the anti-imperialist movement were motivated by the political principle that a republic such as the United States should not possess colonies. The anti-imperialists did not oppose colonial expansion for economic or

humanitarian reasons, but rather because such a policy was inconsistent with the self-determination set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address.¹ American imperialism violated the tradition of republican expansion whereby new territories were added with the expectation of eventual admission into the union as a state. As Henry Van Dyke stated in his Thanksgiving Sermon in 1898, an “imperialistic democracy is an impossible hybrid.”² Old World expansion ran counter to American ideals, and it would weaken America’s moral position as an example of freedom, democracy, and self-determination in the world.

Some historians, such as Harrington, overlook the issue of race in the imperialist debate of 1898. While those who favored expansion into Asia cited paternalistic reasons of spreading civilization to “dark corners of the world,” the anti-imperialists also used race to justify their arguments. As radical historian Christopher Lasch asserts, many politicians condemned imperialism on the grounds that Filipinos, like African-Americans, were innately inferior to white people and therefore could not be assimilated into American life.³ Anti-imperialist arguments focused on these racial and

¹Fred H. Harrington, “The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900.” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 22 (Feb. 1935): 211.

²Henry Van Dyke, “The American Birthright and the Philippine Pottage, a Thanksgiving Sermon Preached in the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City, 24 Nov. 1898,” in *Imperialists Versus Anti-Imperialists*, ed. Richard E. Welch, Jr. (Itasca: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1972), 78.

³Christopher Lasch, “The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man,” *Journal of Southern History* 24 (August 1958): 319-31.

political consequences of imperialism, not the economic benefits that expansion into the Philippines would have on American industry.

Harrington also believes that the anti-imperialist movement failed because it was unable to elect William Jennings Bryan to the presidency in 1900. However, the movement initially stated that its objectives were to redefine the notion of American foreign policy following the Spanish-American War. The anti-imperialists did not oppose the ensuing conflict with Filipinos for control of the Philippine Islands. Even though the Philippine-American War lasted longer, cost more money, and took more American lives than the Spanish-American War, the new protest movement was anti-imperialist, not anti-war. An examination of the lasting effects of the movement reveals that the anti-imperialists did not fail as Harrington and other historians have suggested. The Philippines were eventually promised independence in 1916, and the result of the movement was a distinctive form of American Open Door Imperialism, which, according to historian William A. Williams, is based on commercial and moral development without the problems of political entanglement.⁴

This imperialist debate, which was a result of Dewey's invasion of the Philippines, was prompted by the need for American expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. In his 1893 essay, Frederick Jackson Turner stated that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American

⁴William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1972), 50.

development.”⁵ The history of the United States to this time had been the expansion, acquisition, settlement, and growth of the lands west of the Appalachians to the Pacific Ocean. The United States, for the first time in its brief history, no longer found itself facing the challenge of taming the frontier.

With the absence of the American frontier in the 1890s, Americans began to look beyond their borders for new places to spread their economic and cultural ideals. Foreign commercial expansion and national prosperity seemed intertwined, and many felt that it was the duty of the national government to acquire new markets for economic opportunity. In April 1897, Senator Albert J. Beveridge stated that American factories are “making more than the American people can use, and American soil is producing more than they can consume. Fate has written our policy to us: the trade of the world must and shall be ours.”⁶ This “trade of the world” that Beveridge referred to was the Asian markets. By this time, the world had embarked on a second era of colonialism in which European interests had shifted to the Orient. As Senator Henry Cabot Lodge wrote in a letter to a friend on 18 May 1898, “all of Europe is seizing China” and there is a “consequent need to establish ourselves in the East so as not to be shut out of the Asian markets.”⁷

The Spanish-American War, which captivated the minds of the American people, presented the United

⁵Margaret Walsh, *The American Frontier Revisited* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1981), 11.

⁶Williams, 28.

⁷Daniel B. Schirmer, *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing, 1972), 72.

States with an opportunity to secure such a foreign market. At the same time as this movement for expanding American markets, there was also a feeling that the United States was the guardian state of the Western Hemisphere under the Monroe Doctrine. As a result, the Spanish-American War began as a demonstration of American humanitarianism and sympathy towards the Cuban insurgents who were fighting Spanish control. Americans felt that the Spanish had no right to retain a colonial empire in the New World. In his annual address to Congress on 6 December 1897, President William McKinley stated that in regard to Cuba, "I speak not for forcible annexation, for that cannot be thought of. That, by our code of morality, would be criminal aggression."⁸

Even though the United States had claimed it declared war on Spain over popular indignation of Spanish colonial interests in the Caribbean, the first battle in the war to free Cuba actually took place in the western Pacific. When Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, he presented a new array of problems for Americans at home. Out of this naval victory emerged a crisis of national identity in regard to the acquisition of the Philippine Islands. Almost immediately, the presence of American forces in the Philippines and the possibility of taking on the Philippines as America's first colony split the nation on the issue of shaping the peace following the Spanish-American War.⁹

⁸William McKinley, "The Alternatives in Cuba: McKinley's Annual Message to Congress, 6 Dec. 1898," in *The Annals of America, vol. 12, 1895-1904: Populism, Imperialism, and Reform*. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1976), 164.

⁹Schirmer, 80.

Those who favored the formal annexation of the Philippines following the Treaty of Paris on 12 February 1899 believed that the islands would serve as the source of the much-needed markets for American industries. In November 1898, economist John Barrett declared that the acquisition of the Philippines would serve as “an unsurpassed point in the Far East from which to extend our commerce and trade and to gain our share in the immense distribution of material prizes that must follow the opening of China, operating from Manila as a base, as does England from Hong Kong.”¹⁰ The Philippines were not needed as a traditional colony, but rather as an entrepôt into the China market and as a center of American military power in the Pacific.¹¹

Largely ignored at this time in the discussion of Philippine markets were the natives of the islands. During the Spanish-American War, the Filipinos had united with the American army to defeat the Spanish. The Filipinos assumed that once the war had ended, the Americans would leave and grant them independence. However, when the Americans remained, the Filipinos rebelled again. During the ensuing Philippine-American War (often referred to in the United States as the Philippine Insurrection) the Filipinos made no distinction between their Spanish and American conquerors. They believed that the American military showed the Old World sense of

¹⁰John Barrett, “The Problem of the Philippines, Nov. 1898,” in *Imperialists Versus Anti-Imperialists*, 64.

¹¹Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), 107.

imperialism by remaining on the islands and not granting them their independence.¹²

Never before had Americans fought outside North America. In the jungle terrain of the Philippines, they fought seven thousand miles from home.¹³ As the war progressed, Americans realized that suppressing the Filipinos would be far more difficult and costly than defeating Spain. By mid-November 1899, after his army had suffered defeat in conventional battle, Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo switched to guerrilla tactics, a brutal strategy that would prolong the war another three years.¹⁴ Poorly trained and ill supplied, the Filipino army proved no match for the Americans. In fact, the American government did not even recognize the conflict as a war but rather as an insurrection against legitimate American authority.

This conflict, however, did not play a large part in the imperialist debate at home. At the time, many Americans did not have information about the war due to military censorship imposed upon the press. The military created the impression that the hostilities were purely defensive in nature. The American public was unaware of the extent of losses on both sides, and opponents who sought to describe the human and financial costs of the war were called liars.¹⁵ Instead, debate focused on the Philippines merely as the stage

¹²Richard E. Welch, Jr., *Response to Imperialism: The United States and the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 25.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 51.

¹⁵Welch, *Response to Imperialism*, 42.

of imperialism, not considering the military implications of the Philippine-American War specifically.

Historians have agreed that the anti-imperialists of 1898 were a diverse group that was united only through their common opposition to the formal annexation of new territories by the United States. However, there is much disagreement over the particular motives of the various groups of anti-imperialists. Historian Robert Beisner critically analyses several of these anti-imperialist groups, arguing that the anti-imperialists offered a wide range of objections to the acquisition of new territories, including constitutional, diplomatic, moral, racial, political, and historical reasons.¹⁶ Following the annexation of the Philippines, many Anti-Imperialist Leagues were founded to, as historian Richard Welch states, “prevent the Spanish-American War from being perverted into a war for colonial spoils.”¹⁷ Early on, however, the Anti-Imperialist League was essentially a protest movement against overseas imperialism, not the military subjugation of the Filipino people.

In this sense, the anti-imperialists were motivated by political philosophy, not the humanitarian implications that such a foreign policy would have on the rest of the world. New opposition to imperialism did not emerge out of moral condemnation of colonialism but instead primarily focused on the political dangers posed by such a foreign policy.¹⁸ They feared that even more imperialism would emerge following the annex-

¹⁶Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898-1900* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 216.

¹⁷Welch, *Response to Imperialism*, 43.

¹⁸Ninkovich, 200.

ation of the Philippine Islands. Former Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz warned in 1898, "If we take these new regions, we shall be well entangled in that contest for territorial aggrandizement, which distracts other nations and drives them far beyond their original design."¹⁹ It was the belief of many anti-imperialists that an imperialist foreign policy would undermine the institutions and moral health of the nation.

The unifying argument used during the anti-imperialist movement, as Harrington suggests, centered around the implications that an imperialist policy would have on the American political identity. The anti-imperialists were guided by abstract principles of a political ideology, which they felt were founded in the Declaration of Independence. They asserted that a republican form of government could not also be an imperial government, and the United States could not preserve its own democracy if it denied the right of self-rule to others.²⁰

In his first speech against imperialism in Omaha, Nebraska on 14 June 1898, William Jennings Bryan stated, "To inflict upon the enemy [Spain] all possible harm is legitimate warfare, but shall we contemplate a scheme for the colonization of the Orient merely because our ships won a remarkable victory in the harbor of Manila?" Still wearing his uniform after being discharged from the army, Bryan continued, "Our guns destroyed a Spanish fleet, but can they destroy that self-evident truth, that governments

¹⁹Alden March, *The History and Conquest of the Philippines* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 248.

²⁰Beisner, 220.

derive their just powers, not from a superior force, but from the consent of the governed.”²¹

Historically, anti-imperialists such as Bryan felt that a policy of imperialism violated the tradition of American expansion whereby new territories in North America had been added with the expectation that they would eventually be admitted to the union as a state. Many cited the fact that the United States intervened in Cuba to protect its people from foreign arms, and now the United States had the same imperialistic vision in the Pacific. In a speech delivered at the Duckworth Club banquet in Cincinnati, Ohio on 6 January 1899, Bryan declared, “The real question is whether we can, in one hemisphere, develop a theory that governments derive their power from the consent of the governed, and at the same time inaugurate, support, and defend in the other hemisphere a government which derives its authority entirely from superior force.”²² In response to the question of whether the Constitution follows the flag of the United States, Secretary of War Elihu Root said in 1901, “as near as I can make out the Constitution follows the flag—but it doesn’t quite catch up with it.”²³

One final argument used by anti-imperialists, which had a tremendous impact on public opinion regarding the Philippines, was race. Historian Mark Van Ells proposes that Americans viewed Filipinos the

²¹William Jennings Bryan, speech delivered at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha, Nebraska, 14 Jun. 1898, in *Bryan on Imperialism: Speeches, Newspaper Articles, and Interviews* (Chicago: Bentley & Company, 1900), 4.

²²*Ibid.*, William Jennings Bryan, speech delivered at the Duckworth Club banquet in Cincinnati, Ohio, 6 Jan. 1899, 9.

²³Ninkovich, 56.

same as they viewed Native Americans in the United States. "Americans surveyed the Philippines in much the same way they did the North American frontier just a few decades before," Van Ells argues, "as one of the world's dark places awaiting Euro-American civilization and enlightenment."²⁴ He believes Americans thought that the Filipinos, like the American Indians, had to either yield to their way of life or face extermination.

The generalizations that Van Ells describes emerged from the public perception of the Filipinos received from the American press. Filipino historian John Lent analyzed this perception of the Filipino people and reveals that "American newspapers in 1898 had the view that the islands were a rich, untapped source of American wealth and capital. The natives, half-devil, half-child, insist on playing government, a group of warlike tribes who will devour each other the moment American troops leave."²⁵ In most cases, the press portrayed the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands as helpless, mischievous children who desperately needed American care and civilization.²⁶

As a result of the limited knowledge that Americans had regarding the Philippine-American War from the press, there was a strong sense of racism concerning Filipino rights. In the 7 February 1899 issue of the

²⁴Mark D. Van Ells, "Assuming the White Man's Burden: the Seizure of the Philippines, 1898-1902," *Philippine Studies* 43 (Winter 1995): 612.

²⁵John A. Lent, "The Philippine Press During the Revolution and the Filipino-American War," *Asian Thought and Society* 3 (September 1978): 315.

²⁶Christopher A. Vaughan, "The Discovery of the Philippines by the U.S. Press, 1898-1902," *Historian* 57 (Winter 1995): 305.

New York Times, an article entitled “Future Work in the Philippines” proclaimed that Aguinaldo’s “insane attack” and “stupendous folly” offered conclusive evidence that the Filipinos were “undisciplined children.” To give them any political power was “to give a dynamite cartridge to a baby for a plaything.”²⁷ There was a belief among many Americans that there was an innate incapacity for self-government among “colored” races. The subsequent “insurrection” of the Filipinos was seen as confirmation of their need for American rule and tutelage.²⁸ These notions are also reflected in the letters of Henry Adams, an American soldier in the Philippine-American War, to his wife Elizabeth Cameron. In a letter dated 22 January 1899, Adams wrote that the army “must slaughter a million or two of foolish Malays in order to give them the comforts of flannel petticoats and electric railways. We all dread and abominate war, but cannot escape it.”²⁹

It is important to note here that both those who favored expansion and those who opposed it used these racial ideas to justify their argument. Imperialists, who favored the expansion into Asia on the premise of securing new American markets, argued that part of America’s role as a world power included spreading civilization throughout the dark parts of the world such as the Philippines. This idea not only reflected the notion of Manifest Destiny, which was used to secure North American lands in the nineteenth

²⁷“Future Work in the Philippines,” *New York Times*, 7 Feb. 1899, 4.

²⁸Welch, *Response to Imperialism*, 102.

²⁹Henry Adams, “Letters of Henry Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, 22 Jan. 1899,” in *Imperialists Versus Anti-Imperialists*, 106.

century, but it also included the concept of Social Darwinism, which argued that survival and growth belonged not only to the strongest individuals of a species, but also to the strongest nations of the world. It was as carriers of civilization that the United States was obligated to annex the Philippines.³⁰ The result of these two principles was a distinctively new form of American Imperialism that assumed commercial development and the spread of civilization were twin imperatives.³¹ As Theodore Roosevelt stated in 1899, “expansion gradually brings peace into the red wastes where the barbarian peoples of the world hold sway.”³²

Using principles of American superiority, Senator Beveridge defended the annexation and imperialist policy of the United States before Congress on 9 January 1900. In response to the anti-imperialist argument that the political ideology of the United States forbids the country to annex the Philippines, Beveridge argued, “The Declaration of Independence applies only to people capable of self-government . . . [The Filipinos] are not a self-governing race.”³³ Beveridge felt that self-government should only be endowed upon the “graduates of liberty, not the name of liberty’s infant class, who have not yet mastered the alphabet of freedom.” He considered it America’s duty

³⁰Lasch 328.

³¹Julie A. Tauson, “The Ideology of Empire in *National Geographic Magazine*’s Coverage of the Philippines, 1898-1908,” *Geographical Review* 89 (Spring 1999), 35.

³²Theodore Roosevelt, “Expansion and Peace, Dec. 1899,” in *Imperialists Versus Anti-Imperialists*, 121.

³³*Congressional Record*, 56th Congress, 1st Session. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1900), 704-711..

to carry out God's mission of civilization throughout the world, and that Americans "cannot retreat from any soil where Providence has unfurled our banner."³⁴

Those who opposed American expansion in the Pacific also used race as justification for their beliefs. Both the imperialists and anti-imperialists, as historian Alfred McCoy states, "believed that the Philippine reality could not impinge on their national self-image of America as a new world power with civilization worthy of imitation."³⁵ However, unlike their opponents, the anti-imperialists believed that Manifest Destiny was merely continental, not global. Historian Stuart Creighton Miller notes that the most effective anti-imperialist argument was to "exploit racial fears by threatening to insist that full citizenship be extended to Filipinos unless the 'foolish venture' into imperialism was abandoned."³⁶ Anti-imperialists spoke passionately about the dangers of bringing in, as one southern senator described it, "yet another inferior race under the American flag."³⁷ These racist fears of Filipino infiltration into American life were echoed in the House of Representatives. Congressman Champ Clark from Missouri warned his fellow representatives that "very soon almond-eyed brown-skinned United

³⁴Albert J. Beveridge, "The Taste of Empire: A Campaign Speech Given in Indianapolis, 16 Sept. 1898," in *The Annals of America*, vol. 12, 202.

³⁵Alfred W. McCoy, "Philippine-American Relations: A Problem of Perception," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 6 (Summer 1987): 18.

³⁶Stuart Creighton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1982), 125.

³⁷Van Ells, 614.

States Senators would destroy the very Constitution that had granted them the rights of citizenship.” Such a statement drew resounding applause from Clark’s fellow anti-imperialists in the House. Clark continued, “No matter whether they are fit to govern themselves or not, they are not fit to govern us.”³⁸

With only very few exceptions, such as Senator George Hoar, the anti-imperialists shared the expansionists’ belief in the inferiority and incapacity of the world’s “colored” population. However, while the imperialists assumed that it was the responsibility of Americans to care for these savage races of the world, the anti-imperialists appealed to these same racist assumptions to justify excluding non-white people from a place in the American way of life. Beisner states that both groups believed that “the blood of tropical peoples would taint the stream of American political and social life and further complicate the nation’s already festering racial problems.”³⁹

Herein lies the essence of the anti-imperialist argument. An imperialist policy of annexation would have been a dramatic departure from American expansionism. Anti-imperialists fixed the limits of westward destiny at the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Because all new territories were contiguous, citizens of other states could easily settle the new territories and establish a population that was indistinguishable from other states. These new lands could then be admitted with the same standing as older states. Anti-imperialists

³⁸ *Congressional Record*, 55th Congress, 3rd Session. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1900), 5888.

³⁹ Beisner, 219.

believed that such a policy could not exist in new territories such as the Philippines because of racist principles. They believed that the Filipinos were not qualified to become American citizens, and they would therefore have to be governed as subjects. However, a republic based on the principle of self-determination could not have subjects because it was a contradiction of the principles over which the founding fathers had separated from England, ideals which are found in the Declaration of Independence and elaborated on in the Gettysburg Address passage that states a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from this earth." This evidence suggests that, as Harrington asserted, the focus of the anti-imperialist argument of 1898 originated in historical precedence and political principles.

The anti-imperialist movement began to grow after the annexation of the Philippines in February 1899. Members from literary, labor, and political organizations from all over the country joined Anti-Imperialist Leagues. Almost immediately, imperialism became the central issue in the presidential election.⁴⁰

In the election of 1900, as rumors surrounding the atrocities committed by the military in the Philippines spread, the Republican Party platform regarding imperialism stated: "It is the high duty of the Government to maintain its authority, to put down armed insurrection, and to confer the blessings of liberty and civilization upon all the rescued peoples."⁴¹ Democrats, on the other hand, nominated the anti-imperialist Bryan. In his nomination acceptance speech, Bryan

⁴⁰Harrington, 220

⁴¹Welch, *Response to Imperialism*, 64.

proclaimed imperialism the central issue of the race. In describing the party platform regarding imperialism, Bryan stated: "We favor immediate declaration of the nation's purpose to give the Filipinos, first, a stable form of government; second, independence; and third, protection from outside interference such as has been given for nearly a century to the republics of Central and South America."⁴² Bryan knew that this election would decisively determine American foreign policy abroad.

Bryan's defeat in the 1900 election served as a crushing blow to the anti-imperialist organization. Bryan had fewer votes than in the 1896 election, and this loss prompted the Democratic Party to end all affiliations with the anti-imperialist movement.⁴³ In his analysis of the reasons why they lost the election, Harrington states that anti-imperialists had failed to unite bi-partisan support behind a single candidate. Many anti-imperialists did not like Bryan because of his support of the Treaty of Paris.⁴⁴ They also had to contend with strong national feelings of patriotism and pride elicited by the war with Spain. As Beisner explains, the anti-imperialists had to "ask people aroused by American armed triumphs to surrender the fruits of victory."⁴⁵

Harrington believes that the defeat of the anti-imperialists signaled the failure of the movement in American history. However, while the election may

⁴²E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 228.

⁴³Welch, *Response to Imperialism*, 71.

⁴⁴Harrington, 233.

⁴⁵Beisner, 230

have resulted in the formal break-up of Anti-Imperialist Leagues throughout the country, anti-imperialist ideas still remained in American politics. In looking at the lasting effects of the movement, it can be seen that the movement did not result in failure as Harrington and other historians have suggested.

In terms of the originally stated goals of the movement, the anti-imperialists were able to change the American foreign policy of annexation. They had opposed the annexation of the Philippines because it violated the fundamental political foundations of the country. This issue was well received following the 1900 election, and even though the anti-imperialist movement had formally ended, Americans no longer annexed foreign lands as it had after the Spanish-American War. Since 1900, the Philippine Islands were America's sole experiment in colonialism, and the Philippine-American War has been considered merely a postscript to the Spanish-American War.

The Jones Bill, also referred to as the Organic Act of the Philippine Islands, reflected that anti-imperialist ideas were still in American politics after the movement formally ended. Enacted on 29 August 1916, this bill gave the Filipinos a greater measure of self-government and confirmed the intention of granting the Filipinos eventual independence. American industries would still have a presence in the Pacific, but the Philippine Islands themselves would be granted independence. Moorfield Storey, former president of the Anti-Imperialist League, stated in 1913 that "the American people know in their hearts that they have no right to hold the Philippines. They will hail with delight and profound sense of relief the passage of any measure which restores their self-respect by setting

the islanders free.”⁴⁶ However, not all those who supported Philippine independence were anti-imperialist. Theodore Roosevelt also supported the Jones Act for military reasons, reflecting America’s move towards isolation prior to World War I. In a letter to the *New York Times* on 22 November 1914, Roosevelt declared: “I do not believe we should keep any foothold whatever in the Philippines. Any kind of position by us in the Philippines merely results in making them our heel of Achilles if we are attacked by a foreign power. There can be no compensating benefit to us.”⁴⁷

Granting the Philippines independence was one of the major issues for anti-imperialists, and the enactment of the Jones Bill in 1916 shows that ultimately the purpose and objectives of the original anti-imperialist movement of 1898, as stated in Bryan’s platform, were achieved. The anti-imperialists had desired to change the American practice of imperialism in the twentieth century because it violated, what the Anti-Imperialist League called, “the spirit of 1776.” Another result of the anti-imperialist movement was that, as historian Frank Ninkovich notes, “underneath the political and aesthetic contrasts, there was neither Old nor New World [emerging], but a common, economy-driven new-world-in-the-making.”⁴⁸

This new type of imperialism that emerged from America’s involvement in the Philippines is what historian William A. Williams calls “Open Door Imperi-

⁴⁶John A. Beadles, “The Debate in the United States Concerning Philippine Independence,” *Philippine Studies* 16 (July 1968): 424.

⁴⁷Theodore Roosevelt, “The Navy as a Peacemaker,” *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 1914, SM5.

⁴⁸Ninkovich, 36.

alism.” Williams argues that while Americans had agreed upon the need for commercial expansion to secure new markets, the imperialist debate disputed the proper strategy and tactics of such expansion. This debate, Williams believes, was solved by “a policy of the open door that was designed to clear the way and establish the conditions under which America’s preponderant economic power would extend the American system throughout the world without the embarrassment and inefficiency of traditional colonialism.”⁴⁹ This Open Door policy would become the Monroe Doctrine of the twentieth century and the central feature of American foreign policy.

While Williams does recognize the emergence of Open Door Imperialism at the turn of the century, he does not identify that this new type of imperialism was based upon the beliefs of the anti-imperialists. All Americans, including the anti-imperialists, realized the need for foreign markets. The anti-imperialists did not contest the war in the Philippines or the economic aspects of colonialism, but rather opposed the political implications that an imperialist policy would have on the American tradition of self-determination. Anti-imperialist leader Carl Schurz believed that this Open Door Imperialism would “extend freedom by exerting civilizing influences upon the population of the conquered territories and gain commercial opportunities of so great a value that they will more than compensate for the cost of the war.”⁵⁰ The anti-imperialists

⁴⁹Williams, 45.

⁵⁰William Appleman Williams, *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (New York: Random House, 1969), 441.

believed that wars such as the Philippine-American War were necessary in order to ensure American industries new markets such as the Philippines. This new Open Door Imperialism was a creative solution for anti-imperialists because it satisfied their desires for economic growth and preserved democratic purity. They became pioneers of a new foreign policy that would guide American economic growth throughout the twentieth century and today.

After receiving news of the American naval victory in Manila Bay in 1898, the *Washington Post* declared, "The guns of Dewey at Manila have changed the destiny of the United States. We are face to face with a strange destiny and must accept its responsibilities."⁵¹ The war to drive Spain from Cuba opened the door for the establishment of an American marketplace throughout the world. As the result of Dewey's victory in the Philippines, Americans debated contrasting visions of the proper foreign policy for their country. The United States, which only a century earlier had been born out of a reaction to imperial domination, now itself became an imperial power. Americans favored expansionism not colonialism. Realizing that they could not expand in the traditional European way, Americans found a way to expand their interests economically and socially, but without violating the modern notion of democracy, which the United States itself had established. This foreign policy was vital to American growth and, for the first time, the United States was building an overseas empire. This new Open Door Imperialism, which resulted in part be-

⁵¹Henry F. Graff, *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1969), xiii.

cause of the anti-imperialist movement of 1898, did not violate the spirit of 1776 and had all the advantages while escaping all the burdens of colonialism. At the turn of the century, Americans had the economic need, the Social Darwinian vision, and the progressive impetus to develop a new foreign policy that had the power to create a worldwide market where American businesses could buy, sell, and openly invest in other parts of the world.

Getting Defensive: Excuses for the Construction of the Alaska Highway

Dane Skilbred

The construction of the Alaska Highway (also referred to as the ALCAN Highway) has been regarded as one of the greatest projects in American history. The highway spans a distance of over fifteen hundred miles from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Fairbanks, Alaska. It was constructed during World War II after the Japanese attacks on the Aleutian Islands, specifically those on the ports of Dutch Harbor, Attu, and Kiska. These attacks are widely held to be the direct reason for the United States government's decision to build the road, along with the fear that a Japanese invasion of Alaska was imminent.

As a challenge to this view, one must ask why a road being built to Fairbanks, Alaska was necessary to defend Alaska against a Japanese attack on the Aleutian Islands. If the Japanese invasion of Alaska was such a looming threat, why was the road to Alaska not extended to the coast close to the Aleutian Islands rather than to the center of Alaska? While it makes some sense that the United States government would want to bring military supplies to Alaska in a timely fashion in an emergency, it does not make sense that the government would attempt to do so by constructing a road that leads to a part of Alaska that is far from the area of concern. In fact, it could be argued that the government was discussing a road to Alaska many years before its construction in 1943, and the "defense" of Alaska was not the most important focus of

discussion. There were mainly economic, as well as some political and social, reasons for constructing the Alaska Highway that were greater factors in the deliberation to build it than was national defense.

The discussion on the project today seems more concerned with how the Alaskan Highway was built, the planning that was involved, and the social implications related to its construction, rather than the motivations for its creation. Historian J. Kingston Pierce compares the military effort in the project to that of the military in building the Panama Canal. He discusses the long hours without sleep that troops spent working on it, as well as the battles with the wilderness they had to endure.¹ John Krakauer also describes some of the effects of nature on the troops, namely the boggy marshes that engineers had to move through and the ice and extreme cold present in the wintertime.² These two authors write briefly about hearings in Congress, but their discussion seems to be concerned mainly with the actual construction of the highway. The motivation for the highway's construction is never in question.

It seems logical that the desire for the Alaska Highway not be in question. The reason for it being pushed through Congress may well have been purely for national defense. The national defense argument, however, does not explain why the highway was proposed in Congress as early as 1933. It does not

¹J. Kingston Pierce, "The Biggest and Hardest Job Since the Panama Canal," *American History* (Feb. 2001): 52-58. Academic Search Elite (accessed January 27, 2004).

²John Krakauer, "Ice, Mosquitoes, and Muskeg – Building the Road to Alaska," *Smithsonian* (July 1992): 102-112. Expanded Academic Index (accessed January 28, 2004).

account for the fact that the proposed highway was built not in the direction of the areas being attacked and invaded by the Japanese, but rather significantly to the northeast of them. Historian M.V. Bezeau writes that the road was already a foregone conclusion to help the United States economy, and the Japanese attack on the Aleutian Islands was just enough to legitimize the American presence in the Northwest.³ There is clearly room to challenge the view that the U.S. built the Alaska Highway purely to defend against a Japanese threat.

The first point of contention against the argument for national defense is the route the army took in its construction of the highway. The finalized route went through mountain ranges and swamps. The army argued that supplies could more readily be transported through air force flights inland along this route where flying conditions were better.⁴ However, what is interesting is that the army was not willing to build a highway toward southwest Alaska, where the Japanese attacks had occurred. Looking at the following map, it seems quite reasonable for the army to have built a road through the pass between the Kuskokwim Mountains and the Alaska Range toward Bristol Bay as indicated by the dashed line (roughly the last 650 miles of the chosen route is indicated by the solid line). The mountain route would have given naval forces a much more direct route to Dutch Harbor, and the

³M.V. Bezeau, "The Realities of Strategic Planning: The Decision to Build the Alaska Highway," in *The Alaska Highway: Papers of the 40th Anniversary Symposium*, Kenneth Coates, ed. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 33.

⁴"Alaska Road Inquiry Off," Special to the New York Times, *New York Times*, June 17, 1942. p. 4.

Aleutian Islands, than a trip from Fairbanks, through Valdez, around the Gulf of Alaska and the southwestern peninsula to the same place. According to historian M.V. Bezeau, however, the highway was never meant to be a supply route to the Aleutians.⁵



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Beside the troubling fact that the road was not built along the simple mountain passage toward Bristol Bay, it did not really “shorten” the route from the continental states to Alaska all that much. Simply looking at distances, one might deduce that the Alaska Highway would not make the trip for troops and supplies any easier. For instance, the flying distance

⁵Bezeau, 33

⁶Alaska Tour and Travel, “Alaska Map.”
www.alaskatravel.com.

from Seattle to Dutch Harbor is about 2000 miles. The distance from Fairbanks to Dutch Harbor, however, is about 900 miles. It seems the idea of building a highway that spans 1500 miles, only to connect to another highway that spans 1500 miles, to reach a city that falls 900 miles short of the area the U.S. military was trying to defend would not shorten the time of reaching it at all.⁷ Because the distance from the continental United States to Dutch Harbor was not sufficiently cut, other motivations need to be examined to explain the construction of the Alaska Highway.

Common sense indicates that the economic impact such a project would have on the Alaskan economy as well as the economy of the whole United States was a strong motivation. For years before World War II there had been discussion in Congress about building a highway to Alaska. As early as 1930, Herbert Hoover had suggested the study of a link between Alaska and the lower 48 states.⁸ The discussion of the link had little to do with the defense of the territory at the time. The Department of the State, in its study of the territory, felt that the road would help in the “development of natural resources,” the “development of tourist traffic,” and the “promotion of good will and trade between Canada and the United States, by facilitating travel between the two countries.”⁹ Any discussion of the defense of Alaska was completely missing. What was important in the study, though, was the idea that

⁷Estimates from www.webflyer.com, WebFlyer Network.

⁸Alaskan.com, “The Alaskan Information Center,” <http://alaskan.com/gen-info.html>.

⁹U.S. Department of State, *Report of the Commission to Study the Proposed Highway to Alaska*, Conference Series, No. 14. (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1933), 23.

the increased output of exports from the territory would outweigh the cost of building the road.¹⁰

Historian Kenneth Coates argues that the riches in the Canadian Northwest were on people's minds for years. At the turn of the 20th century, the Klondike gold rush had piqued great interest, and that interest was revived in 1920 when oil was discovered in the Mackenzie valley of British Columbia. The thought of this land's immense resources never escaped public consciousness.¹¹ In fact, those resources were the main topic of conversation in the Alaska legislature's memorial to Congress of 1933. The legislature wrote a letter to be read in Congress asking them to reintroduce dialogue about the vast economic opportunity in the territory of Alaska, and to initiate conversation on a highway to Alaska. The letter described the economic depression occurring in the territory, and the only emergency they seemed to cite was that of the urgent financial problem.¹² It seems the whole point of the letter was for the Alaskan legislature to give Congress an idea of the wealth that would be gained in the transaction. Save for one small paragraph about the instability in the Far East, which did not make a strong case, the legislature dealt only with economic issues.¹³

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹Kenneth Coates and W.R. Morrison, *The Alaska Highway in World War II* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 13-14.

¹²U.S. Senate, House Joint Memorial 5, *The Congressional Record*, 73rd Congress, Vol. 77, Part 5 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 5058.

¹³*Ibid.*, 5058-9

Discussion in Congress continued to neglect the defense argument for the better part of the next decade. In an address to Congress, Senator Clarence C. Dill of Washington argued that since there was talk of a highway through Mexico, there should be talk of one through Canada to Alaska.¹⁴ It seemed only logical that a road should be built connecting the U.S. and its territories. In fact, Senator Robert R. Reynolds of North Carolina furthered the argument by saying, "The greatest industry on earth is the tourist industry. This would add to the tourist industry of America as well as of our sister countries to the north and south, and would create for us a warmer bond of friendship."¹⁵ Three years later in the House of Representatives, Warren G. Magnuson of Washington made the case for the opening of industry as well. By opening new territories, the U.S. could finally make use of the land that they had purchased from the Russians seventy years before.¹⁶ Magnuson continued on about everything from population growth, to the welfare of Alaskans and the interconnectedness of the United States. The whole argument, however, was based on economics, never once mentioning defense of the region.¹⁷ The government's stress on the monetary value of the Alaska Highway would be the frame for discussion throughout the period before World War II, rather than any argument based on defense.

¹⁴U.S. Senate, *The Congressional Record*, 73rd Congress, Vol. 78, Part 11 (U.S. Government Printing Office 1934), 11620.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 11621.

¹⁶U.S. Senate, *The Congressional Record*, 75th Congress, Vol. 81, Appendix, Part 10 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937), 1775.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 1775-77

Not only was the debate in Congress based on assessment of economic opportunity, but the national media also focused on the same frame of reference. The *New York Times* portrayed the construction of the Alaska Highway as a great financial and cultural advantage to the whole United States. One particular article highlighted the possibilities for future production in Alaska. Alaskan miners felt that Alaska could be a permanent settlement for Americans as well as a place for tourists to visit. The vast resources present in Alaska could provide jobs for people if they had adequate transportation to the territory.¹⁸ Even as late as 1939, the editor ran a story that featured engineer Donald MacDonald of Fairbanks speaking to the economic power of the region. He believed that the highway was a way for people to see the wildlife and beautiful summer settings. It would also give miners and farmers a chance to make new beginnings.¹⁹ Clearly the media's center of attention was on the markets and opportunities the Alaska Highway could potentially open up.

The discussion in Congress of a road to Alaska gradually changed. Talks moved from dialogue about the development of resources and production toward talk of defense of the territory. One can reasonably deduce that since the economic argument was not enough to convince the Congress, discussion was forced to defense. Historian David Remley argues that talks in Congress were stalled until the attack on Pearl

¹⁸"Highway from Seattle Hailed by Alaskans as Big Boon." *New York Times*, Jan 5, 1930, p. E2.

¹⁹"Engineer Hopeful of Alaska Highway: MacDonald, Here, Portrays Wide Advantages of Project." *New York Times*, Jan 12, 1939, p. 23.

Harbor. He says that the fear of the Japanese was what finally pushed the governments of both the U.S. and Canada to agree on the proposal to build the highway.²⁰

Even before the attacks on American harbors, as the international climate changed, congressmen slowly started framing their discussion around defense of Alaska. Rep. Magnuson made another speech in the Congress in October 1941, this time shifting the discussion to defense as well as resources. His message was that the highway would be a “great adjunct to the national defense,” as well as “an incalculable factor in the development of the great resources of British Columbia and interior Alaska.”²¹ In August 1941, the Alaska legislature had been making similar statements, but played on emotion much more vividly. In a telegram to Congress, the legislature felt that the fall of Russia was “seemingly imminent,” and that military presence was drastically necessary.²² While some military advisors may have suggested the possibility of an attack from Japan through Alaska, it was not widely accepted that Alaska was an immediate target. The legislature used the argument that it was completely isolated except by sea and air. The idea that Japan would bother conquering Alaska to reach the continental United States when there was no route from Alaska to the continental United States for them

²⁰David Remley, “The Latent Fear: Canadian-American Relations and Early Proposals for a Highway to Alaska,” in *The Alaska Highway*, 1-3.

²¹U.S. House of Representatives, *The Congressional Record*, 78th Congress, Vol.87, Appendix, Part 14 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 4923-25.

²²*Ibid.*, 3964.

to travel on seems unreasonable. The legislature's claims were simply exaggerations without sufficient evidence to support them.

Other such claims came from the engineer who just one year previous had said the Alaska Highway would be used mainly for tourist attractions. In an article in the *New York Times*, Donald MacDonald had argued about the economic and social benefits of the highway. In *Liberty* magazine, however, he changed his opinion to include the necessity of a highway for defense from hypothetical threats.²³ He conjectured that a threat might one day come, and that the United States should protect the precious resources in Alaska.

This sort of rhetoric was adopted by the media around the country throughout the war period. The *New York Times* published articles in favor of the Alaska Highway, using military reasoning for the project. Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, wrote one such article. The article argued that Alaska provided a crossroads for many key centers around the world, making it seem that it was the closest part of the U.S. to almost all locations across the globe.²⁴ He masked his discussion of the enrichment of resources inside the territory of Alaska with ideas that it was the center of the world for strategic positioning.

Other reporters skirted the issue of the economy like Ickes had. Richard L. Neuberger of Oregon discussed the possibilities of a canal project to Alaska in

²³Donald MacDonald, "Defenseless Alaska – The Ramparts we Don't Watch – Danger in the North – an Eye-opening Look at a Grave but Unheeded Peril, and What can be Done About It," *Liberty*. (July 20, 1940).

²⁴Harold L. Ickes, "Bastion and Last Frontier." *New York Times*, Jul 26, 1942.

an article in 1941. The idea in the Oregon legislature was that this canal could provide for defense, even though its main purpose would have been for shipping lumber.²⁵ He started out with the defense argument, and then the article became a venue for discussion of assured profit. Neuberger extended the discussion about the Alaska Highway in 1942, with an article entitled “America’s Burma Road.”²⁶ This time, the discussion was more about defense, but again had the hint of economic interest in the Northwest region. The article seemed to be a tool to rally emotion from the American public, with the final passage about the completion of the Alaska Highway stating: “It will be a great day for Donald MacDonald – and a sad one for Hitler and Hirohito.”²⁷ The idea was that an engineer would be happy with the project because of its potential, and the “evil leaders” would be exposed to attack through Alaska. The second argument does not hold because it would be more efficient to make a direct path from the continental United States to Japan and the highway never was a strategic blow to the Japanese, let alone the Germans. The protection of Alaska was an excuse for constructing a resource highway.

If the main reason for constructing the Alaska Highway had been for the protection of Alaska, then it was a terrible failure. In 1944, the Alaskan International Highway Commission deemed the project just

²⁵Richard L. Neuberger, “Inland to Alaska.” *Sunday Oregonian*, Portland, May 27, 1941.

²⁶Richard L. Neuberger, “America’s Burma Road,” *Sunday Oregonian*, Portland, April 26, 1942, 1.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 4

that, a failure.²⁸ The highway commission had been created as a subcommittee in Congress in the 1930's. They felt the highway did not serve the purpose that it had set out to fulfill. It had not ever been used to protect the people of Alaska, and it certainly never aided in a front against the Japanese.

Many other observers of the project did not share the sentiment that the Alaska Highway was a failure. *The New York Times* ran articles about the success of expeditions in the Canadian Northwest and in Alaska. Reporter Theodore Strauss mentioned the booming industry in the territories because of everyday discoveries of vast resources, even during the war.²⁹ Others argued that the highway might improve future relations between Alaska and Canada. The argument was that the highway would be mutually beneficial to both countries after the war.³⁰ While the sentiment may have been that both groups would benefit equally, the U.S. has been the primary recipient of the revenue from the Alaska Highway.

The government, as well as some members of the mass media, used propaganda to their advantage in bringing Canada along to finance a highway that was more beneficial to Americans. There is an argument that the U.S. government purposefully moved forward on construction of the highway to claim a sort of political sovereignty over Canada. Historian Curtis R. Nordman argues that, in order to save face, the Cana-

²⁸"Calls Alaska Highway Failure," *New York Times*, May 9, 1944.

²⁹Theodore Strauss, "ALCAN Road Booms Vast Untamed Area," *New York Times*, Jan 1, 1943.

³⁰Hurg Gordon Miller, "Alcan Highway," *New York Times*, Feb 3, 1943, E9.

dian government was forced to pay \$123,500,000.³¹ The majority of this was for staging routes on the Alaska Highway. Not only that, but the Canadian government has been forced to pay for the constant improvements on the highway since its completion.³² While the Alaska Highway has benefited Canadians to an extent in the post-World War II era, many see it as a passage for Americans from the Continental U.S. to Alaska. The trip through the Canadian Northwest has drawn revenue from tourists on their way to Alaska, but the majority of their money has been spent in Alaska. It is as if Canada were only a stepping-stone that the United States government had to overcome to connect its territories. The movement for the Alaska Highway was just another example of Americans' sentiment for political supremacy over Canada.³³

Beside the political ramifications the venture had on Canada, there were social indicators that might help to put the Alaska Highway project into an even larger context and give it a complete perspective. The majority of the United States army workers for this job were black. It is believed by some that the highway was an attempt to separate blacks and whites because of racial tensions in the military. President Roosevelt had it in mind to keep a sizeable part of black troops in a remote area away from white troops during the

³¹Curtis R. Nordman, "The Army of Occupation: Malcolm MacDonald and U.S. Military Involvement in the Canadian Northwest," in *The Alaska Highway*, p. 92.

³²P.J. Philip, "Canada to Repay U.S. for Air Routes." *New York Times*, Mar 1, 1944.

³³Nordman, 83.

war.³⁴ The perfect opportunity would be in a remote area like the Pacific Northwest. This was one social problem for the U.S. solved by the construction of the Alaska Highway.

One other social problem solved during the project was that of disconnection between Alaska and the continental U.S. due to a lack of communication technologies. Theodore Strauss argued that communication was tough even for the army. The only news that they could receive was from Japanese and sometimes Russian radio stations.³⁵ Alaska was without telephone service, and could only reach the rest of the United States through telegram. By the end of the war, a telephone system was constructed along the highway, which helped to unite Alaska with the contiguous part of the country.³⁶ While these seemingly small social implications do not add up to much in the grand scheme of the need for a highway to Alaska, they help to put the whole picture of its conception into context.

Looking at the entire picture, it seems that the need for military defense of Alaska was not the most substantial piece of the puzzle. Bezeau would argue that the Alaska Highway did not contribute significantly to the defense of Alaska.³⁷ Even during the early stages

³⁴E. Valerie Smith, "The Black Core of Engineers and the Construction of the Alaska (ALCAN) Highway," *Negro History Bulletin*, v51, Dec, 1993: 22-37. Expanded Academic ASAP. (accessed Jan 7, 2004).

³⁵Theodore Strauss, "ALCAN Cold Numbs Men and Machines," *New York Times*, Dec 31, 1942.

³⁶Associated Press. "Final Link Is Opened In Telephone to Alaska." *New York Times*, Nov 21, 1943.

³⁷Bezeau, 33.

of the war, the military did not back a road to the territory of Alaska. There was no justification for it.³⁸ The highway never even accomplished the military goal of taking pressure off of the Aleutian Islands. Coates writes that the Alaska Highway lost its importance in the scheme of the war because the Japanese threat to Alaska fell dramatically after the initial attacks on the Aleutian Islands.³⁹ It makes no sense that the road would have been built for defense reasons, when it was not used for that purpose during World War II.

What does make sense is the Alaska Highway's significance to the history of the Alaskan economy. Because of the road, tourist families from all over the United States can more easily make the trip to Alaska. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran a story on one such family, the Coogle's, in 1959. The family may not have been able to make the trip without the road, but in 1959, they finally made the drive all the way from Georgia to Alaska with its improved conditions for tourists. They had wanted to explore the adventure that is Alaska, just as so many other families had wanted to before the construction of the highway and since its completion.⁴⁰ Tour buses have provided transportation to Alaska, and brought money into the state with increased expenditure. Even neglecting the increase in tourism, Alaskans have been better off with the highway because of its benefits of cheap transportation. With the oil, seafood, and many minerals in Alaska, exporting goods to other places has been

³⁸*Ibid.*, 26.

³⁹Coates, 69.

⁴⁰Annie Lou Hardy, "There's Goal in Alaska," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Jun 14, 1959.

facilitated by the highway.⁴¹ All of these products have bolstered the Alaskan economy and have given an extra source of useful natural resources to the continental United States.

The construction of the Alaska Highway has provided numerous opportunities for the state of Alaska, and from Alaska to the rest of the country. While many point to the need for the defense of Alaska as the primary reason for the construction of the highway, it is clear that Japanese attacks were only the final straw that helped the government gain support for the project. The economic success of Alaska has been greatly helped by the Alaska Highway, and the economic impact on Alaskan industries was, as were certain political and social factors, far more important than military defense in the motivations of those interested in constructing the highway. The economy was what drove the idea of the Alaska Highway to Congress. The need for military defense was just a measure used to bring those unsure of the project to support it.

⁴¹Lee Huskey, "Import Substitution: The Hidden Dynamic in the Growth of Frontier Regions," *Growth and Change*, 16 (Oct 1985): 43-55. Academic Search Elite (accessed Feb 20, 2004).

Their Genocide and Ours: International Influence in 1994 Rwanda

Maggie Penkert

In 1994 Rwanda suffered a genocide of unprecedented speed. Western press coverage at the time attributed the genocide to ancient ethnic hatreds between Hutus and Tutsis, but the genocide was, in fact, a political act involving the Rwandan government that planned it and the international community that stood back and observed it. This international community included Western states, international organizations, and neighboring African states. The world community seems to tread a fine line between violating national autonomy and working together across borders to maintain a standard for human rights. Moreover, genocide places the effects of national self-interest on international relations in stark relief, often to the detriment of less developed countries. Though Rwandans organized and carried out the genocide, no actor on the world stage ever performs in isolation. The international community, collectively in the form of various organizations and states, influenced the genocide both by abandoning Rwanda in its time of need, as well as contributing to factors leading to the genocide.

Africa has long grabbed the attention of the world with its civil wars and massacres, but the Rwandan genocide is an extreme case. Within only a few months, ethnic Hutu extremists planned the genocide and then murdered approximately 800,000 Tutsi men, women and children. Two million Rwandans fleeing the killings became refugees within Rwanda and in

neighboring countries.¹ As a brutal genocide, the events in Rwanda could not escape comparison to the Holocaust. It was after the Holocaust that the United Nations organized a Genocide Convention in 1948 as part of the international community's commitment that the genocidal horrors "never again" be repeated. The Convention's immediate goals were to clarify genocide in legal terms as a criminal act, thereby making it legally imperative for nations ratifying the Convention to attempt to halt any genocidal acts. The Convention defined genocide as the intention to destroy wholly or partially a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide became an unacceptable tool of political or military authority, with the international community organized through the United Nations to act as watchdog for prevention.²

Much of the scholarly writing on the genocide in Rwanda has focused on the causes of the genocide, explained in terms of Rwandan history. Scholars agree that ethnic tensions existed between Hutus and Tutsis, but disagree about the depth of traditional divisions between these two groups.³ This debate is

¹Guy Arnold, *Historical Dictionary of Civil Wars in Africa* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1999), 229.

²Robert F. Gorman, "Genocide," *Great Debates at the United Nations: An Encyclopedia of 50 Key Issues, 1945-2000* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 96-99; Alexander Laban Hinton, ed., *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 1-6.

³Mahmood Mamdani is part of the group of scholars that believes that the colonial experience exacerbated any political, ethnic, and economic divisions that may have existed before colonialism. On the other side of the debate, Philip Gourevitch, Catharine Newbury, and David Newbury believe that ethnicity was created as a political construct within Rwanda during

significant considering that ethnic differences, to some extent, influenced the genocide. Some scholars have also discussed economic causes for the genocide.⁴ Rwanda, already a poor country by international standards, experienced economic hardship in the 1980s, and these economic difficulties often reinforced views of Hutu and Tutsi class differences.⁵ Focusing on the international impact of economics as opposed to the national, some scholars have discussed the influence of Western states' and organizations' economic aid in Rwanda in the years leading up to the genocide. In continuing to provide aid to Rwanda despite governing Hutus' racist policies against Tutsis, the donor countries were unofficially supporting the government's human rights abuses. Rwanda's increasing debts to donor countries also contributed to the negative economic situation despite benevolent aid intentions.⁶ These economic factors placed the Rwandan government in a desperate situation, which prompted some officials to extreme measures. While many scholars have explored international political actors' responses to the genocide, there has been very

colonial times, and post-colonial governments perpetuated it as a political agenda.

⁴Scholars supporting the economic causes of the genocide include Helen Hintjens and David Newbury.

⁵Helen Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37 (1999): 256-258; David Newbury, "Understanding Genocide," *African Studies Review* 40 (1998): 89-90.

⁶Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, Inc., 1998), 1-4; Regine Andersen, "How Multilateral Development Assistance Triggered the Conflict in Rwanda," *Third World Quarterly* 21 (2000): 441.

little work on the responses of non-governmental organizations like the Red Cross or Christian missionary groups. This study will comprehensively explore the role of the international community in the forms of the UN, the United States, Belgium, France, Western Christian missionary groups, the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and neighboring African states.

The history of ethnic relations in Rwanda is often mistakenly described as one in which primordial “tribal” conflict eventually resulted in genocide. Ethnicity, however, is a social construction that is contextually relative. Ethnic identity often varies by situation, and indeed, the identities of Hutu and Tutsi had fluid ethnic boundaries. Even after colonialism hardened the distinction between them, social and political forces continued to construct and manipulate Hutu and Tutsi ethnicity for various reasons.⁷ At one point in the distant past the Hutus and Tutsis belonged to different ethnic groups that migrated to the region of Rwanda, but after centuries of living together and intermarrying, they came to share a language, religion, and other cultural traditions. Their differences largely centered on economic status, as the Tutsi predominately raised cattle for their livelihood and the Hutu farmed.⁸ There were some differences in social status as well. A kingdom state developed in Rwanda, and while official position appointments were controlled by a Tutsi monarchy and chiefs were usually Tutsi, Hutus could also be chiefs, especially in posi-

⁷Newbury and Newbury, 294.

⁸Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 5.

tions of agricultural authority.⁹ While people's identity as belonging to a particular group remained generally intact over time, Hutu or Tutsi group membership was not their sole identity. Kinship, clan (which often was inclusively Hutu and Tutsi), and class were often more important markings of social identity during pre-colonial history.¹⁰

The Germans were the first colonialists to arrive in the Rwanda region in 1897, and they remained until they lost the territory to the Belgians after World War I. When the Germans set about structuring their administrative rule, they saw the Tutsi-led kingdom as an instrument of control over the people. The Germans' racist attitudes also influenced how they perceived the kingdom. The colonialists viewed the fairer and taller Tutsis as a superior race to the Hutu; this notion seemed to be validated by the fact that the Tutsi dominated political leadership. The Germans theorized that the Tutsi had migrated from the north, possibly even from west Asia, and then set themselves up to rule over the inferior (and smaller, darker) Hutu.¹¹ This imaginary scenario, based in nineteenth-century Social Darwinian ideology, worked well for the colonialists, because the colonial administrators could simply perpetuate the "natural" social structures by giving Tutsis positions of leadership. When the Belgians became the new colonial lords, they continued using the system that the Germans had set up. The Belgians reified ethnic distinctions by instituting identity cards in 1933 naming the bearers as Tutsi or

⁹Prunier, 9-12.

¹⁰Newbury and Newbury, 293.

¹¹Prunier, 5-9.

Hutu. However, their system of distributing the cards confused and artificially strengthened pre-colonial “ethnic” identities of Rwandans, and in many cases ignored the self- and ancestral identity of the individuals. Colonial rulers favored Tutsis in political and religious leadership, employment opportunities, and education (using the identity cards to help them distinguish between Hutus and Tutsis).¹² Through the years of Rwandan colonial experience, ethnicity became a self-fulfilling prophecy, and its function as a fixed identity marker disadvantaged Hutus and benefited Tutsis.

As independence movements gained momentum in Africa, Hutu populations in Rwanda sought independence for themselves. However, in their revolutionary struggles to restructure Rwandan society, Hutu activists targeted the downfall of the Tutsi monarchy as the key to their freedom rather than the complete removal of the Belgian colonialists. The Hutus were aided in their efforts to grab power because prior to granting independence in 1962, the Belgian trusteeship (working with the UN) replaced many Tutsi authorities with Hutus. The Church and European governments were influenced by post-World War II era ideologies that connected colonialism to favored, and thus, suspect leadership groups. When independence was granted to Rwanda in 1962, the new government was mostly Hutu. Many Hutus internalized the European colonialists’ view of Rwandan history to the degree that they came to see themselves as the indigenous Rwandan population, suffering for years under

¹²Hintjens, 249-250.

the “foreign” rule of the conquering Tutsis.¹³ During the struggle to gain power at independence, 20,000 Tutsis were killed and thousands sought refuge in neighboring states, which increased perceived divisions between Hutus and Tutsis.¹⁴

The first independent leader of Rwanda was Gregoire Kayibanda, and during his presidency, ethnic divisions between Hutus and Tutsis established by the colonialists intensified. With Hutus now the elite ruling class, it was they who reaped the benefits of an ethnically prejudiced system, and the Tutsis who suffered.¹⁵ The second independent presidency, of Juvenal Habyarimana, starting in 1973, generally continued anti-Tutsi policies.¹⁶ Economic problems, political problems of declining legitimacy, external situations of Hutu and Tutsi conflict in Burundi and Uganda, and an influx of refugees led to increasing disapproval of Habyarimana’s leadership, especially among extremist Hutus who disliked his attempts, in the face of international pressure, to negotiate an end to the war with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a largely Tutsi army based in Uganda that demanded the return of Tutsi refugees and Tutsi representation in government. Habyarimana’s political favor also plummeted among the rural Hutu population that feared an invasion by RPF Tutsis. Returning Tutsis might reclaim land and property taken over in their absence, a prospect that was especially alarming to the

¹³Hintjens, 254-255.

¹⁴Rene Lemarchand, “Disconnecting the Threads: Rwanda and the Holocaust Reconsidered,” *Journal of Genocidal Research* 4 (2002): 503.

¹⁵Newbury and Newbury, 298-299, Uvin, 35.

¹⁶Lemarchand, 504.

coffee farmers who had largely turned to subsistence farming on former Tutsi lands when the price of coffee dropped on the world market.¹⁷

With all of these problems faced by the Habyarimana regime, violence against Tutsis was a tool of the government to maintain power while “punishing” a cultural scapegoat. During the early 1990s, Tutsis were blacklisted, arrested, and killed in raids that were encouraged, if not planned, by extremist Hutu members of the president’s circle.¹⁸ Peace accords, reached during negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania, in the early 1990s, between the RPF and Habyarimana’s government declared that current political leaders would share the future Rwandan government with RPF leadership and that some extremist Hutu parties would be excluded. It was the potential implementation of the Arusha Accords that prompted the extremists, fearing loss of power, to use genocide as a political tool.¹⁹ The genocide’s first victim would not be any Tutsi but the man viewed by the extremists as most responsible for allowing the Arusha Accords, the president himself.

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Habyarimana and the Burundian president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down, killing both presidents. Although it is still not certain who was responsible, this event seemed to mark the planned start of the genocide. Within hours roadblocks throughout the capital of Kigali were set up, Tutsi and opposition Hutu names were spread, and groups of government soldiers,

¹⁷Hintjens, 256-259.

¹⁸Lemarchand, 505.

¹⁹Lemarchand, 510-511.

police, and youth group militias searched out the victims, whom they began to massacre.²⁰ Although the majority of victims were Tutsis of all social and political groups, Hutus opposing Habyarimana's regime were also targeted. The massacres spread out from the capital into surrounding areas of Rwanda and drew in masses of low-class Hutus to join the "professionals" in wielding mostly machetes to murder men, women, and children. Orders and encouragement to join the killers permeated the country through official political chains of command, starting at the top of the government leadership. People at any political level or social class who were reluctant to kill were cajoled, enticed by the property of potential victims, or threatened with death themselves.²¹ Propaganda to join in the killing was also spread by the extremist Hutu radio station Radio des Mille Collines (RTLM), which aided the killers by directing them to locations where victims were hiding. The RTLM broadcasts, like the extremist Hutus in the government, ignored the distinction between Tutsi civilians and the Tutsi-led RPF guerilla army invading Rwanda from Uganda. Many Hutus were encouraged to feel that their lives were in danger from their well-known Tutsi neighbors.²² Meanwhile the RPF was attempting to halt the genocide, but not by slaughtering Hutu civilians. The RPF aim was to reach the capital of Kigali as soon as possible to take over the government. In the face of the international community's lack of action, it was indeed the RPF's

²⁰Newbury and Newbury, 294.

²¹Prunier, 242-247.

²²Christine L. Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves, "The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide," *Journal of Communication* 48 (1998): 120-122.

capture of Kigali on July 2 that heralded the end of the genocide.²³

If the international community had intervened, this tragedy could have been halted early on, if not prevented altogether. Instead, the Rwandans were left to themselves, to kill or be killed. The international players that virtually abandoned Rwanda during the genocide, both states and organizations, had various reasons for their inadequate response and had various relationships with pre-genocidal Rwanda. The UN was no stranger to Rwanda as it participated in the Arusha Accords' negotiations between the RPF and the Rwandan government. The deployment of UN peacekeeping troops to the country in 1993 was part of the implementation of the Accords' peace plan. The operation, called the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), sent 2,500 troops to the country on a Chapter Six peacekeeping mandate. The Chapter Six mandate restricts operations to light weapons for self-defense only.²⁴ Thus, mandates can restrict UN troops on the ground from carrying out actions that they may deem necessary, as in Rwanda in 1994.

The UN was first made aware of genocidal plans in Rwanda in January 1994 through a cable sent by the UNAMIR commander in Rwanda, General Romeo Dallaire, to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York. A government politician warned Dallaire of government plans to kill the Tutsi

²³Prunier, 293-294.

²⁴Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), 191; Scott Peterson, *Me Against My Brother: At War in Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 290.

population as well as Belgian troops, if necessary to prompt the Belgians to pull out. Dallaire, justifiably alarmed, suggested that the UN troops raid the massive arms stores in the capital city, to which Dallaire's informant could direct them.²⁵ The responding cable from Kofi Annan, then Deputy Director of Peacekeeping Operations, did not seem to take the threat of potential massacres seriously. He advised Dallaire to assume that Habyarimana was not aware of the genocidal plans and inform him of them. Dallaire was also told to inform the ambassadors of Belgium, the United States and France of the potential violence. However, Annan did not pass the informant's message along to the UN Security Council.²⁶ At this point, three months before the beginning of the genocide, a UN department and three western governments were apparently aware of the potential violence being planned by extremists in the Rwandan government, but nothing was done.

There are several reasons why the UN avoided intervention in Rwanda once the genocide began, including the recent UN mission failure in Somalia widely covered by the international media, the disinclination of member states to support action in Rwanda, and the lack of accurate information about the severity

²⁵Romeo Dallaire, "Request for Protection of Informant," (Outgoing Code Cable to Baril at DPKO in UN) *The Triumph of Evil* 1999 <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/warning/cable.html>> (29 October 2003).

²⁶Kofi Annan, "Contacts with Informant," (The UN's response to Roger Booh-Booh and General Dallaire) *The Triumph of Evil* 1999 <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/warning/unresponsive.html>> (29 October 2003).

of the genocide.²⁷ In addition to the UN leadership's wariness of becoming embroiled in another African disaster, member states of the UN were equally worried about the financial costs and potential loss of lives. Moreover, most countries could not rationalize action in Rwanda with their own national security or national interests. With the exception of a few states such as the Czech Republic and New Zealand, member nations did not volunteer troops.²⁸ The United States and Belgium, in fact, even encouraged the complete withdrawal of UNAMIR. On April 21, weeks after the genocide began and as the death toll was mounting, the UN passed a resolution to reduce the UNAMIR force by ninety percent.²⁹ The UNAMIR commander General Dallaire later blamed the member nations for failing to intervene, saying, "The true culprits are the sovereign states that influence the Security Council, that influence other nations into participating or not."³⁰ This is an indication of a critical inadequacy of the UN as an international organization. That is, problems are inevitable if member states are faced with a choice between their own good and the common good. Shortcomings within the leadership of the UN compounded the effects of the unwillingness of member states to intervene. Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh of

²⁷"Interview with Iqbal Riza," (website). In the failed UN mission to Somalia in 1993, Somalis killed 18 U.S. soldiers, and the UN was afraid of another Somalia, that is, of losing control and losing lives in Rwanda.

²⁸Gourevitch, 151.

²⁹Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, 191.

³⁰"Eyewitness: UN in Rwanda 1994," (interview with Dallaire) *BBC News* 6 September 2000 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/911232.stm>. (27 October 2003).

Cameroon was the UN special representative who supplied UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali with information on the situation in Rwanda. However, Booh-Booh had a conflict of interest because he actually supported Habyarimana's regime. Booh-Booh's reports to Boutros-Ghali toned down the speed and scale of the killings and made it seem as if both sides were murdering each other in similar numbers. When Boutros-Ghali received reports from Dallaire that contradicted some of Booh-Booh's reports, the Secretary General took his advice from the latter.³¹

The United States' role in the genocide largely paralleled the UN role. Because of the death of eighteen U.S. soldiers in the Somali capital the previous year, Congress resisted joining potentially dangerous UN operations. National interest also played a role, as the U.S. appeared to have nothing at stake in the Rwandan crisis other than a moral obligation to prevent genocide. The U.S. ambassador to the UN at the time, Madeleine Albright, pressured other states to join the U.S. in opposing further involvement in Rwanda. This coincided with Presidential Decision Directive 25, which set up guidelines for acceptable U.S. involvement in UN peacekeeping operations.³² Rwanda did not fit the guidelines.

The UN and the United States both faced a dilemma by not intervening in the Rwandan genocide. According to the Genocide Convention, they both were morally and legally responsible for acting to prevent genocide if they knew it was occurring. The solution for the UN and the U.S. initially was to deny the events

³¹Peterson, 294.

³²Gourevitch, 150-151.

as genocide. UN and U.S. leaders publicly avoided using the term and encouraged their staffs to follow suit. The U.S. took this word avoidance a step further by actually forbidding unqualified official use of it. State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelley openly admitted that qualifying phrases for the term "genocide" were necessary because, "there are obligations which arise in connection with the use of the term."³³ James Woods, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in the Department of Defense, also noted that the U.S., "didn't want to know the full dimensions of this thing and, thereby, assume the responsibility of having to deal with it."³⁴

Belgium and France also played significant roles in the Rwandan genocide. Belgium's involvement dated, of course, from the colonial period. When the UNAMIR force was first deployed, the largest contingent of troops was Belgian. The extremist Hutu government was betting that if European peacekeeping troops were killed, it would influence them to withdraw. On April 7, the day after Habyarimana's plane crash, ten Belgian soldiers, protecting the moderate Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyamana, were killed by *genocidaires*. The Hutu extremists had planned correctly. After the peacekeepers' deaths, the Belgian government withdrew their soldiers from UNAMIR. Similar to the U.S. administration, Belgium, placing national interest above international responsibility,

³³Gourevitch, 152-153.

³⁴"Interview with James Woods," *The Triumph of Evil*, 1999
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/interviews/woods.html>> (29 October 2003).

decided that intervening in Rwanda was not worth the risk for Belgian soldiers.³⁵

France, another influential actor in the international community's inaction in Rwanda, was unique among western states because of its close connection with the Rwandan government before the genocide. The ties between the two countries were largely personal and cultural. The personal relationship was based on the friendship of French President François Mitterrand and Rwandan President Habyarimana. The cultural relationship was grounded in France's desire to maintain political, linguistic, and cultural ties with Francophone African countries. French motives stemmed partly from the desire to spread French culture but also from a phobia of losing ground to Anglo-Saxon influence on the African continent.³⁶ The two countries also had a military cooperation agreement since 1975. Beginning in 1990, French troops joined the government military Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) in fighting the RPF invasions. France saw the Tutsi-led RPF as promoting Anglophone interests in Rwanda because the RPF had emerged from the Anglophone country of Uganda. While French involvement in actual fighting was not large-scale, French arms shipments to Rwanda were huge throughout the early 1990s and even during 1994, when the genocide was obvious.³⁷ Even if French officials and military leaders had no idea of the extremity of the Hutus' genocidal plans, the institu-

³⁵Peterson, 292.

³⁶Gourevitch, 90.

³⁷Grourevitch, 89; Alain Destexhe, "The Third Genocide," *Foreign Policy* (Winter 94-95): 3-18; Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, 56.

tionalized racism and policies of anti-Tutsi discrimination should have been apparent, as the French worked closely with the Rwandan military, many of whose generals were extremist Hutus. Whether or not France had any advance information of the genocide, the French government's reaction to news of the genocide, once it became common knowledge within the international community, was as inadequate as the responses of the UN and the United States. The French government made no official declarations about or against the genocide. Indeed, Rwandan government leaders were welcomed in a trip to France weeks into the genocide, further evidence of French avoidance of the genocide and French support of Habyarimana's government.³⁸ In contrast, during this period, Belgium refused to issue visas for Rwandan government ministers. As the genocide continued, the French shipment of arms to Rwanda continued as well, in spite of a UN sanctioned arms embargo on Rwanda.³⁹ France seemingly ignored not only the evidence of genocide in Rwanda, but they also ignored the international community's admittedly weak efforts in censuring the Rwandan government.

France finally took the initiative and responded to the genocide, but even that response was inappropriate. In choosing to respond to the genocide, French Prime Minister Balladur spoke to the UN Security Council of a "moral duty" to protect the threatened

³⁸Rwandan Foreign Minister Bicomumpaka and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza (the leader of the most extreme Rwandan Hutu political party) were officially received by President Mitterand, French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe in Paris on April 27, 1994.

³⁹Prunier, 277-279.

populations and to end the genocide.⁴⁰ This rhetoric contradicts the previous French stance that the killing was not genocide but was just massive casualties on both sides of a civil war between the RPF and the government. The reversal of French policy towards Rwanda prompted international leaders to question French motives in mounting an armed operation in Rwanda. South African President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and of course the RPF, were all concerned that the proposed French military action was really a cover to aid the FAR.⁴¹ However, the UN approved of the French mission, called Operation Turquoise, which also consisted of Senegalese troops to keep up appearances of multilateral action.⁴²

Operation Turquoise received a UN Chapter Seven mandate, which authorized troops on the ground to use aggressive military action in self-defense and to protect civilians. Operation Turquoise officially started on June 22, and succeeded in setting up a “safe zone” in the country. The beneficiaries of the “safe zone,” however, were not those who had been most victimized. The French mission probably saved more extremist Hutus fleeing from the advancing RPF than Tutsis fleeing the *genocidaires*. To be sure, the Operation saved the lives of some Tutsis and innocent Hutus, but it did nothing to aid the deteriorating political situation. In fact, by the time the Operation began, not only was the genocide winding down (as most of the Tutsis to be killed had already been

⁴⁰“Genocidal Slaughter Claims as Many as One Million,” *United Nations Chronicle* 31 (December 94): 3.

⁴¹Gourevitch, 154-156.

⁴²Italian and Tunisian troops were also part of the initial Operation Turquoise plans, but it did not work out.

murdered), but the RPF was nearing victory in gaining control of the capital.⁴³ The French response was essentially too little, too late.

In looking at the involvement of the international community in Rwanda it is also important to examine the role of development aid, including aid from foreign states and international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In the 1970s Rwanda was seen as a model developing country, and international aid poured in from Western states, especially Switzerland and Belgium.⁴⁴ Even after the economic crisis began, Rwanda signed an agreement with the World Bank for a ninety million-dollar structural adjustment program (SAP) in 1991.⁴⁵ Rwanda's political stability made it an ideal recipient country. Although it was clearly a dictatorship, the government was in undisputed control of the country, there was an effective administration, and there was a concern for investment in rural areas. This dictatorship had the problems that aid and adjustment programs were meant to address – poverty, high population growth, and environmental pressures. Other problems, such as human rights abuses and racism, were not easily solved with donor money and adjustment programs, so they were ignored. The aid agencies failed to investigate the political history of Rwanda in their project reports.⁴⁶ These were grave mistakes. Rwanda was given the

⁴³Prunier, 281-299; Destexhe, 3-18.

⁴⁴Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, Inc., 1998), 42.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 43-46; DesForges (website).

impression that what they were doing internally would be ignored externally.

Following the end of the Cold War, however, the West added a new condition for aid, democratization, which, ironically, adversely affected the Rwandan situation. President Habyarimana was forced to accept democratization as a goal of structural adjustment, to avoid economic disaster. However, the extremist leaders of the government were fearful of potential power loss, and they became more extreme and anti-Tutsi in their attempts to retain authority.⁴⁷ The effects of aid programs on pre-genocide Rwanda were twofold. First, as model recipients for aid and development, Rwandan economics and not Rwandan politics were the focus. Rwanda's pattern of prejudice and human rights abuses was initially ignored. Second, the conditions of receiving aid and adjustment programs were forced moves towards democratization, which merely pushed Hutu officials towards extremism as they feared losing power. While foreign aid and structural adjustment programs cannot be blamed for the genocide, they were undoubtedly in part responsible for setting the political and economic scene in Rwanda that eventually led to genocide.

Another large group who had the opportunity to work for positive change in Rwanda, but did not, were the Christian Churches and their various missionary orders. Christian missionaries not only made up a significant portion of the international community living in Rwanda, but they had also been intimately involved in the development of ethnic politics in Rwanda since the colonial period. The White Fathers

⁴⁷Andersen, 441-450.

order of the Catholic Church established their missionary movement in Rwanda in the 1880s. This group of missionaries attempted initially to convert the traditional leaders of Rwandan society, in the hopes that once the leaders converted the rest of the population would follow. By the 1930s the majority of Rwandans had converted to Christianity, and the devotion lasted. In post-colonial times, Rwanda was one of the most "Christian" states in Africa. The missionary attention to leadership extended to the colonial powers as well as to the African elite. Religious leaders worked closely with the colonial administrations and contributed to the legitimacy of colonial authority. Church officials and priests preached obedience to the state as a core Christian value. Protestant missionaries came to Rwanda after the Catholics, and while Protestant churches often appealed to the more marginalized populations, Protestants followed the Catholic example of preaching obedience to the state.⁴⁸

The relationship between the Church (Catholic and to a lesser extent Protestant) and the state extended further than respect for state authority. The churches played a key role in establishing visions of ethnic superiority, as they were the original sponsors of the Hamitic hypothesis, which stated that the superior

⁴⁸Timothy Longman, "Christian Churches and Genocide in Rwanda," *The Holocaust Revealed* 1997 <http://www.logon.org/-domain/holocaust.revealed.org/Africa/Rwanda/Christian_Church_Genocide.htm> (15 November, 2003); Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal, "The Ungodly Missionary Legacy," from *U.S. Complicity by Silence: Genocide in Rwanda* <<http://mediafilter.org/CAQ/CAQ52Rw2t.html>> (4 November, 2003).

foreigner Tutsis conquered the native inferior Hutus.⁴⁹ The Catholic Church was also instrumental in constructing ethnic relations in the post-colonial state of Rwanda. Priests played a crucial role in changing Belgian colonial support from Tutsis to Hutus as independence neared. In the 1950s, the typical Belgian missionary priest coming to Rwanda was a Flemish “progressive” motivated by theories of social justice. These priests regarded minority rule as outdated, and they identified with the oppressed Hutu majority. The Church attitude influenced the Belgian colonial authorities. Following the Hutu struggle to gain power, when Belgium was granting independence to Rwanda, colonial and Church leadership supported the switch from Tutsi to Hutu leaders.⁵⁰ After independence, the ties between Church and state were knotted even tighter. Many of the early Hutu leaders had Church patrons who not only supervised their advanced education but also helped them gain positions within the government. Church leaders were also members of the government. The Archbishop of Rwanda was a member of the Central Committee of Habyarimana’s party, the only party until the 1990s.⁵¹ Not all religious officials participated in discriminatory practices against the Tutsis before the genocide, but neither did the Church stand against the institutionalized racism – cooperation with the state was too deeply ingrained at this point.

The Church also played a role during the genocide. Due to the Church’s significant status in Rwandan

⁴⁹Mamdani, 232.

⁵⁰Longman (website); Omaar (website).

⁵¹Mamdani, 232.

society and the nonexistence of other social organizations, churches and priests often had very close relationships with community members, especially in rural areas. Populations went to their churches for education, economic assistance, healthcare, charity and employment. These resources furthered the Church's status among the people and provided an image of refuge in tumultuous times. The people remembered this image during the genocide. Tutsis often fled to their local churches for safety. The *genocidaires* often told Tutsis to gather in churches, ostensibly for their protection, but in reality to gather them together to make the killing easier. The range of nuns' and priests' actions during the genocide varies widely. Some religious leaders attempted to protect their Tutsi congregations seeking refuge, some did nothing, and some were actively involved in helping the killers or even carrying out killing themselves.⁵² The Church can be held accountable for its complicity with the extremist Hutus in government and its failure to take a stand against ethnic discrimination and violence in Rwanda.⁵³

There are other international organizations that should be examined, not because they were directly complicit with the violence in Rwanda, but because of their lack of appropriate response to the genocide. Two groups were the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, also known as Doctors without Borders), the only two

⁵²Longman (website); Omaar (website).

⁵³Rasmus Hylleborg, Lone Møller-Hansen and Allan Poulsen, "The Rwanda Genocide in 1994 and Danish Baptist Involvement in the Country," trans. Allan Poulsen (Report for the Baptist Union, 1998), 1-7.

large-scale humanitarian organizations that continued to operate in Rwanda during the genocide. The Red Cross and MSF are independent non-governmental groups that go to areas facing humanitarian crises to provide medical relief as well as to address underlying health-related issues, such as providing clean drinking water and better sanitation facilities. The MSF is often the first NGO to arrive at a crisis, but their services are only meant to be temporary, whereas the Red Cross carries out long-term projects in many countries after the immediate crisis has ended but while humanitarian relief is still needed.⁵⁴

MSF and Red Cross workers provided medical care to survivors of *genocidaire* attacks in Rwanda. Treating near-fatal machete wounds was a common purpose of medical teams. Wounded and hiding Tutsis also sought refuge in the MSF and Red Cross compounds, and both organizations cared for orphans of the genocide. The MSF and Red Cross were doing their jobs to the best of their abilities, considering the number of volunteers and the amount of available supplies.⁵⁵ It is in the area of politics that MSF and Red Cross were constrained. Publicly choosing sides in a conflict would limit their effectiveness in future endeavors. They have to stay neutral to continue working in areas of conflict. In addition, aid from the

⁵⁴Elliot Leyton, *Touched by Fire: Doctors Without Borders in a Third World Crisis* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1998), 29, 45; "The ICRC in Rwanda," *International Committee of the Red Cross* (17 August 2003) <<http://www.icrc.org/Web/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/rwanda?OpenDocument>> (23 November 2003)

⁵⁵Leyton, 63, 92; John Sundin, "Kigali's Wounds, Through a Doctor's Eyes," *Harper's Magazine* 289 (August 1994): 13-18.

developed world is often viewed as a cover for political manipulations in the Third World, and, therefore, MSF and the Red Cross have to scrupulously and publicly avoid politics to assure the countries that the aid and relief comes with no strings attached to Western governments. These factors limit the ability and willingness of such organizations to take a stand on issues about which they have unique access to information. Only after crises, such as the genocide, can MSF and Red Cross workers speak out politically about what they witnessed.⁵⁶

The final group of international actors to examine regarding the 1994 genocide are three of the states surrounding Rwanda: Burundi, Uganda, and Congo. Burundi had the most influence on Rwanda among the neighbor states in the years from independence until the genocide, partly due to shared histories and partly due to the ease of populations crossing borders. Rwanda and Burundi had been governed by the colonial powers jointly as one territory. The colonial powers favored Tutsi minorities in both territories, and policies of ethnic discrimination were put in place. Rwanda and Burundi attained independence in 1962, but unlike the case in Rwanda, Tutsis remained in control of political and military power in Burundi. Burundian minority Tutsi officials discriminated against majority Hutus. The discrimination by both governments evolved into ethnic violence.⁵⁷

The violence in each country influenced ethnic violence in the other. Ethnic violence towards Hutus in Burundi was the justification Rwandan officials

⁵⁶Leyton, 136, 159-160.

⁵⁷Hintjens, 276; Arnold, 3.

used in persecuting Rwandan Tutsis, and violence against Tutsis in Rwanda was justification for Burundian officials' persecution of Burundian Hutus. The movement of refugees fleeing from such persecution across borders also influenced inter-ethnic relations. In 1972, Tutsis killed between 100,000 and 200,000 Hutus in Burundi after Hutus attempted to organize an uprising. This event, referred to by scholars as the first genocide after the Holocaust, sent Hutus fleeing across borders to Rwanda, and also played a pivotal role in aiding future President Habyarimana's regime of anti-Tutsi policies. In 1993, Burundi's first popularly elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, was assassinated by the Tutsi-controlled military. The assassination prompted Burundian Hutus to murder about 20,000 Tutsis, which the army responded to by killing about 300,000 Hutus.⁵⁸ These events led to Hutu refugees fleeing into Rwanda, many of whom later participated in the 1994 genocide.⁵⁹

The killings of Hutus in Burundi in 1972 and 1993 were used as examples by the Habyarimana regime of the threat that Tutsis posed to Hutus and as justification for ethnic violence within Rwanda. In addition, as journalist Philip Gourevitch stated, "Lack of international response to the 1993 massacres in Burundi permitted Rwandan extremists to expect that they too could slaughter people in large numbers without consequences."⁶⁰ The ethnic violence used as political tools by Rwanda and Burundi were inextricably linked

⁵⁸Hintjens, 277-279; Lemarchand (article), 5-7; Newbury and Newbury, 298.

⁵⁹Mamdani, 205.

⁶⁰DesForges, (website).

– when the two states had problems with the policies of their neighbor, they never engaged in government dialogue, but simply channeled their anger with their neighbor to their own populations of their neighbor's politically powerful ethnic group.

Uganda was also involved in Rwandan affairs because many Tutsis fleeing from Hutu extremist violence throughout the decades after independence sought refuge in Uganda. There they joined with Ugandans to create the post-colonial state. However, under Ugandan President Milton Obote's two periods of rule, Rwandan refugees were viewed with hostility, prompting many to join with Ugandan Yoweri Museveni's revolutionary guerilla forces to overthrow Obote. One Rwandan involved in this guerilla movement was Paul Kagame, future leader of the RPF. After Museveni's victorious ascent to power in Uganda, he changed rules of citizenship so that anyone who had lived within the country for ten years was a citizen, partly to acknowledge Rwandan refugees' aid to his revolution. However, facing criticism from native Ugandans, and needing to maintain his legitimacy, Museveni revoked the changes so that citizenship was once again dependent on ancestry. Refugee Rwandan Tutsis, unable to return to Rwanda, were faced with losing their welcome in Uganda.⁶¹ These events played a significant role in the establishment of the RPF as a group fighting for the right of Tutsis to return to Rwanda. Thus, events in Uganda had an influence on pre-genocide Rwanda, although direct relations at the state level had not been a factor.

⁶¹Prunier, 67-74; Mamdani, 17.

Congo (Zaire at the time of the genocide) was also involved in pre-genocidal Rwanda, but unlike Burundi and Uganda, Congo maintained positive relations because of the friendship between President Mobutu Sese Seko and President Habyarimana. Mobutu aided the Rwandan government's struggle against the RPF by assisting the shipments of arms to the Rwandan army during the genocide. Mobutu also provided bases for the French Operation Turquoise within Congo, as a cultivator and recipient of French government support for his own country.⁶² While Mobutu did nothing to halt the genocidal culture developing among extremist Rwandan Hutus, and, in fact, probably encouraged it through his support of Habyarimana's regime, Congo's most direct involvement in the affairs of Rwanda occurred towards the end of the genocide and after it. Partially through the French Operation Turquoise safe-zone, Hutu extremists fled the RPF into the protective custody of refugee camps located in Congo. These refugee camps, run by numerous international humanitarian organizations, provided a base for the extremist Hutus in exile to reorganize their violent anti-Tutsi efforts and to regain support among the camps' populations. The extremist Hutus directed armed battles against the new RPF-controlled government of Rwanda in an attempt to regain power. The extremists also, tragically, encouraged ethnic violence against Tutsis living in Congo, even if they were native Congolese.⁶³

⁶²Gourevitch, 253-254, 279-280.

⁶³Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 140, 143-144.

Were there warning signs of the violence or potential actions that the international community could have taken? The major warning sign of impending genocide was supplied by the UNAMIR commander Dallaire's informant, but other evidence for a potential genocide was also ignored by the international community. In 1993, a mission undertaken by International Federation of Human Rights and Africa Watch found evidence of human rights abuses carried out by Habyarimana's regime in the mass graves of Tutsis killed in 1991 and 1992. Their report was corroborated by a UN human rights official, and the report was sent to Western governments. The report was largely ignored or viewed as an exaggeration.⁶⁴ However, some foreign officials heeded the signs of impending violence. The Foreign Minister of Belgium, Willy Klaes, warned the UN Secretary General in March 1994 that the current situation in Rwanda, "could result in an irrepressible explosion of violence."⁶⁵ Another ignored warning sign was the hate propaganda pouring out of the Rwandan radio station RTLM and the newspaper *Kangura* beginning in the early 1990s. The messages of ethnic hate encouraged violence against Tutsis and portrayed all Tutsis as direct threats to Hutu safety.⁶⁶

Some scholars note that the international community could have undertaken various military actions to halt the genocide once it began. For example, bombing the RTLM radio headquarters would have presented

⁶⁴William A. Schabas, "When There's No Forgetting," *Irish Red Cross Journal*, March 2000 <<http://www.redcross.ie/news/review/2000/0300b.html>> (15 November 2003)

⁶⁵Gourevitch, 108.

⁶⁶Kellow and Steeves, 116.

little risk to the military volunteers heading the operation, and by cutting out the main voice that encouraged and aided killers, lives might have been spared.⁶⁷ More direct action to halt the genocide would have involved military presence on the ground in Rwanda, but this could have occurred in various degrees of intensity. The UN could have changed the UNAMIR mandate from Chapter Six to Chapter Seven, authorizing more aggressive force. The UNAMIR forces could have been enlarged. The Belgian and French paratroopers who were sent in only long enough to evacuate their citizens, could have remained to protect their citizens and provide an armed presence in Rwanda.⁶⁸ The UN or the U.S. could have led an intervention force designed to end the killings. Political scientist Alan Kuperman theorized that a minimal intervention consisting of solely air force from outside Rwanda that either evacuated Tutsis to neighboring countries or bombed Rwandan government troops, could have saved up to 75,000 Tutsis from execution.⁶⁹

Historical events are, to be sure, contingent on a variety of factors, so it is impossible to know the outcome of any of these scenarios. Yet, it is clear that contemporaries did make predictions based on their assumptions about outcomes. The organizers of the genocide were betting on international withdrawal from Rwanda once the genocide exploded. International presence, even without international military action, might have been enough to dramatically reduce the killings by genocidal killers armed only with

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁶⁸ Des Forges, (website).

⁶⁹ Kuperman, 106-119.

machetes. It was only after the international journalists, diplomats, clergy, aid agencies, and businessmen left Rwanda that the killing became massive and widespread.⁷⁰ The international community's obvious decision to leave the Rwandans to themselves was a clear signal to the extremists in power that they could continue with the genocide as planned without anyone trying to stop them. Tragically, the same signal that told the genocide's organizers they could continue with their plans also signaled to the populations in Rwanda that participating in the killing would not incur punishment. Realizing the relative ease with which the international community could have intervened leads to questions of why it did not. To prevent genocide from occurring again, which in all probability it will somewhere, these questions need to be asked and the answers explored.

Rwanda had a very troubled history that led to a culture capable of committing genocide. Many factors played a role in not only setting Rwanda on the path to ethnic violence as a state policy, but also in causing the genocide. Although the genocide had obvious ethnic expressions, it was a form of political violence and did not result from ancient ethnic differences. Because the genocide was a political outcome, it could have been dealt with in the international community through political avenues. It should not be denied that Rwandans were responsible for committing the genocide, but neither should it be ignored that the international community and historical conditions were influential in setting the stage for assisting the extremist Rwandans to attain power in Rwanda and to

⁷⁰Hintjens, 272.

pursue genocide in a state which was in economic and political crisis. In addition, the international community, in its various forms, is limited by the necessity of respecting state sovereignty. States' national interests are usually prioritized above those of individual citizens. Recognizing these aspects of the international system and acknowledging the historical role of international governmental and non-governmental actors in events leading to genocide will help explain the failures in Rwanda. Furthermore, it may help to avert future genocide under different circumstances.

