

History Matters



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For the History Matters Family

The History of HISTORY MATTERS
Appalachian State University
Department of History

Have you ever spent so much time and effort on something that you wanted share it with other people? Have you ever felt unfulfilled receiving only a grade and your own satisfaction as rewards for your hard work? Have you ever wanted to get your work published?

For these reasons HISTORY MATTERS was founded. In the spring of 2003, Eric Burnette, a freshman, was looking for an outlet—a venue for his research paper. He figured that other students probably felt the same way. Dr. Michael Moore, who had edited ALBION, a professional journal of British history, for over 25 years, began advising Eric on how best to go about starting an academic journal for students. Another student, Matthew Manes, was asked to join the interesting experiment, and together they laid the groundwork for HISTORY MATTERS.

Our first deadline was in late January 2004. For the editorial staff, it was an extensive and time consuming process of reading, revising, and communicating with both the authors and the Faculty Editorial Board. In the end, the collaboration published one research paper, one research essay, and three editorial book reviews. The first issue of *HISTORY MATTERS: An Undergraduate Journal of Historical Research* was published on April 28, 2004 at www.historymatters.appstate.edu.

From the beginning, Eric and Matt wanted to expand the journal. The more students involved meant that more students had the opportunity to be published, and the better those papers would be. The 2004-2005 school year saw the participation of the University of North Carolina— Asheville and Western Carolina University, as well as submissions from half a dozen schools nationwide. The 2005 issue was published with two research papers, one from Appalachian State University and one from a student at Villanova University, and five editorial book reviews from all three participating departments.

Since 2004, HISTORY MATTERS has grown drastically. Over the years our submission base has increased from 11 papers in 2004-05 to 118 submissions in 2011-12. We now receive submissions from all over the United States from distinguished universities including Yale, Harvard, and Stanford. HISTORY MATTERS has also expanded internationally. We receive submissions from Canada, South America, Australia, and New Zealand while also employing international staff members as contributing editors.

HISTORY MATTERS continues to grow and prosper thanks to a supportive faculty, department, university, and most importantly, the students who have worked hard on their papers and work with us to get them published.

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Land of the Free, Home of the Slave:
The Rise of Slave Markets in Alexandria, Virginia, 1800-1850

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James Madison University

With the addition of Alexandria, Virginia, into the District of Columbia on February 27, 1801, the nation's capital annexed one of the most prominent slave trading markets in the Antebellum South.¹ The consolidation of the city's infrastructure around the transportation of slaves to the Deep South helped give rise to the establishment of slave trading firms such as Franklin & Armfield, and solidify the city's dependency on the domestic slave trade. But as the local newspaper played the role of a public forum, strengthening the trade with advertisements for the dealing of slaves, it also proved to be influential later when abolitionists used it as a means for communicating their protest. Even though the increasing abolitionism eventually threatened the existence of the slave trade in the District, the residents of Alexandria voted to return to Virginia before the Compromise of 1850 outlawed the slave trade in the nation's capital completely. Despite the debate that raged on the pages of the *Alexandria Gazette* during the 1800s, slavery was not the major reason that residents voted to retrocede. On the contrary, the lack of political representation in the city's affairs ultimately led to a fear of economic insecurity and the desire to reunite with Virginia once more.

Realizing the wealth that could be generated from the abundance of arable land throughout the northern part of Virginia, landowning elites officially petitioned for the establishment of the city of Alexandria in 1749. Given the city's strategic location along the Potomac River, Alexandria flourished with commerce as merchants continually traveled to the region for the agricultural trade. As a result, wheat and tobacco products were mass-produced and shipped elsewhere, and Alexandria gradually became one of the major trading locations utilized by Great Britain before the Revolutionary War. While Alexandria was

¹ William Seale, *A Guide to Historic Alexandria* (Alexandria: The City of Alexandria 250th Anniversary Commission, 2000), 39.

initially more dependent on its agricultural production as a means for sustaining its economy prior to the 1800s, it also became involved in the slave trade that was slowly booming at the same time. Only after the city developed into a “center of an extensive and lucrative agricultural network” within the broader United States, however, was it able to maintain an extensive slave trade as well.²

After slavery was revolutionized with the introduction of Eli Whitney’s cotton gin in 1807, the rising demand for African laborers in the South helped secure Alexandria’s role as a major player in the transportation of slaves throughout the country. But with increasing abolitionist pressures from both the domestic and international communities, the United States followed Great Britain’s example in 1807 and outlawed the trans-Atlantic slave trade with the Slave Trade Act of 1808. Nevertheless, by the time of this restriction, the abundant population of African-Americans residing inside the United States was enough to fuel the rise of the domestic slave trade, while simultaneously intensifying Alexandria’s role in that trade. Consequently, Alexandria was able to thrive in both the agricultural and slave trades until soil depletion and subsequent low market prices brought about a harsh economic depression in the early 1820s. Because of the overuse of tobacco plants, the soil had lost much of its nutrients, and so some planters were forced to leave the area. Under the circumstances, the city’s traders who decided to stay thus shifted their dependency from the agricultural trade to the slave exchange.³

² Seale, 17-18; Lisa Kraus, John Bedell, and Charles LeeDecker, *Joseph Bruin and the Slave Trade* (Washington, D.C.: Louis Berger Group, 2007), 13; Donald M. Sweig, “Reassessing the Human Dimension of the Interstate Slave Trade,” *Prologue* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 6-9.

³ Steven Deyle, “The Irony of Liberty: Origins of the Domestic Slave Trade,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 39; Seale, 17; Beverly McMillan, *Captive Passage: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Making of the Americas* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 53; Kraus, 13; Pamela J. Cressey and Margaret J. Anderson, *Alexandria, Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8-9.

Since the Chesapeake region already had a history of trafficking slaves, Alexandria's rise to national recognition was almost instantaneous. Yet slave trading within the United States following the Slave Trade Act of 1808 proved to be a much more complicated, though easily manipulated, business. Generally, slaves could be transported from the Chesapeake region one of three ways: overland on foot, by ships, or by a combination of both. Regardless of the new slave trading restrictions, which banned the importation of slaves via the Atlantic exchange, the new generation of slave traders in the nineteenth century found ways around the legality of proving the origins of slaves, such as mysteriously misplacing their ship manifests. Historian Michael Tadman notes that even though the majority of overland records were rarely recorded, transportation by foot through slave lines called "coffles" composed nearly half (if not three-quarters) of the total trade.⁴ This way, slave traders did not have to report their cargo when arriving at their urban destinations, thus allowing the subliminal continuation of a smaller scale trans-Atlantic slave trade. In the process, due to the huge influx of slaves to the city, Alexandria experienced massive growth that was comparable to other contemporary cities such as Baltimore, Richmond, and Charleston.⁵

Even though some local residents were forced either to move away from the region or sell their slaves in order to compensate for their losses after the economic crisis, the traders that remained invested their efforts in the domestic slave trade. In fact, slaves were first used to help traders' economic situation and only later increasingly treated as dispensable commodities, useful because they could be sold again. The huge numbers of slaves coming into the city helped attract the attention of outside traders wishing to penetrate the market,

⁴ A coffle on average consisted of thirty to forty slaves, but could go over more than a hundred.

⁵ Kraus, 5; Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 8.

and consequently, many migrated to Alexandria. For instance, John Patterson, a trader in Maryland, wrote a letter to Peter Carr, a resident in Alexandria, in which he stated:

You will oblige me by asking your brother Dabney if negros can, on any terms, be removed to the state of Virginia from Maryland – I have been informed, at this place, that by a late act of the legislature, persons crossing into Virginia to reside can bring their slaves, on making affidavit that they are introduced for their own use, & not intended to be sold. I should be glad to have his opinion before I return, for if I cannot take mine to [Virginia] I will sell them in [Baltimore].⁶

With this letter, Patterson embodied the typical trader in Alexandria who sought to infiltrate the slave trade developing in the city at the time. What is remarkable to note is that Patterson even contemplates finding ways around the law, by expressing that he intends to use them for private matters, all for the purposes of tapping into the slave markets in Alexandria.

Examining the city's rise to prominence, historian Steven Deyle notes that the increasing number of out-of-state buyers in Alexandria resulted in a court's proclamation of "a grievance [due to] the practice of persons coming from distant parts of the United States into this District for the purpose of purchasing slaves."⁷ The trade proved to be so successful that the local residents complained that other traders were settling the city and taking their profits. But regardless of this complaint, due to the efforts of earlier traders such as William Beckman, Elijah Ogden, and Ira Bowman who had migrated to the city, Alexandria was able to establish a lucrative slave market.⁸

During the earlier stages of the slave trade in Alexandria, African slaves brought into the city were sold to local residents and out-of-town traders, who then decided upon slaves' specific duties on their own. Usually this meant that the slaves worked for their masters'

⁶ John Patterson and Peter Carr, *Letter Alexandria, Virginia to Peter Carr, 1808*, Charlottesville: Alderman Library, 1984.

⁷ Deyle, 60-61.

⁸ Kraus, 14.

businesses and in their homes, or were hired out to work for someone else. As the domestic slave trade developed a hub in Alexandria, the city's economy became significantly tied to the trade. Consequently, as the trade grew, a system was instituted in which Africans were auctioned off to the highest bidder. Tadman explains this shift by noting that slaves were often bought from planters who needed cash after the agricultural crisis. Later, however, auctions played an important role in settling prices for whole regions, "giving both buyers and sellers an idea of the state of the market."⁹ This was crucial since the market houses, which were deemed the commercial center of Alexandria at the time, shifted their attention from the agricultural trade to the transportation of slaves. In turn, the slave trade in Alexandria became more important, as evidenced by the development of an elaborate system of transactions based on characteristics such as slaves' age, weight, height, and sex.¹⁰

The development of the slave trade impacted Alexandria most significantly when it gave rise to the establishment of businesses that complemented the trade. For example, many hotels were created to adapt to the needs of the outside trader traveling into the city. Additionally, some existing hotels installed barred windows and externally locked doors to attract slave traders traveling with their slaves. Other businesses simply changed their hotels into holding cells for slaves, areas otherwise known as "slave pens." In fact, Alexandria was a notorious center for its slave pens, as they served as a temporary detainment center for slaves to be kept until they were sold and transported elsewhere. As historian Walter Johnson notes, the domestic slave trade in the upper South revolved around these slave pens so much that "slave traders invested in the holding of these slaves for as long as two months

⁹ Tadman, 53.

¹⁰ Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 53-55; Bryan Clark Green, "The Structure of Civic Exchange: Market Houses in Early Virginia," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 6, Shaping Communities (1997): 189; Sweig, 6.

before they were shipped to the south.”¹¹ The city was thus completely revolutionized as money seemed to impact almost all aspects of the commercial society.¹²

This monumental growth is heavily documented in the local newspaper, the *Alexandria Gazette*. While many local residents were forced to conform to the slave trade following the agricultural crisis, the *Alexandria Gazette* was initially used to help sustain their economic situation. In the April 16, 1822, issue, local trader John S. Hutcherson ran an advertisement that read:

Cash to give for Slaves. The subscriber, who resides in Alexandria, D.C. wishes to purchase a likely young Negroes, [sic] male and female, from 10 to 18 years of age. Persons having such property for sale, may find the subscriber living on Henry st. between King and Prince strts. Alexandria, near Mr. Swan’s plaster mill, in Mrs. Nutt’s brick house.¹³

While this advertisement serves as evidence of the attempt to utilize the resourcefulness of the local media in order to prosper in the slave industry, it also attests to the developmental stages of the slave trade in Alexandria. For example, early local traders such as Hutcherson, advertised for specific qualities in slaves that they were willing to purchase for domestic or private use; he, for instance, wanted “male or female” slaves from “10 to 18 years of age.”¹⁴ But as the slave trade began to advance further—and as it proved to be a very successful addition to Alexandria’s then-stagnant trade—this massive economic growth attracted outside traders to settle and establish their businesses in the city. As a result, the *Alexandria Gazette* was once again utilized by the outside traders willing to purchase slaves. Just three years after Hutcherson’s advertisement, a Maryland trader by the name of E.P. Legg printed in the February 15, 1825, issue:

¹¹ Johnson, 48.

¹²James W. Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 291; Kraus, 10-14.

¹³ *Alexandria Gazette*, April 16, 1822.

¹⁴ *Alexandria Gazette*, April 16, 1822.

SLAVES WANTED: The subscriber will at all times, pay the highest price in cash for slaves...Sixty or seventy slaves at this time, expressly to go to Tennessee.¹⁵

Yet another example from an 1825 issue included the following statement from outside trader John W. Smith:

Cash for Slaves. WANTED to purchase, about 30 or 40 Negroes of both sexes; a liberal price will be given in case. Enquire at the SOUTHERN HOTEL...¹⁶

The *Alexandria Gazette* was one of the most influential means of communication during the era, and both local and outside traders clearly employed it to their fullest capabilities. In comparison to the earlier advertisements of local residents such as Hutcherson, these advertisements from Legg and Smith attest to the change over time in just a matter of three years. With their concise word choice, Legg and Smith did not care to include characteristics such as age, but rather wished to purchase slaves in huge quantities. Moreover, some traders such as Legg even noted that slaves would “expressly go to Tennessee,” demonstrating the commercial use of slaves as commodities in the rising slave trade. In addition, this also indicates the considerable demand for African laborers elsewhere, such as in Tennessee. The *Alexandria Gazette*, which was arguably one of the fastest and most effective means of communication for the time period, was utilized by traders as a means to appeal to a large audience in the shortest time possible.

With the substantial growth of the slave trade made feasible by outside traders infiltrating the city’s resources, Alexandria received notable attention that transformed outside traders’ operations into local slave trading firms. Alexandria was drastically impacted by the establishment of these slave trading firms, since they gave rise to the Slave

¹⁵ Ibid., February 15, 1825.

¹⁶ Ibid., June 14, 1825.

Trade District along Duke Street in Old Town Alexandria. As Johnson notes, the profit generated by each slave trading firm in Alexandria could potentially amount to an annual income of over hundreds of thousands of dollars. And while there were numerous slave trading firms in the Slave Trade District, among these was “one of the largest and most profitable slave trading operations in the South” – the Franklin & Armfield firm.¹⁷

Isaac Franklin and John Armfield took advantage of the high demand for slaves in the South that was brought on by the advancements of Eli Whitney in the cotton industry. While they were independently successful, as Franklin dealt in the slave trade in Mississippi as early as 1819, the two traders centralized their headquarters in Alexandria. Coming together in February 1828, they decided to headquarter their business in a three-story brick house at 1315 Duke Street. As historian Donald Sweig explains, this three-hundred-square-foot house was strategically built to serve as a jail for slaves until they were sold. This slave pen was the center of the entire operation of the firm, as it was used to hold the massive amounts of slaves that they owned. Sweig also remarks that the firm took pride in their treatment of slaves. In fact, while detained, the slaves were reported to have ample amounts of food and clothes, live in decent rooms, and even have heat in the wintertime.¹⁸

While the firm made their headquarters in Alexandria, each individual concentrated on his own specialized skills. The partnership was composed of Armfield, who bought slaves in Virginia, and Franklin, who received shipments of slaves from Virginia in Natchez, Mississippi; Franklin then sold the slaves to other places throughout the South, such as the prominent slave markets of New Orleans. With a full command on both ends of the trade, they heavily benefited from the firm’s ability to acquire African-Americans from other

¹⁷ Johnson, 48; Cressey, 26; Deyle, 63; Loewen, 291.

¹⁸ Sweig, 6-9.

traders. Besides having the necessary wealth to purchase as many slaves as they wanted, the firm capitalized on their ability to search the neighboring regions for slaves that could be bought cheap. Upon gaining valuable experience in the trade, the firm employed agents in locations such as Baltimore and Richmond to help search the cities for enslaved African-Americans. These slaves were bought at “estate and execution sales,” only to be transported to and sold once again in Alexandria.¹⁹

With this operation, Franklin & Armfield showed signs of one of the most sophisticated slave trading businesses of the time period. The two businessmen perfected their craft so well that at one point they elected to increase their profits with the investment in a company ship, the *Isaac Franklin*, in order to save money by not paying a third party for transportation. This move proved to save the company thousands of dollars in shipping fees and worker payments. In 1831, Franklin & Armfield further expanded their business by adding another partner, Rice Carter Ballard, whom they strategically stationed in Richmond, Virginia. By this point, Franklin & Armfield had established themselves as a commanding presence in the South and designed an elaborate system of shipping slaves south from Alexandria, either to Ballard in Richmond or further down the Atlantic coastline to Florida. Either way, the slaves were ultimately shipped to Franklin in Natchez, where they were subsequently sold elsewhere.²⁰

Once again, the *Alexandria Gazette* proved to contribute to the success of the slave trade in Alexandria, as even the Franklin & Armfield firm used it as a means to generate profit. Taken from an issue in 1829, one company advertisement read:

¹⁹ Sweig, 7; Kraus, 10.

²⁰ Loewen, 291; Kraus, 10; Edward E. Baptist, “‘Cuffy,’ ‘Fancy Maids,’ and ‘One-Eyed Men:’ Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States,” *American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (December 2001): 1626-1628.

Cash for Negroes. We wish to purchase ONE HUNDRED LIKELY NEGROES, of both sexes, from 12 to 25 years of age. Field hands; also mechanics of every description. Persons wishing to sell would do well to give us a call, as we are determined to give higher prices for slaves than any purchaser who is now or may be hereafter in this market.²¹

Just as the local residents and outside traders utilized the advertisements in the newspaper, the *Alexandria Gazette* continued to play a significant role in the maintenance of the slave trade. By this time, the slave trade in Alexandria was a thriving industry, as the appearance of frequent advertisements attests to the success of the local media for completing business transactions. But unlike the earlier advertisements of Hutcherson, Legg, or Smith, the Franklin & Armfield firm demonstrates a greater depth of involvement in the slave trade as they advertised for the purchase of one hundred slaves. While this is just one example, it is remarkable to note the developing stronghold that Franklin & Armfield had established in the city. With its advertisements of “giving higher prices” than other slave traders, the firm essentially asserted its dominance over the market. In the process, the firm created a monopoly on the industry as smaller slave traders could not financially compete. In fact, by 1835, the Franklin & Armfield firm “controlled nearly half of the slave trade by sea between New Orleans and the Virginia/Maryland area.”²²

Consequently, when Franklin & Armfield dissolved in 1836 due to a mutual understanding, both original partners were millionaires. The two men sold the Alexandria slave pen, and Franklin took his money to Tennessee, where he lived a wealthy life until his death. On the other hand, Armfield continued to participate in the slave trade with the firm’s third partner, Ballard. While the new operation was not nearly as successful, the legacy of Franklin & Armfield set a precedent for the future establishment of slave-trading companies

²¹ *Alexandria Gazette*, June 20, 1829.

²² Cressey, 26.

that followed in the late 1830s. There is a conflicting debate as to who was the “unofficial successor” of Franklin & Armfield, as historian James Loewen argues for Price, Birch & Co., and historian Lisa Kraus argues for Bruin & Hill. There is no doubt, however, that Alexandria’s reputation as a prominent slave market continued to attract the rise of smaller trading firms. These firms included the likes of George Kephart; Price, Birch & Co.; Robert Windsor; Bruin & Hill; Brady & Co.; and numerous others. But as the domestic slave trade continually proved to be a thriving business, the city was conflicted with a moral dilemma of gaining wealth from the misery of human trafficking.²³

Although abolitionist awareness reached its peak following the establishment of slave trading firms, abolitionists existed in Alexandria much earlier than the 1830s. As early as April 1816, for instance, William Hartshorne, a Quaker merchant living in Alexandria, wrote a report for the Alexandria Monthly Meeting denouncing slavery and Alexandria’s involvement in the slave trade. Hartshorne later expanded on an earlier report written by Quaker Elias Hicks that called for a boycott of slave goods, adding that the entire community should cease participating in the slave trade. This call is particularly significant since the region was adversely affected by a crippling economic crisis in the 1820s, and the Quakers in Alexandria decided to take financial losses rather than participate in the thriving slave trade.²⁴

With the abolitionist awareness increasing throughout the nation’s capital during the early nineteenth century, abolitionists focused on the end of the slave trade as the first step to improving the condition of African-Americans. While abolitionist pressures had led to the banning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the United States, the domestic slave trade was

²³ Loewen, 292; Kraus, 15.

²⁴ A. Glenn Crothers, "Quaker Merchants and Slavery in Early National Alexandria, Virginia," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 47-48.

still left unaddressed. At the same time that Alexandria was consumed with its involvement in the slave trade, the more progressive ideology of the District helped integrate Alexandria's African-American population into the community. In fact, without taking into consideration the number of slaves coming in and out of Alexandria, Washington City's free black population of 3,129 outnumbered its 2,330 slaves by the 1830s.²⁵ Directly because of abolitionist pressure, the black population in the District received more rights and freedoms relatively unknown to other parts of the United States.

This early abolitionist pressure helped influence the improvement of the liberties of the free black population living in Alexandria. Considering one example, African-Americans were given the right to build their own neighborhoods, including one known as "The Bottoms," located near the prominent slave markets in Old Town Alexandria. Free African-Americans were also allowed to serve as firefighters, a job that was predominately reserved for whites in the past. This was significant because as historian William Seale explains, a group of black firefighters helped save the city from a terrible fire in 1827. But despite this limited progress, the slave trade continued to be a harsh reality, and so many abolitionists used the *Alexandria Gazette* to criticize the city for hypocritically allowing some African-Americans limited rights, while simultaneously subjecting others to the brutality of slavery.²⁶

Despite the fact that the local media was used to develop and maintain the domestic slave trade in Alexandria through its advertisements, the media also played a significant role in raising awareness of the mistreatment of the slaves. As early as 1811, the *Alexandria Gazette* printed an editorial that defended the banning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade:

²⁵ Compared to over 6,000 slaves recorded in Alexandria in 1830. John Michael Vlach, "Evidence of Slave Housing in Washington," *Washington History* 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1993/1994): 65-66; Seale, 39-40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

SLAVE TRADE. The abolition of the Slave Trade...by the two following arguments: 1st. That the Trade to the coast of Africa for slaves, together with their subsequent treatment in the West-Indies, is productive of so much human misery, that its continuance is disgraceful to us as men and as Christians. 2^d. That the culture of the West-Islands could go on with equal advantage, and much greater security, if no further importation of slaves were to take place.²⁷

Although the author is unknown, this advertisement hints at the moral dilemma facing the participants in the slave trade. In fact, in comparison to the early Quaker movement initiated by Hartshorne, religion seems to be a familiar theme in the argument for abolitionism, as this editorial argued that the slave trade was “disgraceful to us as men and as Christians.”

Another editorial from 1814 hinted at the illegal importation of slaves into the United States in spite of the Slave Trade Act of 1808, which banned such importation. When the British ship *H.M.S. Thais* essentially destroyed a slave trading factory in South America, American abolitionists honored “this act of humanity” in the *Alexandria Gazette*.²⁸ But while the abolitionist editorials in the newspaper began with calls to ban the trans-Atlantic slave trade, they exhibit an ideological shift from raising general questions about abolition to later attempts at persuasion, highlighting specific details about the inhumanity of the slave trade.

This shift is best exemplified in the June 22, 1827, issue of the *Alexandria Gazette*, in which a stronghold for the abolitionist movement in the city, the Benevolent Society of Alexandria for Ameliorating and Improving the Condition of the People of Color, appealed to the local residents by publishing:

The District of Columbia is now made the depot for this disgraceful traffic!...These enormous cruelties cannot be practiced among us, without producing a sensible effect upon the morale of the community...temptation to participate in so lucrative a traffic, though stained with human blood...become so accustomed to its repulsive features, that they cease to discourage it in others.²⁹

²⁷ *Alexandria Gazette*, June 1, 1811.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 26, 1814.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 22, 1827.

With its reliance on strong words that evoke vivid imagery, this abolitionist group specifically targeted human emotions; it used words such as “disgraceful,” “cruelties,” and “repulsive” to associate a negative connotation with the domestic slave trade, hoping to persuade its audience that the slave trade was essentially evil. The Society, formed in 1827, continued to be influential, communicating their members’ protest via the *Alexandria Gazette* numerous times throughout the early to mid-nineteenth century, and even printing an editorial as late as 1842.³⁰ But besides the more obvious mistreatment of slaves, the Society also looked to raise awareness of the racist and prejudice attitudes towards the free black population living in Alexandria. However, towards the latter part of the century, the Society shifted its strategies from a more intellectual approach to more of a religious appeal. This was evident in the November 26, 1842, issue in which members published that “slavery cannot exist...in a Christian community.”³¹

Another strategy of the abolitionists in Alexandria was to report speeches given at Congressional meetings, as senators were constantly debating the slave trade in Congress. Taken from an editorial in February 19, 1829, the *Alexandria Gazette* printed the following quotation from Pennsylvanian Congressman Charles Miner:

You denounce the foreign slave trade as piracy and punish it with death? – Why do you do so? Because it is cruel and unjust; it separates husband and wife, parent and child, and tears the inhabitants of Africa from the home of their childhood or their choice. And wherein does your domestic slave trade, as it exists, and is carried on through this district, differ from that on the coast of Africa, except that this is near and that a distance? Are not all the sympathies of our nature, which we are taught to regard as sacred, violated and crushed by it without hesitation or remorse? Are not husband and wife, parent and child, separated daily?³²

³⁰ *Alexandria Gazette*, November 26, 1842.

³¹ *Ibid.*, November 26, 1842.

³² *Ibid.*, February 19, 1829.

Congressman Miner, a harsh advocate for abolitionism, was actively quoted in the *Alexandria Gazette* for his speeches given in Congress on behalf of the end of the slave trade. Although this is just one small excerpt from Miner's entire speech, abolitionists like Miner focused on the United States' false assumption that the domestic slave trade was nothing like the trans-Atlantic slave trade, even though they both had similar effects on the slaves they abused. By exposing this double standard, abolitionists explained that citizens were more sympathetic to the African plight because the trans-Atlantic slave trade happened overseas, and were therefore under the false belief that domestic slaves' struggles were not nearly as great because the domestic slave trade happened locally.

Yet another, perhaps more significant, strategy that abolitionists employed was to attack the initial advertisements that helped give rise to the domestic slave trade. As an unknown author in an editorial from 1829 stated:

And whereas the laws in respect to slavery in the District of Columbia have been wholly neglected. From which neglect, for nearly thirty years, have grown numerous and gross corruptions. Slave-dealers, gaining confidence from impunity, have made the Seat of the Federal Government their head quarters [sic] for carrying on the domestic slave trade...advertisements beginning, 'We will give cash for one hundred likely young negroes, of both sexes from eight to twenty-five years old,' contained in the public prints of the city, under notice of Congress, indicate the openness and extent of the traffic.³³

While this editorial is just one example of the manner in which abolitionists attacked the earlier slave advertisements, it demonstrates that the abolitionists realized the importance of the *Alexandria Gazette* in fostering Alexandria's role in the slave trade. Additionally, the abolitionists ultimately held the newspapers accountable for contributing to the growth of this domestic slave trade. But to examine the editorial a little more closely, these abolitionists attacked a model advertisement that is much similar to that published by Franklin &

³³ *Alexandria Gazette*, January 8, 1829.

Armfield in 1829. As Franklin & Armfield frequently advertised for “one hundred likely young negroes,” they were able to prosper and dominate the slave trade. Realizing the resourcefulness of the *Alexandria Gazette* themselves, abolitionists attempted to utilize the local media with the hopes of stunting the growth of the slave trade and ultimately increasing the rights of African-Americans.

While the increasing abolitionist sentiment during the earlier part of the nineteenth century seemed to be an imminent threat to the existence of the slave trade, the local residents of Alexandria seemed to be more focused on a lack of political representation in city affairs. With the Organic Act of 1801, Alexandria was annexed into the District of Columbia, meaning that Congress subsequently assumed all control over the city’s legislative concerns. This proved to be detrimental to the success of the city as Congress failed to develop one standard by which the entire District was governed. In turn, different laws continued to govern each individual part of the District. As historian Mark David Richards notes, the residents of Alexandria felt a sense of political separation from the District’s affairs. One example of such separation is the fact that Congress did not allow the building of federal buildings in Alexandria, whereas construction was allowed elsewhere in the nation’s capital. Another example is the resentment of the old British laws that governed the city, which the District did nothing to improve. But when this lack of governmental representation in the city’s affairs led to a loss of economic security among its residents, Alexandria began to consider a move back to the Commonwealth of Virginia more seriously.

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³⁴ Seale, 39; Mark David Richards, "The Debates over the Retrocession of the District of Columbia, 1801-2004," *Washington History* 16, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004): 59-62; Vlach, 67-69.

A published report by Alexandria's Common Council, explicitly lays out the reasons for retrocession:

...that we are a disfranchised people, deprived of all those political rights, and privileges, so dear to an American citizen, and the possession of which is so well calculated to elevate and dignify the human character; that the exclusive jurisdiction which Congress possesses over us, however wisely and moderately exercised, is a despotism...Our situation is essentially different, and far worse, than that of our neighbors on the northern side of the Potomac. They are citizens of the Metropolis, of a great, and noble Republic, and wherever they go, there clusters about them all those glorious associations, connected with the progress and fame of their country. They are in some measure compensated in the loss of their political rights.³⁵

This lack of political involvement adversely affected the interests of many of the local residents and those that felt a sense of detachment from the affairs of the city. The Committee, although comprised of three individuals, demonstrates the greater city's resentment and jealousy of the economic development in the northern District. As Congress governed the city, Alexandria had virtually no say in the passing of laws, and to many residents, this lack of collaboration ultimately took away from the economic prosperity of the city. However, Alexandria's earlier movements for retrocession were essentially dismissed as nothing but a mild hindrance of a small proportion of the population. This was evident on January 24, 1832, as Alexandria voted 419-310 to stay in the District. But the reasoning behind Alexandria's stay in the District of Columbia was that the potential economic benefits of being a part of the nation's capital overlooked the more negative lack of political involvement.³⁶

But given the economic insecurity from the building of two canals, as well as Congress' failure to reestablish the banks along the region, Alexandria began to reconsider

³⁵ Francis L. Smith, Robert Brockett, and Charles T. Stuart, "Memorial of the Committee of the Town of Alexandria for Retrocession," Common Council of Alexandria report to Congress, Washington, D.C., 1835.

³⁶ Richards, 60-61.

retrocession later on. As the *Alexandria Gazette* reported in 1840, the local mayor at the time, Edgar Snowden, noted in a town meeting:

Resolved, without one dissenting voice, That a Committee of Thirteen, and the Chairman of this meeting, be appointed, to adopt such measures as they may deem necessary to carry into effect the unanimously expressed desire of this meeting, that the town and county of Alexandria be RETROCEDED to the State of Virginia as soon as practicable (author's emphasis).³⁷

Following the looming threat of a financial burden, Alexandria's advocates, such as Snowden, publically expressed their desire for retrocession, ultimately leading to a city-wide vote on October 2, 1840. Unlike the first such vote, retrocession prevailed as Alexandria supported the idea, 537 to 155. After finally receiving permission from the Virginia General Assembly, they petitioned for Congressional approval. But while slavery was the ultimate reason for Alexandria's economic success, the issue of slavery in Alexandria's retrocession was rarely mentioned in Congressional debates. In fact, Richards even notes that "between 1836 and 1844, the House of Representatives passed a gag rule that prohibited debate or discussion relating to slavery."³⁸ Rather, the main focus for retrocession was Alexandrians' fear that a lack of political involvement might threaten their economic vitality.

The anticipation of the wealth generated by the building of canals in the northern part of the District consumed the citizens of Alexandria with envy. In addition, because the citizens were not involved in the city's economic projects, this feeling of a diminishing voice in the city's affairs contributed to public outcries for separation. But as retrocession was a complicated process, the newspaper once again played a major role in the documentation of the city's affairs. Nonetheless, on July 10, 1846, when President James Polk signed the Virginia Retrocession Act into law, the *Alexandria Gazette* proved to be biased in its support

³⁷ *Alexandria Gazette*, July 9, 1840.

³⁸ Richards, 67-71.

for retrocession.³⁹ Following the official vote to be accepted into the Commonwealth of Virginia on September 3, 1846, the *Alexandria Gazette* celebrated the retrocession by stating in bold words:

It is with pride and pleasure we announce that, by a vote of the people of the Town and Country of Alexandria, taken under provisions of an act of Congress, that portion of the District of Columbia originally ceded to the General Government by the State of Virginia, lying south of the Potomac River, has been **RETROCEDED** to the parent state, and will henceforth again become a component part of the Old Dominion... We congratulate our fellow citizens upon the happy event which attaches our town to the State of Virginia.

Just one article of many in the very same issue, another editorial printed:

As the *substance* and not the *form* is material, and **RETROCESSION** has been effected by vote of the people, we do not think it worth while to wait longer, but adopt immediately the emblems of State sovereignty, and date from *Virginia* (author's emphasis).⁴⁰

One aspect to be noted is that in both cases, each author is incredibly subjective as he makes his opinion known. Especially during the 1840s, when retrocession talks were at their peak, the *Alexandria Gazette* remained influential for swaying its voters. This sense of pride for returning to the Commonwealth was seen as vital for maintaining the city's success. In turn, retrocession talks appealed to the public as the last straw in order to protect their economic security.

Shortly following the retrocession from Washington, D.C., Alexandria experienced significant economic growth, similar to that of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Particularly because the citizens' increased participation in Virginia state legislature helped implement the city's economic concerns, the improvements to the city were monumental. This was seen through the city's development of new railroads, banks, and industry, among

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁰ *Alexandria Gazette*, September 3, 1846.

other advances. At the same time, abolitionists were ultimately successful in curtailing the slave trade in Washington, D.C, with the passing of the Compromise of 1850 four years following Alexandria's departure from the nation's capital. However, the profound new economic growth brought about by increased political participation in the city's affairs led to Alexandria's continuation of the slave trade. So, while slave traders in the District of Columbia migrated across the Potomac River into Alexandria in order to continue their investment in Alexandria's slave market, Alexandria's black population declined from 1,962 to 1,409 at the same time, as they too migrated across the Potomac River, but into Washington, D.C., where their treatment was more favorable.⁴¹

This was particularly noted in the correspondence between Moses Hepburn, a former slave who subsequently bought his freedom, and abolitionist Gerrit Smith from the North. Written after the retrocession in 1846, with no specific date, Hepburn accounted for how the black population of Alexandria reacted to Alexandria's retrocession when he wrote:

I know that could you but see the poor colored people of this city... the day of Election when the act of Congress retroceded them to Virginia... as the votes were announced every quarter of an hour the suppressed wailing and Lammentations of the people of color wer [sic] constantly asseding to god for help and succor in this the hour of ther [sic] need... Oh sir there never was such a time here before.⁴²

While recognizing that the abolitionist Smith could have easily added his own input to Hepburn's experience, this account nevertheless attests to the black response of retrocession in Alexandria. As the black population was not allowed to vote, they were subsequently not allowed to voice their opposition to the retrocession. This is particularly ironic since the citizens of Alexandria were complaining about the lack of political representation in the

⁴¹ Seale, 39, 45.

⁴² Moses Hepburn and Gerrit Smith, *The Hepburn-Smith Correspondence, 1846*, Syracuse: George Arents Research Library, 1980.

city's affairs, even as the black population was completely limited in their participation in Alexandria's legislature. Realizing that they were going to lose any rights that they might have previously gained by the re-admittance into the Commonwealth of Virginia, Hepburn noted that the black population cried in the streets because they knew that retrocession would ensure the continuation of the domestic slave trade.

While Alexandria continued to prosper thanks to slave trafficking following retrocession, the slave trade was by no means comparable to that of the slave exchange during the time of the major slave trading firms. The success brought about by the formation of Franklin & Armfield helped establish the city as a major player in the slave trade, solidifying its dependence on accommodating the slave trade. Even though the progressive ideology of the District of Columbia and abolitionist sentiments threatened the existence of this trade, slavery was not the main reason behind the retrocession of the city. Rather, as the city was underrepresented in the city's political affairs, the local residents felt that this ultimately threatened their economic efficiency. So, while the city chose to retrocede four years prior to the Compromise of 1850, the economic growth experienced by their readmission into Virginia contributed to the continuation of the domestic slave trade through smaller slave trading firms that followed in the footsteps of Franklin & Armfield. When tensions over slavery reached an all-time high during the Civil War, Alexandria thus fought as part of the Confederacy, and after the South's defeat, was faced with the reminders of the success and the shame of the slave trade.

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**‘Surest Bond of a United Irish Nation’:
An Increasingly Factionalized Ireland in the First World War**

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When the First World War was declared in August 1914, John Redmond, Member of Parliament and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, held the firm belief that this fight might have the potential to unite all Irishmen under the banner of a common cause. Indeed, he described the war as “just” since it was “provoked by the intolerable military despotism of Germany.”⁴³ Against the German threat Redmond called for a “distinctively Irish army composed of Irishmen, led by Irishmen,” which he believed would form the “surest bond of a united Irish Nation.”⁴⁴ However, Redmond’s vision never came to fruition. Through an examination of political speeches, war propaganda, soldiers’ accounts, reactions to events such as the Easter Rising, and war memorials and commemorations, it is evident that the war, while initially promoted as a way to unite Irishmen, instead exacerbated the growing tensions within the Irish community and caused divisions that continued far into the twentieth century.

The First World War came at a significant time in the course of Irish history. The war began during the chaos surrounding the Third Home Rule Bill, which had been introduced to the British Parliament by Prime Minister Asquith in April 1912. The bill introduced Home Rule, which intended to give Ireland an Irish Parliament and grant the nation more independence than it had experienced since its union with England in 1800.⁴⁵ The bill’s introduction sparked vigorous debates throughout Ireland and England. Those who did not support Home Rule were Irish Unionists, located mostly in the six counties of Ulster, and they were predominantly Protestant.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Nationalists, the bulk of who were Catholics and lived outside the Ulster counties in the south and west of Ireland, were proponents of Home Rule. The debates between the two sides were both bitter and

⁴³ Nuala Christina Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War, and the Geography of Remembrance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Paul Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 368.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 367-369.

divisive. As England prepared to fight World War I, the British Parliament chose to put Home Rule aside until the end of the war, promising to reintroduce it once the fighting was finished and peace had been established.

Through the war effort, John Redmond sought to unite the opposing sides of the Home Rule debate. The chief factions that Redmond sought to unite through the war were the Unionists of Ulster, the Nationalists like himself, and the radical Nationalists who would become the ring leaders of the violent Easter Rising in 1916. On August 3, 1914, Redmond pledged at Westminster to support the war effort of the Allied Powers, stating that volunteers from all parts of Ireland would rally to the cause.⁴⁷ In September 1914, he made a speech at Woodenbridge, County Wicklow, in which he laid out his perspective on why Irishmen should join the war effort. He focused exclusively on how the war would affect Ireland, specifically how choosing not to fight would harm Irish honor. He argued: “The war is undertaken in defense of the highest principles of religion and morality and right, and it would [be a] disgrace for ever [sic] to our country, and a reproach to her manhood, and a denial of the lessons of her history, if young Ireland confined their efforts to remaining at home.”⁴⁸ Redmond thus emphasized how Ireland was taking on a just, moral, and worthy cause. He made no mention of the differences between Irishmen, insisting that the war was a cause for everyone in the country and one that could overcome parochial differences, such as the support or opposition to Home Rule.

The propaganda distributed throughout the war sometimes mirrored Redmond’s vision of unity. While initially posters possessed no “distinctly Irish content,” in early 1915 it was agreed that a separate Irish recruiting board, the Central Council for the Organization

⁴⁷ Denis Gwynn, *Life of John Redmond* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., Limited, 1932), 390-391.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 391.

of Recruiting in Ireland (CCORI), was to be established.⁴⁹ This organization encouraged Irishmen to join the war through the distribution of recruiting pamphlets, papers, and other literature. Additionally, CCORI requested that soldiers compose open letters to the public encouraging enlistment. In July 1915, the soldier Stephen Gwynn published a pamphlet that reinforced the idea of a united, Nationalist Irish cause. Gwynn was a Nationalist Member of Parliament for Galway city who had enlisted as a private in an Irish regiment and rose to the rank of captain in the Irish Brigade, 16th Division. He wrote of the war as just and a cause for all Irishmen: “If any ask, why it is Ireland’s war, there is a plain answer. It is a war in defense of justice and liberty...No man is too good to carry a rifle in [the army], and for an educated citizen the most honourable position is, perhaps, a place in the ranks.”⁵⁰ Gwynn’s portrayal of the war mimics Redmond’s position that the war was moral and just, and that all Irishmen, no matter where they were from or what they believed, should join its cause.

In contrast to the propaganda pamphlets spread by the Nationalists, however, the radical Nationalists portrayed enlistment as unpatriotic from an Irish point of view. Anti-recruitment propaganda appeared in the newspapers of different radical organizations, such as the IRB in the *Irish Freedom* and Sinn Fein in *Eire and Sinn Fein*. In the *Irish Freedom* in December 1914, an article suggested that the war was motivated “not for the cause of religion or civilization but for the cause of England’s great God-Markets.”⁵¹ Earlier in September 1914, the *Irish Freedom* had also labeled John Redmond a “Judas” and his followers “political Esaus,” using religion to promote their own cause and defame their opponents. Historian Nuala Christina Johnson analyzes the opposition propaganda spread by

⁴⁹ Johnson, 28.

⁵⁰ Pamphlet, *An open letter from Capt. Stephen Gwyn MP to the young men of Ireland*, n.d. (Trinity College Dublin: Recruiting leaflets relating to the European War, 1914-1918, OLS L-I-540 Nos. 1-16), quoted in Johnson, 33.

⁵¹ Johnson, 34.

these papers, concluding that “part of their mission to transform it was to oppose the war openly in their writings. However, after the Easter Rising, an insurrection that took place during Easter week in 1916, a more conciliatory tone entered their vocabulary, as Sinn Fein’s expanding support base included the families of many serving soldiers.”⁵² The Easter Rising marked a turning point in the relationship between Ireland and the warring European countries. The uprising crystallized more radical Nationalist feelings among many and gave these feelings more prominence in discussions of the war, pushing Redmond’s views further away from mainstream thought.

Estimates of the number of Irishmen enlisted at the start of war show a remarkable initial support for the war effort. As historian Henry Harris writes, “By 8 August, 620 men had flocked to join the Connaught Rangers in Galway alone.”⁵³ Keith Jeffrey estimates the total number of Irish volunteers from August 1914 to February 1915 to be 50,107, the highest number of Irishmen ever to serve in the war.⁵⁴ The significant number of recruits who responded immediately to Redmond’s call of duty indicates that this war was seen in a positive light by many Irishmen in the fall of 1914. However, as enthusiasm for the war dwindled and tensions at home grew more pertinent, the number of Irish volunteers decreased, reaching the lowest point during the period from February 1917 to August 1917. The greatest decrease in number of volunteers came between August 1915 and February 1916; whereas 19,801 men had joined in the six-month period from August 1915 to January 1916, only 9,323 men joined between February 1916 and August 1916. Jeffrey points out

⁵² Ibid., 35.

⁵³ Henry Harris, *The Irish Regiments in the First World War* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1968), 16.

⁵⁴ Keith Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7.

that this decline mimics the sharp drop in recruits throughout the United Kingdom as war fatigue took hold.⁵⁵

Although Redmond encouraged unity among Irishmen in fighting the war, the call to arms highlighted a major split of volunteers along political lines. While estimates of the number of Irishmen enlisted at the start of the war show a remarkable initial support for the war effort, soldiers typically joined with regiments that matched their political views, indicating that the unity Redmond desired was not easily enforced. An examination of the three Irish regiments that participated in the war reveals that societal divisions carried over into military units. The first Irish division, the 10th Division, included Nationalists and Unionists, and was the first to leave for the European continent at the start of war. Apart from specialist troops, this division was mostly Irish; the unit's historian, Bryan Cooper, calculated that 70 percent of the men and 90 percent of the officers were Irish.⁵⁶ The division was comprised of men, as the *Irish Times* described it, "from all classes of the community...and all quarters of the city."⁵⁷ The second Irish regiment, the 16th Irish Division, was formed when Britain chose to recruit more men, and it was also composed of Unionist and Nationalist supporters. These regiments' diversity meant that they were nearest to Redmond's dream of unity among all Irishmen and that they best embodied what could be called the middle road of Irish society and politics. In other words, they were neither radically Nationalist nor Unionist.

The other Irish regiment, however, was formed entirely upon Unionist ideals rather than the all-inclusive nature of the 10th and 16th Divisions. This Division was formed from men of the Ulster Volunteer Forces, which had been established in 1912 in the event that

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁶ Harris, 17.

⁵⁷ *Irish Times*, 1 May 1915.

Ulster elected to mount a military response to fight the Third Home Rule Bill. The Division's historian, Cyril Falls, describes the 36th Division as a group determined to maintain their U.K. citizenship; they were "a legion of civilians banded together to protect themselves from the consequences of legislation which they believed would adversely affect their rights and privileges as citizens of the U.K."⁵⁸ This regiment embodied the polar opposite of Redmond's ideals. The men of Ulster saw the war as a chance to prove their loyalty to England and thus did everything, including form their own regiment, to prove this point. Their goals were best summarized by a headline published in a northern newspaper, the *Newtownards Chronicle*, that stated: "Ulster will strike for England – and England will not forget."⁵⁹ In other words, Ulstermen would maintain ties with Britain at all costs.

Simultaneously, Nationalists also plotted their own regiment to oppose the war, and their efforts became most evident during the 1916 Easter Rising. In 1913, the Irish Volunteers formed in opposition to the Ulster regiment, eventually numbering around 11,000 people.⁶⁰ The Irish Volunteers played an essential role in the opposition to the war, and particularly to Redmond. They believed that Ireland had little to gain from the war, and that it placed unnecessary burdens on Irish citizens. On October 25, 1914, at the first convention of the Irish Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill stated that "the issue between Mr. Redmond and ourselves...[is] clear and simple."⁶¹ The issue was whether the Irish Volunteers were "pledged to the cause of Ireland, of all Ireland, and of Ireland only," or were "bound to serve the Imperial Government in defense of the British Empire."⁶² MacNeill rejected Redmond's claim that the war would benefit the Irish cause, questioning whether the war was even

⁵⁸ Harris, 22.

⁵⁹ *Newtownards Chronicle*, 31 October 1915.

⁶⁰ Johnson, 23.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶² *Ibid.*

relevant to Ireland when so many Irishmen desired separation from England. The wish to break from England took concrete and deadly form during the Easter Rising.

The First World War provided the perfect scenario for the violent Easter Rising of 1916, drawing further divisions between Irish Unionists and Nationalists, and irrevocably damaging Redmond's vision of unity. The Rising took place during Easter Week of April 24-30, 1916, with the aim of encouraging a final, once-and-for-all severing of ties with England. On the morning of Monday, April 24, around 1,200 Irish Volunteers and other army members captured strong points in Dublin while another several hundred gathered at Liberty Hall. In a few instances, the Volunteers shot civilians who attempted to stop them. The British military was unprepared for the events, and it took several days for them to halt the rebellion and arrest the rebels. To great protest and anger among the Irish population, the instigators of the rebellion were hanged in prison the following month for the crime of high treason.

Many historians have argued that the impetus for the Rising can be attributed directly to the First World War. For one thing, the war legitimized violent behavior in the name of lofty goals. As Johnson writes, "The First World War provided both the opportunity and the timing for the Irish Republican rising of Easter 1916. It presented a suitably violent model for political action and defined the moment when that action was likely to occur."⁶³ Indeed, with the debate over Home Rule halted, many concluded that violent action was necessary. In December 1915, one of the leaders of the Rising, Patrick Pearse, remarked on the situation of Belgium, which was attempting to resist German invasion. Pearse remarked on the heroism of the small state of Belgium and compared its situation to that of Ireland. "Heroism

⁶³ Ibid.

has come back to the earth,” he stated emphatically.⁶⁴ Their struggles both involved small nations defending themselves against larger, stronger enemies. By making these parallels, Pearse intended to build support for rebellion; the Irish Volunteers were being heroic, just as the Belgians. Thus, the Rising was a heroic battle in the eyes of Volunteer supporters.

While the Irish Volunteers encouraged division and rebellion, Irish soldiers at the front in most cases viewed the rising in a negative light and instead favored unity among all troops. William Redmond, the son of John Redmond and a key figure in the war who eventually died fighting, wrote of the camaraderie felt between Irishmen, both Unionist and Nationalist. In his work, *Trench Pictures from France*, he described how men from different areas of Ireland joined together to fight, despite their differing political, religious and social views: “These young men came from the North of Ireland and from the South... They professed different creeds; they held different views on politics and public affairs; but they were knitted and welded into one by a common cause.”⁶⁵ William Redmond’s description echoes his father’s hopes for unity and highlights how, even in 1917 after the Rising, troops at the front were dedicated to the war and to each other.

Captain Noel Drury, a member of the Dublin Fusiliers, commented in a similar vein as William Redmond. He described in his diary about how he found himself obliged to attend a Roman Catholic worship on St. Patrick’s Day, even though he was Presbyterian. He wrote:

Good Presbyterians like myself paraded and marched off to the tunes of the ‘Boys of Wexford’ and ‘A Nation Once Again’ and went off to chapel for the first, and perhaps, the only time in our lives. What a change the war has brought over things to be sure. If anyone had told me a year ago that I would have marched off to a Roman Catholic chapel to a rebel tune, I would have said they were potty to say

⁶⁴ Patrick Pearse, “Peace and the Gael,” in *Political Writings and Speeches* (Dublin: Phoenix Publishing Co., 1924), 216.

⁶⁵ William Redmond, *Trench Pictures from France* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1917), 69.

the least of it. It was rather disconcerting to find myself standing up and sitting down at the wrong time through ignorance of the ritual but nobody seemed to mind.⁶⁶

Drury's illuminating account of this event demonstrates that fighting together in the war had the potential to bring men of different backgrounds together, despite the increasing radicalization of the population at home. Indeed, when the news of the uprising reached the trenches, Drury was critical of the rebels. In his diary on April 19, 1916, he wrote: "We got the most astounding news on the 27th that a rising has broken out in Ireland. Isn't it awful[?] Goodness knows what they think they are going to gain by it. It's a regular stab in the back for our fellows out there, who don't know how their people at home are."⁶⁷ Drury's insightful comments illuminate the complex situation of men in the trenches after the Easter Rising. He was both upset by the violence and concerned by the implication that his fellow Irishmen at home no longer unanimously supported the war he was fighting. Therefore, it seems that John Redmond's wish for unity was answered among the troops abroad, yet unable to find solid footing among the people at home.

The developing rift between soldiers' and civilians' attitudes towards the war became more apparent after the British decision to execute the leaders of the uprising. The soldier John Lucy of the 2nd Battalion of Royal Irish Rifles commented that his "fellow soldiers had not great sympathy with the rebels, but they got fed up when they heard of the executions of the leaders. I experienced a cold fury, because I would see the whole British Empire damned sooner than hear of an Irishman being killed in his own country by any intruding stranger."⁶⁸ Lucy, like Drury, professed little sympathy for the uprising; however, Lucy's comments on

⁶⁶ D.G. Boyce, "That party politics should divide our tents': nationalism, unionism and the First World War," in *Ireland and the Great War: 'A war to unite us all?'*, ed. Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 198.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁶⁸ John Lucy, *There's a devil in the drum* (Great Britain: The Naval and Military Press, 1992), 352.

the British decision to kill the leaders of the revolt indicate the complicated feelings of many Nationalist soldiers about the war. While Lucy did not approve of the rebels' acts, he despised the idea that the British should be free to execute them, since they were Irishmen above all else. Even if Lucy did not support their cause, British involvement was, in this light, even more unacceptable than the rebels' insurrection. Lucy's comments highlight the complex attitudes among Irish people during the First World War in Ireland: how should Britain's relationship with Ireland be defined? This question plagued the period and was ever present in Lucy's attitude towards the uprising.

After the Easter Rising, the Irish increasingly questioned their involvement in the First World War, and the public consequently became distant from the soldiers at the front. Boyce comments on this feeling, stating that "the war was soon perceived as the wrong war, fought in the wrong place, and against the wrong foe – a view which became political orthodoxy as Sinn Fein won a victory over the Home Rule party in the general election of 1918."⁶⁹ In his analysis of County Louth during the First World War, Donal Hall documents growing disinterest in the war, citing evidence recorded by the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). As the end of the war neared, the RIC reported: "With the exception of a fanatical section of Sinn Feiners who are intensely anti-British, the mass of the people appear to regard the war with apathy."⁷⁰ The public increasingly felt distant and removed from the Front. For their part, soldiers began to feel that their fight was no longer the right fight and that their countrymen no longer supported their sacrifices. Tom Kettle, the Irish Home Rule Member of Parliament and a British officer, commented in July 1916 about how he thought that he would be remembered after the war: "These men [participants in the Easter Rising] will go

⁶⁹ Boyce, 201.

⁷⁰ Donal Hall, *World War I and Nationalist politics in County Louth, 1914-1920* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 40.

down in history as heroes and martyrs, and I will go down – if I go down at all – as a bloody British officer.”⁷¹ The glorious unity in the pursuit of war that Redmond had desired had unraveled in the wake of the Easter Rising.

However, while the Easter Rising inherently altered the attitudes of Nationalists toward the war, in Ulster the years of 1916-1918 witnessed continued support of and participation in the war effort. In July 1916, the Ulster Division participated in the bloody Battle of the Somme, a moment that shaped the attitudes of Ulstermen towards the war for the rest of the fighting and afterwards. An important reason for this battle’s significance, aside from the large number of Ulstermen who participated, was that it took place on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, during which the victory of King William of Orange sustained Protestant supremacy in Ireland. The Battle of the Boyne effectively upheld the tradition of the largely Protestant Ulster counties, a source of pride and practically mythical significance among Protestant Ulstermen even in the early twentieth century. In a famous account from a correspondent of the *London Times*, the patriotic sense of this battle is evident: “I am not an Ulsterman, but yesterday as I followed their amazing attack I felt I would rather be an Ulsterman than anything else in the world.”⁷² Thus, while the Nationalist belief in the war was faltering, the support for the war effort in Ulster was reaching a crescendo.

At the end of the war, the divisions in interpretation of the war effort that had built up since the Easter Rising were higher than ever. These divisions were most evident in the way that different areas of the country chose to celebrate Peace Day in July 1919. Britain

⁷¹ Boyce, 201.

⁷² S[amuels] A.P.I., and S.,D.G., *With the Ulster Division in France: A Story of the 11th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (South Antrim Volunteers) from Bordon to Thiepval* (Belfast, n.d.[c.1920]), quoted in Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War*, 56.

declared July 19, 1919, as “Peace Day,” and marked the occasion in London with a parade of 18,000 troops. In Dublin, Peace Day was also celebrated as a Bank Holiday and accompanied by a parade. The *Irish Times* reported the occasion on July 21: “Politics, dissention, everything are forgotten as Ireland’s Viceroy and the Empire’s first defender takes his stand under his well-served flag; and for some minutes, at any rate, one felt that every voice in Ireland was paying throaty tribute in honest thanksgiving to a man in whose person the spirit of victory and peace was symbolized.”⁷³ This article emphasizes, as the *Times* did throughout the war, the unity of the Irish cause. Readers of the *Irish Times* consisted in large part of the members of the English and Irish community who wished for Ireland to remain in union with Great Britain. Its circulation included many wealthy, educated Catholics and Protestants throughout England and Ireland. Therefore, readers of the *Irish Times* were likely to have been among the people who supported the war in the first place and who viewed Peace Day as something worth celebrating.

The Nationalist position towards Peace Day, in its greatest contrast with what was portrayed in the optimistic coverage of the *Irish Times*, came in the form of the *Irish Independent*’s coverage of the day’s activities throughout the country, particularly in the southern county of Cork. The *Irish Independent* was a Dublin-based paper read mainly by Catholics and was typically Nationalistic.⁷⁴ The *Independent* focused less on the unifying aspects of the Dublin celebration in favor of revealing how the rest of the country treated the events with apathy and in some cases violence. The title of the *Independent*’s article on July 21, 1919, was: “Shots Fired in Cork: How Munster Observed the Day.” Munster is the

⁷³ *Irish Times*, 21 July 1919.

⁷⁴ John North, *Waterloo Directory of Irish Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900* (Waterloo: North Waterloo Academic Press, 1986), last modified 2003, <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com/series2/purchaseinformation.asp>.

province comprised of all the southern Irish counties: Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford. The south traditionally had a significant number of Nationalists, meaning that the *Independent's* emphasis on the south clearly points to the paper's allegiance towards the Nationalist cause. The article began: "The outstanding incidents in Munster were serious conflicts between police and civilians in Cork and Limerick in which baton charges were made...In Waterford there were no celebrations...In Tipperary the Very Rev. Mgr. Ryan, P.P., V.G., read a message of congratulations from the King and Queen."⁷⁵ The article then goes on to describe the violence in Cork in which policemen and civilians both fired guns into a crowd of people. There was no further mention in the paper of the message of congratulations.⁷⁶ The editors were clearly deemphasizing this event in order to focus more on the overall disdain for the celebrations in other parts of the south.

Just as the southern counties celebrated Peace Day in a method consistent with their political leanings, Ulster's Peace Day celebrations mirrored their support for Britain and conviction that participation in the war had secured them a spot in the British Empire. In Ulster, Peace Day was not celebrated until August 9, 1919, so that the Battle of the Somme could be celebrated in July. The *Irish Times* on August 11, 1919, reported on the Belfast parade and other Peace Day events: "A striking demonstration...of Ulster's loyalty and adherence to the Throne and the Constitution. It was at the same time convincing proof of the noble part played by the Northern Province in the Great War."⁷⁷ The *Irish Times'* reporting reflected its typically pro-British stance. In fact, the paper supported the British until Irish independence in 1921. In an editorial in the *Belfast Newsletter* on August 9, 1919, an anonymous author took a similar stance. As he noted, "We are today in Belfast joining

⁷⁵ *Irish Independent*, 21 July 1919.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 11 August 1919.

with our fellow citizens of the British Empire in expressing our heartfelt thankfulness to Almighty God for complete triumph over an arrogant and remorseless enemy.”⁷⁸ The central contention of this report was that the war had solidified Ulster’s place in the British Empire. Indeed, the historian Neil Jarman comments that “opposition to Home Rule was no longer couched solely in reference to seventeenth-century battles or in abstract politico-religious ideals; it was securely anchored in the events of the recent past.”⁷⁹ The majority of residents in Ulster thus believed that they had achieved their original goal: to remain part of the British Empire. They had defended the British and so saw membership in the United Kingdom as appropriate and proper; they therefore maintained that they could not be forced to accept Home Rule. The war, for the Unionists of Ulster, was a success and was celebrated as such.

Moving on from the immediate celebrations at the end of the war, the differing views of World War I between Nationalists, radical Nationalists, and Unionists were evident in the ways that these factions chose to memorialize their fallen soldiers. In Dublin, shortly after the war’s end, a decision was made to construct an Irish National War Memorial. However, it took seven years for a firm proposal to reach the Irish Parliament. The largest issue surrounding this endeavor was that the Dublin government wanted a memorial that would not alienate political, religious, or other factions in the city. Johnson remarks that this was the first public debate on the role of the First World War in Irish history.⁸⁰ It was eventually decided that this memorial would be placed outside the city center, across the river at a place called Islandbridge. The inscription on the memorial eventually read: “To the memory of the 49,400 Irishmen who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918; their name[s] liveth for

⁷⁸ Editorial, *Belfast Newsletter*, 9 August 1919.

⁷⁹ Neil Jarman, *Material conflicts: parades and visual displays in Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 71-2.

⁸⁰ Johnson, 93.

evermore.”⁸¹ This inscription clearly avoids any possible favoritism. Considering that this was being constructed during the Irish War for Independence and an increase in overall violence in Ireland, remaining neutral was a central factor in Dublin’s memorial to the war.

In contrast to Dublin’s neutrality, in both Cork and Belfast the memorials to the First World War were used to promote radical Nationalist and Unionist causes, respectively. The unveiling of the Cork City war memorial took place on St. Patrick’s Day in 1925. Parliament member Michael Egan addressed the audience at the memorial, stating: “It was [the people of Cork’s] duty not to forget the brave deeds of men who went out and died on behalf of the small nations of the world... [There is] no reason why Irishmen who died abroad could not be remembered by the people whom they served, and a memorial put up to their memory in their native land.”⁸² This speech was recorded and reprinted in the *Cork Examiner* a day later on March 18, 1925. The inscription on the memorial echoes Egan’s emphasis on the Irishmen’s valiant efforts to protect small nations. The inscription read: “Erected / by public subscription / under the auspices of / the Cork Independent / Ex-Service Mens Club / in memory of their comrades who fell / in the Great War fighting for / the freedom of small nations.”⁸³ Cork was able to bring the First World War memorial and the Nationalist cause for independence together. In remembering and honoring the men who fought in the Great War, Cork City was hoping to emphasize how the war was relevant to the freedom of small nations. The soldiers of World War I had fought for Belgium’s freedom, as Pearse emphasized in 1915, and Belgium’s freedom was analogous to Ireland’s desire for independence from the oppressive British Empire. Johnson remarks that “in Cork, then, the

⁸¹ Michael Pegum, “National War Memorials and Garden of Remembrance,” last modified November 8, 2003, <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/html/getPDF.php?memorialID=91>.

⁸² *Cork Examiner*, 18 March, 1925.

⁸³ Seán Healy and Michael Pegum, “Cork Great War Memorial,” last modified June 20, 2008, <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/html/getPDF.php?memorialID=251>.

vocabulary of the Great War existed comfortably alongside the independence movement.”⁸⁴

They used the war to their advantage, much as the Ulstermen did in Belfast.

Unlike those in Dublin, officials in Belfast were unconcerned with maintaining a neutral appearance. The city’s main memorial was placed within the grounds of the Protestant-dominated council offices at City Hall. This clearly made connections between the First World War and the Unionist cause in a way that was entirely avoided in Dublin. Jeffrey writes that in the North, “commemoration of the war became overwhelmingly an opportunity to confirm loyalty to the British link and affirm Ulster’s Protestant heritage.”⁸⁵ The government in Belfast, like that of Cork, used the memory of the war to its advantage. The inscription on the Belfast cenotaph read: “Erected by / the city of Belfast / in memory of / her heroic sons / who / made the supreme sacrifice in / the Great War 1914-1918. / They dedicated their lives to a great cause, and their achievements by sea and land and air won undying fame.”⁸⁶ At the end of the inscription is a quote from King George V, which read: “Throughout the long years of struggle which have now so gloriously ended, the men of Ulster have proved how nobly they fight and die.”⁸⁷ The attitude of Ulster’s citizens towards the First World War that was reflected in the memorial is unequivocally pro-British and pro-Ulster. Not only did this memorial involve a quote from the British monarch, it also focused entirely on Ulster. Unlike in Dublin, officials in both Belfast and in Cork City used the remembrance of the war to further their own objectives. Their goals were to enhance, not overcome, the divides that had become commonplace in Irish society and political life.

While John Redmond’s campaign in the fall of 1914 to unite Ireland under a common

⁸⁴ Johnson, 99.

⁸⁵ Jeffrey, 131.

⁸⁶ “Belfast Cenotaph, City Hall Belfast,” Ulster War Memorials, last modified June 2011, http://www.ulsterwarmemorials.net/html/belfast_city.html

⁸⁷ Ibid.

cause had some success at the start of war and among troops abroad, the divisions between Irishmen of different geographical, religious, and political backgrounds were too great to be overcome through the threat of a common enemy. While soldiers remarked on the unity that they felt with other members of their regiments, their sentiments did not extend to others in the country. Ireland's relationship with the British Empire was too fraught to be resolved by participation in a European conflict. It was impossible for the different factions to find common points of view; instead, the war illuminated and brought to the forefront Irish tensions that plagued the country for the rest of the century.

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England's Answer to God's Scourge

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Amidst the filth, stench, and rats that pervaded the streets, more than two million English subjects succumbed to the Bubonic Plague between 1348 and 1666. The plague often proved to be dramatically and immediately fatal.⁸⁸ Modern science attributes the pestilence to the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, which is often transmitted by fleas. This deadly bacterium infects the lymphatic system, which induces the bubonic, septicemic, or pneumonic plague in its human victims. While today a seven-day dosage of Gentamicin or Doxycycline can cure the disease, no remedy assuaged the physical and emotional suffering that the plague inflicted in Early Modern England.⁸⁹ Thus, the English turned to religion to explain the constant curse and chaos.

For most Englishmen in the 1600s, God was the architect who designed the plague as a reprimand for the depraved.⁹⁰ This biblical notion of divine punishment characterized the British explanation of the pestilence from the first English epidemic in 1348 to the last at the end of the seventeenth century. Historians have explored the medical, economic, and cultural effects of the disease in Great Britain, particularly of the deadly and demoralizing 1665 outbreak. Although most have mentioned the spiritual climate of the seventeenth century, no scholar has thoroughly examined sermons, a significant religious tool of Protestant sects. As demonstrated by numerous scholars such as Horton Davies, Peter McCullough, and James Rigney, sermons were an essential component to Protestant religious practices in England in this period and can be used to analyze the political and social atmosphere of the time. Thus, the orations of preachers during the 1600s shaped and

⁸⁸ Ernest B. Gilman, *Plague Writing in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 33-34.

⁸⁹ "Bubonic Plague Symptoms," Clinearo Inc., 2006-2009, <http://plague.emedtv.com/bubonic-plague/bubonic-plague-symptoms.html> (accessed February 2, 2010).

⁹⁰ John Michael and Mollie Hardwick, *The Plague and the Fire of London* (London: Max Parish, 1966), 5.

reflected contemporary perceptions of the plague, even as they influenced social issues that resulted from responses to the plague.

This paper examines the role of the homily in seventeenth-century England and the insights that these sermons provide on the diverse forms of Christianity during the period under scrutiny. The sermons ranged from those of warning to those of lamentation and thanksgiving. Although the paper largely serves as an analysis of the tone, literarily mechanisms, themes, and symbols of the sermons, it also expounds upon the historical and political components included in the speeches. The sermons provide a window into comprehending how a culture guided by faith understood the plague and its ramifications.

To understand the context of seventeenth-century English plague sermons, one must first understand the political and ecclesiastical discord that the nation had been experiencing over the last century. In 1533, King Henry VIII severed London's ties to Rome and founded the Church of England, headed by the British monarch. Henry VIII meticulously adapted the tenants and practices of Catholicism to his institution, but the theology of his Church of England during the 1600s oscillated between traditionalist understanding and radical interpretations of Christianity. The Church struggled to define its philosophy, combating the extreme doctrines of the Puritans, Calvinists, and Presbyterians, as well as the unorthodox beliefs of the emerging Quaker, Anabaptist, and Seven-day Adventist sects.⁹¹ This conflicted, zealous, and frequently hostile environment contextualizes the manner in which ministers from the Church of England approached the pestilence.

From 1559 to 1625, the Elizabethan Church had a profound effect on England's political and spiritual climate. James I, a Protestant born to a Catholic mother in Calvinist

⁹¹ Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors, and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689* (London: Routledge, 1991), 6-11.

Scotland, was interested in religious issues and worked closely with bishops, especially George Abbot, who became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1611. Both men tolerated moderate Puritans but could be ruthless towards extremist Presbyterians.⁹² However, Richard Montagu, a prominent scholar and chaplain to the king, argued in his widely read pamphlet, *A New Gagg for an Old Goose*, that Calvinism was simply Puritanism under another name; he thus spread anti-Calvinist views and influenced the later restoration of traditionalist doctrines under Charles I.⁹³ In 1625, for instance, Charles adopted “Arminianism,” a conservative type of Protestantism that scrutinized Calvinist doctrine and revived many of the ceremonial and decorative components of Henry VIII’s Church. The dogmatic decrees of Charles I not only promoted Arminians such as William Laud to religious and secular positions, but also reinforced Charles’ absolute rule until his hanging in 1649.⁹⁴

Clearly, the Calvinists and Puritans had a precarious place alongside the Church of England in the sixteenth century. In 1536, John Calvin fled from France to Geneva, instigating the exodus of Protestant ministers and Reformed emigrants to Switzerland.⁹⁵ Archbishop Thomas Cranmer invited the notable Italian Bernardino Ochino and Peter Martyr to Britain, where they were soon joined by Martin Bucer and Paul Fagius. Their fortuitous arrival in England coincided with the short but tolerant rein of Edward VI and was complemented by the return of many English Protestants.⁹⁶

⁹² Ibid., 6.

⁹³ Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 125.

⁹⁴ Doran and Durston. 7-8.

⁹⁵ Ole Peter Grell, *Calvinist Exiles in Tudor and Stuart England* (Aldershot Hants, England : Scholar Press, 1996), 98.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 98-99.

Second only to Geneva, London slowly came to symbolize the New Jerusalem for these zealous individuals,⁹⁷ who believed that the Protestant saints had been elected before birth by a jealous and punitive creator, and were “God’s storm troopers bent on conquering the Devil, the flesh, and the world.”⁹⁸ However, while Geneva soon faded after Calvin’s death, England remained a beacon for Calvinists despite the Catholic regime of Mary Tudor.⁹⁹ After 1559, Elizabeth I guaranteed hospitality to the Italian, Walloon, Dutch, and French Reformed emigrants who were drawn to Britain’s economic opportunities and who were eager to escape religious wars elsewhere.¹⁰⁰ Merchants and craftsmen characterized the trades of these transplanted Calvinist communities.¹⁰¹ Although they represented the minority of the population, the English Reformed, like the Calvinists who settled in other Northern European cities, believed that their experiences were a consequence of God’s providence and a sign of the New Covenant. The assurance that they were God’s chosen people gave the British Calvinists the confidence and strength to combat the pivotal events of the next century.

In the early 1600s, the Calvinist relationship with the English monarchs deteriorated.¹⁰² The depression that stretched from 1615 to the mid-1620s was compounded by two consecutive poor harvests between 1621 and 1622, and the outbreak of the plague in 1625. These demoralizing circumstances bred xenophobia, especially in London where foreign artisans belonging to different congregations became the scapegoats of England’s calamities. James I decided to capitalize on the anti-foreign sentiment in a manner that

⁹⁷ Ibid., 99.

⁹⁸ Tyacke, 1.

⁹⁹ Grell, 99.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 99-100.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 100.

¹⁰² Ibid., 34.

allowed him to solve his own financial troubles simultaneously. He instigated the Star Chamber Case, which implicated immigrant merchants for illegally exporting bullion in December 1618.¹⁰³ This case emotionally shook both the Dutch and French Calvinists, with Archbishop Laud's 1632 campaign for uniformity within and without the Anglican Church only wounding the Reformed communities further.¹⁰⁴ These scars triggered the Separatist movement, which radicalized Cromwell's reign and incited great hostility towards the Puritans following the restoration of Charles II.

Despite their political and doctrinal differences, Church of England and Puritan ministers generally accentuated the role of God as a source of the plague during the outbreaks of the seventeenth century. In one of his 1599 plague homilies, Richard Leake, a preacher at a parish in Westmerland County, declared that it pleased God to give England a taste of his power in judgment.¹⁰⁵ Sixty-four years later at the height of the 1665 epidemic, Richard Kingston, cleric at St. James Clerken-well, reaffirmed Leake's opinion in his sermon, "Pillule Pestilentialis: or a Spiritual Receipt for the Cure of the Plague," delivered in St. Paul's Church in London. Kingston linked the elements that contemporary physicians thought caused the illness, including foul air, a dissatisfactory diet, and corrupt humors, to paradigms in the Bible. By using biblical references from the sulfuric air of Egypt to King David's varying body moisture, the minister cleverly underscored that only the Lord afflicted the pestilence.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, Thomas Brooks, a Puritan preacher, cited 2 Samuel 24:15 as evidence of the plague's divine origin: "When the pestilence is among a people, 'tis the Lord

¹⁰³ Ibid., 42

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰⁵ Susan Scott and Christopher Duncan, *Return of the Black Death: The World's Greatest Serial Killer* (Chichester, West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 118.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Kingston, "Pillule Pestilentialis: or a Spiritual Receipt for the Cure of the Plague delivered in a Sermon Preach'd in St. Pauls Church in London in mid'st of our sore Visitation" (London: W.G for Edw. Brewster at the Crane in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1665), 15-16, 19.

alone that sends it.”¹⁰⁷ Brooks distinctly stressed that God chose to slaughter certain citizens in families, towns, cities, and kingdoms, and “to spare, save, and passé by all the rest.”¹⁰⁸ According to Brooks, the plague was a great equalizer that had the “aptness to cut down one man as well as another.”¹⁰⁹ Brooks proclaimed that the plague derived from divine intervention even more than other ailments.¹¹⁰

Although battle, poverty, and starvation burdened the majority of the English people throughout the seventeenth century, William Cupper stressed the gravity of the pestilence in a similar manner to Brooks. Unlike war or famine, which could have a multitude of causes, actors, and results, Cupper attested that God inflicted the plague with his own hands and offered no means of escape.¹¹¹ Many other preachers incorporated the original Latin word *plaga*, meaning “blow” or “stroke,” to illustrate the lethality of the disease and the depth of God’s wrath.¹¹² A cleric now only known by his initials, T.C., referred to passages in both Ezekiel and the Apocalypse that emphasized God’s two angels, stressing especially the second seraph that smites the wicked.¹¹³ This idea of instant fatality was mirrored through frequent mention in the sermons of the Angel of Death, the finger of God, and arrows sent from Heaven.

The sermons emphasized that people’s sins, from lying and adultery to prostitution and hypocrisy, had initiated the catastrophe in England. William Crashaw, an emphatic

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Brooks, “A heavenly cordial for all those Servants of the Lord that have that have had the Plague and are recovered or that now have it; also for those that have escaped it, though their Relations and Friends have either been visited, or swept away by it” (London: John Hancock, 1666),1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5-6

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹¹ William Cupper, *Ten Profitable and Godly Sermons concerning the Pestilence* (London: Brazen Serpent in Paul’s Churchyard, 1625), 52-53.

¹¹² Shrewsbury, 1.

¹¹³ T.C., “A Godly and Learned Sermon, upon the 91 Psalme Declaring how, and to what place, a Christian ought to flie in the dangerous time of the pestilence, for his best Saftie and Deliverance” (London: S, Paul’s Church, 1603),7.

Puritan clergyman who extracted parts of his philosophy from the Bernadine collection of devotional works, accentuated that transgressions of negligence, presumption, and carelessness triggered God's anger;¹¹⁴ as a result, Creshaw said, he had to bury "forty, fifty, sometimes sixty [people] a day."¹¹⁵ Crashaw rebuked his fellow citizens for swearing, gaming, vanity, gluttony, stinginess, irresponsibility towards the government and the church, and lack of devotion.¹¹⁶ The preacher claimed that the country's superstitious and idolatrous laws, Catholic practices, complacency, and theaters "secretly instilled if not openly professed" sin.¹¹⁷ Jeremiah Dobson clarified in his 1665 sermon, "The Preacher's Precept of Consideration, or England's Chief Lesson in Dealing in this Sad Time of Visitation," that the alehouse and the stomach became the calling for the epicurean, which suggested a type of idolatry.¹¹⁸

Crashaw also alluded to the international religious wars as causes of the plague, accusing Britain of deceiving the many refugees who believed they were settling in a peaceful environment.¹¹⁹ The Church of England minister and distinguished historian, Dr. Thomas Fuller,¹²⁰ disagreed with this Crashaw's accusations, vehemently emphasizing England's tranquility compared to continental Europe's mayhem and arguing that this harmony had led to corruption.¹²¹ Many English ministers such as William Cupper agreed, believing that England had become too complacent and stressing that God sent the plague to

¹¹⁴ Davies, 79.

¹¹⁵ William Crashaw, "London's Lamentation for her Sinnes ad Compompoent to the Lord Her God" (London: Northside of the Royal Exchange, 1625), A1-2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹¹⁸ Jeremiah Dobson, "The Preacher's Precept of Consideration, or Englands Chief Lesson and Dealing in this Sad Visitation" (London: E. Coses, 1665), 4.

¹¹⁹ Crashaw, 5.

¹²⁰ Davies, xxii.

¹²¹ Thomas Fuller, "Upon the Late Decrease and Withdrawing of God's Heavie Visitation of the Plague of Pestilence from the Said Cittie" (London: B.Aslop and Favvcet, 1626), 32.

rouse the British people from their “careless securtie” and evil ways.¹²² In the aftermath of the lethal and particularly harrowing 1625 epidemic, numerous vicars chastised their congregants for overlooking their responsibility to God and repeating the same transgressions that had culminated in the 1603 outbreak. Sampson Price, a Church of England minister and writer, professed that forgetting the Lord and recent history had been the sin of Israel and later of England; he thus encouraged his followers to “keepe a registrar of this black plague in red letters.”¹²³ Price’s contemporary, Robert Horne, partially attributed the staggering death count of 1625 to his countrymen’s poor memory of previous plague epidemics.¹²⁴ Though the English ministers in the 1600s had good reason to reflect on prior disasters and to dread future outbreaks, modern psychologists have since commented on the extreme anxiety, communal trauma, and constant grief present in seventeenth-century sermons, even in homilies of thanksgiving given in times of relative health.¹²⁵

For seventeenth-century Protestant ministers, excessive pride and obstinacy were the two most heinous transgressions that provoked the plague. The nonconformist preacher John Dod reminded his congregation that conceit caused the Israelites to wander for forty years in the wilderness and transformed King Nebuchadnezzar into a beast for seven years.¹²⁶ Dod professed that the heart had to be broken in sin before men could redeem themselves, for pride hardened men’s souls and made them unreceptive to scripture.¹²⁷ He believed that God

¹²² Cupper, 8-9.

¹²³ Sampson Price, “London’s Remembrancer: For the Staying of the Contagious Sickness of the Plague” (London: E.U. and All-de, 1626), 16,20.

¹²⁴ Robert Horne, “A Caveat to Prevent Future Judgements; An Admonishment to all England; more specifically to London and other Places where Death of Plague hath Lately been” (London: G.M., 1626), 6.

¹²⁵ Gilman, 55-57.

¹²⁶ John Dod, *Four Godlie and Fruitful Sermons to be Preached in Draiton in Oxfordshire* (London: T.C., 1611), 21.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

would strike down England's brutish populace like the Lord deflated the ego of St. Paul.¹²⁸ In Corinthians, Paul declared, "If we judged ourselves, we shall not be judged. But when we are judged, we will be chastened."¹²⁹ Paul's call for frequent reflection and humility resonated with the English clergy, who cautioned against self-absorption and spiritual apathy.

Thomas Pulein used a verse from Jeremiah to describe his sorrows concerning the stubbornness of his nation: "Oh to mine head were full of water, and mine eyes a fountaine of teares, that I might weep day and night for the slaine of the day after of my people."¹³⁰ With such sweeping statements, Pulein attempted to emulate Jeremiah's grave and lyrical voice in his own sermons. Just as Jeremiah lamented that the insolent Jews would be scattered without hope to reform, Pulein prophesied that London, a city once blessed by God like Jerusalem, would face divine fury for continuing to drink, deceive, have illicit sex, and wear inappropriate clothing despite the clergy's persistent warnings against such activities.¹³¹ Thus, Pulein claimed that terrible transgressions would result in terrible consequences and long-standing grief for sinners; he cited a verse from Isaiah that read, "The wrath of the Lande is not yet turned, yet his hand lay outstretched still," to underscore his message.¹³² He also beseeched the English people to mourn with him or risk the decimation of wicked cities like Sodom and Gomorrah.¹³³

The arrogance that clergymen condemned among the English populace assumed a variety of forms. Richard Kingston cited the breaking of the Sabbath as the British people's

¹²⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹²⁹ T.C. 4.

¹³⁰ Thomas Pulein, "Jeremiah's Teares or a Sermon Preached in York-minster upon Trinity Sunday in the Yard Goul when the Sickness was begun in the cittie"(London: William Iaggard, 1608),1.

¹³¹ Ibid., 6.

¹³² Ibid., 6-7.

¹³³ Ibid., 17.

most frequent and imprudent offense.¹³⁴ Thomas Fuller expressed his frustration that his congregants used their leisure time to sin and frequent alehouses rather than attend services.¹³⁵ Bishop of Norwich and chaplain to Charles II, Edward Reynolds, agreed, proclaiming that the arrogance and pride of the English subjects provoked their physical suffering.¹³⁶ Reynolds dramatically demonstrated his disappointment in the ethics of his countrymen by accentuating each sin that he listed in his sermons with the word “again,” and by including in his sermons rhetorical questions such as “Are not these the Laws of Christ?”¹³⁷ William Jones, an “Arminian” minister known for his *Commentaries on the Epistles to Philemon and the Hebrews*,¹³⁸ contributed to this view of Englishmen as arrogant when he stated in his 1632 sermon, “A true inquisition or The sad soules search,” that humans tended to forgive their own faults and justify their wrongdoings by the egregious mistakes that they had not committed.¹³⁹ By focusing on the rampant carelessness towards and disregard of the Sabbath, these ministers portrayed the haughtiness of their parishioners and blamed that haughtiness for causing the plague.

Although the Bible ascribed God as the sole designer and bearer of the pestilence, religious leaders were not completely blind to the concept of contagion. London experienced this problem more than provincial towns due to its size and growth, and to the ineptness of numerous authorities responsible for maintaining order.¹⁴⁰ Stephen Porter, a British urban historian, has argued that the idea of contagion did not exist in classical texts but was a

¹³⁴ Kingston, 30-31.

¹³⁵ Fuller, 20.

¹³⁶ Edward Reynolds, “A sermon preached before the peers in the Abby Church of Westminster, November 7, 1666,” (London: Tho Ratcliffe, 1666), 5.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³⁸ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 66.

¹³⁹ William Jones, “A true inquisition on or The sad soules search” (London, William Jones, 1632), 9-11.

¹⁴⁰ J. D. F. Shrewsbury, *A History of the Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 15.

concept that began to take root in Western medicine during the plague.¹⁴¹ The staggering death count and widespread infection incited many ministers to explain their society's undeniable circumstances. Henroch Clapham, a Church of England minister and fervent champion for human dignity, depicted the infectious capacity of the scourge in his plague sermon in 1604.¹⁴² Similarly, in the sermon "The Dreadfulness of the Plague," Josiah Hunter commented on the sudden spread of the pestilence and reminded his congregation to pity their neighbors who had been afflicted by the visitation.¹⁴³ James Balmford, who preached, "God's people should be protected from filthiness and contagion," also recognized that the plague was more fatal than leprosy.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, Balmford called for the Old Testament's strict leprosy laws to apply to the plague, which included washing a deceased person's clothing.¹⁴⁵ Balmford realized that the fear of contracting the pestilence contributed to his congregants' anguish.¹⁴⁶

Several preachers tried to reconcile why so many good Christians perished even as many evildoers survived the plague relatively unscathed. Henry Roborough, the minister of St. Leonard's Eastcheap, believed that not all victims, and particularly not all children, were rampant sinners.¹⁴⁷ Many clerics agreed with Roborough, prompting them to view the plague as both a personal and national trauma. Vicars throughout England questioned whether the nation was afflicted by the transgressions of its citizens or whether the people

¹⁴¹ Stephen Porter, *Lord Have Mercy Upon Us: London's Plague Years* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, England: Tempus Publishing, 2005), 21.

¹⁴² Henroch Clapham, "His demandes and answeres touching the pestilence methodically handled, as his time and meanes could permit" (Middleburg: Richard Schiders, 1604), 19.

¹⁴³ Josiah Hunter, *The Dreadfulness of the Plague: or a Sermon Preached in the Parish-Church of St. John the Evangelist, December 6 being a Day of York Publick Fasting* (York: Stem Bathley, 1666), 8.

¹⁴⁴ Balmford, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴⁷ Porter, 128.

were dying from some national sin.¹⁴⁸ Reformation England looked to the mass suffering of the Egyptians and the scourge that beset the Israelites in the desert as examples of how the sum of individual offenders could provoke punishment for the entire kingdom.¹⁴⁹ However, not all theologians accepted this viewpoint. As James Balmford argued, the Lord took the lives of “godly men” who had actually lost faith in their ultimate salvation but left the “wicked” who might yet prove their trust and repentance.¹⁵⁰ Thomas Brooks hypothesized that God occasionally spared sinners to inflict a greater punishment for them in the future.¹⁵¹ Brooks’ message might have encouraged the living to be more righteous, for even England’s brightest scientists concluded that God shaped human fortune.¹⁵²

Apart from attempting to explain the overall cause of the plague, the Church of England’s clergy also addressed the reality of continual epidemics of the plague. These spiritual leaders, like most Englishmen, were traumatized by the widespread death and suffering that the periodic epidemics caused. In 1603, the same year that Elizabeth I died, for instance, more than 33,347 London citizens perished in a plague outbreak.¹⁵³ The preachers’ despair and shock epitomized the severity of the situation. Thus, plague sermons also offered optimism and guidance to a desperate population. Even as ministers chastised their followers for their evil ways, they tried to raise the nation out of sin and a cycle of depression. The empathetic tones and hopeful themes of the homilies were a source of light during the dark period and helped guide the English people through the bubonic plague.

¹⁴⁸ Gilman, 45.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 143.

¹⁵¹ Brooks, 11-13.

¹⁵² A. Lloyd Moote and Dorothy C. Moote, *The Great Plague: The Story of London’s Most Deadly Year* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2004), 38.

¹⁵³ Walter George Bell, *The Great Plague in London in 1665* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head LTD, 1924), 5-6.

Although he often chastised the English people for their arrogance, Edward Reynolds, in a speech of thanksgiving, nevertheless attributed England's successful weathering of plague outbreaks to the people's faith and hope placed in God.¹⁵⁴ Frequently, Reynolds expressed his conviction that the hand of the Lord was always near the troubled island and that the Divine Spirit consoled and enabled true believers,¹⁵⁵ which reassured the devastated nation. He also stressed moderation, patience, humility, modesty, charity, sobriety, truth, and adherence to the Church's principles. While arguing for the pursuit of knowledge, Reynolds, like other Church of England ministers, tactfully restricted his congregation's liberties when they might lead to communal vice.¹⁵⁶ He often repeated the idea that secular wisdom made the individual forget his reliance on a higher power, correlating with the tropes of arrogance and negligence found in his own and other sermons of the time. Reynolds further emphasized the opportunity to be readmitted into God's graces if one recognized one's own hubris.

Another manner in which many Church of England ministers encouraged their congregants was by proclaiming that the plague was a sign of God's love rather than the Devil's curse, as was suggested by Calvinist and Lutheran clergy. Traditional Church of England preachers proposed that the Lord inflicted the plague as a method to lure his drifting children back into the fold. John Squire, Vicar of St. Leonard's "Shordich" and part-time Fellow at Jesus College at Cambridge, immediately drew his congregation's attention to Psalm 20:15, which beseeched believers to "call upon me, in times of trouble; I will hear

¹⁵⁴ Reynolds, 2.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 3-4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 7.

thee, and thou Shalt Praise me.”¹⁵⁷ Squire emphatically insisted that fasting and prayer prevented more people from dying during each successive week.¹⁵⁸ His use of anaphora and simple language promoted the idea that the Lord recognized his followers’ genuine repentance and relieved them from their suffering. The Church of England clergyman and religious writer, Nicholas Bownd,¹⁵⁹ also employed the notion of comfort and renewal in his 1604 book, *Medicines for the Plague*.¹⁶⁰

Church of England homilies prompted English Christians to take action against their distressing predicament. Although Edward Reynolds’ assertion that mankind was “Light in the Lord” resembled a stern warning, his accompanying charge that men and women should “Shine as Lights in the World” revealed that humanity could aspire to great holiness.¹⁶¹ Reynolds’ use of the imperative challenged his congregation to take initiative to improve their lives. Thomas Hastler conveyed the same sense of urgency when he encouraged his congregation not to neglect prayer and equated delayed remorse to meat laid on the grave when the dead had no use for it.¹⁶² Likewise, William Cupper advocated that the English people should receive little pleasure during the day and little sleep at night because they should be stirring early and late during God’s scourge to praise the Lord for his mercy.¹⁶³ However, James Balmford emphasized patience despite the attention to expediency that other

¹⁵⁷ John Squire, “A Thankes-Giving for the Decreasing, and Hope of Removing the Plague” (London: B.A. and T.F., 1637), 2.

¹⁵⁸ Squire, 25-26.

¹⁵⁹ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, “Nicholas Bownd,” Oxford University Press, 2004-2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101003084/> (accessed February 9, 2010).

¹⁶⁰ Charles F. Mullet, *The Bubonic Plague in England: An Essay in the History of Preventive Medicine* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1956), 128.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶² Thomas Hastler, “A Antitote against the Plague or Panchreston: a Salve for all Sores” (London: M. Flesher, 1615), 11.

¹⁶³ Cupper, 7.

clergymen stressed, which underscores the variety of viewpoints within the Church of England.

William Jones encouraged his congregation to alter their behavior in a series of heartfelt homilies. He began one sermon with the promising declaration, “The Lord shall be with you, we shall not cease praying.”¹⁶⁴ This affirmative and reassuring statement set the tone for his entire speech. By centering his sermon on the passage, “Let me search and find my ways, Jones imbued confidence in the worshippers.¹⁶⁵ His theme of every man’s accountability to God encouraged his followers to take responsibility for their deeds.¹⁶⁶ Jones wanted his congregants to view personal responsibility not as a daunting task, but as a spiritual opportunity. Like King David who accepted the challenge to change his behavior after his illicit affair with Bathsheba, the congregants had the possibility to influence their lives through prayer, piety, and concentration.

This approach differed greatly from the austere and dramatic warnings of the Calvinist preachers who believed in predestination. However, it is important to note that not all Church of England ministers projected the same magnitude of mercy. Robert Wright in particular emphasized that no sinner could be rescued from his ways twice and thereby accentuated the immediacy of the situation.¹⁶⁷ For Jeremiah Dobson, the Ecclesiastes 3.1 passage that read, “To everything there is a season and a time,” explained the 1665 visitation of the plague.¹⁶⁸ He described death as the “greatest monarch, and the most ancient king of the world,” in an attempt to comprehend London’s most lethal of its seven significant

¹⁶⁴ Jones, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁷ Robert Wright, “A recyt to stay the plague” (London: A.M. and I.N, 1625).

¹⁶⁸ Dobson, 1.

epidemics.¹⁶⁹ Dobson stressed that the English people, especially women, had to dispel their terror and accept that they were being tested by God.¹⁷⁰ Thus Dobson, in quoting an Ecclesiastes verse that read, “in the day of Prosperity be Joyfull, but in the day of Adversity Consider,” recommended a denunciation of sorrow, selfishness, carnality, and hypocrisy, and advocated for meditation in a sacred setting on the Sabbath and solemn days of humiliation and fasting.¹⁷¹ Dobson’s confidence in his advice reflected the idea that God was a gracious and kind entity.

While Dobson’s optimism and conviction in a forgiving deity was widely held amongst the Church of England clergy, the Puritan and Nonconformist preachers offered a different interpretation of divine clemency. Richard Baxter’s non-conformist stringency was quite apparent in his sermons and pamphlets. Like his Church of England contemporaries, Baxter stressed that the plague served as an incentive to release sin.¹⁷² He believed that mankind, which had the capacity to know, love, and surrender to God, must judge itself and look at its errant life with sorrow. Similar to other Church of England clergy, Baxter contended that immorality posed a danger towards the population and offended God; consequently, he urged his followers to “repent, repent from the bottom of [their] heart[s] for the time [they] have lost.” Though this preacher emphasized that God and Christ would forgive those who sincerely relinquished their wicked ways out of love, thankfulness, and willingness to accept heaven’s laws, Baxter ultimately revealed his Puritanical ideals when he asserted that only Jesus could cleanse and justify past wrongdoing and that only God had a right not to leave the sick unhealed despite their recantations. He underscored the difference

¹⁶⁹ Mootes, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Dobson, 13-14.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 3-5.

¹⁷² Richard Baxter, *“Short Instructions for the Sick, specially who by Contagion or Otherwise, are Deprived of the Presence of a Faithful Pastor”* (London: 1673).

between reforming out of true understanding, and penance solely fueled by fear.¹⁷³ His strong declarations reflected his belief in the supremacy and dominance of scripture and of an empowering Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁴ However, compared to his contemporaries' radical views and dissenting actions, Richard Baxter was considered a peacemaker.

Symon Patrick, the vicar of London's wealthiest parish, St. Paul's Covent Garden, was known for his kindness and diligence.¹⁷⁵ He was reputed to have lived by his words: "Remember thy promises when made a minister...Remember the preciousness of a soul; how much should we do for its good?"¹⁷⁶ Patrick often accompanied the bodies of his deceased parishioners to their graves at night to ensure a proper burial, and he even paid for the funerals of the indignant congregants.¹⁷⁷ As did many of his fellow clergymen, Patrick emphasized the futility of his congregants' anguish in his sermons. Patrick reminded his followers that the supernatural governed all affairs and that divine will should be a source of wisdom and comfort.¹⁷⁸ Although he was known for his empathy for the poor and his ability to stir the consciences of his affluent members,¹⁷⁹ Patrick also aggressively asked his parishioners the following questions: "Are your friends the first that ever dyed?...Are you the only person God has singled out to be left alone?"¹⁸⁰ Patrick's attempt to make his congregants understand that death was a natural and necessary part of God's plan was harsh in such a gloomy atmosphere,¹⁸¹ but Patrick worried that excessive grief would hinder the

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Davies, xviii.

¹⁷⁵ Mootes, 21.

¹⁷⁶ John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 13.

¹⁷⁷ Mootes, 123.

¹⁷⁸ Symon Patrick, "The Hearts Ease, A Remedy against all Troubles with a Consolatory Discourse particularly directed to those who have lost their Friends and dear Relations" (London: R.W. 1676), 8.

¹⁷⁹ Mootes, 35.

¹⁸⁰ Patrick, 99-100.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 102-104.

English people's ability to concentrate on their souls.¹⁸² Thus, he encouraged his parishioners to value their friendships in life, as they would not last forever.¹⁸³

The staunch plague homilies of Henry Burton, the pastor of St. Albans in Woodstreet, reflected his dedicated and bold nature. In 1637, Archbishop Laud ordered Burton's ears to be chopped off for his radical, Puritan pamphlets. Not silenced by mutilation, however, Burton preached a message entitled, "A Most Godly Sermon," in 1641 that called for the English people to deny themselves all things.¹⁸⁴ Although Burton acknowledged that men should devote themselves to God and treat their neighbors with charity, equity, and mercy, he argued that some men were naturally predisposed to be upright, just individuals.¹⁸⁵ He acknowledged the horror of the pestilence, but also proclaimed that England's victims should evaluate the cause of their suffering, and fast and pray in repentance.¹⁸⁶ Burton insisted that the English people not only abstain from meat, drink, swearing, lawful recreation, and occasionally sex, but also encouraged offspring to rebel against parents who tried to keep them from Christ's vision of Christianity.¹⁸⁷

Although clergymen primarily used these sermons to alert the English people to their transgressions and inspire them to repentance, they inevitably incorporated their own views of contemporary issues into their messages as well. Consequently, these sermons also provide insight into the way that English clergy perceived the religious, political, and social issues of the 1600s. Clergymen consciously and unconsciously exposed the emotions and

¹⁸² Ibid., 93.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 108.

¹⁸⁴ Henry Burton, "A Most Godly Sermon" (London: B. Alsop, 1641).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹⁸⁶ Burton, 6.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 3-5.

opinions associated with the plague in their homilies, which is invaluable to understanding seventeenth-century England's social trends, mores, and problems.

Containing both impassioned language and pithy comments, plague sermons were clearly used by various denominations to deride other sects. As Richard Kingston remarked, "The Turk cannot hate a Christian with more ... hatred... than we persecute one another, though baptized into the same faith, and equally Professors of the same Gospell [sic]"¹⁸⁸ This vehement loathing was certainly palpable in these seventeenth-century homilies. William Jones cheered his audience by criticizing Catholics' dependence on saints and the Virgin Mary, implying that the Protestants were not only free from the sin of idolatry but also could plead with God directly on their own behalf.¹⁸⁹ His backhand anti-Papist remarks, typical in Anglican orations, reveal a political aspect of Black Death sermons. Henroch Clapham used the example of David's direct plea to God to emphasize that no courier or traveler was necessary between worshippers and the divine.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, George Walker, a London pastor and member of the Assembly of Divines, extolled the traditionalist dislike of the splinter denominations. Walker accused Catholics, atheists, malignants, Anabaptists, Antinomines, Libertines, and Schismatical Separatists of banding together to wage war against the Reformation, follow the Antichrist, and expose the weakened English institutions to enemies.¹⁹¹ Preaching in the decade that brought the Puritans to power, Walker was troubled by the increasing number of religious divisions and was concerned that these groups would interfere with England's deliverance from the scourge.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Tim Harris, *Charles II and his Kingdoms 1660-1685* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 79.

¹⁸⁹ Jones, image 18.

¹⁹⁰ Clapham, A2.

¹⁹¹ George Walker, "A Sermon Preached before the House of Commons, at the late Solemne Monthly Fast, Januarie 29, 1644" (London: Order of the House of Commons, 1645), iv-v.

¹⁹² Walker, iv.

Whereas the sermon was an integral component of both Church of England and Puritan practice, it was held in higher esteem by the Puritans.¹⁹³ Theologically, the Puritans believed St. Paul's statement that preaching was "the power of God unto salvation," and so they stressed the concept that "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God."¹⁹⁴ British historian Christopher Hill also points out that the Puritan homily provided news and political commentary alongside moral guidance for a population that could not afford the circulating newsletter.¹⁹⁵ These painstakingly prepared, comprehensive, and theatrical discourses provided a well-defined and respected platform from which to discuss the issues surrounding the plague.¹⁹⁶

The Calvinist and Puritan plague homilies reflect the radical history of these sects in seventeenth-century England. From these factions' dogmatic theology to their political dissidence, this fanatical movement advocated purification of the Church of England. Beyond their extreme interpretation of Christianity, the economic and ethnic composition of the Calvinist and Puritan congregations also fueled the mounting ecclesiastical, administrative, and cultural tensions between the more traditional factions of the Church of England and its more radical contingency. This struggle between the competing sects was inherent in the Calvinist and Puritan plague sermons that not only lamented the catastrophe of the plague, but also used the terrible sickness as a means to spread their faith and provide an allegory to religious observance in England.

The Calvinist and Puritan discourses were boldly used as venues to propose the heretical nature of their traditional adversaries. Henry Burton attacked Catholics who

¹⁹³ Davies, 137.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁹⁵ Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964), 32-33.

¹⁹⁶ Davies, 138-139.

perpetuated their erroneous faith by clinging to tradition, and he claimed that they darkened the souls of their children by sending them to monasteries.¹⁹⁷ This vehement aggression towards Catholicism revealed his conviction that Arminianism was the origin of all England's woes.¹⁹⁸ Incensed by the anti-Calvinist Parliament and the staunchly Arminian Charles I, Henry Burton advocated complete abolition of the episcopacy by 1640.¹⁹⁹ Burton extended his critique to include princes, states, and laws that violated his religion, while trying to embolden his harassed followers with the decree that the nearer one became to the savior, the more they should expect persecution.²⁰⁰

Burton's extreme contempt for Charles I contrasted with Anglican Jeremiah Dobson's acceptance of Charles II and of the traditionalist view that one should love and exonerate the king.²⁰¹ The dichotomy between the Church of England's support and the Puritan disdain of the monarchy underscores not only the political conflict facing the Puritans for most of the seventeenth century but also illustrates differences in doctrine.

Unsurprisingly, many Puritans strongly opposed Charles II on account of his traditional view on religion, his Scottish origins, his alleged illegitimacy, and his weakness for women and alcohol.²⁰² However, there was a gradation of dissatisfaction in Puritan and Nonconformist orations. Vincent Alsop preached that his congregation should pray for the welfare of the nation and the prosperity of the English regent, whose success influenced the entire kingdom. Alsop proposed that even during unfavorable reigns, the nation should still pray for

¹⁹⁷ Burton, 3.

¹⁹⁸ Tyacke, 161.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 188.

²⁰⁰ Burton, 5.

²⁰¹ Dobson, 26.

²⁰² Richard Greaves, *Deliver us from Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain 1660-1663* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 22.

ministers, councils, and administrations that feared the Lord.²⁰³ While William Cupper scoffed that his countrymen spent more time perfuming the air, sweeping their homes, washing their bodies, and killing stray dogs than purging their souls, he acknowledged that the English people must abide by government orders, since they might be the means by which God guided English society to help itself.²⁰⁴

The plague sermons also debated the monarch's responsibility towards warding off the disease during an epidemic. Some clergy felt that the king should resemble biblical King David, who protected his people from a scourge as he did from their political enemies.²⁰⁵ In the 1630s, King Charles' physician and Royal College of Physicians member, Theodore de Mayerne, linked overcrowding, poor vagrants, rotten meat, stagnant water, and toxic fumes to the plague. The council proposed that garbage be removed from the street, the number of taverns be reduced, and hospitals and pest houses be built.²⁰⁶ Sir Mayerne also suggested killing all rodents and thus employed rat trappers in certain cities such as Charterhouse, though these regulations were difficult to enforce.²⁰⁷ The English government chose to ignore the physicians' findings largely due to the widespread belief that the plague was entirely the will of God. Thus, after thirty years without a major pandemic and the absolute conviction in divine intervention, London was unprepared for one of its most devastating outbreaks.²⁰⁸ Charles II quarantined Dutch ships and segregated the sick from society, but

²⁰³ Vincent Alsop, "Duty and Interest United in Prayer and Praise for the King, and all that are in Authority" (London: Crown in the Pall nials, 1695), 6-13.

²⁰⁴ Cupper, 30.

²⁰⁵ T.C., 6.

²⁰⁶ Stephen Porter, *The Great Plague* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, England: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 18.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

²⁰⁸ Bell, 11.

the preachers' homilies demonstrated that the English citizens were not content with governmental efforts geared to quelling Puritan uprisings more than curing the infirmed.²⁰⁹

Thomas Adams' two-part sermon, "Englandes Sicknes, comparatively conferred with Israels," delivered in 1615, used the pestilence as an analogy to the weakening Church of England. However, Adams made a deliberate point to stop his theoretical sermon in order to reflect on the actual disease. Though the illness had not struck England seriously for over a decade, the preacher reminded his congregation that the plague waited for their sins to return.²¹⁰ He personified the scourge as a devious entity without a body or soul that skulked until full repentance had been reached. While Adams sought to warn his followers to abstain from vice, he also intended to touch his congregants emotionally. The minister poignantly recalled the ferocity of the epidemic that led people to abandon each other at critical moments.²¹¹ With flare, he evoked the image of bereaved widows beating their breasts in sorrow, swooning mothers who kissed the "insensible colde lippes of their breathlesse infants," and orphans made mature before their time.²¹² Adams emphasized the emotional mayhem of the epidemic by succinctly reminding congregants of church bells in mourning, the sick's ignored cries, and the "noisome hole not twelve foot square" into which families were confined with their dying loved-ones.²¹³ He simulated the immediacy and confusion that defined the plague, by which he hoped to brand horror and despair into his congregants' minds, and thereby provide incentive for repentance. Adams' sincere tone also suggests that

²⁰⁹ Mootes, 33.

²¹⁰ Thomas Adams, "Englandes Sicknes, comparatively conferred with Israels Divided into two Sermons" (London: E. Griffen, 1615), 50.

²¹¹ Ibid., 50.

²¹² Ibid. 50-51.

²¹³ Ibid., 51.

the 1603 wave of the plague was so distressing that it became a common point of societal reflection that was continuously discussed and used for reference thereafter.

Thomas Vincent, an English Puritan preacher and author, captured the same dread of the pestilence as Thomas Adams in his account, “Gods Terrible Voice in the City by Plague and Fire.” In this sermon, Vincent attested that God spoke in both words and works.²¹⁴ He employed the premise that the Hebrew word for plague stemmed from the Hebrew word meaning speak, therefore showing that the pestilence was the Lord’s way of communicating his dissatisfaction with the English people.²¹⁵ In addition to Vincent’s concentration on man’s wickedness and responsibility for his transgressions, the preacher also dwelt on the details of the 1665-1666 outbreaks, which underscored the impact of the epidemic on English society. Although he painted a graphic picture of the blood, boils, and stench of the bubonic carbuncles, he also informed his congregants of the merciless nature of the disease that touched all sections of society and killed suddenly.²¹⁶ Vincent stressed the dismal and fearful atmosphere of England during a plague outbreak, which he illustrated by descriptions of the red crosses that marked sites of death, the empty streets during quarantine, and the lack of trade.²¹⁷ This experienced orator used these gruesome accounts in conjunction with his ideological arguments to emphasize the unrighteous behavior of his Church of England colleagues, city magistrates, and wealthy English citizens who had shirked their religious duty to their neighbors and constituents by fleeing during the last plague.

The plague sermons can also be viewed as a forum in which all of England’s Protestant denominations discussed the poverty, suffering, and death that surrounded them.

²¹⁴ Thomas Vincent, “Gods terrible Voice in the City by Plague and Fire” (London: 1667), 4.

²¹⁵ *Dever* refers to the plague, while *deber* means to speak. Ibid., 9.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 9-10.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 24-26.

The government believed that confining plague victims to their homes for forty days would significantly reduce the death rate, but the policy had an unintended severe psychological influence on the patients' families who were quarantined alongside their loved-ones.²¹⁸ The state ordered that a watchman guard the locked door, which enhanced frustration of those inside about their loss of liberty. Parish authorities sent elderly ladies with little or no medical experience to nurse the sick, but the English public perceived these women as greedy and vengeful interlopers.²¹⁹

While the state delivered food to these homes daily, it was not sufficient to sustain the sufferers. The lack of a livelihood and of interaction with friends caused many individuals to turn to bribery, lying, and occasionally riots.²²⁰ Those employed as servants and in skilled labor positions suffered economically as well.²²¹ England's lowest class could not afford to bribe guards for their freedom and therefore disproportionately faced over a month of sorrow and rage in their overcrowded, wooden houses.²²² Comparing the plague precautions with the ancient leprosy regulations, Henroch Clapham lamented the cruelty and selfishness that the shut-in law evoked.²²³

Many government magistrates and Church of England ministers abandoned their parishes out of fear for their health and dread of the mounting responsibilities. John Squire believed the covenant between God and the repentant saved the English masses when their officials fled the infested cities in 1636-1637 outbreak of the plague.²²⁴ Squire's condemnation of state and ecclesiastical actions tended to be a key point in his surviving

²¹⁸ The policy was not successful. Michael and Hardwick, 15.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 20.

²²⁰ Ibid., 23-25.

²²¹ Mootes, 164.

²²² Michael and Hardwick, 26.

²²³ Clapham, 16-17.

²²⁴ Squire, 17-18.

sermons. The lack of physical support from the government and Church forced the people to examine their spiritual lives. The sermons suggest that the religious revival connected with the seventeenth-century plague instilled personal rather than sacerdotal faith in England's citizens.²²⁵

However, as Lord Arlington commented with exasperation, "so many ministers [have] gone absent that the Nonconformists have thrust themselves into their pulpits to preach to the sick."²²⁶ Richard Baxter encouraged these dissenting preachers to evangelize in the Church of England's place.²²⁷ The mass flight of England's leaders had tremendous ethical and spiritual connotations. The cleric known only by the initials T.C. declared that every Christian was bound to Christ and therefore had an obligation to visit suffering neighbors.²²⁸ The preacher emphasized that fear of contracting the disease was a childish excuse not to tend the ailing in the community. After all, many ministers who had aided the sick had not fallen ill, which meant that a benevolent Higher Power had to exist.²²⁹

John Featley, in his 1665 sermon, "A Divine Antidote Against the Plague: or Mourning Teares, in Soliquies and Prayers," empathetically expressed the effect that the widespread illness and death had on his fellow countrymen. Featley acknowledged the people's plight in his sermon and questioned the ethics of the shut-in law. He appealed personally and morally to the conscience of his audience when he asked whether he should tend to his ailing neighbors or avoid the plague to protect his own family.²³⁰ He later approached his spiritual dilemma in terms of his professional obligations and religious

²²⁵ Scott and Duncan, 159.

²²⁶ Sutherland Ross, *The Plague and the Fire of London* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 57.

²²⁷ Spurr, 52.

²²⁸ T.C., 1, 8.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-9.

²³⁰ John Featley, "A Divine Antidote Against the Plague: or Mourning Tears in Soliquies and Prayers" (London: Thomas Mabb, 1665), 3.

expectations. Although some clergy justified seeking refuge at their country estates, Featley emphatically professed to his congregation that it was his duty to care for the ill despite his reservations.²³¹ Through descriptions of overcoming his own fear and apprehension, Featley subtly encouraged his followers to tend to the sick as well.²³² He also compared the current pestilence to a major plague that afflicted the Jews in the Old Testament, poetically intertwining the modern images of death, isolation, famine, and pain with his moral message to succor the sick. Although Featley exemplified the dedicated and compassionate preacher, England's plague experience serves as an example of civic mayhem and a reminder of a disease's destructive social, political, and religious impact on society.

While these English plague homilies focused on the rampant death, desolation, and destruction of the seventeenth century, the sermons ultimately served the living. These sermons attempted to salvage a fractured world through both admonition and inspiration. Ironically, in clergymen's quest to rally the English people against their evil inclination and its punishment of the plague, the country became a more polarized kingdom. Though the plague indiscriminately killed its victims, this dreaded sickness paradoxically divided the English throughout the seventeenth century. On an ecclesiastical level, the pestilence segregated the saints from the sinners.²³³ The plague sermons often blurred the past with the present, biblical paradigms with contemporary catastrophes, and opinions with facts; however, they also distinguished the various factions of English society, demonstrating the conflicting views and personalities of all parties involved. These sermons attempted to convert all of English society to preachers' views of the "true" faith and accentuated the religious and political differences of the period, whether they condemned other sects of

²³¹ Featley, 4.

²³² *Ibid.*, 7.

²³³ Shrewsbury, 25.

Christianity or supported or condemned the regent. Examining them today, the sermons also depict how extreme duress under the plague publicly amplified animosity and obfuscated the order and values of the nation. The frequent lamenting of the parish vicar deserting his needy congregants and the common warning against the normally law-abiding citizen who lied, bribed, and pillaged in order to survive illustrate the dire straits that the plague created. Thus, a catastrophe like the plague not only magnified England's existing problems but also produced new challenges. England's seventeenth-century Church of England and Puritan plague sermons were meant to draw the English people closer to God, but they can also be seen as windows to understanding their perceptions of their tumultuous time. These sources reveal the emotions surrounding the extensive death count and present the clergy as authorities of the nation's fate. The sheer number and length of the sermons, particularly those of the Puritan sects, demonstrate that the English people still looked to and relied on religion in their time of crisis, which ultimately shaped their lives and the nation.

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A Schism in the South: The Formation of Slave Religion

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On March 26, 1937, more than seventy years after slavery had been abolished, Mrs. Marriah Hines gave her testimony of life as a slave in an interview conducted as part of the Federal Writers' Project. She described her former master James Pressman lovingly, considering him to be a kind and humane plantation owner. One of the most significant aspects of the relatively comfortable life in slavery that Hines had on a plantation in Virginia, and one that she stressed in her narrative, was the great religious freedom she, her family, and her friends enjoyed. Her master encouraged church attendance but never required it, he forbade any kind of work by the slaves on Sundays, and he invited slaves to pray with him nightly. However, under this rosy façade, one can still see a rift that formed between what the master viewed as acceptable worship and what the slaves practiced in secret. As Hines said, "Cause some of the masters didn't like the way we slaves carried on, we would turn pots down, and tubs to keep the sound from going out. Den we would have a good time, shouting singing and praying just like we pleased."²³⁴ Despite the open religious environment of her plantation, Hines never felt at ease worshipping in earshot of her master, and thus hid her true religious spirit.

On a plantation with intolerant masters, slaves often had to go underground to partake in any sort of worship; the oppression that slaves lived under shaped the way they encountered religion. Scholars have argued in the past that harsh masters and the institution of slavery itself erased any legacy of traditional African religious culture, leaving them to

²³⁴ Mrs. Marriah Hines, interviewed by David Hoggard, March 26, 1937, in *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*, American Memory, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html> (accessed February 27, 2011). Here, Hines is referring to slaves' sound-catching devices: large, inverted pots or kettles placed just outside the front door to block the noise coming from within as the slaves gathered together and worshiped in their own style. See Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2004), 34.

inherit a version of Christianity crafted at the hands of their masters. However, others have cited evidence of African culture that lingered in the slave community, emphasizing the influence that this culture had on Christian slave practices.²³⁵ If one considers slave narratives from the Federal Writers' Project and records from early black religious communities, it is evident that whites used Christianity as a method of social control among their slaves. Consequently, slaves developed a distinct version of Christianity that fit their own needs, provided a sense of community, and incorporate their old African religious traditions.

Whites did not begin scattered attempts to convert their slaves to Christianity until the early to mid-eighteenth century.²³⁶ From the first slave settlements in 1619 until the mid-eighteenth century, language barriers between masters and slaves, as well as general apathy among whites, precluded any major attempts at conversion.²³⁷ Moreover, masters were more concerned with economic profit than missionary zeal; they feared that any effort to Christianize slaves would take away valuable time during which slaves could be working in the fields.²³⁸ Masters also feared that if slaves were capable of conversion, they must in fact have souls and so would need to be set free, since Christian belief dictated that fellow Christians were not to be enslaved.²³⁹ This fear caused many planters to refuse to let missionaries convert their slaves because doing so risked the loss of an extremely valuable financial asset. However, slaveholders were eventually able to sidestep such technicalities

²³⁵ Franklin E. Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

²³⁶ Mitchell, 29.

²³⁷ Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 1979), 35-39.

²³⁸ Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 97-99.

²³⁹ Lawrence Neale Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches, 1619-1860* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2007), 6.

with help from the bishops of the Church of England, who promised them “that the freeing of the soul in Christ did not alter the bondage of the body in any way.”²⁴⁰ This amendment to Anglican belief eased whites’ initial anxiety over the issue of slave conversion and forced them to acknowledge the seeds of Christianity that were already beginning to blossom in the slave community by the mid-eighteenth century.

Even though the rare glimpse of Christianity that masters offered to their slaves lacked depth and emotional connection, the religion still took root among slaves. One main reason is found in the eclectic and accepting nature of traditional African religious culture. When conquered, many African kingdoms took on elements of the conquerors’ religion. They believed that the conquerors were stronger because they had a more powerful religion, and so that religion was worth learning and adopting.²⁴¹ Because of this core belief, Christianity was able to flourish within slave communities in the American South. Slaves’ acceptance of Christianity was also made easier by the fact that the religion shared many elements with traditional African belief systems. These elements included the idea of one high God, the identification of the slaves with the Exodus story, a promise of being held accountable for one’s actions in the afterlife, and forms of intense emotional expression.²⁴² Even Jesus, who was a new figure for most Africans, was similar to the lesser African deities who served as a bridge to approach the high god. In addition, before the second half of the eighteenth century, slaves wanting to worship generally conducted underground meetings based heavily on old African religious traditions.²⁴³ These private meetings helped slaves develop their own understandings of foreign religious concepts and blend elements of their

²⁴⁰ Mitchell, 24.

²⁴¹ Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 51.

²⁴² Mitchell, 14-21.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

own culture into their new Christian religion. In the process, a new, distinct form of Christianity emerged.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, however, whites began increasing their efforts to convert slaves to their version of Christianity, a version that was not as accommodating to difference or diversity. As several historians have discovered, by this time, masters were beginning to use religion as an apology for slavery, an economic and secular institution. Protestant preachers in particular realized that they needed whites' permission to evangelize to mass numbers of slaves, so they began arguing that the gospel was an effective method of keeping peace and order among blacks. Building upon the Anglican actions mentioned above, Baptists especially led the way in this movement, altering their previously antislavery stance to one of pro-slavery.²⁴⁴ They subsequently argued that the gospel was an effective method of keeping peace and order among blacks.²⁴⁵ Lawrence Neale Jones, former Dean Emeritus of the Howard University Divinity School, describes the actions of the religious community as “an unacknowledged pact with the secular society” that consisted of three concepts: “(1) slavery is not contrary to scripture, (2) social arrangements are divinely ordained and therefore should not be challenged by religion, and (3) the natural and divine rights bestowed on human beings do not extend to Africans, who are an inferior species.”²⁴⁶ These concepts show that the white religious community in power, which consisted of slaveholders and the preachers who served them, viewed their religion as malleable, and so they were willing to bend beliefs to fit their personal needs and economic agendas. Whites also began to use the Bible as justification for slavery, and church

²⁴⁴ Sobel, 88-89.

²⁴⁵ Kenneth M. Stamp, “To Make Them Stand in Fear,” in *The Black Church in America*, ed. Hart M. Nelsen, Raytha L. Yokley, and Anne K. Nelsen (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1971), 55-56.

²⁴⁶ Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches*, 5-6.

attendance often became compulsory in an attempt to indoctrinate slaves into a white-dominated social order.²⁴⁷

Constantly fearing conspiracy among their slaves, whites believed that allowing slaves' religious practices to go unsupervised would lead to greater group solidarity and potential rebellion. To try and avert slaves' unification, slaveholders therefore tore apart families by selling them to different owners.²⁴⁸ Husbands and wives were shipped off to separate owners and children were ripped out of their mothers' arms. Former slave Easter Brown gave credence to this reality in an interview in 1936 in which she testified to Sadie B. Hornsby: "Dere was six of us chillins...Dey was all sold off to diffunt parts of de country...I was so little dat when dey bid me off, dey had to hold me up so folkses could see me. I don't member my real ma and pa [sic]."²⁴⁹ Masters also forbade African traditions that created a sense of community or shared history, such as drumming and customary forms of medicine.²⁵⁰ For slaves who tried to continue their religious customs as they had practiced them in Africa, the lack of community or family support, coupled with bans on traditional practices, made open worship difficult and dangerous. Consequently, slaves took their worship practices underground, where they had free range to adapt their practices and style of worship in a manner that appealed to them. Many of these practices—such as dancing, shouting, and spiritual possession—had their origins in African religion and served to keep parts of African culture alive for future generations.²⁵¹ Other practices reflected slaves' adoption of certain Christian beliefs and worship styles, which were more acceptable for

²⁴⁷ Charlie King, interviewed by Mary A. Crawford.

²⁴⁸ Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 52; Richard C. Wade, "Beyond the Master's Eye," in *The Black Church in America*, 65-69.

²⁴⁹ Easter Brown, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

²⁵⁰ Mitchell, 4-8.

²⁵¹ Arrie Binns, interviewed by Minnie B. Stonestreet.

them to declare and practice in public. Nevertheless, slaves did not find a fully acceptable social outlet for their long-hidden traditions until the First and Second Great Awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁵²

The First Great Awakening of the 1740s led to massive amounts of conversions in the slave population of the South.²⁵³ The Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century only added to this phenomenon by increasing the number of conversions and adding to the hysteria of religious fervor. These revivals were known for being highly emotional and stirring, with reports of shouting, fainting, wild barking, shaking, chanting, and frenzied sobbing.²⁵⁴ Numerous narratives from former slaves describe how churches occasionally held jubilees, or revivals, where “eve’body got religion [sic].”²⁵⁵ While most of these experiences were totally new and foreign to whites, for slaves, they were natural due to a similar tradition carried over from Africa. Slaves saw an emotion and passion in these religious revival meetings that was very different from the typically silent and strict services in the white churches they had attended.²⁵⁶ This expressive style of worship, which allowed members of the congregation to shout, laugh, dance, and be filled with the Holy Spirit, was closer to slaves’ African roots and able to fill the void that was left after traditional African culture and religious practice had been banned. Many slaves who had kept alive some of the elements of their traditional African culture—such as drum codes, spiritual possession, folktales, medicine, dance, and musical style—now had a more acceptable outlet to express

²⁵² Mitchell, 8-10.

²⁵³ Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches*, 8.

²⁵⁴ Jones, *African Americans and the Christian Churches*, 8; Sobel, 97.

²⁵⁵ Berry Clay, interviewed by Adella S. Dixon.

²⁵⁶ Arrie Binns, interviewed by M.B. Stonestreet. The trend seen here to keep worship quiet and unemotional can be seen in other slave narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, especially those from the deeper South such as Georgia or in Methodist services.

these characteristics.²⁵⁷ As Booker T. Washington stated, “During the period of servitude in the New World, the Negro race did not wholly forget the traditions and habits of thought that it brought from Africa. But it added to its stock certain ancestral ideas.”²⁵⁸ For many whites, expressive forms of worship were too overwhelming and inappropriate for public venues, and so the experiential version of religion popular during the Great Awakenings ultimately declined within most white churches. Slaves, however, continued to hold onto the emotional, expressive style of veneration that was so familiar to them, and they found in it a reason to embrace Christianity more fully.²⁵⁹

Although slaves started to identify with this new religion by means of their traditional roots, white slaveholders continued to use religion to justify slavery and maintain their own superiority.²⁶⁰ As Albert J. Raboteau writes, “By arguing that Christian slaves would become obedient to their masters out of duty to God and by stressing the distinction between spiritual equality and worldly equality, the proponents of slave conversion in effect built a religious foundation to support slavery.”²⁶¹ Whites only emphasized certain parts of the Bible pertaining to obedience to one’s master and punishment for sins on judgment day, and they attempted to exert even more control over their slaves by claiming to have exclusive knowledge of the afterlife and the actions necessary to enter into it. This gospel was customized to fit whites’ social needs, and it was extremely different from the religion that slaves later created and recognized as legitimate.²⁶² Therefore, when masters maintained that they had converted their slaves to Christianity, they were generally unaware that many of

²⁵⁷ Albert G. Raboteau, “Slave Autonomy and Religion,” *Journal of Religious Thought* 38, no. 2 (Fall 1981): 52-53.

²⁵⁸ Booker T. Washington, “The Religious Life of the Negro,” in *The Black Church in America*, 40-41.

²⁵⁹ Mitchell, 32-33; Sobel, 108.

²⁶⁰ Mitchell, 4-8.

²⁶¹ Raboteau, “Slave Autonomy and Religion,” 52.

²⁶² Wade, 65-69.

these so-called conversions were not actually heartfelt and were instead proclaimed by slaves to avoid punishment or trouble. After all, many ‘conversions’ frequently consisted of nothing more than slaves memorizing a few Bible verses, saying a prayer, or repeating a credo.²⁶³ Thus, slaves hardly had to invest much effort into the ‘conversion’; they could simply do what their master asked of them, and then continue to practice their own beliefs in private.

Over time, slaves began to realize and resent that church services and sermons were being used as tools to control them. Former slave Benjamin Johnson explained in a 1937 interview with Edwin Driskell how a typical Sunday went. Blacks sat in the gallery behind whites, and preachers told the congregation to “obey yo’ master an’ yo’ missus an’ you will always do right. If you see eggs in de yard take em’ to yo’ marster or yo’ missus and put em’ at her feet [sic].”²⁶⁴ On a plantation where slaves often stole chickens because they were not fed adequately, this sermon seemed suspiciously aimed at the black half of the audience. Johnson was also told week in and week out that he would only meet his heavenly master if he were obedient and docile to his earthly masters. Sermons were typically given by a white preacher, and even when black preachers were allowed to preach in public gatherings, a white overseer was present to make sure the master’s instructions for the sermon were carried out.²⁶⁵ Charles Grandy, a former slave from Virginia, told a similar story in an interview with David Hoggard in 1937. In his experience, no form of religious expression was allowed on his plantation at all. Grandy was only allowed to worship during secret gatherings led by Yankee soldiers at night. Yet, even at these meetings led by Northerners, the main points of

²⁶³ Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 52; Mitchell, 11.

²⁶⁴ Benjamin Johnson, interviewed by Edwin Driskell.

²⁶⁵ Thelma D. Ackiss, “Changing Patterns of Religious Thought among Negroes,” *Social Forces* 23, no. 2 (Dec. 1944): 214; William Ward, interviewed by Edwin Driskell.

the sermons were the importance of obedience and the evils of stealing. Clearly, a white agenda stressing slaves' earthly piety and eternal judgment was still present in these selections of religious material.²⁶⁶

Even though masters had preachers stress the values of obedience and acceptance of one's earthly station in their sermons, slaves saw through this pretense and so focused on different elements of Christianity when worshipping on their own. Former slave Alice Hutcheson remembered constantly hearing the verse, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life," every Sunday, but acknowledged that masters took away the message's validity by repeating it so often.²⁶⁷ Christianity truly rooted itself in the black community as slaves began to discover the Bible for themselves, regardless of whites' efforts to censor the religious material that slaves could access in sermons.²⁶⁸ Since slaves had to look past the face value of the lessons that white preachers taught them, they had to find a new resource through which they could learn about the true nature of Christianity, and so they turned to the Bible as their main source of authority. The emphasis that was placed on the Bible is indicated in slave narratives like that of Easter Huff; she claimed that "folkse ought to be 'ligious so dey can help others to live lak de Bible says [sic]"—not like the preacher told them.²⁶⁹ Despite attempts to prevent reading among slaves, literacy still existed and thus allowed stories from Exodus, which told the history of the Hebrews' slavery and eventual freedom, to be circulated. The idea of an all-powerful and loving God who did not condone the treatment of his people in bondage was unsurprisingly very popular among slaves. Since not all slaves could read for themselves, however, a common way for this

²⁶⁶ Charles Grandy, interviewed by David Hoggard.

²⁶⁷ Alice Hutcheson, interviewed by Grace McCune.

²⁶⁸ William Ward, interviewed by Edwin Driskell.

²⁶⁹ Easter Huff, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

message to be spread was through spirituals like, “When Israel Was in Egypt’s Land”: “No more shall they in bondage toil, / Let my people go, / Let them come out with Egypt’s spoil, / Let my people go.”²⁷⁰ Spirituals were also a way that slaves incorporated Biblical stories into their day-to-day activities, for they were often sung while working in the fields.

The story of Exodus is just one example that led to the suspicion that there was more to Christianity than masters let on, causing slaves to come to their own conclusions based on the Bible. Even though traditional African religion typically had no governing text like the Bible, slaves easily adapted to using the Bible as they found passages that gave them hope to overcome their difficult lives. These interpretations were in many cases directly related to blacks’ earthly situation in slavery, and so the text became central to their life experience. One passage that is pointed out in *A Condensed Anti-Slavery Bible Argument, by a Citizen of Virginia*, reads: “And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.”²⁷¹ Passages like this justified slaves’ sense of worth. Another verse from the book of Galatians that solidified blacks’ self-respect is found on the cover of a published slave narrative: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.”²⁷² Slaves built their religious foundations and justifications upon the substance that verses like these provided. Slaves also understood and incorporated new or foreign elements of Christianity by relating them to current social conditions. For example, the figure of Jesus is central to Christian

²⁷⁰ Clifton F. Brown, “Black Religion-I 968,” in *The Black Church in America*, 19.

²⁷¹ George Bourne, *A Condensed Anti-Slavery Bible Argument, by a Citizen of Virginia* (New York, Printed by S. W. Benedict, 1845), 9, *Documenting the American South: The Church in the Southern Black Community*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/index.html> (accessed March 19, 2011).

²⁷² Elizabeth, *Elizabeth, A Colored Minister of the Gospel, Born in Slavery* (Philadelphia, Tract Association of friends, 1889), title page, *Documenting the American South: The Church in the Southern Black Community*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/index.html> (accessed March 19, 2011).

belief, yet was a relatively new entity to slaves. According to Christian belief, Jesus came down from heaven, took human form, died for people's salvation on the cross, and rose again. To grasp the concept of a figure that was both 100 percent divine and 100 percent human, slaves originally compared him to lesser deities in African religions who served as a bridge between the one high god and the people.²⁷³ They also focused on the fact that Jesus suffered on the cross with the same intensity that any human being would suffer. In this way, the slaves identified with Jesus through a shared experience of pain and affliction, for their personal cross was slavery and its torments. Slaves also looked to Jesus as a source of inspiration because he was persecuted and subjected to cruel treatment, just as they were.²⁷⁴

Hell was another new religious concept for slaves that came to be understood as a place where cruel masters went to receive their eternal punishment for the sins they committed on the plantations.²⁷⁵ Elizabeth Sparks, a former slave, expressed these views in an interview. When responding to questions about a master who had beaten her, she said, "Is he in heaven! No, he ain't in heaven! Went past heaven."²⁷⁶ For Sparks, God was not forgiving and merciful, but a supreme being who passed judgment. Another former slave, Minnie Fulkes, had more extreme opinions of her master's fate: "Lord, Lord, I hate white people and de flood waters gwine drown some mo [sic]."²⁷⁷ Here, Fulkes alludes to the story of Noah's Ark in the Old Testament, where God sent a massive flood to kill all the sinners of the earth; she therefore implies that whites would receive just punishments for the suffering they had inflicted upon slaves. As with Sparks, Fulkes also considered God to be the distributor of judgment. Charles Crawley, another former slave, shared intense attitudes

²⁷³ Mitchell, 19-20.

²⁷⁴ Sobel, 90-91.

²⁷⁵ Mitchell, 16-20; Washington, 40-41.

²⁷⁶ Elizabeth Sparks, interviewed by Claude K. Anderson.

²⁷⁷ Minnie Fulkes, interviewed by Susie Byrd.

about the fate of the masters as well. Crawley claimed that God had punished the white masters after slavery's end because they were not true Christians, and because God was on the side of his true followers—the black community.²⁷⁸ Historian Henry H. Mitchell goes so far as to say that a “failure to recognize [that] the slaves already had this early depth of spiritual and ethical insight is an insult to the great wisdom of our enslaved foreparents...the deep conviction that masters were accountable to a just God for disrespecting the personhood of slaves was one reason they kept sane minds and weathered the cruelties.”²⁷⁹ From their understanding that equality would eventually be reached with whites and justice attained, slaves found strength to deal with their day-to-day lives.

The camaraderie that developed from having to worship in secret also helped slaves to deal with their daily struggles. Blacks often came together in secret because they did not feel comfortable praying in front of their masters for freedom and an end to their sufferings. Even if a white master tried to give his slaves an easy life and objective view of Christianity, he was still keeping them in bondage. As Raboteau explains, “Precisely because the interests of master and slave extended only so far and no further, there was a dimension of the slaves’ religious life that was secret.”²⁸⁰ These prayer meetings, often referred to as brush arbor meetings, had to take place well out of earshot of masters or white overseers, or the consequences could be severe; as Albert Jones stated, you “couldn’t praise God so he could hear yer. If yer done dem things, he sho’ would beat yer [sic].”²⁸¹ Consequently, the meetings took careful scheduling and organization, with preparations made in advance to arrange meeting locations (usually in nearby dwellings or on other plantations) and plans of

²⁷⁸ Charles Crawley, interviewed by Susie Byrd.

²⁷⁹ Mitchell, 16-17.

²⁸⁰ Raboteau, “Slave Autonomy and Religion,” 58.

²⁸¹ Albert Jones, interviewed by Thelma Dunston.

action in the event of white intrusion.²⁸² Slaves had to worry about whether they could receive a pass from their masters to walk to a nearby meeting on a different plantation, and whether going to the meeting was worth the risk it posed: “if a slave was cotched widout no pass, [the slave patrol] would beat him mos’ nigh to death [sic].”²⁸³ Slaves also had to worry about the attention that their rejoicing might draw, and so they often placed a large iron pot upside-down against the door of the slave quarters to block sound from outsiders’ ears.²⁸⁴

Instead of defeating the slaves, these obstacles increased their will to hold religious meetings. They continued worshipping in the face of grave danger and punishment because in the brush arbor, they found communal support and “tangible relief from the exhaustion and brutality” of their daily lives.²⁸⁵ Through secret meetings, slaves recognized their shared identity and purpose; they needed to stick together against their common enemy in order to worship freely. This goal created a bond much more powerful than the whip of the patrollers. Former slaves such as Arrie Binns described this period of time as “dem days of real feelin’ an’ keerin’[sic].”²⁸⁶ Della Harris described the joy she found during worship with her peers. In her time they “went to church together and praised God, led prayer meetings, and yes siree, would feel good.”²⁸⁷ The secrecy of the meetings and the genuine emotion that was shared in the conversions, hymns, and prayers created a deep sense of community.

When slaves were successful in gathering, the slave on the plantation who was most knowledgeable or well-versed in Bible passages usually took charge at the religious meeting, performing conversions, leading hymns, and singing spirituals that “gave vent to their true

²⁸² Marriah Hines, interviewed by David Hoggard; Charlie Hudson, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

²⁸³ Easter Huff, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

²⁸⁴ Mrs. Marriah Hines, interviewed by David Hoggard.

²⁸⁵ Raboteau, “Slave Autonomy and Religion,” 58.

²⁸⁶ Arrie Binns, interviewed by Minnie B. Stonestreet.

²⁸⁷ Della Harris, interviewed by Susie Byrd.

feelings.”²⁸⁸ These black preachers, sometimes referred to as Chairbacks, did not have to censor their petitions for freedom as long as they were careful to remain undercover.²⁸⁹ Even when slaves were allowed some sort of religious experience on a plantation—usually sitting in the gallery at a white church service—many slaves still met in secret to worship. At these meetings, slaves did indeed diverge from the version of Christianity that whites preached to them, and they had a distinct component to their worship that was based on both spiritual wellbeing and their physical bondage in slavery. Through worship, slaves were able to focus on their own needs as people with a shared history and experience. This recognition of a common identity and purpose gave blacks exactly what whites had been trying to prohibit them from forming since the very beginning: a sense of community.²⁹⁰ Even as slaveholders continued to tear apart African families by selling husbands, wives, and children to separate owners, slaves’ religion gave them a new family in the form of their congregation of fellow believers.²⁹¹ Having a community to support and care for one another helped slaves cope with the world around them, and served as a “new bond of social cohesion.”²⁹² The black church was thus able to provide an outlet for the slaves where they could escape from the social structure of their normal lives.

Since every aspect of a slave’s life was controlled by their master or overseer, from when they woke up in the morning, to the amount of work they did, to what church service they could attend, the black church provided slaves with an opportunity to escape this rigidity and gain a sense of control over their own lives. During black prayer meetings and worship services, slaves experienced an equality that they never experienced in the outside

²⁸⁸ William Ward, interviewed by Edwin Driskell.

²⁸⁹ Arrie Binns, interviewed by M.B. Stonestreet.

²⁹⁰ Mitchell, 4-8.

²⁹¹ Wade, 68-69.

²⁹² Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 52.

world. In a physical sense, many of the usual restrictions that whites imposed on them were absent. For instance, slaves did not have to sit in the back gallery of the church like they did during the majority of white services.²⁹³ They were not monitored by anyone holding a whip and threatening to use it at the slightest sign of laughter or outward emotion.²⁹⁴ They were not forced to leave the church building before the service ended.²⁹⁵ An even more significant aspect of the equality that blacks shared in their worship services was an expressive equality. Outside of whites' earshot, slaves could "shout an' pray" for freedom and salvation to their heart's content.²⁹⁶ They were free to control what was preached and what they chose to believe. In other words, having their own religious outlets gave slaves a sense of empowerment in a world where they were typically powerless. As Raboteau explains, "In preaching and in church life some blacks found channels for self-expression and self-governance."²⁹⁷ Equality also extended to a spiritual sense of the word, since Christian belief espoused that everyone was equal in the eyes of God. Slaves found support for this idea in Bible verses such as Galatians 3:28 that claimed "ye are all one in Jesus Christ."²⁹⁸ This sense of equality created an open and accepting atmosphere in which slaves could worship.

Since everyone was equal spiritually, women also finally had an arena where they could gain authority. As a part of the body of Christ, every person had a different spiritual gift to offer, such as healing, wisdom, speaking in tongues, or simply faith.²⁹⁹ As Sobel explains, "All the saved, both men and women, were regarded as part of the mystical body of Christ...unequal in the gifts He called them to but equal in the need to learn to use those gifts

²⁹³ Adeline Willis, interviewed by Minnie B. Stonestreet.

²⁹⁴ Berry Clay, interviewed by Adella S. Dixon; Arrie Binns, interviewed by Minnie B. Stonestreet.

²⁹⁵ Annie Huff, unknown interviewer.

²⁹⁶ Candis Goodwin, unknown interviewer.

²⁹⁷ Raboteau, "Slave Autonomy and Religion," 56.

²⁹⁸ Elizabeth, *Elizabeth, A Colored Minister of the Gospel, Born in Slavery*, title page.

²⁹⁹ 1 Corinthians 12.

fully.”³⁰⁰ If a slave woman became known for possessing such a gift, she could gain recognition from her peers within the congregation. In certain cases, black women even gained respect from whites. Elizabeth Sparks, a former slave, told her mother’s story in an interview with Claude K. Anderson. On his deathbed, a white master told Elizabeth’s mother that he was “so sorry that he hadn’t found the Lord before an’ had nuttin’ ’gainst his colored people. He was sorry an’ scared, but confessed...[my mother] she was very religious an’ all white folks set store to her [sic].”³⁰¹ Religion was one of the only areas in which slave women were valued, and their spiritual worth sometimes became a greater factor than their social worth. In former slave Jason Miller’s interview with Stiles N. Scruggs, another example is presented of a black woman who was able to gain respect from blacks as well as whites for her spiritual gifts. In this case, a white master aboard a ship caught in a violent storm asked Miller’s grandmother to pray for their safe return to shore, claiming that he could not pray himself. The fact that a white man asked a black woman to pray for him shows how important spiritual leaders were in society and how they could cross normal social boundaries.³⁰²

Spiritual leaders in the slave community in particular became significant, as having preachers and other leaders of their own race helped slaves to escape the normal social structure of their lives in which they were always inferior. Some plantations, like the one where former slave Amanda McDaniels lived, provided services with a white preacher in the morning and a black preacher in the evening.³⁰³ At evening services, instead of having a white man tell them how to behave and what to believe, slaves finally had a true leader from

³⁰⁰ Sobel, 82.

³⁰¹ Elizabeth Sparks, interviewed by Claude K. Anderson.

³⁰² Jason Miller, interviewed by Stiles N. Scruggs.

³⁰³ Amanda McDaniel, interviewed by Edwin Driskell.

their own people to admire. This different social order they formed, with a black leader for black people, helped to empower the vast majority of slaves. In the case of Bryant Huff, a former slave, church services with a black minister usually ran much longer than white-led services, and everyone participated freely, shouting and getting “happy.”³⁰⁴ An independent church or prayer meeting gave slaves a safe-harbor for social independence that they did not experience in their usual social arrangement with whites.³⁰⁵ Empowerment was even greater for the slave who was given a chance to step up as a leader for his community. Sobel describes how many of these individuals were “reborn in a black Baptist faith through which they gained a new sense of their selves, a new individuality, and a new purpose. They began new lives as a result of their conversions and were able to become creative and even charismatic leaders.”³⁰⁶ Religion provided an arena for black preachers to gain a high status thanks to their abilities to lead, teach, and interpret the Bible.

Black preachers in turn helped transform slaves’ originally isolated meetings into a larger, organized church. The black church began as an institution that was based solely on encouraging spiritual community and wellness, but it became an outlet for social, educational, and cultural activity. Sunday was usually the only day of the week that slaves were not required to work. On their day of rest, slaves not only wanted to worship, but sought to socialize and connect with their friends as well. The sense of community that slaves established through their religion provided not only a spiritual group of believers, but a common social ground with other slaves. Not every plantation had its own church or allowed blacks to worship, so many former slaves like Charlie Hudson voluntarily walked

³⁰⁴ Bryant Huff, interviewed by Adella S. Dixon.

³⁰⁵ Edward R. Crowther, “Independent Black Baptist Congregations in Antebellum Alabama,” *Journal of Negro History* 72, no. 3/4 (Summer-Autumn 1987): 70-72.

³⁰⁶ Sobel, 106-107.

several miles for the chance to attend a service.³⁰⁷ By traveling to religious revivals and so-called “jubilees,” slaves created broader social networks with their peers. Several former slaves such as Candis Goodwin explained that they had actually met their future spouse at a camp meeting or church service.³⁰⁸ Ex-slave Ed McCree described some of the interaction that took place: “At de baptizin’s was when de nigger boys shined up to de gals [sic].”³⁰⁹ The black church thus became an institution that affected all areas of its members’ lives.

Education was another aspect of life in which religion played an active role. The vast majority of plantation owners did not want their slaves to be literate and so prohibited any sort of schooling for blacks. Even in the rare case of a master who did not object to the education of his slaves, these efforts were usually condemned by the larger white community. Former slave Charlie Hudson described the white community’s attitude towards slaves’ education in his interview with Sadie B. Hornsby. His master, David Bell, had the ginhouse on the plantation cleared out and converted to a schoolroom on Sundays. However, these lessons only lasted three weeks because “on de fourth Sunday night riders had done made a shape lak a coffin in de sand out in front, and painted a sign on de ginhouse what read: ‘No niggers ‘lowed to be taught in dis ginhouse [sic].’” These actions infuriated Bell, who had a brush arbor constructed in place of the ginhouse. Unfortunately, when Hudson went to the arbor one Sunday, he found that “de night riders had done ‘stroyed de brush arbor, and dat was de end of my gwine to school [sic].”³¹⁰ Since education of slaves was not socially accepted, slaves’ only source of literature slaves was the Bible. Ex-slave Carrie Hudson recalled that slaves she knew were aware of what the Bible was, but could not read

³⁰⁷ Charlie Hudson, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

³⁰⁸ Candis Goodwin, unknown interviewer.

³⁰⁹ Ed McCree, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

³¹⁰ Charlie Hudson, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

it.³¹¹ A slightly more positive view was presented by Easter Huff, who claimed that “some few of the slaves might have read de Bible a little, but dar warn’t none what could write [sic].”³¹² Candis Goodwin fell into this latter category, explaining in an interview that she was able to learn to read bits and pieces of the Bible, but was never able to write.³¹³ One of the reasons that black preachers were so respected in their community was because they had the ability to read and interpret the Bible.³¹⁴ The few slaves who were able to further their education did so through a religious outlet of some sort. Ex-slave Mary Jane Wilson, who became one of the first black teachers, claimed that she first attended school in a church.³¹⁵ Religion was one of the only resources that blacks had for education and self-improvement.

Aside from education, religion became ingrained in other ways in the black culture of the antebellum South. As Richard C. Wade explains, “the range of the churches’ concern was not limited to worship. It extended to Sunday schooling for the young, to Bible classes for adults, and to prayers for the sick. Funerals and burial services further involved the churches.”³¹⁶ Events such as baptisms, weddings, and even funerals came to be big social events that brought the community together, similar to the ways that church events in the white community brought whites together. These were the most significant events in a slave’s life, and they were all tied to religion. Former slave Carrie Hudson specifically remembered how baptisms took place within her plantation: “Dere was a heap of baptisin’s dem days and I went to most all of ‘em...I kin see dem folkses now, a-marchin’ down to de crick, back of de church, and all de can-i-dates, dressed in de whites’ white

³¹¹ Carrie Hudson, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

³¹² Easter Huff, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

³¹³ Candis Goodwin, unknown interviewer.

³¹⁴ Crowther, 70-72.

³¹⁵ Mary Jane Wilson, interviewed by Thelma Dunston.

³¹⁶ Wade, 69.

clothes...evvybody jined in de singin' [sic].”³¹⁷ Baptism, while an intensely personal experience, was clearly an event that could be celebrated by the whole congregation as well. As for the next rite of passage—marriage—slave weddings had not traditionally been celebrated or even presided over by a preacher; a typical ceremony had consisted of the new couple jumping over a broomstick three times in the presence of their masters.³¹⁸ However, as slaves’ religion became more recognized and organized, these broomstick ceremonies were slowly replaced with religious ceremonies conducted by preachers of either race. In some cases, masters even permitted slaves to have wedding receptions and celebrations.³¹⁹ This shifting trend put more emphasis on the spiritual significance of a wedding. The final stage in the life cycle that took place within the church was the funeral. Former slave Ed McCree explained the importance of funerals in the slave community, describing how “niggers for miles and miles around went to de funeral [sic].”³²⁰ Slaves from various plantations helped to form a wide network of support for the grieving family. Arrie Binns testified that most of the slaves on a plantation also sat up with the body the night before the funeral and sang hymns of prayer for the deceased.³²¹ Even typically stern whites allowed black preachers to conduct their own slave funerals.³²² Through life milestones like baptisms, weddings, and funerals, the black church became ingrained into slave culture.

The development of a more experience-based method of worship that focused on an individual’s spiritual encounter with God provided the momentum that inspired slaves to break away from their masters’ selective, constructed version of Christianity. By examining

³¹⁷ Carrie Hudson, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

³¹⁸ Georgina Giwbs, interviewed by Thelma Dunston.

³¹⁹ Fannie Berry, interviewed by Susie Byrd.

³²⁰ Ed McCree, interviewed by Sadie B. Hornsby.

³²¹ Arrie Binns, interviewed by Minnie B. Stonestreet.

³²² Charlie King, interviewed by Mary A. Crawford.

the slave narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, one can see evidence of how white plantation owners of the antebellum South used Christianity as a means to indoctrinate slaves with values believed to pacify them. Further examination of these narratives reveals slaves' negative reactions to white-taught religion, and their efforts to develop their own version of Christianity and religious culture based on their African roots. In these efforts, slaves sought to fulfill their own needs of inspiration and hope for their earthly situation by looking to a new religious authority—the Bible. As slaves started to realize their own needs and beliefs, they created a strong sense of community. Slaves bonded not only in their faith, but in a shared identity, social cohesion, and an entire lifestyle that was based around the church. These findings enable scholars to understand slaves in the antebellum South more accurately, since religion was such a fundamental element of their daily lives. Understanding these slaves' experience is crucial in order to achieve a holistic view of history that does not merely focus on those in power, but seeks to uncover the harsh realities of life for slaves—those with the least power—as well.

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The Homespun Confederacy: Patriotism or Necessity?

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In the years before the American Civil War, a great majority of middle-class and wealthy women in both the North and South attempted to dress as fashionably as possible. “Every white woman dresses in the height of fashion,” noted an antebellum *Harper’s Weekly* article.³²³ In 1860, Northern newspapers such as the *New York Times* advertised sewing machines, fashion plates, and clothing and accessory stores daily; and every month *Harper’s Weekly* monitored the latest fashions spotted in Paris so American women did not have to wait for new developments to cross the Atlantic. Atlanta’s *Daily Intelligencer* and other Southern broadsheets focused more on marketing the ready-made clothing that local merchants purchased from Northern factories or imported from Europe. This Southern reliance on Northern- and European-manufactured clothing and fabric changed, however, when the Civil War began: the Union’s blockade of Confederate ports became more efficient and effective, thereby reducing the availability of ready-made clothing and eventually textiles in general. Though only one of the many hardships and domestic challenges brought about by the war, the scarcity of textiles became one of the most prominent issues for Confederate women. It was also one of the most dynamic issues, beginning as a motivation to establish a preferential patriotic movement revolving around homespun and ending as a required sacrifice in the face of resource depletion.

At the beginning of the Civil War, the Confederacy considered the Union blockade laughable; according to figures attributed to archivist Marcus Price, blockade runners were still 96.8 percent successful at reaching their destinations in 1861.³²⁴ Yet despite the continued availability of a variety of textiles at the beginning of the war, Confederate newspapers soon began encouraging women to forgo such luxuries in favor of the more

³²³ “The March of Fashion,” *Harper’s Weekly*, May 26, 1860.

³²⁴ David G. Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority and the Economics of the American Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 4.

republican and patriotic production of homespun. As a writer for the *Staunton Spectator* lectured in June 1861, “The ladies should be willing to forego the pleasure of appearing in costly silks, and high-priced bonnets. The fashion should now be to wear cheap and durable apparel. The time for ‘Flora McFlimseys’ is when the country teems with wealth and smiles with prosperity.”³²⁵ Such comments promoted the adoption of homespun and assumed that the desire not to be thought a “Flora McFlimsey”—a woman who would forsake her country for fashion without a second thought—would prevail in Confederate women’s hearts if pure patriotism did not. Another method the media used to encourage homespun was its historic precedent. In November 1862, a writer for the *Abingdon Virginian* scolded women whose “idleness and profligacy [had] usurped the place of prudence and industry.” “God send that our wives and daughters could be induced to imitate the customs of the days of Martha Washington – then, indeed, they would be helpmates for man instead of being drawbacks,” the writer said. He continued to praise those Southern women who had already sacrificed fashion for the Confederate cause as their “grandmothers did in the revolution.”³²⁶

The reception of homespun was generally positive throughout the Confederacy, apart from some minor bickering at the beginning of the war over whether the sacrifice of fashion was worthwhile and ladylike. Confederate politicians considered homespun an honorable contribution; a newspaper article in the Milledgeville *Confederate Union* claimed that when Jefferson Davis “saw a lady wearing a homespun dress he felt like taking his hat off his head in respect to her.”³²⁷ Men, and soldiers in particular, seemed to appreciate a woman in a dress made from homespun cloth. The *Anderson Intelligencer* reported on a party held within a week of the firing upon Fort Sumter and hosted by Colonel Donald of Leake County,

³²⁵ “What Shall We Wear?,” *Staunton Spectator*, June 4, 1861.

³²⁶ “Homespun,” *Abingdon Virginian*, November 14, 1862.

³²⁷ “Homespun Dresses,” *Confederate Union*, January 13, 1863.

Mississippi, at which “the ticket sent to each young lady required that she should come dressed in Mississippi manufactured apparel, in the manufacture of which she must in some way assist.” The paper reported that over one hundred homespun-clad men and women attended the gala.³²⁸ Though some stories reported homespun dresses looking peculiar—one account from a Captain John Wise of Virginia comically related how a young woman’s homemade “stomacher [was] very suggestive in its proportions”—such appraisals generally criticized inexperienced tailoring, not the use of homespun itself. On the whole, many soldiers seemed to consider the homespun dresses present at social functions “simple, [and] pretty, [though] sometimes antiquated.”³²⁹

The most popular contemporary celebration of the homespun dress was the song known alternately as “The Homespun Dress,” “The Southern Girl’s Song,” “The Southern Girl with the Homespun Dress,” or some variation thereof. Although the song’s origins are disputed, “The Homespun Dress” was considered “a sentimental ode to the privations Southern women had to endure for the sake of their cause.” One source, for instance, claims that a Lieutenant Harrington was inspired to compose the lyrics after a moving experience in which he witnessed several women in Lexington, Kentucky, walking about in homespun.³³⁰ Another source attributes the song to an anonymous Confederate female who composed the lyrics as part of a letter to her lover in the Confederate army, and who aimed to acknowledge the patriotism and sacrifices of her fellow women through them.³³¹ The song has also been credited to a Georgia resident, Miss Carrie Bell Sinclair, who wrote other popular

³²⁸ “A Homespun Party,” *Anderson Intelligencer*, April 17, 1861.

³²⁹ John Levi Underwood, *The Women of the Confederacy* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1906), 138.

³³⁰ Ray Browne and Lawrence Kreiser, Jr., *The Civil War and Reconstruction*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 124.

³³¹ Frank Moore, *The Civil War in Song and Story: 1860-1865*, (New York: P.F. Collier, 1889), 174.

Confederate songs during the Civil War.³³² Regardless of authorship, “The Homespun Dress” is a distinctive celebration of the use of homespun in the Confederacy, including lyrics such as:

Now Northern girls are out of date;
And since old Abe's blockade,
We Southern girls can be content
With goods that's Southern made.³³³

The enduring popularity of “The Homespun Dress” throughout the war and even today strongly implies a widespread admiration of the material sacrifices of patriotic Confederate women.

These material sacrifices held immense symbolism. Reminiscent of the Revolutionary Era when homespun was used to denote the self-dependency of the Thirteen Colonies, Confederate homespun was intended to exemplify the South’s new independence, an implication in cloth that the Confederacy did not need the Union’s factories or European trade to meet its basic needs. Jefferson Davis praised the blockade as a blessing for stimulating the Confederacy’s ingenuity and self-sufficiency, declaring that “as long as hostilities continue the Confederate States will exhibit a steadily increasing capacity to furnish their troops with food, clothing, and arms. . . . thus daily becoming more and more independent of the rest of the world.”³³⁴ Many Confederates agreed with Davis’s assessment, including the editor of the Charleston *Mercury*, who claimed that two years of the war would “result in the manufacture of all our clothing. There shall be Southern chintzes and calicoes

³³² Irwin Silber and Jerry Silverman, *Songs of the Civil War* (North Chemsford: Courier Dover Publications, 1995), 54.

³³³ “Southern Girl’s Song,” *Southern Recorder*, June 30, 1863.

³³⁴ Surdam, 97.

in 2 years of blockade.”³³⁵ Confederate women managed to look to the future possibility of scant resources as a challenge concerning their patriotism and willingness to put forth effort.

A month into the war, Mrs. McGuire, a Virginian woman living outside Alexandria, wrote:

We are very weak in resources, but strong in stout hearts, zeal for the cause, and enthusiastic devotion to our beloved South . . . The embattled hosts of the North will have the whole world from which to draw their supplies; but if, as it seems but too probable, our ports are blockaded, we shall indeed be independent on our own exertions, and great must those exertions be.³³⁶

President Jefferson Davis, the editor of the *Mercury*, and Mrs. McGuire all offered confident and determined approaches to the impending crisis, but as time passed and the Confederate military and civilian populations both began to run out of basic supplies, including textiles, their hopefulness proved increasingly unrealistic. As Southern production of clothing and shoes had accounted for less than five percent of the United States’ national output during the antebellum period, the assumption that the Confederacy would easily become self-sufficient was a rather optimistic one.³³⁷

The patriotism and symbolism of homespun began to fade as it developed into less of a choice and more of a necessity for Confederate women. As the war progressed, the blockade strengthened and fewer imports made it through to Southern port cities.

Confederate blockade runners were only 66.2 percent successful in 1862—a 30.6-percent drop from the first year of the blockade—limiting the quantity of imports that made it to Southern ports.³³⁸ The blockade runners who were successful still could not provide enough supplies for the entire Confederacy. Store shelves were barren in Charleston and Richmond,

³³⁵ Cited in Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitutes on the Southern Homefront* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952), 79.

³³⁶ Mauriel Phillips Joslyn, ed., *Valor and Lace: The Roles of Confederate Women 1861-1865* (Murfreesboro: Southern Heritage Press, 1996), 28-29.

³³⁷ Surdam, 33.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

and many merchants were forced to close their shops. The imports that did reach the Confederacy were prohibitively expensive, with the price of cloth increasing by 6,150 percent between 1861 and 1865 in the port city of Wilmington, North Carolina, and by nearly 4,067 percent in the non-coastal town of Fayetteville.³³⁹ Cloth that cost five cents per yard in 1860 was priced between two and three dollars, depending on the town, during the war. As a *Harper's Weekly* article from October 17, 1863, declared of Richmond women, "the few ladies who walk out appear to be living, as it were, backwards on the finery and fashion of other days."³⁴⁰ Use of older clothing and homespun became a common sight. As historian Mary Decredico writes, "By 1863, hardships affected virtually every class of southern women."³⁴¹ What began as a female community-bonding experience at the beginning of the war became the Confederate woman's unwanted necessity.

The wartime burden of creating something out of nearly nothing created contradictory feelings for Confederate women. They still felt it to be their patriotic duty to conserve materials for the military, especially as uniforms and shoes for soldiers grew scarce. Some women even attempted to make homespun clothing for the Confederate military late into the war, but were forced to cease this practice when even the basic supplies for homespun were exhausted. As a Confederate woman known only as Agnes wrote to a friend in January 1863,

Do you realize we shall soon be without a stitch of clothes? There is not a bonnet for sale in Richmond. Some of the girls smuggle them, which I for one consider in the worst possible taste, to say the least. We have no right at this time to dress better than our neighbors, and besides, the soldiers need every cent of our money.³⁴²

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-94.

³⁴⁰ "The Prisons at Richmond," *Harper's Weekly*, October 17, 1863.

³⁴¹ Mary Decredico, "The Confederate Home Front," in *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ed. Lacy K. Ford (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 266.

³⁴² "There is Not a Bonnet for Sale in Richmond," in *Heroines of Dixie*, ed. Katherine M. Jones (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 202.

Though textiles were becoming rarer and rarer, women like Agnes still associated the sacrifice of such things as a patriotic contribution to the war effort. She continued cleverly, “It seems rather volatile to discuss such things while our dear country is in such peril. Heaven knows I would costume myself in coffee-bags if that would help, but having no coffee, where could I get the bags?”³⁴³

Despite the patriotic fervor promoting homespun and a modest lifestyle that prevailed during the early years of the Civil War, by the middle of the war in 1863 the lack of not only luxury but also basic needs began affecting Confederate morale. Women’s morale was especially affected. As Decredico explains, “faith in the Confederate cause declined, and calls for continued patriotic sacrifice were met with laughter, cynicism, anger, or disbelief,” as privations continued to multiply.³⁴⁴ A suppressed desire to live a life materially similar to antebellum conditions was prevalent among Confederate women. Seventeen-year-old Susan Bradford of Leon County, Florida, for instance, wrote a diary entry in the Fall of 1863 relating her busy days of “spinning, weaving, sewing, and knitting” clothing for family members, and lamenting her lack of shoes. As Bradford wrote, “Until the shoes for the army are finished, Mr. McDearnmid will not have time to make any shoes for any one else”; nevertheless, she continued with a seemingly conscious selflessness, “this is right, for our dear soldiers must come first in everything.”³⁴⁵ Some women’s desire for fineries apparently overrode their senses of patriotic duty. Mary Elizabeth Massey relates in her book, *Ersatz in the Confederacy*, how Constance and Hetty Cary went to Washington in the spring of 1863, and “while there, these young ladies went on a buying spree, which Constance chose to call

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Decredico, 266.

³⁴⁵ Cited in Susan Bradford, “Many Things are Becoming Scarce,” in *Heroines of Dixie*, ed. Katherine M. Jones (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 259, 277.

‘A nine day wonder.’” When Constance and Hetty returned to Richmond, they were considered among the most fashionable in the city, and other Confederate women, eager to have the same fashionable appearance, attempted to replicate their contraband garments.³⁴⁶ Perhaps actions such as those of Constance and Hetty Cary were the inspiration for an ad in the *Staunton Spectator* on June 2, 1863, that reminded, “Fashionable committees—which are fortunately only local—should elevate themselves in all respects to the height of the crisis, and by their example inculcate the policy which is enjoined by every consideration of public duty and patriotism—the policy to buy nothing that is unnecessary, and nothing we can make ourselves. This is Independence.”³⁴⁷

As textiles became all but unavailable to civilians, Confederate women began turning to their own creativity to engineer solutions to the problem of clothing and shoes. “Deprived of customary supplies and conveniences of daily life by the effectiveness of the Federal blockade,” writes Katherine M. Jones, “the plantation was forced to find all sorts of expedients and substitutes.”³⁴⁸ Young Susan Bradford, who had written in her diary of her shoe deficiency, also described how she created her own pair of shoes by “plaiting shucks” into the form of a slipper that she then lined with velvet, a method she had discovered by observing an old local African-American craftsman. Though some laughed at her finished product, Susan stated that she was proud of her work.³⁴⁹ Others made shoes from tanned hides or from leather found in other items when it was available. As Massey notes, “It was said that no sensible man would leave a saddled horse outside ‘a church, store or post office after dark,’ for fear that he would find that ‘some one had appropriated . . . [the] saddle skirts

³⁴⁶ Massey, 80.

³⁴⁷ “A Word in Season,” *Staunton Spectator*, June 2, 1863.

³⁴⁸ Katherine M. Jones, *Heroines of Dixie* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill: 1955), 260.

³⁴⁹ Bradford in *Heroines of Dixie*, 277.

for sole leather.”³⁵⁰ There are also reports in letters and diaries of women creating clothing from household textiles such as bed sheets and carpets for themselves, their families, and the Confederate soldiers. Curtains were often used to create new dresses as well, as this popular verse from the 1860s parodies:

Let me whisper: this dress I now wear for thee,
Was a curtain of old in Philadelphée.³⁵¹

Oilcloth table coverings or rubberized piano coverings were especially popular sources of material, as they were waterproof and lined with flannel, making them useful for creating raincoats and overcoats.³⁵² Confederate women, desiring some semblance of fashion and variation, also dabbled in methods of natural dyeing using plants, frequently consulting newspaper articles that provided basic instructions for creating dyes from indigo, pumpkin, hickory, and sassafras bark. According to Massey, “A favorite riddle of the day ran like this: Question – ‘Why am I like Saint Paul?’ Answer – ‘Because I dye daily.’”³⁵³

Sources from the first year of the war clearly indicate that Confederate women agreed with their government that deprivation would not be unendurably severe and that Confederate determination would prevail if materials did become scarce. By entertaining the idea of homespun during the early years of the war, Confederate women began associating such domestic practices with the choice to be patriotic as opposed to the requirement to survive. During the final year of the war, this association came to be emotionally challenging and stressful. What was once an act of simple sacrifice had created a new burden of ingenuity and harder work as supplies dwindled and Confederate women struggled to find replacements for their everyday needs. Self-sacrifice in the form of homespun no longer

³⁵⁰ Massey, 82.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁵² Sumner Archibald Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran*, Volume 21, 164; Massey, 95.

³⁵³ Massey, 97.

showed the world that the Confederacy was self-sufficient and capable, but rather the opposite; self-sufficiency became observably more difficult as Confederate women first scrambled to preserve some semblance to antebellum life, and later attempted simply to survive.

Confederate women's adopted methods of coping with shortages certainly serve as an example of their ingenuity, though the accounts also show how feelings towards homespun as a form of patriotism changed after the early years of the war. From 1863 to the end of the conflict, patriotism most likely cannot be cited as the main motivation for the use of homespun and other homemade means of clothing production. Patriotism certainly contributed to homespun's popularity in the beginning of the Civil War when it served the purpose of representing support of the Confederate cause. However, as the blockade began taking its toll on Confederate resources, homespun was no longer a choice. The call for continued use of homespun during the middle years of the war, during which data state textiles were rare to nonexistent and procurable only by illegal or prohibitively expensive means, seems to be the government's failed effort to rejuvenate the patriotism with which homespun was formerly associated. The charm of homespun also dulled as women saw the Confederacy's increasingly futile military efforts. By Sherman's March to the Sea at the end of 1864, the women who had formerly donned charming homespun dresses to show their love of country were forced to choose between having sheets and having undergarments. At the end of the Civil War, the patriotism of homespun had morphed almost fully into a practice of necessity.

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**Victory Through Art Power:
Comparisons between American Posters from the First and
Second World Wars**

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In a January 1918 meeting of the National War Savings Committee, thousands of New Yorkers eagerly crowded into Carnegie Hall. Here, the popular former Secretary of State Elihu Root discussed the changing reality of twentieth-century warfare and the new sacrifices the American public had to make in order to defeat Germany and its allies:

Modern war is as much a contest of supplies as it is a contest of arms. The vast armies arrayed against each other must be fed, must be clothed, must be armed, must be supplied. And where are these supplies to come from? One hundred millions of men, either in the armies or engaged in the manufacture of supplies for the armies, have been withdrawn from productive employment, and all over the world there is a shortage of food, of clothing, of materials. In every direction the supreme test of war now is to be found in the capacity of the people to supply the materials necessary to enable the armies to go on with the war.³⁵⁴

Though Root's speech was well received by the crowd, it was only heard by a small fraction of the population of New York City, far fewer than needed to have a significant effect on the whole American population. Yet the American government needed to mobilize the entire population in the war efforts of the First and Second World Wars, as both conflicts placed huge demands on the country's material and personnel resources. The government therefore turned to posters to communicate these war-related needs. In an age before most Americans had access to radio or television, these large public images were an effective means of informing citizens about the various needs of the American war effort. As William L. Bird points out, posters were "inexpensive, accessible, and ever-present," and they were "an ideal agent for making war aims the personal mission of every citizen."³⁵⁵

The American government, along with various private organizations and businesses, produced millions of posters during each war, allowing them to be displayed all over the

³⁵⁴ "Thousands Pledged to Aid War Thrift," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1918, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9C0CE6DB133DE533A25752C3A9679C946996D6CF>.

³⁵⁵ William L. Bird and Harry R. Rubenstein, *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 1.

country. During World War II, posters were described as “real war ammunition” by the U.S. Office of War Information,³⁵⁶ and were said by the U.S. War Production Board to “work a 24-hour shift” because of their ability to reach so many citizens.³⁵⁷ Aside from this vital role they served during the wars, posters produced during the First and Second World Wars also provide unique insight into American governmental and public perspectives on each war. As these military conflicts fade farther into the past, posters have become one of the few remaining ways scholars can understand not only the ways in which Americans reacted to the various demands of the wars, but also the key differences in American home front involvement in each war. In terms of poster appearance and the goals represented in them, American propaganda posters in the First and Second World Wars were significantly different and indicate substantial differences both in American reactions to the war and in the government’s war aims. World War I posters stressed the importance of volunteerism and focused more on military enlistment compared to World War II posters, which revolved around war bond sales and factory production. World War I posters were also more commercially formatted than World War II posters, which contained more emotional appeals to citizens and thereby reflected the increased personal involvement Americans had in the conflict. The evolution and change seen in American war posters thus parallels the changes in American involvement between the wars.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, people have seen and been influenced by posters and the messages they contain. Posters were originally used in commercial and artistic settings in Europe, though they quickly spread to the United States. It was not until the years

³⁵⁶ U.S. Office for War Information, *Poster Handbook—A Plan for Displaying Official War Posters* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1943).

³⁵⁷ U.S. War Production Board, “War Production Drive,” Progress Report No. 2, 1942, folder: production drive, box 1379, entry 257, NC-148, RG 208, National Archives at College Park.

approaching the First World War, however, that posters began to be used as political tools relating to a variety of war-time programs. According to poster historian Max Gallo, one of the poster's main functions was to encourage volunteerism in the army before the Selective Service Act of 1917 instigated the draft.³⁵⁸ As Gallo notes, "what many people had to be persuaded of was the need for total commitment and effort [to the war]...Supplies had to be conserved. Most important, morale had to be maintained. These were selling jobs for which posters were well suited."³⁵⁹ Most of the earliest posters created before American entry into World War I encouraged volunteerism in the armed forces, and appealed to Americans' sense of adventure and patriotism. For instance, the poster entitled, "Columbia Calls," depicted an image of Columbia (a popular early twentieth-century personification of the United States) holding a large American flag and a sword, along with the text to a patriotic song that proclaimed, "There are no cowards here!" and "America, our blessed land, is calling, calling thee."³⁶⁰

Other posters utilized different techniques and themes to promote the involvement of citizens in the war effort. One used the image of a vicious ape wearing a German helmet labeled 'militarism' and holding an unconscious American woman to catch viewers' attention. This message on the famous "Destroy this Mad Brute" poster encouraged pre-war volunteers to enlist in order to save their homeland and families from the horrors of a war that could spread into the United States; as it stated, "If this war is not fought to a finish in Europe, it will be on the soil of the United States."³⁶¹ Another common poster theme seen before American entry into World War I promoted relief and donations for those involved in

³⁵⁸ Max Gallo, *The Poster in History* (Verona: The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1974), 188.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

³⁶⁰ Francis Adams Halstead, *Columbia Calls*, 1917, Museum of the City of New York.

³⁶¹ H. R. Hopps, *Destroy This Mad Brute*, 1916, Guernsey's.

the war overseas. These posters, created by the American government and important charity organizations such as the Y.M.C.A., Red Cross, and other relief committees, were used before and during American entry into the war, and they helped raise money and other needed materials to send both to soldiers and affected civilians across the world. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, these volunteer and relief themes continued to be important in posters and were joined by other messages concerning government war aims necessary for American success in the war.

American World War I posters were heavily influenced by earlier European war posters, which had been in use since the beginning of the war in 1914. The best example of this influence can be seen in the legendary “I Want You” poster created by James Montgomery Flagg in 1917, which featured the ‘Uncle Sam’ character and a call for volunteers to join the army.³⁶² Although it was incredibly influential and popular (over five million copies were made between 1917 and 1918), and has now become an American cultural icon,³⁶³ this poster was closely modeled after an earlier British recruitment poster created by Alfred Leete in 1914.³⁶⁴ Despite these foreign influences, American posters still developed their own unique style after the United States entered the war in 1917.

Within days of America’s declaration of war on Germany in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI), an organization designed to promote the “Great War” and the American government’s various war aims. The CPI was headed by George Creel, known today as the creator of modern wartime propaganda. Creel quickly set up the Division of Pictorial Publicity (DPP), which was tasked with creating posters to advertise the war aims of the government to the American people.

³⁶² James Montgomery Flagg, *I Want You for the U.S. Army*, 1917, The Museum of Modern Art.

³⁶³ Library of Congress, “The Most Famous Poster,” American Treasures of the Library of Congress.

³⁶⁴ Alfred Leete, *Britons—[Lord Kitchener] Wants You*, 1914, Imperial War Museum.

Charles Gibson, creator of the popular “Gibson Girl” and one of the best known illustrators in the nation, was chosen to head the DPP, and was soon in charge of coordinating the group’s artists and illustrators. Gibson, along with the other artists of the DPP, was recruited from the ranks of American advertising agencies. Many of these men were close professional friends of Gibson, including Flagg and William Chandler Christy. These artists, most of whom were strong supporters of American involvement in the First World War, used their popularity and knowledge of effective advertising techniques to make posters more appealing to Americans who were not yet convinced of the need for such involvement. As put by scholar George Vogt:

The choice of prominent...commercial artists reflects a need...to use the art of advertising to sell support of involvement in the war to the United States...Isolationism was still a significant cultural obstacle, and support of the war made more sense when it came in the form of something familiar... What better way to make the war effort familiar than to use images like those appearing in advertisements in daily newspapers, in weekly magazines, and on the very products that sat on the tables and in the cupboards of America?³⁶⁵

Gibson and his fellow poster artists used fonts and images that readers of popular magazines and newspapers would see and recognize in an attempt to make their posters more popular with Americans. The “Gibson Girl” and the “Arrow Collar Man,” both well-liked and easily identifiable characters from early twentieth-century advertisements, were major influences for characters on American war posters. Dozens of examples of World War I posters picture men and women closely modeled after these commercial characters, such as

³⁶⁵ George L. Vogt, “When Posters Went to War: How America’s Best Commercial Artists Helped Win World War I,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 84 (Winter 2000): 40.

the successful “House Manager”³⁶⁶ and “Here He is, Sir” posters, both created by Gibson himself in 1917.³⁶⁷

Most American posters from the First World War were drawn realistically, in the same fashion as commercial art and advertisements from that time. This technique was thought to distract viewers from the fact that many posters often called for tough sacrifices from American citizens.³⁶⁸ By exaggerating the positive aspects of participation in the war, World War I poster art was closely linked to early twentieth-century advertising, which used the same technique to sell their products to America. According to scholar Phillip Fehl, posters “could bring civilians running to recruiting stations, where the Red Cross was staffed by Gibson girls and where soldiers, eagerly shooting away from antiquated machine guns [looked] charming in their [militarism].”³⁶⁹ Because of this, American posters rarely reflected the reality of the war in Europe. “To the very end,” a line from Karl Kraus’ popular World War I drama, *The Last Days of Humanity*, reads, “if one had shot the posters the people would have remained alive.”³⁷⁰ This line echoes the fact that the reality of the First World War was far from these ideal poster scenes and messages that glorified war and participation in it. American posters from the First World War were also similar to advertisements from the same period in that both commonly contained a large amount of text, in contrast to foreign posters of the same time or to subsequent American World War II

³⁶⁶ Charles Dana Gibson, *House Manager*, 1917, University of Texas at Austin.

³⁶⁷ Charles Dana Gibson, *Here He is, Sir*, 1917, Guernsey’s.

³⁶⁸ Vogt, 41.

³⁶⁹ Phillip P. Fehl, “Propaganda and the Integrity of Art: Notes on an Exhibition of War Posters 1914-1918,” in *WWI Propaganda Posters: A Selection from the Materials from the Bowman Gray Collection of Materials Related to WWI and WWII* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1969), 1.

³⁷⁰ Karl Kraus, *The Last Days of Humanity*, 1921, Act V, Scene 42.

posters. As George Creel later wrote, the CPI and its Division of Pictorial Publicity were “a vast enterprise in salesmanship, [and] the world’s greatest adventure in advertising.”³⁷¹

Racism in American posters was decidedly rare during World War I, in part due to the high levels of immigrants in the United States who might be offended by negative depictions of European enemies, but also because of the tendency of posters to focus on the home front. In the first decades of the twentieth century, 32 million Americans, a third of the population, had been born outside of the United States or were first-generation citizens.³⁷² These “Hyphenated Americans,” especially those from nations hostile towards the United States during World War I, already faced discrimination from many native-born citizens. Any official encouragement of racial intolerance in posters threatened the war-time contributions of immigrants, who were heavily involved in the American war effort in terms of both bond purchases and participation in the armed forces. A large percentage of the American Expeditionary Forces, for instance, consisted of immigrant Americans; its commanding general, John J. Pershing, was in fact a German-American.³⁷³ Posters instead attempted to bring native and immigrant Americans together to face World War I as a united nation.

Also noticeably absent from World War I posters were actual mentions of war or fighting. The word ‘war’ was seldom used on posters (war bonds were referred to as ‘Liberty bonds’), and combat and other violent scenes were rarely depicted as well. Instead, violence towards American soldiers or civilians was only insinuated, if mentioned at all. One example

³⁷¹George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (1920; repr., New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1972), 4.

³⁷²Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 178.

³⁷³Presidential Commission for the German-American Tricentennial, “Three Hundred Years of German Immigration to America 1683-1983,” U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany.

of this style of implied violence is Joseph Pennell's "That Liberty Shall Not Perish" poster, which showed "New York City bombed, shot down, burning, [and] blown up by an enemy," as the artist himself described it.³⁷⁴ The image of a destroyed New York cityscape still only suggested the violence by showing its aftermath. Other unusual posters that used the threat of violence to encourage support of the war and of American war aims depicted the violence only in silhouette, as in the infamous "Remember Belgium" poster, where an evil German soldier is shown taking an innocent Belgian girl away, possibly to be raped.³⁷⁵ By focusing instead on positive, often idealized images and scenes, posters of the First World War reflected the distance Americans felt from the actual war being fought hundreds of miles away across the Atlantic Ocean.

After America became involved in the war, the most common themes among World War I posters were recruitment, bond sales, and resource conservation; these themes reflected the most important needs of the American government during that time. Though there was a draft during the First World War, recruitment was still a vital part of the American war effort, making the overseas deployment of 4.5 million troops possible.³⁷⁶ The most memorable recruitment poster of World War I and in American military history in general was Flagg's "I Want You" poster. With millions of copies produced and distributed between 1917 and 1918, the popularity of Flagg's and other recruitment posters emphasized the need for manpower in the American military, which was inadequately low before and at the start of the war. The lack of eager volunteers was due in large part to the prevailing isolationist ideology of the time, or the conviction that the United States was better off staying uninvolved in the affairs

³⁷⁴ Joseph Pennell, *Joseph Pennell's Liberty Loan Poster* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1918), 18.

³⁷⁵ Ellsworth Young, *Remember Belgium*, 1918, Museum of the City of New York.

³⁷⁶ Scott Manning, "World War I: Troop Statistics," *Historian on the Warpath*, <http://www.scottmanning.com/content/world-war-i-troop-statistics/> (accessed May 22, 2011)

of far-off nations, a sentiment that dated back to George Washington's warning about "foreign entanglements." President Wilson's 1916 campaign slogan, "He kept us out of the war,"³⁷⁷ reflected this early lack of American support of the First World War. Aside from making patriotic appeals to citizens not completely sold on the war effort, recruitment posters thus had to make military life seem ideal and adventurous to make soldiers want to enlist. They therefore juxtaposed images of handsome, proud soldiers with promises of adventure and glory over in Europe. While it is difficult to prove that these posters had a direct impact on recruitment during World War I, they reflect the importance that recruitment played in the United States as a whole, where citizens uninterested and uninvolved in the war were hesitant to enlist on their own.

Aside from recruitment, posters encouraging citizens to buy government bonds were among the more mass-produced and widely distributed posters during World War I. These bond posters were often the most commercial of American posters of the First World War, as they gave artists an actual product to sell to the American people. Consequently, they were highly successful, raising over 20.5 billion dollars for the war effort.³⁷⁸ One of the more popular war bond posters was Joseph Pennell's vision of a ruined New York City in "That Liberty Shall Not Perish," which called for support for the Liberty Loan drive. Conservation was also a vital part of the American war effort, and war posters encouraging the reduced consumption of important war goods such as wheat, meat, sugar, and fats in the 1917 "Eat More Corn, Oats, and Rye Products" piece were commonly seen throughout the war on the home front. In this example, a variety of foods are shown that the government preferred citizens to eat in greater quantities, since those foods were not needed in great quantities by

³⁷⁷ William A. Degregorio, *The Complete Book of U.S. Presidents*, 6th ed. (Fort Lee: Barricade Books, 2005), 417.

³⁷⁸ Vogt, 44.

troops overseas.³⁷⁹ Both types of posters offered Americans ways to support the war effort without making an extensive personal commitment. This alternative to direct involvement was critical during World War I, when many Americans were not fully dedicated to the war.

Despite the fact that American industrial strength was another major part of the war, posters mentioning industry or factory workers were uncommon. The prominent themes of bond sales, conservation, and the idealized military experience, along with the lack of posters mentioning industry or the difficulties of military life, reflect the American public's light level of involvement in World War I. In the early twentieth century, when the United States was emerging from an era of isolationism and was not yet a major world power, citizens were loathe to become heavily invested or participate personally in a foreign war. Their aversion to participation was all the more powerful given that the European enemy was not very fundamentally different from themselves, as the case was twenty-five years later during World War II.

When war broke out in Europe again in 1939, the United States started out at a neutral country, following the precedent it had set during the previous global conflict. However, with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the American people were again plunged into war with Germany, and Germany's new ally, Japan. With this new war came a variety of new posters that were very different from their World War I predecessors, both thematically and stylistically. Two types of posters were the most common during the Second World War: ones that contained highly realistic images and others that used symbols and less life-like graphics. From 1941 to 1945, the length of American involvement in the war, the level of detail in war posters differed from organization to organization and from year to year. American industries and individual companies also became more involved in

³⁷⁹ L.N. Britten, *Eat More Corn, Oats, and Rye*, 1917, University of North Texas Digital Library.

the war effort at this time, and produced more war posters than in the previous war. The iconic image of ‘Rosie the Riveter’ in J. Howard Miller’s “We Can Do It!” poster, for instance, was created by the Westinghouse Company, an important electronics company that made war materials for the United States.³⁸⁰

In early 1942, the War Advertising Council, a government organization consisting of the nation’s leading advertising and mass media experts, researched the features that made a war poster effective. Through extensive reaction surveys in Canada, a country that had been involved in World War II for two years by 1942 and that was similar enough to America culturally for survey results to apply to the American case, specialists came to the conclusion that “the most effective war posters appeal to emotions... [they] should be a picture, not... a symbolic design.” Continuing, the report stated, “If it isn’t a picture, it is not likely to make a powerful appeal. Abstract design and symbolism are to be avoided, as they are likely to be misunderstood or not understood at all.”³⁸¹ George Gallup, founder of the Gallup Organization and consultant to the War Advertising Council, later remarked that effective posters were ones that could be understood by the “lower third” of American citizens.³⁸² Artists followed this advice and created very literal, emotional posters that commonly depicted battle scenes and images of American soldiers sacrificing for victory. In many cases, these detailed posters showed viewers the brutal reality of war in an attempt to pressure them into participating in the war effort through guilt. Posters that discouraged ‘careless talk’ and warned of enemy spies were particularly extreme in their depictions of

³⁸⁰ J. Howard Miller, *We Can Do It!*, 1942, National Museum of American History.

³⁸¹ U.S. Office of Facts and Figures, *How To Make Posters That Will Help Win the War*, by Young and Rubicam, Inc. Toronto, 1942.

³⁸² Bird, 28.

soldiers; the 1944 poster, “Careless Talk got there First,” for example, contained an image of dead soldiers parachuting onto a field.³⁸³

Despite survey research promoting more realistic images on posters, many posters created during the Second World War still favored the use of symbols and more abstract pictures, a technique that had not been used during World War I. These more symbolic posters were used throughout the war, but only in high volume at the very beginning of American involvement. Their designers felt that people on factory floors and in mass transit areas—places where posters were commonly displayed—could grasp posters’ messages better and more quickly if the messages were rendered in abstract form. However, as the war progressed, these types of posters were usually abandoned for the more detailed, popular, and effective posters that the War Advertising Council recommended. When posters made use of more detailed images, they also appealed emotionally to their audience. Though casualty scenes were relatively uncommon, posters that showed American soldiers facing danger or making other war sacrifices gave Americans back home a stronger incentive to want to help end the war as quickly as possible. The combination of patriotic and emotional appeals in posters encouraged viewers to do anything possible, from buying more war bonds to working harder in the factory, to aid in the war effort.

Differentiations between the Americans and their enemies were highlighted during both World Wars, but the ideological differences between the United States and its World War II enemies were much more extreme. Posters rarely referred to Germans and Japanese by their actual names, instead giving these enemies more derogatory monikers such as ‘Nazi,’ ‘Jap,’ or simply ‘them’; these generalized slurs emphasized that America and the values that it upheld had little in common with these foreign peoples. Unlike in the First

³⁸³ Ibid., 45.

World War, Germany was controlled by Hitler and the Nazi Party, whose power over the nation “was the step that made the most appalling trail of destruction possible...destruction of human life, destruction of morality and civilized behavior, [and that] opened the door to barbarism.”³⁸⁴ One of the most visually arresting posters of the war demonstrated this ideological divide by simply picturing a hand adorned with a Nazi swastika stabbing a Bible above the text, “This is the enemy.”³⁸⁵ The Japanese and their imperialist beliefs fared even worse when depicted in posters, due to the long-standing contempt Americans had for the Japanese that was only reawakened after reports of Japanese atrocities in the invasion of China in the mid-1930s. Posters showed images of helpless Americans being killed or tortured by cruel Japanese invaders with captions such as “This isn’t war...its murder,”³⁸⁶ and “The Jap way- cold blooded murder.”³⁸⁷ With posters such as these, Americans were constantly reminded of the differences between their own beliefs and their enemies, and of the dangers faced on the home front should the United States lose the war against evil.

World War II posters and their sense of urgency reflected the dire need of both the American government and the American people to defeat the “evil” Nazis and Imperialist Japanese at all costs. These enemies of the United States were often given racist portrayals in posters and shown committing horrible acts of brutality and barbarism. A common portrayal of America’s enemies can be seen in the “Be Sure you have the Correct Time!” poster, where Hitler and the leader of Italy, Benito Mussolini, are depicted as ignorant buffoons, and a Japanese soldier is shown as a conniving, rodent-like person.³⁸⁸ The extremely negative

³⁸⁴ Richard Bessel, “The Nazi Capture of Power,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 2 (April 2004): 169.

³⁸⁵ Barbra Marks, *This is the Enemy*, 1943, U.S. Office of War Information.

³⁸⁶ U.S. Army Department, *This isn’t War...It’s Murder*, 1943, National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁸⁷ U.S. Army Department, *The Jap Way- Cold Blooded Murder*, 1943, National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁸⁸ Anonymous, *Be Sure you Have the Right Time!*, 1941-1945, National Archives at College Park.

depictions of Germans and especially of Japanese in war posters were used primarily as a scare tactic for American viewers, who after seeing a poster would understand the consequences of American defeat in the war and thus become even more dedicated to the war effort. Racism in World War II posters was accepted in part by the American public because of the growing cultural divide between the United States and the rest of the world.

Particularly after the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924 severely restricted immigration, citizens had become more “American” and less connected to their immigrant heritage in Europe and elsewhere.

Not all imagery in American war posters was negative, however. Many posters instead celebrated the middle-class American, the traditional family, and free enterprise, all core American values. The Sheldon-Claire company, a private poster publishing firm, believed that workers would find more inspiration to work in posters that had “emotional appeals” in the form of images and messages reflecting classic American values.³⁸⁹ One such example from the company showed a typical American family, with a father and son working in their yard while a mother and young child looked on. The accompanying text on this poster read, “This is America...a nation with more homes, more motor cars...more comforts than any nation on earth. Where free workers and free enterprise are building a better world for all people. This is your America... Keep it free!”³⁹⁰ These posters were commonly seen in factories and other places of work where, according to William L. Bird, they “established a narrative that included not only what the nation sought to defend, but also what it would need to preserve in postwar America...by weaving commonly accepted political values...with

³⁸⁹ Bird, 84.

³⁹⁰ The Sheldon-Claire Company, *This is America...Keep it Free!*, 1942, National Museum of American History.

traditional representations [of core American values].”³⁹¹ These posters offered visions of the ideal life in postwar America and served as positive influences for Americans on the home front to become involved in the war effort.

World War II posters generally contained one of six “propaganda themes” as identified by Alan Cranston, a leading executive in the U.S. Office of War Information. These included the evil nature of enemies, the importance of allies, the conviction that all Americans should work, the need for Americans to fight, the call for Americans to make sacrifices for the war effort, and the freedoms of liberty and democracy for which Americans were fighting.³⁹² The most frequently seen World War II poster subjects—bond purchase, defense work, and frugality—all fit into these ‘propaganda themes’ and were aimed at motivating Americans to become more involved in the war effort.

According to scholar Terrence Witkowski, war bond posters were the most common kind of poster distributed during World War II.³⁹³ The American government had seven different war bond drives during the war, and the frequency of bond posters shows the government’s massive need for money in order to fund all programs related to the war. Most bond posters were made by the U.S. Treasury Department and avoided the high-pressure advertising techniques seen in World War I posters. Instead, bond posters in the 1940s emphasized positive participation in the war effort and targeted the “working bondholder,” portraying such Americans as vital to the war effort. As one bond poster of a smiling worker in overalls from 1941 read, “I’m no millionaire, but— I own a share in America.”³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Bird, 84.

³⁹² Alan Cranston to Norman Ferguson, 17 November 1942, folder: California trip, box 1078, entry E222, NC 148, RG 208, National Archives at College Park.

³⁹³ Terrence H. Witkowski, “World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American Consumers,” *Journal of Advertising* 32 (Spring 2003): 72.

³⁹⁴ Bird, 21.

After war bond posters, posters related to industry and defense work were the next most common poster type. These posters, largely unseen during the First World War, promoted hard work in the factory and labor-management cooperation. The United States had just experienced a period of economic unrest during the 1930s, including the Great Depression and a series of major labor strikes and incidents of labor-related violence. After American entry into World War II, however, both the labor and management sectors of the economy immediately gave full support to the war effort. The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Workers, the two most powerful American unions of the time, created and distributed their own war-related posters that promoted hard work and cooperation with business management. These industry posters, alongside ones created by businesses, tried to create a positive image of American capitalism and industry, which had been damaged during the economic turmoil of the previous decade. According to Bird, industrial posters were used to “create an atmosphere of urgency, participation, and factory discipline.”³⁹⁵ They encouraged workers to surpass factory quotas and to take personal responsibility for the war’s progress. As a patriotic appeal to workers, many posters also contained images of lazy workers directly aiding Hitler and other American enemies, thus insinuating that lax work in the factory was synonymous with treason. Posters also referred to workers as “production soldiers” and attempted to make them feel as if they had a direct and significant impact on the outcome of the war. Additionally, posters displayed throughout factories and other workplaces showed images of workers with their tools alongside American troops fighting overseas. Nevertheless, in some cases, these same posters—and particularly those created by businesses—were designed not just to support the American war effort, but also to glorify industry’s contribution to the war. According to Richard Rovere, “If

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 51.

this trend kept up [in posters], the boys in the fox holes would, on their return, be forced to employ a press agent to convince the public that soldiers, too, had something to do with our victory.”³⁹⁶ These companies apparently used the war and patriotic appeals to their workers for their own private benefit.

Frugality and material conservation were frequent topics in posters throughout the war, presenting Americans with a simple way to support the war effort. Reminiscent of World War I, posters encouraged consumers to economize on goods, recycle waste and scrap, and put discretionary spending into war bonds. Food rationing and conservation soon became “weapons of war,” according to posters, and this patriotic appeal, similar to the term “production soldier,” gave Americans who did not serve in the military a sense of personal responsibility for the outcome of the war. This appeal was especially effective with American housewives and other women, and was at least partly responsible for the recycling of billions of pounds of materials during the war, as well as the over \$135 billion war bonds sales to private citizens.³⁹⁷

The unique American reactions to each of the World Wars can be seen in the posters created and displayed for both conflicts. Isolationism during World War I and the belief by many Americans that the conflict was exclusively “Europe’s war” were very common. In response, poster designers used their advertising training to try to “sell” the war to Americans and help them understand the necessity of participation in the war. These commercial techniques produced posters that attempted to connect citizens, who were desperately needed to enlist and buy government bonds, to each other and the war effort. On the other hand, the posters of the Second World War reached out to Americans on a more personal level,

³⁹⁶ Richard H. Rovere, “Advertising in Wartime,” *New Republic*, February 21, 1944, 234.

³⁹⁷ Witkowski, 79.

reflecting the commitment that citizens already had towards the war effort. World War II posters let Americans know that they did not have to be a soldier to participate personally in the war, and individual contributions to the war effort, through hard work in the factory or the conservation of various materials at home, made every American feel like a home-front soldier. These personal connections to the war effort in World War II and their accompanying changes in lifestyle indicate that American society was much more committed to this war than the previous generation had been to the First World War. For the American people, there was no substitute for victory in World War II. Against ideologically and politically foreign enemies like Germany and Japan, the outcome of the Second World War seemed much more dire than the First, when many Americans felt that they would not be personally affected by the war no matter its outcome. The frequency of World War I posters that promoted donations and charity for people overseas also indicates a lack of attachment and direct involvement of the American people during the First World War. In contrast, World War II posters made every American a personal part of the war effort, and reminded them of the threat to U.S. soil should victory not be obtained. Especially after the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and other American islands in the Pacific, the threat of war reaching and personally affecting Americans became a harsh reality. The fear of actually experiencing war at home, which European citizens had endured since World War I, helped motivate Americans during the Second World War to work harder toward victory.

When comparing the World Wars through their respective posters, it is clear that Americans were not as involved or concerned with the outcome of the First World War as they were with the Second. Aware of the public's distance during the first conflict, commercial illustrators and advertisers were forced to make a poster-ad campaign that sold

volunteerism, conservation, and bond sales to Americans. These themes were not as necessary in the posters of World War II, since the American public was already aware of the need to contribute to the war effort; thus, advertising only needed posters to motivate Americans to increase their level of participation. The change in American posters between the First and Second World Wars ultimately parallels the changing role the American people and their nation played in these world events, transforming from an isolated country in the early twentieth-century to an internationally involved superpower during and after World War II.

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Red Mortar:

Obtaining and Molding Subservient Soviet Youth Under Stalin

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“Cadres Decide Everything!” stated a chief slogan of Soviet ideology. This axiom embodies the goals and ideals of the Soviet Union: to pursue victory for Communism, and to ignite a class struggle between the proletariat and their bourgeoisie oppressors.³⁹⁸ The Bolsheviks intended to shatter the foundation of their centuries-old society by altering established perceptions on everything from religion to common sense. As they realized, the quickest way to achieve such a monumental overhaul of cultural values was not through the minds of the mature and obdurate, but through the fragile and gullible minds of youth. Children born after the 1917 Revolution had not been corrupted by capitalist attributes or by the Russian monarchy; they were, in essence, the first offspring of a new national culture and needed to be cultivated according to the beliefs of the contemporary state. As the communists were well aware, it was not possible to transform every child overnight, so they developed a phased program for educating the ‘new Soviet man,’ which was carried out intensively until the collapse of the Soviet Union. They enveloped each Soviet child in a cocoon of ideology from birth and provided the child with the traits necessary to serve as a dutiful and obedient citizen, who they hoped would serve as the mortar holding together the foundation of their new society.

This paper explores the dimensions of the Soviet government’s role in shaping childhood en route to creating a base of citizens genuinely willing to develop and service the needs of the Communist state. The Soviet Union attempted to ensure its progress and survival through the indoctrination of eager youth, who replaced cadres responsible for proletariat domination. To understand how the Soviets accomplished this goal, it is first necessary to investigate the strategy used by the government to gain access to children for ideological training, and to describe the institutions established for this practice. Soviets first separated the child from any influence, parental or cultural, that carried vestiges of the

³⁹⁸ Joseph Stalin, 76.

undesirable past. This then allowed state-funded schools to become an outlet for ideological manipulation through a curriculum based on Communist ideology, which identified threats to the State. Schools and textbooks served as propaganda that attempted to generate trust in totalitarian power by exhibiting the benefits of life in the Soviet Union, all while exposing the struggles that had been overcome by means of Soviet rule.

A further investigation into Soviet schools suggests that they alone did not adequately foster a love for Soviet power. Consequentially, Soviets also turned to newspapers, films, and books to promote their message. By the late 1920s, schools were only one of many aspects of society to be infiltrated by the government; the Soviets soon penetrated the press and influenced pop culture as well. As youth expanded their interests to literature, film, and other forms of pop culture, the Soviets implanted a revolutionary drive into these outlets. The government essentially chased the development and tastes of the youth, attempting to make their interests match the contemporary state agenda and to make it very difficult for young people to escape state-approved views. Soviet press and entertainment presented life in the USSR as a life worth duplicating and even sacrificing if need be. An in-depth report of the social atmosphere during NEP (New Economic Policy 1921-1928), as detailed by historian Anne Gorsuch, makes it safe to assert that the inability to control information, and the subsequent inadequacy in inculcating Bolshevik morals through the press and pop culture, resulted in identity crises among youth and proved detrimental to the aims of the state.³⁹⁹

Subordination of personal desires for the good of society—the ideological goal of Soviet propaganda and education—required a great deal of reeducating because it required the dismantling of old imperial and capitalist principles that persisted in society. This goal

³⁹⁹ Anne Gorsuch, "Soviet Youth and Politics of Popular Culture during NEP," *Social History* 17, no. 2 (May 1992): 189-201.

required a totalitarian approach, and the Soviet government had total control of information and media outlets. Before considering the methods of control, it is important to understand the obstacles to the state's efforts. The Bolsheviks had to battle Western, imperial, and religious fragments of resistance that wandered within the new country, but they also had to mind their own citizens' perception of them. Because the Bolsheviks seized power through a bloody revolution, there were certain murky details of their rule that needed to be kept veiled to prevent any disenchantment among the citizens. An analysis of children's propaganda shows that the government not only engaged in censorship but also tried to shift the public perceptions to be consistent with Soviet ideology. Only by controlling the youth, the government believed, would the achievement of an ideal Communist state be possible. And only a totalitarian system could guarantee such control.

The authoritarian objective was to mold youth who would profess "unshakable faith in the bright future consistent with the revolution's precepts and be prepared for the sake of this to make any sacrifice."⁴⁰⁰ Sacrifice they did. Almost all those who enlisted in the Soviet forces during the Second World War were born between 1915 and 1924, and were therefore products of the Soviet state.⁴⁰¹ The Soviets were successful in laying a foundation of citizens who fought for the Communist cause at home and abroad. Citizens faithfully took to the factories during Stalin's 'Five Year Plans' to meet quotas on steel and trains, and they tackled social issues like illiteracy and alcoholism. The call to "beat the enemy with Stakhanovite work-ethic" was answered with great virtue.⁴⁰² Although often based on fallacies, the totalitarian methods of mass cultivation worked excellently for Stalin's Soviet Union.

⁴⁰⁰ Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2004), 85.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁴⁰² *Pravda*, February 2, 1937, 2.

Here it is important to be cautious about applying the image of the overly patriotic, obedient, and subservient youth to all those growing up in the Soviet Union. Not all young people under the totalitarian regime were blind followers and intrinsic believers in the Soviet system. Scholars have brought to life the realities of childhood under the Soviet regime and demonstrated that children did indeed reject the government due to awful experiences and differences in ideological values. The rural youth definitely fell into the category of ‘non-believers’ in the Soviet system. As the authors of *Stalinism as a Way of Life* clearly demonstrate, children were victims of failed Soviet planning, and knew that their conditions were unnatural and unfair.⁴⁰³ It was largely the youth living in the cities that were highly susceptible to propaganda and lies. However, the recently discovered and published diary of the schoolgirl Nina Lugovskaya proves that even children growing up in urban Soviet settings, far removed from the bleak *kolkhoz* (collectivization communities), were well aware of injustices against them and even acted out in opposition to the regime.⁴⁰⁴ Children such as Nina, however, were few in number, and many like her perished during Stalin’s purges, taking their resistance with them to their graves.

The Bolshevik reign began with the removal of those who stood in the way of the government’s power—even parents of the children were seen as threats or even enemies to progress—and so the government attempted to act as surrogate parents to children to mold citizens according to Soviet standards. The plan was to substitute public upbringing for family upbringing, and to place childcare in the hands of Soviet professionals.⁴⁰⁵ Opinions on the extent of the government’s role in child-rearing varied; moralists’ views ranged from the radical to the more radical. “We must rescue these children from the nefarious influence

⁴⁰³ Siegelbaum and Sokolov, 257.

⁴⁰⁴ Nina Lugovskaya, *Diary of a Soviet Schoolgirl: 1932-1937*, trans. Joanne Turnbull (Moscow: Glas Publishing, 2003).

⁴⁰⁵ Lisa Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades: Revolutionizing Childhood in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932* (New York: Falmer Press, 2000), 40.

of family life. In other words we must nationalize them,” said Z.I. Lilina, wife of Leonid Zinoviev, in regard to the substitution of traditional parenthood.⁴⁰⁶ Leonid Sabsovich, economist and organizer of the Soviet commune, said that terms like “our children” and “my parents” would fall out of usage as the society progressed and began to view children as property of the state, a sign of true socialism.⁴⁰⁷ Revolutionary Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin’s wife, believed that government should ensure that the new society was established according to Soviet ideology, but thereafter cease interference in public life.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming consensus of Soviet moralists was that traditional families were not capable of raising Communists, and so moralists sought justification for disintegrating such families. Soviet psychologists and sociologists blamed parental incompetence for nearly all social problems involving children, and claimed that children’s poor welfare was due to bad parenting. One study conducted in 1927 showed just that. The study revealed that aside from the physical confinements of small apartments and a poor diet consisting of kasha and potatoes, half of the children tested had contracted pneumonia by age five and measles by age seven.⁴⁰⁸ The Soviets sought not just to reeducate parents on modern parenting techniques but to replace parenting to the greatest extent possible. Arguing that placing children in nurseries would allow more women to work by relieving them of maternal duties, Bolsheviks effectively assumed child-rearing responsibilities with support from parents, all while increasing the work force.⁴⁰⁹ Although this change was certainly beneficial to the children in terms of physical well-being, it also exposed children to Communist ideals through the elaborate school system. In the midst of revolutionary

⁴⁰⁶ Kent H. Geiger, *The Family in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), 72.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁰⁸ Kirschenbaum, 45.

⁴⁰⁹ Geiger, 48.

socialist spirit, the government successfully assumed the role of caretaker and guardian; kindergartens and schools became homes, and teachers became parents.

Immediate communization of social life was an obvious goal for the government; it was on the agenda within weeks of Soviet existence. In January 1918, the government issued a decree on education, which criticized former practices and announced a state-controlled provision of education. At the head of the State Commissariat on People's Education was A. V. Lunacharsky.⁴¹⁰ Lunacharsky attacked the Imperial Russian system of education, calling teachers "utterly useless" and the high schools "diploma factories," and he made it very clear how and why schools needed to "be conducted in the spirit of socialist citizenship."⁴¹¹ As Lunacharsky was undoubtedly aware, city streets in 1918 were filled with *bezprezorniki* (homeless children) and orphans who had suffered from the Revolution and the ensuing civil war. Also, the illiteracy rates in Russia were at a staggering seventy-six percent.⁴¹² To be a successful, long-lasting state, the Soviet Union had to show that citizens were beneficiaries of radical change, and so the Soviets needed to address the problem of homelessness and illiteracy. To that end, the Soviets established a number of social welfare programs. They sheltered millions of *Bezprezorniki* and ensured that schools provided children with access to safe drinking water and daily breakfasts, and they made certain that classrooms helped "lay the foundation for the habits and emotions which guarantee the construction of the new communist life."⁴¹³

Youth ideologically indoctrinated into the Communist state were more competent in aiding the government in overcoming social issues, for they viewed the voluntary expansion

⁴¹⁰ James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, eds., *Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918; Documents and Materials* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), 597.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 599.

⁴¹² Elizabeth Moos, *Soviet Education: Achievement and Goals*, (New York: National Council of American Soviet Friendship, 1967), 8.

⁴¹³ Kirschenbaum, 110.

of positive Communist attributes as both a duty and an honor. When Bolsheviks launched their campaign to end illiteracy in the Soviet Union, many youth thus participated enthusiastically. They hung campaign posters promoting education all over Russia. For instance, large banners hanging in the cities read, “There is no knowledge without the book, there is no Communism without knowledge”; below this statement was an image of a dedicated group of children and adults carrying stacks of books to the *derevnya* (village). Thousands of volunteering students took to the *derevnya* to teach children and adults to read and write.⁴¹⁴ *Pravda*, the propaganda organ of the Soviet Union, ran an article in 1929 titled, “Books—Weapons of the Proletariat,” that described how the preceding ‘Five Year Plan’ had finally organized and nationalized the book-publishing industry, ridding it of bourgeoisie influence. A corresponding cartoon showed a cannon firing books at devilish-looking creatures labeled “illiteracy,” “drunkenness,” “religion,” and “bourgeoisie professor,” as they fled from the ammo of books.⁴¹⁵ By 1939, illiteracy in the Soviet Union was nearly eradicated thanks to the efforts of youth; eight-one percent of all people above the age of nine were literate.⁴¹⁶ Nurseries and kindergartens became the focal points of socialist policy because literacy and teaching ideals were essential for future political participation. Kindergartens, based on the ideas of German philosopher Froebel, were instituted in the Soviet Union in large numbers. Kindergartens were intended to educate the child through self-expression, which included reading, singing, building, painting pictures, reciting poetry, and playing games that were pertinent to Communist morals.⁴¹⁷ Before October 1917, between forty and fifty kindergartens served several hundred children (usually those of the

⁴¹⁴ 1930 Poster: “A child marches in step with adults in the fight against illiteracy,” in Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 76.

⁴¹⁵ *Pravda*, May 21, 1929, 3.

⁴¹⁶ Eugene Medynsky, “Soviet Education in the USSR,” *American Sociological Review* 9, Recent Social Trends in Soviet Union (June 1944): 288.

⁴¹⁷ Dean Webb, *The History of American Education* (New Jersey: Pearson, 2006), 172.

nobility), but because of measures taken by the Soviet government, 3,286 kindergartens served approximately 200,000 children by 1920.⁴¹⁸ The government was able to influence children through Soviet institutions and shape new proletariat cadres.

Schools, as well as nurseries, served as government safe havens. Children spent a sizable portion of their day in a schools and the government sought to make good use of it. While children were not required to attend kindergarten, they were required to attend general education schools, which were built in huge numbers without sacrificing quality for quantity. In 1935, the number of general education schools almost doubled from the time of the revolution; 31 million pupils attended them, a 400-percent increase.⁴¹⁹ The government provided schooling for as long as possible; leaders stressed the importance of monitoring children in the public sphere as schools were the only place where the government was nearly guaranteed to have an impact. Students could attend general education schools, secondary schools, and universities free of charge. Even the Western world, which was very critical of the Soviets' blatant suppression of freedom, had high praise for the Soviet school system. "Since the Revolution, significant educational progress has been made in the Soviet Union and considerable educational success has been achieved," wrote a Western journalist, who also noted that "the teacher is honored, recognized and highly respected by the Soviet people and the Communist Party."⁴²⁰ Reinforcing the success of Soviet schools was the fact that students remained together from kindergarten until graduation; stronger students were not allowed to skip grades.⁴²¹ Togetherness was likely promoted to prevent feelings of envy, and it allowed strong students to help their classmates catch up and set an example of

⁴¹⁸ Kirschenbaum, 40.

⁴¹⁹ Medynsky, 288.

⁴²⁰ Alexander Chabe, "Soviet Society and Education," *The Clearing House* 41 (January 1967): 263.

⁴²¹ Moos, 88.

excellence for others. In constructing the ‘new Soviet man’, the schools did not settle for mediocrity.

Schools had a duty to teach not just vocational skills but to convince students that their role in society was to push Communism to victory. This duty consisted of two components: to form an ideological connection to Communism based on love for the nation, and to mold a desire to expand Communism to the entire world to protect it from harm.

Stalin, in particular, was a proponent of gathering youth’s support through the use of fear:

Capitalist encirclement means that here is one country, the Soviet Union, which has established the socialist order on its own territory, and besides this there are many countries, bourgeoisie countries, which continue to carry on a capitalist mode of life which surround the Soviet union, waiting for an opportunity to attack it, break it, or at any rate to undermine its power and weaken it.⁴²²

Instilling fear in the minds of the youth created hatred for the opposition and an urge to serve the state, which claimed to have an alternative method of countering evil. The school was a place where the Communist party directed intense propaganda and took extra steps to champion patriotism. In 1937, at the peak of Soviet propaganda, *Pravda* published an article by Molotov entitled, “Soviet Patriotism—Great Revolutionary Power,” that called on teachers to provide the lessons necessary to “fill students with love for the motherland.” The Soviet schools, Molotov implored, “must colorfully demonstrate to our curious youth the hardships with which their mothers and fathers upheld the country, and how the nation’s bravest sons and daughters gave their life for the honor and glory of the homeland.”⁴²³ The prewar years of crisis mandated intensified patriotism in order to create a basis of support for the inevitable war. One American journalist said that “considerable attention is paid to cultivating the feelings of love for the country [in the Soviet Union]. This is achieved by

⁴²² Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing Company, 2010), 11.

⁴²³ *Pravda*, March 26, 1937, 2.

means of lessons in history, native and Russian language and literature.”⁴²⁴ The Soviet Union, however, had a history blackened by failed collectivization projects and purges that sent millions to their deaths. Therefore, they needed to approach the lessons of history with extreme caution. The Soviets had to hide undesirable details by overshadowing them with exaggerated cases of patriotism and loyalty to the state.

Class materials supplied by the state assisted teachers in preaching this Bolshevik ideology. History textbooks often aligned more with political doctrine than history; details were either twisted to conform to political agendas or fabricated entirely. Heightened tensions with the United States, for instance, prompted the appearance of the following statement in the official government-approved textbook on the Second World War: “Because of hate toward our socialist government, hoping to damage it through the hands of fascism, they [Americans] pushed the Nazis toward initiating the Second World War.”⁴²⁵ Claiming that American monopolists and *vorotily* (tycoons) funded the Germans during their mobilization in order to defeat the USSR, the government instilled students reading this textbook with animosity toward America. By asserting that the war could have been prevented if the capitalist Americans, French, and British had not intentionally refrained from acting militarily, the government claimed to have come to the salvation of the entire world by ridding it of the evil Nazi empire. The government also fabricated a number of statistics in textbooks. For example, the government stated that 3,000 German aircraft were captured at the Battle of Stalingrad, although actual data shows that number to be around 900.⁴²⁶ Embellished statistics helped promote the idea that the war was fought in an organized

⁴²⁴ Medynsky, 291.

⁴²⁵ Institut Voénnoi Istorii Ministerstva Oboroni SSSR (Institute of Military History of the Department of Defense of USSR), *Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyná: 1941-1945 (The Great Patriotic War)*, (Moscow, USSR: Political Literature Press, 1970), 26. Translation is my own.

⁴²⁶ Thomas Zeiler, *Annihilation: A global Military History of World War II*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 203; *Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voyná*, 190.

fashion because of the USSR's successful industrialization campaign and strong military training. The Soviet schools included "official inflated statistics, optimistic Party documents, and idealized goals which did not take into account human imperfectability."⁴²⁷ One Soviet teacher said:

Perhaps my children do not know all their historical facts perfectly, but there is one thing I can say for sure: they understand who they are supposed to hate and who they are supposed to love. They hate those who have oppressed our people in the past and those who have interfered with our heroic struggle. They love our people and their friends and leaders, Lenin and Stalin.⁴²⁸

As the developing generation became increasingly linked to the proletariat class, which the Soviet Union tried so hard to create, the government began to implement Communist standards directly into school curricula. The influence of a socialist upbringing became more and more imposing. Teachers were expected to be, in the words of Lenin, "an army of socialist enlightenment."⁴²⁹ They were required to have strong ideological and political training, and they were directed to teach specific literature lessons. Lunacharsky demanded that literature be used not as a tool to broaden knowledge but as a political instrument. Character-building was a vital ingredient in literature lessons, and the government made patriotism a main component of the curriculum, maintaining that "stories of war exploits are particularly helpful." Teachers used many novels written about brave and heroic triumphs, such as Polevoi's *Story of a Real Man*, depicted the selflessness of Soviet people during the Second World War, as well.⁴³⁰ Polevoi's book described the ideal citizen whose duty was to protect the state even if it meant going back into battle as a cripple. Another book and standard of the literature curriculum was Arkady Gaidar's *Military Secret*,

⁴²⁷ Chabe, 260.

⁴²⁸ David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 76.

⁴²⁹ Felicity O'Dell, "Socialization in the Literature Lesson," in *Home, School and Leisure in the Soviet Union*, ed. Jenny Brine and Maureen Perrie (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), 93.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

written in 1935, which was about a boy who was captured by bourgeoisie forces and tortured for the military secret that he possessed; in the story, the boy did not betray the country and instead endured torture with pride, knowing that he had done his part in assisting his comrades.⁴³¹

The censorship of literature was just one of the many strategies that the Soviet government used in attempts to generate a passion for spreading and protecting Communism in the proletariat. In the students' rulebook, the first code of conduct was to "tenaciously and persistently acquire knowledge and to become an educated and cultured citizen and to be of maximum use to the Soviet motherland."⁴³² A teacher once contended that school had become "pure politics," and classes were often monitored by school directors and other party members. Textbooks were published by the state and even lesson plans were inspected. Students learned simple grammar through sentences that contained the terms *Communism* and *Soviet Union*; "all this is the achievement of the Soviet state" was one example of a mandatory sentence used in dictation assignments.⁴³³ Teachers had little say in what the students learned; they instead followed closely the government's instructions to use 'stable textbooks.' Barred from teaching the truth, many teachers left the profession, morally unwilling to teach lies.⁴³⁴

While the Soviets promoted learning, they paradoxically prohibited it at the same time. When attacking the bourgeoisie education system, Lenin said that it was "nothing but an instrument of the class rule of the bourgeoisie... Their purpose was to supply the

⁴³¹ Arkady Gaidar, *Voenii Sekret* (Military Secret), (Moscow: Gosudarstvenoe Izdatel'stvo Detskoi Literaturi Ministerstvo Prosvesheniya RSFSR (Detgiz), 1959.

⁴³² Philip Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era*, (London: Routledge Press, 2000), 146.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 139-40.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

capitalists with obedient lackeys and able workers.”⁴³⁵ Ironically hypocritical, the purpose of Soviet schools and organized youth planning was to create obedient and functioning members of society who were unaware of the truths hidden by their government. Children became employees of the state, and the state supplied them only with content they viewed as useful for socialization. Most children living under Stalin had very little sense of reality because the government carefully manipulated everything prior to its consumption. Schools were a safe haven for the government because they were monitored and run according to Communist ideology. But while schools were intensely targeted by the Soviets, children spent only half of their day at school. Elements of society that surrounded the children outside of school posed a threat to the accomplishments of the system, and so naturally, the Soviet government attempted to change that.

The threats to Soviet manipulation of society became evident during the New Economic Policy or NEP. Even with intense effort to educate youth according to Bolshevik ideals, the country was plagued by contradictory culture in the 1920s. Many young adults did not place the needs of the Communist society above their own personal desires. Beginning with NEP in 1921, the Communist government had a hard time keeping individual-driven ambitions from disturbing their agenda. Incorporating facets of capitalism into their economy to create a market of goods naturally contradicted the Communist belief that private owners were responsible for class struggle and inequality.⁴³⁶ Believing that exposure to Western and otherwise un-Soviet elements that traveled along with the free economy were to blame for weak Bolshevik values, Stalin devoted his early reign to

⁴³⁵ Vladimir Lenin, “Speech at the All-Russia Congress on Education,” in *Collected Works, Vol 28*, trans. George Hanna (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), 87; available at: <http://www.marx2mao.com/Lenin/SFCE18.html>.

⁴³⁶ Roger Stites and Catherine Evtuhov, *A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces since 1800* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 330.

communicating Bolshevik ideology through all sources that influenced thought and action. The Soviet government seized the presses and created their own popular culture in order to protect themselves from the destructive potential of youth. Children needed to be motivated to protect and to serve the country instead of their own liberties—Lenin's policies did not successfully accomplish this goal. Stalin, on the other hand, sought to restrict all antagonistic or inconsistent materials, and to use the sources of entertainment and information as propaganda machines to promote Bolshevik ideas.

Economic struggles debilitated Soviet progress during NEP, and so the Bolsheviks were hardly able to rely on Soviet forms of entertainment to satisfy citizens' leisure needs. Instead, they had to depend largely on foreign entertainment. American films dominated the motion picture scene; famous foreign actors and actresses even had theatres named after them, like the Clara Kimball Young Theatre in Moscow.⁴³⁷ In 1921, eighty-seven percent of the films shown in the Soviet Union were foreign.⁴³⁸ While the citizens enjoyed Western goods, the Bolsheviks grew concerned about the values that accompanied these goods.⁴³⁹ Positive connections with American goods translated into supportive attitudes toward American—and therefore individual-centered—capitalist culture.⁴⁴⁰ For Lenin, economic revival was at the forefront of the agenda; ideological Communist growth came second. NEP was necessary to keep the country from falling apart after the civil war, so Lenin had to divert funding from schools and kindergartens for use in trade and other state services.

⁴³⁷ Gorsuch, 194.

⁴³⁸ Jeffrey Brooks, "The Press and Its Message: Images of America in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Russia in the Era of NEP*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 1991), 236.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 233

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

Education was no longer provided at all costs and the number of kindergartens dropped from 4,700 in 1921 to 647 in 1923.⁴⁴¹

Soviet attempts to create a ‘new Soviet man’ in the public sphere seemed to be faltering; Western values were not only accessible but popular. When given a choice, the youth bought American and other foreign products because they were far superior in quality to Soviet goods. Early attempts at abating the effects of Western influence by creating Soviet mass entertainment were unsuccessful. A fifteen-year-old said this of Soviet films: “I like films about the lives of workers and agitational films least of all. We see all that in our own lives. I’m sick of it, and at the movies I want to take a break from my everyday life.”⁴⁴² The government was unhappy with the form of life that teenagers valued; Western influence stood in the way of Soviet advance. Also, the Bolshevik stance on dress was that it should be simple and easy to move around in. Anything flashy, provocative, or exotic was considered “un-revolutionary.”⁴⁴³ Western images of dress, especially those from Hollywood, encouraged youth to seek a style similar to their favorite stars. Bolsheviks were upset that “young women waste their salaries first of all on movies, and secondly on silk stockings, fashionable skirts, cutting back on everything else, so that they can look like their screen heroes.”⁴⁴⁴ Many young people even developed an almost pathological desire for popular clothes. Another Bolshevik concern was the class-struggle that had evidently originated between the Soviet flappers and the Komsomol (Youth Communist League) youth. The dating scene even revolved around fashion; those who dressed nicely refused to go out with

⁴⁴¹ Chart found in Kirschenbaum, 91.

⁴⁴² Gorsuch, 193.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 195.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

“supposedly less attractive, but more Communist, Komsomol women.”⁴⁴⁵ This was a social rift that went against everything the new society had envisioned.

The social rift, which began in the late 1920s, created the fear that all the capitalist elements in society would bring down Communist power. Stalin therefore saw it necessary to withdraw nearly all non-Communist influence from the country. Consequently, the next two decades were filled with Communist propaganda that was preoccupied with molding individual behavior and that left little ideological room for alternative forms of expression. Books, films, and the press came under complete government control via censorship and Bolshevik-sanctioned releases. This change in pop culture carried such heavy ideological weight that it transformed Soviet society completely. The Soviet leaders learned from NEP’s mistakes; they learned that youth’s interests were capable of destroying the socialist fiber of their society. Money spent on schools and entertainment could have easily shifted towards aiding in weapons production in preparation for the Second World War; insistence on maintaining the schools, however, played in favor of the government when loyal and grateful students fought for their motherland and paid with their lives. Bolshevik moralists inundated the public realms, taking all necessary steps to prevent Western ideology from sidetracking Communist values. Art and literature, like the citizens, came to the service of the state, one reinforcing the other.

A series of book purges in 1927, 1929, and 1930 decimated library shelves because Stalin decreed that materials not in alignment with Bolshevik or his own personal views were illegal.⁴⁴⁶ Libraries were purged of almost all political literature written before 1930, with the exception of a few authors whose philosophies aligned with that of the Soviet leadership.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 198.

⁴⁴⁶ Newspapers like *Pravda* were often times contradictory. In the same year, 1929, *Pravda* published an article by both Lilina and Krupskaya who offered different views on what the government should do in terms of involvement in the up-bringing of Soviet youth.

Libraries were believed to be the main source of political education, so they were nationalized and inspected by those who were sympathetic to Bolshevik power. Everything “ideologically harming” to the state was banished; anti-Darwinist and religious texts, texts promoting nationalism, and books about private farming were all taken out of the public libraries and destroyed.⁴⁴⁷ Long-standing staples of educational literature and philosophy like Plato were no longer in accord with Soviet ideology. If books were written by those who later became “enemies” of the state, they too were purged, or the pages containing “harmful” ideas were torn out. By 1934, movies, plays, and the arts were strictly monitored, much like the libraries, to ensure that they adhered to Soviet guidelines. Films in particular had to be approved by the head of the film industry and by Stalin himself prior to their release.

The movie scene, extremely popular among children, was an obvious target of the government. It presented an opportunity to extend the realm of authority into pop culture. After 1934, all movies shown in the Soviet Union were produced by the government. Sometimes the underlying propaganda was obvious as in movies about happy industrial workers building a bridge, symbolizing that the labor force was enthusiastic when it came to building up the USSR. Sometimes the propaganda was not as readily apparent, as in the 1936 hit, *Circus*, which became one of the most popular films of the decade. *Circus* was full of anti-American, anti-bourgeoisie tones. In the film, an American circus performer, Marion Dixon, is ousted from her position at a circus in the United States after giving birth to an interracial child. The star finds safe haven in the USSR and falls in love with her Russian colleague, Ivan, who also works at the circus and generously takes her in. After her American manager, a former love interest, is unsuccessful in buying back her love with jewelry and fur coats, he tries to sabotage the act of her Russian lover. The American resets

⁴⁴⁷ Robert Rogers, “Censorship and Libraries in the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Library History, Philosophy, and Comparative Librarianship* 8 (January 1973): 25-26.

Ivan's launching pad, Ivan is launched off-course, and he nearly dies, symbolizing American intentions to do everything in their power to hurt the USSR. The actress' love for Ivan prevails and despite the cultural differences between them she chooses to stay with him in Moscow.⁴⁴⁸ Negative images of the West, as portrayed in this film, dominated the movie scene. The Soviets emphasized American racism and blood-thirsty capitalism. Children, unaware of the realities and lacking resources other than media to study the West, regarded the West as their enemies. Slowly, but surely, Stalin's films began to destroy the previous infatuation with America, undoing NEP's mistake. America was viewed through the mass media as oppressive, hateful, and philistine.

Historian Anne Gorsuch writes that the Bolsheviks "understood the potential power of using popular forums to convey socialist messages," and they took advantage of "youthful enthusiasm for the movies."⁴⁴⁹ Revolutionary-themed films, attempting to spark the revolutionary spirit, became very popular among children and were dually beneficial to the State: children came to see high-action films in which the government was able to sneak in proletarian ideology and depict a model soldier for the children to idolize. Many children subconsciously processed it, while many others rejected it and screened out what they disagreed with. That being said, children idolized movie stars and their characters, and often strove to impersonate their favorite movie heroes by acting bravely or working with the same enthusiasm. For instance, children loved Timur, a character from Arkady Gaidar's 1941 book-turned-film, *Timur and his Squad*. Timur was a Pioneer, and his pals decided to go above and beyond their Good Samaritan expectations and sneak around town doing good deeds for the families of soldiers who were off fighting in the war. Children were intrigued by the character's patriotic ideas, and patriotic spirit subsequently swept through the country.

⁴⁴⁸ Giorgi Alexandrov, *Tsirk (Circus)*, (Mosfil'm, 1936).

⁴⁴⁹ Gorsuch, 193.

This phenomenon was known as the Timur movement, wherein children expressed their admiration for the defenders and Timur by forming their own squads with similar intentions in mind.⁴⁵⁰ Children, who were so malleable, took the message of the films to heart.

Soiuzdetfilm (Studio of Children's Cinema) was established in 1936, primarily to turn old folk tales and classic foreign literature into Soviet films with Soviet plots. *Gulliver's Travels* turned into *New Gulliver*, in which Gulliver helped the Lilliputians lead a revolution to overthrow their leader instead of fend off the rival kingdom, which was the plot of the original novel.⁴⁵¹ In this manner, everything that children encountered was in some way revised or altered to adhere to Soviet qualities.

Another challenging task for the Soviets was to keep their own internal issues from surfacing. Soviets thus worked hard to keep citizens ignorant of true happenings within their country and to eliminate sources of information whereby they could find out. Not only were details of Bolshevik power hidden from the masses, but the truth was also masked by apparent happiness. The failures of collectivization led to the death of millions, for instance, but Stalin nevertheless justified them in the wake of increased industrialization, and details about life in the *kolkhoz* (collectivization communities) were not actually released until 1956. Before that time, people thought of collectivization as a successful strategy for gathering food to sell in return for industry, mostly because of propaganda films depicting life in the *kolkhozy*. In the 1934 film, *Veselye Rebyata* (Jolly Fellas), the *kolkhoz* was full of song and delight; residents made games of gathering crop and herding cattle.⁴⁵² For all intents and purposes, collectivization was seen by outsiders as a task that was happily taken on by the

⁴⁵⁰ Arkady Gaidar, *Timur and his Squad*, trans. Leonard Stolitsky (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 11.

⁴⁵¹ Alexander Prokhorov, "Arresting Development: A Brief History of Soviet Cinema for Children and Adolescents," in *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*, by Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova (New York: Routledge, 2008), 133, 138.

⁴⁵² Giorgi Alexandrov, *Veselye Rebyata (Jolly Fellas)*, (Moskinokombinat, 1934).

farmers and peasants. Other films such as *Volga, Volga*, released in 1938, reinforced this false notion.⁴⁵³ The jolly scenario depicted in the film was improbable for any *kolkhoz*. The *kolkhoz* was riddled with malnutrition and disease, and tireless work still did not produce the unrealistic goals set by the government; a life of luxury or even pleasure was rare if at all possible. The movies tried to communicate a message of joy and thriving happiness that would help legitimized the Soviet cause.

For most children, the movies provided the only insight they received about certain aspects of Soviet life, and those who did try to expand their knowledge through books read ideologically loaded content very similar to what was seen in the theatres. Under the jurisdiction of the State Academic Council, GUS (*Gosudarstvennyi Uchenyi Sovet*)—the administration in charge of promoting proletariat, pro-communist ideals in education and entertainment—author Samuil Marshak released the popular children’s tale, *The Cat’s House*, in 1922, which became the prototype for anti-bourgeoisie literature.⁴⁵⁴ In the story, the Cat, living in a fine apartment with fancy chairs and tables, invites her friends over for dinner. Meanwhile, the Cat leaves her nephews wet, cold, and trying to recover after their house fell apart; in other words, she leaves them unattended because they are dirty and homeless. This symbolized the lack of comradeship in bourgeoisie culture. Later in the year, a candle falls and burns down the house of the bourgeois Cat who then has nowhere to go. The Chicken and Pig, close friends, have too much fine furniture to risk a homeless cat sleeping on it and getting it dirty. It is ultimately the Cat’s downtrodden, homeless nephews who make room for her and welcome her into the small shack on the street that they call home.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ Giorgi Alexandrov, *Volga, Volga*, (Mosfil’ m, 1938).

⁴⁵⁴ Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing up in Russia 1890-1991*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 75.

⁴⁵⁵ Samuil Marshak, *Koshkin Dom (Cat’s House)*, Moscow: Detskaya Literatura, 1922. Interpretation is my own.

This short rhyming story, a depiction of the greed of the old Imperial Russia and the communality of Soviet culture, was read to children in nurseries and often recited in school plays.

Also playing a heavy role in propaganda aimed at youth were newspapers and periodicals intended like *Pionerskaya Pravda* (Pioneer Truth) and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Komsomol Truth), both branches of the larger newspaper *Pravda*.⁴⁵⁶ In the 1930s, the Soviet press aimed to “promote Stalin’s vision of what it would mean to be loyal to Soviet power.”⁴⁵⁷ A typical propaganda piece by *Pravda* published in 1937 expressed the citizens’ joy over living in the Soviet Union. In this letter, a Chinese immigrant described his move to the Soviet Union. He juxtaposed his starvation and slavery in China with his ability to eat rice and meat every day in the Soviet Union thanks to the “gift of Soviet power,” for which he voluntarily fought during the Russian Civil War.⁴⁵⁸ Similar articles were published in large quantities: “It is like a nightmare to remember today, in bright and joyful days, the lives of miners before the Revolution.”⁴⁵⁹ In short, the ultimate goal of Soviet propaganda was to curb the potential desire to live outside of the Soviet Union by exhibiting both the extraordinarily wonderful life in the USSR and the bleak conditions everywhere else.

The onset of the Second World War essentially eliminated all negative public opinions of the government and of Stalin himself. Soviet standards and attitudes were everywhere. Children were part of a cult of Stalin as media and even school curricula pushed the image of Stalin farther than that of any other public figure in the Soviet Union. Stalin occupied the homes, schools, the media, and the very minds of the Soviet people. The young

⁴⁵⁶ Marina Balina, “Creating the Self: Narratives of Prerevolutionary Childhood in Soviet Literature,” in *Russian Children’s Literature and Culture*, by Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova (New York: Routledge, 2008), 93.

⁴⁵⁷ Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and Socialist Person After Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 28.

⁴⁵⁸ *Pravda*, January 1, 1937, 3.

⁴⁵⁹ *Pravda*, March 9, 1937, 1.

citizens of the Soviet Union grew up with the notion of Stalin as a leader who was kind, giving, and passionately devoted to the Communist cause; at times he was viewed as a god-like figure. His image was promoted not only by the government and government-controlled media and entertainment outlets but also by the children themselves. Schools were crucial in proselytizing the youth to be functioning citizens of a Communist state, but the State Commission on People's Education saw schools as only a small part of socialist education. They therefore began to reach out to the youth organizations. Under Stalin, the members of the Pioneers and the Komsomols, organizations founded by Lenin in 1922 to teach children Communist ideals outside of school, were molded to become exemplary citizens and to be the very foundation of the Stalin cult. Children's literature, films, public figures, and schools all fell victim to Soviet manipulations. These manipulations burdened the youth by forcing them to become prototypes of the model Communist and ideal Soviet citizen.

To further the indoctrination of Communist morals, the government created Soviet youth groups similar to the Boy and Girl Scouts in America, which were recreational and voluntary; the underlying difference between Western-style youth groups and those of the Soviet Union was the high volume of political undertones that reinforced Communist beliefs and moral education to Soviet youth.⁴⁶⁰ The youth movement was separated into three sections: the Octobrists for the youngest children ages seven to ten, the Pioneers for children aged ten to fifteen, and the Komsomols for young adults under the age of twenty-eight.⁴⁶¹ Delving into Soviet Communist culture, camp leaders taught the Pioneers the proletariat code of labor and expected them to be exemplary citizens and Good Samaritans. Through chants, poems, and songs, the organization spread the message of Communism and stood passionately by their leaders. Upon Lenin's death, each Pioneer club was expected to build a

⁴⁶⁰ Nigel Grant, *Soviet Education* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1979), 73.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

“Lenin corner” complete with news-clippings of his accomplishments, details of his death, an individually written biography of Lenin, and his portrait. Images of “Grandpa Lenin” and “Uncle Stalin” taught youth to be “always prepared” to fight for their cause.⁴⁶² Being a Pioneer was not a requirement for all youths; as a matter of fact, those who had troubled pasts and the children of dissidents were not welcome. Nevertheless, Pioneer enrollment was high. Children needed to feel like they “belong[ed]” and youth groups were a great solution.⁴⁶³ To don the red triangular neckerchief was an honor for children.

On weekends Pioneers welcomed guests and leaders visiting their cities, presented them with flowers, sang songs, and even put on a play or a puppet show. Pioneers often held their camps in ‘Pioneer Palaces’ (former mansions of wealthy imperial aristocrats). At the palaces, the Pioneers held sporting competitions in soccer or tennis and pursued hobbies like chess. Pioneers organized sightseeing and nature excursions, and usually took trips to the Black Sea or the Caucasus mountains.⁴⁶⁴ Membership in the youth organizations was bred into the Soviet culture by the early 1930s and was tied closely, though unofficially, to schooling. The majority of schoolchildren belonged to the Pioneers and set the standard for good students. They were taught to volunteer upon a teacher’s request and to stay after class to help tidy up the classroom. They were instructed to do their homework and be ready to answer any question as well. “A Pioneer is polite and well disciplined,” the Pioneer Code of Conduct stated; Pioneers were obligated to “be friendly to other children” and to study well.⁴⁶⁵ The rulebook also stated: “A Pioneer hardens himself, does physical exercises every day, and loves nature,” but most importantly “love his Motherland and the Communist Party

⁴⁶² Kelly, *Children’s World*, 74.

⁴⁶³ Grant, 74.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

of the Soviet Union.”⁴⁶⁶ All rules were clear, repeated every morning when the groups met, and were emphasized day in and day out. As models of exemplary Soviet ideology, the children were mobilized to influence the actions of other youth in society.

As products of a propagandist society, the children had genuine love for Stalin and belief in the Soviet system, and this devotion was advertised. Slogans such as, “Thank you, Comrade Stalin, for our happy childhood!” were posted all over the country. Many children really did rest their allegiance with Stalin; after all, many positives in their life were attributed to him. Stalin’s image had been built up among the youth since he took over the party, but 1934 was the year that his cult consumed the children. After 1934, Stalin’s portrait and pictures became more prominent in newspapers and on posters; his popularity skyrocketed soon after.⁴⁶⁷ Children from across the country wanted to send presents and flowers to Stalin as gratitude for serving as their role model.⁴⁶⁸ *Pionerskaya Pravda*, the most popular newspaper for children and young adults, credited all the advances in the country to the Soviet leaders. At parades, which were very popular, Pioneers chanted praises for Stalin and the best Pioneers even recited poems directly to Stalin, such as this one:

Радостней всех живётся
Детям нашей страны.
Каждый из нас смеётся,
Все мы во всём равны.

More Joyful than any other
Are the children of our country.
All of us laugh,
In everything we are equal.

Есть у нас всё, что нам надо,
Живём мы дружной семьёй,
И личная нам награда,
Что любит нас Сталин родной.

Everything we need, we have,
We live as a friendly family,
And our personal reward,
Is that dear Stalin loves us.

Товарищ Сталин, спасибо,

Comrade Stalin, thank you,

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ This observation is my own. In the editions of *Pravda* from September to December of 1932, Stalin’s portrait and pictures of Stalin rarely appear. In the 1936 editions, his image appears frequently (several times per week). In *Pravda* from 1939, images of Stalin of all sorts and sized were overwhelming.

⁴⁶⁸ Catriona Kelly, “Riding the Magic Carpet: Children and the Leader Cult in the Stalin Era,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 49, Special Forum Issue: Russian Children’s Literature: Changing Paradigms (Summer, 2005): 200.

Что нам хорошо так жить!
Мы будем учиться отлично
И крепко Вас любить.⁴⁶⁹

That we live so well!
We will excel in our studies
And love you very much.

Children were encouraged to “regard the leader as a protector and patron, and an all-powerful paternal figure to whom demands might not be made, but who might be beseeched for favors and thanks.”⁴⁷⁰ In reality, the government owed much to the youth organizations because they spread the message of Communism and helped construct the Soviet country morally and physically. The Pioneers were unpaid but productive members of society whose efforts carried out the wishes of their leaders.

The Pioneer image was also at the center of propaganda aimed directly at children. Perhaps the most famous Pioneer figure was Pavlik Morozov. It was said that in 1932, Pavlik turned his father over to the authorities for misappropriating food from the *kolkhoz* to feed his own family. Pavlik was then killed by the bourgeois-oriented community for telling on his father.⁴⁷¹ Pavlik was considered a martyr for the Soviet Union. The government idealized the boy, and subsequently so did the youth groups. Although Pavlik did turn in his father, the reason behind it was more likely due to a family dispute, and his death was either at the hands of angry family members or the NKVD (secret police), who saw his death as a rallying point for the Communist cause.⁴⁷² This event catapulted into the epoch of *stukachi* (tattletales) all across the country. Children saw it as their duty to expose the enemies of the state according to government guidelines, and they posted the names of other children whom they had seen attending church, telling anecdotes ridiculing Stalin, or otherwise breaking the

⁴⁶⁹ Poem found in Kelly, “Riding the Magic Carpet,” 215. The translation of the poem is my own.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴⁷¹ Kelly, *Children's World*, 79.

⁴⁷² Andrei Konchalovsky and Alexander Lipkov, *The Inner Circle: An Insider View of Soviet Life Under Stalin*, trans. Jamey Gambrell (New York: Newmarket Press, 1991), 81.

law.⁴⁷³ The *stukach* phenomenon was an extension of fear from the political world. The crackdown on disloyal party members that led to the purges of many of the country's leaders led to outright fear. Party members felt that it was their duty to inform Moscow of anti-Communist activity, often acting on fear of being called out themselves rather than any actual proof of counterrevolutionary activity.⁴⁷⁴ The government viewed this as a citizen's exercise in democratic participation. Enthusiasm for the government cause, for some, turned into outright fear of the government's child-soldiers, the Pioneers. Although they did so unofficially, the Pioneers and Komsomols acted as an extension of the NKVD, who weeded out apparent conspirators and enemies. Another famous Pioneer, Mamlakat Nakhangova, for instance, was said to have shown her entire village how to pick cotton efficiently and at high speeds by tying the bag around her neck and utilizing both hands.⁴⁷⁵ Children such as Mamlakat were icons of devotion; children viewed these Pioneers as the embodiment of good, and as the individuals who provided for the country through innovation and sacrifice. Images of Stalin with the pioneers appeared in all media addressing children, which showed them trying to please their victor and guardian.

Public admiration of Stalin should come as no surprise, since many of his gruesome tactics and actions did not surface publically until after his death. The image of Stalin from the 1930s to the early 1950s was almost saint-like. One youth recalled the moment he heard rumors of the 'doctor's plot' (a supposed plot to assassinate Soviet leadership, which was later believed to be a stratagem to push anti-Semitism). He was in shock at the barbarism toward Stalin: "For every single one of us, he was greater than a God... The nightmare of

⁴⁷³ Brian Moyhayan, *The Russian Century: A Photographic History of Russia's 100 Years* (London: Endeavour, 1994), 139.

⁴⁷⁴ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear off the Masks! : Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 210.

⁴⁷⁵ Konchalovsky and Lipkov, 74.

Stalin being killed haunted me and made me literally ill.”⁴⁷⁶ For this very reason, most of his former followers were in complete disbelief when Stalin was denounced in 1956 and his cruelties revealed. His roles in the Soviet atrocities were previously unknown; Stalin’s propagandized persona left people in complete dismay after his death. In the public’s mind he was irreplaceable. Unaware that Stalin was personally involved in his imprisonment, chief rocket designer Sergei Korolev wrote to his wife: “Our Comrade Stalin passed away... My heart hurts so much, my throat is clogged, and there are no thoughts and no words to express the tragedy that befell all of us. This is a truly national, immeasurable tragedy—our beloved Comrade Stalin is no more.”⁴⁷⁷ The grasp of Stalin had penetrated deep into society and even deeper into the hearts of the Soviet people. To the children, Stalin was the embodiment of the victorious and euphoric country that they had grown up to perceive. The formation of the Stalin cult is precisely what the education of youth intended to achieve—boundless support for the government.

Stalin’s death marked the return of individuality. With the advent of Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet society began to change its mentality. The new era intended to disband the Stalinist mindset by allowing more personal and cultural liberties through the loosening of control on media and literature, a move that inadvertently gave the Soviet citizens power in voice and action. The collapse of the leader cult, coupled with access to the outside world via travel, media, and various reforms, led to discontent with the Soviet system. The totalitarian regime of Stalin preached and executed uniformity in thought and action. Under the more liberal regimes of Khrushchev and his successors, contradictory information often influenced youth, and the core of the Soviet foundation became anything but uniform. The

⁴⁷⁶ Boobbyer, 116.

⁴⁷⁷ Slava Gerovitch, “Stalin’s Rocket Designers’ Leap into Space: Technical Intelligentsia Faces the Thaw,” *Osiris* 23 (2008): 193.

system between youth and government was based on trust and mutual respect under Stalin. But the eventual disintegration of that trust ushered in the pursuit of personal fulfillment by Soviet youth. They withdrew their once mighty allegiance to the state, leaving government without a core of ambitious youth to fight for its cause.

Fear of another dictatorial regime, which had wiped out many of the country's leaders, led to the destruction of the leader-cult by Stalin's successor, Khrushchev. In a secret speech to Congress on February 25, 1956, Khrushchev revealed horrendous details of Stalin's power, including the purges of *kulaks* (powerful peasants) and army officers in the late 1930s, the imprisonment and murders of government officials, and other atrocities that resulted from cozy relations with the NKVD chiefs.⁴⁷⁸ Khrushchev's reason for delivering the speech was to disassociate the new regime from Stalin due to pejoratives of fear and authoritarianism among leaders; he also intended to restore peace and trust among the citizens by claiming that another Stalin-like figure would never enter the ruling ranks. When the public discovered the details of that speech, either they had their suspicions confirmed, or they were shocked. Following this news, Stalin's cult quickly fell apart. Newspapers and journals no longer published his image, and anecdotes ridiculing his oppressive power became favorites. A decade after his denunciation, his image and influence seemed to disappear entirely; Lenin's image was brought back to represent the USSR.⁴⁷⁹ Khrushchev's revelations about "omnipresent hypocrisy" destroyed the concepts of Soviet idealism and stifled the revolutionary Communist momentum among the most powerful messengers—children.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ Nikita S. Khrushchev, "The Secret Speech On Stalin and the Cult of the Individual," in *Soviet Politics and Education*, ed. Frank Sorentino and Frances Curcio (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), 97-122.

⁴⁷⁹ Personal finding from the *Iunost'* magazines of 1966-1968. *Iunost'* was a popular youth magazine that began circulating in 1955. *Iunost'* had no mentions of Stalin, while Lenin was featured in articles and on covers.

⁴⁸⁰ George Sherman, "Soviet Youth: Myth and Reality," *Daedalus* 91 (Winter 1962): 235.

For some children, the direct thaw of Stalinist mentality came with Khrushchev's reforms on education. The reforms intended to use students practically according to their abilities, instead of using them ideologically. In essence, Stalin's school had the intention of creating strong and supportive Communists, but Khrushchev's school attempted to create a strong and able workforce for the advancement of the Soviet Union. Through the reforms starting in 1958, the brightest students were allowed access to special secondary schools for arts, science, and technology (often referred to as Kolmogorov/Fiz-Mat schools).⁴⁸¹ This type of schooling went against the Stalinist system in which all students had to study a common curriculum with a goal of "the all-round development of the individual."⁴⁸² One student, Alexandr Shen, said that Kolmogorov boarding schools reserved for the 'brightest student' unintentionally promoted snobbism and the notion of "I am better than everyone else," and that they cultivated an inability to deal with regular students.⁴⁸³ These schools promoted personal success rather than teaching morals for bettering society. Another student of Kolmogorov recounted an event that embodies the liberal reforms of Khrushchev:

Due to the tense atmosphere after the firing of Yuliy Kim [a Soviet human-rights activist, who was a teacher of history at Kolmogorov's School No.18 in Moscow], we felt it was our inherent duty to do something... It was no secret that everybody at the *internat* [another name for the Kolmogorov boarding schools] was exposed to the culture of dissidents, and we all, to some extent, dabbled in dissidence... We collectively decided to protest against the administration so we decided to call a hunger-strike, proclaiming that the cafeteria food was dissatisfactory. But it was really just the way we expressed our disapproval with everything that what was going on.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸¹ David Kendall, "Kolmogorov as I Remember Him," *Statistical Science* 6, No. 3 (1991): 311; "Fiz-Mat" is short for Physics and Mathematics schools.

⁴⁸² John Dunstan, "An Educational Experiment: Soviet Mathematics and Physics Boarding Schools," *Soviet Studies* 27 (October 1975): 545.

⁴⁸³ Alexander Shen, "O Pol'ze I Vrede Matematicheskikh Klassov," *Vserossiiskaya konferentsiya: Matematika i obshchestvo, Matematicheskoe obrazovanie na rubezhe vekov*. MTsMNO, September 2000 (Moscow: 2000), 312. Translation is my own.

⁴⁸⁴ Evgeny Danstin, Interview by author, Chicago, IL. (March 18th, 2011). Evgeny Dantsin is currently a professor of mathematics and computer science at Roosevelt University. He graduated from Physics and Mathematics School No. 18 in Moscow, sponsored by Moscow State University (MGU) in 1968, and studied

An act like this was unthinkable under Stalin, and students would have undoubtedly faced expulsion at the very least. Under Khrushchev, however, youth had no such strict restrictions, and so they no longer believed that the Soviet Union was the greatest system in the world. Without a respectable figure to revere and without the belief of living in a country that was above all others—a notion disturbed by dissidents—children had little motivation to show the USSR support. Disenchantment with the government led to a land of free spirits trying to find comfort in the moral ruins of a post-Stalinist country.

As it became evident later, the indoctrination of children to Soviet ideology was a worthwhile endeavor for the USSR. When the Soviet Union allowed children to develop according to their own desires—exposed to the realities of Soviet life—the country encountered the social issues of the post-Stalin era. The spirit of the Soviet citizens proved to be a greater enemy to Soviet progress than any foreign foe. Soviet leaders took merciless measures to establish a society based on Soviet ideologies, but all at the expense of children's freedoms, the very children they claimed to be helping. When the youth learned that the hot breakfast they were served at school came at the expense of a starving child in the *derevnya*, the loyalty that they once had and the enthusiasm that they once shared for the country disappeared. This distrust was further engendered by travel to Eastern Europe, thus generating familiarity with a Western world that citizens learned quickly offered a much greater and better array of consumer goods. Nearly twelve million Soviets visited Eastern Europe from 1960-1976.⁴⁸⁵ Tens of millions of other Soviets heard from traveling family members and friends that the myths about consumption variety in the Soviet Bloc were

personally under Andrei Kolmogorov. He also noted how silly he felt after the strike. In retrospect, he said, the food was excellent for the price they paid. The standoff was simply a sign that they knew what was happening in the political world and the dissident underworld.

⁴⁸⁵ John Bushnell, "The 'New Soviet Man' Turns Pessimist," in *Russian and Soviet History, 1500-1991: The Khrushchev and Brezhnev Years*, by Alexander Dallin (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), 150.

fact.⁴⁸⁶ What they saw no longer corresponded to what they were taught, and they realized that life in a Western-influenced society was actually better than life in the Soviet Union. Under Stalin, such a trip, which would potentially undermine the propaganda claiming that the USSR was the best place to live, would have been impossible. Furthermore, prostitution, drug use, alcoholism, corruption, gangs of hooligans, and thieves all stand as proof that the Soviet man was just as susceptible to the vices derived from social struggle, especially when not swayed by mass propaganda. The would-be robots displayed “the same virtues and weaknesses of youth the world over.”⁴⁸⁷

It comes as no surprise that, after the unveiling of gruesome details of Bolshevik power, the youth chose to stand against the government. Freed from the government’s control, the Soviet man was less timid in exploring the bounds of freedom. Youth preferred the way of the hippie to the way of the Soviet; doing drugs, wreaking havoc, and familiarizing themselves with the words of dissidents became the mode of opposition. The now cult-less government could not seize the minds of children; only a program of total control of information would create a society based entirely on the ideas of the leaders. Above all, de-Stalinization, like the open economy of NEP, showed that Soviets naturally desired choice in the marketplace and a self-constructed mode of life. Youths’ experimentation with different lifestyles and different interests often opposed parents’ wishes and did not meet the approval of Soviet leadership. Parents and government, by allowing their children to venture from the shelter of their influence, stood to lose their children to the outside world. The land of Soviets turned out to be full of hunger and oppression, riddled with hypocrisy and betrayal from the leaders, swarming with rebellious products of dissidence, and other elements that the Soviet Union had previously walled off from the

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Sherman, 218.

general populace. Without effective propaganda and government involvement in cultivating children, the Soviets did not produce a mortar strong enough to hold together the Soviet structure; the cadres that “decide[d] everything” were continuously replaced by children who grew up with distrust toward the government. Sheltering children from all that was ideologically harmful to the Soviet Union was necessary to keep the youth from using the truth to devour the state from within.

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**Fragmented from Within: The Dual Challenges of Integration
and Legislation Among Sexual Minorities in France**

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Since the early days of the Revolution, the French Republic has had a long and storied history of assimilating outsiders into a culture of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*. From Jews and Muslims to refugees and asylum-seekers, millions of immigrants have settled in the country and devoted themselves fully to their new home, slowly weaving themselves into the fabric of French society until they blended in perfectly and retained few traces of their former identities. Although the legal process through which immigrants must wade has gone through cycles of increased restrictiveness, France has maintained a firm tradition of *jus soli* and deeply felt beliefs in the liberal ideals of republican government. Therefore, the country has never approached the restrictiveness of other, more xenophobic European nations.

In recent decades, however, France has faced a new question: what happens when the outsiders come from within? This is the unique quandary presented by the emergence of a community of sexual minorities in France, the vast majority of whom came from within the country's borders. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender⁴⁸⁸ community has only flourished in France over the last half-century, yet it has already encountered the challenge inherent to any French minority group hoping both to maintain its distinctive identity and to mesh comfortably with society at large. In fact, the French gay⁴⁸⁹ movement has gone through three waves of integration over the course of its short lifespan. The first, starting in the late 1940s, encouraged quiet assimilation among the gay community; the leaders of this movement actively downplayed sexuality, stressed civility and loyalty to the country, and attempted to separate in the public's eye pederasty and homosexuality. The next wave of gay leaders took hold of the movement in the late sixties, reemphasizing the sexual aspects of

⁴⁸⁸ Transgendered people will not be discussed at length in this paper, as their legal and social history is removed from that of gay, lesbian, and bisexual citizens.

⁴⁸⁹ As used in this paper, the term "gay" should be understood as inclusive of all homosexual and bisexual people in France, unless otherwise noted.

homosexuality, rejecting assimilation, promoting separatist beliefs, and, in some corners, reestablishing a link between pederasty and homosexuality. Finally and most recently, the AIDS crisis of the 1980s brought the movement back to its assimilative roots, and it has since focused on firmly reintegrating itself into French society, subordinating sexual identity to civic identity. This approach of universalism and “interiorized self-control” has scored the gay movement a series of legislative successes and gained the community great respect in society.⁴⁹⁰ As Western culture has become increasingly tolerant toward sexual minorities, the French gay community has shed its radical elements and cleaved to the traditional route of assimilation, readopting many tenets of its repressed roots.

In order to understand the progression of sexual minorities in France in the modern era, it is necessary to trace the movement back to its somewhat surprising origins: the French Revolution. Before the Revolution, the government took its cues from theologians in viewing sodomy, a rather vague umbrella term encompassing all non-procreative sexual acts, as “a sin against nature.”⁴⁹¹ Old and New Testament passages concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, along with proscriptions in Leviticus, served as proof enough for most religious authorities that aberrant sexual behavior was a public matter that must be prohibited by the authority of the righteous state.⁴⁹² Encouraged by priests and judges alike, who labeled sodomy “dreadful crimes” and “abominable lewd acts” that must be “punished in all times with the severest penalty,” jurists were generally harsh on alleged sodomites, often recommending the death penalty even when the Crown did not demand such extreme

⁴⁹⁰ Scott Gunther, *The Elastic Closet: A History of Homosexuality in France, 1942-present* (Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 91.

⁴⁹¹ Jean Benedicti, “The Compendium of Sins and the Remedy for Them,” in *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*, ed. Bryant T. Ragan and Jeffrey Merrick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2.

⁴⁹² Antoine Bruneau, “Observations and Maxims on Criminal Matters,” in *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*, ed. Bryant T. Ragan and Jeffrey Merrick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.

measures.⁴⁹³ Unlike other laws concerning morality, the prohibition of sodomy was duly enforced, with arrests, trials, and convictions carried out frequently, hastily, and harshly. Public health, both mental and physical, was perceived to be at risk, and the only feasible means of containing this potential epidemic of aberrance was through the punishment of these “individuals whom nature created deformed.”⁴⁹⁴

With the French Revolution, the state’s attitude toward sodomy changed drastically, though public opinion was somewhat slower to shift. The National Assembly decriminalized sodomy in 1791, and while no records exist today of their deliberations, it is possible to infer the motivations behind this decision. Legislators probably did not act out of explicit tolerance toward homosexuals, for at this point in history, homosexuality was not recognized as a separate “form of sexuality,” as Michel Foucault points out. Rather, “the sodomite [was considered] a temporary aberration,” and gays were not deemed to be a separate “species” until later in the nineteenth century.⁴⁹⁵ Therefore, tolerance or intolerance towards sodomy in eighteenth-century France pertained to homosexuality as an isolated act, not as a trait or a lifestyle.

In their sanctioning of sodomy, then, the Assembly members were most likely influenced not by a desire for tolerance and equality, but instead by the views of the philosophes, who “modified and challenged the conventional discourse that censured same-sex sexuality.”⁴⁹⁶ Some philosophes argued that sex between men was “a function of culture,” citing “Greek love” and the omnipresence of same-sex behavior throughout the ages

⁴⁹³ Nicolas Meusy, “Code of Religion and Morals: On Crimes Against Nature,” in *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*, ed. Bryant T. Ragan and Jeffrey Merrick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 18.

⁴⁹⁴ Donatien Alphonse Francois de Sade, “Philosophy of the Boudoir,” in *Homosexuality in Early Modern France*, ed. Bryant T. Ragan and Jeffrey Merrick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 170.

⁴⁹⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1990), 43.

⁴⁹⁶ Bryant T. Ragan and Jeffrey Merrick, *Homosexuality in Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 18.

in myriad diverse regions as evidence.⁴⁹⁷ Other more radical philosophes questioned how a seemingly innate desire could be considered unnatural and presciently argued that sexuality was merely a societal construction that unforgivably constrained natural behavior. This discourse may well have led Assembly members to see anti-sodomy measures as having been founded in superstition and originating in outdated Christian tradition. Moreover, the idea of “victimless crimes,” or crimes that had no ascertainable victims, was fundamentally incompatible with the universalist spirit of the French law code.⁴⁹⁸ Individuals in a liberal Republic were meant to be protected against an overreaching state, and if deeming private bedroom activities as punishable infractions was not overreaching, surely nothing was.

Thus, from the Revolution on, those who viewed sodomy as illicit and illegal had no explicit legal interdictions on which to rest their case. As previously mentioned, widespread public censure of sodomy and homosexuality remained in place for centuries after the National Assembly’s move toward tolerance, and these opinions often manifested themselves in the actions of police officers, legal scholars, and the judiciary. Also during this period, the mainstream conception of homosexuality shifted from an occasional aberrant act to a defining trait, giving homophobes an identifiable class of people to persecute. Laws against “public indecency” were frequently cited as the basis for the penalization of sexual minorities, while police repression of gay citizens was often justified by allegations that sexual minorities had connections with the world of crime.⁴⁹⁹

Napoleon retained the status quo of decriminalization, taking a libertarian stance on the issue and bemoaning the scandal and vulgarity surrounding the prosecution of sodomy.

⁴⁹⁷ Claude-Adrien Helvetius, *De l’homme* (London, 1773), 194, quoted in Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, *Homosexuality in Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 21.

⁴⁹⁸ Gunther, 14, 16.

⁴⁹⁹ *Observations des tribunaux criminels sur le project de code criminel*, vol. 1, at 14 (Paris).

This conception of the legislation of sexual morality—that it should be minimal because it was distasteful and excessive—remained in vogue among French legislators and rulers for hundreds of years. Sexual minorities may have faced discrimination from the society at large, brutality at the hands of police officers, and intolerance from a still moralistic legal system, but their behavior was not officially criminalized by the state. France as a country still frowned on sodomy, as it was forever intertwined with homosexuality, but until 1942, the spirit of the law was, in the abstract, on the side of personal liberty for gay citizens.

Before 1942, because of the theoretically firm but, in practice, legal and moral standing of homosexuality, most gay individuals were either forced to the fringes of society or pressured to blend in with the masses. The vast majority of sexual minorities, then, decided not so much to assimilate as to hide, viewing their choices as a dichotomy between discrimination and repression of desire, and opting for the latter. Free will played a minimal role in the decision of most gay French persons to remain secretive about their sexuality, engaging in same-sex acts covertly if at all and otherwise maintaining a life of either feigned traditionalist values or chastity. The issue of integration, then, becomes pertinent only when sexual minorities felt they had a choice in the matter, or when a gay person could reasonably opt to live openly as a homosexual and then decide to what extent he valued his commitment to his country and his community.

This age of tolerance, ironically, emerged almost concurrently with a new age of legal restrictions on homosexuality. In 1942, Philippe Petain and the Vichy regime introduced a new law that, while not explicitly homophobic, targeted gay people as a group and sought to introduce an element of criminality to their behavior. The ordinance established separate ages of consent for homosexual and heterosexual Frenchmen (twenty-one and thirteen,

respectively), citing French youth as the “victim[s]” of sodomy and thereby resolving the issue of same-sex relations being “victimless crimes” that could not be prosecuted.⁵⁰⁰ The law was preserved after the fall of Vichy, and by 1960 a second, similar ordinance was passed to double the penalty for “public indecency” between people of the same sex.⁵⁰¹ Between these bookends of discrimination, in the context of the legitimization of homophobia, the first gay rights movement sprouted in France in the early 1950s. It was both represented and guided by two important magazines, *Club Futur* and *Arcadie*, both of which rallied around the repeal of the 1942 law and, later, the 1960 law.

Yet the nullification of these prejudiced laws was, in fact, merely the beginning of the long list of goals that the first wave’s leaders wanted to achieve. Andre Baudry, who is considered to be the figurehead and leader of this movement, rallied his readers and followers around the concept of “living with dignity,” a phrase still repeated today in a similar context.⁵⁰² Baudry carried himself as a true gentleman, dignified and well spoken, a far cry from the general public’s perception of a gay man and perhaps something of an anomaly within the gay community itself. He preached with upmost vehemence the need for extreme assimilation among sexual minorities, claiming that he was “disgusted enough” by the flamboyance and scandalous activities of American gay men to “vomit.”⁵⁰³ The concept of universalism was key among his beliefs; Baudry lectured time and time again on the importance of gay persons conducting themselves as though they were heterosexual. He famously hosted formal balls for men only, meant to parallel almost exactly the dances held by straight society. During these events, he enforced a strict code of conduct, proscribing

⁵⁰⁰ Gunther, 26.

⁵⁰¹ Joseph-Marie Hulewicz, “Reflexion: La phobie de l’homosexualite,” *Gai pied hebdo*, October 29, 1992, 13.

⁵⁰² Gunther, 39.

⁵⁰³ *Journal officiel*, Senat, no. 43, May 23, 1980, 2086.

close contact and physical affection in order to set an example of how gay men should act in real life. The manifestation of homosexuality in one's personality, Baudry claimed, was "first and foremost a personal problem," and he felt that no gay man would ever be respected in society if he acted as such.⁵⁰⁴

While Baudry's exceedingly assimilative ideas may seem oddly self-loathing today, they were likely necessary to alter what had previously been a hallmark of the gay rights movement: pederasty. Regardless as to how many gay men in France believed pederasty to be a right, the public certainly linked pedophilia to homosexuality, and it took a man as straight-laced as Baudry to sever this association. The two words, pederasty and homosexuality, were, in fact, used interchangeably until the first wave of the gay rights movement in France, and thus one can easily see how public opinion of gay people tended toward dismay and disgust. Compounding the problem of pedophilia, in terms of both its popularity and its perception among the populace, was a lack of consensus within the fractured gay community. Some contributors to *Arcadie* insisted on writing pieces that promoted the continuation of Greek-style pederasty, hiding behind the facade of classicism in order to escape government censorship. Yet Baudry stood firmly on his principles, exploiting his position as de facto leader of the movement to influence its followers and inculcate them with his own ideals.

The question of why, exactly, Baudry felt compelled to guide the gay community away from pederasty is simultaneously obvious and ambiguous. One would certainly hope that he saw the matter of ending the practice as a moral imperative, but to make this claim is to force a very modern viewpoint on a very complex and antiquated issue. Instead, Baudry's crusade against pederasty, which was eventually taken up by many leaders of this early

⁵⁰⁴ Gunther, 40.

movement of dignity and staidness, seems to have been closely linked to assimilation. As previously mentioned, the public saw the two issues as intertwined; any man who professed to be homosexual was also inadvertently admitting to an attraction to young men and boys, whether or not this was the reality in the streets of the gay Parisian underworld. Baudry grasped that so long as this association existed, no sexual minorities would ever be viewed favorably by the country at large. His solution, then, was to fit the problem of pederasty into his overarching message of total assimilation. Man-child sex, he seems to have reasoned, alienated the gay population from the general French population, and for the gay community to sever itself from the Republic in any way was an unpardonable, unconscionable sin. To live with dignity was, for Baudry, to live as similarly to society at large as possible, and if pedophilia prevented this, it stood in the way of dignity and, by extension, integration.

However, Baudry's aims at assimilation were never widely accepted among the gay population living openly in France. To many, the idea of subsuming sexual identity into a broader identification with French universalist values seemed cowardly or—ironically considering Baudry's stated aims—undignified. Arcadie's fights to repeal the 1942 and 1960 laws were utterly futile, as the movement was never firm enough as a political coalition to effect real legislative change. Perhaps without Baudry and Arcadie, French society would have drifted further into the realm of homophobia and the government would have enacted laws to reflect this shift; but such a hypothetical is, at heart, guesswork. Thus, with the close of the 1960s, the radical assimilationist movement disintegrated, lacking widespread support among its target audience and unable to find sympathetic allies among the general public. Ironically, the radicalism of Baudry and his supporters' integrationist views was quickly supplanted by a new kind of radicalism, one that eschewed the concepts of

heteronormativity, assimilation, and civility in favor of brazen homosexuality, separatism, and sensationalism.

Like any traditionally repressed group, the gay population of France was faced with disapproval and disdain from the population at large, but with the rise of Baudry and the Arcadie mindset, many gays in France felt that the repression was suddenly emerging from inside their own community. The famous critical theorist Abdelmalek Sayad noted that many minority groups react against a stigma by embracing it; the “black is beautiful” movement in America, for instance, allowed African Americans to reclaim their identities as positive rather than negative factors.⁵⁰⁵ Similarly, when Baudry’s movement failed to remove many of society’s negative associations with gay people, a new group of reformers took the stage, rejecting wholesale the apologetic tone of their predecessors and inviting gay Frenchmen to recover their identities as openly and proudly homosexual. These new leaders ultimately led the gay rights movement miles away from its decorous, assimilationist foundations, courting controversy and backlash while risking marginalization, ghettoization, and self-destruction.

Unlike the first wave, which was not particularly well-organized but had clear leaders throughout its run, the second wave of the gay rights movement in France was a Russian doll of movements: its leading groups continuously splintered off into smaller associations before dissolving in a series of self-implosions. Also dissimilar from the first wave was the second wave’s ambiguity of origin; many pinpoint the movement’s emergence as being concurrent with the 1968 riots, though it only emerged as a recognizable force in society in the early part of the next decade. Perhaps the most identifiable genesis of this wave occurred at a gathering of Arcadie members and followers at which one Françoise d’Eaubonne rose from the audience and interrupted none other than André Baudry with a brash if canny criticism: “You

⁵⁰⁵ Abdelmalek Sayad, *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (Cornwall: Polity Press, 2004), 286.

say that society must integrate homosexuals, but I say that homosexuals must disintegrate society!”⁵⁰⁶ This incident took place a full two years after the emergence of the Comité d’Action Pederastique Revolutionnaire [the Revolutionary pederast action committee], but whereas that group gained only fleeting notoriety, this retaliation against everything the gay rights movement had heretofore represented was felt more fully.⁵⁰⁷ By 1971, this new faction had broken off and formed its own group, the Front homosexuel d’action révolutionnaire (FHAR), which was the first of several such gay fronts. The FHAR eventually took a key role in leading the movement away from integration and Arcadie, and into a brave new world of militant homosexuality.

There were a number of innovations put forth by the FHAR, and while today many of them might be considered reprehensible, they were certainly forward thinking for the time. As previously discussed, the rallying cry for the FHAR was a rejection of assimilation and a revolution of sexual desire. Supporters of the group demanded “the right to be different,” to separate themselves from heterosexual society and the enforced normalcy encouraged by Baudry, and instead assert their identities as proudly gay.⁵⁰⁸ A founder and leader of the FHAR, the aforementioned Françoise d’Eaubonne, spearheaded this charge with dashing vehemence, coining the battle cry, “Down with Daddy’s homosexuality!”⁵⁰⁹ and constantly lobbying for the acceptability of “abnormal sexuality.”⁵¹⁰ Gay people, according to d’Eaubonne and the FHAR, should stop behaving “normally” and instead assert their rights as a legitimate minority group deserving the same treatment and respect as any other

⁵⁰⁶ Gunther, 47.

⁵⁰⁷ Frederic Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France since 1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 15.

⁵⁰⁸ “Rapport contre la normalite,” FHAR (Paris: FHAR, 1971).

⁵⁰⁹ Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France since 1968*, 48.

⁵¹⁰ Jan Willem Duyvendak and Olivier Fillieule, “Gay and Lesbian Activism in France: Between Integration and Community-Oriented Movements,” in *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics*, ed. Barry D. Adam et al (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 188.

members of society.⁵¹¹ There is an inherent contradiction in this concept, however; gays, the FHAR claimed, should separate themselves from society at large by clinging to their sexual identities, yet simultaneously demand respect as equal French citizens. In a sense, then, the FHAR wanted every perquisite with no compromises; like Baudry, d'Eaubonne desired egalitarian treatment of gays, yet she wanted it without the compromise of assimilation. The fragmenting of a group built on such an inconsistent foundation was therefore nearly inexorable.

However, the fact that d'Eaubonne herself did for a time play a major role in the FHAR is quite surprising, given the misogyny that had defined both the gay community and the gay rights movement until that point. Recall that Arcadie rarely made an effort to appeal to lesbians, and that, reaching further back, the controversy over sodomy and homosexuality in centuries prior always centered squarely on men. With the birth of the second movement came the birth of lesbian liberation, which rose in parallel with women's liberation in general and the Movement de liberation des femmes (MLF). Because lesbian liberation battled against discrimination from both society and the gay rights movement, it emerged with sudden, shocking force from seemingly nowhere. Like much of women's liberation ethos, lesbian rights activists eschewed the necessity of men, yelling chants such as, "We've had it up to here with getting fucked, and badly/ by guys full of their own superiority./ Love among ourselves is equality,/ and long live homosexuality."⁵¹² Feeling the forces of misogyny rising once again within the FHAR only months after its formation, d'Eaubonne and her lesbian colleagues quickly fled en masse to the MLF and other smaller organizations such as the Gouines Rouges (Red Dykes), which they felt better represented their cause. The FHAR

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 189.

⁵¹² Martel, 43; Marie-Jo Bonnet, *Le Torchon Brule*, May 1971.

birthed the French lesbian liberation movement but then rebuffed it, an omen of the later splintering that occurred within the group.

Aside from the rejection of heterosexual cultural normality and the spawning of the lesbian liberation movement, the FHAR cannot be said to have achieved many goals that today seem desirable. In spite of Baudry's insistent lobbying against the practice, the FHAR reignited the battle for the right of pederasty, labeling an established age of sexual majority as "age discrimination" and arguing for "the liberation of young people's sexuality" lest the forces of repression take hold at a young age.⁵¹³ This, it must be said, was a troubling and regressive development. The leaders of FHAR were radical leftist neo-Marxists who believed in the destruction of the patriarchy, the class hierarchy, and the existing power structure, and they linked these ideas to the notion that pedophilia was natural. One must examine this pederast platform in context, however; the FHAR's overarching intent was to provoke widespread sexual pandemonium by destroying the dividing lines of sexual identity, elevating same-sex sexuality to a divine level, and restructuring society in the fashion of Marxist communism. If gays in France were going to be "abnormal" deviants, they were going to be empowered deviants.⁵¹⁴

Tying into a push for freedom of sexuality for gays was a surprising and never coherent ideal of the end of "dark sexuality," or secret, hidden, random sex acts between men.⁵¹⁵ In theory, the FHAR should have seen nothing wrong with the practice of "cruising" for anonymous gay sex; gays, after all, should have had the power to sleep with whomever they wanted, wherever and whenever.⁵¹⁶ The details of this kind of lifestyle, however, do not

⁵¹³ Gunther, 51.

⁵¹⁴ "Inversions, no. 2," Paris Gay 1925 (Paris: Presses de Renaissance, 1981), 188.

⁵¹⁵ Martel, 71.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

paint a pretty picture; one needs only hear a few tales of nightclubs, “urinals,” and “glory holes” to understand that this was not the life Baudry envisioned when he spoke of living with dignity.⁵¹⁷ Unseemly and unsafe, men who partook in such activities might be married or single, young or old, rich or impoverished; such distinctions mattered little in this licentious underworld. The situation was an interesting paradox for the leaders of FHAR: should these people renounce their secretiveness and join the gay movement, or did they have a right to conduct their sexuality as they so desired? This problem, which was never fully addressed during the FHAR’s reign over the gay rights movement, planted the seeds for the third wave, which ushered in a new era of sexual responsibility linked closely with assimilation.

As discussed above, the FHAR did not permanently speak for the second wave of the French gay rights movement. By 1974, a major faction had split off and formed the Groupes de liberation homosexuelle (GLH), which rejected the FHAR’s ties with far-left political movements and Marxism. Instead, the GLH focused on building an independent movement that could fight autonomously for its own objectives, namely the complete eradication of traditional marriage and the nuclear family. Religious homosexual groups such as David et Jonathan and Beit Haverim (Christian and Jewish organizations, respectively) also broke away from FHAR, and by the time the Comite d’urgence anti-repression homosexuelle was created to attempt to squeeze these different factions back into an umbrella organization, enough dominos had fallen to signal the end of any cohesiveness among the sexually liberated second wave of gay rights activists. Assimilation was later put back on the table, at about the same time that the 1942 and 1960 laws were repealed. Most historians believe that the legislative action on these laws occurred in spite of, not because of, the actions of the

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

second wave; for all their notoriety, the sexually liberated leaders of the movement were too opposed to French universalism and integration to catch fire among the masses. But it was not its contentious and ramshackle nature that brought about the demise of the second wave; rather, it was a potent combination of extremism fatigue and a force of nature no one could have predicted: the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Around the dawn of the 1980s, the gay community in France seemed collectively exhausted from a decade of upheaval and radicalism. The rallying-cry for reform—the 1942 and 1960 laws—had been repealed, and the organized forces of the homosexual revolt against mainstream society had imploded. Baudry's much-touted ideal of living with dignity returned, albeit in a drastically altered form; the French gay community was not interested in living exactly like heterosexual citizens, but rather simply as French citizens. Assimilation was once again in vogue, but rather than downplay their homosexuality, these new assimilationists desired instead to integrate it equally with other cherished values, such as devotion to France. Arising simultaneously with this widespread detachment from politics was the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which further encouraged gay people to adhere to formerly heteronormative lifestyles, monogamy in particular. This de-marginalization and slow blend into mainstream society has continued through the end of the century, culminating with a series of explicitly pro-gay rights laws and a political and societal atmosphere favorable to tolerance.

Easily the best example—and perhaps a propelling force—of the early third wave of French gay rights was the creation of *Gai Pied*, a monthly magazine that explored a wide variety of gay issues. Launched around the same time that *Arcadie* dissolved, the magazine grew in readership in its early years, becoming a dominating force in the gay discourse in

France by the early to mid-1980s. It served as “a medium of discussion and knowledge,” eschewing the radicalism of the previous decade and instead encouraging understanding and civility.⁵¹⁸ That a magazine could encourage the gay community to “have fun [being] gay” while simultaneously “promoting respectability”⁵¹⁹ was a quietly revolutionary phenomenon, a perfect fusion of the credos of the movement’s two distinct forbearers. French gays in the early 1980s fit in neatly with the image Gai Pied projected; apolitical and generally contented, the gay community seemed to have replaced legal restraints with “internalized, private self-control.”⁵²⁰ There were no riots, no protests, no outward signs of anger; being gay no longer seemed to dominate gay citizens’ consciousness. Homosexuality was sublimated into gays’ wider personalities, beliefs, and codes of conduct. They were visible, known, and somewhat accepted; even the gay neighborhood, Marais, had been transformed into a famous Parisian haunt. Gays were not forced to live in the shadows, and for once, the status quo seemed ideal.

However, the arrival of the HIV/AIDS epidemic put a firm end to this respite from suffering, thrusting the gay community into a crisis that it was not capable of solving on its own. Because the third wave lacked any real leaders throughout the early ‘80s, the community had no voices to rise above the clamor and aid them in protecting themselves. No longer invested in politics, the movement had little say in attaining government assistance, a situation further exacerbated by what some have called “the closet of French republicanism.”⁵²¹ Because the universalist principles of the Republic discouraged specific groups from receiving special recognition and treatment, and because the third waves’

⁵¹⁸ Frank Arnal, “The Gay Press and Movement in France” in *The Pink Book: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression* (USA: Prometheus Books, 1993), 43.

⁵¹⁹ Gunther, 74-75.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

assimilationist tendencies had supported this practice, the gay community was not singled out as an especially at-risk population. Once the epidemic became widespread, however, Frederic Edelmann, Jean-Florian Mettetal, and Daniel Defert founded Aides in order to fight the spread of the virus, and the three men suddenly became the guiding forces in a movement desperately in need of leaders. Working with virtually no assistance from the government or Gai Pied, which was tragically slow to recognize AIDS's impact, Aides attempted to educate the gay population about how to protect themselves, often using guerilla tactics. The organization ventured into "gay bars, bathhouses... and other gay spots" in Paris with condoms and educational material, all the while attempting to avoid the appearance of a gay organization in order to maintain public support.⁵²²

Eventually the crisis calmed, but the effect of AIDS on the lifestyle of French gays was so huge as to be immeasurable. Having sex with multiple partners, Aides warned, increased one's risk, so one should probably settle into monogamy when given the chance. The message may not have been received immediately, but it was received. As the community began adapting to the more traditionally heteronormative practice of acquiring life partners—a fundamentally assimilationist practice—the law also started to reflect a more favorable attitude toward gays. A 1985 bill prohibited discrimination against homosexuals, finally placing sexuality alongside race and gender as categories recognizable by the government. In refusing to condone discrimination based on "moral habits," the government reflected the same values that led to the decriminalization of sodomy so many years earlier.⁵²³ Gays, the government reasoned, deserved to be treated equally, for they were first and foremost French. Whereas the National Assembly members applied this notion in the

⁵²² Daniel Defert, "La sodomie est la voie royale du sida," *Gai Pied Hebdo*, July 13, 1985, 1.

⁵²³ Alison Brooks and Rita J. Simon, *Gay and Lesbian Communities the World Over* (USA: Lexington Books, 2009), 80.

eighteenth century by allowing gays to conduct themselves as they pleased, the 1985 legislators took the idea one step farther, requiring all other citizens to respect gays' right to live their lives free of persecution.

This law may be taken as the forerunner of a string of laws leading up to today that have increased the French gay community's ability to live as complete equals to their heterosexual countrymen. Workforce anti-discrimination laws and military anti-discrimination laws followed, and the flood of tolerance culminated in 1999 with the creation of Civil Solidarity Pacts, or PACS. PACS are a distinctly French solution to the question of gay marriage; in an effort to appeal to universalist values, both homosexual and heterosexual couples can acquire them, and the law is written in gender-neutral language. These measures were necessary to ensure the law's passage, as singling out homosexuals as a group violated Republican values; thus, the final version of the PACS bill had to appeal equally to homosexuals and heterosexuals. Interestingly, the law did entail nearly as many rights as marriage, which today continues to be restricted to opposite-sex couples. Tax and immigration benefits in particular are not nearly as potent, and couples with civil unions rather than marriages are not permitted to adopt. Regardless, the fact that the gay community has pressed for marriage and marriage-like benefits is evidence of just how much it has embraced assimilation. Promiscuity, once a hallmark of gay life, has been replaced with a focus on commitment and monogamy, partially because of AIDS but also because of a climate favorable toward the Republican values that have governed France for centuries. Marginalization through unsafe sexual practices or radicalism is not desirable for the gay community in modern-day France. Integration through acceptance of self and respect through society as a whole is, instead, the preferred path forward.

When, in December 2004, the French legislature voted to include anti-gay rhetoric as hate speech, thereby rendering it illegal and punishable by fines and jail time, it seemed to be an inevitable next step in the gay community's climb toward total societal acceptance. Naturally the law was somewhat controversial, as all of France's laws attempting to criminalize opinion have been, but the backlash was minor at best. Like laws against racist or anti-Semitic speech, the anti-homophobic speech law was seen as an extension of France's practice of legislating community values, a necessary aspect of enforcing the Republican value of tolerance. Whether or not the law went against universalism by once again singling out the gay community for special treatment, it was still widely regarded as a signifier that tolerance toward gays was the new norm in French society. It is undeniable that the gay community itself did its part to ensure its acceptance; after its decade of extremism and marginalization in the 1970s, its reversion back to assimilative practices in the last three decades has granted it a favorable public opinion, often reflected in pro-tolerance laws. The most popular figures in the French gay movement today preach integration just as vehemently as Baudry, but it is a different kind of integration, one that respects homosexuality as a decent and important aspect of one's identity but as only one of many such aspects. It is impossible to predict exactly what the future of the movement will hold, but one can assume that the fourth wave, whenever it comes about, will continue this focus on integration into mainstream society. After all, the gay community, unlike other minority groups in France, emerged from within the country's borders, not from without. Now that it has finished trying to separate itself from the heterosexual public at large, it can finally embrace its role as a piece of the jigsaw puzzle that, when all fitted together, forms the French Republic.

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Cox, Karen L. *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Karen Cox's book, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture*, attempts to explain why the stereotypes and symbolic imagery of the Old South gained traction within the larger American culture. She argues that the "moonlight and magnolias" images, typically associated with the South, did not originate there. Instead, they were a product of Northern entertainment, advertising, marketing, and publishing companies. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Northern companies began to realize the commercial value in connecting their products with images and ideas associated with the Old South. After the Civil War, Northerners struggled to deal with significant changes in their society and culture. They saw increases in industrialization and urbanization, as well as an onslaught of blacks emigrating from the Southern states. Moreover, they felt a deep-seated need for reconciliation between the North and the South. These anxieties manifested themselves as a yearning for a pastoral existence, wherein everyone was content and time moved at a more leisurely pace. In this fantasy, blacks happily labored in the fields, or occupied other subservient positions, white women were dainty and feminine, and white men, most importantly, were all-powerful. The Old South provided an outlet for this mirage and a place for Northerners to rest their weary, urban eyes and ears. By purchasing products wrapped in Old South imagery, they could pretend that they had been transported to that imaginary time and enjoy a respite from modern life. As Southerners realized the commercial value in their perceived heritage, they made efforts to perpetuate symbols of the Old South. This kept Northern tourists, and their dollars, streaming into Dixie.

Using fresh sources, Cox traces the development of Southern symbols through American music, radio, movies, literature, and tourist industries. She carefully outlines the formation and commodification of familiar icons of white antebellum plantation life: Southern belles in hoop skirts, plantation gentlemen and charming Confederate soldiers, vistas of cotton fields, trees drenched with Spanish moss, and steamboats. Likewise, she unpacks the complicated black stereotypes associated with the Old South—including the mammy, pickaninny, Zip Coon, Jim Crow, Uncle Ben, and Jezebel—and she does a nice job of contextualizing their meanings within larger American culture. These images, together with the ideas of Southern hospitality and femininity, fueled significant portions of the American media juggernaut as well as the tourism industry in the South. Cox's prose is clearly written, and if her theories become cumbersome, she restates them in a concise manner. She is at her strongest when dealing with intersections of hospitality, femininity, and tourism.

Cox argues that "the South in popular culture is a subject that historians have, for the most part, avoided as not serious enough to warrant their attention" (5). *Dreaming of Dixie* is an example of the type of work that can lead to a better understanding of Southern stereotypes in American culture. Its chapters discuss the South in popular songs, advertising, radio, film, literature, and tourism. By focusing chapters in this way, Cox is able to embark on a deep and meaningful exploration of individual topics. She explores the history, images, and stereotypes created within each genre, as they relate to the American South and their exportation into Northern markets. Each chapter can stand alone, making the text ideal for classroom use. Conversely, this format makes reading each chapter in turn somewhat repetitious as she recounts her theories and contextual information anew with each chapter.

Cox's generous use of advertising and publicity photographs provide convincing, visual context for her arguments. The chapter graphics and headings are a pleasant mix of vintage and contemporary typesets and images, further enhancing the book's visual appeal. The cover itself is sunshine yellow, embossed with tiny roses, and reminiscent of an older style of publishing, when books were a feast for the eye as well as the mind. The strong aesthetic appeal makes this a natural for the general public, but professional historians and students will find *Dreaming of Dixie* a fulfilling read as well.

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