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# THE MSU UNDERGRADUATE HISTORIAN STAFF

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are thrilled to present the fourth volume of *The MSU Undergraduate Historian*. One of the few entirely undergraduate-operated history journals in the country, this journal strives to reflect the radiant and colorful intellectual climate fostered by MSU's Department of History in its largest constituent body: the undergraduates. This year's publication features seven excellent articles written by these undergraduates, who here exhibit symptoms of this wonderful setting of scholarship

In the opening article, Nicholas Huhn writes a timely piece about pirates in the ancient Mediterranean. By defining and discussing the changing attitudes of acceptance surrounding piracy over an extensive period of time, he reminds us of the power that piracy can wield in transforming maritime societies.

Andrew Smith contributes a profoundly insightful article on the ways in which foreign relations, as well as both international and domestic exploitation, can have lasting effects on health policy. His article tackles the issue of opium demonization in China as having a variety of alternative motives from different parties both at home and abroad.

Dayna Caldwell uses Chilean tapestries to demonstrate how Pinochet's persecution spurred women to political activism not only in Chile, but other parts of Latin America as well. Driven by their collective memory, groups of women in Chile expressed their pain through both public demonstration and the works of their own hands.

Robert Wells explores how racism in America both shocked a German visitor and prepared him for a leadership of resistance against Nazism in his native Germany. He uses Dietrich Bonhoeffer's and others' writings to show the complex emotions that racism in America and anti-Semitism in Germany elicited in this sensitive and passionate theologian and resister.

In her paper on body image in South Africa, Elizabeth Young forcefully argues that British colonialism changed native conceptions of beauty and body type. These changes were an important part

of African history and must be understood when examining gender, culture, and society in the past and present of the continent.

Matthew Murray tells the story of America's first attempted coup against an overseas ruler. Using naval and diplomatic records, he argues that the United States sought to remake Tripoli's approach to international relations and economics in the First Barbary War.

In the concluding article, Shauna Tharp compares two different Jewish leaders' policies toward children in the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos. She demonstrates the differences in outcomes of these policies, and provokes deep thoughts about the roles of perpetrators, collaborators, and victims, and how one can be all three. She offers interesting insights in to people's reactions to impossible situations, and the results of them.

Volume 4 of *The MSU Undergraduate Historian* would be inconceivable without the commentary and professional refereeship provided so thoughtfully by Dr. Denise Demetriou, Dr. Linda Fair, Dr. Aminda Smith, Dr. Erica Windler, Dr. Pero Dagbove, Dr. Emine Evered, Dr. Gordon Stewart, Dr. Karin Hanshew and Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich -- all faculty members at MSU. This long-list of willingness to assist undergraduate endeavors is telling of the Department's dedication to education. We would also like to thank Dr. Mark Kornbluh, Department Chair, for making this possible and the rest of the Department staff. Above all is the great debt owed to Dr. Christine Daniels who volunteered countless hours into the realization of this publication.



Ryan Etzcorn  
Editor-In-Chief



Matthew Murray  
Associate Editor

## A NOTE ON THE REVIEW PROCESS OF VOLUME 4

The review process for Volume 4 of *The MSU Undergraduate Historian* has been a significant departure from previous issues. After much debate and reflection, it was decided that the current volume would increase its overall strength with the aid of professional referees. All submitted articles were first reviewed with the use of a double-blind procedure by the board of student editors. Nearly 50 Essays were submitted this year and a select few were passed on to faculty members at Michigan State University. At this stage, each article was given scrupulous attention and commentary by faculty members in a double-blind procedure, ultimately deciding the final selections for publication.

# PIRACY AND POLITICS IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN FROM ODYSSEUS TO POMPEY THE GREAT

*Nicholas Huhn*

Since the time man began trading goods by sea, there have been pirates. Though most people may only envision colonial-era buccaneers, pirates have a long history dating back to the ancient world. Just as modern oil tankers are terrorized by pirate envoys, so too were grain transports and other merchant vessels in the ancient Mediterranean. Just as travel on Roman roads was perilous because of thieves, transport by ship was risky because of sea-bandits. By definition, pirates are people who pillage and plunder from the sea without consent from any nation.<sup>1</sup> References to these types of activities surface throughout classical literature but very rarely in more than a line or two, and often ancient sources seem confused whether piratical activity was even a crime. The life of the pirate has captured the imagination of the world today, but it is important to understand that their place in history reaches far back and extends over a wide period of time and space. Perhaps by studying the activities of pirates in the ancient world and that world's reaction to them, we can learn something about our own society and our own times.

## WHO WAS A PIRATE?

Throughout Greek and Roman writing, there seems to be almost no clear distinction between pirates, privateers, and mercenaries. The life of a pirate sometimes was even condoned and encouraged, and many times

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1. The definition of piracy used in this paper is the modern concept of someone who either robs at sea or plunders the land from the sea without authority from a nation. Though some of the source material may not specifically use either the Greek or Roman word for “pirate”, the actions of the individuals described are clearly piratical in nature.

was chosen by former soldiers as a unique way to increase their wealth. Often, whether a person or a group of people were considered pirates depended on who was writing and who was reading the material. For instance, Homer writes in *The Odyssey*:

From Illios the wind bore me and brought me to the Cicones,  
to Ismarus There I sacked the city and slew the men; and from  
the city we took their wives and great store of treasure, and  
divided them among us, that so far as lay in me no man might go  
defrauded of an equal share.<sup>2</sup>

By modern standards, this is clearly an act of piracy. The narrator, Odysseus, pillages an innocent town on his way back from Troy. Odysseus, though, was regarded as a hero to the Greeks and a person to be revered for his cunning wisdom and keen wit. Within the context of Bronze Age Greek culture, Odysseus' actions could be looked highly upon. This gathering of wealth allowed him to claim power and command over many of his fellow Greeks; whether the riches were obtained by illicit means or not made no difference.<sup>3</sup> Piracy was just another novel way to earn a living in Homeric times.

Turning from warfare to piracy was not a trait of the Bronze Age alone. Later, Herodotus wrote in his *Histories* of Dionysius of Phocaea, who, rather than returning home after a military defeat, headed to Phoenicia where he made himself rich sinking merchant ships.<sup>4</sup> Clearly the option of turning to piracy was there for those with the necessary skills and desire. Military men would have been especially prepared for this type

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2. Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.39-42

3. *Odyssey*, 14.230-4 Odysseus is quite explicit in stating that he obtained his riches through warfare and that this wealth is what made him feared and revered among his fellow Greeks.

4. Herodotus, *Histories*, 6.17 Dionysius chose to become a pirate rather than face slavery and Herodotus goes on to say that he established some sort of pirate base at Sicily. Herodotus also points out that while Dionysius attacked Carthaginian and Tyrrhenian ships, he left Greek shipping alone.

of work, already having experience fighting and pillaging. One could have found work as a pirate no differently than a man finding work as a blacksmith, farmer, or politician. Just as the latter professions require a special skill set, so too did piracy. These early accounts then, seem to find little negative connotation regarding pirates. Aristotle himself appears to place “brigandage” with hunting, fishing, and farming as jobs that may be held by men.<sup>5</sup> As time passed though, piracy started to be seen by other writers as something needing to be eradicated.

Just as one man’s entrepreneur is another’s sea raider, there were those who believed that pirates needed to be dealt with in order to make the seas safe for both travel and trade. Thucydides wrote that King Minos<sup>6</sup> was one of the first individuals to establish a naval fleet. Minos made himself master of the Hellenic Sea and put down piracy “as best he could” so that he himself could enjoy the riches that uninhibited trade could provide.<sup>7</sup> A later Greek historian of Rome, Polybius, also portrayed these bandits as treacherous and ill-plotting people.<sup>8</sup> These later writers make it clear that by their time piracy had stopped being a legitimate profession, rather becoming an unacceptable act that severely threatened the ability of certain states to conduct trade. It appears that as city-states evolved and became more complex they started to react against piracy in violent ways. Whereas in the preceding Bronze Age pirates were viewed as nothing but glorified treasure hunters, they were now, beginning somewhere between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE (c.500-300 BCE), viewed as a problem that needed to be dealt with. The writer and traveler Strabo pointed out:

After the Sindic territory and Gorgipia, one comes to the coast

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5. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.1256a

6. King Minos, the mythological ruler of Crete who was said to have lived before the Trojan War. Thucydides mentions Minos with an air of approval for the creative way he protected his land and increased his wealth.

7. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1.4.1

8. Polybius, *Histories*, 5.95 Polybius here describes a raid in which certain men captured ships by disguising themselves as friendly.

of the Achaei and the Zygi and the Heniochi, which for the most part is harborless and mountainous, being part of the Caucasus. These people live by robberies at sea. Their boats are slender, narrow, and light, holding only about twenty-five people.<sup>9</sup>

Strabo clearly makes a distinction between pirates of his age (63 BCE to AD 24) and those of the Homeric age. Where Homer used words like “slew” and “took” to describe the activities of Odysseus, Strabo clearly points out that what pirates did was steal.

Another writer, Diodorus Siculus, writing some time in the first century BCE also makes this difference clear. His story involved Dionysus, tyrant of the Syracusans, who founded two cities in Apulia specifically to deal with the “barbarians” that infested the passage across the Ionian Sea and who “put out in numerous pirate ships and render the whole shore along the Adriatic Sea unsafe for merchants.”<sup>10</sup> It seems that the rising concern with pirates coincided with the rise of sea-trade and the more powerful city-states. Before wide-spread trade by sea became popular, it was up to individuals to defend themselves, but when pirates started to press themselves into the affairs of powerful city-states, they became a problem.

Plutarch gives modern historians one of the most detailed glimpses into ancient piracy offered in classical literature. In Plutarch’s *Life of Julius Caesar*, a story is recounted of Caesar being captured by pirates. It was not until after his capture that his keepers learned who he was. They determined that he was a man worth ransoming rather than selling, and they demanded a large amount of money for his release. Caesar apparently laughed at the sum of money they demanded, and in general made quite a mockery out of the people who held his life in their hands. Plutarch wrote that Caesar had nothing but contempt for his captors and promised that when he was freed he would return with an envoy and kill them all. Eventually he was freed, and just as he had promised he

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9. Strabo, *Geography*, 11.2.12

10. Diodorus Siculus, *Library*, 20.25.3



returned, captured the pirates, and had them all crucified.<sup>11</sup> This event was included to illustrate the courage of Caesar, even in the face of the most ruthless people in the known world, but it also shows how the economics of piracy worked, which will be looked at later. Plutarch also wrote about Rome's solution to the pirate problem, Pompey the Great. His description of how and why Pompey cleared the seas will be discussed in section III as will the law which gave Pompey his unprecedented power.

Finally, modern historians learn about pirates from two less conventional sources: laws and inscriptions. Unlike prose writing, these allow one to see a clear opinion on what piracy was and some of the solutions passed to stop them. Laws were only passed if they dealt with people and events that were on the minds of those that passed them. Thus, though pirates may not have seemed to be a large threat at first, they came to be seen as much more than a mere nuisance, as is shown by the growing number of laws recorded regarding them. Pirates' presence had to be addressed with the full might of the Roman people. One of these inscriptions comes from Sydera in the form of oracular verse. In it, the Sydereans agree to comply with Rome's policy towards pirates and agree not to give anything, whether money or shelter to them.<sup>12</sup> By agreeing to Rome's demands, the Sydereans also implicitly agree that they themselves are subjects of Rome. With this inscription we may see the connections between pirates and diplomacy and Rome's manipulation of them. Rome uses the threats of pirates to bring city-states in line with their own policies, extending their power.

Laws were often recorded by public inscription, including those dealing with robberies at sea. The *Lex de provinciis praetoriis*, which was found on three blocks that formed part of a monument to Lucius Aemilius Paulus, was one such law.<sup>13</sup> The law established criteria for

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11. Plutarch, *Life of Julius Caesar*, 2

12. de Souza, *Romans and Pirates in a Late Hellenistic Oracle from Pamphylia*, pg. 478

13. Geelhar, *Some remarks on the lex de provinciis praetoriis*, pg. 109

the organizing of Roman government in Asia and Macedonia. It also stated the Roman people's wish to ensure "that the citizens of Rome and the allies and the Latins, likewise those of the nations who are friends of the Roman people may sail in safety and obtain their rights."<sup>14</sup> The only logical conclusion that can be ascertained from this is that they wanted to make the sea safe from all bandits. Clearly, pirates or other similar types of mercenary activity were becoming a problem in the Roman provincial waters. This growing problem eventually led to the passing of the *lex Gabinia*, a law which gave Pompey unquestionable power in dealing with the sea threat, and which also corrupted the nature of Roman politics and power. So, what did pirates do to warrant this type of treatment?

#### THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT PIRATE

Because there is no single large work on pirates or their activities, it is difficult to pin down exactly what they did, where they went, and how they did whatever it was that they did. As Janice Gabbert points out, often there is no distinct line drawn between a pirate and a mercenary and many times pirates are even employed by kings or leaders in wars against other nations.<sup>15</sup> Since their objectives are somewhat ambiguous, their activities are also hard to pin down. From the tiny bits of information though, some conclusions can be drawn.

Ancient authors usually described the actions of pirates as "pillaging and plundering," specifically what they plundered, however, is virtually impossible to know. Most often they can be seen either pillaging coastal cities<sup>16</sup> or actual merchant ships<sup>17</sup> all while engaging in revelry of all types. Alcibiades ravaged the city-states Cos and Rhodes in order to

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14. Geelhaar, 112

15. Gabbert, *Piracy in the Early Hellenistic Period: A Career Open to Talents*, Greece and Rome 1986, 158

16. Thucydides, 2.32

17. Ibid., 2.69

collect enough “booty” to pay his troops and keep them fighting.<sup>18</sup> This booty probably refers to gold, silver, other precious metals, statues, other valuables, and food. These are all objects that a commander would need to pay his troops and keep them comfortably fed and clothed. One of the largest prizes for any pirate, however, would not have been inanimate objects, but human beings themselves.<sup>19</sup> Pirates would capture people either from the land or at sea. If the individual was well connected or wealthy, like Caesar, they would be ransomed off. If they were not, they would be sold into slavery. The slave trade was where pirates truly made their mark and where they had the largest impact on the ancient Mediterranean. Pirates and slaves were intricately tied together and as long as there was a need for slaves, there was an implicit need for pirates.

Several references to pirate strategy still survive from antiquity, offering a glimpse into how evolved their tactics could be. Their strategies did not need to be complicated. They were often facing merchant vessels with a small crew in a much slower boat.<sup>20</sup> Strabo describes one of their schemes:

The waters along the coast of Mt. Corycus, they say, were everywhere the haunt of pirates, the Corycaeans, as they are called, who had found a new way of attacking vessels; for they say, the Corycaeans would scatter themselves among the harbors, follow up the merchants whose vessels lay at anchor in them, and overhear what cargoes they had aboard and whither they were bound, and then come together and attacked the merchants after

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18. Diodorus Siculus, 13.69.1 Alcibiades was an Athenian general during the Peloponnesian War so he also fits with the image of Odysseus as someone who is not considered a pirate by ancient terms, but engages in very piratical activities.

19. Strabo, 14.3.2 “the dockyards stood open to the Cilicians, who would sell their captives at auction there”

20. Diodorus Siculus, 15.3.1 Diodorus specifically states that Evagoras has a few ships of the type used for piracy, implying that there was a special type of ship that had to be used to be successful.

they had put to sea and plunder their vessels.<sup>21</sup>

This amazing insight into the detail and planning behind a sea robbery is invaluable. In much the same way that a spy would operate, they would have been able to tell whether a ship was worth pursuing and how heavily guarded that ship may have been. Strabo also discusses the bases often held by pirates, where they would frequently lay anchor to rest and sell their spoils. The cities Pamphylia and Tracheia were famous for these safe havens.<sup>22</sup> Obviously, piracy on a large scale would not be possible without the cooperation of the merchants who sold the stolen goods and the leaders who permitted the market for them to exist.

Their involvement with the slave trade provided pirates' biggest influence on the ancient world. Slaves were an integral part of the pirate's income, while insuring that the governments could not afford to fully eradicate them from the seas. Since slaves were a large part of the Roman and Greek economy, there were incentives not only to leave pirates unharmed, but also to subtly encourage them to continue their activities. Without slaves, crops could not be harvested, babies could not be nursed, dangerous jobs like mining would not be performed, and Roman aristocrats would have the opportunity to sit around all day discussing who to conquer next. In short, slaves were crucial to the Roman economy, and a large number of them were needed to support it.<sup>23</sup> One of the sources that supplied them was pirates.<sup>24</sup> The Roman leaders found themselves in a predicament. If they destroyed the pirates and bases where they were harbored, they would be eliminating a large

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21. Strabo, 14.1.32

22. Strabo, 14.3.2 Clearly then the oracle from Pamphylia plays a key role in understanding how Rome sought to control the pirate threat; by getting those smaller city-states that harbored them to comply or probably face destruction

23. A.H.M. Jones, *Slavery in the Ancient World*, The Economic History Review pg 185 Almost everyone had a slave, even the poorest of farmers, so it is very likely that the slave population outnumbered the citizens at least two to one

24. H.A. Ormerod, *The Campaigns of Servilius Isauricus Against the Pirates*, The Journal of Roman Studies (Vol 12) pg 35 Ormerod says that the pirates were a necessary, albeit hated, part of the Roman economy

influx of slaves, but if they did not deal with them the problem could grow out of control and wreak further havoc on Roman trade. The flesh trade was the activity of the pirates that had the largest impact on Roman society because it dealt directly with their economy. Ultimately Rome would be faced with a difficult choice, one that had been addressed previously by many Greek city-states; just what should be done with these thieves?

### THE DOWNFALL OF PIRACY

Before Rome rose to power in the Mediterranean there were a number of different checks against the activities of pirates. King Minos, as cited earlier, used one such example of how early Greek city-states dealt with the problem. They developed a navy and kept their own traders safe. The Greeks had no united government, though, and so each city-state had to fend for themselves when it came to the pirate problem. Smaller city-states would be at a disadvantage and would often align themselves with larger ones, or just abandon sea trade altogether. Larger city-states like Athens or Corinth, however, had the material and capital to clear the seas, and the incentive to create a free and unmolested sea.

Rome took a somewhat different approach to piracy. The Romans ruled over a large empire, and thus had little time to pay attention to the squabbles that occurred in distant parts of their territory. As was said earlier, they relied heavily on slaves and so were more reluctant to put a stop to piracy than perhaps the Greeks were. When Rome conquered naval powers such as Rhodes, Corinth, and Carthage, she replaced a careful infrastructure of sea protection with a general lack of concern.<sup>25</sup> Again then, for Rome, pirates an accepted, albeit abhorred, part of life, and one that the empire as a whole would not deal with on a large-scale basis. A decision would turn out to be incredibly costly.

Around 100 BCE Rome finally passed a law that declared they would no longer tolerate the activities of pirates within their empire.<sup>26</sup> This

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25. Ormerod, 35

26. *Ibid.*, 35-6

act drove the pirates into the waiting arms of King Mithridates, who welcomed them, knowing they would be valuable mercenaries in the fight against Rome. After the passing of this law, Roman relations with the pirates started to deteriorate rapidly. Plutarch wrote that the pirates gained strength during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE because of this alliance, becoming dangerously bold and confident.<sup>27</sup> He went on to describe the scene in Rome as being one of civil war and disorder, unable to cope with the growing pirate threat. Plutarch further stated that instead of preying on passing ships far out at sea or harbors in distant corners of the Roman empire, the pirates began attacking coastal towns and harbors close to Rome. They sacked religious centers and allegedly participated in mystery cult activities.<sup>28</sup> Their most daring act, however, and one which would prove to be piracy's downfall, was their attack on Rome's port city of Ostia and the capture of two praetors, Sextilius and Bellinus.<sup>29</sup> Now the pirates had not only threatened sea-going vessels, but the very citizens of Rome. If Ostia was compromised, then the main entryway for grain into the territory would vanish. This threat caused the Romans to pass the *lex Gabinia*.

This law gave direct power to one man, Pompey, in both land and sea to deal with the pirates in any way possible for as long as three years. After that time, he was supposed to give all of his power up and walk away. At the time the law was proposed Plutarch says that most of the learned men opposed it because it would be akin to granting kingship to someone. The law's only supporter was none other than Julius Caesar.<sup>30</sup> The very fact that Caesar was in favor of the bill should have been the first sign to the Roman senators that passing it would end badly, but they eventually did it anyway. Pompey then proceeded to clear the sea of pirates in a very short amount of time, ending their reign in the Mediterranean for the moment, but creating an impact that would shape

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27. Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, 24

28. Plutarch, 24

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 25

the face of a civilization.

This law giving Pompey complete power was just another in a long line of measures the senate passed that worked to usher control away from the senate and people of Rome and into the arms of the few. Eventually, the senate did lose all control over the state, perhaps not overtly, but functionally, no longer holding any real authority. By creating laws allowing men to gain the confidence and trust of soldiers, they also showed their own ineptitude and total lack of control. Caesar knew that the passing of this law meant that there would be one less hurdle to climb to gain what was practically kingship over Rome, so why didn't other men see it? Perhaps they did but were so caught up in distress that any solution seemed like a good one at the time. So instead of thinking rationally and coming up with more appropriate solutions, they signed away their power to a man who claimed he could end the threat. So, no matter how large or small a role pirates may have played in the region up until this point, it is fair to say that they played one of the key parts in the destruction of the Roman Republic and the rise of the principate. For this they should be remembered as more than mere footnotes to history.

The lessons of antiquity should not be forgotten by those living today. Though the ancient world seems so far away, it has much more relevance than many think. Pirates are just one example of a problem that today's nations have to deal with, just as Greeks and Romans did over two-thousand years ago. They have not disappeared from the world, just evolved. They still rely on fear, surprise, and knowledge of the enemy. Though comparisons of nations separated by several thousand years ought not to be made gratuitously, one can still see echoes of the distant past in the events of today. The problems that the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean faced still exist in the world, making the study of history more important than ever. The lessons the past has taught the world should never be forgotten.

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# A CURE WORSE THAN DISEASE: FOREIGN RELATIONS AND OPIUM DEMONIZATION IN LATE-QING CHINA

*Andrew Smith*

China's defeat in the Opium Wars of the 19th century at the hands of Great Britain's forces would leave China's government forced to tolerate the British opium trade through what would come to be called the "Unequal Treaties." China at that time was undoubtedly over-matched by the power and technology of the British forces, and therefore could not have competed in a military war to keep itself closed to foreign trade. China's ambitious opium prohibition policy was essentially impossible to administer with the limitations of the infrastructure and control of the Chinese government at the time. Additionally, even if a prohibition policy would have been realistic logistically, medical evidence shows that opium was a necessary evil up until the discovery and widespread distribution of aspirin, which was not readily available in some parts of China until the mid 20th century. Unfortunately, various factors including the biased accounts of foreign missionaries who had moral objections to all mind-altering substances and the testimony of medical professionals who had enormous financial interests to exaggerate the evils of opiates have contributed to an overly negative view of the drug, which has led to many misconceptions that have shaped inaccurate attitudes about this issue. This paper will show that China's prohibition policy was unnecessary and unworkable at the time, ultimately contributing to the crippling effects of the Opium Wars, and that the demonization of opium, which occurred largely in the early 20th century, has distorted the historical record.

### EARLY OPIUM SMOKING IN CHINA

Despite the conventional notion that the beginning of the history of opium in China was the start of the foreign opium trade, China actually has a far longer history of interaction with the drug, the early stages of which are crucial to understanding the factors that eventually led to the prohibition and demonization of opium in the country. In the drug's earliest stages in China it was the Arab traders (who also probably introduced opium in India around the same time) who first brought the drug to the Chinese people – early Chinese historical accounts describe the system where Arabs would trade their poppy capsules for Chinese merchandise.<sup>1</sup> This overland importation the Arabs conducted through India probably occurred as early as the 7th century AD. The first confirmed mention, on the other hand, of the substance in China did not come until 973 AD, when the Chinese Emperor requested it as a cure for dysentery. On an extremely small scale, when compared with opium's use in China during the 19th century, it was this type of use that predominated as Chinese, Portuguese, and Dutch traders took over the trade for the next several centuries.<sup>2</sup> The early opium use in China that was facilitated first by Arab traders in an essentially medicinal context seemingly created no moral dilemma for the Chinese government. How, then, by the mid-17th century and increasingly during the 18th century, could the Chinese government's attitudes about opium have changed so dramatically?

Governmental attitudes began their gradual shift toward the drug's prohibition in China only after smoking opium, especially madak (an opium and tobacco mixture) became the primary means of delivery in the country. This form of smokable opium was likely introduced between 1624 and 1660 by Dutch traders stationed in Taiwan.<sup>3</sup> But the

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1. "History of Opium, Opium Eating and Smoking," *The Journal of Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 21 (1892): 330.

2. Terry, C.E. "The Development and Causes of Opium Addiction as a Social Problem," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 4, no. 6 (February, 1931): 336.

3. Frank Dikotter, *Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

history of tobacco itself in China dates back further. European traders introduced smoked tobacco to China in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, where it gained popularity among elite members of the court. The rise in popularity of tobacco happened despite bans on the substance as early as 1644 by the Manchus, who considered the habit an extremely heinous crime.<sup>4</sup> Tobacco smoking continued to increasingly spread among lower classes of the Chinese, while at the same time the use of madak increased, though never reaching the popularity that tobacco enjoyed.<sup>5</sup> This continued into the early 18th century until eventually a new emperor in 1729 issued an edict that banned the smoking of madak.<sup>6</sup> At first glance this could seem like the beginning of the official anti-opium policy in China, but with a closer look it becomes clear there were various other considerations contributing to the ban that had nothing to do with opium.

#### EARLY PROHIBITION EFFORTS

The 1729 edict issued by the Yongzheng emperor had much more to do with continuing the already-established struggle against tobacco and with an attempt by the Chinese government at social control over the lower classes than it did with a concern over potential detrimental effects of opium on the Chinese people. Despite the condemnation of madak in 1729, there is still evidence to suggest that opium was still seen as relatively harmless, and that the tobacco content in madak was actually the more pressing reason for the ban. After the madak ban took effect court records indicate that some accused of smoking madak defended themselves by saying they simply used medical opium and thus were innocent. An official verdict concluded that, “opium is a pharmaceutical substance required by medical practitioners. Only when it is blended with tobacco can it become harmful and lead to lustful acts: it can then

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4. *Ibid.*, 25-26.

5. *Ibid.*, 33.

6. *Ibid.*, 35.

be referred to as an illegal item.”<sup>7</sup> Clearly at this point in China’s history opium use did not have the extremely negative stigma attached to it that would eventually develop. It remained a necessary medicine for all manner of afflictions. But there must have been other motives behind the government’s decision to explicitly ban madak since the edict did not ban the use of tobacco by itself, which was also gaining popularity in China at the time. Scholars have suggested that pragmatic political motivations played a role in the edict as well. The frontier regions along the southern coast where madak first gained popularity outside elite circles were strategically important to the government establishing control and stability: “People in the south were farther away from the centre of the empire and were traditionally regarded as less well educated and more prone to rebel. For potential rebels to ‘gather in groups’ in order to pursue a ‘corrupt’ and ‘lustful’ habit seemed to pose an even greater danger to dynastic rule in this part of the empire.”<sup>8</sup> While the Chinese government made very little of the madak smoking done by the ruling elite, they very quickly acted with efforts to squelch the practice when it began to spread in some areas to lower classes of society.

The 1729 edict is hardly the lone example of a government acting to ban a substance for reasons different from those explicitly stated. It illustrates the importance of understanding all the motives of governments, acknowledged or otherwise, in understanding complex issues like the opium problem, rather than using governmental prohibition in and of itself as evidence of a substance’s evils. The 1729 policy to outlaw madak smoking, then, was the first in a long line of Chinese drug prohibition policies having unintended side-effects arguably worse than the problem being addressed in the first case. In this particular situation, the calamitous side-effect was the growth in pure opium smoking that would happen largely in response to the government’s ban on smoking madak. Some evidence suggests that following the edict which was strictly enforced in Fujian and Guangdong (where madak was first

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7. Wang Hongbin in *Narcotic Culture*, 38.

8. Dikotter, Laamann, Xun, *Narcotic Culture*, 36.

identified as a problem) users in that area turned to pure opium because they could more easily justify it as medicinal.<sup>9</sup> One can easily see why strict enforcement of prohibition policies regarding one form of opium would lead to a surge in popularity of another form. But, as is the case with many prohibition policies, especially of this time and in a country as vast as China, the edict was not enforced strictly enough to eliminate smoking madak, as this 1816 account of the British traveler Clarke Abel illustrates:

No opium is exposed for sale in the shops, probably because it is contraband article, but it is used with tobacco in all parts of the empire. The Chinese indeed consider the smoking of opium as one of the greatest luxuries; and if they are temperate in drinking, they are often excessive in the use of this drug. They have more than one method of smoking it: smoke it from a pipe with a very small bowl; and sometimes they steep fine tobacco in a strong solution of it.<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese government's policy largely focused on the coastal areas where lower social classes had taken to smoking madak, which allowed the practice to continue to spread among the elite classes who might interact with a traveler like Abel. Until the 1790s, when a stricter ban on madak became enforced throughout the country, the demand for more expensive, higher quality smoking opium remained relatively low among the elites who could afford such a luxury. One particular time the British East India Company attempted to sell a shipment of this pure opium in China in 1780; its Chinese merchant only managed to sell 15 percent of the shipment, and was forced to unload the rest in the junk trade along the South China Sea.<sup>11</sup> This explains why opium trade

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9. Ibid., 38.

10. Clarke Abel, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China, and of a Voyage to and from that Country in the Years 1816 and 1817* (London: Longman, 1818), 214-215.

11. Dikotter, Laamann, Xun, *Narcotic Culture*, 37.

expert H.B. Morse claims “it is probable that opium was not much, if at all, smoked by itself before the year 1800.”<sup>12</sup> When the ban on smoking madak finally became implemented more thoroughly across the entire country, in addition to the market forces that led to more high-quality opium entering the market at lower prices, smoking pure opium began to increase in popularity throughout China.

At the most basic level, the Chinese government was unable to successfully administer its ambitious anti-opium policy for logistical reasons; they simply did not have the governmental infrastructure necessary to cover all the remote areas of the country. As David Bello explains in his study of opium prohibition in southwest China, many of these frontier areas were out of governmental control largely because of the diverse ethnic minorities that occupied them. Many of these ethnic minorities had histories of resistance to state power, and the opium trade gave them the “capacity to augment and effectively sustain” that resistance.<sup>13</sup> Managing the extensive cultivation and distribution networks necessary to spread the drug throughout China provided these communities with a substantial portion of the funds generated by the trade. The locations of these communities, usually in frontier areas largely out of the central government’s sphere of influence, essentially meant it was extremely difficult for the government to shut them down. This situation led to gaps in the Chinese government’s authority that would undermine their overall prohibition efforts.

The factor that, more than any other, proved the Chinese government’s policy of opium prohibition was unworkable was the government’s addiction to the illicit funds generated by the opium trade. This steady stream of funds that developed in the early days of the trade ensured both that the Chinese government could not possibly maintain itself without those funds, and that local officials did not have the power

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12. H.B. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, (London: Longmans, 1910), 173.

13. David Bello, “The Venomous Course of Southwestern Opium: Qing Prohibition in the Early 19th Century,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 4 (November, 2003): 1111.

to take too hard a line on opium cultivation or trafficking. Indeed, the Chinese realized early on that illicit opium funds were undoubtedly bringing in essential revenue to local governments, but seemingly did nothing to change the policy. In 1840, metropolitan censor Lu Yinggu explained that the reason the local officials were unable to shut down the networks of poppy cultivation and opium trafficking needed to spread the opium across the empire was,

that the profit obtained from poppy cultivation among the populace is fairly substantial. In consequence, tax quotas can be fulfilled quite early, so local officials benefit from the ease of revenue collection and are concerned only with their performance evaluations; they are heedless of the benefit or harm done to the populace. Thus, they permit the people to cultivate and do nothing to prohibit it.<sup>14</sup>

He understood that at the end of the day, even a fairly upstanding local official would accept illicit funds if it decided between a good performance evaluation that could mean a promotion, or a bad one that could mean losing his job. In a business as lucrative as the international opium trade, there were plenty of funds to win over a lot of local officials. Once they began accepting the illicit funds, officials had no choice but to continue accepting them to reach the new quotas that were based on inflated numbers from the previous years. As it went on, this became not only a problem among local officials, but spread to higher levels of government and society. Both provincial officials and nobles in Peking, for example, noted on several occasions that, “opium generated one of the few fiscal bright spots in otherwise dark and deficit-ridden budgets.”<sup>15</sup> The development of the Chinese government’s addiction

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14. Lu Yinggu in David Bello, “The Venomous Course of Southwestern Opium,” 1117.

15. Thomas D. Reins, “Reform, Nationalism and Internationalism: The Opium Suppression Movement in China and the Anglo-American Influence, 1900-1908,” *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 1 (February, 1991): 102.

to illicit opium funds illustrates better than any other factor that their prohibition policy was impractical and unworkable.

#### MISCONCEPTIONS AND MEDICAL EVIDENCE

Even if complete prohibition of the substance were possible at the time in China, medical evidence shows that prior to the discovery of aspirin, opium was a necessary evil as a recreational drug and an essential home remedy for a variety of ailments. Prior to the systematic demonization of the substance that occurred largely in the early 20th century, it was widely seen as a less or equally harmful alternative to alcohol use, as this medical journal from 1892 illustrates:

The bulk of the medical evidence goes to support the verdict that [opium] is not more injurious than the moderate use of alcohol, and that even its abusive use is less destructive to the victim and his friends than intemperance... It is even contended that in China, where opium indulgence attains its greatest proportions, the people are strong, healthy, active, and lose none of their national characteristics through the daily use of opium; that, on the contrary, the majority of the working classes manifest far less evidence of demoralization and physical degeneracy than occurs with the labouring classes of Europe, who participate daily in an allowance of spirits.<sup>16</sup>

Before aspirin's widespread use, opium was also one of the best ways to reduce pain, fight fevers, and suppress coughs. In 18th and 19th century Europe, opium was used "as a form of self-medication by those unable to afford expensive medical fees."<sup>17</sup> Opium was far from the "social scourge" critics largely describe it as today – most working class users were simply looking for relief from common ailments so they could productively do their jobs. Moreover, as R.K. Newman argues,

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16. "History of Opium, Opium Eating and Smoking," 332

17. Dikotter, Laamann, Xun, *Narcotic Culture*, 75.



opium's medicinal uses may have actually contributed to some of the overly negative perceptions of its effects because its association with famine and chronic disease could cause outside observers to confuse the cause and effect of the conditions of the afflicted. One can see how this misunderstanding could take place, since those who used opium to cope with terminal illnesses would be forced to increase their doses as the disease worsened. This "undoubtedly led many observers to confuse the effects of the cure with the symptoms of the disease."<sup>18</sup> But while they played a role, misconceptions like these alone could not account for the enormous gap between the realities and the perceptions of opium's harmful effects. A gap wide enough to skew the historical record on the Chinese opium problem as much as it has been would be impossible without a systematic effort on many fronts to exaggerate the evils of opium.

#### THE INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

From 1807, when Protestant missionaries first came to China, the British opium trade and missionaries were inextricably linked. Protestant missions in China, going back to their earliest stages prior to the Opium Wars in 1807, had struggled to successfully convert Chinese to Christianity in any significant numbers. In fact, from their first arrival in China up until the Opium War the Protestant missionaries had managed to convert less than one person per year.<sup>19</sup> They had trouble initially getting their operations off the ground in China for various reasons, not the least of which was the fact that China was still largely closed off from the west. The missionaries, rather than looking at how to improve the results of their message through their own efforts, were convinced that "a hard shell of habits, institutions, and enforcing magistrates shut the

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18. R.K. Newman, "Opium Smoking in Late Imperial China: A Reconsideration," *Modern Asian Studies* 29 no. 4 (October, 1995): 776.

19. Peter W. Fay, "The Protestant Mission and the Opium War," *The Pacific Historical Review* 40, no. 2 (May, 1971): 148-149.

message out.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, they reasoned, the essential step to improving the number of converts was the opening of China to foreigners – “the shell had to be shattered, and China thrown open.”<sup>21</sup> Protestant missionaries may not have been the reason the Opium War took place, but they certainly saw the war to open up China as a positive development for their organization’s goals, as evidenced by the following letter from S. Wells Williams, one of the American Protestant missionaries in China in 1842:

Although war is bringing its train of horrors upon this heretofore peaceful land... and the still sorer scourge of opium is slaying its thousands, we will encourage ourselves in the name of the Lord. The cause of the war is exceedingly objectionable, and so has been many of those in ages past which at the end have brought blessings upon the scene of their devastation. The evils resulting from the traffic and use of opium are terrific, far exceeding, we fear, those of the war; nor do we see how they are to be removed until the moral principle of the Gospel is brought to assist the weak efforts of the people to resist the temptation.<sup>22</sup>

Williams’ letter articulates the rather peculiar conclusion the Protestant missionaries’ moral and religious beliefs lead them to – while their morality led them to believe that opium was a scourge on the Chinese people, their religious beliefs also taught them that only through Christ could the Chinese people be liberated from the widespread use of opium.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the war was a necessary development in their eyes, in order for the Chinese people to ever escape the evils of opium despite the fact that in a far more direct way the war would also mean opening the country up to more foreign opium, in addition to the obviously negative effects any war with an invading foreign power would cause. It is

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20. *Ibid.*, 149.

21. *Ibid.*

22. S. Wells Williams in Peter W. Fay, “The Protestant Mission and the Opium War,” 161.

23. Peter W. Fay, “The Protestant Mission and the Opium War,” 161.

clear, then, that the Protestant missionaries placed extremely high value on their ultimate goal of converting the 300 to 500 million Chinese to Christ, given that they felt the positive aspects of the conversion would outweigh the potentially-calamitous effects of both the war and their (largely exaggerated) fears about the destruction of the Chinese people at the hands of more available opium. Understanding the eventual conversion of the Chinese as their chief motivation is of critical importance to understanding the missionaries' role in later demonizing opium.

The Protestant missionaries in China continued to play a role in the history of opium in the county later on in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when they were at least partially responsible for creating the overly negative perceptions of the drug that still skew the image of opium to this day. While moral considerations no doubt played a role in the anti-opium sentiment of the Protestant missionaries in China, there was also a purely practical reason they chose to take an active role in the push to eradicate the drug by shaping the public and governmental perceptions of opium.<sup>24</sup> After the opening up of China following the Opium Wars failed to increase the number of converts as much as initially expected, the missionaries looked to other variables that could be hurting their efforts. They largely concluded it was the still-existing foreign opium trade that had led to Chinese distrust of foreign missionaries and thus kept conversion numbers down since "in the eyes of most Chinese opium and foreigners were directly linked."<sup>25</sup> Clearly there were more than just concerns about the health and safety of the Chinese people shaping the views and actions of the Protestant missionaries in China, who made up a significant portion of the temperance movement as a whole, and played a prominent role in eventually regulating opium worldwide.

Their largely pragmatic considerations about trying to convert more Chinese may help to explain why missionaries and other members of the movement to abolish the British opium trade reacted so harshly to

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24. Thomas D. Reins, "Reform, Nationalism and Internationalism," 109.

25. *Ibid.*, 110.

the findings of the 1893-94 Royal Commission on Opium set up by the British government to pacify the temperance reformers. It instead “ended by enraging them, because its report concluded that opium did little harm and there was no good reason for abolishing the export trade from India to China.”<sup>26</sup> That reaction illustrates that for many of the temperance reformers, Protestant missionaries playing no small role, a deeper ideological opposition and even strictly pragmatic motivations, not actual concerns about the harmful side effects of the drug, played the primary role in shaping their perceptions. What makes understanding the motivations of the various elements of the temperance movement so important to understanding the opium issue as a whole is the fact that the movement to end the foreign opium trade in China in the early 20th century played a major role in shaping the world’s understanding of the “opium evil” even to this day.<sup>27</sup> Many of the misconceptions about the health and safety of opium that still shape the drug’s perception are misconceptions that were formed in this time period largely by the rhetoric of groups that certainly had concerns beyond that of the health and safety of the Chinese people. These are people with largely identical interests as the Protestant missionaries who sixty years earlier concluded that the Opium War would be a net positive development for China because it would open them up to Christianity – it is clear they are far more concerned with spreading the Gospel than with the wellbeing of the Chinese, or they could never have made that determination.

#### AMERICAN ATTITUDES ABOUT OPIUM

While this paper focuses on opium use and prohibition in China, it remains important to understand the evolution of American attitudes about the drug in order to truly understand how opium has, in modern times, become so vilified as a plague in China, since Americans played a critical role constructing the misconceptions about the drug that have

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26. R.K. Newman, “Opium Smoking in Late Imperial China: A Reconsideration,” 768.

27. *Ibid.*, 765-766.

dominated discourse of the opium issue ever since. The story of the evolution of American attitudes about opium is largely the story of the struggle between “regularly educated” medical practitioners and “patent medicines,” the vast majority of which contained opiates. Prior to the turn of the 20th century, opiates enjoyed a fairly positive reputation in America. Near the end of the 19th century opiate-based patent medicines were an extremely profitable business in America, making their manufacturers some of the most ambitious advertisers in the country, with one company alone – Scott’s Emulsion – spending over \$1 million on advertising annually.<sup>28</sup> At this time opium was far from viewed as the devastating social scourge it would be portrayed as just decades later in America. As anthropologist Marcus Aurin puts it, “Until the latter part of the century, addiction, like alcoholism, was not considered a condition that warranted medical attention. It was viewed as perfectly normal for one to take regular daily doses of opium.”<sup>29</sup> For most Americans up to the turn of the 20th century, opium had a fairly innocuous reputation as a safe household remedy for a variety of afflictions, worlds away from its eventual reputation as an international menace that has affected discourse on the drug ever since.

Despite opium’s fairly harmless reputation in America just a few decades earlier, by 1914 the drug would be outlawed and American influence used to help end the opium trade in China. This evolution was not a simple one – it encompasses issues that vary from international diplomacy to the financial interests of the medical community. What is clear, however, is that the health and safety of the Chinese (or American, for that matter) people was far from the chief concern in the debate. The authors of *Narcotic Culture* explain opium’s transition to demonization succinctly when they say that “while opium did not change in itself, the world around it gradually did, as the substance became a scape-

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28. Marcus Aurin, “Chasing the Dragon: The Cultural Metamorphosis of Opium in the United States, 1825-1935,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (September, 2000): 418.

29. *Ibid.*, 419.

goat in the politics of nationalism, a vector of racial anxieties, a bone of contention in a professional struggle against self-medication and the very foundation of a new disease theory of addiction.”<sup>30</sup> The beginning of opium’s decline in America from acceptable self-medication to supposed social scourge came, ironically, because of the legalization of the Chinese opium trade in 1858 following the Second Opium War, which meant the end of U.S. financial interests in the opium trade because their profits had come from smuggling the drug into illegal black markets. Once U.S. financial interests in the trade disappeared, the American government saw an opportunity in anti-opium rhetoric to exploit Chinese distrust of England and other powerful European nations in order to gain favor (and helpful trade deals) from the Chinese government.<sup>31</sup> This foreign policy goal would motivate the American government for more than half a century to pursue anti-opium policies domestic and abroad which have dramatically distorted the debate on the health of opium.

Because the American government’s decision to take up the anti-opium crusade was made primarily for pragmatic foreign policy reasons, rather than considerations about the health of Chinese opium smokers, the evidence they subsequently gathered to support a view of opium as a social scourge is therefore highly suspect. While the health of the Chinese opium smoker was clearly not high on the American government’s list of priorities for their policy stance, proving the deleterious effects of the drug was essential to making their case to the American people. Because the government put itself in this position, they found perfect bedfellows in the medical community – especially psychiatrists and psychologists – who had enormous financial incentives to exaggerate the harmful effects of opiates and opium smoking while providing the government with the respected, authoritative voice they needed to get the public behind the anti-opium movement.<sup>32</sup> Marcus Aurin describes

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30. Dikotter, Laamann, Xun, *Narcotic Culture*, 95.

31. Marcus Aurin, “Chasing the Dragon,” 429.

32. *Ibid.*, 427.

the specific benefits these doctors would receive for providing an air of objectivity to the government's message: "For their allegiance, expert testimony, and advice (knowledge), these doctors not only received political patronage, institutional distinction, and official public commendation (not to mention funding), but their professional rivals were also expunged through regulation and strict law enforcement."<sup>33</sup> These doctors provided their supposedly expert testimony in order to get public sentiment behind the anti-opium movement in America, which would help the government pass domestic anti-opium laws "in the diplomatic tradition of symbolic gestures" prior to the Shanghai Opium Commission.<sup>34</sup> The American State Department's diplomatic goal of enacting highly sought-after trade deals with China led the government to essentially use the American people as pawns on the opium issue. Despite scant actual medical evidence of the drug's dangers to moderate or light users, the American government, with the help of many in the medical community who also had ulterior motives, was able to successfully demonize opiates and eventually pass the domestic anti-opium measures they hoped would give them moral high ground with the Chinese at the International Opium Conferences.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL OPIUM COMMISSIONS

The International Opium Conferences of the early 20th century are where the various factors including influential missionaries and medical professionals, as well as American diplomatic goals all came together to create an overly negative perception of opiates that would distort discourse on the drug to this day. The first of the International Opium Conferences, the 1909 Shanghai Opium Commission, was tasked with studying the opium situation and compiling a report with recommendations to be debated and implemented at a later conference. In preparation, Dr. Hamilton Wright, a prominent American medical professional, was to create a report on the opium situation in the United States, which

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33. *Ibid.*, 428.

34. *Ibid.*, 431.

he said “had become contaminated [with opium] through the presence of a large Chinese population.”<sup>35</sup> The result, predictably, was an exaggerated account of the evils of opium that played on racial fears and was largely inconsistent with the statistics on opium use in the country at the time, which showed that the drug’s use had been declining for years and would continue to decline for decades.<sup>36</sup> Tactics like these would help the United States accomplish its objective at the conference of successfully lobbying for the calling of another, more powerful, international conference at The Hague. His success led Dr. Wright to conclude to Secretary of State Knox,

Our move to help China in her opium reform gave us more prestige in China than any of our recent friendly acts toward her. If we continue and press steadily for the conference, China will recognize that we are sincere in her behalf, and the whole business may be used as oil to smooth the troubled water of our aggressive commercial policy there.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly then, despite the rhetoric, the US State Department’s motives in demonizing opium domestically and abroad had little to do with the health of the Chinese or American people, and a great deal to do with accomplishing unrelated foreign policy goals. Wright and others would continue to help further those diplomatic goals by pushing harder for domestic opium prohibition, which would finally pass as the Harrison Act in 1914 coinciding (not accidentally) with the third Hague Opium Convention. The overly negative perceptions of opiates that have distorted debate on the drug spread as a direct result of biased medical testimony like Wright’s, which were being used to further America’s diplomatic goals.

The missionaries, whose motives were discussed earlier, also played

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35. Dr. Hamilton Wright in Marcus Aurin, “Chasing the Dragon,” 431.

36. Marcus Aurin, “Chasing the Dragon,” 432.

37. Dr. Hamilton Wright in Marcus Aurin, “Chasing the Dragon,” 432.



their own role in the demonization of opiates at these conferences. Indeed, the conferences may never have happened in the first place without a great deal of missionary involvement. Bishop Brent, the Episcopal Bishop of the Philippines, personally brought the idea to President Roosevelt as a response to a Chinese boycott on American goods, and even offered his “extensive grass-roots anti-opium network” to further the government’s agenda.<sup>38</sup> This network would provide a great deal of the information on the opium problem in China and other Far East nations where missionary accounts, despite their obvious bias, were largely the only accounts available. As Aurin puts it, “missionaries were organized and everywhere... Diplomats often relied on reports from the extensive networks of missionaries and also used them as interpreters and guides.”<sup>39</sup> Given the amount of influence missionaries exercised on the opium issue, coupled with their dubious motives discussed earlier, it is obvious that their accounts on the evils of opium were far from unbiased and accurate. Since American and international perceptions on the opium issue were at least partially formed based on these accounts, clearly they have contributed to the distortion of the historical record on the opium problem.

#### CHINESE NATIONALISM AND OPIUM DEMONIZATION

Another factor that has altered the historical record is the role Chinese Nationalism following the Boxer Uprising played in overly demonizing the drug. The Boxer Uprising was a native Chinese movement at the turn of the 20th century to throw out or kill the foreigners, especially missionaries, and restore the Qing Dynasty’s power and authority in the country – its slogan was “revive the Qing, destroy the foreign.”<sup>40</sup> It culminated in the summer of 1900 with the murder of missionaries and Chinese Christians throughout the country, and the storming of em-

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38. Marcus Aurin, “Chasing the Dragon,” 430.

39. *Ibid.*, 429.

40. Jerome Ch’ên, “The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement: A Morphological Study,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 23, no. 2 (1960): 290-291.

bassies. The surge in nationalism that followed and the government's willingness to create a scapegoat for all the weaknesses of China, have in their own way altered the historical record on opium in China and further exaggerated the evils of the drug there. Due largely to the perception of opium as a drug solely peddled by imperialist foreigners, the drug emerged at the time as a convenient scapegoat and symbol of all the weaknesses of the Chinese people – the Chinese “failure of the will.”<sup>41</sup> Despite their inaccuracy, these extreme views on the effects of opium on the Chinese people became the prevailing view in China: “The imperial reformers failed to secure the power necessary to implement their vision of change, but their demonization of ‘opium’ as the principal cause of ‘racial’ decline and ‘moral’ turpitude became mainstream with the New Policies initiated after the Boxer Rebellion.”<sup>42</sup> This led to the Chinese government being the first to pursue an aggressive “war on drugs,” setting off a chain reaction in America then Europe of anti-opium governmental sentiment.<sup>43</sup> Their extreme anti-opium stance was a result not only of the blaming of the drug as the cause of nearly everything wrong with the country, but also pragmatic concerns that “such an internationally prominent position would make the empire less vulnerable to further territorial encroachment.”<sup>44</sup> The Chinese government's surge in nationalism and resulting revitalization of the demonizing of opium acted, in many ways, as the spark that set off other governments' anti-opium campaigns. This change in international sentiment made possible the International Opium Conferences and subsequent widespread demonization that has led to overly negative perceptions of opium.

## CONCLUSION

Despite some public sentiment and scholarship to the contrary, the Chinese government's missed opportunities to implement realistic, work-

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41. Dikotter, Laamann, Xun, *Narcotic Culture*, 109.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*, 110.

44. *Ibid.*, 111.

able opium and foreign trade policies, not solely the British government's insistence to pursue the international opium trade, led to the Opium Wars of the 19th century. The Chinese government's opium prohibition policy was simply unworkable at the time for a variety of reasons, including their lack of governmental authority in many tribal areas controlled by ethnic minorities, the simple lack of manpower necessary to institute the policy in such a broad geographical area containing many frontier regions, and especially the addiction to illicit opium funds that would develop in the various levels of Chinese government. Additionally, whether or not its prohibition policy was workable, medical evidence also shows that prohibition was not necessary prior to the discovery of aspirin because opium was an essential home remedy for a variety of common ailments and light to moderate use was relatively harmless. Despite those factors, since the early 20th century various elements with ulterior motives have been able to successfully demonize the drug for a variety of different reasons that have little or nothing to do with the health and safety of opium users. Missionaries were motivated both by philosophical opposition to all mind-altering substances and pragmatic considerations of how to more effectively convert as many Chinese as possible. The US State Department was chiefly concerned with gaining favor with the Chinese in order to enact profitable trade deals. The American medical community had financial incentive to exaggerate the deleterious effects of opium dependence, turning it into an addiction they could then be tasked with treating. Finally, following the Boxer Rebellion the revitalization of Chinese nationalism gave the government the opening to blame opium for essentially all the weaknesses of the country, thus avoiding blame themselves. The net effect is that all these factors have contributed to the prominence of an overly negative view of opium that has distorted the historical record. However, evidence shows that, far from the social scourge many perceive it as today, opium was at worst a necessary evil up until the widespread distribution of aspirin, and never significantly more harmful as a recreational vice than the more socially acceptable drug of alcohol. The opium poppy

was in this way another in a long line of mind-altering, sometimes-addicting substances that have significantly shaped our world essentially since history began.

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## THE AWAKENING OF THE CHILEAN “ASPILLERISTAS”: 1974–1990

*Dayna L. Caldwell*

In 1974 Chile the arpilleristas began as a group of thirteen women brought together by common grievances. State-sponsored confusion had led to chaos as society was kept ignorant of the military's intentions and actions. Fear kept them silenced. Although there was much to discuss, much to be protested, the disappeared to be found, people to be held accountable, memories to be remembered...fear held them in basements and clandestine workshops. “Nothing happened here” their society told them. They knew that this was not true. A great deal had happened to oppress and violate them and their loved ones. Without a voiced expression, these courageous women called on a traditional art form in which to stitch their memories. The women desired only to reestablish familial alliances disrupted by the Pinochet dictatorship that had begun one year earlier. Their art would eventually give rise to broader political missions such as the denouncement of authoritarianism and the fight for democracy.

The arpillerera movement demonstrates how Chilean women became politically active as a result of experiencing persecution by the Pinochet dictatorship. Driven by their collective memory, the arpilleristas broke from traditional values by publicly protesting the human rights violations they remembered so vividly and were determined not to forget. To illustrate how the Chilean women progressed from being traditional mothers and wives to radical instigators of a political movement, I will analyze specific arpilleras. In doing so, I will show how their collective memory was motivation to become politically active and would eventually influence other women's protest

Chile in 1974 provided for a chaotic existence for arpilleristas and other

lower to middleclass families. Before the commencement of Pinochet's regime on September 11, 1973, these families were hopeful for an end to their poverty for which President Salvador Allende's economic programs were thought to be responsible. Allende's socialist agenda attempted to nationalize and redistribute land seized from the elite class. Throughout Allende's three-year term (1970-1973), racial tensions between the poor descendants of indigenous people who supported the program and the elite, landowning class increased. Inflation, decline in export income, and strikes damaged the economy in such a way that the coup d'état in 1973 by Augusto Pinochet, commander-in-chief of the Chilean army, was welcomed.

By 1975 Pinochet had set forth an economy of free-market reform. The policy's objectives were economic liberalization, privatization of state owned companies, and stabilization of inflation. This program was successful in recovering economic growth and became known as "the economic miracle." Despite these advances in the economic realm, however, the political and social spheres descended into turmoil. Immediately following the coup of 1973, the recently established junta exercised both executive and legislative functions of the government. The junta enforced strict censorship and curfew and banned leftist parties that had constituted Allende's Unidad Popular coalition. The dictatorship's violence was not only directed at dissidents but towards their families as well. Thousands of civilians were kidnapped, tortured or assassinated until Chile returned to democratic rule in 1989.<sup>1</sup> According to Pinochet, these operations were necessary to extract communism from Chile.

Pinochet's Chile in 1974 was a violent and frightening place for the women of the lower-middle class. In an effort to obtain straightforward information on the whereabouts of their loved ones, the women became regular visitors to the morgues, hospitals, and torture centers. Day after day these women would see one another, recognizing the look of hope

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1. Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 108-111.



on each other's faces. They quickly realized that their stories were similar; their loved ones had been detained and/or had disappeared.<sup>2</sup> Solely motivated by the desire to reunite their families, the mostly middle-aged women banded together in the Santiago shantytowns to create patchwork tapestries, *arpilleras*, depicting the human rights violations they were experiencing. The women set up clandestine workshops in homes or in the basements of the Vicariate of Solidarity, an organization established to defend against the violation of human rights.<sup>3</sup> The cover of the Vicariate from 1974 to 1989 allowed the *arpilleristas* to meet weekly to embroider their painful stories. Here they were free to not only translate their experiences onto cloth but also find comfort in relating to the group of women. *Arpillerista* Violeta Morales discusses the significance of the group meetings in Marjorie Agosín's book *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile*: "There I found other people who were suffering from the same thing and trying to help them sometimes helped me with my own tragedy."<sup>4</sup>

Using the clothes of the disappeared, and sometimes unraveling their own clothing, the *arpilleristas* created their tapestries in secret. The intimacy of using this cloth allowed for a close bond between the *arpillerista* and the cloth's history. The *arpillerista* personalized her tapestry by stitching the memories of her life within the poignant fabric. This domestic, female tradition of embroidery used these cloths, reminiscent of pain, to deplore the horrible conditions in which the women were living. The *arpilleristas* not only protested the disappearances, but according to Agosín, they also protested "the destruction of their lives and homes, economic scarcity [and] constant psychological tension."<sup>5</sup> Violeta Morales describes the objectives of the *arpillera* movement in

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2. Marjorie Agosín, "Patchwork of Memory." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 27, no. 6 (1994): 11.

3. *Ibid.*, 12.

4. Marjorie Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 88.

5. Agosín, "Patchwork of Memory," 12.

Agosín's book:

We wanted to design a handmade product that would denounce what we and our country were living. We wanted to tell people about our personal experiences through pieces of our own clothing. We wanted to embroider our story, the harsh and sad story of our ruined country.<sup>6</sup>

The arpilleras were surreptitiously sold and even shipped abroad to extend the arpilleristas' message world-wide. Agosín poetically describes the embroidered fabric's ability to relay messages of condemnation and remembrance through imagery:

The arpillera weaves a relationship with the receiver..., [who] looks at it over and over again, and in the power of this glance espouses rituals and imagines the body of the disappeared. This relationship between the arpillera and the observer is an active dialogue of voices, histories, and words. It repairs the besieged world.<sup>7</sup>

Arpilleristas began to recognize themselves as political entities. They were out on the streets of Santiago organizing other workshops and searching for loved ones by day and tirelessly stitching their arpilleras by night. In her testimony, recorded by Agosín, Violeta Morales recalls how she and other arpilleristas "started training sessions to teach the women about solidarity and their role in...other group activities."<sup>8</sup> Partaking in the creation of communal kitchens and educational groups helped the arpilleristas confront the fear, feed their families and become politically active against authoritarianism. According to Agosín, through these different groups the arpilleristas were able to attain a profound

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6. Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*, 88.

7. Ibid., 34.

8. Ibid., 90.

knowledge of politics. “By means of the tapestries, they undertook a collective dialogue grounded in social justice and the commitment to transform an authoritarian culture into a democratic and cooperative one.”<sup>9</sup> The work of the arpilleristas had a vast influence on the fight for democracy. The voice of the arpilleristas essentially helped to bring international awareness to the political condition of Chile during the seventies and eighties.

In a sense the arpilleristas of Chile were struggling against oblivion. The embroidery of personal fabrics denouncing the human rights violations kept the memory of the disappeared alive. By stitching the intimacies of their lives, the arpilleristas allowed each arpillerista to evoke a human life, thus memorializing him by the receivers. Whereas scholars like Lessie Jo Frazier believe that Chilean memory is a condition of remembering versus forgetting,<sup>10</sup> scholar Steve Stern argues that the dichotomy of memory versus forgetting is too narrow of a categorization process for what occurred to Chilean memories after the military takeover of 1973. As formerly noted, Stern describes four emblematic memories as competing selective remembrances.<sup>11</sup> He states that because social actors are selective when making sense of collective trauma, the four frameworks are indispensable when investigating memory.

The first emblematic remembrance Stern discusses is “memory as salvation.”<sup>12</sup> Those whose memories belong to this category believe that human rights violations either did not happen, happened for a reason, or happened as an exception by provoked agents.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, memory as salvation “views the takeover of 1973 as a new beginning that rescued the national community.”<sup>14</sup> Stern goes on to describe a

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9. Agosin, “Patchwork of Memory,” 12.

10. Lessie Jo Frazier. *Salt in the Sand: Memory, Violence, and the Nation-State in Chile, 1890 to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 8.

11. Stern, *Remembering*, xxvii.

12. *Ibid.*, 108.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

second emblematic “memory as an unresolved rupture.”<sup>15</sup> This memory disturbs those who were personally affected by the violence of the military during the Pinochet dictatorship. The suffering caused by fear, ambiguity, distress, and anger devastated the quality of life for those who possess this remembrance. “Indifferent memory” or “memory as a closed box” is an emblematic memory that regards the coup and its violent aftermath as something to be consciously forgotten. To relive these disturbing memories would be to taint the future and its chance for national progress and social reconciliation.<sup>16</sup> The dangers of surfacing this memory outweigh the advantages.

The final memory introduced by Stern is that of “memory as persecution and awakening.” This remembrance includes those who experienced both self-discovery and repression during the military dictatorship. Stern states that “the violent persecution of dissidents, the collapse of democratic rights, the staying power of the dictatorship, these tested one’s deepest values and social commitments, and thereby provoked...a process of awakening.”<sup>17</sup> In an effort to cope with the trauma brought about by the military reign this remembrance gave rise to an intensification of nonconformity as well as self-knowledge and values. This memory entraps an individual between the pain caused by violence and the hope that the repression will bring about social and political change. Memory as persecution and awakening is somewhat similar to memory as rupture. Whereas remembrances of pain and suffering are found throughout both categories, memory as persecution and awakening paves the way for a collective political mobilization. It serves as an example encouraging others to combine their self-knowledge and experiences with a more emblematic meaning.<sup>18</sup>

The arpillera movement belongs to memory as persecution and awakening. Although her research views memory as a much smaller

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15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 111.

17. Ibid., 109

18. Ibid., 110.

framework than Stern's belief, Frazier's study of memory in the context of nation-state formation contains parallels to Stern's work. In her book *Salt in the Sand: Memory, Violence, and the Nation-State in Chile, 1890 to the Present*, Frazier states that memory "produces emotion to bring people on board with particular political projects in particular ways."<sup>19</sup> This emotion Frazier describes could very well be a result of persecution and, therefore, could cause individuals to awaken politically and join projects. Both authors theorize that memory causes emotion, which then acts as motivation for individuals to become more politically active.

The arpilleristas experienced the violence first-handedly when their husbands, fathers, siblings, and/or children were detained and disappeared. They battled sleep, sometimes for days, so that they might complete an arpillera to sell to put food on the table for their families. They organized themselves, founding workshops in which to practice their covert craft. According to Agosín, "the workshops transformed into centers of solidarity for innumerable activities as forms of social and political subsistence."<sup>20</sup> Here began a political movement denouncing not only the kidnapping of loved ones, but also unemployment, lack of food, and the right to a job. This was preparation for a political transformation in 1989 in which authoritarianism was finally defeated by democracy.

To further demonstrate how the memory of the arpilleristas uses memory as persecution and awakening I would like to examine a few examples of arpilleras produced during the Pinochet dictatorship of the 1970's and 1980's. First it is important to understand the delicate manner in which the women crafted their artwork. The process of creating the tapestries began with fabric from loved ones' clothing or donated clothing. The arpilleristas cut shapes and combined scenes by stitching with brightly colored thread. The background of the decided theme was made first, joining together elements like the Andes Mountains, clouds,

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19. Frazier, *Salt in the Sand*, 4.

20. Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*, 27.

the sun, or treetops. These scenes of nature represent the existence of hope in spite of the pain.<sup>21</sup> Once the stage was set, the arpillerista added other figures for action and drama. The addition of dolls and other elements depicted people continuing daily life in a disrupted society. Within these every day scenes are connections to the political frameworks of the time such as the “state of exception.”<sup>22</sup> The military Junta employed the “state of exception” theory as a justification for the 1973 coup. It argued that the social and political disruption caused by the incapability of the Allende government (1970-1973) created a “state of exception” necessitating the Junta to step in and strive for a stable existence.<sup>23</sup>



I.<sup>24</sup>

21. Agosín, “Patchwork,” 12.

22. Giorgio Agamben, “The State of Exception as a Paradigm of Government.” in *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1.

23. Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davis, “The Reasons for the Junta.” *The Politics of Anti-Politics: The Military in Latin America*, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 1997), 181.

24. Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*.



Regardless of the reasons behind the disruption of daily life, it is evident that the arpilleristas first-handedly felt its repercussions. The dolls shown persisting with routines illustrates both the resilience and the powerlessness of the people. Piece by piece the dolls were carefully made. Now and then the arpillerista would even use her own hair to cover the doll's tiny head.<sup>25</sup> The arpillerista breathed life into the tapestry and through her tender diligence made the scene come to life.

The dolls and other three-dimensional elements of Arpillera I. indicate a sense of urgency and connection between the art and the life being depicted. The tapestry shows the police randomly taking citizens off the street. The confusion of the scene is evident in the halting of daily activity by those witnessing the act. The suddenness with which this could occur is apparent in the choice of setting; mid-day and on a busy street. Agosín remarks that in her collection of arpilleristas' testimonies, one theme is always at the forefront of their minds. "I never met one arpillerista who did not recount [the story of the arrest of their loved ones] to me. The details were retold, relived, and repeated obsessively."<sup>26</sup>



## II.

25. Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*, 53.

26. Ibid., 47.

The arpilleristas felt that information of how and where their relatives were arrested was fundamental in their creation of the tapestries. They could not and would not forget the facts of the event which changed their lives forever.

Arpillera II was made by Violeta Morales. Her identity is known because her brother, Newton Morales' photo was superimposed on the tapestry. Most arpilleras were not signed. According to Agosín, "this anonymity celebrates the collective power of this art form."<sup>27</sup>



### III.<sup>28</sup>

This design characterizes the early arpillera productions. The inclusion of a face expresses the tapestry's identity and humanity. The scene depicts a protest against the disappearance of Chileans.

27. Ibid., 15.

28. Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*.



The sequential order of *Arpilleras I* and *II* shows how the arpilleristas were motivated by the vanishing of loved ones to mobilize and become more politicized. The feeling of hopelessness within *Arpillera I* is not present in its successor. It is apparent that the organization of group activities and construction of arpilleras instilled in the women a sense of empowerment.

Social disobedience was an important aspect of the arpillera movement. *Arpillera III* depicts protestors chained to the gates of Congress. Agosin notes that “all the [arpilleristas] I spoke to [in 1994] had taken part in hunger strikes and had chained themselves to fences in strategic locations in downtown Santiago.”<sup>29</sup> This was done to disrupt the course of daily life in an effort to call attention to the military regime’s systematic disappearance and torture of Chileans. Throughout the seventies and eighties women regularly partook in demonstrations against the dictatorship and insisted that men stay at home to avoid arrest, torture, or exile.<sup>30</sup> Women felt that their gender protected them from these outcomes. As a result they would march every Thursday to the Supreme Court Building with photos of missing relatives attached to their clothing.<sup>31</sup> This is reminiscent of the protests of the *madres* of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina, who also wore photos of their missing loved ones. The similarities between the demonstrations of the Chilean and Argentinean women are indicative of the arpillera movement joining with a larger international framework of protest. The influence of the arpilleristas on the later *madres’* movement will be discussed in detail shortly

Hunger strikes were another form of civil disobedience in which the arpilleristas participated. The women in *Arpillera IV* are shown bedridden in a room of a church, most likely at the Vicariate of Solidarity. Because hunger strikes could last for days, the women were weak and unable to stand. Similar to their other forms of protest, hunger strikes

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29. *Ibid.*, 51.

30. *Ibid.*, 50.

31. *Ibid.*

were an attempt to bring national and international attention to the disappearances of loved ones.<sup>32</sup> In 1994 Anita Rojas, one of the first arpilleristas, described a hunger strike in which she participated in June of 1978. “For seventeen days, I lived only on water and salt. The first week I felt well, but beginning on the eighth day I began to weaken until they were forced to feed me intravenously in order for me to survive.”<sup>33</sup> As the women became gravely ill, the pressure built and the government relented, promising to tell the truth of the disappeared’s whereabouts. Rojas claims that, to this day, no information has been given.

IV.<sup>34</sup>

In 1983 the arpilleristas formed a folkloric group attempting to

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32. Ibid., 9.

33. Ibid. 102.

34. Ibid.

spread their message through song and dance. Arpillerista, Violeta Morales recalls, “We not only wanted to embroider and cry out our grief, but we also wished to sing our message of protest.”<sup>35</sup> The group’s most memorable performance was the dancing of *la cueca sola*. It is interesting to note here that performances of *la cueca sola* caught the attention of the international network of solidarity. In 1988 the musician Sting toured, under the banner of Amnesty International, for the Human Rights Now! Tour where he performed the single entitled “They Dance Alone.” This song described the plight of Chilean mothers and their dance of protest, *la cueca sola*.



V.<sup>36</sup>

This final Arpillera V depicts women performing *la cueca sola*.

35. Ibid., 92.

36. Ibid.

With their missing loved one's photo pinned to white and black uniforms, the women danced the Chilean national dance, a routine usually done performed in pairs. According to Agosín, "Through la cueca sola, the dancers tell a story with their solitary feet, the story of the mutilated body of a loved one. Through their movements and the guitar music, the women also recreate the pleasure of dancing with the missing person."<sup>37</sup>

This variation of the dance transforms it from a pleasurable experience to one full of pain and memory. Author Alexander Wilde believes that the televised la cueca sola performed at the inauguration of democratically elected President Aylwin in 1990 particularly moved the audience. In his article "Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy," Wilde claims that irruptions of memory caused by performances like la cueca sola forces Chileans to "contemplate the deeply divided memories of their conflictive past."<sup>38</sup> Wilde's study demonstrates that the arpilleristas' message was distributed as intended. The women dancing la cueca sola recall the past, the company of a partner, pleasure, desire. Witnessing this poignant display compels the country to remember also. The existence of the arpilleristas in a world dependent on mediatized images aided them in their cause. Without the far-reaching influence of television and radio, the objectives of the arpillerista movement may not have dispersed as widely as desired.

It can be said that the solidarity and subsequent movement of the arpilleristas generated a model for mothers and wives in other Latin American countries oppressed by dictatorships. Similar to the forming of the arpilleristas, groups of women banded together during Argentina's Dirty War from 1976-1983. Like the arpilleristas of Chile, Argentinean mothers and wives began encountering one another in the government offices, prisons, and courts while searching for disappeared

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37. Ibid. 62.

38. Alexander Wilde, "Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 31, (1999): 485.



loved ones.<sup>39</sup> By 1977 these “madres” were marching and protesting each week to the Plaza de Mayo, the political, financial, and symbolic center of Buenos Aires, where they were sure to attract attention. Scholar Diana Taylor theorizes that the madres’ resistance “was very much a performance designed to focus national and international attention on the junta’s violation of human rights.”<sup>40</sup> The madres used their identity as traditional Argentinean women to become noticed. The protests illustrated how they were forced to enter a public domain, an unconventional act for women, in order to render care to their missing children, an aspect of the traditional woman’s role. Taylor states that “unlike the military, [the madres] showed their wounds rather than their instruments.”<sup>41</sup> Taylor argues that the madres’ use of political performance and identity politics was a way to combat the junta’s own performance. Taylor’s reasoning can be applied to the arpilleristas’ movement in Chile. The creation of arpilleras and the ensuing social disobedience acts can be said to be political performances meant to confront those of the Chilean junta. Although the madres of Argentina were just developing their performances in 1977, the arpilleristas of Chile had formed their resistance mechanisms three years earlier. The connections between the arpilleristas and the madres and the influence of the former movement on the latter lend understanding to the rise and evolution of women’s political movements in Latin American.

The arpilleras examined in this essay demonstrate how the arpilleristas used their deplorable experiences as a motivation to become more politicized. Although the arpilleristas began working in a time where no one dared to voice objection to authoritarianism, their powerful arpilleras voiced their messages for them. As the years wore on and the missing were still not found, the women realized that informing the international community of the human rights violations would not give

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39. Diana Taylor. *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s “Dirty War”* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 186.

40. *Ibid.*, 184.

41. *Ibid.*, 198.

them answers they desired. Creating arpilleras helped these women to acquire the confidence and to discover the avenues through which to protest effectively. Their memories of persecution pushed them into an individual and collective awakening. This awakening effectively traversed Latin America and found its way to the madres of Argentina who in 1977 experienced similar plights to those of the Chilean arpilleristas. The arpillera movement acted as an exemplary model that generated an opening for the madres to become more politicized and, according to scholar Diana Taylor, create political performances to give influence to their agenda during their struggle in the Dirty War.

Today there is still much for the new generation of arpilleristas to protest. While democracy has overcome authoritarianism, at present, Chilean society struggles with inequality between social classes and the inadequacy of the judicial system, which has not as of yet uncovered the truth behind the past violence or prosecuted those responsible.<sup>42</sup> What has changed for the arpilleristas of today is that they no longer battle a losing conflict alone. Chilean history and memory are at the forefront of society's mind and a new generation of institutions has taken responsibility for implementing change. The concept of the arpilleras of the seventies and eighties can be reflected upon to relate to current issues in Chile. Agosín believes that "the arpillera inspires us to live in the past, but also allows us to restructure the ethic of our future."<sup>43</sup> Although more than thirty years has passed, the significance of the arpillera is as relevant today as it was yesterday.

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42. Peter Winn in Marjorie Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*, 168.

43. Agosín, *Tapestries of Hope*, 35.

*tinue her academic pursuits by attending graduate school and receiving an advanced degree in either Native American studies or art connoisseurship and appraisal.*

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## FINDING BONHOEFFER IN HARLEM

*Robert Wells*

When German theologian, Nazi resistor and Christian martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer came to New York City as a young divinity student, he learned that truly being a good Christian meant taking responsibility for the physical and emotional health of one's neighbors, saving the body and mind, as well as caring for the soul. As he grew acquainted with the oppression of black Americans, he saw how fulfilling that responsibility came to require social and political action, instead of just relying on the spiritual comfort and teaching he was accustomed to. The culture shock Bonhoeffer experienced in Harlem proved that racism was a worldwide phenomenon and prepared him for the horrors of Nazi Germany, against the horrors of which he later led his own resistance from beyond the pulpit.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau, Germany on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 1906 along with his twin sister, Sabine, to Karl and Paula Bonhoeffer. Dietrich was part of a large, close-knit family and had five older siblings: Karl-Friedrich, Walter, Klaus, Ursula, Christine, his twin Sabine, and a younger sister, Susanne. Karl Bonhoeffer was an accomplished scholar and held the chair of Psychiatry and Neurology at Berlin University, one of the most prestigious positions in Europe. He was the authority figure and pillar of reliability for the Bonhoeffer family, and raised his children strictly, but fairly and lovingly. His wife, Paula, was the picture of a doting, adoring mother and the main Christian influence in the house, having made it a priority that her children learned Bible verses and hymns when they were young. Karl's eminent position put the family into an upper-middle class position and the children never lacked in anything, but, following their father's character, everything

was done in moderation.<sup>1</sup>

Dietrich and his siblings were allowed to follow their own paths and interests. This is significant because it would have been easy for an important academic like Karl to push them into his area of study or secure appointments for them. This was definitely not the case, particularly for Dietrich. His choice of theology as an area of study met with slightly mixed reactions from his father, but his mother, who had clergy in her family, was elated, and Dietrich ultimately received nothing but support in his decision from them.<sup>2</sup>

Responsibility was emphasized in the Bonhoeffer household. Karl and Paula's belief in academic discipline and self-determination suggested a classically liberal upbringing. Even more central to the Bonhoeffer household was "consideration for the needs and feelings of others," which "was expected of the children from an early age, and their parents' praise or blame was concentrated almost exclusively in this area."<sup>3</sup> Both parents went out of their way to teach the children respect for all people, and extended the emphasis on responsibility for self and family to include responsibility for one's neighbor as well. Paula "saw that upbringing as having a Christian value and her husband saw it as having a humanist one", and they made it "clear to the children that they had to fight against injustice, whether it affected themselves or other people."<sup>4</sup>

After completing his studies in Tübingen, Berlin, Rome and Barcelona, Bonhoeffer was fully qualified for ordination by August of 1930; unfortunately the canonical age to be ordained was 25 and Dietrich was only 23. His superior in Berlin convinced him to travel abroad in the meantime, and attained a one year scholarship for him in

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1. Eberhard Bethge, *Bonhoeffer: An Illustrated Biography in Documents and Photographs*, trans. Rosaleen Ockenden. (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1979), 5-15.

2. *Ibid.*, 13.

3. *Ibid.*, 9.

4. *Ibid.*, 10.

America.<sup>5</sup> Bonhoeffer arrived later that fall at New York City's respected Union Theological Seminary, where he was eager to study America's very different Denominational interpretation of Protestantism. He was asked by nearly every Christian organization in the area to speak on the European situation, particularly on the subject of war. He turned most down, but became uniquely involved in the district of Harlem, the heart of which was only about a mile from Union Theological Seminary.

The year was 1930 and Harlem was black America's cultural Mecca. It had been growing for over thirty years, since black entrepreneur Phillip Payton, Jr. began buying-up property in the Harlem district and encouraging African-Americans to build a community. Black Denominational churches moved into the area around the same time, and thousands migrated from the South and West Indies after hearing tales of a Black Promised Land in America's greatest city. They were forced into ridiculously overcrowded apartments, and many complained about the rent and living conditions, but none were able to move anywhere else. The 1920s saw the emergence of a unique African-American culture tied to the area: jazz and blues music, poetry, literature, drama and other arts flourished. Headed by enthusiastic young artists and intellectuals like Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Alain Locke, the Harlem Renaissance, as it came to be called, was crucial to the development of African-American identity in the years between WWI and WWII. Unfortunately, the stock market crash in 1929 plunged Harlem and the rest of the US into terrible times. The reader is encouraged to examine the work of Cary D. Wintz for further information on this important period.

Bonhoeffer was introduced to Harlem and African-American life in general through a fellow student at UTS named Frank Fisher. Fisher was himself African-American, and led Bonhoeffer on "guided visits to the area, including a 'trip to centers of Negro life and culture in Harlem', beginning with a flight over the district."<sup>6</sup> Bonhoeffer showed

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5. Ibid., 24-26.

6. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, trans.

an admirable drive to immerse himself in a culture entirely foreign to him, a European with a strong Swabian background, and spent many an evening walking the streets of Black America's Promised Land. He fell in love with African-American spirituals and purchased a number of gramophone records, including the work of Paul Robeson, which he later played for his students in Germany.<sup>7</sup>

Almost every Sunday, Bonhoeffer attended service at Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church with Fisher, and was enormously impressed by the energy of African-American worship.<sup>8</sup> He started to work in the various clubs and Sunday school classes the church sponsored, caught up in the Abyssinian Baptist Church's firm belief in providing as much aid and service to the Harlem community as possible. The spirit, energy and purpose of the church was embodied in its head pastor Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Sr.

Powell (1865-1953) had been one of Harlem's most recognizable leaders for over twenty years when Bonhoeffer first encountered him. He assumed the pastorate in 1908 and moved the church from Manhattan to Harlem the same year, purchasing a very large tract of land and constructing an equally impressive new building. When completed, the new Abyssinian Baptist Church was one of the most impressive ecclesiastic structures in the city, and attracted a suitably large congregation due in no small part to Powell's powerful preaching style. Powell encouraged the loud, emotional services he witnessed as a young man in Virginia, where the local pastor would, so overwhelmed by feeling, "rise to take his text and fall to the floor under strong religious emotions. [The pastor] did not utter a word, but it was the most effective sermon I have ever heard."<sup>9</sup> The formal, restrained Bonhoeffer must

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Eric Mosbacher, Peter Ross, Betty Ross, Frank Clarke, William Glen-Doepel, ed. Edwin Robertson, (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 109.

7. Ibid., 109.

8. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Protestantism Without Reformation," in *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, trans. and ed. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 113.

9. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. *Against the Tide*, (New York: Richard R. Smith,

have been impressed by the passion in Powell's sermons because he kept coming back.

Powell, as a man of the cloth, was responsible for his congregation's spiritual well-being, but he was also an intensely pragmatic advocate of African-American unity and responsibility. He was a disciple of Booker T. Washington, the great southern leader he had admired as a boy, and focused his efforts equally on the fight for his charges' spiritual and social prosperity.<sup>10</sup> In addition to regular church functions, he was involved with the administration of church-sponsored social aid programs, political activism and, maybe most importantly, pedagogical opportunities for young men and women. The Abyssinian Baptist Church grew to house a YMCA-type center called the Community House that held, along with the traditional role as a shelter and activity center for young men and women, evening training courses for the Red Cross and prospective ministers, and a large Vacation Bible School. It also was also affluent enough to run an elderly home and a social relief bureau under the Reverend's son, and future politician, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.<sup>11</sup> Under Powell's leadership, the Abyssinian Baptist Church helped spearhead Social Gospel teaching from its position at the heart of Harlem, and did much to establish the African-American church's position as a central body of spiritual and racial community.

The 'Social Gospel' was a Protestant movement starting around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that emphasized combating inequality with Christian ideals and Denominational backing. A Baptist minister and theologian from New York named Walter Rauschenbusch is credited as the father of the movement, and was around the same age as Powell when he was first named pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. Rauschenbusch himself was white, and it is important to note that the Social Gospel was applied to many different progressive issues by a

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1938), 15.

10. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. *Riots and Ruins*, 77-78.

11. John Michael Spencer, "The Black Church and the Harlem Renaissance," *African-American Review* 30 (1996): 453-460.

number of different groups, and carried a religious connotation before a racial one.<sup>12</sup> It's not hard to see why the Social Gospel became so central to African-American churches, however, when the congregations already constituted a unified body of oppressed people. Under a strong, charismatic leader like Powell, organized religion, long used as a tool of oppression to justify slavery in America, was now a weapon with which to fight back.

Having grown up in a Reconstruction-era Virginia before moving to New York, Powell was probably considered 'old-school' amongst the Harlem community. His worked as a voice of experience and wisdom, providing sincere guidance to the youthful, creative energy that made Harlem tick. He made every effort to channel that enthusiasm into organization and action; he was very outspoken about African-Americans taking their voting rights seriously, for example.<sup>13</sup> Later, he staunchly supported the first threatened March-on-Washington, and applauded its organizer, saying "There is not a more heroic spirit in America than the one which dwells in A. Philip Randolph's body."<sup>14</sup> Conversely, he was very critical of African-Americans who he saw as impeding progress by performing destructive actions, calling-out participants in the Harlem race riots that occurred a few years after Bonhoeffer left. Such "hoodlums" didn't realize until after-the-fact "that all the valuables they had stolen from the pawnshops and the cleaners belonged to their own race. They further realized that they had caused Negroes to lose thousands of man hours of work and many of them to lose their jobs."<sup>15</sup> Though he probably thought he understood their frustration, Powell's high-handed attitude betrayed the comparatively privileged existence he enjoyed in Harlem.

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12. Does Robinson Sharpe, *Walter Rauschenbusch*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942).

13. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. *Riots and Ruins*, (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1945), 92-93.

14. *Ibid.*, 134.

15. *Ibid.*, 57.

In spite of his classism, Powell did not give up on these ‘shortsighted’ individuals as lost causes. He proudly looked to formerly-rowdy youths of the Abyssinian Baptist Church’s activity center that had gone on to lead successful careers as proof that certain lessons about respect and social responsibility just needed to be taught. “Don’t shoot them,” he said, “Don’t send them to a reform school. Don’t brutalize them, but brotherize them.”<sup>16</sup> *Brotherize them*. The use of the word “brother” makes reference to the Big Brother movement of which Powell was a proponent, and carried a temporal concern with racial pride and unity. The responsibility Powell advocated, if taken as a necessity of being *Christian* instead of African-American, was exactly what Bonhoeffer wanted to hear at the time. He would come to realize later the value of both approaches, however, and that they might not be so different.

Racism was a fact of everyday life in America, and Bonhoeffer was, as a man of conscience and a friend to Fisher, forced to look the problem in the eye on a daily basis. He caused a scene in that New York restaurant after Frank was refused service, leaving in protest with his friend and stunning fellow white students.<sup>17</sup> It would have been natural for him to stay locked up in the seminary, pouring over texts and reports with as noble a purpose; indeed many of his studies up to that point had been conducted in such a manner, a detached academicism. However, Bonhoeffer strove to achieve as complete an understanding of the ‘Negro question’ as possible, and did so by getting physically involved. This respect Bonhoeffer showed for the Harlem community allowed him to achieve an amazing level of acceptance for a white man in the proudly black area. His friend, Paul Lehmann, would later remark that Bonhoeffer had “a remarkable kind of identity with the Negro community, so that he was received there as though he had never been an outsider at all.”<sup>18</sup> There is surely some hyperbole in that description, but

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16 . Ibid., 62.

17. Elizabeth Raum, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Called by God*, (New York: Continuum, 2002), 47.

18. Paul Lehmann, B.B.C. talk, 3/13/1960, in Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man*

the way Bonhoeffer himself was regarded by the white Denominations, who wanted him to speak on strictly German topics, it would have been understandable for him to have felt like an outsider in New York. It's very possible that he, the foreign oddity, found a certain comfort among the separated neighborhood of Harlem.

While at Union Theological Seminary, Bonhoeffer studied under now-famous American theologian Reinhold Niebhur and was introduced to his "most radical socializing of Christianity."<sup>19</sup> He was actually more than a little perturbed by Niebhur's devotees; he apparently perceived a disdain for serious theological study, and commented that "the theological education of this group was virtually nil"<sup>20</sup>. Whatever Bonhoeffer thought of his students, however, Niebhur himself would become a particularly important friend. At the time, he helped introduce Bonhoeffer to American literature, including contemporary African-American literature; this was very unique study at a Seminary school for the time, and owed to Niebhur's socially-conscious theology. Bonhoeffer wrote an essay for Niebhur's class on James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, a book that had a presumably strong affect on him, the essay was remaining vivid in his mind two-years later, in February of 1933.

*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* tells the story of the African-American Narrator, begotten to a white, Southern father and an African-American mother. He grows up in the North with his mother while his father remarries a white woman and stays in the south. The narrator and his mother are not poor off financially, however, and he grows up comfortably, receiving a good education. Because his mother and he are lighter-skinned African-Americans and of a favorable economic situation, he grows up identifying himself as white, if anything

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*of Vision, Man of Courage*, 114.

19. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Report on a Period of Study at Union Theological Seminary in New York, 1930-1931," in *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, trans. And ed. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 89.

20. *Ibid.*, 89.



at all.

One of the novel's key scenes occurs when the narrator is a child in elementary school. The principal enters the classroom, asking all of the white students to stand, and the narrator stands with the white children, earning a rebuke from his teacher, who tells him to stand with "the others"<sup>21</sup>. Astonished, he later asks his mother "am I a nigger?" to which she replies he is not, that he is equal to all of the other students. He then asks "Well, mother, am I white? Are you white?"<sup>22</sup> and she carefully says she is not. He is left horribly confused, unable to comprehend where that leaves him, and he grows up a loner, unsure of his identity. He discovers a talent for music, however, specifically the rhythmic jazz and blues he identifies as African-American, and aspires to be a great musician and credit to his race. He gives up on his dream after witnessing a crowd of whites burn a black man alive, and decides he wants nothing to do with 'race' at all. He manages to opt-out, so to speak, through his uniquely light-yet-dark skin, and live somewhere in between. Out of respect to Johnson's work, it is necessary to point out a sad smile in the bleak landscape; Johnson's work is a novel, not an actual autobiography, but it draws heavily on Johnson's own experiences and the lives of his friends. This triple-layering with the title confuses matters, but the *roman a clef* arrangement injects a sense of satire or tragicomedy that may or may not have been apparent to Bonhoeffer.

What Bonhoeffer would certainly have picked up on, however, was the Narrator's dissatisfaction with Christianity and its actual ability or willingness to aid people in need, as can be seen in the following passage:

I became interested in the life of Christ, but became impatient and disappointed when I found that, notwithstanding the great power

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21. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, in *Writings*, ed. by William L. Andrews (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2004), 12-13.

22 . Ibid., 14.

he possessed, he did not make use of it when, in my judgment, he most needed to do so.<sup>23</sup>

What good was religion when that man was being burned alive? Why had Jesus tolerated the existence of such horrid racism to a point where the Narrator's embrace of a nonidentity is understandable? Only the concluding sentences remain of Bonhoeffer's actual essay, which follows:

According to the whole mood in present Negro literature, it seems to me, that the race question is arriving at a turning point. The attempt to overcome the conflict religiously or ethically will turn in a violent political objection.<sup>24</sup>

The way Bonhoeffer worded his analysis, with religion and ethics joined at the hip, seems to imply organized religion and theological discourse as the insufficient solutions mentioned. It is quite clear how disturbed he was by Johnson's attitude, especially if others were equally disenchanted, in that he, a young, enthusiastic theology scholar, acknowledged the problem as something already beyond the scope of his study or ability. More importantly, however, Bonhoeffer acknowledged a difference in *passive*, ideological objection and progressive *action*, and their ability to solve actual problems. Powell and the Social Gospel as a response to Johnson may be seen in that distinction.

In a letter Karl-Friedrich wrote to Bonhoeffer, his brother, while the latter was still in America, dated 1/24/1930, Karl-Friedrich spoke of the parallel between what African-Americans faced and what Jews faced at the time in Germany. "I am delighted you have the opportunity of studying the Negro situation so thoroughly. I had the impression when I was over there that it really was *the* problem, at any rate for people with

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23. Ibid., 17.

24. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, 109.

a conscience [...] our Jewish question is a joke in comparison.”<sup>25</sup> In 1930, Bonhoeffer could not have imagined that it wasn’t the American “race question” that was arriving at a “turning point”, but the German one.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 1933 Adolf Hitler was named Reich Chancellor. The entire Bonhoeffer household was outraged: Dietrich’s brother-in-law Rudiger Schleicher declared “This means war!” upon hearing the news, and no one in the family disagreed.<sup>26</sup> It marked a turning point for all of Germany, as the rapid ascent of Hitler was no longer something that could be ignored by those like the Bonhoeffers, who considered him a dangerous demagogue. Chaos broke out and splits occurred between friends and families, as all of Germany was confronted firmly with the choice of actively dissenting, keeping quiet and out of the violence in the streets, or cooperating actively with the regime.

Dietrich would not associate with those who remained quiet after Hitler’s February 1<sup>st</sup> proclamation to take German Christianity under his ‘firm protection’, and had to sever some ties, too. His stance as a resistor led to a sudden surge of notoriety, and he was forced into the public spotlight that same February 1<sup>st</sup>, when he gave a radio broadcast. Bonhoeffer was highly critical of both Hitler and the nationalist ‘German Christians’ that were taking over positions of authority, saying “Leaders or offices which set themselves up as gods mock God.”<sup>27</sup> In what would become a trend, Nazi officials declared the broadcast subversive and had Bonhoeffer cut off midway through.<sup>28</sup>

Bonhoeffer sent a letter to Niebhuhr on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1933 requesting that Niebhuhr put in a good word for his cousin Cristoph van Hase, who

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25. Karl-Friedrich Bonhoeffer, Letter to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Frankfurt, 24 January 1931, in Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, 110.

26. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, 191.

27. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “The Leader and the Individual in the Younger Generation,” in *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, trans. And ed. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 204.

28. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, 194.

would be applying to study at Union Seminary on Bonhoeffer's advice.<sup>29</sup> The chief purpose behind the letter and its timing may not be too hard to guess. Cristoph was not necessarily in any more danger than the rest of Germany, but he was younger and more vulnerable than Dietrich, and it may have been better for him to leave and avoid the conflict the German church was embroiled in. What was particularly interesting, however, was that, as an aside at the letter's end, Bonhoeffer requested that Neibhur instruct a friend named Jim Dobrowski to return the *Ex-Colored Man* essay.<sup>30</sup> Why, in the middle of all that was happening, only seven days after the terrible news, was Bonhoeffer's mind on an essay he wrote two years earlier about African-American literature?

We can only speculate on Bonhoeffer's motive, but it seems likely he feared for the German Jews with Hitler as chancellor. Though nobody could've guessed at the time what horrors Hitler would exact on the Jewish people, the Nazis had never been quiet about their anti-Semitism. Though the essay itself may not have been important, the request is evidence he was thinking about his experiences in America. Perhaps Bonhoeffer feared Hitler's election was, for Germany, the turning point he had predicted for America, that the state under Hitler would create a Jewish 'Ex-Colored Man' his beloved Lutheran church couldn't physically or spiritually save. Such concern would have been even more personal in nature, as Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law and friend, Gerhard Leibholz, was of Jewish ancestry.<sup>31</sup>

Those worst fears were realized that April, when the 'Aryan Clauses' were pushed, one-after-another, into effect, barring any Germans of Jewish ancestry and their spouses from holding government positions. This was bad enough, but what set Bonhoeffer and many of his colleagues off was that, due to the Lutheran arrangement of state and

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29. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letter to Reinhold Neibuhr, Berlin, 6 February 1933, in Larry L. Rasmussen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 218-219.

30. Ibid.

31. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, 196.

church in Germany, clergymen had some political status. Christians with Jewish ancestry, then, were basically barred from their congregation. Bonhoeffer was among the first to respond, in a careful objection entitled “The Church and the Jewish Question”. Though not overt, there is a very relevant passage, which follows:

There are three possible ways in which the church can act towards the state: in the first place, as has been said, it can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state, i.e. it can throw the state back on its responsibilities. Secondly, it can aid the victims of state action. The church has an unconditional obligation to victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community. ‘Do good to all men’. [...] The third possibility is not just to bandage the victims under the wheel, but to put a spoke in the wheel itself. Such action would be direct political action, and is only possible and desirable when the church sees the state fail in its function of creating law and order, i.e. when it sees the state unrestrainedly bring about too much or too little law and order [...] too much where the state intervened in the character of the church and its proclamation, e.g. in the forced exclusion of baptized Jews from our Christian congregations or in the prohibition of our mission to the Jews.<sup>32</sup>

These comments are not necessarily threatening when taken in the context of the whole work, which is theoretical in nature. It was one of the first examples of how Bonhoeffer would conduct his opposition to Nazi seizure of the State and Church, as Edwin Robertson notes: “always, theological, not political.”<sup>33</sup> The inclusion of social aid and

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32. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “The Church and the Jewish Question,” in *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, trans. And ed. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 225.

33. Edwin Robertson, *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, trans. and ed. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row,

political action, however, is an excellent example of how Bonhoeffer always “left the door open a crack for such a step.”<sup>34</sup> This was not yet a call to action by any means, but a warning of what the church, backed into a corner, would have to do. Political action is still considered a last resort, but it is now perfectly justifiable in Bonhoeffer’s mind.

Besides the obvious correlation in wording between the “Jewish question” and “race question”, the church’s “unconditional obligation to victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community”, is clearly something Powell would have emphasized.

Hitler’s aggression into Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938 brought about changes the world over. Persecution of the Jews reached a new, horrific high (or low) in the *kristallnacht*, which Bethge postulates was the inspiration for Bonhoeffer’s famous directive, “Only he who cries out for the Jews may sing Gregorian chants”.<sup>35</sup> Hitler’s military ambitions spelled particular trouble for the Bonhoeffer family because nobody was confident Gerhard Leibholz and his relatives could be kept safe in a mobilized Germany. Fearing the closing of borders, Bonhoeffer went with Leibholz and his family to the German-Swiss border, where they were able to cross into Basel safely. Bonhoeffer’s friend George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, helped them eventually make their way to England, where Gerhard would serve as a political advisor to Bell throughout, and after, the War.<sup>36</sup>

War mobilization also meant the likelihood of army call-up for Bonhoeffer, a prospect he was absolutely dreading, and he spent the last months of 1938 through the early half of 1939 trying to work out what to do. He was suffering a crisis of conscience because he felt leaving the country and dodging service, even if he was capable of doing so, might endanger his few remaining colleagues at the Confessing Church.

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1965), 229-230.

34. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, 580-581.

35. *Ibid.*, 512.

36. *Ibid.*, 536-538.

Bonhoeffer learned he was to report on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and hastily drew up an application to go back to America in June, where Niebhur and his old friend Paul Lehmann were making arrangements. The application wouldn't have come off in time had his father Karl not called the local recruiting officer at the last second, who's family had known the Bonhoeffers for years, and asked for a favor. Leave was granted for a year and Bonhoeffer found himself back in New York City.<sup>37</sup>

He came to America under a dark cloud, concerned as he was to leave his family and friends in the powder keg of Germany circa 1939, but also because the military service couldn't be put off forever. Bonhoeffer's friends, Lehmann in particular, prevailed upon him to take any number of church positions in the States, but he turned them all down. Bonhoeffer came to the conclusion that

I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people.<sup>38</sup>

Bethge characterized the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, the day he officially turned down the job offers and made arrangements to go back to Germany, as "the day that decided Bonhoeffer's future."<sup>39</sup> He could've gotten out at that point and might still be alive today, but the realization of a different responsibility had become apparent to him.

Before Bonhoeffer made it back to Germany, he began work on an essay entitled "Protestantism Without Reformation", that was a new, very frank reflection on American Denominationalism. It's particularly noteworthy, however, that he devoted an entire section to "The Negro Church" in which he strongly reprimands the white churches' inability or

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37. Ibid., 538-554.

38. Ibid., 559.

39. Ibid., 557.

unwillingness to unify with African-American churches. The separation he saw descended from a long history of perversions, starting with how Christianity was withheld from Africans in order to justify slavery. The Bishop of London's "dreadful letter of reassurance" that allowed slaves to be baptized, but kept them in chains and unable to hold church office or be ordained was another step backwards. Bonhoeffer then explicitly mentions a contemporary example of such hypocrisy, which follows:

The most influential contribution made by the negro to American Christianity lies in the 'negro spirituals' [...] Every white American knows, sings and loves these songs. It is barely understandable that great negro singers can sing these songs before packed concert audiences of whites, to tumultuous applause, while at the same time these men and women are still denied access to the white community through social discrimination.<sup>40</sup>

Bonhoeffer seems to have left theological discourse behind entirely at this point, indeed the whole "Negro Church" section lacks in any sort of abstraction, and its charges are drawn purely from positivist analysis. One can't help but think this is the Dietrich Bonhoeffer that watched his own German church shredded by racism for seven years, his friends and family threatened, and had finally had enough.

Bonhoeffer had long since come to understand the disconnect between ideological and active objection, that the former was not always enough, but he held off slightly, unwilling to quite cross into political or revolutionary action. As the earlier passage from "The Church and the Jewish Question" indicates, he had an idea of what response may eventually be necessary, just not where the stimulus to cross that line would come from. What could possibly make him approve of a "violent" objection? Note how the outpouring of anger came right after

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40. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Protestantism Without Reformation," in *No Rusty Swords: Letter, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, trans. and ed. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 113.



Bonhoeffer made the monumental decision to return home out of a concern for his community. This may have been, to come full circle, the most fundamental influence of Powell on Bonhoeffer. A feeling of love and responsibility for one's fellow man, to the point where it is necessary to defend him actively by any means, could come from a *secular*, humanist connection as much as a dogmatic, Christian one. Powell's humanist duty was to his own African-American community, his Christian duty to their salvation; he brought the two together in his interpretation of the Social Gospel, a combination of the secular and spiritual. The humanist responsibility allowed Powell to advocate organization and action as he did, no system of theology was necessary to "brotherize" a neighbor. Bonhoeffer became aware of this, asserting that, "It is important that Jesus gives his blessing not merely to suffering incurred directly for the confession of his name, but to suffering in any just cause. They receive the same promise as the poor, for in persecution they are their equals in poverty."<sup>41</sup> The pull he felt back to Germany was instinctual, and when he returned, he launched into the active political objection that would lead to his death.

Bonhoeffer returned to Germany and became politically involved just a year later, in September of 1940. For many years prior Bonhoeffer and his family had been continuously kept up to date on top secret information by his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi, a member of the *Abwehr*, German intelligence. Bonhoeffer was involved in smuggling a small group of Jews out of Germany and into Switzerland like he did with Leibholz, but he mostly acted as a courier of information for conspirators in the *Abwehr*. He crossed into Switzerland a handful of times, and arranged a crucial meeting with his friend Bishop Bell in Sweden. Bell was supposed to pass news of a possible *putsch* on to British Foreign Minister Eden, but Eden never sent word back and while he was in prison, Bonhoeffer learned that the *putsch* had failed.<sup>42</sup>

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41. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. and ed. by R.H. Fuller and Irmgard Booth, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1963), 102-103.

42. Eberhard Bethge, *Bonhoeffer: An Illustrated Biography in Documents and*

Bonhoeffer and Donhnanyi were arrested in October of 1942, along with at least one other co-conspirator. Bonhoeffer was held in Tegel prison until October of 1944, underwent a trial, and moved to a basement prison at Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse. Charges of involvement with the *putsch* and smuggling Jews into Switzerland were brought, with proof having at least been found of the former, and he was hanged on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Von Donhnanyi was executed the same day, and Bonhoeffer's brother Klaus and friend Rudiger Schleicher were executed on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>43</sup>

Clearly there was much Bonhoeffer still could've given the world, he was only 39 when he was killed, but he had one last lesson to teach. In a letter Bonhoeffer sent to Eberhard Bethge on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944 from Tegel, which follows:

I'm still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith [...] By this-worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In doing so we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God [...] I'm glad to have been able to learn this, and I know I've been able to do so only along the road that I've traveled. So I'm grateful and content with the past and present.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the incredible injustices he had seen done to his country, his family, his friends and to himself, Dietrich Bonhoeffer died with a degree of spiritual peace that must be incomprehensible to many. It gives incredible weight to his insistence on "living completely in this world" because it's impossible to look back over his life and argue he

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*Photographs*, 58-90.

43. *Ibid.*, 84.

44. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letter to Eberhard Bethge, Tegel, 21 July 1933, in *Letters and Papers From Prison* trans. by R.H. Fuller and ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Company, 1966), 226-227.

did otherwise. He could've conducted his studies at Union Theological Seminary without ever having set foot in Harlem, he could've gone through the motions in Germany and likely never attracted any attention whatsoever from the Nazis and he most certainly could have stayed in America until the situation in Germany calmed down. Frankly none of the racism and hatred he encountered in either New York or Germany was ever directed at him. He was a bystander nobody need have cared about. That he chose to inject himself into the situations he did out of concern for those around him, without regard for whether the afflicted was a black American or a German Jew, was the ultimate negation of the exclusivist, racist societies he found himself in. He learned firsthand that hatred was universal across cultures and peoples, whether he was in New York or Berlin, and reacted by proving love equally so. Bonhoeffer arrived earlier than expected, but, like one of his favorite spirituals says, he is still helping us from the other side:

If I get there before you do  
 Coming for to carry me home  
 I'll cut a hole and pull you through  
 Coming for to carry me home

Swing low, sweet chariot  
 Coming for to carry me home  
 Swing low, sweet chariot  
 Coming for to carry me home.

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# CHANGES IN THE MODEL OF BEAUTY AND BODY TYPE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: 1930–1960

*Elizabeth Young*

In any study of Africa, even a passing glance, it quickly becomes obvious that the period of early colonialism was one begetting intense and long-lasting changes. Every person dealt with the impact of these effects, regardless of their regional location, economic status, race, age or gender. Some groups felt the influence of colonialism more than others: women, in particular, were often forced to endure hardships their male counterparts did not. While this disparity can be seen in many aspects of the women's lives, when investigated through the lens of sexuality it raises many interesting questions about the place of women in society as a whole. Exploring issues of women's sexuality can often work to elucidate the underlying problems in any society by showing how various factors affect those living life in the lower rungs.

In the case of the southernmost British colonies, the overt racism and sexism present there after contact with Europeans led to a doubly difficult life for black women. In what is now Botswana, South Africa, and the nearby countries, women's sexuality offers an informative look at the transformations that took place in this area with the onset of colonialism. With the influx of Europeans in the area, many changes occurred in African society, even to the most intimate details of sexuality and beauty. Ideas regarding women's beauty changed significantly during colonialism, from opinions on skin tone, to facial structure, clothing, and, especially, body type. Colonialism changed the beauty of body type in the southern British colonies by westernizing the women away from ideas related to practical activity in society. These changes

are crucial when investigating these societies because they show the transitive nature of beauty and its connection to broader transformations.

I began my research with a fairly general question in mind: how did colonialism change ideas of beauty in Africa? This matter intrigued me and I began to search for primary sources addressing the issue. I quickly focused on the southernmost tip of the continent and the former British colonies there, for the main reason of the extensive amount of research from there available to me. Isaac Schapera's study in Botswana became an obvious choice for primary source information about precolonial society as he was pretty much the only one who touched on issues of sexuality. After some further investigation, the South African magazine *Drum* presented itself as a multifaceted source for postcolonial data on women's issues, most importantly those related to beauty. I chose to study the earliest issues of *Drum* that I could find, and therefore concentrated on January 1962 to December 1962. I narrowed my search question down to how colonialism changed ideas of beauty in this smaller area of Botswana and South Africa. Additional work tapered my focus from the general issue of beauty to the specific concerns surrounding body type. Finally, my work came to focus on the beauty of body types in the southern tip of Africa and how colonialism affected these ideals.

#### SCHAPERA: INTRODUCTION AND BIASES

From 1929-1934 Isaac Schapera lived with and studied the Bakgatla people of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in what we now call Botswana.<sup>1</sup> His research led to a book-length examination entitled *Married Life in an African Tribe* in which he investigated the affects of colonialism and how things had changed since the Bakgatla came into contact with white settlers. Europeans had been present in the area since 1840 but essentially did not come into heavy contact with Africans until the

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1. Motzafi-Haller, Pnina. "When Bushmen are Known as Basarwa: Gender, Ethnicity, and Differentiation in Rural Botswana." *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Aug 1994). pp. 541



turn of the century.<sup>2</sup> At that point, missions moved in from the coast and established a church in center of the village. The natives began to have consistent contact first with the missionaries, and then with other Europeans. The affects of this connection soon became obvious in almost every aspect of life, from day to day activities to ceremonial events.

Schapera studied the Bakgatla people thirty years after they had come into direct contact with Europeans, however, he believes that he acquired valid information about life before colonialism. He conducted much of his research through interviews with people in the village and he felt that this method gave him recordable data about the goings on about fifty years before. Schapera and his assistants obtained facts about precolonial life from two main sources; either through interviews with older community members who had been alive during that time, or through questions of younger members about traditions and what had been the practices of the “old days.”<sup>3</sup> This leaves the reader with many questions about his validity, especially with regard to the research on the conditions decades before his study, however, his information remains the best source on the topic for the time period and must be examined as is, as we are left without any other alternative. This skepticism can be overcome by maintaining a critical lens and keeping in mind the filters through which the information has come.

Schapera devoted a fair amount of space to discussing ideas of beauty, with most of this dialogue related to the topic of sexuality. Some who have examined this text have felt that he sensationalized these issues and developed an obsession with the sex lives of “tribal natives.” As with many historians and sociologists of this time, he has been criticized for viewing Africans in general as ‘the other’ and for studying them in an almost animalistic way.<sup>4</sup> Although at times he does

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2. Schapera, Isaac. *Married Life in an African Tribe*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1941. pp. 10.

3. Ibid., pp. 14

4. Comaroff, Jean, John Comaroff and Isaac Schapera. “On the Founding

go into what seems an irrelevant amount of detail which could perhaps be symptomatic of viewing Africans as “others,” Schapera presents data that would otherwise have been lost forever. In an interview conducted in 1988 he points out that while our society may view certain topics as personal and embarrassing, this does not always translate world-wide. For example, to the Bakglata, sex was not something considered clandestine, but issues of witchcraft were. As Schapera says, “...what is regarded as ‘private’ or shameful’ in one society is not necessarily so in another.”<sup>5</sup> His research still presents some biases, which must be kept in mind, but they are not as problematic as they might immediately seem.

#### SCHAPERA: INVESTIGATION

Schapera organizes his insights by comparing and contrasting the ideals of pre-colonial society to those after contact with Europeans. When studying the text on pre-colonial culture it becomes clear that beauty did not hold the same importance that it does in modern American society. To the Bakglata of the early twentieth century, a marriage involved more than just two people: it was a joining together of two largely extended families or even two entire communities. Marriages were arranged by the children’s parents, who only made their decisions after extensive deliberations and consultations with everyone who could possibly find themselves affected.<sup>6</sup> The well-being of each individual as well as the community as a whole were taken into account and weighed against possible marriage partners.

This is not to say that the prospective spouses had no say in the matter. They made their opinions known as well and the parents also considered their feelings about their peers. However, when children made pleas for certain individuals and based their arguments on beauty,

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Fathers, Fieldwork and Functionalism: A Conversation with Isaac Schapera.” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Aug. 1988). pp 561.

5. Ibid., pp. 560.

6. Schapera, Isaac. *Married Life in an African Tribe*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1941. pp. 36.

they often found themselves shot down quickly. Schapera makes note of this sentiment and documents that, “More emphasis was laid upon her capacity for work than upon her good looks. As a local proverb vulgarly puts it: ‘A pretty girl either steals or wets her bed’, the girl is more likely to be a nuisance than an asset to her husband and his people.”<sup>7</sup> These comments represent the feelings of an older generation about their children more than they represent feelings of the younger generation on the importance of beauty, but they serve as an example of the lack of influence beauty had on many decisions. Data from this and other sources does not show whether beauty had any affect on the longevity of a marriage or the choice of a second spouse or lover. While this information may have been lost forever, it would certainly be an interesting avenue for new research.

On the other hand, Schapera does mention what men found attractive in women at the time he was writing, and some of these attributes appear to be traditionally based. Several mentions are made of large, round buttocks and the pleasure these bring to a partner during sexual activities. He also mentions lengthened labia and the enjoyment both men and women claim they add to sexual encounters.<sup>8</sup> Many women engage in the practice of manually extending their labia, and while it is not something ever truly seen by their partners, it appears to factor significantly into whether or not a woman is found attractive.

It becomes clear that much of the Bakglata ideas of beauty centered on a woman’s body more so than her face, hair or any other features. While conceptions of beauty may have been more subtle and involved a woman’s physical ability to do different kinds of work or perform certain activities, men at this time concentrated on body type when discussing beauty of women. Concurrently, the writing of love letter became a widespread activity, and a study of these correspondences reinforces ideas centering beauty on body type. One man’s letter to his wife focuses on her body, telling her, “I still think of how we loved each other; I

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7. Ibid., pp. 40.

8. Ibid. pp. 50.

think of how you behaved to me with your body...We fitted each other beautifully...you were not too heavy for me nor too light.”<sup>9</sup> Many other men interviewed by Schapera speak on the importance of a woman’s body, even if they did not necessarily have a say in choosing the woman they would marry. Schapera summarizes this by pointing out that the Bakgatla youth prefer sexually attractive girls for their mistresses, but that they demand additional qualities in their future wives.<sup>10</sup>

### DRUM: INTRODUCTION AND BIASES

The magazine *Drum* began in 1951 by a white South African named Jim Bailey who aimed the issues towards black members of the newly formed middle class. All of the highest staff members and many of the lower ones came from the white community, but the magazine was read intensely by almost all black members of South African society.<sup>11</sup> It featured articles of entertainment, social issues, history, and personal relations. Subtle at some points and overt at others, *Drum* sought to delight its readers while also offering a criticism of society. The wide-reaching affects of apartheid weighed heavily in the pages of *Drum*, and while this material was often disguised as fluff so that it would be approved by the government, the audience was able to identify the information, leaving them to consider and discuss it.<sup>12</sup> It ran advertisements heavily, which also serve to comment on culture at the time, and the looks of women chosen to be featured in the magazine has particular relevance to this essay. Its wide readership makes it an excellent source of societal data and its focus on women offers a wealth

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9. Breckenridge, Keith. “Love Letters and Amanuenses: Beginning the Cultural History of the Working Class Private Sphere in Southern Africa, 1900-1933.” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Jun. 2000). pp. 342.

10. Schapera, Isaac. *Married Life in an African Tribe*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1941. pp. 48.

11. Dodson, Don. “The Four Modes of Drum: Popular Fiction and Social Control in South Africa.” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Sep. 1974). pp. 318.

12. Porter, Dorothy B. “Review: Drum, A South African Periodical.” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring 1958). pp. 165.

of information on the subject of beauty.

*Drum*, like Schapera's work, cannot be studied without first becoming aware of its biases and shortcomings. Foremost, one must keep in mind that while it is very tempting to investigate *Drum* as first-person testimony, it does not actually operate that way. At this point we cannot tell which of the words printed on their pages actually came directly from the regular citizens they claim to and which were filtered in one way or another by the editors. Some of the pieces, such as the monthly installment of "Girl About Town," obviously come directly or semi-directly from the minds of the editors and not from the woman who claims to write them. The validity of other articles is not always quite as easy to ascertain, but one can hope that they have origins more connected with laypeople.

The advertisements printed in *Drum* raise related but separate issues when studied in search of an average person's feelings on matters of beauty. Without the data on consumerism or interviews directly with people on these subjects, it remains impossible to figure out the exact relevance of these advertisements. They can be investigated as a way of showing what companies and the editors of *Drum* assumed were the feelings of the average person, but they cannot be used as a direct example of any one person's opinion on the matter.<sup>13</sup> They certainly do hold relevance and can be used as a rough guide for the average sentiments present at the time, but one can never know if an ad was entirely irrelevant and disregarded by readers.

As with any publication, the sponsors in general and those who bought specific ads had a significant affect on what went into *Drum*. They aimed the magazine towards a readership in the new urban African population and all different kinds of entrepreneurs sought to capitalize on the consumerism of this new group. African writers promised upward mobility to their working-class readers, and the widespread popularity of the publication interested white management who sought to capitalize

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13. Peterson, Bhekizizwe. "Review: The Drum Decade: Stories from the 1950s." *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring 1993). pp. 140

on their new spending habits.<sup>14</sup> Due to the newness of such a culture, the advertisements at this time in many ways still reflected the whims of those funding *Drum* and not as much a direct relationship with the average female or male consumer.

### DRUM: INVESTIGATION

In the actual pages of *Drum*, the editors devoted a significant amount of space to issues of women's beauty. Skin tone, makeup, clothing, hair, and teeth are all discussed in ads and articles and photos, but the most touched upon facet of beauty was body type. Many articles and advertisements alike mention the ideal of the 'perfect figure,' and a few even go into details of what this paragon would entail. A letter to the editor in the February 1962 issue comes from a man who became outraged after meeting what he terms a "Curvaceous Doll about Town," only to go to her house and discover that her curves had come from padded clothing. His letter asks "...where were the curves? I made a bee-line for the taxi rank. The things girls will do to collar us boys!"<sup>15</sup> The man's utter outrage at this situation displays how important a 'curvy' body was to males in the society at this time.

It then remains to determine what specific characteristics necessitate a 'curvy' body. An ad for the Maidenform Much Ado Lo-Bak Bra found in the January 1962 issue (see Appendix One) claims to make clients, "...even prouder of your lovely new curves," and "...give you a doll-like waist,"<sup>16</sup> which certainly reinforces the attractiveness of the curves created by a small waist. Another ad (see Appendix Two) claims to use daily tablets to "...increase and firm up your bosom and throw away that padded bra!"<sup>17</sup> Clearly, a curvaceous body also involved a large bosom,

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14. Choonoo, R. Neville. "The Sophiatown Generation: Black Literary Journalism during the 1950s." *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880s-1960s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. pp. 257

15. *Drum*, February 1962. pp. 7

16. *Drum*, January 1962. pp. 54.

17. *Drum*, September 1962. pp. 5

something that women sought to obtain through any means necessary, if they did not acquire it naturally. Attractive legs also factor in to a curvy body, as evidenced by an ad for Escort nylons which declares, “Men notice a gal’s legs, first thing! Escort nylons make legs look curvy and satin smooth.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the data seems to point towards a large bosom, small waist and curvy legs as some features men looked for as attractive in women.

More so than any other subject however, advertisements and articles alike focus on weight loss. One ad for the Slimwear Slimming System alleges their product will make you, “Look lovelier and make men look at you twice...you can lose up to 12 lb. per week.”<sup>19</sup> Obviously, maintaining a slim figure had considerable importance if an entire company was devoted to the process of losing weight. The monthly installment of “Our Beauty Bar” devoted its entire page in the July 1962 issue to getting rid of flabby areas on the body. It advocates giving flab on hips and thighs, “...a good beating with the back of a hairbrush,” and massaging areas of fat big enough to be pinched.<sup>20</sup> The amount of space taken up by issues of weight loss shows that these matters bothered women of this time period at least to some degree and that being attractive had a lot to do with being slim.

An article that nicely sums up issues of beauty at this time was entitled, “Search for a Black Marilyn,” and first debuted in the September 1962 issue. It asked men and women to look around themselves and try to find “...a dark girl—one of ours—who has the same qualities which could take her from obscurity to the heights.”<sup>21</sup> These qualities included a ‘face of innocence,’ liquid lips, and a figure of approximately 38-23-36. Next month the editors ran an article featuring the best of the women who had been entered, complete with headshots and measurements

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18. *Drum*, April 1962. pp. 23.

19. *Drum*, September 1962. pp. 102.

20. *Drum*, July 1962. pp. 81.

21. *Drum*, September 1962. pp. 55.

of their figure.<sup>22</sup> The numbers certainly fit well with other ideas of a curvaceous figure and made quite clear just how small of a waist many deemed attractive.

All of these articles and advertisements make no attempt to hide that men created or wrote them. Only one consistent page claims to value the input of women, that devoted to Marion Morel, *Girl About Town*. In the January 1962 issue she lists many complaints she has had with men lately, one of which had to do with them, "...sitting on the white sands criticizing the girls. Too fat...too skinny...bandy legs...flat chest...But do they take a look at themselves?"<sup>23</sup> In her opinion, men can never be satisfied on this matter and their ideals of beauty change and become impossible to reach. She makes clear that these men should worry about themselves and their own appearance before they judge and criticize the women around them.

A final look at *Drum* utilizes its selection of cover girls. While advertisements and articles inside the pages of the magazine continually advocate slimness, small waists and Marilyn-esque curves, the cover models tell a different story. These women certainly do not have 23 centimeter waists and are shown, rolls and all, proudly smiling in their bikinis. They have large butts, rolls around their waist, thick thighs, and often not very large bosoms. (see Appendix Three and Appendix Four) The disparity between the cover models and advertisements could be attributed to many factors.

The most probable answer would be that cover models show what a typical man would actually find attractive, otherwise the editors would not sell many magazines. Women on the cover probably represent the more average woman a man would be used to seeing and finding attractive, while the features advocated on the inside might represent a more idealistic figure that sounds good in theory but would not necessarily translate into real life situations.

The editors of *Drum* made their requirements very clear in an

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22. *Drum*, October 1962. pp. 51.

23. *Drum*, January 1962. pp. 57.



interview quoted by R. Neville Choonoo:

The Cover girl must be happy and good looking preferably aged 15 to 18 so that she appeals to young readers. Every second or third cover girl should be Coloured, preferably Africanish. The cover must be bright and striking and this depends on the use of a model who is not static— movement is an important part of the cover's appeal. The girl must be doing something cheerfully.<sup>24</sup>

While the cover girls may have represented a more realistic vision of the African readership, they still indicated an inherently sexist publication which showed women as merely sex objects and consumers of cheap household goods.

#### ANALYSIS

It quickly becomes clear that ideas of beauty changed between the time of Schapera's study and the height of *Drum's* circulation. First, one must note the amount of time and space devoted to issues of beauty. As mentioned before, beauty was not hugely important in pre-colonial society but its significance obviously exploded after that time. Beauty dominates the pages of *Drum* more so than almost any other topic, something that would have certainly dumbfounded members of the previous societies. Women's beauty must have been of much consequence to the readers of *Drum*, which included both men and women of the South African middle class. In specific terms, the beauty of body types changed much of its focus during these decades and incorporated some new ideas. The spotlight appears to have shifted from primarily the buttocks to the legs and a curvy figure. Issues of weight loss became a significant concern, something that no historical record mentions in pre-colonial societies.

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24. Choonoo, R. Neville. "The Sophiatown Generation: Black Literary Journalism during the 1950s." *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880s-1960s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. pp. 258

These changes came from many different places but almost universally can be attributed to colonization. The largest effect of colonization relevant to this data is the creation of the middle-class. Before heavy contact with Western society, these African societies did not have a middle-class, and certainly not one that focused on consumerism. Although many think of European violence and political power when referencing colonialism, another significant facet of the movement came in cultural colonialism. For South Africa, the importation of African-American society through political and cultural traditions had an impact dating back to at least the 1880s.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, as African-American society changed to become more urban and consumer-driven, while also seeing the creation of a middle-class, so too did the black society in South Africa.

In contrast, almost all of the people studied by Schapera in the 1930s had the same basic living conditions and, coming from a rural community, mainly supported themselves.<sup>26</sup> The acquisition of control by whites led to far-reaching and multifaceted changes in these communities. Large cities were established and people flocked to them from the countryside. Government positions and other jobs in the city paid enough money to create a middle-class capable of indulging in consumerism. Products for every function during the day became available for purchase and advertisements began to push people to buy them.<sup>27</sup> All of these changes had affects on ideas of women's beauty and its relation to body type.

Movement to the cities meant that women held different positions in society and their bodies began to look different from new types of

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25. Choonoo, R. Neville. "The Sophiatown Generation: Black Literary Journalism during the 1950s." *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880s-1960s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. pp. 255

26. McEwan, Cheryl. "Building a Postcolonial Archive? Gender, Collective Memory and Citizenship in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *Journal of South African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (April 2003). pp. 743

27. Walker, Cherryl. "Gender and the development of the Migrant Labor System c. 1850-1930: An Overview." *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945. Cape Town: 1990*. pp. 170

work performed. Women began to wear different types of clothing that accentuated different body parts, such as shorts highlighting legs and corsets highlighting waists. It also becomes clear that the influx of white media brought with it white ideals of beauty. Any media text containing a white woman advocated her beauty and influenced black thought about their own beauty. These changes led to the creation of the 'modern girl,' which involved a combination of many colonial developments in society and came to be a derogatory term for those who let white society manipulate them more than was deemed acceptable.<sup>28</sup> Entire other essays have been devoted to the topic of skin lighteners, but it must be mentioned here that this phenomenon also shows the influence of white culture on ideas of beauty and is important to note due to its significant affect on society.

### CONCLUSION

After a thorough investigation of the differences between these primary sources, many trends become evident but the question of their importance remains. What is the significance of these changes and why does it matter to women today? The first and most simple answer is that this deserves to be studied because no one has truly done it before and the historical record all but ignores these issues. Women in general have been disregarded for much of history and issues around beauty have been termed unimportant and irrelevant to a study of society. These mindsets need to change and academics need to recognize that these ideals can elucidate other issues in society that would not have been easy to study otherwise.

Ideas of beauty and transformations around them also have importance for all women's lives. If a trend pushes for women to lose weight even if it is not healthy for them to do so, this can have detrimental affects on society. Any trend that urges women to be something they are not will have harmful affects, and one that comes from a patriarchal and racist

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28. Thomas, Lynn M. "The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa." *Journal of African History*, Vol. 47 (2006). pp. 465.

society will lead to long-lasting psychological issues in the women of the society. While not all of these issues had been significantly internalized by the readership of *Drum* in the 1960s, these advertisements, articles and pictures laid the foundation for issues that arose later.

These problems are relevant to women today in both southern Africa and around the world. More agency needs to be given to women when it comes to issues of beauty so that they may begin to take the steps forward to changing them for the better. Unfortunately, not much has changed in southern African society since the publications of *Drum* in the 1960s. Women still are met with conflicting and harmful messages about what embodies a beautiful woman and what they should do to be found attractive by the opposite sex.<sup>29</sup> The beauty industry worldwide still needs to be revolutionized to a situation in which women will have control over their own bodies. Learning about the history of this society is one important step in the right direction.

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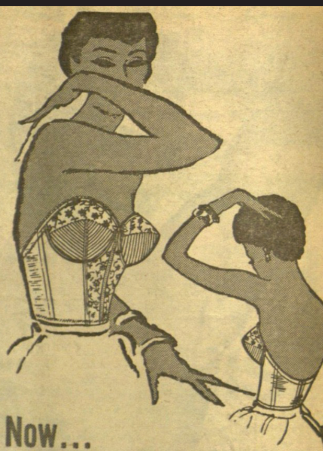
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29. Magubane, Zine. "Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Post structuralism, Race, and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the 'Hottentot Venus.'" *Gender and Society*, Vol. 15 (2001). pp. 825.

APPENDIX

I.



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II.

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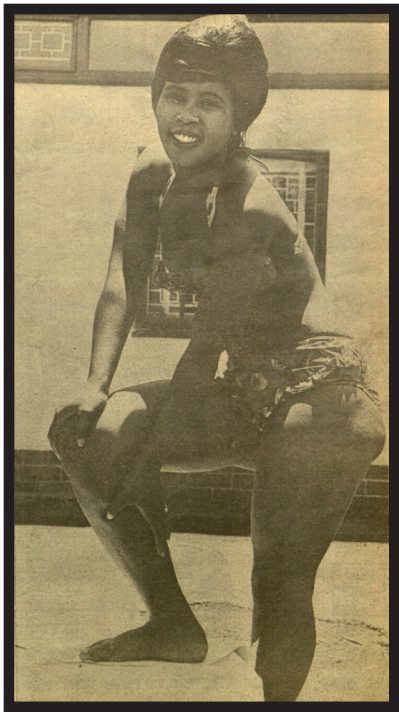
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III.



IV.





# COUP IN TRIPOLI: THE ATTEMPTED OVERTHROW OF YUSUF PASHA IN 1805

*Matthew Murray*

From 1801-1805, the United States fought a war in the Mediterranean and in the Sahara with Tripoli, an autonomous regency of the Ottoman Empire. Corsairs operating from the port of Tripoli had declared war on American shipping and imperiled trade in the region. The Jefferson administration responded by attempting to change the Tripolitan state's complete approach to international relations, from a traditional Ottoman style to a modern European method, in order to protect U.S. trade abroad. The U.S. pursued this agenda through an aggressive naval campaign, including bombardment of the city, a covert attempt to lead a coup d'état within Tripoli, and secret negotiations that resulted in abandonment of allies. My paper will demonstrate how in the First Barbary War, the United States attempted to impose a European-origin, capitalist-friendly, state system on Tripoli by force. The focus of this paper is the attempted overthrow of the ruler of Tripoli to replace him with his brother. The United States pursued the strategy of coup in order because it seemed the easiest, least expensive, and most effective way of changing Tripoli's approach to trade and diplomacy in the Mediterranean.

American aims in the war were to protect American commerce, sailors, and dignity from the corsairs. The United States refused to pay the tribute that Tripoli demanded. European countries paid this tribute – or as Great Britain and France called it, “gifts” – in order to secure promises that their ships would not be attacked by the corsairs. This was primarily a war over competing economic systems.<sup>1</sup> Some early

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1. The first, and for the most part only, scholarship to focus on the importance of trade in the Barbary Wars is Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars : American Independence in the Atlantic World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005).

Americans portrayed it as a noble defense against bloodthirsty pirates, and some modern historians describe it as righteous war against terror.<sup>2</sup> The Tripolitan ambassador to Paris declared it the religious duty of all Muslims. Despite the rhetoric from both sides, the First Barbary War illustrates more than anything the existence of two different economic systems, and the United States' willingness to use force to protect and promote its system. In the Mediterranean, the countries of the Maghreb set peace treaties, accepted tribute, and waged war against countries that ceased to send gifts. European countries with trade in the sea willingly went along with this system. The U.S. sent a naval squadron to the Mediterranean in 1801 to promote the American system, which included such ideas as freedom of the seas, mutual prosperity through trade, and in name at least, dealing with all nations on an equal footing.

After independence, American ships no longer had the protection Great Britain assured by paying the rulers of the North African Regencies. In 1770, the thirteen colonies exported \$3.5 million to the Mediterranean and imported \$1 million, with this volume rising significantly by the time of the war with Tripoli.<sup>3</sup> Yusuf Karamanli Pasha, the ruler of Tripoli who controlled 10 cruisers wielding 112 guns, threatened this trade. Yusuf depended on the corsair revenue to maintain power, with tribute, ship seizures, and hostage ransoms totaling 40% of all government revenues.<sup>4</sup> In order to obtain more revenues, Yusuf Pasha declared war on the United States and expelled the American

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2. See Joseph Wheelan, *Jefferson's War : America's First War on Terror, 1801-1805* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003).

3. Richard Bordeaux Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary : A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2004), xv.

4. William Eaton to Secretary of State, 15 July 1799. Box M-466: Despatches From U.S. Consuls in Tripoli, Libya, 1796-1885, roll 1, RG 59, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. Hereafter referred to as M-466, roll number, and National Archives ; James Cathcart to Secretary of State, 4 January 1801. M-466, roll 1, National Archives ; Secretary of State to James Cathcart, 15 January 1800. M-466, roll 1, National Archives ; Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 39-40 ; Kola Folayan, *Tripoli during the Reign of Yusuf Pasha Qaramanli* (Ife, Nigeria: University of Ife Press, 1979).



consul in 1801.<sup>5</sup> President Jefferson responded by sending an American squadron to the Mediterranean in July 1801, with instructions to protect American vessels and negotiate a peace without tribute that would protect American ships. For four years, American ships quite unsuccessfully blockaded Tripoli, occasionally bombarded the city, and escorted American merchantmen across the Mediterranean.

### PLANNING A COUP

As the naval war, blockade, and occasional bombardments ground on with little hope for improvement, the United States sought an alternative approach to the situation in Tripoli. Whenever Yusuf Karamanli Pasha and American officials met, the Pasha's terms were unacceptable to the U.S. American diplomats in North Africa believed Yusuf Pasha's power and legitimacy in Tripoli were weak, and began to formulate a scheme to overthrow him. President Jefferson, Secretary of State Madison, and Secretary of the Navy Smith approved and funded a conspiracy to place the Pasha's brother, Hamet, in power. Yusuf had taken control over Tripoli in a coup in 1795 and exiled his brother. By 1803, Hamet was reported to be residing in Egypt, and the American government sent an agent to locate him, convince him to reclaim his rule over Tripoli, raise a mercenary army, and march with the army across the desert to take Tripoli by force.

Though many historians have written that William Eaton devised the plan to overthrow Yusuf, it was in fact James Cathcart, the ex-consul at Tripoli, who first proposed a conspiracy to replace Yusuf with his brother. On 29 June 1801, shortly after the naval war began, Cathcart emphasized the need for secrecy and raised the idea to Eaton, then U.S. Consul in Tunis. Cathcart feared that "an honorable and advantageous peace at Tripoli" would not suffice. Instead, the United States "must establish a national character in Barbary by effecting a revolution in favor of Hamet the Bashaws Brother who is at Tunis, for so long as Joseph

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5. James Simpson to Secretary of State, 15 August 1800, Box M-466, roll 1, RG 59, National Archives.

Bashaw [Yusuf Pasha] lives, our commerce will not be secure.” Hamet, Cathcart believed, would be more “subservient to our Interest” than Yusuf if the U.S. assisted him in retaking control over Tripoli.<sup>6</sup> As far as my research has determined, this was the first documented proposition by a United States government agent to overthrow a Middle Eastern ruler – perhaps the first proposed foreign coup in U.S. history.

William Eaton responded with delight to Cathcart’s idea, which would have surprised no one knowledgeable of his life and career. Born in Connecticut, Eaton enlisted in the Continental Army at age fifteen. After the war, he studied Greek and Latin at Dartmouth College. He soon joined General “Mad” Anthony Wayne fighting the Western Confederacy, a coalition of Native Americans resisting colonial expansion in Ohio Territory. There, Eaton earned the favor of then-Secretary of War Timothy Pickering, who appointed Eaton Consul to Tunis when Pickering became Secretary of State.<sup>7</sup> Eaton arrived in Tunis in 1799 and quickly became conversant in Arabic, but the Mediterranean system posed a challenge to this headstrong former soldier. Eaton’s consular dispatches indicate little patience for North African customs. He lacked a diplomat’s finesse when dealing with foreign peoples and agitated for war against the North African regencies from the very beginning of his post.

The idea to use Hamet to overthrow Yusuf moved closer to reality in 1803. Hamet wrote to President Jefferson on January 20, 1803, claiming that he could raise an army in Egypt and sail to Derna, where he would be welcomed by the people he used to rule. Derna, a busy port city located between Alexandria and the city of Tripoli, furnished significant taxes twice per year to Yusuf. Taking Derna would be an important first step in the proposed campaign. From there, Hamet planned to lead the army, strengthened with recruits from Derna, farther west to take Benghazi

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6. Cathcart to Eaton, 29 June 1801, M-466, roll 1, National Archives.

7. Charles T. Harbeck, *The Life of the Late General William Eaton* (Brookfield, MA: E. Merriam and Co., 1815), 10-67; A.B.C. Whipple, *To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 173-179.

and Tripoli. Hamet, Cathcart, and Eaton claimed that the populations of Derna, Benghazi, and Tripoli supported him over his brother and would rally to his cause. All that he required was transportation from Alexandria to Derna and artillery support from the US Navy when battling for the three cities.<sup>8</sup>

Eaton and Hamet convinced President Jefferson, who approved arms, marines, and \$40,000 for the mission in early 1804. A letter from Secretary of State Madison to Eaton helps to illustrate the thinking of the administration.

Although it does not accord with the general sentiments or views of the United States, to intermeddle in the domestic contests of other countries, it cannot be unfair, in the prosecution of a just war, or the accomplishment of a reasonable peace, to turn to their advantage the enmity and pretensions of others against a common foe.<sup>9</sup>

Madison carefully justifies the United States' support of this coup. In his eyes, the war to destroy the tribute system of the Mediterranean was a just one, and the terms the U.S. demanded – freedom of the seas, Most Favored Nation status, and shelter for sailors – were part of a “reasonable peace.” Though generally, he claims, the United States would not interfere in domestic affairs, the ends in this case justified the means. Alliance with the exiled former ruler of Tripoli would allow the U.S. to accomplish its goals.

The opportunity for Eaton to overthrow a ruler he despised finally arrived. Secretary of the Navy Smith appointed Eaton Navy Agent of

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8. Hamet, Lawful Bashaw of Tripoli to President Thomas Jefferson, 20 January 1803, in United States Office of Naval Records. *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers*, Volume II, (Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939-1944), 347. Hereafter referred to as *Naval Documents* and volume number.

9. Secretary of State to William Eaton, 22 August 1802, in *Naval Documents II*, 245.

the United States of America for the Several Barbary Regencies on May 26, 1804, charging Eaton with the mission he had requested for three years. This innocuous title hid his real instructions, transmitted orally and recorded in Eaton's journal. Eaton was charged with locating Hamet in Egypt and helping him take back the rule of Tripoli by force.<sup>10</sup>

Eaton and ten marines landed at Alexandria on November 26 1804. After two months of searching and adventures in then-war-torn Egypt, the Americans met with Hamet outside of Alexandria on February 5, 1805. Once Eaton and Hamet met, they changed plans and agreed to launch an overland expedition to Derna rather than have the US Navy transport them by sea. Eaton gives no reason for deciding to cross 500 miles of barren desert rather than following the plan of sailing and landing near Derna. Tactically and strategically, there is no explanation for this decision. Based on reading his documents, I can only conclude that Eaton was a romantic adventurer who simply favored the heroism of an overland expedition.<sup>11</sup>

Even before the expedition began, agents of the U.S. began to show their willingness to use any means necessary to ensure the success of the mission and the remaking of Tripoli. The party spent February preparing for the march to Derna. Eaton recruited European mercenaries from across the continent who were in Egypt. Hamet recruited Arabs from the region and nomadic Bedouin. They also hired 190 camels, with drivers, to transport all of their supplies. Significantly, Eaton committed the U.S. government to over \$100,000 during this preparation stage. The President had only authorized the expenditure of \$40,000. Eaton notes that he planned to use plunder from the conquest of Tripoli to pay for the difference!<sup>12</sup> This proved to be a common theme during the course of the expedition. On multiple occasions, Eaton used the promise of future

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10. Secretary of the Navy to William Eaton, 26 May 1804, in *Naval Documents* IV, 120.

11. Harbeck, *The Life of the Late General William Eaton ; Naval Documents* V and VI.

12. Whipple, 194.

treasure, expected to be seized in the course of war, to secure men, arms, and supplies. Even before the march began, he promised the Arabs and Europeans under his command 150% of the amount authorized by the president. Only by looting the cities they planned to take could Eaton hope to repay this debt.

On March 4, 1805, Eaton sent the Secretary of State a copy of his convention with Hamet, which offers excellent insight into U.S. motivations. Both Samuel Barron, American Commodore in the Mediterranean, and the Secretary of State read and approved of the agreement, though both would later fail to fulfill their commitments under it. The convention began with a standard agreement of military alliance, with the U.S. committed to “reestablish” Hamet as “the legitimate sovereign of the kingdom of Tripoli.” Throughout their letters to each other, the administration in Washington, and domestic newspapers, American agents in North Africa emphasized Hamet’s right to the throne. They constantly sought to legitimize their actions by claiming to restore Hamet’s right to rule.

Some of Hamet’s commitments to the United States are very illustrative of the economic mindset of the American government. Many previous historians have ignored one article in particular. “In order to indemnify the United States against all expense” it may incur while helping Hamet, the exiled former Pasha agrees to give the U.S. government all tribute obtained from Denmark, Sweden, and the Batavian Republic, until the U.S. is repaid in full. The United States proved willing to take from Tripoli the goods and money that European countries had paid to it in order to protect their ships.<sup>13</sup> This was one of the ways the U.S. planned to recoup its losses from reshaping Tripoli.

The convention also established the superiority of Eaton during the campaign to take Tripolitania. Hamet recognized him as Commander in Chief of all land forces fighting Yusuf, and promises “that his own Subjects shall respect and obey him as such.” Here, the man that Eaton constantly refers to as the legitimate ruler of Tripoli, ceded control over

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13. Eaton to Secretary of State, 4 March 1805, M-466, roll 2, National Archives.

the mostly Arab army to the American agent.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the course of the war, the United States utilized European, imperialist-style tactics to ensure success. Establishing an American naval officer as the head of all land forces, American, European, and Arab alike, was emblematic of the ways European powers used native collaborators while striving to maintain a position of superiority over them.

The convention contained several articles that embody key goals of the United States in the war, and similar versions of these would appear in the final peace treaty with Yusuf. These articles provided for the future status of relations between Tripoli and the United States after the hoped-for restoration of Hamet. Primary among this was calling for a firm and lasting peace between the two countries. With this came a guarantee from Hamet to never demand tribute as a condition for peace, never to take slaves in case of war, and never to ask for ransom for prisoners. The treaty provided for Most Favored Nation status between the two countries in any future treaties. The establishment of the principle of Most Favoured Nation, enshrined in the first article of the treaty, illustrates America's emphasis on free trade and willingness to force it upon Tripoli. It also established the European principles of diplomatic immunity, calling for the immunity from all crimes except treason and murder, for anyone in Tripoli under the flag of the United States Consul.<sup>15</sup>

The convention included a secret article that perfectly summarizes the coercion that the U.S. attempted to use in order to secure its goals. In this secret article, recorded in Eaton's letter to the Secretary of State, Hamet agreed to capture and deliver to the United States his brother Yusuf and the Chief Admiral, Murad Reis (the Scottish renegade Peter Lisle) as prisoners. The documents offer little to explain what the U.S. planned to do with these prisoners, but the agreement and its secrecy are yet another example of the methods used to overthrow Yusuf in favor of his America-friendly brother. Throughout the convention, elements of

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14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

European imperialism can be seen. Demanding indemnities, establishing command over native forces, imposing economic and political rules favorable to the metropole, and secret agreements for holding political opponents are all present in Hamet and Eaton's agreement.<sup>16</sup> Americans, even in 1805, were playing by the rules of the European imperial game.

After locating Hamet, preparing men and supplies, and agreeing to the terms of the expeditions, Eaton and 400 European, Arabic, and Berber mercenaries, along with 10 American marines, set out from Alexandria on March 8, 1805 to cross the Libyan Desert and attack Tripoli.

#### THE EXPEDITION TO TOPPLE YUSUF PASHA

Fortunately for historians, Eaton carefully maintained a journal during the trek to Derna.<sup>17</sup> The expedition averaged between 20 and 25 miles per day, barring problems, and problems there often were. Eaton and Hamet quelled two outbreaks of violence that threatened to develop into full-blown mutinies. On several occasions, the supply caravan threatened to turn around unless they received money. Each time, however, the camel drivers stayed after Eaton or Hamet promised extra cash upon the taking of Derna. Eaton's promises of money he did not have and willingness to loot the city he would attack highlight the lengths that American agents would go to ensure the success of the mission.

At the end of March the expedition reached Marsa Matruh, an oasis where several hundred Bedouin had gathered to trade. There, a Moroccan pilgrim undertaking the *hajj* informed Hamet that Yusuf Pasha had learned of the plot and was sending an army of 800 troops to reinforce Derna's defenses. A few days later, Hamet convinced several hundred Bedouin to join the expedition with the promise of US money to be paid at Derna, with additional money after the capture of Tripoli. At this point, the expedition had over 600 fighting men, as well as over

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16. Ibid.

17. Accounts of the expedition are taken from excerpts of Eaton's journal and correspondences in *Naval Documents V* and *VI*.

400 dependents accompanying the camel caravan.

On April 17 they met three American naval ships at the Bay of Bomba bearing news that foreshadowed events to come. One of the ships carried a letter from Barron informing Eaton, "I feel it my duty, to state explicitly that I must withhold [sic] my sanction to any convention or agreement committing the United States or tending to impress on Hamet Bashaw a conviction that *we have bound ourselves to place* him on the Throne."<sup>18</sup> This shows that agents of the U.S. were already backing away from their commitments. Barron had seen the agreement between Eaton and Hamet before forwarding it to the Jefferson administration, and had agreed with it then. However, Barron was already establishing a basis for abandoning Hamet.

Resupplied, the expedition continued the march from Bomba to Derna. They arrived at Derna on April 26, 1805 after 520 miles and 50 days of trekking across the harsh and nearly uninhabited land between Egypt and the Regency of Tripoli. The expedition found that they had indeed beat Yusuf Pasha's reinforcements to the city. On April 27, Eaton and Hamet launched their attack. Eaton commanded the U.S. marines and European mercenaries, who fired artillery and muskets, while Hamet led the combined Bedouin, Arab, and Berber forces in the hand-to-hand combat invading the city. Three American naval vessels shelled Derna's fort and harbor batteries during the battle. After a fierce two and a half hour battle, they took the city from the Pasha's governor. Governor Mustafa sought refuge in the harem of a respectable sheikh, who denied the invading forces entrance. Eaton only honored the sanctity of the harem because Hamet feared the town would turn on them if he allowed an invading Christian to break into the private quarters of the town's most respected member. They simply had to wait for Mustafa to leave. Hamet, meanwhile, claimed rule over Derna and promoted his right to be the legitimate ruler of all Tripoli to the people of the city. According to Eaton's journal, the residents of Derna supported them.

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18. Captain Samuel Barron to William Eaton, 19 May 1805, in *Naval Documents* VI, 25.



Hamet and Eaton's success was tested after two weeks. The force from Yusuf Pasha that they had learned of, led by a Hassan Bey, arrived at the outskirts of Derna on May 8. On May 13, Hassan Bey attempted to retake the city for Yusuf. Forces loyal to Hamet successfully repelled the attack, with assistance from the American ships stationed just offshore. Minor skirmishes continued for a month, and Hassan Bey's army settled into a siege of the city. Eaton and Hamet were now surrounded by land, but maintained access to the ships at sea. The defenders of Derna and Fort Enterprise, the newly renamed fort of Derna, were unable to leave the city and continue the trek to Tripoli. Hamet and Eaton's forces continuously repelled Hassan Bey's attempts to retake the city until June 13, 1805.

The American adventure in the Sahara came to an abrupt halt. On June 1, the *Hornet*, an American naval ship which had participated in the initial capture of Derna, returned from fetching supplies at Malta bearing serious news. The United States had just signed a peace treaty with Yusuf Pasha in Tripoli, and the war in Barbary was over. The *Hornet* carried orders to evacuate Eaton, Hamet, and the marines – only. Despite Eaton's and other agents' talks of waging a just war to restore the rightful ruler of Tripoli, the U.S. government decided to abandon the mission as soon as they were able to obtain favorable peace conditions. In his journal, Eaton rails about how abandoning the mission was an affront to justice, but for the government, Yusuf's concessions outweighed the moral cost of abandoning an ally. During the night of June 13, 1805, Eaton, Hamet, the American marines, the European Christian mercenaries, and a few of Hamet's "sheikhs" snuck into boats and onto the *Argus*. When the hundreds of Arabs they had fought with saw that they were being abandoned, many looted and fled the city, fearing death at the hands of Yusuf's army for treason.

With peace, the plans to restore the throne to Hamet were abandoned, and the first American attempt at regime change failed. All of the rhetoric from officials in Washington and naval officers in the Mediterranean about establishing responsible government and a "National Character in

Barbary” proved false once the opportunity for a cheap peace presented itself. Eaton was upset, and carried an anger that would later drive him to alcoholism. He claimed that overthrowing Yusuf would have “very probably [been] a Death blow to the Barbary system,” and in failing to do so, the U.S. had failed to pursue its mission to remake Barbary.<sup>19</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The peace treaty ended the war with Tripoli. Though the United States continued to have minor diplomatic troubles with the Barbary Powers, and sent a fleet to the Mediterranean in 1815, the 1805 treaty with Tripoli marked the beginning of the end for the Barbary corsairs. They rapidly lost the ability to attack European shipping as the new system of international relations grew in strength. With France’s colonization of Algiers in 1830, the Barbary system practically ceased to exist.

To protect American ships as they carried goods to, from, and between the countries of the Mediterranean, the U.S. sought to remake completely Tripoli’s entire approach to international relations. When negotiations with Yusuf Pasha seemed futile, Americans launched a coup to restore Yusuf’s brother to power. The moment that an opportunity for a cheap peace that met American demands presented itself, the U.S. abandoned Hamet and the rest of the army. Furthermore, despite rhetoric of freedom and American exceptionalism, the United States utilized methods such as gunboat diplomacy, secret agreements, strategic alliances, and native collaborators, not unlike the methods of European imperialism in order to achieve these ends.

The United States accepted European systems of international relations, and then attempted to force this European system upon Tripoli at the turn of the century for economics. American shipping in the Mediterranean was profitable for the young country, and corsairs operating from Tripoli and the other North African ports threatened this commercial interest. Americans strongly believed they had a right

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19. William Eaton to Captain Samuel Barron, 29 April 1805, *Naval Documents* V, 552.

to traverse the seas without danger from other countries, which would allow them access to foreign markets and goods. Tripoli's belief in its own right to seize foreign ships and take their cargo represented a competing economic system. The United States government under Jefferson did not believe these two economic systems could coexist in the Mediterranean, and conflict ensued. The United States employed aggressive naval tactics, overland war, and secret conspiracy in order to shut down an economic system that threatened its own. Shortly after this war, European countries such as Britain and France began to withhold the tribute they had previously paid. North Africa's military power and economic systems continued to decline in the face of European expansion. The American adventure in Tripoli was an early and illustrative episode of this trend.

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# THE JEWISH CHILDREN OF THE WARSAW AND LODZ GHETTOS: FUTURE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OR COLLATERAL DAMAGE? (FEBRUARY 1940–SEPTEMBER 1942)

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When one hears the word “Holocaust” or “Nazi,” harrowing images of the suffering of Jews throughout Europe are evoked. Hitler and the Nazi party were systematic in their persecution of the Jews. They quickly created and issued plans for dealing with the “Jewish problem” as they occupied neighboring lands. When the Nazis invaded Poland, they established ghettos to separate the Jewish inhabitants from the Germans and Poles in the major cities. They organized Judenrat, Jewish Councils, to carry out their orders, under the guise of providing social and religious services.<sup>1</sup> These councils were usually made up of twelve to twenty-four members chosen from the existing religious and political elite of the Jewish community,<sup>2</sup> and performed three main functions: to carry out tasks imposed by the Nazi government, to continue the basic welfare services provided before invasion, and to deal with any new tasks that arose as consequence of ghettoization.<sup>3</sup> Only the first task, however, was mandatory; any other services leaders of the ghetto

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1. Leonard Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1972), 201.

2. Saul Friedlander, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007), 40.

3. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 202.

provided were of their own accord. The Judenrat were victims of the Nazis, but were also made into perpetrators by being forced to carry out the Nazi agenda. The Nazis chose the heads of these councils and ghettos. However, the people chosen by the Nazis interpreted their responsibilities differently and, thus, approached their jobs differently. A man named Adam Czerniakow was appointed as head of the Warsaw ghetto, home of the largest Jewish population in Europe,<sup>4</sup> and affected his authority as an administrator; Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski, on the other hand, was placed in charge of the Lodz ghetto, which had the second largest Jewish population in Europe,<sup>5</sup> and controlled the area as a dictator, centralizing all power in himself. Each of these men was established as a leader of his Jewish communities before ghettoization. However it was not until after they acquired control of their respective ghettos that their leadership ideologies, survival ideologies and resulting actions would become most apparent. Thus this paper's focus begins with the point when the ghettos were established. The Lodz ghetto was established in March of 1940,<sup>6</sup> Warsaw was established on October 12, 1940;<sup>7</sup> continuing through the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto and deportation of the children of Lodz.<sup>8</sup> The differing manners in which Rumkowski and Czerniakow approached their responsibilities and their plans for the survival of their respective ghettos affected the daily lives and deportations of the Jewish children that lived there, and our

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4. The Warsaw ghetto had over 400,000 Jews living in about 1.3 square miles. "Warsaw," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005069> (accessed September 22, 2008).

5. The Lodz ghetto had a Jewish population of about 230,000. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "The Lodz Ghetto," *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/lodz.html> (accessed September 22, 2008).

6. "Lodz," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?en&ModuleId=10005069> (accessed December 8, 2008).

7. "Warsaw," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, (accessed September 22, 2008).

8. Warsaw was liquidated September 1942 and the children of Lodz were liquidated July 1942 (both of which are discussed later).

investigation of these techniques can provide greater insight into the long and short term results of these differing policies.

### HISTORIOGRAPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Jewish suffering under Nazi occupation is a very popular scholarly topic; there is a wide array of available literature on the topic in any library and most discuss ghettos in some manner. Most of these sources mention both Rumkowski and Czerniakow because these men represent the two opposite positions available to Jewish leaders of Nazi established ghettos. Many of these sources, like Yahil, Dawidowicz, Gilbert, Gutman, Bauer and Friedlander, try to cover the Jewish experience under Nazis from the beginning of anti-Semitic policies through extermination, and everything in between.<sup>9</sup> As a result of the breadth of their coverage, these sources can only provide general information and perceptions of these men. Tushnet offers the best study of these men when he compares them (and Gens, the leader of Vilna); however, this book focuses on the decisions these men made, how they were (and were not) influenced by their surroundings and their roles in their respective Jewish communities from before deportation until their deaths, but not the affect these men had on their “subjects”.<sup>10</sup> Most Holocaust literature does not address the practical implication of these policies on the people of those ghettos, and especially not the children. The usual discuss the men and the conditions of the people separately.

The manner in which Jewish children who grew up in Nazi ghettos has been discussed can be separated into a few categories. First, there are those that focus on psychological ramifications of growing up as a

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9. Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975); Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*, (London: Collins, 1986); Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, and Revolt*, (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1982); Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, (New York: Franklin Watts, 1982); Friedlander, *Years of Extermination*.

10. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*.

Jewish child under the Nazis. Bergmann and Jucovy do this through studying the children of children survivors (and other survivors as well).<sup>11</sup> Eisen does this in a unique study on the role “playing” has for children and adults watching children in the ghettos; while Eisen’s book does mention some living conditions of the children, it does not provide any discussion of these conditions, how they came to be, or how they relate to the “plan” of the leaders.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, many books that actually address children, only focus on deportation. For example, Dawidowicz included two paragraphs about children in the Lodz ghetto, but only concerning their deportation.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Horwitz has a chapter devoted to children, but it only explains the last few days of the Lodz ghetto; he doesn’t describe the daily conditions of children in the Lodz ghetto, before the deportations began.<sup>14</sup> Kassow’s work is slightly different from the rest.<sup>15</sup> He devotes a whole section to Jewish children in Warsaw, but his focus is on community efforts through organizations, rather than on Czerniakow’s policies.

The issues of leadership and children in the ghettos are generally presented separately in Holocaust literature; this technique, however, is unfortunate, because the two topics are deeply connected. An understanding of the mentality and policies of the leaders is necessary to understand accurately the experiences of children and the role they played in their communities. It is important to understand the experiences and role of Jewish children from the ghettos because children play a very special role in society; they represent the future. The treatment

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11. Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy, ed. *Generations of the Holocaust*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1982).

12. George Eisen, *Children and Play in the Holocaust: Games Among the Shadows*, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

13. Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews*.

14. Gordon J. Horwitz, *Ghettostadt: Lodz and the Making of a Nazi City*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

15. Samuel. D Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

of children in these ghettos shows how the ghetto leaders and Jewish community-at-large viewed their current position and the future of their people. It is also important because the ways that children were treated in the ghettos shapes the ways that children who survived remember the Holocaust. It is only by trying to understand fully the extent of children's experiences from the beginning that we can attempt to understand how they viewed the Holocaust and the post-WWII world. Consequently, the topic of ghetto administrations' policies and its effect on children is extremely important for the specific aid it can provide in understanding the outlook of the Jews living in the ghetto, its affect on survivors, and a glimpse into a specific tactic of the Nazis. By comparing Rumkowski and Czernaikow's attitudes and actions in regard to the children of their ghettos, we can contrast two very different ways children were treated in order to determine the effects of their policies.

#### RUMKOWSKI'S AND THE CHILDREN OF LODZ

Rumkowski was self-labeled "a fascist and a communist." Many would argue that this is an accurate summation of his policies.<sup>16</sup> He began creating a pseudo-dictatorship by setting up a housing office and putting himself in charge of rationing.<sup>17</sup> This centralization of power served another purpose: preventing private enterprise. Rumkowski did not want Jews profiting from the suffering of other Jews.<sup>18</sup> There was widespread hunger, but none thrived while others starved. He believed that for any to survive, all occupants of the ghetto must be equal; thus no economic classes emerged.<sup>19</sup> All wealth was concentrated into Rumkowski's power, and he distributed it as he saw appropriate. There were no extra rations to be bought or sold. Everyone worked, as explained later, and rations were determined based solely on how valuable a person was

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16. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 214.

17. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death* 15, 23.

18. *Ibid.*, 20.

19. *Ibid.*, 19.

to the ghetto (i.e. how much they could produce). Class was, thus, eliminated. There was simply Rumkowski and the Lodz Jews; there was no social hierarchy within the ghetto structure. He tried to organize a working Jewish community while building up personnel by providing more community standards.<sup>20</sup> Rumkowski has been highly criticized for these policies and even compared in some respects to Hitler. Tushnet argues, “Rumkowski’s ambition and the German fuehrer-principle were perfectly congruent.”<sup>21</sup> Rumkowski was a dictator; he controlled all parts of ghetto life. There was no option for questions or suggestions; there was no alternative to his plan and view for the ghetto. Many did not see much difference between his policies and those of the Nazis; however, despite his strong-handed authority, Rumkowski’s policies ensured that children had better living standards than in most other ghettos.

Rumkowski believed survival depended on production. The ghetto could become “self-sufficient” by transforming itself into a labor source for the Nazis.<sup>22</sup> More importantly, though, if the ghetto could establish itself as a necessity to the success of the Third Reich, the Nazis would have no choice but to allow it to continue. Rumkowski believed that this had to be done efficiently, which meant centralization of all power in his hands.<sup>23</sup> He created factories of industry, worked to obtain large orders of goods, putting more people to work, and made all enterprises communal.<sup>24</sup> This view of the ghetto greatly affected the role children played in the community. If the role of the ghetto was a means of survival for as many Jews as possible and that survival depended on work, what did it mean for the children who could not work? Children became simply empty mouths to feed that could not contribute to the short-term survival of the ghetto as a whole. They had no value in the

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20. Ibid., 17.

21. As described previously, Tushnet did a comparative study on Rumkowski, Czerniakow and Gens: Ibid., 11.

22. Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews*, 232.

23. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 170.

24. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 21.

Lodz ghetto society according to this logic. This became apparent as it became clear that all of the Jews of Lodz would not survive.

#### CZERNIAKOW AND THE CHILDREN OF WARSAW

Czerniakow saw his duties in the most limited sense, allowing for dissent and encouraging individual organizations. He saw it as his duty to obey German orders, but not to accommodate them.<sup>25</sup> He realized that he had to obey Nazi orders to preserve his own life and to make the best possible situation for the ghetto; if he did not obey Nazi orders, he was well aware that he would be replaced with someone else and this person probably would not care for the inhabitants of the ghetto. Yet, he felt strongly that he should not make things easier for the Nazis either; he was unwilling to be a factory for the Nazi machine, even if it meant improving the conditions in Warsaw. Czerniakow wanted the Jews in Warsaw to retain as much freedom as possible. He continued as a strong supporter of liberalism and capitalism. He believed in letting people act in their own interest, allowing a variety of organizations to parallel his power.<sup>26</sup> These policies led to economic disparity in the Warsaw ghetto. Two classes emerged; one grew increasingly richer and stronger at the expense of the other, which grew increasingly poor, sick, and starving.<sup>27</sup>

Czerniakow had a very different approach than Rumkowski to the role of the ghetto and, therefore, children. Czerniakow stressed that “man does not live by bread alone”; he believed that the ghetto was not simply about survival but also about family and, especially, children.<sup>28</sup> He made every effort he could to make life better for the children. “His love of children is obvious.”<sup>29</sup> He opened a public kitchen in 1941 for children

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25. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 84.

26. *Ibid.*, 110.

27. Yahil, *The Fate of European Jewry*, 219.

28. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 222.

29. Eisen, *Children and Play in the Holocaust*, 43.

whose fathers were at the labor camps.<sup>30</sup> He made efforts to provide education by creating orphanages and children's homes.<sup>31</sup> In 1941, he succeeded in reestablishing many schools, which offered education to roughly 7,000 children.<sup>32</sup> These schools were then used to provide food to children, even giving the children candy.<sup>33</sup> He began an initiative to build playgrounds and discussed opening new playgrounds on several different occasions in his diary.<sup>34</sup> He had celebrations for children's holidays and parties for the opening of the playgrounds. Czerniakow also convinced the community to organize a "Children's Month," which actually lasted from September 1941 until November 1941. He ended up raising over one million zlotys during this period.<sup>35</sup> In his diary on July 8, 1942, he describes how "many people hold a grudge against me for organizing play activity for the children." He continues, defending himself, by comparing himself to a captain of a sinking ship.<sup>36</sup> He realized at this point that there was no hope for survival, but to Czerniakow this meant that it was more important than ever to provide hope and some form of normalcy for the children of Warsaw.

#### CZERNIAKOW'S POLICY AND THE WARSAW STARVATION

Often Czerniakow's desires for the Warsaw ghetto were limited by his interpretation of his role and view of the ghetto. He approached all his duties with a capitalist laissez-faire strategy, economic and otherwise.<sup>37</sup>

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30. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz, ed, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1979), 259.

31. *Ibid.*, 7.

32. Gutman, *Jews of Warsaw*, 84.

33. *Ibid.*, 341, 345, 366.

34. Hilberg, *Diary of Adam Czerniakow*, 353, 363, 374.

35. *Ibid.*, 299.

36. *Ibid.*, 376.

37. Gutman, *Jews of Warsaw*, 82.



He did not enforce rations and even allowed extras to be sold. He did not want to interfere with free enterprise.<sup>38</sup> Because of this, a large disparity between classes in the ghetto emerged, creating rifts within the ghetto community.<sup>39</sup> He saw a need for communal services such as education and food relief. While some schools were opened (as described above), they were contingent on Nazi approval *and* approval of public funds. However, people did not want to pay for it, and in his capitalist ghetto, he was not going to force them because “he was not the one to pass judgment on other Jews – they had trouble enough already”.<sup>40</sup> Children also suffered from starvation, disease and general malnutrition at astonishingly higher rates in Warsaw than in Lodz. Abraham Lewent, a Jewish teenager of about sixteen when the Warsaw ghetto was established, describes the situation: “The hunger in the ghetto was so great, was so bad, that people were laying on the streets and dying, little children went around begging...if you don’t have it [food] you die, and that’s what it was”.<sup>41</sup> As time passed, the situation only became worse.

The number of children who needed help and the degree to which they needed it were rising, while the resources were declining.<sup>42</sup> As the cost of food and fuel continued to rise, Czerniakow often described seeing starving and decaying corpses of children on the streets in his diary.<sup>43</sup> He described seeing children as “living skeletons”.<sup>44</sup> Most people lived on 170-200 calories per day.<sup>45</sup> Rations in Warsaw did not cover ten

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38. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 92.

39. Friedlander, *Years of Extermination*, 243.

40. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 121.

41. Abraham Lewent, “Personal Stories: Ghettos: ‘The hunger in the ghetto was so great, was so bad, that people were laying on the streets and dying,’” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Smuggling.html> (accessed December 2, 2008).

42. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?*, 260.

43. Hilberg, *Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow*, 232, 261.

44. *Ibid.*, 366.

45. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 107.

percent of what would be considered the normal nutrition requirement.<sup>46</sup> The situation for children got even worse as rations were decreased for non-workers, a group including children.<sup>47</sup> Often parents, unable to feed themselves, would be forced to leave their children at orphanages.<sup>48</sup> As parents starved and fell victim to disease and death, more and more children were left to fend for themselves. Eventually five to six hundred people per day were dying of starvation in Warsaw.<sup>49</sup>

Czerniakow and independent organizations were unable to meet the needs of the children. The children were starving and had to discover their own means to survival. Children took on the identity of their parents and went to work until they were caught, got in trouble and/or were killed.<sup>50</sup> They were also an integral part of the smuggling operation in the ghetto, which worked because the ghetto shared a currency with the rest of Warsaw. Children could fit through the holes in the ghetto wall, allowing them to bring back food to the ghetto and sell it or give it to their family. This was extremely dangerous. On January 19, 1942 alone, 213 boys and girls were arrested for crossing the ghetto border to get food for their families.<sup>51</sup> On another occasion approximately one hundred smugglers were shot after being caught leaving the Warsaw ghetto, many of whom were Jewish children between five and six years old.<sup>52</sup> Yet the danger was not enough of a deterrent. The children realized they *might* die if they got caught smuggling; however, if they did not

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46. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "The Smuggling of Food into the Warsaw Ghetto," *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsources/Holocaust/Smuggling.html> (accessed September 22, 2008).

47. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 331.

48. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?*, 260.

49. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 123.

50. Hilberg, *Diary of Adam Czerniakow*, 285.

51. *Ibid.*, 13.

52. "American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, *Smuggling into the Warsaw Ghetto*.

smuggle they *would* die of starvation.<sup>53</sup> Israel Aviram, who was a child in the Warsaw ghetto, said that rations were handed out every ten days, but there was only enough food for “maybe three days.”<sup>54</sup> Children never stopped smuggling even “when the street was still slippery from the blood that had been spilled” from other smugglers; candles were set out to guide the way for them.<sup>55</sup> Children were left with no other option than to smuggle; they would die if they relied solely on what they were legally allowed. Czerniakow realized the futility of the situation. He did not like that the children were smuggling, thus risking their lives; yet he also acknowledged that smuggling was necessary for the children’s survival because it provided them food and/or resources to buy items they needed. So, an understanding emerged between the Jewish law enforcers and the community and smuggling was not stopped.<sup>56</sup>

#### RUMKOWSKI’S POLICY TOWARDS CHILDREN

The situation in Lodz was much different from that in Warsaw. Rumkowski concentrated all economic activity in his own hands.<sup>57</sup> He thought of himself as a king, referring to himself as “King Chaim”.<sup>58</sup> He left no room for any private organizations to provide relief to the inhabitants of the ghettos. Some children were able to get work within the ghetto. Many were able to get jobs in mica splitting factories; many girls would sew German uniforms.<sup>59</sup> Rumkowski created easier jobs for children and many apprenticeships started.<sup>60</sup> In July 1942, there was even a Nazi order requiring that all children over the age of ten work

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53. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 219.

54. “Hunger in the Ghetto,” *Children in the Ghetto*, <http://www.ghetto.galim.org.il/eng/hunger/testimony.html> (accessed December 3, 2008). (from the first video)

55. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, *Smuggling into the Warsaw Ghetto*.

56. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 221

57. Ibid., 170.

58. Ibid., 210.

59. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, *The Lodz Ghetto*.

60. Horwitz, *Ghettostadt*, 199.

in Lodz, because the health of the people was deteriorating and output needed to be improved.<sup>61</sup> Children under the age of ten, however, still did not fit into the working society Rumkowski created and the Nazis desired. Children ten years and older had “the potential for work...those younger...so hungry, so whiny, altogether useless in a workshop-were just additional mouth to feed.”<sup>62</sup> Rumkowski ensured there would be no smuggling to compensate for the shortage, though. There was a separate currency called “Rumkies” (after himself) with his picture on them in the ghetto.<sup>63</sup> Since this currency was only used in the ghetto, and of no value in the rest of Lodz, smuggling was curtailed.<sup>64</sup> In today’s society the end of illegal economic activity would be seen as a positive thing; however, ghetto life existed under different rules and morals. Ending economic activity meant that people simply had to live on what the ghetto provided them. Unlike in Warsaw, children had to live on their rations. They could not find supplemental food and/or income to buy food and other necessities through smuggling. Additionally, Rumkowski eventually set up a juvenile court system to stop child smugglers.<sup>65</sup> No food came in from the outside, meaning that Lodz Jews had to rely exclusively on the food that was given. This meant wide spread hunger for the children.

During the first half of Rumkowski’s “reign,” he believed that he could save the Jews of Lodz, so he provided some care for the children.<sup>66</sup> He compensated for limitations on smuggling and private enterprise by enforcing taxes and using the revenue to support his various aid

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61. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, “The Deterioration of the Physical Condition of the Jews in the Lodz Ghetto,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/lozd5.html> (accessed September 22, 2008).

62. Horwitz, *Ghettostadt*, 193.

63. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. *The Lodz Ghetto*.

64. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 211.

65. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 39.

\66. Ibid., 214.

institutions, such as soup kitchens and schools.<sup>67</sup> The Education Department he established opened forty-five Jewish schools, which he used as cover to give the children food, clothing and medical services for approximately two years.<sup>68</sup> About 5,000 children were taught in Yiddish and Hebrew in these schools.<sup>69</sup> He opened soup kitchens between the fall of 1939 and 1940 that increased the number of portions served from 500 to 18,060.<sup>70</sup> He paid special attention to the orphans. He opened several orphanages that housed 1500 children between the ages of seven and fifteen. In these orphanages he put hospitals, infirmaries, and pharmacies.<sup>71</sup> He opened summer camps for kindergarteners in 1940 and had children's plays through the Center for Cultural Activities, which he created.<sup>72</sup>

As thanks for these early attempts to help the children of Lodz, the schools put together an album of gratitude for Rumkowski. There was a page from each district, roughly 14,000 children, thanking him for providing them with food.<sup>73</sup> Yet, these words still seem to ring hollow and insincere. Children like Chaim Benzion Cale and Sara Plagier signed this album. Chaim wrote in his diary "we were scared of Rumkowski... we were scared—always scared" and he wrote that "I wanted to go to school not so much to learn, but to eat the soup."<sup>74</sup> Sara Plagier describes Rumkowski as an "absolute monarch...He was all powerful...among us he was king. We called him all sorts of titles: His Excellency the

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67. Tushnet, *Pavement of Death*, 13.

68. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 212.

69. Gilbert, *Holocaust*, 151.

70. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 212.

71. *Ibid.*, 213.

72. *Ibid.*, 212.

73. "Give Me Your Children: Voices from the Lodz Ghetto," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <http://www.hsmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/lodzalbum/> (accessed December 3, 2008). (From the introduction to the album)

74. Chaim Cale, Holocaust Encyclopedia, "Chaim Benzion Cale," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org) (accessed December 3, 2008).

Chairman,’ ‘The Eldest of the Jews.’ And we called him ‘King.’”<sup>75</sup> The addresses in the album of “dearest father”, “the good angel of children”, “Honorable” and “Esteemed” Mr. Chairman, “beloved among all others” “beloved father and friend” seem forced rather than genuine.<sup>76</sup> When the pages and poems are read, they sound like propaganda that could have been eschewed from the Nazi machine by simply replacing “Chairman” with “Führer”.

“FATHERS AND MOTHERS:  
GIVE ME YOUR CHILDREN”<sup>77</sup>

In the fall of 1942, Rumkowski received instructions from the Nazis to deport 10,000 children under the age of ten.<sup>78</sup> He fully intended to comply with these directions. He obviously realized the implications of this decision because, for the first time during his role as “King Chaim,” he tried to bring in the support of community and political leaders that still remained to act as his “accomplices;” he did this by offering the few exemptions he had been granted to the children of those who would cooperate.<sup>79</sup> Only one member voted to accept Rumkowski’s offer; the rest all voted to reject. Despite the obvious disapproval for this action, on September 4, 1942, a year and a half before the entire ghetto was liquidated, Rumkowski announced that he intended to hand over the children of Lodz to the Nazis for deportation.<sup>80</sup> Rumkowski’s decision to deport the children is incredibly difficult to comprehend. In order

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75. Sara Plagier, Holocaust Encyclopedia, “Sara Rachela Plagier,” *Untied States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org) (accessed December 3, 2008).

76. “Give Me Your Children: Voices from the Lodz Ghetto,” multiple pages from album.

77. Excerpt from Rumkowski’s speech to the ghetto announcing the decree that all children under ten would be deported. “The Deportation of the Children from the Lodz Ghetto,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishlibrary.org](http://www.jewishlibrary.org) (accessed September 22, 2008).

78. Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews*, 294.

79. *Ibid.*, 294.

80. Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 447.

to do so, one must consider the mentality in the Lodz ghetto. People were fighting for daily survival. Rumkowski wanted to save the Jewish people; he may not have cared about specific individuals, but he wanted to save the people. He had been threatened that if he failed to deliver the children, the entire ghetto would be eliminated.<sup>81</sup> He believed that deporting the children would increase the chance of survival for the rest of the ghetto. So much so, that he himself went “to oversee the removal, made sure that none evaded capture or were left behind.”<sup>82</sup>

It is also necessary to remember Rumkowski’s plan for survival: production through universal work. Children under the age of ten simply could not contribute to his vision of a labor ghetto. This is evident in his speech describing his decision to hand over the children for deportation, “I must cut off limbs to save the body itself! ...Common sense requires us to know that those must be saved who can be saved and who have a chance of being saved and not those whom there is no chance to save in any case.”<sup>83</sup> It was inevitable that some would die, so he sacrificed whom he thought could contribute the least to the survival of the rest. There was little option in his mind; the children must be sacrificed because they did not play a contributing role in Lodz ghetto life. He was simply extending the strategy he had created from the beginning.

It is clear that the community had also accepted Rumkowski’s plan by this time. In the Lodz Chronicle, which kept daily records of events during the ghetto period, the authors reported a sense of apathy by the community to the deportation of the children.<sup>84</sup>

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81. Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews*, 294.

82. Horwitz, *Ghettostadt*, 219.

83. “The Deportation of the Children from the Lodz Ghetto,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, (accessed September 22, 2008).

84. The Lodz Chronicle consisted of pictures and reports of conditions of the ghetto, mortality rates, economic standards, labor statistics and other details of life (even the weather) within the ghetto from Jan. 12, 1941-July 30, 1944. It was established by Rumkowski under the Department of Archives (this was just one of the projects of the department), and as such was granted full authority to all legal documents coming in and out of the ghetto. The authors were Julian Cukier, Szmul Hecht, Dr. Bernard Heilig, Dr. Abram Kamieniecki, Dr. Oskar Rosenfeld, Dr. Oskar

There is not the slightest doubt that this was a profound and terrible shock, and yet one must wonder at the indifference shown by those...from whom loved ones had been taken...Is this some sort of numbing of the nerves, an indifference, or a symptom of an illness that manifests itself in atrophied emotional reactions?<sup>85</sup>

The families of the children were immersed in grief for a short period, but quickly moved on looking for the next meal. Mere survival was almost everyone's primary concern; if they were to survive it was necessary that they not dwell on their losses. They had to quickly move on to care for themselves and the pieces of their families that remained. The context in which this decision was made cannot be ignored. People were starving and dying; death was a common occurrence and had become almost normal. Beno Helmer, a Jewish teenager in the Lodz ghetto, describes how he witnessed a mother completely deny her maternity of one of her children and watch a Nazi soldier kill the child by swinging it against the wall by its legs. The mother was completely disassociated with the child. "It wasn't her child. She completely cut this child out of her emotions. She cut this child off completely away. And I realized at that time that self-survival is, is the most...more primary in your life. It's more than...than even your own child."<sup>86</sup> By this point everyone believed in Rumkowski's plan of salvation through production. The acceptance of Rumkowski's view meant the early deportation of the

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Singer, and Jozef Zelkowicz (with contribution from other staff members). These people were different ages, professions, came from different countries of origin, and even had different languages, which contributes to the validity of the document because there was such a range of contributions. Only one of these men (Ostrowski – a staff member) survived the war. It was found by some of the 877 Jews who survived in the ghetto until it was liberated in Jan. 1945.

- Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed, *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-1944*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), introduction.

85. Ibid, 255.

86. Beno Helmer, "Personal Stories: Ghettos: 'The hunger in the ghetto was so great, was so bad, that people were laying on the streets and dying,'" *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org) (accessed December 3, 2008).



children (compared to the liquidation of the rest of the ghetto).

#### LIQUIDATION OF THE WARSAW GHETTO

By contrast, Czerniakow refused to hand over children for deportation in Warsaw. It was not until the final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, which occurred between July 22 and September 12 of 1942, that the children were removed from the ghetto.<sup>87</sup> The Warsaw ghetto's 350,000 person population (at that time) was entirely liquidated during that summer.<sup>88</sup> Czerniakow did not learn of the imminent liquidation until July 20, 1942; at which point he frantically scrambled to determine the rumors' validity.<sup>89</sup> Everyone he confronted denied the allegations, yet he was still rightfully uneasy. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, after the rest of the Jewish council and his wife were arrested, Czerniakow learned that liquidation would begin with 6,000 Jews "irrespective of sex and age" being sent east that day.<sup>90</sup> The next day it was increased to 7,000 Jews per day.<sup>91</sup> Despite the inevitability of the situation, Czerniakow felt so strongly about the importance of children, that he was unable to cope with the idea of the children being sent to labor or concentration camps. In his diary Czerniakow wrote, "'They demand from me to kill the children of my nation with my own hands.'"<sup>92</sup> He continued to fight for exceptions for children and was finally sent to SS Major Hofle, Plenipotentiary in charge of deportations in Warsaw.<sup>93</sup> After futile pleading for the exception of orphans to Hofle, Czerniakow committed suicide by cyanide when he learned that the children would be deported east as

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87. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 378.

88. *Ibid.*, 378.

89. *Ibid.*, 382.

90. Hilberg, *Diary of Czerniakow*, 384.

91. Gilbert, *Holocaust*, 389.

92. *Ibid.*, 389.

93. *Ibid.*, 388.

well.<sup>94</sup> In his suicide note Czerniakow wrote, “I am powerless, my heart trembles in sorrow and compassion. I can no longer bear all this. My act will show everyone the right thing to do.”<sup>95</sup> He firmly believed that children were so vitally important and should be cared for that he thought it was necessary to commit suicide. His idea that this was “the right thing to do,” suggests that he thought it was better to die than to be complicit in the handing over of what he saw as the future of the Jewish community. This is a drastically different response than Rumkowski’s.

### CONCLUSION

The contrasting policies of Czerniakow and Rumkowski reflect their views of the role children played in the ghettos, which were greatly influenced by their ideas about survival. Czerniakow focused more on cultural and moral survival. As a result, he saw the children in a manner more similar to today; he saw children as an integral part of Jewish society and the future of their culture. Yet, these children of Warsaw faced worse living conditions than in Lodz. Rumkowski was more focused on physical survival and children did not fit into his plan; survival depended on production and children could not work. The Jewish children of Lodz had a better quality of life; yet, they were handed over as collateral damage towards the survival of the rest of the population. Although this suggests a higher regard for children in Warsaw, the children of the Warsaw ghetto ultimately were liquidated as well; they just did so with their families at the end.

Judgment has been cast upon these men from the moment they became chairmen of their respective Judenrat. During this period of ghettoization many Jews held bitter feelings towards both of them. A common riddle during this period was “‘What is the difference between Czerniakow and Rumkowski?’ The answer: ‘No difference.

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94. Ibid., 301.

95. Yahil, *Fate of European Jewry*, 382.

Both stink.”<sup>96</sup> Jews often also played on the Judenrat term by calling it “Judenverrat, ‘betrayal of the Jews,’ ‘Jewish fraud’ for ‘Jewish board’”.<sup>97</sup> Today we continue to cast judgment. Rumkowski is often still seen as little better than his Nazi counterparts. Czerniakow is generally seen in a much better light, though – as a man with honorable intentions, albeit mishandled. Mordecai Tenenbaum recognized Czerniakow as one of only three decent chairmen of Judenrat.<sup>98</sup> However, the similar endings of the children from Warsaw and Lodz show the futility of the situation. It is impossible to remove these decisions from their context. The reality of Jews living in a Polish ghetto during Nazi occupation is vastly different from the reality people shape their morals in today. Each of these men tried to do what he deemed as best or most important for his respective ghetto. Unfortunately, this is seen clearly through the experiences of the children in these ghettos. Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto suffered an extremely difficult, almost impossible, life, but were seen as a vital part of the ghetto; so they remained until the end. Jewish children from the Lodz ghetto had a slightly better life, but were seen as empty mouths to feed that were not contributing to the survival of the rest. Yet, it would be inappropriate to judge these policies and their consequences for the children under modern morals because they did not exist in a modern situation.

However, that does not mean that nothing can be learned from these comparisons. The experiences of children in the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos show how adept the Nazis were at making their victims perpetrators, adding a new level of victimization to their assaults. Rumkowski and Czerniakow were clearly victims, neither survived through the war; yet they were turned into perpetrators, forced into choosing life or death for the people of their ghettos. It shows the futility of the situation the Nazis put Jewish leaders in. Success was almost certainly impossible;

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96. Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews*, 239.

97. *Ibid.*, 239.

98. Tenenbaum was the commandant of the Jewish resistance organization in Bialystok: *Ibid.*, 240.

Czerniakow and Rumkowski created plans that they thought would best serve their communities. The outcomes of Warsaw and Lodz ghettos suggest that there was not a “correct” response; there were positive and negative aspects and implications of each. It also highlights the question of the role children play in society. The view society holds of their children affects their treatment and how policies of administration affect even the children.

It is extremely important to consider the experiences of the children in the ghettos of Warsaw and Lodz, because the themes and lessons that can be learned are not isolated to this specific case. These can be applied to other cases of persecution by the Nazis and have been seen in other forms of occupation both before and since then. By learning and understanding the different experiences of children in the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos a better understanding can be gained of Nazi policy and ideology, the extent of Jewish suffering under the Nazis, and the role and implications of occupation on a wider scale.

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