Historian

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Acknowledgements

As we publish our 52nd edition of Historian, the Editorial Board would like to extend our gratitude to the many people whose support has enabled us to publish this journal this year.

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We would especially like to thank our faculty advisor, Professor Richard Hull of the History Department. Without his tireless efforts for many years, Historian could not have achieved the same success. We are incredibly grateful for his encouragement and advice throughout the entire publication process.

Thanks also to all of the history professors who encouraged their students to submit. Their dedication to excellence in teaching is undoubtedly why we read so many well-written, well-researched and diverse essays each year.

And, finally, thank you to all of the students who submitted their work. Without your submissions, there would be no Historian. We encourage you all to continue writing and submitting, and to fuel your passion for history.

With our heartfelt gratitude,
Historian, Editorial Board

Francesca Eick (co-editor in chief)
Angela Lelo (co-editor in chief)
Oluwamodupe Akinnawonu
Adrian Legaspi
Caroline Marris
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Faculty Advisor's Forward

This year our undergraduate journal celebrates its fifty-second anniversary. It can now be referred to as a 'venerable' publication as it is one of the oldest and most respected of its kind at NYU and indeed nationally. Our journal has become a vital tool in attracting undergraduates to historical research and writing. Its contributors have been among our most distinguished undergraduates in the college and many of them have gone on to successful careers in the professions.

This year's essays are distinguished not only by their originality and quality of writing and research but also by the diversity of topics. The contributors and the dedicated members of the editorial board are to be congratulated for another fine issue. At a time when the editorial pages of our national media decry the decline in writing skills among the current generation of American students our undergraduates are proving to be the exception. Over the last decade the college has placed strong emphasis on student writing and research skills and the effort has borne fruit. Each year we have seen steady growth in the quality of the submissions to Historian. Many of the papers originated as theses in our department's successful Honors seminars. A few of them are the result of student research overseas during their study abroad experiences at our far-flung campuses. We have become a global university and the diversity of papers clearly reveals this.

Since my arrival in the History Department nearly forty-four years ago, I have had the enormous pleasure and honor to work with some truly extraordinary editors. It has been a labor of love for faculty and students alike. History as a discipline is alive and well at NYU and we have enjoyed a dramatic growth in the number of undergraduate majors over the last decade.

On a personal note, it is now time for me to step down and to pass the torch of Faculty Advisor to my esteemed colleague, George Solt. Professor Solt is deeply committed to our students and I know he will be dedicated to the journal. I salute and thank my fellow faculty members and students who over the decades have contributed to the journal's astounding success and who in so doing have advanced the cause of history.

With sincere best wishes.

Richard W. Hull
Professor of History
Essay Introductions

Afton Cissell: The violence and terror of Bloody Sunday is an episode in Irish history memorialized in dozens of ways. It is Bloody Friday, however, which enabled the British to take advantage of tensions between the IRA and public opinion and take military action in Belfast in its aftermath, supported by the blaming of terrible casualties on the IRA by local media. Afton Cissell examines this traumatic and chaotic event through an exploration of conflicting contemporary newspaper reports. Comparing the pro-IRA Irish-American diaspora to the sensitively-placed Irish national press, he calls attention to a period when media and international concerns were intertwined in ways that distorted and manipulated the facts to suit political ends.

Alix Cohen: In “Modern Technology: A Catalyst of Warfare in Africa,” Alix Cohen examines conflicts in Africa that have resulted from the scramble for valuable resources. Cohen focuses specifically on wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia that have been fueled by the demand for coltan and rubber respectively. The author argues that, while various factors contribute to warfare in Africa, the advancement of new technologies and consequent demand for resources have played significantly into political unrest and the ensuing bloodshed. Cohen concludes that correcting the roots of the conflicts in Africa requires first addressing the global ties to these conflicts.

Felipe Cole: The author establishes a theoretical framework through which to consider the relationship between infrastructure and social constructs. This approach is termed “infrastructural inversion” and is used by historians to reconsider the role of otherwise “invisible” infrastructures in establishing or perpetuating social and political discourses. Through this framework the author examines the influence of a single railroad project and a single factory that was built in the northern Peruvian city of Trujillo in the 1860s and 1870s. The author concludes that under the direction of the liberal politician, Don Manuel Pardo, the Trujillo railroad and La Libertad Factory, both used as archetypal infrastructural projects, were constructed with a broader social program in mind. This broader social program was part of the liberal drive to better integrate Peru into a single “rationalized” nation state, formed with the interests of the Lima based elites in mind. Through these two examples the author shows that infrastructure in this region of Peru was decidedly a part of the greater political and social discourses and was not simply “hardware”.

Emily Genser: Genser analyzes the impact of public art works in Hatshepsut’s regime as Pharaoh in the ancient Egyptian Empire. Upon her husband’s untimely death, Hatshepsut was intended to reign as regent Pharaoh until her nephew was old enough to assume his position as Pharaoh. However, Hatshepsut maintained her reign until her death. Even though she was a woman, she managed to maintain control of her empire with little protest. Genser argues that she managed to do so by implementing a creative and effective public works program. Hatshepsut intended these works to highlight ties between her and the gods in the minds of her people. Ultimately, Genser argues that Hatshepsut’s technique of mythologizing propaganda was effective, and allowed her to continue her rule peacefully.

Luke McGeehan: In the 1970s, New York City faced a financial crisis whose impact can be seen today. Once a beacon of social welfare policies and generous government spending, New York City was forced to restructure the way it functioned in order to manage the debt it had accrued. The government transformed into a business-friendly entity, ultimately fostering the continued commerce the city sees today. However, this was at the expense of many of the social policies once enjoyed by the inhabitants of city. Luke McGeehan discusses the history of the collapse, the organizations that sought to correct it, and the ultimate impact it had on New York City.

Daniella Montemarano: This essay explores the ways in which Leopold II of Belgium was able to manipulate and maneuver himself within both domestic and international spheres to carve out the Congo Free State as his private domain. This contrasted greatly with the status of his power in Belgium, bound by a constitution and a parliament wary of monarchy. Within this paper Leopold II comes to be seen as more than just a despot but a clever statesman whose pursuit of African territory came to influence both international relations and the division of Africa’s interior.

Margaret Rippe: Nineteenth-century women living in the United States found themselves encouraged to follow a largely inaccessible doctrine: the Cult of True Womanhood. This principle held that women needed to concern themselves only with the home and display certain virtues, such as piety and submission. Rippe’s paper explores the how the gender normalization of the times intersected with the xenophobia that developed in response to increased immigration. In regard specifically to the Irish immigrants, she details the way in which wealthy, white Americans could use the “Cult” to exclude Irish women from identification with them along racial lines.

Philip Rosenstein: “‘Alien’ Revolutionaries” explores the influence of Eastern European immigrant communities on the growth and eventual failure of the radical Communist movement in the United States. These communities during the first two decades of the twentieth century mobilized politically through local, and eventually national, Language Federations. Using membership statistics and correspondence from many of these Federations and the larger Leftist parties with which they were affiliated, this paper seeks to qualify the effect of the Federations’ involvement in national politics, whether they encouraged or hindered the success of American radicalism. The conclusion of Alien Revolutionaries falls somewhere between two extremes, for the Federations first provided a large amount of the American Left’s support until the Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent Red Scare turned many immigrants either to support only Soviet Communism or to avoid it entirely, abandoning the possibility of a successful Leftist revolution in the United States.

Eitan Sosner: Eitan Sosner’s look into the failed mayoral bid of Henry George gives fascinating insight into the quarrelsome political world of New York City in the late 19th century. Sosner compellingly argues why George could have been the perfect person to
The Fighting Irish: Examining the Conflicting Press Coverage of Bloody Friday
Afton Cissell

Bloody Sunday, known as one of the most violent and politically important events in the Northern Ireland conflict, has been memorialized around the world in songs, poems, and reports. Investigations and apologies for the tragic murder of fourteen Catholic demonstrators at the hands of British soldiers followed the January 30, 1972 massacre.

What the media and much of the public has forgotten is Bloody Sunday’s counterpoint, Bloody Friday. July 21, 1972 marked a devastating day in the nationalist conflict between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and British forces. Over twenty bombs were detonated in seventy-five minutes in the city of Belfast in what was described as a “blitzkrieg” that killed somewhere between nine and thirteen and wounded approximately one hundred thirty people. Casualty lists have remained unclear due to the mutilation of bodies and the inability of morticians to properly reconstruct human forms.

The Provisional IRA accepted full responsibility for the bombings, but speculation surrounded the attacks, as the IRA customarily notified local enforcement agencies before bombings to avoid casualties and the British left two sites vulnerable. Unionists and loyalists quickly dubbed the attack “Bloody Friday” to identify its savagery as equal to that of “Bloody Sunday.” Opinions starkly varied about the responsibility of all actors and the justness of IRA tactics. The drastically different newspaper coverage in Irish versus Irish-American media exemplified the heated debates surrounding Bloody Friday and revealed the challenges free media faced when covering a sensitive event close to readers.

The year 1972 was one of the most violent in British-Irish history. The fighting between the IRA and the British intensified in the province of Ulster as both sides attempted to assert control over the region. Following the dissolution of the home rule Stormont government in March, the British government subjected Northern Ireland direct rule and attacks quickly escalated on both sides. Local citizens came to numbly accept the violence and expect the sounds of ticking bombs and gunshots.

A tentative ceasefire had fallen apart two weeks prior to Bloody Friday and grotesque attacks from British and Irish groups became everyday occurrences. The IRA killed eight soldiers and a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) immediately after the ceasefire ended on July 9.1 British loyalists tortured Catholics with hangings, stabblings, rapes, and shootings. One particularly disturbing case involved the rape of a mother in front of her mentally ill son and the subsequent shooting of the boy.2 But this brutality paled in the public mind on July 21 at 2:15 when the bombs began exploding.

Several interviews and detailed research have provided graphic reconstructions of the chaos and carnage on that afternoon. Survivor Mrs. Jessie McDowell recounted finding a car parked on the sidewalk in front of her shop with a suspicious box of wires inside. She contacted the police, who quickly ordered her to evacuate the area and warn as many people as possible. She tried to warn a young boy peering into the car to run away, but he did not notice and Mrs. McDowell continued on to alert others.3 That boy was later identified as Stephen Parker, son of Reverend Joe Parker. Stephen was killed...
during the bomb blast while alerting others. He was posthumously awarded the Queen’s Commendation for bravery and his father began a peace movement in Northern Ireland called Witness for Peace. Mrs. McDowell was one of the estimated one hundred thirty people wounded on that Friday. She later stated:

I just looked and the blood was running down my leg and my arm. I don’t know what hit me. ... The shop was on fire and the car was on fire and that was the last I’d seen of that. We had no idea how devastating a bomb could be. A police officer on Oxford Street, one of two locations that saw casualties, later reported:

One of the most horrendous memories for me was seeing a head stuck to a wall. A couple of days later we found vertebrae and ribs on the roof of a nearby building. The reason we found it was because the seagulls were diving on it. I’ve tried to put it to the back of my mind for twenty-five years.

Records such as these were used to inspire international outrage and charges of terrorism. The Catholic hierarchy was outspoken in its condemnation of Bloody Friday and IRA tactics. Dr. Cathal Daly, a prominent bishop, denounced “the abuse of power to crush human rights in Northern Ireland” and Dungannon priest Denis Faul “issued a most earnest appeal to the Provisional IRA to ‘cease from actions endangering human life and property.’” These high profile religious figures found the IRA responsible for the destruction and any excuse or justification futile. While the Catholic Church did not directly condemn the IRA as terrorists, they did accuse the IRA of “intimidating you, trying to get you to act against your conscience.”

Aside from contending with Irish Catholic anger following Bloody Friday, the accused IRA had to regain the confidence of an Irish-American public that usually supported liberation efforts. The Irish-American diaspora had established the Northern Irish Aid Committee (NORAIM) in 1969 to raise monetary and material support for Irish Catholics. This exposed them to the frequent accusation of supporting IRA terrorist activities and the organization was caught up in many arms-dealing scandals. However, following the ‘Bloody Friday’ bombings of July 1972, NORAIM warned the Provisionals that their tactics were harming American support. NORAIM stood by the Irish by staging protests against Nixon’s support of the removal of British NATO troops from Germany to Ulster “to back up the British oppression of the Irish people.” However, the group realized that the IRA was quickly losing any potential support in the U.S. The government continued to send financial support to the British and President Nixon attached American soldiers to bases in Ireland as “explicit acknowledgment of U.K. sovereignty over Northern Ireland.” Most importantly, the American public was disgusted with the IRA’s history of car bombings and would support Nixon’s policies if the IRA did not clean up its image. Irish-Americans did not want the IRA to lose legitimacy, nor could they afford to be associated with a terrorist organization.

The IRA had to respond quickly to the outraged citizens of Belfast, government officials, and the international community. They accepted responsibility for Bloody Friday, but “point[ed] out that the following organizations were informed of bomb positions at least thirty minutes to one hour before each explosion: the Samaritans, the Public Protection Agency, the rumour service, and the press.” NORAIM and other Irish American organizations partnered with the IRA and its political unit, Sinn Fein, to disseminate propaganda throughout the U.S. as a “source of inspiration for the committed and to provide points of reference.” The IRA knew they could not win independence through sheer force but instead needed to organize strategically timed events to wage “a campaign of leverage, using the economic, international, and domestic side-effects of their violence on the British public and government to cause the necessary asset-liability shift.” The IRA used pamphlets and newspapers to “prove the hopelessness as well as the brutality of security measures, using such schemes as the ‘long war... justified reaction’... ‘security force incompetence’... and ‘inevitable triumph’ of the revolution.”

Maurice Burke of Irish Northern Aid, an Irish-American organization that supported freedom for Northern Ireland, later published a pamphlet addressing the history of the IRA and defending many of its actions. “Decade of Terror” stated:

The British Army has also, for propaganda purposes, on occasion deliberately ignored IRA warnings. Seven civilians and two soldiers were killed by bombs placed by the IRA in Cavehill and Oxford Street, Belfast, on July 21, 1972. The Public Protection Agency and the Samaritans have both confirmed that they received advance warnings which they passed on immediately. While nothing was done to clear civilians from the area, the British Broadcasting Corporation was alerted in time ‘for on the spot coverage of the explosions and the aftermath.’

The accusation that the British government was truly responsible for the casualties and that they allowed these deaths to occur on purpose became the subject of heated debate. Prior to Bloody Friday, the IRA enjoyed considerable support and protection in “no-go” areas within the city limits of Belfast. Members erected barricades as the IRA asserted power over Catholic locals. The British were afraid to cross into these areas. British politicians, such as Prime Minister Edward Heath and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw, knew that entering the no-go areas would create chaos and many casualties. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and British military could not afford the public outcry that would accompany lengthy casualty lists. They determined that it was better in the long run to respect the no-go areas and allow the barricades rather than risk further violence. This situation outraged Whitelaw and others as they were forced to allow the IRA the upper hand in certain areas; in response, the British cabinet plotted military strategies to reassert power in the no-go neighborhoods. They waited until public opinion would accept direct military intervention in Belfast.

Bloody Friday provided such an opportunity, as it “overlay Bloody Sunday sufficiently to make it politically possible for the army to gather its strength at last to destroy the IRA’s no-go haven of Free Derry in Operation Motorman, and other operations in Belfast.” On July 27 the British Cabinet concluded:
The operation should consist of rapid and simultaneous penetration into the several areas concerned, in order to inflict maximum damage upon the capability of the IRA to wage its campaign of terrorism while keeping to a minimum the risk of casualties to persons other than terrorists.19

Operation Motorman had finally been approved, and in the span of ten days after Bloody Friday the British military presence in the North increased to 21,000 soldiers. On July 31, 5,000 invaded the no-go areas “as the army sent armoured cars, Land Rovers, and bulldozers into the Bogside and Creggan to break down the fortifications that had scaled off the nationalist half of the city for nearly a year.”20 The operation dismantled barricades in Catholic neighborhoods that were known for supporting the IRA, but did not extend into Protestant areas that housed extremist groups such as the Vanguard and the Ulster Defense Association. Motorman was the largest single British operation since 1945 and had been planned long before Bloody Friday. The IRA attack was used as “further propaganda assistance”21 to enact a military strike with minimal negative reaction.

Whitelaw stated that “The general revulsion against the IRA which resulted from the bombing encouraged me to hope that the climate was right for the major action in Londonderry and the rest of the province.”22 This exploitation of Bloody Friday cast suspicion on British forces as to whether Whitelaw’s political agenda or the IRA’s careless planning was more responsible for the carnage. Media sources embodied the arguments: the Irish press condemned the IRA while the Irish-American press condemned the British.

Dublin newspaper Irish Independent devoted extensive coverage to Bloody Friday and Operation Motorman, but none of their articles defended IRA actions. The paper dubbed Bloody Friday a “bomb holocaust”23 and gave detailed descriptions of street scenes during the attacks. The term ‘blitz’ was frequently used and Irish Independent did not hesitate to call the July 21 bombings ‘Bloody Friday.’ James Kelly, the paper’s Northern political editor, claimed he had never “seen scenes so horrible in this city and one felt a deep feeling of anger and shame that such deeds were planned and carried out by fellow Irishmen.”24 Kelly discussed the “sick feeling that no cause could ever justify such indiscriminate and unprovoked punishment of the innocent.”25 His outrage did not extend to the violence that preceded Bloody Friday. Kelly did not mention the murders, abuse, occupation, or internment that British and Protestant forces had used to terrorize the Irish Catholic public. He was angered that there were “innocent” Irish victims on Bloody Friday, but he failed to acknowledge that the British did not act on all of the IRA’s warnings of bomb locations and that casualties occurred at two locations that the RUC did not evacuate.

Unlike any major publication in Ireland, the Irish-American press gave harsh critiques of British forces and defended the IRA. Bronx-based Irish People strongly supported the IRA and republican ideology. It accused the British Army of having “a total disregard for the lives of innocent women and children”26 when it made “a deliberate attempt to discredit the Republican Army”27 by not forwarding the IRA’s warnings of bomb attacks. The paper listed the number of women and children killed as well as specific ages of wounded victims in order to emphasize their ‘innocence’ and the cold indifference of the British. The same edition of the paper included articles detailing violence committed against Irish Catholics and the oppressiveness of British rule following the breakdown of the previous ceasefire. One particularly harrowing account described the rape of a Catholic widow living in the Protestant Belfast neighborhood of Southport St. in Oldpark. Sally McLennaghan was beaten, raped, shot, and robbed by four hooded men. They also murdered her mentally ill son, David, after “innocently he told them it was the Sacred Heart”28 where they attended church. The article did not hold a particular group responsible for the attack, but it identified Mrs. McLennaghan as the only Catholic in a Protestant neighborhood, which suggested she was targeted for her faith – a typical occurrence in Northern Ireland in 1972. By including coverage of grotesque violence committed against Catholics in Belfast alongside their account of Bloody Friday, Irish People implied that the IRA was justified in its tactics and the British and Protestants were the true terrorists.

Irish Independent did not discuss previous violence as a possible motivation or justification for Bloody Friday. The IRA was continuously used as a scapegoat for all political violence in Northern Ireland. British and Protestant murderers were not discussed and the IRA was blamed for the stalling of peace talks. Public outcry for justice and an understanding that “ends and means cannot be divorced”29 dominated the Irish Independent pages without ever quoting the IRA. One of the victims’ funerals became a platform to denounce the IRA and prophesize that “if new societies are brought about by terror and destruction, they bear the marks of those methods.”30 The mourner pleaded with the congregation to reject the IRA’s tactics. Irish Independent focused its coverage on the anger the IRA faced from all parties concerning Bloody Friday.

The Dublin paper, also implied that the IRA purposefully killed people on Bloody Friday and took pleasure in their ‘success.’ Sinn Fein’s president, Tomas Mac Giolla, reportedly found the “Provos were in a state of euphoria, thinking they had won the day.”31 However, Giolla was not directly quoted and there was no evidence that the IRA celebrated Bloody Friday. The article implied that the IRA wanted casualties, even though the organization released a statement accepting responsibility and expressing regret over the deaths immediately following the event. The IRA also restructured its leadership because Seamus Twomey was found unfit for command in Belfast after the ill-planned attack. Many IRA leaders, including Gerry Adams, admitted “it is a moot point whether the IRA operations just stretched the British too far… or whether they deliberately failed to act in relation to two of the bombs, but it is clear that the IRA made a mistake in putting out so many bombs.”32 Adams understood that regardless of intention, the IRA should have been more thoughtful in planning Bloody Friday. Irish Independent did not include the IRA’s public or private statements, but instead made false speculations.

Accusations of IRA delight and purposeful murder were common in the Irish press immediately after the event. The IRA was accused of having “the objective of securing the maximum human carnage”33 by selecting locations and times that “were busy and crowded with people seems to have been a deliberate attempt to bring about indiscriminate and brutal human slaughter.”34 This article reported the IRA’s claim of responsibility, but did not include the expression of regret or the accusation that the British did not act on warnings. Instead, the IRA’s statement was said to only evoke “shame that such deeds are perpetrated in the name of Irish ideals.”35 Irish Independent appeared eager to distance itself from the IRA and defend Irish Catholic morality. The
Following Whitelaw’s July 24 speech to the House of Commons and vague warnings of an upcoming military action, Irish Independent began diverting its coverage from vivid descriptions of the Bloody Friday carnage to summaries of political statements and public wrangling. The paper made one brief mention of Whitelaw’s opinion that “in conditions of war...a sentence of prison is no deterrent because with the peace will come amnesty, men who do these things must take the risk of death and it must come by courts martial.” The author did not go on to discuss the implications of a wartime capital punishment policy or public sentiment on the subject. This glossing over of an important political move exemplified the paper’s unwillingness to criticize the British government, or even to critique their policies.

On July 30 Sunday Independent, the special Sunday edition of Irish Independent, finally gave credence to the IRA’s public statement by confirming that the Public Protection Agency’s log book had noted warnings for all of the bombs and these warnings were forwarded to security forces. The article did not evoke any of its previous statements regarding Bloody Friday or elaborate on the confirmation of warnings. Nevertheless, following the revelation that the IRA did not intentionally incur casualties on Bloody Friday, Irish Independent coverage softened. The paper quoted one person defending the organization. Aontacht Eireann member Ger Carroll’s was quoted saying that some of his friends were “among the so-called murderers and terrorists” that Gibbons denounced.

While in his statement, Carroll does not show Irish Independent defending the IRA or proving its justness, he does acknowledge that the IRA retained some support. The paper also eased its way into criticizing the British government by questioning the effectiveness of Operation Motorman. One article detailed British failures to capture members of the IRA or “persuade the Bogsidlers that they were any better off without their former protectors.” The author looked at Motorman one-dimensionally as a mission to stamp out the IRA rather than as one intended to make a political statement regarding British rule in Northern Ireland. Government officials and opposition leaders were not quoted in the article, but the Irish press took its first step in showing the cracks and shortcomings in British policy following Bloody Friday.

Unlike Dublin-based Irish Independent, the Irish-American press never wavered in its defense of the IRA. Irish People revisited the Bloody Friday case in August 1972 to construct a justification of the IRA’s actions. The paper used the word ‘warning’ eleven times in one article, “Belfast Bombings: The Truth,” to reiterate that the IRA did not want fatalities and every step was taken to ensure purely economic damage. The article accused the British Army of falsifying statements to suit its purposes and ignoring warnings “to use the resulting injuries and deaths as propaganda in their war against the struggle for liberation.” The author then discussed the political reaction to Bloody Friday in Ireland and the manipulation of events for “the chance to call for the destruction of the Republican Movement.” Irish People criticized party politicians for being jealous of IRA control over the North and British willingness to conduct peace talks with the IRA. The paper pointed to the National Liberation Front’s hypocritical support of the Viet Cong and the bombing campaign in Vietnam, while in Ireland the Front denounced the IRA’s similar tactics. Irish People also drew attention to hypocrisy in the Catholic Church’s truce denouncement of the IRA when Cardinal Conway turned a blind eye towards aggressive Protestant groups and the ‘purposeful picking out of over twenty
The paper was very candid concerning the violence of the loyalist Ulster Defense Association and their equivalently, if not even more extremely, brutal activities compared to the IRA.

Irish papers had to be more delicate in their coverage than Irish diaspora media because of a sensitive and deeply affected readership. A printed statement could spark a violent reaction in such volatile regions. The Irish-American press was able to push boundaries since Protestant reprisals were unlikely in the United States. Irish-Americans were able to express their anger towards the British and defend the IRA without fear of direct retribution. They were conscious of the need for American support in order for a united Irish republic to exist, but the Irish-American press also wanted a platform for the IRA since major publications were not giving them a voice. Many Irish-Americans had left Ireland to escape British repression and destructive policies. Unfortunately, none of the media coverage concerning Bloody Friday or the aftermath gave true voice to the Irish Republican Army or its members. There were no quotes from the organization concerning July 21 in the Irish press and the restructuring of the IRA’s leadership was not covered.

Aside from the niche Irish-American media, outlets typically framed the IRA’s goal as the maximization of fatalities rather than economic damage. Mainstream publications such as Irish Independent also charged the IRA with responsibility for political stalling and the lack of an established peace. Whitelaw’s reaction to Bloody Friday was viewed as a new hardliner policy even though military intervention was his chief priority and most desired approach to the Northern Ireland question. Irish People took advantage of their unique position as a publication created by and for a population largely displaced by British rule. The newspaper was a therapeutic source to voice complaints, criticisms, and accusations.

The Irish press was subtler in their discussions of the conflict and did not ease pressure off the IRA until British institutions confirmed warnings were sent. Considering the widespread support of IRA efforts and the continuance of safe houses throughout Northern Ireland, it is unlikely that the organization suffered a significant backlash from the Irish. Irish media coverage did not appear to reflect Irish opinion, but instead was a puppet for the British government. Major institutions, such as newspapers and the Catholic Church, could not risk openly aligning with a rebel group while the British retained political and military control. It was the smaller and relatively unknown Irish-American press that was able to publically champion the IRA and continue to give life to a political and social question that continues to be debated to this day.

Notes:

4. Ibid., 176.
5. Ibid., 178.
6. Ibid., 176.
7. Alan Parkinson, 1972 and the Ulster Troubles (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 204.
8. Ibid., 152.
9. Ibid.
Modern Technology: A Catalyst of Warfare in Africa
Alix Cohen

International demand for Africa’s valuable natural resources fuels many wars in African states. While the media has publicized conflicts over diamonds and gold, less is known about other resource-driven conflicts – particularly, those used for the creation of new technological advances. Modern technologies require some of the most sought-after minerals, including: coltan used for cell phones and computers, uranium for atomic bombs, tungsten for airplanes and incandescent lights, rubber for automobile tires, oil and natural gasses for automobile power, etc. External demand for these resources elevates their profitability, causing the scramble for them and as a result, unfair economic practices such as monopolies or exploitation by governments and neighboring states. This corruption leads to political unrest, and in many cases, insurgencies or divisions of a state into feuding segments. Although international demand for valuable resources has exacerbated many conflicts in Africa, for the sake of brevity, I will focus on wars deriving from demand for coltan in the Democratic Republic of Congo and rubber in Liberia. Because of their similarities, these examples elucidate issues in many other countries as well, including Nigeria, Sudan, and Sierra Leone, and underscore the direct link between technological advances and warfare in Africa.

The second war in the Congo (1998-2003), the most lethal war since World War II, was triggered by an insurgency by the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) but was deeply rooted in economic crises resulting from the country’s history of government exploitation of valuable resources, including coltan, uranium, and tungsten. Former president Mobutu Sese Seko (in power from 1965-1997) epitomized this exploitation, setting up an informal system of rule relying on “patronage, intermediary institutions, and control over clandestine markets.” His form of government came to be known as a “kleptocracy” because his administration stole the country’s resources to such a blatant extreme. While Mobutu grew exceedingly wealthy, the Congo fell into deep economic crises in the 1980s, resulting in political instability that necessitated the end of single-party rule. Fierce power struggles and political rivalries erupted, leading to an insurgency by the RCD at the start of Mobutu’s successor’s, Laurent Kabila, presidency. The country became divided into the three main zones of influence: under Kabila, the RCD, and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC). Conflict between these rivaling factions erupted in the 1998 war. International demand fueled this power-struggle induced war by elevating the price of resources like coltan, leading to Mobutu’s corruption and the subsequent political unrest. The fact that Western countries, specifically the U.S., remained major trade partners with Mobutu sends the message that external actors will turn a blind eye to political malpractice as long as they receive their desired resources. This economic relationship intertwines global trade with political factions in the Congo, furthering conflicts beyond national borders.

Exploitation of the Congo’s minerals extends beyond that of government officials like Mobutu. Evidence reveals that the rebel group leading the insurgency, the RCD, as well as their Rwandan allies intervening in the war had strong economic interests for their joint presence. This group particularly exploited coltan deposits, which are predominantly concentrated in the northeast region of the Congo, bordering Rwanda. In 1998-99, the RCD took control of 1,000-1,500 tons of coltan stocks, and in 2000, they produced 100-200 tons of coltan a month, yielding larger profits than their diamond mining. In 1999 alone, the United Nations Panel of Experts estimated Rwanda’s overall revenues from its military commercialism in the Congo to amount to $320 million, about 20% of their gross national product that year. This emphasizes that it is not resources in general, but, specifically, those that are used for technological advances that are being heavily exploited in the Congo. Rwanda’s immense gains from coltan further reveal that it is not just Western demand fueling the war, but also demand from neighboring states that is catalyzing the chaos.

Although resources beyond coltan contributed to the war in the Congo, the rush for this mineral provides a clear example of how the scramble for resources can result in war. International demand made the resource immensely profitable, leading to exploitation by the government (Mobutu) and rebel groups (the RCD), political unrest, and ultimately, a devastating war that resulted in the death of an estimated 5.6 million people.

The scramble for rubber in Liberia also presents a prime example of how technological advancements and international demand for the country’s natural resources results in brutal conflict and war. While Liberia’s resources include agricultural produce like cocoa and coffee, as well as high-value minerals like timber, diamonds, and gold, its chief exports are rubber and iron ore, both used in the production of new technologies including automobiles and machinery. When cars first started being mass-produced, an American businessman, Harvey Firestone, founded a major company for rubber tires, rapidly elevating the demand for rubber. Economic exploitation of this now highly valuable resource became common amongst Liberia’s government officials and elites (descendants of former Afro-American slaves), and led to political instability in the country. For instance, former Liberian presidents Tolbert, Tubman, and Doe employed a policy of converting agricultural land from communal to private, throwing local farmers off while giving already powerful elites opportunity to gain control over these highly profitable rubber farms. These estates covered 15% of Liberia’s territory, and “gave the elites a new opportunity to build ties to foreign purchasers of their products,” while local peoples became essentially slaves. Moreover, international companies’ demand for rubber led to massive foreign investment in the country. Firestone Tire and Rubber has invested in Liberia since 1926, and by 1970, Firestone and the Liberian Iron Mining Company (LIMCO) provided 50% of government revenues. This reliance on foreign investment, the separation of classes enhanced by private rubber farms, and Doe’s inability to control the distribution of illicit resources (and thus consolidate his power) caused political distress, and in 1989, civil war broke out between two rebel groups attempting to seize power.

The rebel group leaders, Charles Taylor (who eventually assumed power) and Prince Johnson, both extorted valuables from the population. International demand for rubber was still so high that Taylor was able to convince Firestone to collaborate with him on a 1992 attack. The company allowed Taylor to use their communications devices to launch the operation, while in return he used his security forces to control workers on their plantations. Firestone was trying to protect fixed assets during the war and their willingness to collaborate in a violent attack to protect their resources highlights how...
valuable rubber had become: a foreign company participated in an act that would kill Liberian citizens in order to protect a resource that would be sold to international states.

A second instance that indicates international demand for rubber’s huge affect on the conflict is that the Nigerian-led UN “peacekeeping” force in Liberia even made alliances with rebel factions in order to gain their own profits from the country’s resources.\textsuperscript{15} While the widespread production of automobiles and demand for rubber tires and other rubber/iron ore products was not the only factor causing this civil war, it certainly played a large role. Moreover, although this was not the only conflict in Liberia, as violence continued throughout the ’90s with a rebel uprising erupting in 2003,\textsuperscript{16} in this war, about 200,000 people died and more than half of the country’s population became refugees.\textsuperscript{17} The links between these deaths and demand for rubber by the international community are clear: civil war was fueled by separation of classes that resulted from resource exploitation, which was catalyzed by the skyrocketing demand for rubber in the West after the creation of the automobile.

There are many other examples of where international demand for natural resources, particularly for the creation of new technologies, led to conflict in Africa. Demand for oil and natural gas contributed to political destruction in Nigeria and Sudan. Nigeria had been one of the leading African countries in terms of establishing democracy until 1983, when it fell under the rule of northern military dictators who exploited Nigeria’s vast oil and natural gas reserves. Exploitation of oil was so extreme that under one leader, “over $12 million of windfall petroleum revenues generated during the 1991 Gulf War had unaccountably disappeared.”\textsuperscript{18} These dictators’ profits soared while amongst the Nigerian people poverty was widespread, public transportation collapsed, and health care and education systems were destroyed, leaving the country at the brink of civil war in 1998.\textsuperscript{19} Moreover, these profits were undoubtedly attributable to international demand as the United States, many European nations, and now China are all major purchasers of Nigeria’s resources.\textsuperscript{20} Demand for oil in Sudan has likewise caused exploitation by rulers in the north (although the majority of the nation’s oil reserves lie in the south), greatly contributing to the recurring civil wars between the two regions.\textsuperscript{21}

Conflicts fueled by external demand for resources needed for the creation of technologies are many and flourishing. Although diamonds are the most commonly noted conflict-mineral in Sierra Leone, exploitation of rutile and iron ore used for automobiles and machinery and titanium used for aircraft and missiles also contributes to political turmoil.\textsuperscript{22} Clearly, a vast number of African countries have been affected by the advancement of new technologies and the consequent demand for rare minerals. This is not to undermine other factors contributing to warfare, such as religion and ethnicity, or to remove blame from the corrupt government officials in these countries. Yet, it is important to note the vast extent to which routine, unquestioned technologies are fueling political conflicts, and in some cases, wars resulting in thousands, even millions, of deaths. Deep institutional instability in these countries inhibits change. For instance, profiting political figures such as Mobutu do not reinvest their earnings into their country’s infrastructure because of a lack of stable systems in place. They exploit the wealth of their country and then move funds to external banks leaving their nation in poverty, with little room for progress.\textsuperscript{23} International actors ignoring this systemic issue and turning a blind eye to corrupt practices if they are able to obtain desired resources further prevents improvement, for without external pressure, it is unlikely that change will be made. Although African nations like Liberia and the Congo may be geographically distant from trade partners such as the United States, the coltan in American cell phones and rubber in U.S. automobile tires make these nations incredibly linked. Without addressing the global ties to civil wars and political chaos in Africa, the root of these conflicts cannot be corrected.

Notes:

\textsuperscript{1} Richard W. Hull, “Congo” lecture, Warfare in Africa, New York University, College of Arts and Science, October 19, 2010.

\textsuperscript{2} Morten Boss and Kevin C. Dunn, African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2007), 114.


\textsuperscript{4} Boss and Dunn, African Guerrillas, 115-116.

\textsuperscript{5} Hull, “Congo,” October 19, 2010.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{8} Boss and Dunn, African Guerrillas, 127.


\textsuperscript{11} Herbert M. Howe, Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2005), 132.


\textsuperscript{13} Edgerton, Africa’s Armies, 159.

\textsuperscript{14} Reno, Warlord Politics, 100.

\textsuperscript{15} Edgerton, Africa’s Armies, 161.


\textsuperscript{17} Reno, Warlord Politics, 79.

\textsuperscript{18} Edgerton, Africa’s Armies, 169-171.

\textsuperscript{19} Edgerton, Africa’s Armies, 169-171.


\textsuperscript{21} Hull, Sudan,” October 7, 2010.

\textsuperscript{22} Edgerton, Africa’s Armies, 162.

embedded within other structures, infrastructure is ready made and transparent. This means that it fulfills its tasks continuously after being set up once, as in the cases of roads, which do not need to be repaved for every car that rolls over them. Also, the spatial and temporal contours of infrastructure are such that it reaches across various sites and through various events. Power lines deliver electricity across vast expanses of territory and over several instances in time (events), arriving at houses, office buildings and hospitals. Infrastructure is also relational; the knowledge of the infrastructures that support a community is often a prerequisite for membership in those communities and new entrants generally seek out infrastructural knowledge immediately upon arrival. The knowledge is varied; the shortest routes to particular destinations, the right freeway exits, and the closest train stops.

Infrastructures take on their final form only after the way particular uses of them take root among large numbers of users. What begins as a novel, small-scale use of infrastructure, an individual or small group, soon begins to spread, eventually becoming a widely accepted practice. These shared conventions of practice are one of the strongest forces in the development and trajectory of additions and modifications to the infrastructural form, especially when the users creating the conventions form or belong to existing institutions. This notion of user-driven change in the development of infrastructure has a technical dimension, namely the fact that infrastructure is usually found on an already installed base (e.g. telegraph lines following railroad lines), sometimes making the new ideas for using infrastructure possible. Another technical characteristic of infrastructure is its propensity to change in increments, never all at once. These incremental changes are the product of societal demands on these new technologies, not the product of a technological zeal to innovate.

The central feature of infrastructure, for my purposes, is the aforementioned propensity for it to disappear. This phenomenon is as much the result of a process of naturalization (beginning to take the systems as given) as it is an absolving. Infrastructure begins to be conceived of as natural when it is reliable and more directly, when its design selects “properties of the natural environment which we find most useful and comfortable, providing others which the natural environment cannot, and eliminating features we find dangerous, uncomfortable, or merely inconvenient.” The development of infrastructural systems constitutes the construction of a new natural reality, complete with its own set of possibilities and conditions. This powerful, invisible effect of infrastructural systems is not readily available in historical narrative because it is often treated simply as the hardware (tool) used to achieve a higher purpose.

The formulaic approach taken by historians writing on social transformations greatly aided by infrastructural development is as follows: first, a technological advance permits the acceleration of an already ongoing, large-scale social transformation, or it turns a possible transformation into an actionable one. Then, the social transformation that is accelerated or that emerges with the new technological capacity begins to rupture the established structural arrangements in society. As the new structural arrangements are re-articulated following the rupture, the societal transformation (aided by the new infrastructural systems) is deemed complete. A closer look reveals that the infrastructural systems deployed in any societal transformation are not just the tools used to build the new reality, but also the first exhibit of the changes being effected, whether they become durable ones or not. This view of infrastructure as hardware removes from view the
class of liberals, detached from their forbearers that had seen Peru through independence, used the Revista to disseminate their political thought as widely as possible. The tracts and policy prescriptions published during the short, three-year lifespan of the magazine entered political discussion in Lima as white papers, offering an indication of the priorities that a government composed of the "civilian rationalizers," well-trained and stability minded Lima elites, would pursue when and if in power.13

Pardo laid out his vision for replacing the temporary economic engine of guano with a more sustainable one in an 1860 study published in the Revista.14 The sixty-six page document, Estudios sobre la Provincia de Jauma, centers on a careful case study of Jauma, a province within the central highlands of Peru that formed one end of an in-progress rail project. Understanding that the capacity of guano production was untenable and that the resource itself was visibly finite, Pardo articulated a vision for Peru that hinged its fortunes on the construction of a vast railway network. These railways would turn the guano profits, otherwise disappearing into increasingly bloated budgets, into durable, long lasting mechanisms by which to carry out the broader goal of turning the Andean hinterland into a producing and manufacturing region.17 Guano from the coast would also be put to use fertilizing crops in the highlands, exponentially boosting the yearly harvest. Pardo, in Estudios, gave guano a continued productive role lasting between ten or twelve years. Following this last gasp of profit, Pardo argued, the revenues from guano would dry up and send the "civilization back to barbarie." The vision in Estudios is far from narrow, as it encompasses a plan for utilizing the envisioned railroads for developing coal mining in the interior, and a scheme for exporting wool products.19 Pardo drifts from railways to evaluate plans to finance the railways and suggestions for fiscal reform, but the common theme throughout the work is a demand for a robust infrastructural network:

Can we hope for more favorable conditions for the establishment of any industry? But what do these conditions serve, when the transport of raw material for a great factory—supplying some forty leagues (224km) of Peru—costs double the value of the material. Can it then be done? Make roads and all will grow from the soil; without them, all efforts are useless.19

Despite the loftiness of Pardo's writings, he approached the practical work of starting infrastructure projects from a grounded, analytical point of view. As Paul Gootenberg notes, "Pardo's developmental vision was eminently small-scale and 'popular'—by and for those 'secondary classes.' It exudes the spirit of Saint-Simonian industrial trabajo."20 Pardo's focus was certainly aimed at creating bottom up growth, in that he viewed the immediate effect of a manufacturing interior as "spawn[ing] modest dividends for their owners and contribute[ing] modestly to the welfare of the populations that sustain them."21 The loftiest facet of Pardo's vision and perhaps the most salient for my concern is his brief but elevated mention of the moral ramifications of a rail-linked nation:

By merely bettering their [highland Indians] moral condition, we can give them those principles of personal dignity and independence without which they can never amount to anything but miserable helots, commoners attached to the soil—and blind instruments of everyone who cuts a cudgel
to order them about. By improving the material condition of our people, we shall erect the most effective barricade against the advances of tyranny, on the one hand, and on the other, against the forces of the anarchists.22

Though we detect no explicit language of national unification, the image of the self-sufficient, enlightened provincial suggests that one source of national disunity, political strife, could be eradicated by the spread of railways. The railroad-transformed provincial, unavailable to the “advances of tyranny” and the opposing forces of “anarchy” (both emanating from Lima), was also a decentralized citizen, capable of spirited participation in what was understood in Lima as “Peru.” Pardo saw the removal of the Indians from their “attachment” to the land as a necessary phenomenon, one of a soon to be modern Peru and one that would permit the highlands to switch to manufacturing centers.

In a series of deft political maneuvers, Pardo raised his political stock considerably in the remainder of the 1860s, building off his work at the Ministry of Interior in the 1850s and his influence in elite circles in Lima. He successfully parlayed his reputation and experience into a series of plum ministerial appointments and served as the mayor of Lima for a year. The caudillo and then president, José Balta, died in a coup shortly after Pardo left the mayoralty. A quick succession of military pretenders to the presidency emerged and delayed Pardo, a civilian, and his designs on the presidency. Upon the removal of the second successor to Balta in July of 1868, elections were organized. Pardo, the thirty-eight year old Partido Civil candidate, won handily. Now in office, Pardo’s evolved vision of modernizing the Peruvian economy began to take hold in the government’s ministries.

It should be noted that Pardo did not arrive at the presidency with only visions of railroads, but also with a solid idea of what the projects would entail and the limits of what was possible. The Revista de Lima had published more than its share of feasibility studies and detailed economic analyses of what railroads could mean for several regions.23 The successful completion of the short Callao-Lima rail line, and the organization it afforded the previously chaotic process dealing with products entering Peru through Callao (Lima’s port), inspired a torrent of similar plans for locations all across Peru. The proposals for these projects explicitly stated benefits of national integration, like Pardo’s Estudios. Gootenberg summarizes the bulk of the pamphleteering and studies as expressing ideals of unity, but also a hidden economic agenda calling for “a disassembled policy of national fiscal redistribution” and an element of “technological dynamism” that saw the railroads as the central civilizing force of the nineteenth century. This faith in the infrastructural capacity of railroads revealed “a fascination with transforming science, under the influence of engineers and explorers that were streaming into the Andes.”24 Pardo’s administration would open the doors to these experts, a great many of whom made long journeys from continental Europe and the British Isles. The reverberations of this “railroad frenzy” would soon be felt outside of the timid Callao-Lima line. Visions of reengineering the interior incited projects spanning the length of Peru’s coast as the turbulence of the 1860s faded into the frenzy of the 1870s. The zeal of regional elites, experts, and Limeño planners would pool into a multipronged infrastructural vision for Peru involving nearly every technological system available at the time.

The Trujillo Railway would be one of the projects caught up in the hurried pace of Pardo’s government. In order to approach the archival record with the aforementioned “inversion” method, I will briefly describe what the inversion method entails and articulate the mechanics of the planner-expert elite’s “railroad frenzy.” The goal of the inversion method, aside from drawing from the background of narrative the infrastructural, is shifting the focus from looking at changes in infrastructural components (new technologies and new implementations) to changes in infrastructural relations (the new relationships forged in-between societies and structures). Therefore, instead of continuing a survey of the planner-expert class discourse on infrastructure, I turn my attention to a less catalogued and relational site of study: the local arrangements of entrepreneurs within the larger railroad development schemes in and the emergence of one element of the infrastructural system arising in Trujillo during the 1870s.

Pardo’s government, wide-eyed in the railroad frenzy and with no shortage of financial expertise, pursued rail development utilizing a multipronged approach. For an indication of what projects were worthwhile, they relied on the already resident foreign entrepreneurs and the advice of national and foreign technical experts, mostly engineers and prophets of industrialism.25 In order to ensure the uniform progress of every rail project, planners in Pardo’s government had to devise mechanisms to stretch the relatively plentiful but nonetheless limited government funds. Either they took control of the entire process; surveying sites, contracting design and financing through completion, or they participated in varying degrees in the different stages of projects, issuing bonds to raise necessary funds.

The method employed for the development of Trujillo Railway is one such example. This is also the effect of the piecemeal nature of the Trujillo Railway, the amalgamation of two different, shorter lines. In 1869, an independent proposal was approved by the government, with a ninety-nine year concession, for a line connecting the producing cities of Malabrigo (a minor port), Patían, and Ascope to the immediate north of Trujillo.26 That contract was eventually folded into the larger project in 1871. The following year, the government determined that a line connecting Trujillo itself to Salaverry, its port, was necessary and took over the entire project. This displaced the intentions of the Trujillo Railway Corporation, an association formed by agricultural elite investors based in Trujillo. After settling with the investors from Trujillo, the government tendered the construction of the line and eventually accepted the bid of Pedro Telmo Larrañaga in June of 1872.27 This new line would connect the northern producing cities to Trujillo and its port, instead of the sleepy port of Malabrigo and would include a branch to the interior city of Pedregal. Land sales began in earnest but disappear from the record until 1875. This is due to the slowly creeping effects of the worldwide depression of 1873. In Peru, this larger disturbance began to affect the strenuous accrualment of external debt, a process due in no small part to the massive development schemes of Pardo’s administration. Despite the ominous signs of what was to come, the projects already commenced did not cease altogether. Land sales continued throughout 1875, with a particularly large purchase of about nine thousand soles (Peruvian currency) taking place that year.28 The northern portion of the line, connecting the producing regions, would be complete and operational by late 1876.29

The period between 1874 and 1876 offers the richest evidence in the way of understanding the “relational” impact of its arrival. The first shift that emerges, with regard to infrastructure, is the growing awareness on the part of the haciendas in Trujillo that state sponsored infrastructural projects could benefit their haciendas,
factory, a sizable 4,400 square meters, was located adjacent to the Trujillo Railway. Little survives from the immediate history of the factory, but early wrangling regarding the legality of the land's purchase reveals that it was indeed lucrative property. A claimant to the land had alleged that the land was in fact the property of an estate and therefore not state property to sell. In order to overcome these legal challenges, Cole repurchased the land in 1876. Overcoming considerable delays, the Trujillo line of the Railway was completed by 1879. Documentation regarding the factory is missing until 1902, when we can begin to understand the factory's purpose. The document in 1902, a land parcel sale, reveals that Felipe's wife, Sarah, became head of the operation upon the death of Felipe some years earlier. Felipe's last mention in the notarial records show him incurring a significant debt for the purchase of a large piece of railway machinery in England. An advertisement printed in a 1906 edition of Trujillo's newspaper, La Industria, by Cole's son finally reveals the bulk of the work that had been carried out in the factory:

Having completed the new arrangements at my factory, I have the honor to offer to the public, especially to those landed gentlemen, and to all who design contract my services that I am able to manufacture immediately any piece, from the smallest to the largest, made of steel, copper or bronze, with the assurance that the latest advances will be employed...

The land sale of 1902 was one aimed at downsizing the factory and shifting the focus from the railroad to general manufacturing. The advertisement in 1906, which ran in subsequent years as well, moves on to list the specific industrial products that can be fabricated to order for the "coast and the interior":

- Mills of various sizes to grind sugarcane, hydraulic wheels, steam engines, mineral mining fans, mills for processing rice, cauldrons, simple and modern winches, machines to grind yucca and corn, iron and copper pumps for sewers, steam valves, machines to saw through beams and in circular forms, calipers for stuff, tubes for water and steam, kitchen irons, elbow joints, curved pipes and flanges of all sizes, tanks for water and chimneys made to order, greasing wheels, round gears, unifiers, rowlocks and pulleys of all sizes, and much more.

Although it seems daunting, the range of the factory's new capacities reveals the situation confronted by the factory after losing a lucrative opportunity upon Felipe's death in England. It also, however, reveals the desire to capitalize on a coming developmental push, engendered in part by the railroad and its new management under the Peruvian Corporation. The Peruvian Corporation proposed a new direction of rail development, this time driven by very specific, extractive goals. The Peruvian Corporation was the committee of bondholders based in London that controlled the Peruvian external debt following Peru's default in the late 1880s. Peru signed the Grace Contract in 1890, which handed over control of all railroads, among other concessions, to the bondholders. The Peruvian Corporation proposed new lines at interior mineral-rich regions and the northern producing regions, commodities over which the Corporation had either total or partial control. In a steadily growing Trujillo, the Fabrica La Libertad...
did not have many colleagues or competitors. A listing of the representatives to a city wide trade fair honoring Peruvian independence day cite Felipe Ford Cole as one of three under the broad category of “machinists.” The factory began cutting down in size in the ensuing decade, with a land sales taking place in 1911, 1913 and then the final one in 1915. Later iterations of the factory would be significantly smaller in scale and would focus on the development of other infrastructural concerns within Trujillo. The planner-expert vision of the railways had envisioned not only a moral revolution, but also one centered on the development of rural manufacturing. Like the import houses, the lethargic machinery sector in Trujillo influenced the development of the Trujillan infrastructural system as embodied in the rail projects. The import houses diverted the direction of the lines, while the machinery sector worked by slowly drawing attention to another important and immediate infrastructural concern, the modernization of Trujillo through the ready supply of the hardware necessary to introduce new infrastructural systems like sewers to the city on a broad scale. The absence of a large machinery sector, limited the growth of the railroad as much as it questioned the vision of a manufacturing interior. If there were no suppliers of the raw industrial hardware necessary to begin primary manufacturing, what were they going to produce?

The cases of the Trujillo Railway and of the Fabrica La Libertad speak to the ways in which infrastructural projects are enormously influenced and even constructed by social forces, especially on the level of institutions. Infrastructure, more than just the foundation, is also the site where the evolution of societies is initially registered. The example of the “railroad frenzy” of the late nineteenth century in Peru demonstrates the ways in which societal institutions formed the development of infrastructure and indeed guided its very direction, and how that very same infrastructure enabled new patterns of social relations. The historical record should be informed against the notion that infrastructure is a feature that became available to the minds of planners, was understood as helpful, and was implemented as if it were simply “hardware.”

Figure 1.1, Trujillo and its vicinity.


Notes:


4 Ibid., 35.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.


8 Ibid., 12.

9 Bowker and Star, Sorting Things out, 34.


11 Ibid.


13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 75.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 76.


18 Ibid., 30. This quotation is also Paul Gootenberg’s translation from pg. 85 of Imagining Development.

19 Gootenberg, Imagining Development, 85. “Saint-Simonian” of course refers to Pardo’s mentor during his time at the College de France in the early 1850s, Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon. Saint-Simon’s notion of “work” separated class theory from economic function, as part of a larger, forvent view of the possibilities of common social enterprise where all had “work” invested.

20 Ibid.

21 Pardo, Estudios Sobre La Provincia De Jaúja, 65. The translation is Paul Gootenberg’s once more.

22 Gootenberg, Imagining Development, 90.

23 Ibid., 93.

24 Foremost amongst the droves of entrepreneurs arriving in Peru in the 1860s and 70s is the infamous Henry Meiggs. Meiggs, a native New Yorker, earned the title “Yankee Pizarro” for his exploits in Peru. His central accomplishments involved successfully swindling a decade of Peruvian politicians of every stripe into backing railway projects that had little benefit, or in some cases none at all, enriching himself but eventually bankrupting Peru.


26 Ibid.


28 Rodney, Railways of South America. 25.

29 Enrique O’Donovan, the patriarch of the O’Donovan family in Trujillo that was engaged in several business concerns, especially those involving infrastructural systems. The least of these concerns would involve not only the arrival of the telegraph to Trujillo, but also the telephone. The O’Donovan family had roots in Trujillo dating back to the early independence era. Enrique’s brother Ricardo would also become a notable veteran of the war with Chile.

30 República Del Perú, Junta Directiva Del Gobierno Regional De La Libertad, Archivo Regional De La Libertad, Acta De Sesiones, 1873-1877 (Trujillo, Peru, 1878), 117.

31 Rodney, Railways of South America. 225.

32 República Del Perú, Junta Directiva Del Gobierno, 110-412.

33 Ibid., 131.

34 Enrique Meiggs, Los Ferrocarriles Del Perú, 797.

35 Import houses were a phenomenon up and down the coast of Peru. In addition to importing goods, they took on myriad roles within their surroundings, including some in finance and investment.

36 Felipe was my great-great grandfather; I am the fourth Cole to bear his exact name.

Hatshepsut's Architectural Propaganda
Emily Genser

Hatshepsut's reign marked a remarkably peaceful period of growth in ancient Egypt's history. Though Hatshepsut was only expected to rule as a co-regent with her young nephew, Thutmose III, until he was old enough to assume the position of Pharaoh, Hatshepsut claimed the position of pharaoh and reigned for nearly two decades. This was the first, and only, time a woman would claim the esteemed position of pharaoh in the ancient Egyptian Empire, from Predynastic Egypt until its fall to the Roman Empire in 31BC. In efforts to protect her unusual position as a female ruler, Hatshepsut commissioned building projects, many in honor of the gods or past pharaohs who had transcended into being gods upon death. In traditional ancient Egypt, the ruler was responsible for ensuring proper worship of the gods. In exchange, the gods would watch over and protect the Egyptian Empire and the Pharaoh from harm. Hatshepsut's projects reminded her subjects to worship properly. She developed public works projects that helped create a prosperous period in all levels of Egyptian society. In addition, by drawing connections between herself and the gods, Hatshepsut was able to secure a strong claim to her royal blood and the throne. These efforts to legitimize her reign and keep her subjects contented through the expansion of Egyptian architecture prevented uprisings against her rule during her twenty year reign.

The Speos Artemidos, translated as the Grotto of Artemis, is located in a deserted valley in Middle Egypt. This remote temple bears a significant inscription from Hatshepsut. On the facade, Hatshepsut engraved that this temple would be dedicated to recording key events during her reign and the building projects she commissioned while in power. As she wrote, "I raised up what was dismembered ... They ruled in ignorance of Re, and acted not by divine command, until my august person." Here, Hatshepsut drew a distinct difference between the past and how she would improve the future of Egypt. The future, as she declared, would see a new commitment to Egypt's religious past, to Re the sun God who ruled over all of Earth, and a complete rebuilding of Egyptian lands from the disrepair and confusion Egypt faced in the Intermediate Second Period, during which Egypt had been left without an heir to the throne, prior to her rule during the 18th Dynasty.

Hatshepsut instigated her agenda by commissioning an extensive network of processional roads in the city of Thebes. These roads led to the temple of Karnak, a symbol of respect for Amun, the god of creation and wind, and a way for worshipers to reach his image, which was enshrined inside. To emphasize the importance of the entrance to the temple of Karnak, Hatshepsut commissioned the construction of more than one hundred sphinxes to line the road along the 500 meters leading to the front of the temple. Additionally, these roads facilitated the transport of the image of Amun from the temple of Karnak to other temples for religious ceremonies and worship.

The processional roads also led to Hatshepsut's arguably most distinguished building project, her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahari. Here, her subjects would bring offerings and pray to her. The impressive rock-cut structure is comprised of several terraces that are built into the bank of the western cliff of the Nile and in the western hills. Though Doric columns, columns carved with vertical designs, plain saucer-shaped...
capitals and no bases, are accredited to beginning in Greece in the seventh century, several basic forms of these columns are used in the north colonade of Hatshepsut's temple which was constructed eight centuries earlier.9 Just three miles from the temple of Karnak, Hatshepsut's mortuary temple faces toward this religious icon. By having her temple constructed to face the direction of Amun, Hatshepsut legitimized her position as Pharaoh and reminded her subjects of the mythological stories and strong connections she professed to share with the god.10

Relief images carved in the walls of her mortuary temple reflect Hatshepsut's belief that she was destined for greatness from an early age. She recorded several mythologizing tales along these walls. Still partially visible, the northern colonade of the middle terrace originally depicted a narrative in which Amun desires to create an image himself to live on earth and carry out his will. In this story, he disguises himself as Tuthmosis I, Hatshepsut's father, and impregnates her mother during the visit.11 On both sides of this conception scene are images of various gods observing as Hatshepsut is presented to Amun and designated king of all of Egypt.12 As the reliefs imply, Amun did not care that his image on earth would be in the shape of a woman. Therefore, no Egyptian should challenge the authority of the gods by disrespecting this female representative.

To the north of this colonade is a shrine dedicated to the jackal-headed god Anubis. Though he is a mortuary god, found normally in the tombs of those he was responsible for protecting, his presence here holds another relevance. Ann Macy Roth argues that "his occurrence here is probably connected to the use of his name to refer to the prince who was designated heir to the throne, a role that Hatshepsut claims in the adjacent birth colonade."13 To the south of the colonade area lays a temple shrine dedicated to the goddess Hathor. Hathor, also a mortuary god, had long been honored as the wife and mother of powerful rulers throughout Egypt's past. In other depictions, Hathor is personified as the western hills, the area where Deir el-Bahri is located. Her purpose in Hatshepsut's temple, as with Anubis, was not as a mortuary god, but instead as a reminder that Hatshepsut was a powerful and legitimate ruler. The entire central terrace serves as a symbolic representation of Hatshepsut's divine conception and her godly connections that would protect her reign from those who opposed her.14

The south wall of this middle terrace shows relief carvings featuring images of Hatshepsut leading an expedition into the land of Punt.15 The present day location of Punt is unknown, but historians assert it must be south of Egypt since the reliefs describe it as the original home of the frankincense-tree. The relief carvings in this area depict a trip that expanded Egypt's foreign presence and, therefore, its power. Images show the departing Egyptian ships headed by Hatshepsut, their arrival in exotic lands, the loading up of the Egyptian ships with a variety of souvenirs, and the necessary preparations for the return voyage home. The products depicted range from ebony and ivory to leopard skins and live baboons.16 The queen of Punt, depicted as an obese and ugly character, is comical when compared to the slender, masculine image of Hatshepsut with her head held high and proud. Though the specific reasons for the expedition are not recorded, many historians assume that the trip was peaceful because artists are also found among the depictions of the explorers.17

The highest terrace in Hatshepsut's mortuary temple has lost most of its majestic qualities because it has not been well preserved, but scenes of offerings to Hatshepsut, her father, and other gods are still visible. This offering hall is located directly above the temple dedicated to Hathor, another suggestion that Hatshepsut aimed to represent herself along side the image of the powerful female god. Furthermore, this terrace also houses colossal statues of Hatshepsut in the mumified garb of Osiris. In this area, Hatshepsut used the images of various gods to legitimize her role as ruler of Egypt and to prevent her opponents from challenging her power.18

It is clear from her tomb that Hatshepsut believed she intended to spend eternity with the man who was her father on Earth, and that she saw this alliance as advantageous. The sarcophagus holding Tuthmosis I was found with Hatshepsut in her tomb, where he had been moved after his death. Her husband, however, remained unmoved nearby in the Valley of Kings. Though her husband was her half-brother, and therefore also of royal blood, he died before he acquired prestige as a Pharaoh. By drawing connections to her father instead, who had been a powerful and beloved Pharaoh before her, and ignoring her less important husband on Earth, Hatshepsut reminded her subjects of her royal birth and legitimate, though unusual, claim to the position of Pharaoh. After all, had she been male, her father's death would have left her as Pharaoh without question. Scholars speculate that Hatshepsut moved her father's sarcophagus to her own burial tomb to complete her propaganda about her royal destiny.19

Hatshepsut also commissioned other inspiring contributions to the architecture of ancient Egypt, such as the two obelisks in front of the temple of Amun at Karnak. These obelisks depict similar themes as seen at Deir el-Bahri. The obelisks’ foremost purpose was as an offering to Amun, but they also served as a reminder of Hatshepsut's father who was the first Pharaoh to commission the creation of obelisks. In one image on an obelisk, Hatshepsut kneels before Amun as he places a crown upon her head. Obelisks in ancient Egypt were supposed to represent the first ray of light from creation, and inscriptions on the obelisks commissioned by Hatshepsut suggest that she was present at creation. Strong associations in many different locations with both Amun and her father, who according to tradition rose to godly status upon dying as all pharaohs did, helped to legitimize and protect her position.20

Despite the powerful image Hatshepsut projected of herself in her inscriptions and reliefs, mocking graffiti believed to be contemporary to her reign has been found nearby her funerary tomb. The graffiti depicts a male figure and a female figure engaged in an erotic sexual position. Interestingly, the woman does not have breasts and appears to be wearing a headdress. John Romer and others identify the woman as Hatshepsut because she is the only historical figure from this period that is represented in both the male and female form. Scholars speculate that the man may possibly be Hatshepsut's high steward, Senenmut. Others speculate it is not intended to be any specific individual, and the scene is simply a mocking commentary on Hatshepsut's position as Pharaoh, implying that because she is a woman she cannot fulfill all of the many duties that come with such a position. This small, unflattering image tells the story that despite Hatshepsut's best efforts at depicting herself in the male form, and with all the power associated with being a male, and proclaiming herself a legitimate ruler, not all of her subjects accepted her as Pharaoh.21

Two decades after Hatshepsut's death, her nephew and successor, Thutmose III, attempted to remove or replace Hatshepsut's name from as many of her representations and inscriptions as possible. 22 If a deceased person's presence was removed fancell
Egyptians believed the person’s soul, or Ka, would have no where to go and would suffer a second form of death. Reasons for such a massive attack on Hatshepsut’s memory are debated. It is possible Thutmose III was waiting until all of Hatshepsut’s supporters were also dead and could not retaliate, but it is more likely that after Thutmose III’s son, Amenhotep II, was born, Thutmose III began to worry about challenges to his kingship because Hatshepsut’s reign interrupted the natural succession of kings. He may have worried that this interruption would interfere with his son’s ability to claim his royal position and reign. Evidence that the attacks against Hatshepsut’s representation stop after Amenhotep II successfully took his place as Pharaoh support this theory.23

Though her memory was almost erased from history by her nephew, Hatshepsut was surprisingly successful at protecting her position as a female ruler during her lifetime. She was able to successfully prevent being deformed in a time when Pharaohs were exclusively male. Her use of architectural programs to lionize and legitimize her reign over the Egyptian Empire was so effective that she made it impossible for Thutmose III, despite his extreme efforts, to delete her entirely from historical memory.

Notes:

5 Ibid.
7 Dieter Arnold, “The Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri,” in Hatshepsut, from Queen to Pharaoh, (Boston: Metropolitan Museum Of Art New York, 2005), 137.
8 Ibid., 134.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
17 Macy Roth, “Hatshepsut’s Mortuary Temple,” 149.
19 Ibid, 28.
20 Ibid.
23 Ibid., 21.

The New York City Financial Crisis and Neo-liberalism
Luke McGehee

In June of 1975, the nation's largest city was coming to terms with the fact that it was short several billion dollars of meeting its financial obligations. Compounding this problem, bond and investment firms were refusing to lend the city more money. A default would have catastrophic consequences across international markets leading to the loss of billions of dollars of money to private investors. Something had to be done. This critical moment in New York and, indeed, United States history represents a transformation from a social democratic, welfare oriented government to an entrepreneurial, business oriented one. The governing structures in place to help the city mitigate its debt problems, which have come to be known as the 'Crisis Regime,' drastically altered city services and, in doing so, the role of city government.

The historian David Harvey has suggested that the series of reforms implemented during the 1975 fiscal crisis were a “coup by the financial institutions against the democratically elected government of New York City.”24 He argues that investment bankers were the central force in restructuring the city’s finances after the crisis and that they changed New York into a place of and for business interests. Harvey says that New York’s fiscal crisis was a precursor to the financial policy shifts associated with neo-liberalism. He is not alone in this argument. Several analyses of the 1975 crisis echo, to varying degrees, the role of the elites in this fiscal and governmental shift.

Harvey defines neo-liberalism as a policy that proposes human well-being can best be advanced by liberating the individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework, characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.2 It is usually associated with the political economy shifts in the 1980s that stressed cutting social services, extending tax cuts to wealthy investors and emphasizing business development. Before 1975, New York City prided itself on its strong social democratic state and welfare system, supported largely by federal aid and increasing borrowing. During the period from December 1974 to 1975, investors grew increasingly concerned about the size and unmanageability of New York City’s short and long-term debt and, finally, cut off the city. The state, scrambling to prevent a total collapse of New York City, extended its authority through emergency institutions, which paid mounting attention to business interests. What followed was several years of reforms with the end goal of balancing the city budget and ultimately reopening the credit markets. Based primarily on this objective, authorities in charge of these agencies forced drastic spending cuts on social programs, mandated spending go towards debt servicing at the expense of services, and increasingly catered towards business interests. The cost was the autonomy of the city, its employees and its social services.

In the years leading up to the debt crisis, New York City enjoyed some of the highest social spending levels in the country, with New York becoming the largest dispenser of health, education, welfare, unemployment and housing in the country after only the federal government. After the end of World War II, the Great Migration brought millions of new citizens of mainly African American heritage into the city at the same time that industry began to flee and home ownership in the suburbs began to draw population away.4 The city became trapped in a spiral of amplified social spending and
declining revenues. The social system became increasingly financed by public debt. As the historian Robert Zevin describes, the city continued these spending levels in a context of collapsing private economy and extremely high inflation. The motivations were simple enough: the city sought to continue expanding its influence, which made expanding the existing economy necessary. At the same time, the economy began on a drastic decline after 1969, when employment levels in the city peaked. The city stepped up its budget expenditures and employment, paid for more and more frequently with public debt. Compounded by a declining economy and the sharp flight of the private sector, it was only a matter of time before the banks halted their loans altogether.

All the while, the broader national and international economies were growing in the context of high inflation. During the post-war boom, high investment demand, consumer demand and delayed results led to general inflation. By the 1960s, inflation was becoming increasingly necessary to sustain economic growth and to service existing public debt. It was during this period that New York City began to run deficits year over year. As long as inflation and federal funding grew, it seemed, public debt would not strain the city’s budget. However, the early 1970s brought a drop in corporate profits, increases in multi-national competition and the first attempts to curb inflation to reverse the mounting economic problems. In 1975, inflation began to decline, leading to an intensified recession. New York City had a $13 billion debt and employed 350,000 people. A combination of declining inflation, high social and payroll expenditures and the flight of the private sector brought New York City to the brink of bankruptcy.

The financial crisis was a long time coming, but the scales began to tip in the fall of 1974 when the Urban Development Corporation, responsible for the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, defaulted on its loans. By December, the city was forced to accept extremely high interest rates on its bond sales and, by April, bonds were selling at only two thirds of their face value. Moody’s, the bond rating firm, downgraded the city’s credit rating and New York State was forced to advance $800 million to the city to cover the expenditures of just April and May. Finally, in June, the situation reached dire levels: the city was quickly running out of money, it was unable to cover the bonds that were coming due, investors were refusing to buy more and the state was beginning to doubt itself trying to prevent bankruptcy. In order to prevent a total collapse, New York State quickly passed the Municipal Assistance Corporation Act on June 10, creating the Municipal Assistance Corporation, which was to become known as ‘Big MAC,’ and charging it with the task of raising $3 billion for the city’s short term borrowing needs.

Big MAC was still not enough to sustain the city’s fiscal needs and by September, new legislation had to be passed. On September 9, 1975, the Financial Emergency Act was passed by the New York State Legislature and quickly signed into law. The Act created the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB) of seven members, composed of the Governor, the New York State Comptroller, the New York City Mayor, the New York City Comptroller and three private citizens serving at “the pleasure of the governor.” The board was authorized to take full control over the city’s financial affairs for three years. Members were charged with approving a three year fiscal plan created by the city, which would balance the budget, reduce short-term city borrowing, remove expense items from the Capital Budget and permit the growth of controllable spending of two percent per year.

The Emergency Financial Control Board had the power to review and approve major labor contracts, approve all city borrowing, extend a pay freeze on city employees and to control revenue disbursements. The members of the board set to work right away on creating the plan. In the meantime, the fate of New York City hung in the balance and repeated pleas to the State and Federal governments for temporary funding were made. The state continued its support for the city, forced to borrow from union pension funds and investors. However, the Federal Government gave an increasingly clear answer. The response was made famous in an October 29, 1975 article of the New York Daily News entitled “Ford to New York: Drop Dead.” The article summarized public opinion in the city about the fiscal crisis and resulting political shifts. It charged that Ford had publicly promised to support essential services in the event of a default but behind closed doors he admitted that he had no intentions of giving federal money to the city. Ford was quoted as saying “I can tell you now that I am prepared to veto any bill that has as its purpose a federal bailout of New York City to prevent a default.” The lack of federal support increased the pressure on the EFCB and the city to come up with a workable plan for balancing the city’s budget.

A solid plan finally emerged in December of 1975. City wages were frozen, massive layoffs were planned and a $6.8 billion package was created, largely out of state money and, notably, bonds bought by union pensions and investors through MAC. Debt servicing became the first priority of the city. The result was, in particular, massive cuts in social spending as Mayor Beame attempted to return the city to basic municipal services. The biggest downsizes occurred in the City University of New York system, the hospital system, affordable housing construction, particularly the Mitchell-Lama program, and other non-mandated social services. CUNY and the court system were eventually taken over by the state. Physical infrastructure upkeep was reduced to a case-by-case upkeep and, in many cases, fell behind.

New York City also lost a good deal of its home rule, especially in flexibility of fiscal and political decisions. The authority was transferred to the state and other agencies, like the EFCB. Revenue estimation, formulation and enforcement decisions were transferred to the EFCB. The means by which labor policy was conducted also changed. The Board and the state exerted new legal powers over labor policy on a contract-by-contract basis. Formerly, policy was executed by industry. During the crisis, policy shifted to the creation of a universal labor policy for the city. Labor became viewed as one category of expenditure and, thus, a policy was adopted to negotiate with it. However, it should be noted that the Municipal Union retained much of its power through the purchase of city bonds and its influence over electoral politics. Referring Harvey’s definition of neo-liberalism, these changes made New York City into the most pro-business and free market city in America.

The changes resulted in a balanced budget by 1978. The Emergency Financial Control Board was changed to the Financial Control Board (FCB) and continued to serve, though in a diminished role, until July 2008. However, it is still necessary to address, to what extent, the elites were involved in these changes. According to Harvey’s argument, the business community, in the form of a “cabal of investment bankers,” intentionally and actively pushed these regulations through. Robert Zevin, echoing these claims, stated that the political and financial control of the city was placed in the hands of
representatives of “major private capitalist interests with lesser roles for the representatives of the state and federal government.”

The ‘cabal’ to which they were referring was a cooperation group between the big banks and the city known as the Financial Community Liaison Group (FCLG). Its goal was to help connect New York City with the bond market. As the financial situation deteriorated, the FCLG did become a pressure group, making suggestions to the city about budget and fiscal practices with political consequences. It shared concerns with New York City, since the investor owned a large amount of the city’s debt, and wanted to work with the city to make sure that it was able to maintain solvency. After the creation of the EFCB, however, the role of the FCLG was marginalized.

There were other more powerful groups that could, and to some degree did, represent wealthy elite interests. The Municipal Assistance Corporation was headed by Felix Rohatyn, the president of what was shortly to become Citibank. However, the role of this organization was to merely raise short-term capital for the city’s debt servicing. It never became much of a pressure group on city policies, especially after the creation of the EFCB. The Emergency Financial Control Board was easily the most powerful agency created out of the city fiscal crisis. If wealthy elites were working together to force a change in the political economy, there would be evidence in this organization. At first glance, the EFCB appears to have significant power. It limited the city’s political flexibility and autonomy, controlled revenue estimation and formulation, and had final check and enforcement powers on the city budget. The private membership of the board was made up of several very powerful individuals. These members were William Ellinghaus, president of the New York Telephone Company and vice chairman of AT&T, Albert Casey, president of American Airlines and David Margolis, president of Colt Industries. The private membership rotated during the first three years but was always composed of executives. Despite the elected officials holding four votes of seven, these three private members became swing votes and a necessity for maintaining credibility to the bondholders and business sector.

In practice the EFCB was limited. The city government retained the right to set priorities for the cash remaining after debt servicing. The creation of the budget often became more of a negotiation between the city and the EFCB, with the two entities working together more often than not. In sum, the board became more of an institution through which the collective policies of the state, the city, the private sector and unions were carefully cultivated. The policy outcomes were an aggregation of separate interests, rather than an imposition of business class will. In The Crisis Regime, Bailey performs an exhaustive analysis concerning the degree to which the businesses and elites acted cohesively and the impact that they were able to have. He concludes that the banks and bondholders were concerned primarily about the potential risks of collapse or default on the part of the city, and that the primary motivating factor towards intervention was their own self interest. However, the business community was split and affected unevenly. The bondholders had their own prerogatives, as did the banks, the traders and other businesses. A cooperative course of action to assume control of the city’s finances would have been an impossible deal to reach.

Private economic influence was enhanced but not omnipotent. According to an analysis by the New York Times’ Sam Roberts ten years later, “The cooperative climate in which the expansion took place was a heritage of the crisis. The generally adversarial relationship among city and state officials, labor leaders and businessmen evolved into a generally constructive partnership.”

Bailey also surmises that there were three overarching themes of the crisis response: cutbacks in services, reorientation of policy toward economic development and more effective service delivery. Despite the relatively limited role of the wealthy elites in determining the outcome of the city’s budgetary and economic policies, it would appear that a fundamentally neo-liberalist political economy emerged. Social spending was drastically cut. Taxes were lowered and income was redistributed towards the wealthy. Business development and efficiency became the hallmarks of city government. Surveying changes in the city some five to ten years after the fiscal crisis reveals the extent to which these policies took hold.

A fundamentally altered role of government appeared, one in which social spending had been capped and, in many cases, trimmed. Gottlieb summarizes the changes in a quote by Robert Lekachman, a professor of economics at Lehman University, discussing the “deal ... to redistribute income from above to below. Services were going to get worse ... meanwhile, the city became a developer’s paradise.” The poverty level rose to well above the national average, holding at 24.2% of New York City residents by the early 1980s. The poor did not receive an increase in basic welfare allowances for seven years. The city turned over its once prided institutions, the city colleges and courts. Subways fell into disrepair and the streets went unmaintained. And city parks grew weeds and grasses, over ten feet tall in some cases. The cuts in services affected all aspects of city life, from employment to welfare to education to healthcare. These changes left many city residents, already hurt by the worsening economic conditions, in dire positions. In many cases these cuts were to be expected given the financial burden that New York City dug itself into. Given the growth of expenditures on economic development, the city undertook a drastic shift in economic policy beyond financial austerity.

The city government embarked on a program of economic development, extending tax abatements to spur business development, revoking the stock transfer tax, creating tax subsidies to spur real estate, all serving to undermine the equity of the tax system and place more of the burden on the poor and middle classes. The New York Times reported that Rohatyn, once the chair of Municipal Assistance Corporation, as saying that the fiscal crisis “created a very solid notion on the part of the city that business has to be supported and not just tolerated.” In line with his comments, MAC devoted $365 million of its $1.1 billion surplus to business development, specifically assisting in business relocations and attempts to spur real estate booms in other parts of town. Yet, the relative boom during the early 1980s did not extend to all parts of the city. It is estimated that only 50% of those new jobs were filled by New York City residents. That means that the other half of those new employees lived outside the city, presumably in the suburbs. Much of the business growth was in the corporate and banking sectors, along with ancillary businesses, like legal services. A study by the Federal Reserve of New York indicated that gains for city residents has been erratic and weak, and thus limited the actual development of the city itself. An analysis on city budget expenditures from 1978 to 1982 found that the amount geared toward stimulation of private investment grew by 72%, while welfare investment grew by only 20%. It is apparent that the economic growth in the city during the years following the fiscal crisis
was unevenly shared. The wealthy and educated fared much better than the urban poor who were being increasingly left behind.

During the crisis down-sizing, departments were expected to do more with less resources. Drastic managerial changes and structural overhauls were undertaken, aimed at improving efficiency. To some extent, they succeeded, but only in a few sectors. After layoffs of over 7,000 police officers, felony arrests fell by 11%. 41 There was also a decline in the number of fires following layoffs of fire department employees. However, it is difficult to discern whether these decreases resulted from the inability to keep accurate statistics with less staff or real drops. The loss of a significant number of teachers was followed by a system-wide drop of 100,000 children in school enrollment which, despite how disturbing the loss of that many students may be, resulted in a parity of students to teachers roughly equivalent to pre-crisis levels. 42 Considering the loss of some 85,000 municipal employees, the mere fact that city services were not paralyzed is surprising. Within ten years, the city was able to hire back almost half that number. 43 However, service shortages remained a visible problem for years to come and some, especially social services, never reached pre-crisis levels.

Based on these changes, New York City can be said to have adopted a neo-liberal political economy. Yet, if it is not the result of wealthy elite intervention, one must question why the city adopted these policies. It is important to remember that the goal of the city and the state through the crisis was to re-open the bond markets and restore investor confidence by adopting sound fiscal policies. The city was forced to cut services across the board in order to balance its budget. Social services were disproportionately affected, since they were seen as non-essential to the day-to-day life of the city. During the crisis, the city reached a low point in employment, economic growth and overall public perception. After decades of urban flight and de-industrialization, the city was in need of private development to boost revenues. So, by 1978 when the city regained a substantial portion of its fiscal autonomy, its primary concern was generating economic growth in order to revitalize the city. To attract private investment, the city had to compete with its neighbors. New York had to minimize private operating expenses through tax abatements and relocation aid while extolling the size and diversity of its markets. Once this strategy proved sound, the city pursued ever increasing development aid at the cost of its other services.

New York City arrived at a policy of neo-liberal economics through inter-city competition and a need to increase revenue, not, as Harvey argues, through maneuvering of wealthy elites during a period of weakness and readjustment. The crisis proved to be the turning point because the city was forced to deal directly with bondholders. After being cut out of the credit market, the city sought on its own accord, and with the blessing of the state, to regain access by changing its economic structures. This meant adopting policies aimed at increasing revenues by attracting private investment. Devoting a significant portion of the budget to business development, especially during a time of deep budget constraints, severely limited the capacity of the city to provide services to its citizens, resulting in decreased social services. The success of the city in attracting private investment and regenerating itself provided evidence for the growing body of economic theory surrounding supply-side economics. In some respects, Harvey is right. New York served as an important milestone in national campaign for neo-liberalist policies. However, his conclusions surrounding the responsibility of the business class overestimates the organization of wealthy elites and undervalues the decision making role of city and state elected officials. New York City’s transition from social-democratic values to neo-liberalist practices was abrupt and complicated. The turn away from social spending served to exacerbate existing inequalities, isolate and divide the poor and push them to the fringes of the city. At the same time, it solidified New York as a world capital of international finance. New York City was and remains a paradoxical concept, at once representative of wealth and poverty, change and constancy, renewal and retrenchment.

Notes:

1 D. Harvey, Brief History of Neoliberalism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 45.
2 Ibid, 2.
7 Ibid, 23-25.
13 Ibid, 1.
15 Ibid, 1.
19 Ibid, 89-90.
20 Gujarati, Pensions and New York City’s Fiscal Crisis, 3.
22 Harvey, Brief History of Neoliberalism, 45.
26 Ibid, 58.
27 Ibid, 115.
28 Ibid, 60.
32 Gottlieb, “A Decade After the Cutbacks, New York is a Different City,” A1.
The Constitution and the Congo: How Leopold II Used Colonization to Overcome Constitutional Monarchy
Daniella Montemarano

Introduction
On November 15, 1884, representatives and delegates from fourteen nations congregated in Berlin, Germany to participate in a conference that proved crucial for the scope of European Imperialism in Africa: the Berlin West African Conference. Organized by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the conference set out to delineate the economic, geographical, and political boundaries within the context of the European scramble for African colonies. The subsequent General Berlin Act of 1885 legitimized African colonization and led to the construction of the Congo Free State, a nation roughly the size of the United States east of the Mississippi river. The Congo Free State was unique in that it was the only imperial territory owned by a single individual, King Leopold II of Belgium; who took advantage of the General Berlin Act to claim the territory for himself rather than Belgium.

The question of what led Leopold II to his unique position as private sovereign of the Congo has concerned history for more than a century. They have put forward a variety of theories that try to explain his underlying motivations, his cunning manipulations, and his management of the Congo Free State, particularly given the cruelty of forced labor and the extent of corporal punishment that resulted in the deaths of more than 10 million Congolese men, women, and children during his reign. American scholar Neal Ascherson wrote that the power and money-impoverished Leopold II wanted to generate capital to build up the Belgian monarchy and to create a substantial inheritance for his heirs. British apologist Arthur Berriedale Keith, who saw the Berlin Act as a positive humanitarian effort, claimed, “All the actions of the King can be explained without difficulty or improbability on the theory of personal ambition.”

Famous Leopold II historian John Stengers understood Leopold II’s incentive in the Congo to be cold-hearted economic exploitation acquired through slave labor, while famous modern journalist Adam Hochschild claims that the King’s childhood deprivation of parental love and approval drove Leopold II to seek fulfillment in obtaining overseas colonies.

However, these explanations, which identify many of the factors that drove Leopold II towards colonization and many of the mechanisms he utilized, generally fail to identify the role of political forces of change in nineteenth century Europe. Forces, such as spreading ideals of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, which led to the creation of constitutional monarchies answerable to parliaments chosen by an increasingly enfranchised populations. This both shackled and continued to threaten the powers of monarchs across Europe.

The effects of these political changes were prominently felt within the government of Leopold II’s own house of Coburg which had been invited to power by the Belgian Parliament. Leopold II’s attainment and exploitation of the Congo Free State as his personal fiefdom can thus be understood as a way to cope with and compensate for his comparative lack of power in Belgium. Moreover, the political maneuvering he undertook to work around his constitutional limitations in order to acquire and build the
Congo Free State allowed him to bolster his image and increase his political power within Belgium by investing his profits in the state itself. Though he lost control of the Congo Free State and the majority of its funds as the result of an impassioned human rights campaign when the extent of his abuses came to light, the public works that Leopold II funded within Belgium built up the image of a powerful monarchy that lasted far beyond his death.

The Birth of Belgium and its Monarchy

The limits on monarchical authority that Leopold II had to contend with can be located in the establishment of The United Kingdom of the Netherlands as a state after the Napoleonic Wars in the 1814 Treaty of Vienna. The Netherlands were intended, by the powers of Europe, to rebalance the scales of power in Europe and act as a neutral buffer state located between Great Britain and France. However, this new state actually consisted of three kingdoms—Flanders, Wallonia, and Holland—united under Dutch rule. The people of Flanders and Wallonia resented this foreign, despotic, Dutch rule and in 1830, after diplomatic encouragement from France, the middle class led a revolt against the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Wanting to avoid an international war, the European powers quickly granted Belgium its independence and, at the behest of these nations, the new state of Belgium was to assume the role of buffer state and remain a militarily neutral country. By circumscribing Belgium’s international diplomatic and military power through conferred neutrality, the European powers thus came to influence the Belgian choice of royal lineage and, to some extent, the constraints under which the monarchy would fall.

Belgium was democratically advanced and its immediate republican characteristics outstripped those of other European nations thus, outside of the realm of international interests, domestic factors had a large role in shaping the Belgian state. During the eighteen years that followed independence, the different factions in Belgian politics battled and bargained to create a national government that answered their—-not a monarch’s—needs. The landed aristocracy and middle class liberals were the prominent players in these negotiations; their decisions on the nature of the legislative and executive branches of government shaped the formation of Belgian politics. By 1848, these two parties had agreed on a bicameral legislature with an aristocratic upper house and a direct electoral system that employed election taxes to limit popular participation in the national legislature. The monarchy was established as the executive branch as, following the despotic reign of the Dutch King William I, both Belgian conservatives and liberals were in agreement that the powers of the Belgian monarch should be severely limited. However, fearful that more radical liberals would gain the upper hand in constitutional negotiations, and eventually in the government itself, moderate liberals banded together with conservatives to construct a constitutional monarchy more moderate than the proposed democratic republic.

Under this new monarchical system, the King was the commander-in-chief of the army, had full control over foreign policy as well as its implementation, and held responsibility for decreeing and executing laws passed by Parliament. The King had no control over the laws introduced and passed by Parliament and no input on the appropriation of the federal budget. In order to exercise any real authority, especially in the domestic sphere, the King had to work through Parliament and was genuinely bound by Belgian public opinion.

After Belgian political leaders decided upon the constitutional powers of the new Belgian monarch, a king had to be chosen. Given the origins of the Belgian state, rooted in the international desire for a neutral nation, the Belgian king had to be accepted by the major European powers. For this end, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, a German prince related to the English royal family, was chosen.

As a conservative monarchist, Leopold I ardently despised the Belgian constitution and the limits that it placed upon his power. He believed in the Old Regime dogma of unlimited monarchical power—and he wasn’t alone. Regents like Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany also tried to subvert institutional restrictions on their power. The former by building up the British monarchy’s philanthropic organizations as well as imperial representations of power and the latter by manipulating the Reichstag through the German Chancellor. Though Leopold I failed to increase his power by his attempt to introduce constitutional reforms through the Catholic-conservative voting block and styling himself the director of foreign affairs he did succeed in laying the foundation of the monarchy’s role in the international community by aggressively asserting his constitutionally given authority over war and foreign affairs.

Leopold II’s Initial Attempts to Expand Political Power

Upon his death in 1865, Leopold I was succeeded by his son, Leopold II, in 1865. King Leopold II also firmly upheld his father’s beliefs in a strong monarchy with its power stretching far beyond the restrictions of the constitution. Unsettled by the restrictions of a constitutional monarchy, Leopold II sought to push forward with two of his legal powers, control over foreign policy and command over the army. In the early years of his reign, Belgian borders fell under constant threat from the expansionist plans of the Netherlands and the stirrings of the Franco-Prussian War. Anxious about the viability of Belgian defense and the tenuous security of Belgian borders, Leopold II pushed for increases in the military budget. However, the parsimonious majority in the Belgian Parliament saw no reason to increase wartime expenditures and thus rejected Leopold II’s proposal. Since he linked military power with his personal monarchical power, Parliament’s rejection of his applications for military expansion indeed was also a rejection of Leopold II’s attempt to increase royal political power.

Unable to expand his powers in that regard Leopold II started to look toward other means of collecting funds. He turned to knowledge gained from travels in British India and Dutch Indonesia where he learned about the advantages of generating wealth from the resources of industrially underdeveloped nations. In an 1890 letter to the then-Belgian Prime Minister, Auguste Beernaert, Leopold II reflected, “It is in serving the cause of humanity and progress that peoples of the second rank appear as useful members of the great family of nations. A manufacturing and commercial nation like ours, more than any other, must do its best to secure opportunities for all its workers, whether intellectual, capitalist, or manual.” Not only would a colony be an extremely profitable venture, but, colonizing a foreign land under the guise of civilization the natives with Belgian culture had the potential to bring together the warring factions of Belgian politics under a single patriotic mission and allow him to avoid problems with parliament, such as
those that defeated his attempts to increase military expenditures. Leopold II also saw an association with a patriotic venture such as a colony as a way to move into the political graces of the Belgian public in order to ease the way for future legislative plans as well as to augment the coffers of the state, and his own monarchical income. 15 With these goals in mind, Leopold II began looking for territory to claim for the Belgian crown, considering a concession agreement with the Spanish government for the Philippines, a Belgian tobacco monopoly in Polynesia, and a colony in Africa.16

While the Filipino and Polynesian deals fell through, Africa, with its vast territory and mystical allure, became more and more attractive to Leopold II’s colonial ambitions.17 As the 1870’s dawned, European exploration exploded across Africa, generating wondrous excitement for the ‘Dark Continent’ amongst aristocrats, politicians, and the middle class alike.18 Leopold II was no exception. He had joined the Société Geographique de Paris in 1867, and, by 1875, he envisioned hosting his own Geographical Conference right in Brussels. Leopold II became even more enamored with his colonial ambitions when the explorer Lovett Cameron returned from a two-year journey across south-central Africa and the Congo River Basin, telling tales of a land rich with natural resources, especially ivory and wild rubber.19 Complementing the Congo’s abundant natural resources was the territory’s natural transportation system, the Congo River. Draining roughly 1.3 million square miles of central Africa, the Congo River had seven thousand miles of tributaries across the territory, which would only aid in expedient resource extraction. Furthermore, the Congo River Basin had a tangible absence of a central state and weak weapon technology compared to that of Europe, ensuring negligible native resistance to any colonization attempts.20 The combination of all these factors amounted to a perfect overseas colony for Belgium and, indeed, for Leopold II.

In the midst of his colonial plans, he met with a detrimental roadblock: Article 167 Section 1 of the Belgian Constitution. Article 167 Section 1 states: “Cession, exchange, or expansion of territory can only take place by virtue of a law.”21 In this sentence, “by virtue of a law” is synonymous with “act of Parliament.” In order for Belgium to annex Leopold II’s Congolese territory, Parliament had to give its consent through a formal vote. However, in the late 1870’s, a host of rumors concerning the religious affiliations of Leopold II’s colonial corporations infected the country’s two main political factions, the Catholic Party and the Liberal Party. The Catholics believed a Masonic empire to be on the precipice of establishing itself on the African continent, while the Liberals feared heavy Catholic missionary influence in the Congo.22 Since Leopold II needed bipartisan Parliamentary support in order to annex colonies on behalf of Belgium, it was crucial to rally both the Catholics and the Liberals in support of his imperialist goals. Unfortunately for Leopold II, the various rumors only exacerbated the high religious tensions that were endemic to Belgian politics, and unified support for Leopold II’s schemes proved impossible.

In addition to Parliament’s religious concerns, Belgians themselves rejected Leopold II’s colonial ambitions because they feared shouldering the economic responsibility for this colony through the burden of heavy taxes. Content with their domestic enterprises, the Belgian people were disinterested in Leopold II’s grandiose colonial plans; as a Flemish proverb goes, “Oost, west, ’t huis Best,” or, in roughly translated, “there’s no place like home.”23 If Belgian constituents didn’t want an overseas colony, their elected representatives certainly wouldn’t support an imperialist foreign policy. With public opinion precluding Leopold II from annexing territory on behalf of Belgium Leopold II determined that he would have to claim the colony as his own, theoretically building up the colony using funds of his own means before eventually transferring the colony into Belgian hands.24

Leopold II’s Plot for Colonization

In order to accomplish claim an overseas colony for himself, Leopold II had to launch a scheme of mass deception across Europe, hoodwinking foreign diplomats and international leaders into ceding one of the largest, richest territories in the world to a single man. This scheme involved multiple cover organizations, manipulative international diplomacy, and a humanitarian front that would blind the world to Leopold II’s true power-enhancing intentions. In all of its intricacies, this scheme would amount to a substantial expression of Leopold II’s monarchical power.

Leopold II began his colonization scheme by hosting the 1876 Brussels conference, which, to the ordinary contemporary observer most likely appeared to be a benign gathering of international adventurers, geographers, and scientists dedicated to exploring Africa. However, it was Leopold II’s intention to use the Conference in order to harness the expertise and international acceptance of famous African experts to explore and map out the Congo River Basin for himself. Alongside the Conference came the formation of the Association Internationale Africaine (AIA), Leopold II’s organizing group for the exploration of south-central Africa. Publicly, the A.I.A. worked through national subcommittees, with each Western power sending delegations to the Association. This involvement of other European governments was essential to maintain Leopold II’s façade as a neutral proponent of international exploration. Additionally, by evoking notions of civilization, civilizing missions directed towards the African peoples, and aid to free them from the Arab slave trade he was able to appeal directly to contemporary humanitarian ideology and currents of Western cultural supremacy that ran through ‘civilized’ society. As a result of this humanitarian attraction international figures flocked to the AIA and its subsequent incarnations.

The founding of the A.I.A. was the beginning of a rapid succession of international organizations that Leopold II used as a cover for his colonial ambitions because he could still not claim the land of the Congo outright. When the A.I.A. began to fall apart after a year of operation, Leopold II contracted the famous British-American adventurer Henry Morton Stanley to carry out his explorations and subsequent land acquisitions through the establishment of expedition stations along the Congo River. Leopold II thus formed the organization Comité d’Études du Haut Congo through which he could fund Stanley’s activities. When the funds for the Comité d’Études ran out and its mandate expired in 1879, Leopold II formed the Association Internationale du Congo (AIC), of which Leopold II was the sole investor and sole director. The AIC continued to perpetuate the image of Leopold II’s land prospecting under the guise of yet another harmless exploration group.25 Thus, with each organization, Leopold II continued to lay the geographic and political foundations of his African empire, using his international standing as Belgium’s head of state and constitutional director of foreign relations to gain the trust and acceptance of European leaders.

Stanley had secured control over the Congo River Basin by 1883, exchanging gin, cloth, and discarded army uniforms with the region’s chiefs for land concession treaties.
These concessions were further enforced by the might of Stanley’s military force.26 But, if Leopold II wanted to officially acquire foreign territory as a private citizen, he needed foreign assistance and approval to legitimize his claims. Thus, Leopold II started to lobby the international community for recognition of the holdings that would become his Congolese colony.

Since the European powers were embroiled in colonial competition reluctant to bestow recognition upon Leopold II’s Congo, the Belgian King turned first to the United States of America, a hopefully easy gain in international support. He employed Henry Shelton Sanford, a Connecticut-born former diplomat and international entrepreneur, to help him lobby the United States government. Sanford directed much of his attention to President Chester A. Arthur and Senator John T. Morgan on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, both of whom were adept at exerting pressure upon Congress through speeches and backroom political pressure. Leopold II’s emissaries approached American senators and encouraged them to support the Congo Free State by perpetuating both the humanitarian illusion of Leopold II’s presence in the Congo and pointing to the success of America’s own former colony, Liberia.27 Speaking on behalf of the United States, Henry Shelton Sanford said in a September 1877 letter, “Near 5,000,000 of our people are of African race, descendants of slaves; contact with the white races, lately emancipation and education and equality of political rights have made them by far the superiors of the parent race...The idea of [white Americans] returning to colonize and regenerate [the] parent country...is utterly attractive and one worthy or earnest promotion in the United States.”28

On February 25, 1884, both houses of Congress passed a resolution recommending American endorsement of the Congo Free State, which President Arthur immediately signed.29 Leopold II had finally obtained international support for and recognition of his, personal, Congolese colony but now, continuing under the shroud of humanitarianism, Leopold II began to approach the final stages of his colonization scheme: European recognition of The Congo Free State.

By 1884, increased competition between European powers over Africa strongly indicated the coming of a major European crisis over zones of influence in Africa. Statesmen and diplomats across Europe and in America began talking of a conference that would delineate European spheres of influence in Africa. Leopold II himself became increasingly paranoid about the security of the Congo, especially with French and Portuguese encroachment on the territory’s northern and southern borders. Leopold II turned to Otto von Bismarck as an ally in the search for social stability through secure export opportunities. Persuaded by the efficacy of the United States’ recognition of the Congo Free State and concerned about threats to Germany’s potential African empire, von Bismarck agreed to organize an international conference to address the issues of free trade, boundary demarcation, and Congolese statehood. This conference became known as the Berlin West African Conference.30

The Berlin West Africa Conference was the culmination of Leopold II’s efforts to obtain an African colony from the Brussels Conference of 1876 up to the start of the Conference itself. All of his diplomatic maneuvering, his covert organizations, and his strong-arming of local African leaders meant nothing if he could not receive European international recognition of his sovereignty over the Congo Free State. Luckily for Leopold II, in the midst of negotiations over securing free trade at the mouth of the Congo River, securing free navigation of the Congo and Niger Rivers, and defining the political obligations of the colonial powers to the African populations under their control, the King’s agents—Sanford, Stanley, and others present at the conference—pressed the issue of Congolese statehood. Leopold II’s moment of victory came on February 28, 1885, with a letter signed by the conference’s participants declared the Congo Free State an independent, sovereign nation.

Unfortunately for Leopold II, it wasn’t enough for to obtain his international counterparts’ approval of his Congolese acquisition, for Belgium’s constitutional government once again stood in his way. Article 87 of the Belgian Constitution explicitly prohibited dual sovereignty: “The King may not at the same time act as head of another State without the consent of both Houses.”31 In order for King Leopold II to obtain the consent of both houses, he had to convince the Parliament that the Congo would remain a state wholly separate from that of Belgium. Most important for the members of Parliament with regards to their constituencies, Leopold II needed to verbally guarantee that the Belgian taxpayers would not have any fiscal responsibility over the Congo Free State. Leopold II’s potential dual sovereignty also created a problem of accountability and an obvious conflict of executive interest. Logically, because the King is tied to Parliament and answers to the will of the people, if the king was in control of two separate territories, he would be answerable to two different populations. In response to this concern, Leopold II assured the Belgian people that the government of the Congo Free State would be an absolute monarchy, where Leopold II and the Belgian throne had complete control over the Congo. Additionally since the Congo would obtain monetary sustenance from export duties, taxes on its own citizens, and private fund specially created by Leopold II and Belgium would have no financial responsibilities with regards to the colony.32 Thus, placated about the issues of sovereignty and financial responsibility Belgian Parliament, nearly unanimously, voted for the May 1885 bill that allowed Leopold II monarchical control over the Congo.33

The Life and Death of the Congo Free State

Now that both the international community and the Belgian Parliament legitimized Leopold II’s Congo Free State as an independent sovereign nation, it was time to make something out of this vast swath of land. After all of his diplomatic maneuvers, fraudulent humanitarianism, and deceptive international organizations, Leopold II was finally poised to reap the economic benefits of an overseas colony. From the very beginning of the Congo Free State, Leopold II understood that the most profitable way to economically exploit a colony was through state orchestrated imperialism based off of the forced labor of native populations. The Congo Free State, through its despotic bureaucratic structure and its unabashed rape of natural resources and human labor harkened back to Leopold II’s youthful longings for a nation that reflected his Old Regime beliefs about monarchy: authoritarian rule accountable to its citizens. This new African colony was a royal expansion of power taken to another level, especially when Leopold II channeled its returns into public works projects in Belgium to promote his authority and perpetuate the authority of his office as King.

The initial resource that Leopold II exploited was ivory. Although Africans had been killing elephants and obtaining ivory for centuries, Leopold II’s administration outlawed native sale or delivery of ivory to anyone other than an agent of the Congo Free
Leopold II mainly channeled his newfound wealth into public works projects across Belgium. In a matter of years, museums, parks, promenades, and pavilions sprang up, all funded by the ivory and rubber profits from the Congo Free State. Leopold II transformed his personal estate, Laeken, from a mere royal residence into what the King hoped would become an international conference center. The electrical systems were replaced with 2,000 new light bulbs, new additions were put on the main buildings, and the gardens were refurbished with Japanese pagodas, tropical wildlife collections, and immense glasshouses. Brussels, with its new avenues, rolling public parks, and burgeoning commercial life, began to resemble a traditional imperial city. Beyond Belgian borders, Leopold II invested Congo state profits in colonial ventures around the world, including funding railways in China and lavish chateaus in France. 39

Leopold II spent so much time building up public works because it increased the representative power of the monarchy. This was a trend frequently used by monarchs in the nineteenth century. In particular, Queen Victoria and her advisors succeeded in augmenting the representational power of the British monarchy by unifying the royal family with the British Empire. By stamping the names of the royal family on cities, geographic landmarks, and urban edifices across the Empire and bycommencing grandiose royal visits and celebrations amongst Imperial subjects, this royal symbolism conveyed the omnipresence of the British Empire vis-à-vis the monarchy. 40 Leopold II sought to attempt the same feat. In the King’s logic, if the Belgian people wouldn’t accept his sovereignty through direct political control, he could build up the visual symbolism of monarchical authority. For example, the ‘Arcade de la Cinquantenaire,’ an enormous neoclassical edifice located at the end of the Rue de la Loi, was purported to celebrate Belgium’s fiftieth anniversary of statehood. In reality, this monstrous monument, paid for entirely by Leopold II’s Congoese rubber profits, was—and remains today—a powerful symbol of the Belgian monarchy. 41 This symbolism served to constantly remind Belgian subjects of their monarchical executive; it also publicized the King’s political projects and trumpeted his obvious domestic and international power.

This all hasted as soon a fierce humanitarian crusade exposed the atrocities committed by Leopold and his C.F.S. administration against the Congoese. In the late 1890’s, Edmund D. Morel, a low ranking shipping clerk working for the Antwerp office of the British shipping company Elder Dempster, noticed something strange as he reviewed imports and exports from the Congo Free State. While a bounty of rubber and ivory flooded the ports and European markets, a pittance of trade material was sent back to the Congo. If there was no compensatory trade for these goods, only one conclusion could be drawn as to the nature of the labor used to obtain these goods: forced labor, or slavery. Armed with this realization and the figures to back him up, Morel embarked on a mission that would eventually rob Leopold of his colony. 42

Within a matter of years, the humanitarian image of Leopold II and his Congo Free State was turned on its head. Humanitarian societies sprang up around the world, denouncing Leopold II’s extraction and administration practices in the Congo and increasingly calling for the transfer of power over the Congo from monarchical hands to the Belgian Parliament. Morel’s crusade, institutionalized as the Congo Reform Association, was further sustained by official British Foreign Consul reports, international political support, and first-hand missionary testimonies of atrocities in the Congo. As a result of this political movement, derived from embarrassing and horrifying
human rights violations, the Belgian government and its constituents felt obligated to seize the Congo Free State from the Crown. Furthermore, despite Leopold II’s best efforts to sway international press away from rubber and Congolese slavery, he could not hold onto the Congo without international support due to the size of Belgian and its small amount of political influence and military power in relation to that of the greater European nations.

In 1907, the Belgian Parliament entered into negotiations with Leopold II for the transfer of the Congo, and, by early 1908, the two parties reached a deal. The Belgian government would assume control over the Congo, but it would also take on Leopold II’s 110 million francs’ worth of debts, most of which were in the form of bonds he dispensed to his favorite mistresses, as well as the 45.5 million franc price tag of the King’s building projects. In return, Leopold II was to receive 50 million francs “as a mark of gratitude for his great sacrifices made for the Congo,” which was to be extracted from the Congo itself. Yet, despite this proportionally lucrative deal for Leopold, the bulk of the funds he appropriated from the Congo, went straight into the government’s hands. For Leopold II, what remained of his Congolese enterprise was the byev of public works projects funded by rubber, ivory, and forced labor.

Conclusion

Placing aside the renewed interest in Leopold II that has arisen in the last decade as a result of his rule over the Congo Free State, Leopold II remains known to many, especially to Belgians themselves, as the ‘Builder King,’ a nickname spurred by his byev of public works projects that enhanced, beautified, and symbolically fortified Belgian cities and towns. These public works projects convey the unmistakable power and majestic dominance of its creator, contesting any question of political weakness. The permanence of these monuments, museums, and parks reflects general public opinion that unwaveringly regards Leopold II as the country’s benevolent, powerful grandfather King.

Leopold II himself carefully constructed this image of an authoritative regent in response to Belgian’s constitutional restrictions upon its monarchy. At the start of his reign in 1865, Leopold II inherited a limited set of constitutional powers, lacking classical monarchical command unfettered by Parliament and Belgian public opinion. To resolve this problem of power restriction, Leopold II set out to exercise and expand monarchical authority through personally obtaining and exploiting an overseas colony. Under a deceptive shroud of humanitarianism, Leopold II created a series of international organizations and carried out several international diplomatic maneuvers during the late 1870’s and early 1880’s in order to appropriate territory in the Congo River Basin in Central Africa. He finally obtained the foreign recognition he needed at the Berlin West Africa Conference in 1884-5 to claim the Congo Free State as his own. This international victory was cemented by domestic approval in Belgium when the Parliament voted in favor of Leopold subverting the Constitutional provision against dual sovereignty in order for him to rule over Belgium and the Congo Free State simultaneously.

With the creation and legitimization of the Congo Free State, Leopold thus built himself extra-constitutional power with which he could accumulate a vast wealth from the appropriation of natural resources and native slave labor. From this wealth, he enhanced the position and power of the Belgian monarchy through the funding of public works across the country. Public opinion and Parliament eventually stripped Leopold II of this empire and the funds that accompanied it, but Leopold still managed to build a strong and lasting image of monarchical power through his public works projects. These national projects are the final enduring legacy of Leopold II’s efforts to expand the power of his political office, succeeding where building up the military and collecting personal wealth and asserting authoritarian political power in his personal colony ultimately failed. As a King coping with the constraints of constitutional monarchy, Leopold II’s legacy in late 19th century royal history is one of a monarch severely restricted by the Constitution and by public opinion who overcame those hurdles to build himself an extremely lucrative and powerful colonial empire. The Congo Free State was one of the pivotal weapons Leopold II used to liberate himself from the shackles of democratic government.

Notes:

2 A popular anecdote about Leopold II’s childhood recounts his father, Leopold I, describing Leopold to one of his ministers: “Leopold is subtle and sly. He never takes a chance. The other day...I watched a fox which wanted to cross a stream un observed: first of all he dipped a paw very carefully to see how deep it was, and then, with a thousand precautions, very slowly made his way across. That is Leopold’s way!”
3 Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People’s History* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 20-23. Note that the number 10 million is an upward estimate by Nzongola-Ntalaja and fellow historians; due to the lack of documentation, a precise number of Congolese killed in the Free State operations cannot be conclusively determined.
7 It is important to note that the French Revolutionary Wars and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire also brought about the Congress of Vienna.
9 Ibid., 22-24.
11 Ibid., 30 and Ascherson, 18-19.
12 Ibid., 77-84.
13 Ibid., 55.
14 King Leopold II, letter to Prime Minister Auguste Beernaert, July 3, 1890.
15 State imperialism, as practised by the Dutch in the Netherlands and Leopold in the Congo, is a system of economic extraction where all of the surpluses generated from the colony’s profile are funneled into the mother country’s treasury rather than that of the colony.
16 Ascherson, *The King Incorporated*, 77-84.
17 Although Leopold sought colonies for his own monarchical, economic, and personal ambitions, imperialism was a rapidly spreading trend amongst European powers, who equated overseas territories with imperial strength. With its economic, militaristic, and EGOTISTICAL benefits, imperialism was a dominant political practice in late 19th and early 20th century Europe.
18 Due to the overwhelming danger that Africa’s tropical diseases presented to European explorers, the Scramble for Africa didn’t begin until the mid-late 1800’s, when medical and technological advances allowed explorers to penetrate the continent’s interior.
19 Ibid., 85-90.
Qualified Womanhood: Irish Immigrant Women and the “Cult of True Womanhood”
Margaret Rippe

The late nineteenth century was a unique moment in social history for the United States. Following the internal strife of the Civil War, the still young nation hurried to regain its footing on the world stage, setting itself up as a beacon of promise for millions of immigrants. As immigration increased, however, sentiments soured as fear of job loss and culture change increased among native-born Americans. New ideas regarding the social order of society emerged in response to the changing patterns of immigration, and a doctrine detailing gender expectations filtered through the U.S.; women were being told to enter an entirely domestic sphere, to devote themselves to their husbands, children, and home. This ideal was called the “Cult of True Womanhood,” and was problematic for most, save the upper-class, especially for those immigrants who were struggling to preserve their home countries' customs while embracing their new lives in America. Native-born Americans did not know what to make of these new arrivals: Were they worthy of entering the “Cult”? Were immigrant women as pure and virtuous as “home grown” women? The answers to such questions reside in the period's articles and cartoons about immigrant women, and, in this study, specifically Irish immigrants. They arrived in America impoverished, crowded into segregated city neighborhoods, and found employment in unskilled occupations. These women dealt with the double jeopardy of being both foreign-born and Catholic, were the scapegoats of American economic problems, and were considered “dirty, stupid and lazy.” The depictions of Irish women as devoted wives and tireless domestics suggest that the gender differentiation that permeated the country also applied to Irish immigrant women, though they would never be judged as virtuous as native-born American women.

The Cult of True Womanhood was a pervasive gender ideology that celebrated what society considered the “four cardinal virtues of womanhood” – piety, purity, submission, and domesticity. The notion of separate spheres made the home central to a woman’s life. Significant adherence to these principles never occurred, but the ideology in and of itself is important in understanding women’s lives at the time because it dictated the expectations of their roles in the public, and it placed limitations on what they could do within the realm of respectability. It was widely championed by the upper-class of society and many writers stressed the need for women to be upstanding and virtuous at all times, regardless of class or ethnicity.

The examination of the ways in which nineteenth-century gender beliefs were imposed on immigrant groups has implications beyond gender identity. The ideology marginalized most women who were non-white, poor, or foreign-born by stressing ideals that could only be achieved by a leisure class. Wealthy, white women had both the time and resources to dedicate themselves to their homes and families, to dress nicely and to refine their manners. The majority of women could not afford such luxuries and split their time between their homes and places of work. Nonetheless, these values, endorsed by upper-class women, came to encapsulate a national, if unattainable standard; but by marginalizing a sizable number of ethnic groups, the Cult of True Womanhood came to represent not just a gender ideology, but a social hierarchy based on ethnicity. Sojourner
Truth’s powerful “Ain’t I A Woman?” speech details the discrepancies of gender ideology between races; Truth, and African-American woman, was abused by white society, and she questioned how, because of her race, she was treated as though she were not a woman. The answer was in both the direct and indirect prejudices of turn-of-the-century America. In Truth’s perception, white society did not deem her womanly because of the masculine nature of the work she did as a slave, nor could she attain respectability because she was not white.

While this is well documented in cases of African-American women, little has been written about non-black immigrant women. Historian Martha Hodes found that racial categorization in nineteenth-century America was “mercurial,” as the power to classify a person’s race, to decide ‘who is worthy or superior, who is depraved or inferior,’ was left to the wealthy “social authorities” who were perpetually transforming the meaning of “whiteness” to suit their own needs. Irish women were not white by nineteenth-century American standards, though their skin color suggests otherwise, because they could not satisfy the expectations of domesticity, which defined the respectability and power of their wealthy, American-born peers. They were not alone in that regard — no other immigrant group fit into this definition of white, and neither did lower-class native-born white women. These groups struggled to find their place within an elitist and exclusive ideology that was never intended to include them.

Historians have traditionally looked at both the sex-specific creeds of this time period and the attitudes toward and the experience of immigrants, but very little has been done to analyze the interrelations of gender ideologies and xenophobia. The ways in which Irish immigrant women, as opposed to women or Irish immigrants in general, were portrayed is important historically because measuring the degree to which the American gender ideology of the time was directed at new immigrants exposes the attitudes toward them and their racialized experiences. If immigrant women were supposed to uphold the virtues of the Cult of True Womanhood, then one could presume that all people were held to the same standards and that such an ideology could be found throughout society. Such standards would negate any differentiation in the ways that women behaved, that men treated women, or that women were portrayed in media sources based on ethnicity. Historically, however, ethnicity has played a large part in how people were perceived, which directly influenced their experience in society. Just as African Americans faced relentless prejudice and were looked down upon by whites during this time period, so too did white Americans develop prejudice against these new arrivals. Hodes argues that these native-born whites redefined whiteness, shaping it so that being “white” meant being born in the United States. The swell of white European immigrants caused the wealthy to question how their whiteness differed from that of the new arrivals. Given that so many women were excluded from the philosophy, one has to wonder why it captivated the media and social thought as a whole. In examining portrayals of white immigrant women, one is able to explore how native-born white women used the Cult of True Womanhood to narrate a story about the races, one in which they were superior.

One of the ways native-born women constructed their superiority was through the discussion of an Irish woman’s work in her own domestic sphere and the work she did within another woman’s domestic sphere. The distinction between these spheres is important in establishing the fact that while Irish immigrant women, by virtue of being women, still epitomized femininity, they were worth less than their native-born counterparts because they had to work in the domestic sphere of another. Because nearly all Irish women arrived in America at or near the poverty level, they lacked the resources to afford a home, even a tenement, to which they could devote themselves. Instead, they had to work to survive. The nature of women’s work belies the era’s gender discrimination; women were denied access to industrial or professional level positions because these jobs were considered too masculine, relegating women to domestic work, their proper sphere. An article entitled “Domestic Work,” from the Godey’s Lady Book, a nineteenth-century women’s magazine, reinforces this idea. The editor states that “women should fill their situations properly and gracefully; domestic service...being one of the most important.” In saying so, she makes it clear that caring for the home should be a top priority for all women. The article is a call to action for native-born women to resume their position in the home, rejecting the call from “Women’s Rights Women” to exceed “women’s field of action farther than the natural proprieties of her sex limit her,” and claiming that women could not enter fields commonly dominated by men because they lacked the biological and natural needs of such work. In using phrases like “natural proprieties,” the editor makes clear that women are intended, both biologically and socially, to be at home and that “there is room for all, and reasonable support for all” in the domestic sphere, regardless of class or ethnicity. The editor, however, qualifies this statement by explaining that “Irish girls are strong and cheerful; American girls have more judgment and skill.” Here, Irish women embody a somewhat derogatory characteristic because being strong is a more “masculine” and undesirable trait. The editor further emphasizes that “there will not be the call for foreign laborers when good, and efficient, and sensible women are willing to labor in a household.” The structure of this statement makes it apparent to the reader that foreign women cannot then be “good, efficient and sensible.” As a result, there is a juxtaposition of ideas about gender and ethnicity within the Cult of True Womanhood: by diligently serving as a domestic laborer she has “qualities [that are] valuable” and should be commended, but lacks the “superior tact, ability and thrift” of native-born American women. Irish women are portrayed as womanly, but not womanly enough to be considered part of late nineteenth-century femininity.

Other depictions of immigrant women in domestic life illustrate a very similar image. The article “Irish Women” from the Christian Register speaks of a woman’s devotion to her husband, an ideal looked upon with admiration by Victorian-era Americans. The article states that “the fidelity of the Irish wife is proverbial; she will endure labor, hunger and even ill usage, to an almost incredible extent rather than break the marriage vow.” This seems to be a positive statement about the state of Irish women, yet in qualifying the statement “ill usage” with ‘even,’ the writer seems to pity or feel embarrassed for the woman, questioning her motives for staying in an abusive marriage. That same article then details the story of a young Irish immigrant girl who is married to an abusive husband. Again, the way the writer tells the story seems to both admire and pity the young girl who, for example, states “I’ve known nothing but hardship since I married him, but I don’t complain of that.” The Christian Register uses this story to personify the ideals of devotion, submission and faithfulness. The value of those traits, however, is complicated by how he describes the misery of the girl’s life. He seems to encourage more fortunate readers to examine the way the immigrant remains faithful, despite the hardships she endures, to silence the “Women’s Rightsers” who were trying to
break free of the constraints of gender ideology. If, as the editor in *Godey’s Lady Book* suggested, American women were so vastly superior to their immigrant counterparts, then they too should be able to stay faithful in their marriages despite difficulties.

Irish women were also cited as qualified examples of womanhood in the Temperance movement, which was closely tied to the “Cult.” In “Temperance News,” *The Christian Union* details the account of Irish women working for temperance in “the coal region,” which “within the last years [has made reforms] simply without a parallel in the history of temperance reform.” As a result of their work, drunkenness was virtually nonexistent, a feat achieved by ensuring that “no man can enter the charming circle of female society unless he is an avowed temperance man;” they “played the part of true temperance missionaries.” This is a favorable portrayal of Irish women — here they serve as examples for others in their success in getting communities to abstain from alcohol. It must also be noted that in asserting that men agreed to temperance in order to win the affection of women in the community, the article insinuates that Irish women, much like their native-born counterparts, were charming and enviable, and that the courship process was central to society, rendering Irish immigrant women as wholly feminine.

Another article on the temperance movement, “The Way the Irish Woman took to Stop Her Husband from Getting Drunk,” is similar in its praise for the woman’s ability to get her husband to stop drinking, but, in discussing her methods, is skeptical about their appropriateness. In recounting a story of how a woman stopped her husband from drinking, disdain for the Irish is evident in the author’s choice of phonetically spelling the way the woman pronounces English: use of the spelling “niver” instead of “never,” “please ye” instead of “please you,” “jist” instead of “just.” He is mocking the woman’s improper and uncouth speech. Furthermore, her threat to her husband that she would “be getting drunk every day in the week, and every night [and would] sell [their] table and chair and [their] bed too...and put little Jemmy into the work-house” to afford alcohol would be seen as unconventional and inappropriate by nineteenth-century standards.

According to the thinking of the time, a woman should not threaten to act in such a way. Afterwards, her husband immediately signed the temperance pledge. The thought of his wife engaging in such masculine behavior was enough to motivate this man to stop drinking; thus, the ideals of abstinence and virtue were visible at each level of society. Such a tale speaks to the perception of Irish immigrant women: although their methods made them less feminine than American women, they could be good examples of womanhood, and every woman was expected to subscribe to ideals of the Cult of True Womanhood.

It is not surprising then to find articles both idealizing and disparaging Irish immigrant women’s beauty, since depictions of beauty reflected the degree to which a woman upheld the ideals of nineteenth-century femininity. Articles discussing or depicting womanly beauty and advertisements targeting it proliferated in American culture. Another article from *Godey’s Lady Book* entitled “Irish Ladies,” is complementary to the beauty of Irish women in general, but seems to disagree with the idea that her beauty is a measure of her womanliness. Irish women are described as “physically...the finest race in the world — taller, better limbered and chested, larger eyed, and with more luxuriant hair and freer action than any other nation.” Though the detailed descriptions of “cheeks and lips of delicacy and bright tints of carnation, with snowy teeth and eyebrows of jet,” reflect society’s fascination with beauty, the writer seems to reject the idea that such a depiction is a reflection of purity. Instead, the author belittles the Irish woman for being “ill-dressed—not because her dress was ill put on, but because she dances, not glides, sits down without care, pulls her flowers to pieces...she confesses her ignorance.” With this list of social faux pas, the reader is left with two impressions: that social graces were extremely important to society and were a measure of a woman’s femininity and that Irish women were simply not as graceful, refined — indeed as womanly — as native-born women. The article ends with the implication that the Irish immigrant woman “is the child of Nature, and children are not stylish,” — she may be exceedingly beautiful, but she is far from the archetype of the American woman. The political cartoon “Contrasted Faces” published in a New York newspaper in 1866 serves to reinforce this idea by contrasting the faces of Florence Nightingale, the native representation of femininity, and Bridget McBruder, the stereotypical Irish immigrant woman. Nightingale is pretty, well dressed and hygienic; the Irish woman is ill-kept and ape-like. The contrast is striking and, with the emphasis within the Cult of True Womanhood on beauty as a sign of virtue, one could infer that Irish women lacked virtue because they lacked appropriate feminine beauty.

The mid- to late-nineteenth century surge of immigration to America had far reaching social implications. On the one hand, there was a desire to indoctrinate these new arrivals with American dogma, including the Cult of True Womanhood. On the other, there was a vested interest in distinguishing between native-born and immigrant women. Wealthy, white, American women sought to maintain their social prestige by establishing an ideology of domesticity that, by and large, excluded the majority of their sex, whose lives, which largely revolved outside of the home, struggled to match the predominant social ideas about a woman’s sphere. This distinction perpetuated inequality and the spread of an ideology that ostracized the bulk of the public. In examining media depictions of Irish immigrant women, it is evident that the ideals of the Cult of True Womanhood were extremely powerful in dictating expectations for how women were expected to act, though not how they actually did. Therefore, native-born white Americans viewed Irish immigrant women as inferior to native-born women, and, sometimes, not even as true women.

Notes:

2. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Welter, 162.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
‘Alien’ Revolutionaries
Philip Rosenstein

Well-known union organizer Fred Thompson recounted the significance of Foreign Language Federations in the United States in a 1983 interview. Homogenous villages and neighborhoods founded by waves of immigrants began to emerge around the country during the late 19th century. In some cases, particularly in Scandinavian and Eastern European communities in the U.S., someone could reach the age of “16 or 18 and not speak a word of English.” The Foreign Language Federations that developed out of these communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are not often credited for their influence on leftist radicalism in the United States. However, the historical data gathered from these Federations reveals that their numbers and ability to inform and mobilize made them powerful forces within their respective political parties. Many immigrants found unskilled working class jobs in the industrial sector and participated in labor unions. Through these organizations, Foreign Language Federations came in contact with political parties and eventually many of them affiliated themselves with one of the three “old” American Leftist Parties: the Socialist Labor Party, the Socialist Party of America (S.P. or S.P.A.) or the Communist Party of America (C.P.A.). Some attention has been paid to individual Foreign Language Federations, however: “Historians of the Left tend to essentialize the experience of ‘alien’ revolutionaries. Too much commentary on the Foreign Language Federations homogenizes the personalities, politics, and practice of Old World revolutionaries, steeped in the richness of classical Marxism.” It is true that the members of these Language Federations often kept ties with leftist parties in their home countries, but they also helped to bring the culture of European Socialism to the United States.

In the late 1800s, American envoys were sent to Eastern and Northern Europe to promote immigration to the United States. The need for labor in the rapidly industrializing United States, socioeconomic troubles, and oppression from Tsarist Russia were important factors motivating Northern and Eastern Europeans to emigrate. A total of approximately 24 million Europeans immigrated to the United States between 1880 and 1920. In 1902, over 23,000 Finns alone immigrated to the United States, with a population that reached 400,000 in 1920. Scores of people from a variety of European countries formed a base of immigrant workers who, with limited rights in industrialized America, began to establish communities in order to facilitate retaining their language and heritage.

Language Federations were cultivated where large immigrant populations could develop organizations that were both politically informed and prepared to represent the community. The largest of these Federations came from Northern and Eastern Europe including Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Finland. The following discussion will evaluate in what ways and to what extent the Foreign Language Federations played a role in the Left’s revolutionary movement in the United States. Brian Palmer’s main argument is: “The base of immigrant leftists, much broader than this leadership layer itself, proved pivotal to the creation of revolutionary communism in the United States.” The foregoing analysis assumes this to be unquestionably true. This paper instead will attempt to qualify the Federations’ effect on radical American politics. The difficulty in doing so lies in
understanding what effect, negative or positive, the Federations had on the American Left following the Bolshevik revolution. In addition, the effect of the Red Scare on the individual Foreign Language Federations has been wrongly overlooked as a cause of their lack of concrete political objectives and unity in the mid to late 1920s.

One important aspect of the Foreign Language Federations was their utility as self-governing organs. The autonomy that many Federations enjoyed before the 1920s allowed them to develop into organizations that could economically sustain an entire community. Many Federations in the United States grounded themselves by buying property, coordinating community events and publishing daily periodicals. The Finnish Federation, for example, developed an impressive portfolio of properties and cooperative businesses. “They owned some sixty-five to seventy halls valued at $660,000 in 1913, ran a printing plant and a Workers’ College,” and even published a radical daily newspaper, Työmaa.6 Expanding through recruitment plans afforded Foreign Language Federations the ability to inform and quickly mobilize members. The Armenian Federation reported, “[I]n our legal organization we are not failing to carry on a careful agitation. The result has been a recently organized recruiting group and another one to be organized very soon in New York.”6

The most important events Language Federations organized were conventions. At these conventions, the Federations made decisions regarding their political affiliations and activities. At a 1921 convention, the Jewish (Yiddish speaking) Federation that had been affiliated with the S.P.A. voted to break away from the party. Those that voted against the break immediately formed a new independent branch.7 Federations and political parties crossed paths in the workplace mostly through unions and many found that the organizations had common goals. Some Foreign Language Federations, at first, found it unnecessary to join the Socialist Party of America in the first decade of the 20th century. The increased cost and possibly differing political ideologies put the two groups on different paths for the next few years. In 1907, the Lithuanian immigrants organized a Lithuanian Socialist Language Federation; at their convention that same year, an S.P.A. delegate had been sent to offer affiliation. By a vote of 22 to 12, the convention voted not to affiliate with the Socialist Party of America. The S.P.A.’s representative believed that “the increased cost of affiliation with our party seemed to be the greatest obstacle in their way.”8 In 1914, after growth in both the Lithuanian immigrant population and the Socialist Party of America, the S.P.A. decided to offer affiliation once again. By a very small margin the Federation voted in favor. Nevertheless, the closed vote revealed that a significant portion of the Lithuanian Federation was decisively against affiliation and, following the vote, almost 1,500 members left the organization, dropping the Federation’s membership to just over 2,000.9 Many other Language Federations joined one of the three Old Left Parties during the early years of the 20th century. Branches of the Polish Federation, for example, even had affiliations with multiple parties, including the Socialist Party of America and the Socialist Labor Party.10 11

Federations began expanding and in some cases factions emerged with distinct ideologies. Factionalism within the Foreign Language Federations was a major roadblock to the organization of a centralized and united radical immigrant movement, as well as a deterrent to the success of the larger radical leftist movement in the United States. The entire radical communist and socialist movement in the United States was split over tactics and decentralized, prohibiting the organization of all immigrant and American workers towards a shared goal. While their activities point to the potential of Language Federations to rally large immigrant populations, the inability of the Federations to successfully entrench themselves in the American radical movement proved detrimental to the movement of the Left in the United States. As Federations began to split, their influence on American radical history gradually lost potential.

Due to the loss of records during the Red Scare in the late 1910s and early 1920s, it is difficult to grasp the significance of Foreign Language Federations for the Communist and Socialist movement in the United States after the Bolshevik revolution. However, if numbers can be a measure of influence, Language Federations were of considerable importance. In 1919, at the time of a S.P.A. conference in New York, 53% of the S.P.A. constituents were members through their Foreign Language Federations.12 The rank and file of the Socialist Party was primarily comprised of immigrants, but the lack of coherence among branches of individual Foreign Language Federations caused a dispersal of the leadership and the creation of smaller, less effective groups. The Hungarian Language Federation, for example, in 1922 experienced strong discord over the trust and reliability of certain persons. This is summarized in a letter to the Central Executive Committee (C.E.C.) of the Communist Party U.S.A. written by the Cleveland secretary of the Hungarian Federation. In it he wrote:

“The Hungarian movement has gone through a cleansing process since their last convention. The undesirable element was swept out, not for difference of opinion or tactics as they claim, but for being generally unreliable and now the National Hungarian office is doing its utmost to bring back into the movement the expelled and altogether unreliable elements. Should they succeed in this then the true communists will not be able to remain in the movement or else it will lead to further strife and wrangling which might completely destroy the movement.”13

This correspondence shows that Federations masked ideological differences that developed in the early years of Russian Communism. Many of the rifts within Foreign Language Federations were in fact due to the varying interpretations of Communist literature, rather than the ‘unreliability’ referred to by the Cleveland secretary.

In a subsequent letter, the secretary of the Hungarian Federation attacked the C.E.C. and the National Hungarian Language Bureau for not expelling the “undesirable” element, and wrote, “Knowingly or unknowingly the National Hungarian Language Bureau started an underground movement which will first of all lead to the return of the parasites and other morally unreliable persons.”14 Factionalism within large and active Foreign Language Federations, such as the Hungarian group, put stress on the unity of the Federations overall and the Communist Party in the United States.

In addition to these developments, Communism had taken a stronghold within world politics by the late 1910s in the shape of the Soviet Union. When discussing the U.S.S.R. and the movement of the Left in the United States, Russian immigrants in the United States are the most important. The Russian Foreign Language Federation was one of the largest in the U.S., and from 1918 to 1919 it was very politically and socially active and its C.E.C. met regularly. In 1921 the Russians were the largest Federation within the Communist Party U.S.A., but they were also affiliated with the Communist Labor
Eventually, the party elected to join the Comintern and adhere to the idea of world revolution. The excerpt above shows the dedication that these radical Federations had to the European idea of Communism and Socialism. These Eastern European Federations not only affiliated themselves with parties that had positive contact with the Bolsheviks, but they also began publishing and distributing dailies and weeklies largely focused on developments in the Soviet Union.

Being part of a communist or socialist movement in the staunchly capitalist United States was not an inspiring or safe decision. The Russian Federation was a target for agents during the Red Scare because of their affiliations with overseas Communist organizations. In 1919, the American government cracked down on the Russian Language Federations. Leninist activities: 266 members were arrested on vague political charges before the August 1919 Fifth Convention, with a bail totaling $97,000. Some conferences set for 1919-1920 do not seem to have occurred. Other raids were documented, and local and federal authorities destroyed numerous files.

The failure of the American Left is often attributed, and rightly so, to an inability to organize and support a large-scale politically driven worker’s party. The irony of what transpired is that while these Federations played an important role in the creation of revolutionary communism in the United States, they also directly contributed to its stagnation and eventual demise. Immigrants brought European radical culture to the United States, but, as the Language Federations grew and joined larger political parties, their influence on the American Left took a negative turn. After the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, the Russian Language Federations and many others began breaking away from the parties to which they had originally been affiliated, to join the radical, pro-Bolshevik and Comintern-partner, C.P.U.S.A. Different branches joined different parties, but the bulk of immigrant Federations moved away from the more centrist and democratically inclined Socialist Party of America. Factionalism proved to be the undoing of the American Left in the 1920s. Both Foreign Language Federations and political parties faced ideological barriers to forming a coherent front. The Left failed to organize large-scale support and by the mid-1920s the United States government made it very difficult to successfully organize a radical movement on the Left.

Notes:

4 Brian Palmer, James P. Cannon, 100.
5 ibid., 101.
Henry George, the Labor Movement and the Mayoral Election of 1886: A Lost Opportunity

Eitan Sosner

The labor movement of New York City never presented a united front. Rather, it was a collection of micro-movements separated along ideological, religious and ethnic lines. As a result, the achievement of its objectives, which should have taken no more than one or two electoral cycles, instead took decades (some might say that the work is still not done). The election of Henry George as Mayor of New York City might have changed all that. George represented a middle-ground for almost all involved in the labor disputes of the Gilded Age, and his election would have cemented compromise and unity as the central characteristics of the labor movement. Henry George’s past experiences, in addition to his renown as a voice for reform, made him an ideal candidate for unifying the labor movement. These same experiences, however, particularly his time spent abroad, prevented him from being elected in the face of polarizing opposition. This failure had far-reaching consequences still felt today.

In order to understand why Henry George was an ideal candidate for unifying the labor movement, it is important to understand the movement itself, his background, and how he addressed some of the major concerns of the day. By the late 19th century, industrialization of production had become the norm. What this meant for many was not a sudden abundance of goods at reduced cost, but rather a cut in wages, as labor became less specialized and populations expanded. Workers were barely able to sustain a living and support their families. In addition, workers were forced to work incredibly long hours. In an attempt to alleviate these conditions, workers unionized and intellectuals who sympathized with their plight formed organizations for their support and improvement of conditions. These organizations included the Knights of Labor, the International Workingman’s Association, and many others. While all of these groups shared the same ephemeral goal of aiding workers, they, and those who led them, had different beliefs about how to accomplish their objectives. The Knights of Labor, for example, were associated at varying times with communism, socialism, and anarchy based on the associations and ideologies of their leadership. As these groups were pulled in different directions by their ideologies, they came into conflict with one another. Frequently, the conflicts were over which faction should be in control. But there were also more ideological, continuing conflicts, such as that between socialist and communist groups as each tried to differentiate itself from the other.

Unlike many of the intellectuals involved in the labor movement, such as Johann Most (a German anarchist), Henry George was a native-born American from a “respectable” background. As his daughter and biographer Anna George de Mille described, Henry George was born in a regulation house “smaller than the two flanking it,” to “a publisher of Church and Sunday School Books.” The house was comfortably middle class and was furnished with nice furniture, family portraits, and other comforts. At a time when newspapers reported anarchists, nihilists, the Irish, and Jews as threats to western societal traditions in Europe, the “traditional” Protestant nature of Henry George’s origins would have calmed the instinctive distrust of the upper and middle classes who opposed labor interests. Though Henry George supported a major change in
how Western society was organized and was an integral part of the labor movement, he was saved from Johann Most’s fate as the model for a “foreign-looking” terrorist in newspaper cartoons.9

Henry George proposed a means of reforming society that would benefit the lower classes, with only nominal detriment to the upper and middle classes. This is what truly separated him from other ideologues of the time and gave him the potential to unite the labor movement. Henry George believed that land, upon which all depend, should belong to all.10 According to George, as societies develop and become more technologically advanced, the mechanization of labor makes the land required for labor more valuable.11 Landowners, knowing this, will speculatively raise the cost of rent faster than wealth can be produced from the land to pay off the rent.12 Factory owners in turn must cut wages in order to make ends meet,13 and workers will be unable to resist these wage cuts because of the sheer size of the labor pool in the area (the value of land increasing in reply to increased demand from a larger populace as well as from increased mechanization).14 In George’s view, all of the issues of poverty stem not from the factory owner/capitalist, but from the long-distance choke hold on remuneration that the landowner places on both the factory owner/capitalist and the worker. The solution, then, is “to make land a common property.”15

While the redistribution of property was not a new idea, what made Henry George’s ideas more applicable to the labor movement and society at large was that it was not the property itself that should be confiscated and redistributed, but its value: “It is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to confiscate rent.”16 He proposed a massive rent upon property, to the point where all other taxes would be unnecessary.17 The actual land could remain legal property, but the rent generated from it, its monetary value, would be redistributed.18 It was in the method of redistribution of wealth that George differed from other reformers of his time. The anarchists wanted to overthrow society and start anew; George wanted to simply alter the process of taxation. The communists wanted to abolish class systems; George held that there was nothing inherently wrong with the class system, since both the workers and the factory owners suffered from landowners. Socialists wished for bureaucratization and control of the means of production; George only wished for the reallocation of wealth. Henry George’s ideologies made him the ideal candidate to unite the labor system because of their temperament and range of appeal. While in his vision of the world the workers benefited and received a just and financially palatable life for their toil, capitalists were not abolished or restricted; they were welcome to seek profit and success. It was only land that needed to be equally owned.

Henry George’s ideas resonated particularly well with one important group of immigrant laborers: the Irish. Patrick Ford, a proponent of Irish land reform and publisher of the Irish World in New York, befriended George and gave his book Progress and Poverty an enthusiastic review because of how relevant its ideas were to the problems plaguing Ireland. In 1881, Ford sent George to Ireland as a special correspondent, where George wrote fiery articles criticizing English land ownership, lectured and was arrested. George returned to New York “an Irish-American working-class hero.”19

Despite the fact that George was raised as a Protestant,20 he was able to cross not only the national line between the Irish and native-born Americans, but also the religious line between Catholics and Protestants. George formed a relationship with Father Edward McGlynn, an Irish Catholic priest and supporter of the working class. McGlynn “sought to promote the material as well as spiritual needs of his parishioners, and when he read [George’s] Progress and Poverty, it explained to him why all his efforts on behalf of poor parishioners had come to naught.”21 As the Irish were a significant part of New York’s labor force, the Irish community’s support for George attracted the attention of others. The New York Times saw fit to print this excerpt from a pamphlet which George published while in Ireland: “Either the land of Ireland belongs to the Irish landlords, or it rightfully belongs to the Irish people; there can be no middle ground.”22 The same article described how George’s pamphlet and larger work, Progress and Poverty had broader appeal:

Mr. George, in a fine series of logical arguments, lifts the question from the narrow circle of national recrimination to which it is now confined, and shows how the Irish poor are fighting for the very thing that grinds the faces of the English poor, the very thing that keeps up a slow gangrene even in our land of vast unsettled territory.23

That Henry George’s rhetoric appealed not just to one specific group, but to many, is precisely why he had the capacity to unite the labor movement. He possessed the background and ability needed to appeal to native-born Americans, Irish-Americans (and other naturalized groups), Protestants, and Catholics. His ideologies were not restricted to any particular group, nor did they espouse the overthrow of any group. “He has the advantage of...having got rid of the prejudices which beset writers on similar topics. Mr. George is neither a ‘communist,’ nor a free-lover, nor even an infidel.”24

Henry George’s ultimate failure to unite the labor movement, as crystallized by his loss of the 1886 mayoral election in New York, can be linked to two root causes. The first is that he had no hand in organizing when other, more radical and polarizing individuals were present. The second is that his ideas were unable to compete with more radical ideas which, once established, grabbed the attention of many in the labor movement.

Although George returned from his stint as a correspondent in Ireland in 1882,25 by 1884 he was abroad lecturing again.26 In fact, Henry George spent a large portion of time from 1881 until the 1886 election absent from New York, lecturing about his single tax on land. Meanwhile, the labor movement in New York continued to evolve. A prime example was Victor Drury. Drury was a Frenchman who came to New York originally in support of the region’s International Workingman’s Union (the militant workers’ union begun by Karl Marx).27 Drury had associations with anarchist groups and was a close associate of Johann Most.28 Drury became a leading figure in the New York labor movement as the unofficial leader of the 49th district assembly of the Knights of Labor29 and as chairman of a machinist, molder, and pattern-maker union. Under his direction, this union operated under the assumption that “[i]f the working men were sufficiently organized they could enforce their demands for eight hours' work without any statutory law.”30 Drury is only one example of the type of radical individuals who became labor leaders in New York while George was away.31 The effect which these men had on the character of the labor movement cannot be underestimated. Having gained power through status or reputation (as in the case of Most), their radicalism would not only have had the
attraction of all extreme ideologies in times of dissatisfaction, but would also have carried the weight and credibility of the organizations with which they were associated.

George, though well known and respected, had comparatively weaker ties to organizations such as the Knights of Labor. Additionally, because his rhetoric lacked radicalism, it was doubtless less attractive to those already polarized by the radical ideologies of men like Drury and Most. Evidence of polarization in the public consciousness is clear from the headlines of the day. In describing a gathering of workers, the New York Times labeled the article "Recalling the Paris Commune: An Assemble Where Every Shade of Red Could Be Seen,"32 All of those who gathered were painted with the same radical stripe as Victor Drury, who led the meeting.

The mayoral election of 1886 saw Henry George, representing the United Labor Party (a political extension of the Knights of Labor) pitted against the Tammany Hall/Democratic candidate Abram Hewitt, and Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate. Henry George was the selected candidate of "organized labor," Abram Hewitt was the candidate of the "Irish-American middle class," and Theodore Roosevelt was the candidate of the organized bourgeoisie.33 With the upper classes lending their support to Roosevelt, the voters of the lower classes were forced to choose between two candidates who did not seem very different. Neither espoused the radical ideologies of Drury, Most, and their ilk. Unpersuasive to workers attracted to radicalism, Henry George was unable to win the majority of votes in the 1886 Mayoral election. People sided with Hewitt, who, like George, did not represent any of the prevalent radical labor ideas but did offer people something tangible: jobs, the perennial Tammany vote-winner. Henry George, despite offering the most common ground for labor and non-labor interests, lost the election. The labor movement, divided and radicalized by men like Victor Drury whose ideologies left no room for competing views, found little reason to vote for George. Bereft of that ideological association, and lacking the organizational ties that he had forfeited while travelling, George was unable to compete with the immediate benefits promised by Abram Hewitt.

Understanding Henry George's loss of the 1886 election leads to a better understanding of why the labor movement could not unite. Radical ideologies by their very nature polarize people. As reflected by the New York Times "Paris Commune" headline mentioned previously, individuals become victims of guilt by association. This, in turn, forces those who share the same goals to take hard lines against one another in order to simply avoid association in the public mind. The conflict within the Teachers' Union, and then between the Teachers' Union and the Teachers' Guild in the early and middle of the 20th century, is a case in point:

The teacher's union was a factional donnybrook. Finding itself unable to conduct any business and convinced that the communists were using endless debate to sabotage the union, Linville and the leadership sought to have the union 'reorganized,' free of communist 'domination.' When the move failed, Linville- along with most of the union's officers and several hundred members- walked out and founded a new union, the Teacher's Guild.24

This sort of internal strife was common in the labor movement and had its roots in the radicalism of the late 19th century.

Henry George could have unified the labor movement. He was able to relate to immigrant and minority workers in a way that would be needed to become their spokesman, but also had very strong ties to the idealized “true America” that would have made the labor movement seem less threatening to society in general. His theories about labor reform echoed this duality, allowing for the benefit of the worker, without detriment to or destruction of capitalists and capitalism. This ability to appeal to the workers without threatening society could have tempered the radicalism that divided the labor movement.

Had George been more involved in the organizations themselves, he might have been able to stop the spread of radicalism into the leadership of organizations such as the Knights of Labor. It was his very lack of radicalism in a radical environment that ultimately alienated some who believed that he did not really offer anything different than what they had. George was uniquely positioned to unite the labor movement and move it forward, but failed to do so because the polarized nature of the electorate made his ideas less appealing. With his loss in 1886, the labor movement became further radicalized and fragmented, turning those who should have been allies into enemies seeking definition by differentiation. This decreased the efficacy of the unions and forfeited labor’s ability to elect leaders to politically powerful positions and affect change through that route.

Notes:


3 Anna G. DeMille, "Henry George, Childhood and Early Youth," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 283, accessed April 15, 2010, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3483943?&search=yes&term=Henry&term=George&list=hide&searchWithin=1&Fraction=0.626&query%dHenry%26George%26x%3D12%26y%3D3%26wc%3D0%26n%item&8=8&term=303405&returnArticleService=showArticle.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 284.


8 De Mille, 284.


11 Ibid., VII.I.23-29.

12 Ibid., VII.I.5.
The Secret Wars: How the Pentagon Papers and WikiLeaks Exposed the Truth behind America at War

Elizabeth Wu

The risks are not at all only on the side of telling secrets. The much bigger risks are on the side of keeping secrets about wrongful wars and hopeless wars.

-Daniel Ellsberg

Introduction

They called it Project B. For nearly a week, Julian Assange and his team of tech-savvy truth warriors worked around the clock to have it ready for its debut before the National Press Club on April 5, 2010 – the day after Easter. It was a seventeen-minute, long edited excerpt of footage leaked from the U.S. military showing a 2007 ambush which killed twelve people, including two employees of the Reuters news service – twenty-two-year-old photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen and forty-year-old driver and assistant Saeed Chmagh. The original video, which runs for thirty-eight minutes, was filmed from the Apache helicopter that opened fire, and shows what seems to be a successful ambush on a small group of armed insurgents in the suburb of New Baghdad. However, as the Defense Department would soon realize, some of the men seen in grainy black-and-white through the helicopter’s gun-sight were not insurgents.

Immediately following the attack, Lieutenant Colonel Scott Bleichwehl, a spokesman for the multinational forces in Baghdad said, in connection with a statement by the American military, “There is no question that coalition forces were clearly engaged in combat operations against a hostile force.” The military defended the tactics employed in the ambush, saying that the soldiers were following standard operating procedure in their decision to open fire because insurgent activities had recently been reported in the area and that some in the group with Noor-Eldeen and Chmagh seemed to be armed (one possibility is that Noor-Eldeen’s camera was mistaken for an RPG). Thus, the army maintained, the deaths were just an unfortunate mistake. Yet, until the WikiLeaks publication of the video, many of the details behind the ambush remained largely obscured despite continued efforts by Reuters to acquire a copy of the footage of the attack under the Freedom of Information Act.

Since then, WikiLeaks has made public three “megaleaks,” massive collections of classified information leaked from within the U.S. government concerning three crucial areas of foreign policy: Afghanistan, Iraq, and diplomacy. The Afghanistan war logs alone, the first group of documents and perhaps the smallest to be leaked, is made up of over 91,000 classified military documents that detail “records of engagements, mishaps, intelligence on enemy activity and other events from the war in Afghanistan.”

From the beginning of WikiLeaks’ more recent focus on intelligence concerning the U.S. at war, one of America’s most well known whistle-blowers, Daniel Ellsberg, was quick to draw the parallels. The former high-ranking government analyst, who leaked the Pentagon Papers in order to expose the truths behind the U.S.’s involvement in Vietnam, publicly applauded Assange and the WikiLeaks organization soon after the release of the Apache video. Ellsberg, in a statement of solidarity with WikiLeaks, stated, “The Internet is there to bring out this evidence, when a terribly wrongful, reckless criminal act
is being prepared." And after each leak, his support seemed to grow yet more vocal in discussing what he believes to be the fundamental parallels between his actions during the Vietnam War and Assange’s actions now.

On December 10, Ellsberg appeared on The Brian Lehrer Show, and continued to defend WikiLeaks’ truth-telling work, even in the wake of its release of a cache of U.S. diplomatic cables, which caused a storm of controversy because the initial revelations seemed to serve no purpose other than to embarrass public figures. “It’s not really the end of the world if our people hear unvarnished comments once every 40 years. They’ve been fed a diet of varnish for so long that it’s not going to end the world,” said Ellsberg, though he disagreed with some of the New York Times’ editorial decisions to feature the more sensational information first.6

Still, for Ellsberg, WikiLeaks’ commitment to liberate buried intelligence and to promote transparency demonstrates an undeniable connection to his actions to stop the Vietnam War. He forcefully denied any claims that by defending WikiLeaks, he was demeaning the integrity of his own actions forty years ago, which some may deem “more noble” than Assange’s “reckless” actions today:

I’ve seen more positive comment about the Pentagon Papers in the last few weeks than has happened in many years, but it’s mainly to use it as a foil with which to criticize WikiLeaks. There’s a mantra going around – Pentagon Papers good, WikiLeaks bad. And people even expect me to join in on that – I don’t.7

But are Ellsberg’s convictions correct? Or are critics who label Assange’s work as irresponsible and only serving the petty goal of wanting to “discredit and embarrass” the United States well-founded in their accusations? In order to fairly compare the two greatest leaks of classified information in American history, a host of factors must be examined: the nature and medium in which the leaks were released, the basic content of the leaks, the nature of the wars being discussed in the leaks and the public’s investment in the execution of those wars, and the role of the leaks in reshaping broad public perceptions about the U.S. and its military engagements.8 With these criteria as a guide, it seems that Ellsberg and Assange are motivated by different goals for their leaks of classified information. Ellsberg worked to end a specific war that he viewed as unjust, whereas Assange does not seek any specific outcomes, but to broadly expose what he views as injustice in large, hierarchical organizations, like governments and big business. In turn, the Pentagon Papers and the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs from WikiLeaks are two unique leaks of government intelligence that occurred in two distinct moments in history. However, one unfortunate, and perhaps the most crucial, similarity remains: the Pentagon Papers did not have the immediate effect of ending the Vietnam War, and by observing the current fallout from WikiLeaks’ release of the Apache video and the Afghanistan and Iraq war logs, it is realistic to conclude they will not have a significant impact on steering the policy of the Obama administration away from war.

The Wars at Home: Public Opinion and the Influence of the Mass Media

“If They Won’t Stop the War, We’ll Stop the Government.” That was the mantra that inspired over 35,000 protestors to widespread acts of civil disobedience in Washington on May Day, 1971. Ellsberg and his “affinity group,” composed of “academics of one sort or another,” was one of many that employed “mobile tactics” of civil disobedience, such as sitting in front of cars and blocking traffic in order to disrupt business as usual.9 By then, popular opinion of the war had long soured. Early in 1968, the Tet Offensive had showed Americans that, contrary to government assurances, the war in Vietnam was not on the verge of an American victory. “Had [Daniel Ellsberg] come forward with those papers in 1968 or 1969, I think they would have been published then,” said Hedrick Smith, one of the New York Times reporters that eventually helped write the articles that leaked the information three years later. “I think the damage had been done in terms of the government’s credibility with the major papers by that time.10

Still, the Nixon administration continued to escalate the war by increasing bombings in South Vietnam, and by invading neighboring Laos and Cambodia despite the growth of more militant protests.11 “They were holding rifles with one hand and giving us the peace sign with the other,” recounted Ellsberg of some of the Marines deployed for crowd control on May Day.12 Government employees “honked and smiled and flashed peace signs out their windows,” despite the disturbance to their morning commute.13

By May Day, it had been two months since Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers to Neil Sheehan of the New York Times. He was still waiting to hear what the paper planned to publish, if anything at all. It was in this atmosphere of intense social unrest over the most divisive war since the Civil War that “the Pentagon Papers dropped like a huge stink bomb” on June 13, 1971.14

The decision of the Times editors, reporters, executives, and lawyers to publish an account of the “Vietnam Archive” based on the Pentagon Papers was not an easy one. The relationship between the press and the Nixon administration was tenuous. The most vocal attacks on the “Eastern establishment press” came from Vice President Spiro Agnew, who derided the Washington Post Company and its subsidiaries as “all grinding out the same editorial line… four powerful voices harken[ing] to one master.” He also accused television newsmen of allowing “a raised eyebrow, an inflection of the voice, a caustic remark dropped in the middle of a broadcast [to] raise doubts in a million minds about the veracity of a public official or the wisdom of a government policy.”15 The overwhelming number of subpoenas that the federal government served against the press reinforced the veritable “chilling effect” on the press to stand up to the government. CBS and NBC alone received 122 subpoenas for film or reporters’ testimony between January 1969 and July 1971.16

As a result, the New York Times braced itself for the fiery backlash they were certain would occur after the publication of the Papers. According to James Goodale, the Times’ legal counsel, the paper was running two distinct risks by publishing an injunction and a criminal prosecution.17 On June 14, the Times received a telegram from the Justice Department, which demanded that the newspaper cease and desist from further publication of the classified materials or face further judicial action. The Times continued with its June 15 installment and the injunction was filed later that day. Judge Murray I. Gurfein’s decision to preliminarily enjoin the Times until the case could be heard on June 18 became the first time in American history that prior restraint was levied against the press.18
The lead-up to the publication of the Afghanistan war logs was much less dramatic. There were several successful large-scale protests nationwide immediately following the invasion of Afghanistan, but by 2007, dissent on the American home front had been relatively muted for several years, despite the war’s unpopularity. Afghanistan had become the “forgotten war,” eclipsed by the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. This was reflected in its lack of coverage on the nightly evening news, where Afghanistan was not ranked among the top-five news stories of the year. Even Iraq made up only between three and four percent of the news coverage of the nightly evening news programs of the three major networks. According to an annual report evaluating the state of the news media conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, “over the course of the year, out of 2,303 minutes devoted on the three evening news programs to the war in Iraq, they varied by just eight minutes (CBS 771, ABC 769, NBC 763).” The 24-hour news cycle also largely ignored the wars. Again, Afghanistan was not a top-five story of the year. FOX, CNN, and MSNBC all devoted less than five percent of their news-hole to reporting ground events in Iraq.

This stands in stark contrast to the Vietnam War, America’s first televised war, a “living room war.” Constant news coverage inundated American homes nightly with images that showed “the raw horror of war…with the result that war necessarily appears on television as senseless killing.” Rules governing the content that news organizations can broadcast from the frontlines have since restricted the more jarring images of war, such as wounded or dead American soldiers. Thus, war coverage on television has become less sensational, a factor which may have contributed to its slow disappearance from news programs.

Another missing parallel between the political, social, and cultural environment at the time of the Pentagon Papers’ release and when the Afghanistan war logs were publicized is the culture of fear among the media that the Nixon administration had cultivated by 1971. Looking back on the apprehension that newspapers had operated under, former Washington Post reporter Sanford Ungar does not see any equivalent situation now:

Nothing, today, comes close. There is a lot of stress between the government and press today. And nothing since…comes close to the sense of what we felt as young reporters in Washington, about the status of freedom of the press. I mean, the lengths that we went to. We all talked, we imagined we were being taped, and never realized that it actually was happening to some respected, slightly older colleagues…

The slow scrubbing of Iraq and Afghanistan from traditional news sources fed a growing sense of apathy towards the wars due to low information. Thus, the impact of the war logs’ release was less successful in influencing an already stagnant public opinion. Conversely, the Pentagon Papers was a moment of decisive vindication for the nation’s dedicated anti-war protesters, who now had a verifiable body of evidence with which to charge the government for waging an unjust war built on a foundation of lies.

Access for All: The Internet and the Democratization of the Fourth Estate

Within two weeks of being on Youtube, “Collateral Murder” had been viewed over six million times. Even though the traditional news media, particularly television, had begun to devote less and less time to discussing the events on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Internet provided an endless source of information for those in search of it. The role of technology, particularly the emergence of the Internet as a leading source from which Americans get information, is a crucial game-changer in evaluating the different technological environments from which the Pentagon Papers and the war logs emerged. Headlines are no longer the domain of an exclusive oligarchy of news organizations. News has become more democratized.

Even before the Internet existed, Assange had a reputation for being a gifted hacker. Operating under the code name Mendax, derived “from Horace’s splendid mendax, or ‘noblly untruthful,’” Assange was already able to traverse secure government networks, including those belonging to the Department of Defense, at age sixteen. By age twenty, Assange was arrested for the first time, and charged with thirty-one counts of hacking and related crimes. “Julian was the most knowledgeable and the most secretive of the lot,” said Ken Day, the lead investigator of the anti-hacking task force of the Australian police. “He had some altruistic motive. I think he acted on the belief that everyone should have access to everything.”

Assange and his network of “hacktivists” behind WikiLeaks have used their technological prowess to exploit the democracy of the Internet to its fullest. WikiLeaks takes great care to make sure that the information it releases cannot be erased from the public domain. Any “government or company that wanted to remove content from WikiLeaks would have to practically dismantle the Internet itself.” This is accomplished by publishing the information on its own website and other “mirror” sites to create what Assange calls an “uncensorable system for untraceable mass document leaking and public analysis.”

Since its launch in December 2006 with the publication of a document that revealed a decision by Somali rebel leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys to hire hit men to execute government officials, WikiLeaks has made its name as the premier outlet for disgruntled government and business insiders to anonymously leak classified information. With no agenda other than “to expose injustice, not to provide an even-handed record of events,” WikiLeaks is a clearinghouse for a diverse array of secret material – everything from Sarah Palin’s personal emails to the membership list of the far-right British National Party.

Due to the Internet’s capacity to host and disseminate unlimited quantities of information, WikiLeaks is able to publish nearly all of the material it receives. The organization also takes precautions to withhold sensitive information that could endanger others, part of what Assange calls the organization’s “harm minimization” process. “My analogy, in my own experience, is not with Julian Assange,” clarified Ellsberg in an interview with Brian Lehrer. “He’s in effect doing the role of the New York Times, which published the Pentagon Papers, as he is publishing these new revelations.” Nevertheless, even with this stipulation, the similarity between WikiLeaks and the New York Times is strained.

Presently, anyone with access to the Internet can freely browse through the compendium of war logs. Owing to its incredible size, it is likely that few people have chosen to read through all of the documents and have instead relied on reportage from
accredited news organizations to sift through the information and analyze the meaning of the leak.

Nevertheless, the possibility for independent analysis still exists, which was not true of the Pentagon Papers in 1971. With no forum to feasibly broadcast all 7,000 pages of the Pentagon Papers, Ellsberg relied on two conventional channels—established news organizations and discontented lawmakers—to make the information in the Pentagon Papers public. After turning over copies of the Papers to the Times, Ellsberg had no influence on what editorial stance the paper would take, what revelations it would emphasize, when the articles would be published, or if actual raw source material would be published alongside the article. The closest the Pentagon Papers came to full disclosure in its entirety was when Sen. Mike Gravel of Alaska submitted portions of the Pentagon Papers into the congressional record after he used it in a late-night filibuster.32

The introduction of the Internet into the relationship between leaker and publisher offers the public the opportunity to refer to the original documents themselves and to come to their own conclusions, independent of possible biases that may have been projected by a news organization. This occurred with WikiLeaks' Apache video. On www.collateralmurder.com, the website that WikiLeaks created especially for the publication of the Apache video, Assange and his team posted both the WikiLeaks-edited version of the video and the full-length video alongside other documentary evidence, such as U.S. Rules of Engagement 2006-2007, photos of injuries sustained by those wounded in the ambush, and some of the last pictures recovered from Noor-Eldeen's camera.33 The WikiLeaks' version of the video offers helpful explanations of the action. For example, it identifies Noor-Eldeen and Chmagh and transcribes the soldiers' conversation. However, it was also criticized for its level of editorializing, starting with its incendiary title, "Collateral Murder." Assange made clear his opinion of the actions showed in the video at its first screening. "Their desire was simply to kill," he remarked before the National Press Club, "Their desire was to get high scores on that computer game."34

Robert Mackey of the New York Times quotes from a detailed analysis of the video by Anthony Martinez, a blogger who served in Iraq:

Between 3:13 and 3:30 it is quite clear to me, as both a former infantry sergeant and a photographer, that the two men central to the gun-camera’s frame are carrying photographic equipment. This much is noted by WikiLeaks, and misidentified by the crew of Crazyhorse 18. At 3:39, the men central to the frame are armed, the one on the far left with some AK variant, and the one in the center with an RPG. The RPG is crystal clear even in the downsized, very low-resolution, video...This all goes by without any mention whatsoever from WikiLeaks, and that is unacceptable.35

By posting all of the available raw source material together, WikiLeaks allows viewers to come to their own conclusions about the circumstances of the ambush, which cannot occur with information that has been filtered through an established news organization. "It is amazing that outside of the conventional channels of information something like this can happen," observed Lisa Lynch, an assistant professor of journalism at Concordia University in Montreal.36

Aside from the obvious perks of improved technology—it took weeks for Ellsberg and his colleague Russo to Xerox the nearly 7,000 pages of the Pentagon Papers study, Ellsberg even enlisted the help of his two young children—the power of the Internet as a source for raw data sets WikiLeaks apart from the disclosure of the Pentagon Papers. As a result, WikiLeaks is able to play multiple roles: mediator between informants and the press, publisher, and commentator. By allowing unabridged access to the raw documents, the organization inserts a quality of egalitarianism never before available in journalism or government oversight and fundamentally changes the process of leaking classified information.

What We Know Now: Revelations from the Pentagon Papers and WikiLeaks

"There hasn’t been an unauthorized disclosure of this magnitude since the Pentagon Papers 39 years ago. I’ve been waiting for it for a long time," said Ellsberg on Larry King Live soon after the release of the Afghan War Diary. "I wish there had been a Pentagon Papers of Afghanistan earlier than this. But better late than never, the war is still on."37

The release of the largest cache of classified American military documents to date came at an opportune time. "Congress is just being challenged now to vote $33 billion more to a war that’s cost $300 billion so far, in a war where the opponent we’re fighting is stronger than it’s ever been before."38

But just two days later, the House of Representatives voted to send the war-spending bill to President Obama for his rubber stamp. This begs the questions of whether the revelations in the documents were not enough for Congress to take pause before approving more funding for the war, or if they were revelations at all.

The day after the release of the Afghan War Diary, Obama commented that the documents “don’t reveal any issues that haven’t already informed our public debate on Afghanistan—indeed, they point to the same challenges that led me to conduct an extensive review of our policy last fall.”39 CNN Senior International Correspondent Nic Robertson quoted one colleague: “This is old bad news at a new bad time.”40 Analysts generally agreed that the massive collection, which consisted of standard reports filed from the ground, showed a more realistically bleak outlook on the war in Afghanistan, though it did not disclose any groundbreaking revelations that had not previously been reported. “Early reports are often wrong, and low-level operatives often lack the knowledge or perspective to understand events they are witnessing,” wrote Kori Schake, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.41 The most newsworthy aspect of the Afghan War Log may have been leak itself, because of its unprecedented size and scope.

In contrast, when the Pentagon Papers hit doorsteps on June 13, it fundamentally changed how many Americans understood the war in Vietnam. “I can remember having personal epiphanies of mine when I had people lie to me, to my face, people that I had trusted,” recalled Hedrick Smith, a New York Times reporter, as he sifted through the Pentagon Papers. “I had experiences where I found the government was literally putting out information that could not be anything but misleading to us as its first consumers and then to relay on to our readers.”42 Ultimately, the truths revealed in the Pentagon Papers "lent credibility to and finally crystallized the growing consensus that the Vietnam War was
wrong and legitimized the radical critique of the war,” said Harvard law professor Charles Nesson. These revelations also came from a high-level intelligence and the conclusions presented in the Papers were a result of in-depth, well-researched analysis.

Even so, the immediate publication of the Papers did little to slow the Vietnam War’s gears, just as the disclosure of the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs are having little impact on war policy today. “In my view, the Pentagon Papers did have an effect on bringing down Nixon. But it did not have an effect on ending the war, nor did it have an effect on the nature of the American state in the sense of how we do business,” said Marcus Raskin. However, one important result of the Pentagon Papers’ publication and resulting court case was that it emboldened the press to approach its duties as the fourth estate without fear of government backlash.

“I personally don’t think the publication of the Pentagon Papers had such a great effect on American policy,” said Don Oberdorfer, a former Washington Post reporter. “That big change had taken place several years before at Tet....It had a bigger effect on the American press. I would say that was a moment in which the American press, including the Washington Post and the New York Times and all the rest of the newspapers, became independent of the government on the war.”

Conclusion

The legacy of the Pentagon Papers — of its publication, legal battle, and revelations — is what makes possible today’s discussion about Wikileaks. Perhaps the most important result of the WikiLeaks disclosure is that it has revived the memory of the Pentagon Papers, and is showing, to an extent, how little has changed in how the American government wages wars. Though the revelations in WikiLeaks are nowhere as impressive as the discovery of rampant lying by several administrations to continue the war in Vietnam, it does reveal that wars are, more often than not, decided under a cloak of secrecy. Thus, WikiLeaks contributes to the public discussion by raising the questions asked about Vietnam almost forty years ago: Is this war just? Is the administration telling the truth? What does more information tell us about our involvement abroad? In taking advantage of the Internet’s incredible power to hold and release information, WikiLeaks has brought government accountability to the twenty-first century. Finally, by taking into account the memory of the Pentagon Papers, it offers the American public a brand new way to investigate, question, and analyze our government’s foreign entanglements.

Notes:

1 The exact number of casualties is disputed. Initial reports from The New York Times said twelve were killed in the attack. The more recent New Yorker article puts the number of casualties at “at least 18.”
note.html.
7 Ibid.
8 For the purposes of this study, I will treat the Apache video, the Afghanistan war logs, the Iraq war logs as one multi-part leak, despite their differences in subject matter. This is because the type of content, especially between the Afghanistan and Iraq war logs, is extremely similar. Also, my evaluation looks at the psychological impact of the leaks on society-at-large, which is essentially the same across the four leaks even though they occurred over a span of about three years.
9 Other notable academics in the group, which Ellsberg names in his memoir, are Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, and Marilyn Young.
10 Ibid., 62.
13 Ibid., 379.
14 Prados and Porter, Inside the Pentagon Papers, 3.
16 Ibid., 117-118.
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Alix Cohen


Felipe Cole


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Emily Genser


Luke McGeehan


Daniella Montemarano


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**Margaret Rippe**


**Philip Rosenberg**


Eitan Sosner


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