I am simply one who loves the past and is diligent in investigating it.

K’ung-fu-tzu (551-479 BC) The Analects

WWII Refugees Anushua Battacharya
East Ridge High School, Woodbury, Minnesota

Invasion of New Mexico Jonathan Frankle
Richard Montgomery High School, Rockville, Maryland

Great Leap Famine Eliza Fawcett
St. Ann’s School, Brooklyn, New York

Rise of India Tiancheng Zhang
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FDR: THE ‘TITLELESS’ BOOK:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION
POLICY DURING WORLD WAR II

Anushua Bhattacharya

Introduction

In March of 2007, I visited the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. I was somewhat familiar with the sufferings inflicted on the European Jews under the Third Reich; however, it was not until I strolled through the horrifying and moving exhibits that I began to grasp the gravity of this unprecedented genocide. From listening to the stories about young children who lost their lives in concentration camps to watching footage of the backbreaking labor endured by camp inmates, I wondered: could the United States under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt have saved more Jews? My visit to the Holocaust Museum provoked me to study this question.

Dedicated to those who might have been saved...
Overview of the Paper

Should FDR have done more to stop the Holocaust? In hindsight, knowing that 6 million Jews died, the answer is an emphatic “yes.” But the more reasonable question is could FDR have done more to save lives during the Holocaust? The horrors of this genocide were so great that it seems plausible that something could have been done to save a few more Jewish lives. If only 1 or 2 percent were saved, that itself would have been a laudable accomplishment since 60,000 to 120,000 people of the Jewish faith would have survived.

This paper begins with a synopsis of the Holocaust, summarizing the rise of Adolf Hitler and anti-Semitism in Germany. A brief review of FDR’s climb to the presidency and the creation of the New Deal follows. The effect of Nazi pogroms on European Jews is then presented. Five major situations where the United States’ administration had opportunities to save lives are described. This is followed by an analysis discussing the President’s role in each of these events. The paper ends with a conclusion responding to the question: could FDR have saved more Jews?

The Holocaust

The Holocaust refers to the planned murder of Jews under the Nazi regime. Nearly 70 year since its end, the Holocaust remains one of the most atrocious examples of genocide. Eleven million civilians perished, including gypsies, homosexuals, Communists, the handicapped, and 6 million Jews. After Germany’s defeat in World War I, the country suffered from harsh conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. The nation was ordered to pay reparations for war damage, causing an enormous tax burden on its citizens. Adolf Hitler, who served in World War I, joined the German Workers Party in 1919. A year later, it was renamed the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, NSDAP)—the Nazi party. On November 8,
1923, Nazi party members failed to seize power by force in Bavaria. Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison but served only a year. He used his time behind bars to dictate his book *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*, which was to become the writ of the Nazi party. In this book, the main enemy of the German people was identified as: “the Jew.”

The Nazi party had difficulty gaining traction with the electorate. In the 1928 election, the party received 2.6 percent of the popular vote. The crash of the New York Stock Exchange in 1929 hit the German economy especially hard, and the people longed for leadership that would end their misery. For some time, Germany was ruled by weak governments. During the election of November 1932, the Nazi party won 196 seats (33.1 percent of the vote) and became the largest party in the Reichstag. On January 30, 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg had no choice but to appoint Adolf Hitler as the Chancellor of Germany. On February 27, the Reichstag was set on fire and the Nazis blamed the Communists for the mischief. A day later, President von Hindenburg suspended constitutional guarantees. A new election was set for March 5, 1933. In this election, the Nazis prevented the Communists from participating, and won 288 of the 647 seats. Hitler then pushed through a decree on March 23 that gave the NSDAP the sole legislating authority. A law declaring the Nazi Party the only legal party in Germany was enacted on July 14. On December 1, 1933, the Law to Safeguard the Unity of Party and State was decreed. This law made Adolf Hitler and his henchmen the sole authority in the Reich. Upon Hindenburg’s death on August 3, 1934, Hitler combined the presidency and chancellorship and assumed the title of Führer and Reich Chancellor.

The Holocaust was one of the worst genocides in history, but where did anti-Semitism originate? Since the Middle Ages, anti-Semitic beliefs were common in European society because Christianity was the dominant religion. The original perception of Christian anti-Semitism saw the Jews as being “possessed by the Devil.” Nazi ideology actually portrayed the Jew as the Devil himself. This new philosophy made Nazi anti-Semitism state
policy. During the Middle Ages, Jews could evade persecution by converting to Christianity. During the Nazi era, this option was unavailable. The Jews were depicted as nonhuman-parasites that would threaten the existence of their host nation. These thoughts led to Hitler’s “vision” of a Europe “cleansed” of Jews. Prior to the start of World War II, laws restricting Jews from many freedoms were enacted in Germany. For example, Jews were forced to wear the Star of David so that they could be identified in public. Jewish boys and girls were segregated and put into separate schools. Later, Jews were quarantined in camps. As the war progressed, Hitler’s pogrom chose a more ominous course that morphed into the “Final Solution.” Extermination camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Maidanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka were built to fulfill this dream of a Jew-free Germany. In the camps, the inmates suffered daily persecutions from hard labor and starvation to gas chambers and murder. During their reign, the Nazis established nearly 20,000 concentration and extermination camps throughout Germany and other occupied territories.

In spite of Hitler’s animosity towards them, the German Jews regarded the new Chancellor as a recent phenomenon that would dissipate with time. Most reasoned that civilized Germans were not capable of committing such atrocities. Since many had fought for Germany during World War I and regarded themselves as Germans, one Jewish writer noted, “we are either Germans, or without a country.” However, Hitler’s restrictions combined with the growing turmoil in the society caused an escalation in the number of German Jews wanting to emigrate. From 1933 to 1937, the United States allowed a mere 30,000 German Jews to enter the country. This number was capped because the democratic states were reeling from the effects of the Depression; hence the United States was reluctant to accept more refugees. In September 1939, nearly 1 million Jews suffered under Nazi rule. With a large number of Jews wanting to leave and only a limited number of countries willing to accept more refugees, a search for a Jewish haven began. As the war progressed, a solution to this problem became even harder to find. Countries not only ignored the plight of the Jews but also made few attempts to find ways to aid them.
In 1932, New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) was elected to the Oval Office. Americans were eager to have a new leader, one that would lead them out of the Great Depression. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 not only created economic hardship but also sparked bitter attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Growing up in the cosmopolitan metropolis of New York, FDR was aware of these sensibilities. This helped him attract strong Jewish support during the presidential elections.

FDR opposed anti-Semitism. While in office, the President surrounded himself with Jewish people. One of the President’s closest friends was Henry Morgenthau Jr. FDR knew him since his years as governor of New York, and while in the White House, the President appointed Morgenthau as Secretary of Treasury. Felix Frankfurter, an immigrant from Austria, became an influential adviser to the President, and later, was appointed a Supreme Court Justice. Other notable Jewish members of the President’s administration were Samuel Rosenman, FDR’s special counsel, and David Niles, his administrative assistant. Despite his visible appointees, the President was keenly aware of the anti-Semitic views that permeated American society. Businessman Henry Ford, distinguished aviator Charles E Lindberg, and Catholic Bishop Father Charles E Coughlin were virulent anti-Semites. When the President himself became under attack by anti-Semites as possibly being Jewish, FDR replied that his ancestors

...may have been Jewish or Catholics or Protestants. What I am more interested in is whether they were good citizens and believers in God. I hope they were both.

During his first term, FDR created the New Deal, a group of economic programs made to fix the flaws of the country. The New Deal regulated finance, fixed the banking crisis, provided electric power and water resources for development in the Tennessee Valley, and most importantly, created jobs for the unemployed. Yet,
many policies of the New Deal contributed to the discomfort of the upper class and the business community. As the President’s political opponents continued to loath the ‘Jewish Influence’ in the nation’s capital, the New Deal was referred to by some American anti-Semites as the “Jew Deal.”

Nazi pogroms on the European Jews

*Anschluss* and the Immigration Emergency

Before World War II, Hitler had begun to expand his control over territories beyond Germany’s borders. On March 13, 1938, the German army crossed over into Austria (Hitler’s homeland) and annexed the country into Greater Germany. The action, known as *Anschluss*, deprived nearly 200,000 Jews in Austria of their jobs, belongings, and safety. These and other Nazi actions caused FDR to shift priorities in his second term; what was once a worry over banking mishaps and jobs soon was replaced with the worry over the events unfolding in Europe. The annexation made the Jewish crisis a demanding priority and tested United States immigration quotas.

A portion of the United States’ immigration quotas remained unused. Two New York congressmen tried to persuade Congress to fill them with Jewish refugees; nonetheless, the bill was not only rejected by Congress, but restrictions were also supported by many Americans. With unemployment still lurking, opponents argued that for every Jewish refugee entering the country, an American would be put out of work. Luckily for some European Jews, FDR waived Congress’s decision and ordered German and Austrian quotas to be used solely by Jewish refugees.
On November 9, 1938, the Nazi party orchestrated an organized pogrom against the Jewish people. That night, Nazi storm troopers raided the streets of the Third Reich, vandalizing Jewish businesses, setting synagogues on fire, and terrorizing Jews. Kristallnacht—the night of broken glass—was the worst attack inflicted on Jews by the Nazis since achieving power. The attack left the Jews dumbfounded. As one man said, “… we never believed the Germans were capable of doing the things they did. Though practically every German had a copy of Mein Kampf, few ever read it.” Those who did never believed that Hitler’s thoughts would be put into concrete action.

Suddenly, the pressure to emigrate took on a new urgency. Although the preferred destination was the United States, according to a poll taken right after Kristallnacht, Americans had no desire to change their refugee legislation. The idea of becoming involved with European affairs was rejected. Despite this rejection, FDR announced he was extending the visitors’ visas of 12,000 to 15,000 German Jews already in the United States by at least six months. The President’s will to act against Congress’ decision (during Anschluss) and the Americans’ position (during Kristallnacht) exhibited FDR’s desire to aid the European Jews. Yet, once World War II began and progressed, FDR became more reluctant to extend a helping hand.

Missed Opportunities,
Conference for Refugees

As storm clouds gathered over the Jews under Nazi occupation, attempts to solve the refugee problem became a concern for the administration. On March 25, 1938, FDR informed the press in one of his informal press conferences that he had decided to
call an international conference on the refugee crisis. Thirty-two nations were invited to gather in Evian-les-Bains, France in July of 1938. The calling of the conference proved that the refugee issue was on the President’s radar.\textsuperscript{54} This was the first effort to provide relief to those suffering persecution under the Nazis. The nations met under the condition that “no country would be expected to receive a greater number of emigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation.”\textsuperscript{55} FDR had hoped to establish a solution to the refugee problem. Instead, what prevailed in this meeting was a “poker game in which each of the players refused to even contemplate raising the stakes.”\textsuperscript{56} The representatives were not empowered to make offers of assistance from their respective governments.\textsuperscript{57} Each of the nations present delivered public statements about its government’s position, oftentimes expressing concern for the Jewish refugees, yet explaining why their immigration laws could not change. The conference proved to be a failure, for no nation agreed to opening its doors to the Jewish refugees. Some nations felt the United States was persuading others to take refugees when itself had no desire to do so. While no true solution stemmed from the meeting, the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees (IGC) grew out of the Evian Conference.\textsuperscript{58} Regardless, the conference was ineffective in that all the pieces were present, but no efforts were made to solve the puzzle.

Later in 1943, the refugee crisis again gained attention. It originated across the Atlantic in Britain. This time it was the Archbishop of Canterbury who was pressuring the Churchill government.\textsuperscript{59} Similar pressure was building on the American side.\textsuperscript{60} The conference was held in the military-controlled area of Bermuda where press access was limited. The organizers limited the issues that could be discussed. The Jewish aspect of the problem was not to be mentioned. The Americans declined the idea of changing their immigration quotas to admit more Jewish refugees. The British refused to consider Palestine as a safe haven for Jewish refugees.
The Saga of the *SS St. Louis*

The United States annually accepted a maximum of 25,957 immigrants from Germany, though the quota was rarely ever filled. Hence, many German Jews were put on a long immigration waiting list. Fearing they would not be able to survive the delay, German Jews sought to find a safe haven elsewhere. For example, Cuba, at the time, accepted a large number of refugees. On May 13, 1939, the Hamburg-Amerika liner *SS St. Louis* departed from Germany with 937 refugees aboard headed to Cuba.

The ship arrived at the Havana port on May 27. Prior to boarding the *SS St. Louis*, all passengers had purchased legal documentation allowing them entry into Cuba: 50 had consular visas, while the remaining had landing permits. Unfortunately, Cuba had recently implemented a decree banning the government from issuing landing certificates. Because the ship departed a week after the decree was implemented, the Cuban government banned the *SS St. Louis* from docking.

At the time, Cuba was ruled by President Laredo Brú. Upon discovering that Cuban officials were acquiring a fortune over sales of landing permits, Brú ordered Manuel Benitez, Director General of Immigration, to share the wealth. Benitez refused and so, on May 5, 1939, the President terminated the Director General’s power to issue any further landing certificates. In response to the Cuban government’s decision, New York Distribution Committee representative, Lawrence Berenson, began a series of negotiations in hopes of getting the refugees to disembark. President Brú made an offer to Berenson. Like the Americans, the Cubans held anti-Semitic views, blaming the Jews for their country’s economic problems. Brú exploited their sentiments with an eye towards his own reelection.

Berenson offered $500 for each passenger in anticipation that they would not become a burden to Cuban government. Brú was not satisfied. In addition to the $500, the President kept
raising the ante and demanded an extra $150 for each passenger, concluding that all arrangements had to be carried out within 48 hours. Berenson returned a counter offer; however, 48 hours had passed and thus, the deal was off. The ship began its way back for Europe. In Brú’s mind, Cuba was magnanimous. They had offered to house the Jews for generous price, which Berenson was not able to accept. Brú reasoned that since the United States was not intervening in order to house the Jews, Cuba had no obligation to do so either. The attention that the ship received during its voyage died away when it returned, but the SS St. Louis continues to be a symbolic icon of the Holocaust.

Inaction of the State Department

An impediment to Jewish immigration was the State Department. The State Department purposely kept the number of accepted refugees to a minimum by imposing a restrictive interpretation of the requirements under U.S. immigration laws. Passed in 1921 and 1924, the quota system favored immigrants from Northern and Western Europe, as immigrants from those regions supposedly were apt to ‘fit in’ with the rest of the population. During the Depression years of the early 1930s, the Hoover administration admitted immigrants who were unlikely to become a public charge. The law, however, made no distinction between refugees being persecuted and normal immigrants. In 1935, FDR asked the State Department to accord “the most considerate attention and the most generous and favorable treatment possible under the laws” to refugees fleeing Germany. Yet, except for 1939 and 1940, the two years after Kristallnacht, the quota remained largely unfilled. From 1933 to 1944, only 36.7 percent of the quota was filled. Had the quota been used in its entirety, it is estimated than another 200,000 lives might have been saved.
Since June of 1943, there was pressure to create a separate agency to deal with the immediate rescue of persecuted minorities from the Nazis. While FDR wanted to help the European Jews, he was opposed to creating an agency devoted solely to their cause. The State Department objected to the idea of an independent agency, fearing that the WRB (War Refugee Board) would interfere with the department’s functioning. Nonetheless, on January 22, 1944, FDR created the WRB. The WRB’s goals included formulating plans, developing necessary funding, and asking various countries to accept the refugees on an emergency basis. The board impressed upon the governments of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, that their behavior would affect Allied post-war policies. Warnings that officials in satellite countries could be prosecuted as war criminals for collaborating with the Germans helped save many thousands of potential victims. Neutral countries such as Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey were given financial assistance for providing temporary refuge or transits for Jews fleeing Nazi persecutions.

The Bombing of Auschwitz

Perhaps the most controversial plan presented to the President was the plan to bomb the death camps at Auschwitz. Located in Poland near the German border, Auschwitz was the largest crematory factory under the Nazi regime. During the course of the war, approximately 3 million Jews were killed in the gas chambers. FDR had been made fully aware of the atrocities under the Nazi regime. As early as March of 1939, Bill Bullit, the former ambassador to France, was in possession of a document that revealed Hitler’s plans to exterminate the Jews.

The Allies knew of the existence of concentration camps in Nazi-occupied Europe, but it was not until April of 1944 that they received evidence through escapees from Auschwitz about
the gruesome nature of the camp. Already, 5 million Jews had been murdered under Hitler’s monstrous “Final Solution.” The War Refugee Board and the World Jewish Council wanted the United States Air Force to destroy the gas chambers in the camp and the railroad lines leading to it. On June 24, 1944, John Pehle, the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, asked Assistant Secretary of the War, John McCloy, to explore the possibilities of this plan. The War Department declined the idea. Among the reasons cited were: (i) Auschwitz was outside the range of the Air Force bombers; (ii) the mission would require diverting essential resources necessary for other war efforts; (iii) such raids would increase the casualty rate amongst Allied airmen; (iv) the chances of success were low; and (v) the prisoners at the camp would be killed. The camp operated until January of 1945, when the Soviet Army liberated it.

Analysis of FDR’s actions

Franklin Delano Roosevelt is regarded as one of the most important American presidents. He lifted the nation to its feet during the Great Depression, fixed the banking crisis, created jobs for the unemployed, and restored hope. In his inaugural speech, FDR comforted the country with these famous words, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” His leadership during the Great Depression and World War II became a source of courage for the United States.

In considering the question whether FDR could have saved more Jews?, the analysis will be in two sections. In the first section, five situations where the President might have saved lives will be analyzed. In the second section, the possible reasons why the President missed these opportunities will be examined.

It is unclear why the President proposed the conference at Evian-les-Bains. Some have speculated that Nazi annexation of Austria had brought about increased pressure for State Department action on behalf of the refugees. To deflect this pressure, the State
Department, led by Secretary Cordell Hull and Undersecretary Sumner Welles, decided to forestall attempts to have immigration laws liberalized. The gathering was designed to silence the critics of apathy. From the beginning, the conference was destined to failure. Stating that no country would have to expand its quotas any more than already set, FDR was a leader who was concerned about the crisis but stayed behind a façade when action and solution were sorely needed. As the *Richmond News Leader* reported, “the United States will be content with friendly gestures and kind words.”

The results of the conference made an impact on the American Jewish groups. They were initially ecstatic to learn that FDR had created such a conference; however, the failure to constitute an escape plan for their brethren became a “modern wailing wall.” Ira Hirschmann, a New York department store executive, left the conference because he saw it as “a façade behind which the civilized government could hide their inability to act.”

The IGC accomplished little in its nine-year existence. Devoid of authority and deprived of funds, the IGC’s work failed to extend beyond talk and paperwork. It did not even maintain an office in the United States. As the refugee crisis deepened, the President made no efforts to spur IGC to action. Soon after the Evian Conference, Latin American governments increased their immigration restrictions out of concerns that the United States and Britain were about to push most of the problem on to them.

At the conclusion of the Bermuda Conference, the organizers were reluctant to reveal the true nature of the proceedings. The official line was “the most strategic work of the conference could not be made public for security reasons.” The conference did succeed in reducing pressure from the demands for action. Editorials calling for action were less frequent. Lord Coleraine, a member of the British Foreign Office, asked later for his recollection of events of Bermuda said, “it was a conflict of self-justification, a façade for inaction. We said that the results of the conference were confidential, but in fact there were no results that I can recall.” The President showed minimal interest in the
proceedings. After the plans for the conference were made public, he asked the State Department what it was about. Even ardent defender of the President Robert Rosen found the episode surrounding the Bermuda Conference “depressing” and recognized: “...State Department and British Foreign Office personnel who organized the conference shamefully had little if any desire to help the Jews of Europe.” The only concrete outcomes were to reactivate the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees formed at the Evian Conference, and to recommend the establishment of a camp in North Africa for victims of persecution who had found temporary havens in Spain. The President agreed, but insisted that the camp be temporary.

In the SS St. Louis dilemma, the majority of Americans were opposed to accepting the Jewish refugees. While this was the nation’s decision, FDR might have persuaded Cuba to allow the passengers to disembark. It was well known that Fulgencio Batista, the de facto military ruler of Cuba, was the most powerful individual in the country. Cuba, as a small neighboring country, depended on the United States for trade. A quiet word and pressure from the administration might have resolved the issue in favor of the refugees. Instead, the administration made almost no response to the refugee ship. On her final departure, the SS St. Louis headed to Miami as a last effort. In response, FDR sent the Coast Guard to return any passengers that attempted to jump off the ship. It was well within the President’s power to issue an executive order to permit the Jews into the United States, but secretly, he wanted to avoid allowing the refugees to continue on to the United States. With the upcoming 1940 election, FDR feared that admitting Jewish refugees during a time when anti-Semitism was at its peak was not in his best interest. However, 734 of the refugees aboard had fulfilled immigration requirements and held quota numbers that would permit them to enter the United States permanently. The passengers returned to Europe, scattering amongst countries such as France, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. What became of each passenger is unknown, but it is likely many of them perished in the death camps once the Germans annexed
these countries after the start of the war. The SS *St. Louis* was the only ship that was prevented from docking in Havana.

Among the opportunities missed by the President, the failure to impede the wrongdoing of the State Department surmounts the rest. Excluding the years 1939 and 1940, the United States immigration quotas were never completely full due to the restrictions set by the State Department.117 Perhaps the most zealous enforcer of the United States immigration policy was Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long.118 He was a secret admirer of Hitler and Mussolini.119 During the Holocaust, Long deliberately tried to implement bureaucratic obstacles in hopes of keeping Jewish refugees from seeking visas.120 He used the pretext of spies being sent in the guise of refugees to tighten immigration requirements. The first administration official to learn of Long’s tampering was Morgenthau. When Morgenthau confronted the President, FDR defended the State Department.121 This points to a major flaw in the President’s leadership; it was well within his power to overrule Long. However, Long claims in his diary that FDR was in total agreement with the Department’s policies.122

Initial evidence about the ‘Final Solution’ was suppressed until October of 1942, denying credibility to the reports of mass killings.123 In August of 1942, Undersecretary of State Welles received a report verifying the Holocaust, but did not publicize it.124 He instead relayed the information to Rabbi Stephen Wise, the leader of the American Jewish Congress, and asked him to make public its contents. This mitigated the effects of the report because, coming from a Jew, “it would probably be accepted as a normal manifestation of ethnic solidarity and concern.”125 Had the information come from an agency of the United States government, public support may have been shifted towards the early rescue or the aid of the Jewish refugees.

The President believed that winning the war for the Allies was the quickest way to end the sufferings of the European Jews.126 Presented with evidence of the State Department’s inaction and deceit in refugee rescue, the President, though initially opposed, relented and created the WRB. The effort leading to the formation
of the WRB came from the failure of the Bermuda Conference. It intensified the rescue advocates’ call for action. The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe succeeded in introducing resolutions on the need for a new rescue agency in both houses of Congress. In his testimony at the hearings of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Long provided erroneous information on the number of refugees admitted and incorrectly claimed that IGC could negotiate with Berlin on the matter of refugees. Long’s duplicity and awareness of the upcoming presidential election and the impending congressional hearings on his inaction forced the President’s hand. However, the President installed Secretary of War Henry Stimson, knowing that Stimson would be wary about diverting military resources for refugee aid. The WRB was instrumental in rescuing more than 100,000 Hungarian Jews. Given this record, it is logical to ask—how many more could have been saved if the WRB had swung into action years earlier? Leon Kubowitzki of the World Jewish Congress and a leading figure in the rescue operation commented “The consensus of those who watched the work of the board was that had it been set up two years earlier, it might have spared humanity much agony and many, many lives.” Alexander Cretzianu, the Romanian minister who helped in the rehabilitation of the survivors of the concentration camps of Transnistria, told Ira Hirschmann, assisting in the rescue operation, “If this means so much to you why didn’t you come sooner? You could have saved many more lives.”

The United States’ decision not to carry out the plan to bomb the death camps has been analyzed by historians since the War. The bombings of the gas chambers at Auschwitz might have saved the lives of thousands of Hungarian and Slovakian Jews. There is no evidence that FDR even explored the possibility of diverting a few bombers from the bombing sorties to attack the lightly defended gas chambers. Opponents reason that bombing any German camp was immoral and would lead to deaths of inmates. However, to do nothing while people died in gas chambers was, by itself, immoral. Elie Wiesel, a well-known survivor of Auschwitz, wished the camp had been bombed saying “we were no longer afraid of death—at any rate, not of that death.”
It is hard to believe that a few sorties on concentration camps and rail lines would have delayed the ending of the war, or led to significant loss of Allied life or materials. At the time the bombing request was made, the Nazi war machine was experiencing severe shortages of materials and it was unlikely efforts would have been made to resurrect these camps. In any event, the President could have made the case that intervening to stop (or slow) the Holocaust was the morally right thing to do and in line with the basic tenets of democracy. It is evident that the reason bombing was never attempted had more to do with lack of leadership than military capabilities. Years later, McCloy admitted that FDR was opposed to the idea of bombing Auschwitz. When McCloy informed the President that Jewish leaders were pushing for the implementation of the plan, FDR was “irate” and explained that the plan could never be executed. By executing the plan, the President explained, opponents would have accused him of killing innocent people. But, under dire situations such as this, the nation needed a leader who was willing to do what was not only right for the country, but also right morally. Instead, FDR remained a politician protecting his power and authority. While bombing the camp might not have saved many lives, “the record of the Allies would have been brighter, and each person saved could have lived out a decent life.”

After the war, evidence surfaced that the Fifteenth Air Force Squadron based in Italy had both the range and capability to strike the Auschwitz death camp. Actually, Auschwitz was on the Allied radar not because of the death camps but because of the synthetic oil and rubber factory near it. In August of 1944, the Allied Air Force conducted its first of several raids on the factories around Auschwitz, less than five miles to the east of the gas chambers. The Luftwaffe [German Air Force] was a defeated force by early 1944, lacking in resources, and hence, picked its fights carefully—only defending essential targets that were threatened. Would the Luftwaffe have jeopardized the loss of aircraft to defend the gas chambers? Allied warplanes bombed German cities and many had no military or industrial targets. The main purpose for such bombing was to demoralize the population. A
more effective effort could have linked these bombings as a *quid pro quo* for organized killings in the death camps. This would have left the German population with stark choices: was the murder of Jews worth the destruction of German cities?

Why would a president who once said that, “The Presidency is preeminently a place of moral leadership” be found lacking in moral courage? To answer this question, it is important to examine the position of the country prior to the start of the war. There are some key events that kept FDR from doing what many wish he had done.

In 1933, the United States economy was in shambles as a quarter of its workforce was unemployed. The country was a Christian country and there was strong advocacy for isolationism. The country also began to see an increase in Jewish immigration. Already considered to be “different,” Jewish people were excluded in American society. They were not allowed to hold certain positions in office and in some extreme cases, were declined a job offer because of their ethnicity. Colleges limited the number of Jewish youth in their institutions. Hotels and clubs in various cities restricted Jewish people from entering. The prevalence of anti-Semitism in the United States was one of the major reasons for FDR’s inaction during the Holocaust.

In cases such as the *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht*, Americans were remorseful over the pain inflicted on European Jews, but in both cases, rejected the idea of accepting more refugees. In 1933, FDR gave his first fireside chat to the nation through the radio. Originally, the fireside chat created a way for the President to explain the banking situation and to instill hope in the people. With millions of listeners, waiting to hear his warm reassuring words, the fireside chats achieved success. FDR had 30 fireside chats from 1933 to 1944, discussing issues like the New Deal and informing the nation about the state of the war. What FDR failed to do, however, was to seize this opportunity to suppress the growing anti-Semitic views in the country. None of his chats stressed the importance of aiding the European Jews nor discussed the need to open the immigration quotas. When the proposal to
bomb the death camp at Auschwitz surfaced, the President did not inform the American people about the idea. Had FDR described how bombing the death camp would prevent more Jews from perishing, he might well have molded public opinion in a different direction.

Why did the American Jews not push FDR to act in favor of the European Jews? For one, the American Jews of the 30s did not have the political clout they do today. There was a lack of unity among them. While some had recently escaped the Nazi regime, many were first and second generation immigrants. They left their homes to escape turmoil and humiliation. Realizing that they were not accepted in their new society, American Jews found it difficult to adapt, and they discovered it was better to abandon their Jewish practices. Most Jewish voters “viewed themselves as patriotic American citizens rather than victimized Jews.” Some Jewish people refused to serve in prominent positions for fear of a backlash. Henry Morgenthau, Sr. declined to serve on the President’s Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. Some wealthy Jews opposed the nomination of Felix Frankfurter to the Supreme Court, reasoning that the appointment of Frankfurter along with sitting Justice Louis Brandeis, who was also Jewish, might lead to the charge that the Supreme Court was being disproportionately composed of Jews. Important Jews voted against Governor Lehman for fear of an anti-Semitic backlash. Even Morgenthau “didn’t want to stand out as a Jew.” As an ethnic group, American Jews felt a strong sense of kinship and loyalty to FDR. So enamored were the American Jews with the President that Congressman Jonah J. Goldstein remarked “the Jews have velten (‘worlds’ in Yiddish): die velt (this world), yene velt (the next world), and Roosevelt.” They were fragmented in their views on what should be done to help their brethren in danger and many felt that forcing the President’s hand might hurt their cause, both at home and abroad.

American newspapers are a major component in shaping the views of the nation’s people and in turn, the President’s views. During the course of World War I, many of the atrocities described were later proved to be false. Hence, when reports
of Nazi brutality reached the United States during the Holocaust, Americans were skeptical. After details of Kristallnacht were published, Americans held mixed views about the attacks—while some expressed remorse over the Jews’ plight, most reasoned that “things can’t be as bad as we hear.” In the SS St. Louis dilemma, American newspapers strongly expressed their reluctance to take in the refugees, fearing that for every refugee admitted, an American would be unemployed. Some columns recommended places for the Jews to be housed such as Dutch Guinea, the Dominican Republic, or “someplace in Africa.” It became evident that American newspapers reflected American sentiment in having little interest in providing refuge for the European Jews.

FDR was an avid reader of the nation’s newspapers. He held a strong interest in the press’ position on politics and was well-known for maintaining a close relationship with the press corps. In fact, twice a week, the President would meet with the press for a 15 to 30 minute press conference. It is unclear why FDR did not use his influence with the press to help support the idea of admitting more European Jews.

The President did not always bow to the wishes of the American people, but in 1935, when Congress passed the Neutrality Act and FDR signed it because of overwhelming public support, although he was wary of the country’s isolationist view. In one of his famous fireside chats, he urged Americans to be the ‘Arsenal of Democracy’. On September 2, 1940, FDR signed the Destroyers for Bases Agreement. Under this agreement, the United States gave old American destroyers to Britain in exchange for military base rights in the British Caribbean islands, Bermuda, and Newfoundland. When Britain asked the United States for military supplies for the war, FDR devised a plan to overcome the isolationist views of the country. In January of 1941, the President proposed a new military aid bill to Congress in hopes of providing military weapons and supplies to allies of the United States. Congress passed the bill, which became the Lend-Lease Act of 1941. Under the Act, FDR was to “Lend-lease or otherwise dispose of arms” to any country whose security was important to the
defense of the United States. Through an analogy, he explains his controversial plan to both the public and the press as a neighbor lending a garden hose to extinguish a fire in another neighbor’s home.\(^{163}\) Clearly, FDR had the ability and will to mold public opinion in his favor, but the President never used similar reasoning to intervene in the plight of European Jews. What was lacking was the political will and moral courage that the President exhibited in other affairs throughout his tenure.

It should be mentioned that some historians believe that FDR did more than enough to save the European Jews. The President knew that he could not let the war be defined as the war to save the Jews.\(^{164}\) The major difference between the President’s defenders and critics lies in the number of Jewish lives that might have been saved.\(^{165}\) Supporters of FDR’s decisions believe that in affairs such as the SS St. Louis, the plan to bomb Auschwitz, and the WRB, the President was constrained. For example, Robert Rosen in Saving the Jews says that in FDR’s decision regarding the SS St. Louis, the President was limited by the Good Neighbor Policy and the country’s interest in keeping Cuba in the anti-Nazi camp.\(^{166}\) Furthermore, forcing Brú to admit the passengers would result in condoning Benitez’s corruption. William Rubenstein in The Myth of Rescue is skeptical of the claims made by the WRB. In his eyes, the Jews of Transnistria were saved because the Romanian leader Antonescu, anticipating the defeat of the Axis, refused to participate in the Final Solution.\(^{167}\) Similarly, the Hungarian deportations of Jews to Auschwitz ended when Regent Horothy, the Hungarian leader, ordered a halt to them on July 9, 1944.\(^{168}\) Both Rosen\(^{169}\) and Rubenstein,\(^{170}\) along with other analysts,\(^{171}\) believe that the plan to bomb Auschwitz was technically unfeasible due to a lack of the precision required to bomb the camp. Even if the plan was successful, opponents say the Nazis would have resorted to other forms of killings. Nonetheless, these supporters of Roosevelt admit that “In hindsight, FDR may have missed opportunities for rescuing some people.”\(^{172}\)

In retrospect, we today can look back at the Holocaust and study the results of that systematic campaign of murder. FDR,
however, did not have the luxury of hindsight. No atrocities in history have equalled what occurred during the Holocaust. Journalist William Shirer who had covered and written extensively on the war said it aptly: “The Holocaust was recognized as the Holocaust only after victory opened up the death camps.”173 Hence, in FDR’s defense, he could not comprehend that Germans could carry out the murder of millions of European Jews in hopes of wiping them all out. That a nation nurtured on Bach, Beethoven, Goethe, and Nietzsche could descend into such an abyss in a few short years was unfathomable. FDR knew that he could not please every single American and that some tasks would be left unaccomplished so that efforts put into other tasks would result in success. As the President said in June of 1940:

Lincoln was one of those unfortunate people called a ‘politician’ but he was a politician who was practical enough to get a great many things for this country. He was a sad man because he couldn’t get it all at once. And nobody can...If you ever sit here, you will learn that you cannot, just by shouting from the housetops, get what you want all the time.174

Final Words

Since World War II, historians have pondered and debated whether the President truly did enough to save the Jews of the Holocaust. Some175 have concluded that FDR mistakenly focused on winning the war instead of aiding the Jews when the opportunity presented itself. Others have shared that FDR had no premonition that the events during the war would be “as steps on a road toward genocide.”176 But, what makes deciphering FDR’s actions difficult is that the President left no remnants of his personal thoughts. Historians have been making conclusions based on documents, letters, and accounts from other colleagues. There is no diary to better reveal the President’s views, no disclosures in any letters to understand his emotions, and no confidant to whom he shared all of his opinions.177
Throughout the course of his presidency, FDR proved to be a complex man. The President was like a book without a title. Beginning on one end, one will find a man of strong ideals, new ideas, and the extraordinary ability to handle grave situations with tact and skill. But, starting from the other end, one might find a bewildering figure—a man who took action in some occasions but gave little or no response in others, who opposed anti-Semitism during the heat of an election but failed to mitigate it through his years in office. FDR was such an enigma that even Morgenthau had difficulty reading him. There were some days when the two friends would act like schoolboys and pass letters to one another during Cabinet meetings, but on others, the President offered nothing more than a cold shoulder. During his 12 years in the FDR administration, Morgenthau never bought a house in Washington because FDR “never let anybody around him have complete assurance that he would have the job tomorrow.”

While FDR was an admired politician with both charm and craft, he was far from perfect. He was known to condemn anti-Semitism and the events of Anschluss and Kristallnacht, yet he ignored the position of Congress and the American people, respectively, and opened the doors to the European Jews. Yet, the President did not continue to act in a similar fashion at critical times in later years. At Evian he wanted the rest of the world to be a part of the solution. But he walked a fine line by not tampering with the nation’s restrictive immigration policies. While in 1938, FDR had the disadvantage of not knowing the full extent of atrocities committed against the Jews, the President’s inaction to achieve a solution at the Bermuda Conference was disappointing in that it continued the process of expressing concern for the refugees but rarely acting. The SS St. Louis serves as an example when FDR missed his chance to save lives during the Holocaust. He not only failed to nudge the State Department on the issue of immigration but also delayed the creation of the WRB as a separate entity and rejected the possibility of bombing the death camp at Auschwitz.

The White House’s failure to save more Jewish refugees has been used as historians as proof that FDR was indifferent to
their plight under Nazi rule. Saving all 6 million Jewish victims was an insurmountable task. The old saying goes, “he who is able to read tomorrow’s newspapers today can rule the world.” However, the notion that the President could not have saved a thousand or even 10,000 more European Jews is improbable. He was able to mold public opinion in achieving the goals of his administration like the New Deal programs (to which there was opposition), the Lend-Lease Act, and even flouting the Neutrality Act. Strong public opinion, however, kept him from acting in other situations. He could have used his fireside chats to reason with the American people about the underlying righteousness and moral significance of saving guiltless, defenseless civilians. Wasn’t this one of the basic tenets of the humanitarian ideals of democracy? What was it that prevented FDR from acting—political expediency, indifference, or indecision? We shall never know. But as the Babylonian *Talmud* says,

*He who saves a single life, saves an entire world.*
4 Bauer, pp. 81-82
5 Ibid., p. 82
7 Ibid., pp. 23-24
8 Ibid., pp. 23-24
10 United States Holocaust Museum (accessed July 26, 2010)
11 Bauer, pp. 86-87
12 Ibid., p. 88
13 Ibid., pp. 93-94
14 Ibid., p. 94
15 Ibid., p. 94
16 Ibid., p. 94
17 Herzstein, p. 49
19 Bauer, p. 89
20 Ibid., p. 91
21 Friedländer, p. 283
22 United States Holocaust Museum (accessed July 26)
24 Bauer, p. 193
25 Ibid., p. 204
30 Ibid., p. 221
32 Hamerow, p. 29
39 Ibid., p. 42
40 M. Ostrow, America and the Holocaust (Public Broadcasting Station, 2005)
41 Rosen, p. 12
42 Scholnick, pp. 63-64
43 Ibid., p. 73
45 Ibid., p. 87
46 Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945, p. 124
47 Rosen, p. 60
48 Ibid., pp. 60-61
49 Bauer, p. 108
50 Rubenstein, p. 22
51 Ibid., p. 108
52 Lipstadt, p. 38


Lipstadt, p. 94


Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*, p. 76


Ibid., p. 72


64 The number of refugees aboard the ship varies. In *The Voyage of the Damned*, the *SS St. Louis* is reported to have 936 refugees, whereas in *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry*, 933 passengers were aboard.

65 Thomas and Morgan-Witts, p. 12

66 Breitman and Kraut, p. 71

67 Konovich, p. 204

68 Lipstadt, p. 116

69 Breitman and Kraut, p. 70

70 Morse, p. 275

71 Rosen, pp. 91-92

72 Ibid., p. 95

73 Ibid., p. 95

74 Lipstadt, p. 117

75 Morse, pp. 281-282

76 Ibid., pp. 130-132

77 Breitman and Kraut, p. 9


79 Ibid., p. 5

80 Ibid. p. 221
Rosen, p. 342
Ibid., pp. 285-289
Breitman and Kraut, p. 203
Bauer, pp. 213-226
Persico, pp. 215-216
Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945, pp. 288-289
Breitman and Kraut, p. 219
Beschloss, p. 67
Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945, pp. 297-298
Levy, p. 105
Wyman, Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941, p. 44
Morse, p. 230
Lipstadt, p. 96
106 Lipstadt, p. 213
107 Ibid., p. 215
110 Rosen, p. 457
111 Hamerow, p. 385
113 Batista had close connections to United States businesses and government officials.
114 Morse, pp. 270-271
115 Ibid., p. 287
118 Breitman and Kraut, p. 128
119 Hamerow, p. 278
121 Breitman and Kraut, p. 189
122 Fred L. Israel, *The War Diaries of Breckinridge Long: Selection from the Years 1939 to 1944* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966) p. 152
123 Breitman and Kraut, p. 126
124 Ibid., pp. 149-150
125 Hamerow, p. 320
126 Breitman and Kraut, p. 219
128 Beschloss, p. 57

Ibid., pp. 291-292

Ibid., p. 292


Rosen, p. 386

Beschloss, p. 65

Ibid., p. 66

Ibid., p. 66

Ibid., p. 66


Wyman, Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945, p. 299

Rice, p. 166

Breitman and Kraut, p. 8

Hamerow, p. 133


Hamerow, pp. 245-246

Ibid., p. 247

Beschloss, p. 54

Rosen, p. xxi
Lipstadt, p. 9
Hamerow, pp. 224-226
Lipstadt, p. 38
Ibid., pp. 116-120
Ibid., p. 117
Ibid., p. 4
Burns, p. 256
O’Neill, p. 214
Burns, p. 440
Ibid., p. 457
O’Neill, p. 23
Rubenstein, p. x
Rosen, p. 93
Rubenstein, p. 187
Ibid., p. 195
Rosen, p. 479
Rubenstein, p. 177
Kitchens, p. 100
Rosen, p. 483
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Much larger was the Crusade of Nicopolis. In 1395, King Sigismund of Hungary (1387-1437) sent a desperate plea for assistance to the French court. Charles responded enthusiastically with money and men, and he urged his subjects to contribute their time and money to the cause. Both popes endorsed the proposed crusade and issued indulgences for whichever troops recognized them. Many Burgundian and German barons also joined the expedition. The troops rendezvoused in 1396 at Buda, where they were joined by Sigismund and his armies. It was an impressive force, one of the largest crusades ever assembled.

In a council of war, the King of Hungary argued for a cautious advance into Turkish territory, but the knights, eager to cover themselves with glory, would not hear of it. They wanted to follow the example of the First Crusade, fighting the infidel directly and winning conquests all the way to Jerusalem. The crusaders crossed the Danube into Bulgaria, where they took a few small towns. Next they laid siege to Nicopolis, a well-fortified town overlooking the Danube. Sultan Bayazid I (1389-1402) was prosecuting his own siege at Constantinople when he heard of Nicopolis’s distress. At once, he marched his forces to meet the crusaders. The two sides had armies of equal size but unequal quality. Unlike the Christians, Bayazid’s men were well disciplined and under a unified command. The sultan took up a position on a hill and waited. Sigismund again counseled caution, but the French and Burgundian knights insisted on an immediate attack. They also demanded the honor of leading the assault.

The thunder of the Frankish charge echoed in the valley outside Nicopolis as the brightly adorned knights galloped toward the Turkish lines. Quickly and decisively, they defeated the Turkish light cavalry. Beyond was a forest of wooden stakes driven into the soil to break up a charge. When the knights dismounted and began removing the stakes, archers approached and showered arrows down on them. The Franks fell ferociously on the archers, who ran up the hill to safety. On foot, the knights pursued them. As they crested the hill, they found an unexpected sight. Waiting for them was the sultan himself with his elite Turkish cavalry and Serbian army. The flower of chivalry turned tail and ran back down the hill, but it was too late. The Turks advanced in good order, crushing the crusading army. The defeat was total. Most of the crusaders were captured or killed; a few escaped into the woods. Those barons who could arrange ransoms were allowed to go free. The rest, about three thousand in all, were stripped naked, tied together with ropes, and led before Bayazid, where they were decapitated.

The destruction of the Crusade of Nicopolis was a devastating defeat for western Europe. Hungary lay virtually defenseless before the sultan’s armies, and beyond that was the German Empire. For the first time, Europeans began to consider seriously what life would be like under Turkish occupation, in a world in which there were no Christian states. Prophecies circulated that all of Europe would be conquered by the Turks before a great warrior would rise up to defeat them. Yet it was not a savior at home that spared Europe, but someone altogether different.

A Concise History of the Crusades, John F. Madden
New York, Rowman and Littlefield, 1999, pp. 196-197
THE FORGOTTEN INVASION:
CONFEDERATE FOREIGN-POLICY FOR
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN NEW MEXICO
DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Jonathan Frankle

As one of the most heavily analyzed events in United States history, few facets of the American Civil War remain so esoteric as to escape the eye of enthusiast and historian alike. An even smaller subset of events that live in obscurity may have decided the outcome of the war. Far from notable battlefields and personalities, thousands of miles from the Robert E. Lees, Stonewall Jacksons, and Gettysburgs historiography has made famous, Union blue and Confederate gray numbering in the hundreds rather than hundreds of thousands did battle for control of territory five times larger than the state of Virginia. In the deserts of present-day New Mexico and Arizona, then known collectively as the New Mexico Territory, a Confederate invasion threatened to render meaningless the efforts of far larger armies in the more easterly theaters. New Mexico was, at that time, still a fairly new territory to the United States, joining the Union in 1848 following the Mexican-American war. The contents of this vast desert land remained largely unknown, with many contemporary maps simply writing off vast sections of the territory as “unexplored.”

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the decades preceding the forcible restraint of remaining Native Americans in the region during the 1880s, tribes ignoring patriotic affiliation roamed the region, ambushing citizens of the Union, Confederacy, and Mexico alike. A winding path of forts stretching from western Texas through New Mexico provided only periodic safe havens on the trail from the southeastern United States into California. The New Mexico territory itself was, at that time, a formidable opponent for an army without an adversary, yet the Union and Confederacy diverted thousands of troops desperately needed east of the Mississippi to this seemingly useless theater. Why did Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy value the Southwest so greatly as to risk valuable soldiers and resources on a dangerous invasion to capture a massive desert? Why did the Union respond to the threat by flooding the region with brigades deeply desired in Tennessee and Virginia? What victory opportunities could possibly lie in thousands of square miles of unexplored, unforgiving wasteland?

Before considering these motives, one must consider what exactly constituted a situation that would allow for Confederate victory. Objectives that, when met, would allow a side to triumph in a conflict, were greatly different between the Union and Confederacy. For example, in order to win the Civil War, the Union would have to conquer the South and destroy its ability to continue to resist militarily, while the South did not necessarily have to conquer the North to emerge victorious. The condition resulting in victory that the South most directly pursued was crippling the North’s ability to continue to wage war, which they attempted to achieve through direct military engagement. This strategy for ending the war encompassed a variety of potential military situations, such as the destruction of all Union armies or the occupation of Washington D.C. The Confederacy pursued a second, parallel path to victory: European intervention. Many in the South hoped that European nations could be drawn into the conflict due to their particular national motives, providing external pressure to terminate the war. The French and British governments supported a weakened United States where North and South would negate the power of one another, the political
opposite of the threat a reunited nation would present. Should the Confederacy have demonstrated its ability to survive through a series of major military victories, outside countries could diplomatically recognize the Confederacy and threaten the Union with military intervention, effectively ending the war. Economic forces, such as the British textile industry’s complete reliance on Southern cotton and steadily increasing competition from the growing northern manufacturing centers, could force the war to come to a close due to external forces. For all European nations, the existence of a balance of power in North America similar to that between the Great Powers of Europe would supply a desirable conclusion to the slow emergence of the United States as a global force. Around these two general situations potentially resulting in victory, military and diplomatic, revolved nearly all Confederate strategic decisions during the war, including that to invade New Mexico.

Permeating the newly formed Confederacy was a uniquely Southern variety of the American desire to expand borders outward into new territory. Known as “Manifest Destiny,” the American belief that it was fate for the United States to expand westward to the Pacific Ocean and, as some said, southward and northward through Mexico and Canada respectively, had existed as early as the 1830s and by name since 1839. The Southern variety of Manifest Destiny, however, added several corollaries to this definition. The drive westward was fueled by a desire dating back to the first settlement of North America to expand the institution of slavery. Since colonial times, plantation owners sought out new territory in which to extend their profitable business in such cash crops as sugar, rice, and tobacco. Following Eli Whitney’s invention of the cotton gin, which made the financially valuable crop of cotton practically viable, southern desire for more land greatly increased. Due to the division of the nation into northern free states and southern slave states, the outlet for this expansion stretched westward, the only direction in which the borders of either region could grow. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 separated the western United States into free and slave states north and south of the 36-30 parallel, respectively. During the Civil War, the Con-
federate desire to stretch the institution of slavery westward took the form of plots to conquer adjoining territory. Confederates had plans to purchase Cuba, expand westward to California, and eventually stretch southward through the entirety of Mexico and Central America.\textsuperscript{10}

New Mexico, naturally, lay in the path of this expansion, leading the Confederacy to covet it as a pathway to greater dominion. This goal, however, would be a secondary objective to simply winning the war. Seizing territory for purposes of postwar economic extension would be of little use if the rebellion failed to result in the independence of the Southern states. With troops, materiel, and supplies already at a premium, adding another front to a war already threatening the Confederacy with collapse would make little sense. The Southern desire for territorial expansion, though a potent force in Confederate public opinion,\textsuperscript{11} could not have independently brought war to New Mexico; an additional commitment of such resources without the possibility of bringing strategic advantage could hardly seem logical to Confederate President Jefferson Davis or Confederate military strategist. Though many historians may be correct that Manifest Destiny inspired many individuals to volunteer for the campaign into New Mexico,\textsuperscript{12} the military decision to commit troops to the region could not have shared a similar impetus.

How, then, might New Mexico aid the South in achieving victory in the American Civil War? At that time, the territory was primarily known for newly-discovered mineral deposits of gold, silver, and copper, all three of which the Confederacy desperately needed.\textsuperscript{13} To provide a foundation for economic stability in the new nation, the Confederacy had released paper money backed by a bond issue.\textsuperscript{14} These bonds could be paid for using the various cash crops the Southern economy produced.\textsuperscript{15} Numerous progressive bond issues greatly inflated the Southern currency and left the government with a large supply of cotton but very little specie.\textsuperscript{16} This difficulty was compounded when the Confederacy, lacking in the manufacturing centers necessary to facilitate the production of materials of war, was forced to pay European nations in
its remaining specie for weapons and ammunition; the countries refused to accept currency that was steadily decreasing in value.\textsuperscript{17} Though their amount of specie was finite, the government would need to purchase weapons continually to replace those lost during campaigns. A final complication in the Confederacy’s financial situation was the voluntary cotton embargo it had imposed on Europe in an attempt to widen the damaging effects of the Union blockade and encourage European intervention in the conflict.\textsuperscript{18} This combination of circumstances, however, left the South in the precarious financial position where it had to finance a war without being able to trade its primary export to its largest markets.

The most effective way for the Confederacy to resolve its economic predicament while continuing to keep its soldiers well equipped would be to obtain more specie. While it would be easiest simply to halt the embargo and exchange the cotton for gold or silver, the Confederacy preferred to use it as a bargaining chip to inspire European intervention in the war. The rich mineral deposits in the Southwest\textsuperscript{19} provided a second possible avenue to satisfy Southern financial needs. Should the Confederacy take military control of the forts in the Southwest, they could use the mines already in place to bring an influx of much-needed hard currency for the Confederate government. Such a plan, however, would require a larger military commitment to protect the vulnerable mining areas from Northern invasion from the Union-loyal California, and from repeated Native American attacks on both camps and the minerals in transit east. In contrast to Manifest Destiny, the motive of obtaining hard currency would help to satisfy multiple conditions for victory. It could provide the Confederate government with stronger financial standing, increasing the likelihood that European nations would recognize the Confederacy, effectively ending the war. Militarily, additional specie would allow the South to continue to purchase and run the European arms, ammunition, and supplies necessary to continue to wage a successful war through the blockade. Such a Confederate victory would have an equally destructive impact on the Union, denying it access to mineral resources upon which it relied to continue its own war effort.
The capture of the New Mexico territory may have held another path for the Confederacy to obtain European recognition. Though the Confederacy was sometimes quite effective at running the Union blockade of Southern ports,20 Northern efforts still heavily restricted the South’s ability to import necessary products of war from overseas.21 Due to the cotton embargo, it also lacked the specie to pay for such items, even if the blockade were to disappear. The original purpose of the embargo had been to tempt the British, at that time the most powerful navy in the world, to send its ships to Confederate ports for the purpose of purchasing cotton.22 Southern leaders believed that the British economy would suffer severe damage if denied, and for an extended period of time. Though Europe had an overabundance of cotton when the embargo began, supplies started to run short in 1862.23 The British textile mills had run out of cotton, and in some locales unemployment ran as high as 40 percent.24 Cotton prices had skyrocketed, giving the Confederacy an opportunity to sell the cotton it had collected to pay for the bonds issued earlier in the war. In 1862 the South issued “cotton bonds” for sale in Europe at 25 percent below the market price of cotton, generating significant revenue.25 Though the Union blockade was relatively porous, allowing the South to smuggle cotton out and supplies in, many ships were caught, each time resulting in a large financial loss for the Confederate government. In an expensive war where even small amounts of capital were critical, such losses were devastating. The Confederate government began to consider other ways to ship cotton around the blockade. Should British ships attempt to enter Confederate ports in an attempt to purchase cotton, the United States Navy would have to let them through or risk British involvement in the conflict, both solutions that were satisfactory to the Confederate government.26 When severe unemployment failed to tempt the British Navy, the Confederacy next purchased British blockade runners which had a limited rate of success. It was at this point that the Confederacy considered seeking Mexican assistance.
The Union Navy began the war with 90 ships, 42 of which were out of commission when the blockade was declared. Though the blockade became far stronger as the war continued, its ability to cover all Southern ports effectively was not as complete as was desired. Therefore, rather than passing through the blockade, the Confederacy attempted to stretch it to the breaking point. The easiest way to achieve this goal would be to gain access to Mexican ports along the Gulf of Mexico. The United States also recognized this as a possibility, leading both nations hastily to attempt to establish friendly relations with Mexico. The Mexican government itself had only been in power since 1859, when liberal reformers led by president Benito Juárez defeated the conservative leader, Miguel Miramón. The United States government had provided immediate diplomatic support to the Juárez regime, a debt which the Mexican government repaid with warm relations toward United States ambassador Thomas Corwin during the Civil War. The Mexican government, anti-slavery in its outlook, worked closely with the United States to diplomatically limit the Confederacy. It appeared that a victorious Confederacy might look southward to expand its territory, threatening the very existence of the Mexican state. The United States conversely feared a Mexican-Confederate alliance, leading the Union and Mexico toward one another for mutual protection. Confederate Ambassador John Pickett built upon this Southern diplomatic failure with Mexico. Not only did Pickett lack the diplomatic skill and tact that the United States ambassador had mastered, but he repeatedly showed disrespect for the Mexican government and culture. Pickett firmly believed that the Confederacy should simply invade and conquer their neighbor to the south, a conviction he repeatedly emphasized in telegrams to Richmond. He failed to realize, however, that the office of the United States ambassador intercepted and forwarded all of his communications to the Juárez administration. Pickett was jailed and expelled from Mexico after drunkenly assaulting another diplomat, and then he proclaimed his allegiance to the rebelling Mexican conservatives. Confederate plans to cooperate with the Juárez government in order to bypass the Union blockade were thwarted. In confirmation of this failure, Juárez gave the
Union troops transit rights through Mexico, precisely what the Confederates had desired for themselves.

In 1862, the Mexican situation changed dramatically. Napoleon III, Emperor of France, orchestrated an invasion of Mexico by France, Britain, and Spain to collect the debts owed to his half-brother by the Miramón regime. While Spain and Britain returned their armies to Europe as they had publicly promised, France conquered Mexico and installed its own government, eventually ruled by the Habsburg duke Maximilian. Where the United States had formerly maintained cordial relations with the Juárez government, the French were now openly taking advantage of the Civil War to violate the Monroe Doctrine, infuriating the Northern government. Napoleon III threatened that, should United States government interfere with the installation of Maximilian, the French would recognize the Confederacy, confirming Northern fears that Mexico could serve as a stepping stone to European intervention in the war. For the Confederacy, however, the French conquest of Mexico failed to provide access to the much-needed ports. Napoleon III had designs of his own, which included attempts to annex several Confederate states into his new American empire. As the Confederacy had similar plans for deconstructing Mexico, good relations between the South and Maximilian’s regime never materialized.

During the slow retrogression of Confederate relations with Mexico, a new opportunity for circumventing the Union blockade emerged: the Pacific ports of California. Such an outlet would undermine the blockade by stretching it around Cape Horn in an ocean where the United States Navy lacked a presence. In order to achieve such a strategic position, however, the Confederacy would first need to conquer the New Mexican region, before then providing a reliable method of transportation through the unforgiving desert, across the Rocky Mountains, and to the coast. In a region occupied by scattered tribes of Native Americans who ambushed wagon trains headed West and defended by a line of Union occupied forts, controlling of the territory would be a daunting endeavor. Still, to a money-starved Confederacy desperate for a port that would enable unmolested trade with Europe,
such an option would seem appealing. After gaining control of the region, the Confederacy would need to construct a method of swift transport through New Mexico to allow transportation of cotton to Pacific ports for export. Jefferson Davis, Confederate President and former United States Secretary of War under President James Buchanan in the late 1850s, had studied precisely this problem. Midway through the previous decade, the United States House of Representatives had ordered a study from the War Department on various options for building a transcontinental railroad to connect the Midwest with the Pacific coastal center of San Francisco. In his study, Davis concluded that, for a variety of reasons, the southern transcontinental railroad would be both cheaper and easier to build than other options. At approximately $70 million, it would be approximately $45 million cheaper than any other potential route while requiring 200 miles fewer. The route itself would cost to transport one ton of freight 50 percent less than any other route, and the less-hilly terrain would reduce the total mileage of the line. The arid quality of the land would, for a vast portion of the route, obviate the need to build a railroad bed, saving labor and time. In addition, the U.S. government’s purchase of the southern portion of the New Mexico Territory in 1853 from Mexico, thereafter known as the Gadsden Purchase, provided a pass through the Rocky Mountains for the railroad, alleviating the time-consuming procedure of reshaping mountains with switchbacks. Against Davis’s recommendations and in deference to the Gadsden Purchase, the United States government selected a northerly route and elected to begin building the railroad during the Civil War. The wartime construction of the northern transcontinental railroad required six years on a far longer and more labor-intensive route; a southern line would take significantly less time with an equal commitment of resources, providing the Confederacy with a viable and efficient path to the Pacific ocean, and the thus to the global marketplace. By releasing a steady supply of cotton to the world, the Confederacy might hope to achieve the protection of foreign recognition and an influx of military aid in the form of much-needed specie, potentially satisfying these two conditions for Confederate victory.
In the eyes of Confederate politicians fighting financial crises to keep their young nation from collapse, such dreams of mineral wealth and a route for transporting goods to Europe unmolested might seem a viable option. In late 1861, under orders from President Jefferson Davis, Colonel John Baylor led a brigade formed in Texas and poorly masked as a “buffalo hunt” into Union-controlled New Mexico. Baylor recognized the importance of the territory for the Confederacy, stating that “the vast mineral resources of Arizona, in addition to its affording an outlet to the Pacific, makes its acquisition a matter of some importance to our government.” After conquering Mesilla and forcing the Union army to retreat north of the Rio Grande River, Baylor declared the southern half of the New Mexico territory to be the Confederate territory of Arizona and appointed himself as governor. Confederate Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley had assembled his own brigade with the intent of expanding Baylor’s victories northward and westward to the Pacific Coast. Jefferson Davis had cautioned him, however, that he would have to gather his own supplies and troops due to the Confederacy’s already severe shortage of resources. As Major T. T. Teel recalls, “President Davis had authorized [Sibley] to enlist three regiments in Texas…His campaign was to be self-sustaining; President Davis knew that Colonel John R. Baylor…had captured large supplies.” After defeating Union Colonel John Canby at Valverde outside Ft. Craig, Sibley continued northward to Albuquerque, leaving a formidable force within the fort on his path of retreat. After capturing cities in his path through the territorial capital of Santa Fe, Sibley suffered the destruction of his supply train in a surprise attack at the battle of La Glorieta Pass. With an army blocking his path northward and a still Union-occupied fort to his south, Sibley was on the brink of complete military defeat. He had no choice but to retreat back into Confederate Arizona without supplies, resulting in the death of a large portion of his brigade at the hands of the adverse environment. As Major Teel had come to realize, “the territory which we occupied was no storehouse.” Thousands of Union troops from Colorado, California, Kansas, and the Dakota Territory flooded the forts in the Southwest with
defenses the Confederacy was unable to counter. Never again would the Confederacy have the men or money to attempt to retake the area. Soon after Sibley’s failed invasion and subsequent expulsion from the region, Vicksburg, the last Confederate fortress on the Mississippi River, would surrender its garrison, ending hope of victory through the West by dividing the Confederate government and cotton plantations from the southwestern mineral deposits and Pacific ports.

For the Confederacy’s idealistic dreams of finding an unexpected strategy that would lead the struggling nation to victory, New Mexico was a focus of hopes. Its rich mineral resources could provide financial stability while its land could serve as the corridor between Confederate plantations, open Pacific ports and increase national spirit through Manifest Destiny. These goals, while feasible in isolation, would have required a far greater commitment of resources than the Confederacy could manage during a war. Jefferson Davis could not provide Sibley any support in the region, indicating the severity of the shortage of Confederate resources. Had the Confederates had the supplies and men to storm the region with a corps rather than a single brigade, they might have been able to maintain control. Even then, with thousands of Union troops en route to the region, a constant supply of reinforcements would be necessary to hold the area long enough for meaningful transportation or mining operations to resume. Still further manpower and capital would be necessary to construct the southern route of the transcontinental railroad; even then, the railroad would not be completed before the fall of Richmond, Petersburg, Atlanta, and the collapse of the Confederacy. Such investments would come at the expense of defending Vicksburg and the corridor from Washington to Richmond, crippling Confederate attempts to protect interests more central to the survival of the nation. The dream of swift victory in the Southwest would have to remain just that, a fantasy impossible to achieve under the conditions of total war along a 3,000 mile border. In 1862, Confederate victories in the East and Midwestern theaters suggested that military victory might be possible, likely promoting a degree of optimism in Richmond that gave Davis little fear of initiating a
campaign that would consume no Confederate resources and have the slight possibility of ending the war. But Sibley’s campaign was just that—a free gamble with long odds and little hope of winning the ultimate prize: a victory in the War Between the States.
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CHINESE SOCIETY DURING THE GREAT LEAP FAMINE

Eliza Fawcett

The Great Leap Famine in China was the most extensive famine in human history. It had the highest death toll of any documented famine and ranks as one of the greatest peacetime tragedies in history. The defining—and unusual—feature of the disaster was that it was man-made. Lasting from 1958 to late 1961, the famine claimed the lives of approximately 36 million\(^1\) to 45 million\(^2\) people, and was largely due to the Great Leap Forward (GLF) policies implemented by the Communist government at the time. In 1958, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Tse Tung, essentially reorganized the entire Chinese countryside into “people’s communes”—large amalgamations into group living quarters, communal dining areas, and other basic centers. This meant that peasants had to turn over private property, household furnishings, cookware, and most all other tangible goods in order to help supply the communes. The goal was not simply to ensure collective life—a foundation of the communistic pursuit—but to lead China towards a heaven on earth, the ultimate Communist dream. However, the effects of these policies and the way in which they were executed had unintended consequences, as the population started dying from lack of food—due to inadequate grain

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distribution—and privation ravaged the countryside. Abuse was very frequent in the communes, and thousands died at the hands of cadres. One would expect the victimized population to have rallied against the authorities. However, the Chinese people did not muster the collective will to reject the destructive GLF policies because the Communist propaganda was remarkably effective, and the extent of the suffering during the famine was absolutely devastating and all-encompassing, depriving the peasant population of basic social, political, and humane needs.

In the 1950s, by Western standards, China was a backward country: plagued frequently by famines and floods, lacking in modern technology, and unable to support its massive population with basic food distribution, sanitation, and transportation. Inadequate levels of government support also characterized Chinese society. Natural disasters were ubiquitous and exacerbated the government’s inefficient distribution of services. But China was prone to adversity: an American journalist in the 1950s wrote that “Flood, famine, and disease are ancient horsemen who have ridden China’s earth from days beyond historic memory.” The combination of both constant destructive environmental events and a low level of progress across the country painted a portrait of a troubled, ineffective country in the eyes of the West. China’s innovation and technological advancements were hindered by a lack of basic necessities supporting the public, and these problems would take “superhuman effort” and a long time to solve. In contrast, at the same time in America, nutritious food was relatively inexpensive and easy to procure; the polio vaccine had just been developed and had become a great triumph in the medical field; and a booming automobile industry and President Eisenhower had created the Interstate Highway System, which led to suburbanization. China, therefore, was still a fairly primitive state, whose massive poor population struggled to extract but a little sustenance out of daily life, living precariously within the margins of poverty and utter ruin.

Although the Chinese public was accustomed historically to “eating bitterness,” living conditions were little improved since
the Revolution of 1949, especially among the poor. China, at
the time, was neither stable nor efficient in supporting its own
people. The subsequent devastation during the Great Famine was
unprecedented, which made the government’s response terribly
inadequate. But very little opposition to the GLF developed due
to the government’s restrictive political system and the CCP’s
popularity.

The political system that enabled the CCP to consolidate
and monopolize power was totalitarianism. With this dominating,
unopposed political strength, the Party manipulated the very
realities of life and disguised unsatisfactory results with gilded
exaggerations. The CCP politics consisted of a complex system
of superiority, where kowtowing instantly to seniors was standard,
and “acting the tyrannical master” to those with inferior positions
was customary as well. Totalitarianism created a publicly consis-
tent society, where, as author Yang Jisheng—who is likened to a
Chinese version of Alexander Solzhenitsyn—describes, of those
who “went into the totalitarian system, all came out as conjoined
twins facing opposite directions: either despot or slave.” Mao,
the supreme leader, was regarded with a godlike reverence, and
his plans were accepted with unanimous approval—the rare cases
of doubt were kept private, for fear of being labeled a “rightist”
or suffering punishment. Mao rode on the shoulders of an im-
mense amount of support, and even the peasants who lived a life
of penury thought of him with the kind of superlative respect
usually reserved for saints. The Chairman was untouchable, and
within the Machiavellian government that China maintained, such
highly concentrated power could easily become reckless, especially
when under a draconian hand.

Under totalitarian Communist rule, Chinese society evolved
into one of surveillance and submission, and was tainted by recur-
rent violence. Political views were publicly uniform, reinforced by
Communist propaganda, and characterized by an unquestion-
ing belief in Mao. The totalitarian state through which China
controlled its people left no room for another view, and yet the
government remained paranoid about contrary opinions. In an
attempt to keep the entire public under close scrutiny, the government used the militia, youth organizations, and other individuals to report on happenings in their respective communities. Thus, the Chinese government was separated into what political scientist Frank S. H. Yee described as “secret” and “open” divisions: the purpose of the former seemed to be the repression of rebellious acts, the “suppression of the so-called reactionary elements.”

The government created a complex system of investigation that centered on the examination, interrogation, and documentation of common people, including the speech, behavior, and opinions of individuals: ordinary citizens, not just criminals, delinquents, or political enemies, were questioned and monitored in depth. If the government discovered unsatisfactory information or views, the consequences could be ruthless: apparently, some were buried alive after government interrogations. Those used to report on the public were often working-class people, who were used as “claws” by the government and were “trained by the police to act as informants.”

The militia, comprised of mostly lower to middle class citizens (armed with knives or guns), was essential to this constant public scrutiny, and in general the militia used severe tactics to fulfill their tasks: in a single year, in a single province, 67,000 people were beaten to death by the local militia. The militia was not the only one carrying out the social monitoring, however. Much of the Chinese youth was—and still is—involved in the “Young Pioneer” program, a Communist organization geared towards the younger generation whose general purpose was to instill Communist values and promote CCP support. At the time, though, in order to help the militia, the organization took a police-like approach to its responsibilities. The primary focus of the Young Pioneers’ duties was the “three vigilances,” which targeted criminals, arsonists, and spies. Thus, even when real lawbreakers were the focus of investigations, it was the youths, along with the militia, who were monitoring society and reporting back to senior officials about their findings. Therefore, through the paranoia of state officials, China became twisted into a police state, where suspicion pervaded daily life, and the simple concept
of human trust was distorted and betrayed behind a screen of tense, constant public scrutiny.

The GLF was conceived by the CCP as a response to China’s economic shortcomings. It was a complex and highly ambitious series of production goals that emphasized the advancement of industry and agriculture simultaneously, requiring the peasants to bear the burden of achieving often-unrealistic targets. The original concept of the GLF was based more on an ideal rather than on progress from a strong and stable current situation. The basic idea was not Mao’s own, but came from a Soviet model: in 1957, Nikita Khrushchev gave a speech in which he stated that he hoped to surpass the United States economically within the next 15 years. Mao vowed to do the same as Khrushchev, only his goal was to have China eclipse the United Kingdom’s economy, but in 15 years as well. However, while the Soviet goal emphasized the development of industry only, Chinese officials realized that in order for China to feed its massive workforce, extensive agricultural progress was required as well. Thus the concept of “social mobilization” was developed—a solution that forced enormous groups of citizens (mostly peasants) to march around the countryside in massive, military-like campaigns, completing large agricultural and industrial projects. The only way China could come close to achieving any of its impressive goals quickly was to make full use of its massive population: “The basic strategy of the GLF,” writes Roderick MacFarquhar, “was to substitute a plentiful factor of production—labor, for a scarce one—capital.” China’s affluence was not in manufactured goods, but in people: China possessed an enormous labor force equipped with primitive tools and insufficient resources.

Another primary aspect of the GLF was the creation of uniform production goals that were applied to the entire country, not individual regions. Through the concept of “simultaneous development,” the National Programme for Agricultural Development expected all provinces to achieve relatively similar production standards, even without a stable foundation for the desired commerce. Therefore, provinces with previous emphasis
on steel output became burdened with an enormous amount of pressure by leaders suddenly to generate an equal agricultural yield, and vice versa. With the hopes of increasing the countrywide agricultural output of the GLF, the government invented a series of methods for planting and harvesting crops, which were deemed absurd by experienced farmers. However, they were in no position to protest. These experimental procedures included tremendously deep plowing (the most extreme cases boasted of 12 feet deep furrows\textsuperscript{18}), close planting, and, in retrospect, generally ineffective use of the land.\textsuperscript{19} At one point, on the topic of close cropping, Mao announced that “with company [seeds] grow easily… [and] will be more comfortable.” Villagers knew, though, that this method would, as one recalls, “suffocate [the seeds] to death!”\textsuperscript{20} Local farmers avoided expressing contrary opinions—however rational—since such ideas would have been branded as “rightist.” The strain on local farmers mounted as they struggled with what little resources they possessed to produce extravagant harvests. In some cases, when the provinces failed to meet their required goals, local leaders simply distorted the facts in order to satisfy senior officials. The GLF developed into a plan that relied on false statistics: as Party members became exceedingly concerned with pleasing Mao himself, the reality was often brushed aside. For the CCP, the goal was to promote the GLF and to “Strike the battle drum of the Great Leap Forward ever louder!” as a rallying poster proclaims; hindrances would not be tolerated.

The original industrial project which evolved into the GLF’s first goal was a massive irrigation scheme which included the construction of reservoirs, dykes, and other irrigational structures in the hopes of better supplying grain fields across the countryside. This immense project was soon implemented across China, and in a single month, 30 million workers were added to the workforce: the country was making substantial progress and the future looked relatively positive.\textsuperscript{21} But the projects, though seemingly successful, were far from perfect: barely two years after their initial construction, more than 200 dams and reservoirs fell apart due to poor construction—\textsuperscript{22}the laborers were not trade-specialized and thus the quality of the rapidly built developments was weak and gener-
ally inadequate. The conditions of the labor were brutal, and the construction of these reservoirs and dams was fueled by simple human power, since China’s industrial technology was primitive and even draft animals were scarce. Industry on a smaller scale was also conducted within the villages themselves. For example, villagers were encouraged to build backyard furnaces in which pots, pans, and other metal objects could be melted down to form a cheap sort of steel. This brittle metal was then turned over to the government to further the advancement of construction projects, even though the quality of the steel was quite poor.

The idealistic objectives of the GLF were stimulated by Communist propaganda, not by the people themselves. As historian Frank Dikötter writes, the GLF “was a military campaign fought for a Communist paradise in which future plenty for all would largely compensate for the present suffering of a few.”23 The foundation of the GLF was unstable, being supported by an ill-equipped labor force, limited resources, and highly impractical (and falsely reported on) goals. China’s government had high expectations for the GLF, which contrasted starkly with the reality of the limited resources.

Collectivization, the process in which the government claimed all individuals’ personal property, had one of its most powerful expressions in the opening of communes across the country. In order to supply the communes, the amalgamation of tangible, personal resources was required, and in the spirit of Communism, people surrendered kitchen objects, food, furniture, clothing, and even doorframes (to be used as firewood) to the government. CCP propaganda essentially marketed collectivization as fueling the “utopian” Communist dream. The amount of goods assembled by the government was immense: in Macheng, 10,000 pieces of furniture, 3,000 hogs, and 57,000 kilos of grain were taken from peasants and sent to the local commune.24 It seems that as collectivization spread throughout the country, all personal property was beginning to go towards the development of the communes: “Even shit had to be collectivized!” exclaimed one exasperated leader.25 In order to promote the communes, the
government became increasingly insistent on lessening individual security. Cooking at home became a crime, and the militia who patrolled the streets would watch for smoke escaping from chimneys—the perpetrator was fined, and if caught again, utensils and food were confiscated, forcing them to defer to the communes for nourishment.26 As collectivization progressed, the CCP became even more ruthless in pushing people towards the communes—even though many gladly attended. In one province, government officials cut off the entire grain supply to an uncooperative village, leaving the inhabitants with no option for food other than the local commune.27 Families who refused to eat at the communes in favor of retaining normal life were dubbed “rich peasants”28—though Sun Yat-sen noted that, “In China what is called inequality between poor and rich is only a distinction between the very poor and the less poor.”29 One of the major obstacles that lay in the way of collectivization, the CCP believed, was the basic family unit. As Yang Jisheng writes, “The ultimate goal was to eradicate the family.”30 Without the support of a family to help provide food and maintain an ordinary level of joint assistance, people were forced, again, to turn towards the communes for basic aid. The CCP was trapping its own citizens within the constraints of collectivization on social, economic, and political fronts; the common people were being deprived of control over their very own lives. By promoting collectivization, the government was essentially suppressing any suggested opposition by denying individual authority; and without personal power and free will, resistance towards a totalitarian government was a daunting and remote prospect.

“The people’s commune” represented the tangible epitome of rural Communist life. The people would provide labor, working in the countryside in military-like units, and in turn, the government would supply food, shelter, daycare, and life’s necessities. Collective life, and the “socialism we are building right now…nurthes the sprouts of Communism,” said Mao; communes were thus a necessary step towards the Communist utopia.31 In 1958, Liu Shaoqi, the vice-chairman of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), sought to establish communes within two or three years, and focused on developing a communal system where food, clothes,
shelter, medical care, and other essentials would be provided for all people free of charge. The communal model had its roots in military traditions, and Mao championed the idea: “A real spirit of Communism comes when you raise a giant people’s army.” In fact, while en route to labor projects, the work unit would be accompanied by patriotic banners, songs, and appropriate military rigidity. The original “people’s commune” ideal was based on past successes in the Xushui County, where the local leader, Zhang Guozhong, commanded irrigation campaigns in a military style (the workers slept in tents, ate together in canteens, and had no contact with the village); for just one campaign, 100,000 men were recruited, constituting about one-third of the county population. Mao started officially promoting the “people’s commune” model in the summer of 1958, and the first commune opened in the Henan province soon afterwards, serving as a nationwide catalyst for the launching of communes in all regions. This meant that most all private property was turned over to the government, to make room for the building of the communes and to support the Communist ideal of equalization. Mao was pleased with the communal progress throughout China, announcing, in May 1958 that “the people’s commune is great!” By the end of 1958, the entire Chinese countryside had been combined into 26,000 communes, each of which held about 20,000 former households. All the materials obtained through the mass collectivization campaigns furnished, supplied, and fueled the communes, which were a mix of communal dining halls, living quarters, daycares, and nursing homes. The main priority of the communes, however, was not social life, but manual labor: daycare was provided so that mothers could join the labor force, not for the good of the children. Families were separated, since men and women had different jobs and sleeping quarters were based on work shifts; husbands and wives only saw each other at meal times. The individual person could claim very little of their own at this point, from private property to family security: “Now that we have communes, with the exception of the chamber pot, everything is collective, even human beings,” said Zhang Xianli, the Party Secretary in Macheng. The Chinese people were living truly collective lifestyles, whether by force or
with true belief in the Communist ideals; but the utopian dream, as the leaders enthused, was, through collectivization and the communes, supposed to be inching ever closer.

The Chinese Communist propaganda was the most significant tool used by the Party to help further support and thus the development of the GLF policies. The impressive scenes painted onto posters around the towns, the rallying slogans delivered by loudspeakers throughout the villages, and the alluring dreams of global distinction proclaimed by the propaganda, were, for many, never questioned. In fact, they were embraced with a fierce sense of certainty. China was a peasant state, a country supported by a massive poor population that could boast of very few tangible possessions. Part of the creation of the labor force was based on forcible obligation, but most of the public consumed the propaganda with intense earnestness, believing that the Communist dream would pick their deteriorating country out of its constant struggle with adversity and in line with the rest of the world. With Communism, the government promised, China would become a paradise. For the depleted masses of laborers, for the peasants who pulled plows themselves across sun-burnt fields, for those for whom privation was a relentless force of daily life, paradise was quite appealing. The government distributed propaganda—the "hallmark of the Maoist state"—throughout the country with a perpetual vigor, pasting posters with distinct images of abundance in all provinces, which promoted China’s advancements and mocked other countries: "the industry of the Fatherland develops by leaps and bounds, and frightens England so that it trembles with fear!" exclaimed one poster. The ability of the CCP to feed the public—and themselves—with enormous amounts of propaganda was, again, due to totalitarianism: "The government’s monopoly on information," writes Yang Jisheng, "Gave it a monopoly on truth." Jisheng, who grew up during the GLF, who lost his father in the Famine, and who was a very active Communist supporter as a youth (he was a “Young Pioneer”), writes that he was fooled by the propaganda even while his father starved to death: "My heartfelt support for the Great Leap Forward was not only due to the inspiration of Communist ideals, but also to ignorance."
The CCP succeeded widely in the promotion of its propaganda, so much so that when the realities of the Famine started appearing, the senior officials were too proud—and oblivious—to accept the reports, even while the public suffered: as Frank Dikötter writes, the people had to “reconcile a vision of utopia trumpeted by the media with the everyday reality of catastrophe on the ground.”

Therefore, while propaganda hastened the arrival of country-wide support of the GLF, the plan started weakening, and the grand “vision of paradise” was difficult to sustain; as a consequence, millions more died as the government struggled with a deep reluctance to confront the devastation.

As collectivization spread throughout the country, communes started opening, and the Great Leap Forward began to show promising signs of activity. The government encouraged people to overeat and trumpeted their glamorous exaggerations in order to win the support of the population. This excess, however, did not last long before signs of the population. This excess, however, did not last long before signs of the famine started to appear. A bumper harvest that appeared in the summer of 1958—the year when the first communes opened—was received by the government with a sense of impending victory, and was regarded as a harbinger for future successes of the GLF. In the communes themselves, cadres promoted overeating, sometimes forcing people to eat more than necessary. The supply rooms in the communal kitchens were full of grain and food, people were flocking to the communes, and the government was confident that China was secure enough to begin the road towards utopia by indulging in feast-like abundance. Mao was at the forefront of this lavish display of plenty: in August 1958 he declared that, “You should eat more. Even five meals a day is fine!” Villagers, whose furniture, food, and labor had been invested at great cost to the communes, took Mao by his word, and joined in with the collective gorging: food rapidly consumed in a day could have fed a village for half a week. In communes, disgusting amounts of excess food were, if not eaten, wasted: an inspector in one of the communes reported that wasted rice clogging a sewage vat was 30 centimeters thick—this squandering seems even more grotesque, once signs of the Famine started to appear. The crucial problem with the gorging was that the enor-
mous amount of food consumed was not being replenished quickly enough—or at all; by spring 1959, many communes had eaten through their entire grain supply. But overindulgence was not only confined to food; excess and hasty decisions plagued grandiose construction plans in China, especially in preparation for the 10th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution (Khrushchev was to be the primary guest). Huge numbers of houses, old buildings, and streets were ripped apart to make room for glamorous palaces and ceremonial buildings—but these projects often seemed to be monuments to inadequate design, poor construction, and depleted resources. Staggering amounts of money were used to decorate cities and build grand buildings, with heavy emphasis on quantity rather than quality. Many of these projects were never completed, leaving empty, half-finished construction sites littered across the cities. Large numbers of people lost homes during this phase of destruction and rapid rebuilding, leaving them homeless in the dead of winter; some ended up living on roadsides, in temples, or even pigsties. Once again, the peasants paid for the price of government-funded grandeur, as homes were substituted for paper palaces. The initial gorging that occurred within the first couple of months of the GLF’s success was soon to turn to utter scarcity; the killing Famine was gathering strength.

The mass population of Chinese peasants, who worked to complete the Great Leap Forward projects, had their families, homes, and lifestyles torn apart for the sake of collectivization. More than any other social group in China, they suffered horrifically during the Great Famine. The causes of the Famine can be attributed to an overall lack of food, insufficient grain distribution, and inconsistent harvest rates (despite the government’s embellished reports). People started dying within the first year of the opening of the communes due to scarcity from the preliminary overconsumption of grain supplies, but as the months progressed the situation quickly revealed itself as a nationwide catastrophe. The reason why the Famine managed to touch practically every region in China was due to the broad reach of the communes: there was not a single province in China without a commune and not a single commune that did not suffer heavily from the Famine.
While the entire Chinese population suffered during the three years of the Famine, the peasants suffered the worst by far; it was usually the local CCP leaders and their families who survived at all, since they had greater access to supply rooms and were better provided for in general. Peasants in rural villages were at even more of a disadvantage to their urban counterparts, since the government prioritized the urban workforce over the agricultural labor group because as Liu Shaoqi said, “If these people [of this city] don’t get enough food, industrialization cannot be carried out.”

What the government did not seem to realize was that without an able peasant population, the industrial laborers would not receive sufficient food, and thus industry would not advance. The reality of the villages during the famine was absolutely horrendous, as people struggled to survive. Within the first year or two of the Famine, all the living creatures (livestock, dogs, rats, and birds) were eaten or died of starvation themselves, and an eerie quiet descended on the rural communities. Wild grasses, leaves, the bark from trees, and occasionally dirt were consumed in the absence of real food—nature was reduced to the most primitive forms of a nutrition source. Cannibalism was fairly common, especially in 1960, the last year of the Famine, when there was absolutely nothing edible left to scavenge up. Many would eat the flesh off of dead bodies strewn along the roadsides, since no one had the strength to bury them. “That winter,” recounts a survivor, “Human beings became wolves.” A few rare cases of familial cannibalism ensued, but only in the worst scenarios—often the moral consequences of eating one’s own family members led to suicide. Some people would simply hide the dead body of a relative from the government in order to continue receiving the extra food ration. A more popular way of getting additional food, used mainly by the peasants toiling in the fields, was to eat the grain kernels raw straight from the plants. This procedure was fairly widespread and amounted to a substantial decrease in harvest rates: in the Jiaoxian county, 90 percent of grain was missing come harvest, due to premature crop-eating. Patience and the concept of saving for a later use were discarded during the worst of the famine, as people struggled to live hour-by-hour. Taking advantage of any
way to claim food was necessary for basic life survival: as a phrase
in the Guangdong province went, “What you eat is yours, what
you don’t eat is anyone’s.” During the Famine, peasants truly
were reduced to beasts—gaunt, starving beasts—the conditions
were so brutal that many could barely walk down the street due
to hunger, let alone organize any form of protest.

Besides the hunger, besides the accounts of cannibalism
and of peasants eating bark to stay alive, some of the most sicken-
ing reports from the Great Famine involve abuse. The communes,
ideally centers for care and support, quickly evolved into places
ruled by tyrannical and draconian cadres, who rapidly resorted to
inflicting appalling types of punishment on the peasants. In a time
when most of the peasant population was starving to death, many
CPC officials continued to eat well (mainly by hoarding food),
and persisted in abusing the already suffering peasants on often
petty terms—apathy and compassion vanished as power was twisted
towards supporting ruthless measures. Reasons for chastisement
included lack of cooperation by the peasants, inability to work
(due mainly to starvation or sickness), or being caught stealing
food; the consequences were brutal. Whippings, beatings (while
suspended in mid-air or on the knees), extreme exposure to cold
or heat, or cutting off tongues or ears were common. A favorite
violent method used by the cadres was called ‘stir-fried beans’, in
which the victim was beaten continuously by an encirclement of
perpetrators. Humiliation was used as a chastisement as much
as violence was: being paraded through the streets—or forced to
work—naked was common and women were primary victims of
these kinds of punishments—especially for the sordid amusement
of the male cadres. In one day in 1958, 300 women in a com-
mune were forced to labor in the fields, naked, for no apparent
reason; if China was supposed to be on the path to paradise, this
kind of behavior on the part of the cadres was hardly benefiting
the cause. Millions of potential babies were never born because
women were having fewer children due to the hardships, and be-
cause many cadres effectively killed the children within pregnant
women by working them to death. With the combined damages
of the adversity of daily life, starvation, and frequent abuse, the
Chinese population was dying by the millions. The government was mercilessly whipping a distressed, dying population into bitter anguish, leaving the grand ideals of the GLF behind in a dusty, bloody trail of abuse and privation.

In a time of utter scarcity, the fight for survival often boils down to theft alone, and was done by cadres and peasants alike. However, the question becomes whether these actions can be explained as criminal acts, or considered as a subtle form of protest against an inadequate government. The most common form of theft was stealing from the state granaries within the communes: in the Xiangtan region, 800 cases of grain were recorded stolen in a single winter. Perhaps the thieves were simply motivated by hunger. However, by this point the government owned all the food, since private property had been abolished. Thus, stealing any food was effectively stealing from the government. In other words, in terms of stealing, there was no choice between raiding privately-held food storage rooms as opposed to government-owned ones. Frank Dikötter argues that reasons for pilfering were purely for the satisfaction of basic needs: “But these survival techniques pervaded the social spectrum, so much that if these were acts of ‘resistance’, the Party would have already have collapsed.” Perhaps this is true, since theft at the time was “endemic,” but he later writes that some of the only ways for the common person to endure this terrible adversity was “the ability to lie, charm, hide, steal, cheat, pilfer, forage, smuggle, slack, trick, manipulate, or otherwise outwit the state.” While “outwit[ting] the state” does not necessarily imply protest, it seems to be synonymous with resistance—namely not kowtowing to government directives, however subtle such resistance may be. Whether or not they are deemed a form of resistance, acts of theft were ubiquitous, especially in the last years of the Famine. Shipment handlers would discreetly siphon out handfuls of grain through bamboo shafts from bags in transit and then filter sand back in to give the false appearance of quantity. Trains passing through the depleted countryside were constantly robbed—in one scenario, 4,000 peasants converged on a train, stopped it, and made off with every “detachable portion of property.” It will remain ambiguous whether every case of theft
was prompted by hunger or by government-induced hatred—motivations are difficult to record in these types of scenarios—but stealing certainly did happen across the country, and became a dominant means of survival.

For most of the suffering population, the government was untouchable. The majority of the people did not blame the widespread deaths on the government. But some of the people managed to form direct protests, or voice contrary opinions, even though the consequences were often deadly. Full-fledged protestor organizations usually never progressed farther than a name (“Love the People Party”\textsuperscript{63}), but there were rare occurrences of rebellious action, which the army or militia quickly put down. While the government tried to ensure that, as Yang Jisheng writes, “All views diverging from those of the Party were nipped in the bud,”\textsuperscript{64} when people spoke out against destructive government policies, or took action against Party leaders, punishment was brutal, if not resulting in death. Typically perpetrators of anti-government acts were, if not executed on the spot, sent to labor camps for countless years. But there were no doubt quite a number of direct protests: in one region of provinces, there was a rebellion approximately every month for a year.\textsuperscript{65} While some people tried to hide their resentment towards the government, there were many brutally blunt acts as well. In one province, starving villagers hacked a corrupt leader to death with cleavers.\textsuperscript{66} Arson was also a ubiquitous form of protest—it was an effective and obvious way of expressing resentment towards the local CCP leaders. It is recorded that in one province, some villagers poured oil on a statue of Mao and then set it on fire.\textsuperscript{67} But resistance was not that frequent throughout the three years of the Famine—the people were struggling to stay alive, not wasting energy trying to organize protests. The government was a menacing force, and the ability of a dying peasant to resist was quite limited.

Even while peasants were dying in huge numbers throughout China, many leaders simply refused to believe the statistics or the visual realities. They were too caught up in the propaganda themselves to consider blaming the deaths on government policy.
However, a few toured the countryside and gathered information, but for a long time Mao would not contemplate backing down from his idealistic “vision.” The peasants thus continued suffering for the sake of the government’s prestige. The Great Famine did not arrive quickly: signs of the Famine were noted as grain supplies started decreasing, but some leaders refused to confront the deaths. Many loyal CCP officials wanted to continue pleasing Mao with glamorous reports, despite the realities—and described the exact opposite of the true situation in their provinces. One CCP leader went as far as to declare that people in his commune were eating more than the Chairman himself: “Now what do you think of the communes? Is it a bad thing for people to get fat?” There seems to be mixed information about how many genuine reports Mao actually received—whether he simply ignored the facts or received false information. One CCP leader was told by Mao, after detailing the devastation in his community, that the report was a “valuable lesson.” A few senior leaders—specifically Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, and Deng Xiaoping—eventually began to realize the extent of the Famine, and early in 1961 sent out search parties to give sincere reports on the devastation. This task was harder than it appears, since many local leaders tried to conceal the devastation by painting mud and straw on bark-stripped trees and trying to minimize the visual ravages of the Famine. But blind denial could only continue for so long as the death toll increased: after more than three long years of suffering, approximately 45 million deaths, and the destruction of the Great Famine still heavy in the air, the Chinese government grudgingly allowed some of the policies to be reversed: the communes were slowly put out of use and individual land returned. However, the de-collectivization of the countryside was not a hasty process: Mao was still resistant about fully dismantling the utopian Communist dream. Liu Shaoqi (who was later purged from the government during the Cultural Revolution) was forcefully persistent, though, telling Mao that, “History will record the role you and I played in the starvation of so many people, and the cannibalism will be memorized!” The irony of this statement is all too poignant, since modern Chinese textbooks simply refer to the Great Famine as “three difficult
Eliza Fawcett

years.” Survivors remember the Famine painfully, but for some, the government is not even blamed for the deaths and loyalty to the CCP remains despite the devastation these individuals endured. One woman—Mrs. Liu—who scholar Jasper Becker interviewed, actually believed that Mao had effectively saved the population after he directed food to be distributed across the countryside by the army, even though he was theoretically behind the deadly policies in the first place. Only 80 people out of her village of 300 survived the Famine, and yet she is thankful for Mao’s apparent good deeds. the propaganda, therefore, was remarkably effective, for it twisted Mao into a savior rather than the perpetrator of the devastation—and the CCP managed to maintain much of its support.

Although millions were dying, the Chinese government was extremely clever and successful at deceiving the rest of the world about the realities of the Famine. It went to great lengths to ensure the concealment of this horrific segment in history. Even while the peasants died in masses behind closed doors, foreign reporters naïvely continued to laud China’s exemplary endeavors. Yang Jisheng writes of many journalists, who, upon touring the Chinese countryside in the years of the Famine, were absolutely unaware of the terrible devastation, and wrote in newspapers back home that China was making terrific progress and was a thriving country. This deception is due to the fact that Chinese officials would plan the entire trip: the peasants they would meet, the sites they would see, the things that would be said to them. Everyone they saw was well-fed, well-clothed, and well-situated. Thus it was not only many of the peasants themselves who were deluded, but the West as well: China had truly been turned into a hidden, forbidden nation.

The GLF failure and the resulting famine, later referred to as the Great Leap Famine, cause the Chinese people immeasurable suffering, produced an immense death toll, and effectively destroyed much of the countryside. Nevertheless, an important consequence was that some of the survivors emerged with a different perspective on the government. Propaganda was consumed
more skeptically, government commands were taken with caution, and especially during the Cultural Revolution, much of the truth behind the GLF policies surfaced. Though some people—like Mrs. Liu—recall Mao fondly, the government certainly did lose support, especially from inhabitants of the provinces that suffered the worst losses. Politically, the failure of the GLF proved that such highly concentrated—and widespread—collectivization was not effective, and eventually, this realization “laid ground for industrial innovation” by means of encouraging specialized occupations. But the sheer destruction that occurred during the horrendous three years of the Famine still lingers in the memories of the last few survivors. Their stories must speak for the tens of millions who died, so that, as in the words of Liu Shaoqi, “such an error will never be committed again.”
Endnotes


2 Frank Dikötter, Mao’s Great Famine (New York: Walker & Co., 2010) p. 325

3 “Communism Tackles China’s Age-Old Problems,” The Hartford Courant (13 November 1950) p. 9

4 Ibid., p. 9


6 Jisheng, p. 770

7 Ibid., p. 775

8 Ibid., p. 775


10 Yee, p. 88

11 Ibid., p. 85

12 Dikötter, p. 294

13 Yee, p. 86


16 MacFarquhar, p. 26


18 Becker, pp. 144-145, image caption

19 MacFarquhar, p. 27

20 Mao as quoted in Dikötter, p. 40
21 Dikötter, p. 27
22 Ibid., p. 27
23 Ibid., p. 70
24 Ibid., p. 54
25 Li Jingquan as quoted in Dikötter, p. 52
26 Dikötter, p. 54
27 Ibid., p. 54
28 Ibid., p. 54
29 Sun Yat-sen as quoted in Becker, p. 24
30 Jisheng, p. 773
31 Mao as quoted in Dikötter, p. 49
32 Dikötter, p. 49
33 Mao as quoted in Dikötter, p. 50
34 Dikötter, p. 50
35 Ibid., p. 47
36 Mao as quoted in Dikötter, p. 48
37 Dikötter, p. 48
38 Zhang Xianli as quoted in Dikötter, p. 51
40 Shambaugh, p. 26
41 Jisheng, p. 775
42 Ibid., p. 759
43 Dikötter, pp. 228-229
44 MacFarquhar, p. 26
45 Mao as quoted in Dikötter, p. 54
46 Ibid., p. 54
47 Dikötter, p. 55
48 "Great Leap Forward," in Encyclopedia of Modern Asia
49 Dikötter, pp. 163-165
50 Ibid., p. 53
51 Liu Shaoqi as quoted in Jisheng, pp. 771-772
52 Becker, p. 1
53 Mrs. Liu as quoted in Becker, p. 4
54 Becker, p. 40
55 Dikötter, p. 52
56 Jisheng, pp. 774-775
57 Dikötter, p. 258
58 Ibid., p. 224
59 Ibid., p. 209
60 Ibid., p. 197
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Just as the Holocaust expressed the quintessential nature of National Socialism, so did the Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia (1975-1978) represent the purest embodiment of Communism: what it turns into when pushed to its logical conclusion. Its leaders would stop at nothing to attain their objective, which was to create the first truly egalitarian society in the world: to this end they were prepared to annihilate as many of their people as they deemed necessary. It was the most extreme manifestation of the hubris inherent in Communist ideology, the belief in the boundless power of an intellectual elite guided by the Marxist doctrine, with resort to unrestrained violence in order completely to reshape life. The result was devastation on an unimaginable scale.

The leaders of the Khmer Rouge received their higher education in Paris, where they absorbed Rousseau’s vision of “natural man,” as well as the exhortations of Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre to violence in the struggle against colonialism. (“One must kill,” Sartre wrote. “To bring down a European is to... suppress at the same time the oppressor and the oppressed.”) On their return to Cambodia, they organized in the northeastern hills a tightly disciplined armed force made up largely of illiterate and semiliterate youths recruited from the poorest peasantry. These troops, for the most part twelve- to fourteen-year-old adolescents, were given intense indoctrination in hatred of all those different from themselves, especially city-dwellers and the Vietnamese minority. To develop a “love of killing and consequently war,” they were trained, like the Nazi SS, in tormenting and slaughtering animals.

Their time came in early 1975, when the Khmer Rouge overthrew the government of Lon Nol, installed by the Americans, and occupied the country’s capital, Phnom Penh. The population at large had no inkling what lay in store, because in their propaganda the Khmer Rouge promised to pardon servants of the old regime, rallying all classes against the “imperialists” and landowners. Yet the instant Khmer Rouge troops entered Phnom Penh, they resorted to the most radical punitive measures. Convinced that cities were the nidus of all evil—in Fanon’s words, the home of “traitors and knaves”—the Khmer Rouge ordered the capital, with its 2.5 million inhabitants, and all other urban centers to be totally evacuated. The victims, driven into the countryside, were allowed to salvage only what they could carry on their backs. Within one week all Cambodian cities were emptied. Four million people, or 60 percent of the population, suffered exile, compelled to live under the most trying conditions, overworked as well as undernourished. Secondary and higher schools were shut down.

Then the carnage began. Unlike Mao, whom he admired and followed in many respects, the leader of the Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, did not waste time on “reeducation” but proceeded directly to the extermination of those categories of the population whom he suspected of actual or potential hostility to the new order: all civilian and military employees of the old regime, former landowners, teachers, merchants, Buddhist monks, and even skilled workers.
India has undergone a dramatic transformation within the last two decades to become an economic powerhouse to be reckoned with in the world economy. Its rise was the result of a paradigm shift from socialist central planning to a neo-liberal market economy. After being mired in its own socialist red tape for several decades, the shock from the 1991 balance-of-payments crisis resulted in a pattern of economic liberalization that unleashed the potential of the nation. Innovative reforms, ushered in by Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, were characterized by the privatization of the economy, the deregulation of the market, and promotion of foreign trade.

The success of these reforms has resulted in large increases in foreign direct investment, the creation of a rising middle class, the elevation of hundreds of millions of its citizens above the poverty level, and a high growth rate that has spurred rapid development.

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However, the Indian economy still faces daunting challenges and possible pitfalls, such as endemic corruption, rising inequality, aging infrastructure, and widespread poverty. Two decades following the reforms, it appears that the future of India almost certainly lies with becoming a major economic power; however, the magnitude of its success depends on its ability to respond to new challenges and to adapt to a changing world.

An Economic History of Modern India

The reforms have fundamentally altered the economic system of India, which can best be understood within historical context. Prior to the reforms, India operated on a socialist-leaning system of development led by the state and characterized by self-dependence. Following the reforms, India’s liberalized economy was the result of privatization, and it now possesses an internationally encompassing viewpoint on development. The economic history of India can be divided into three distinct phases: the socialist era, the reform era, and the post-reform era; analyzing the changes and continuities among these three periods of history reveals the scope and effects of the economic liberalization of the Indian state.

The Socialist Era

India has existed as a state in its current form only since gaining independence from the British in 1947. The newly founded state, led by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1947–1964), modeled its constitutional republic and parliamentary system on Great Britain and its socialist economic system on the Soviet Union. Due to a history of colonialism and foreign exploitation, India was eager to embrace a pattern of self-reliance. With a predominantly agricultural economy yet a strong desire to industrialize, Nehru selected the Soviet Union’s economic planning process, adopting the Five-Year Plans and the “socialist pattern of development.”
The resulting economic system was one in which the state was the principal agent of change in economics, and it was characterized by the centralization of power, state ownership of the commanding heights of the economy, and a strong emphasis on import substitution instead of export promotion. While this protectionist approach insulated the Indian economy from outside shocks and promoted domestic business, it also had the unintended consequence of isolating India from outside innovation. Thus, what Nehru ultimately oversaw was the implementation of a monopolistic public sector characterized by inefficiency and a constrained private sector held back by strict price and production controls, resulting in a relatively meager 3.2 percent growth rate commonly referred to as “the Hindu rate of growth.”

The strict economic controls imposed required all industries to register with the government and obtain a license for the founding or expansion of all undertakings in manufacturing; furthermore, the government asserted its right to inspect all businesses and regulate the price, supply, and distribution of the products manufactured. The end result was the founding of what C. Rajagopalachari, a prominent Indian politician, termed the “license-permit-quota raj,” which not only hampered private enterprise but also introduced pervasive corruption into the Indian economic system. The result of the license-permit raj, since largely abolished, can still be felt in India today. The country was recently ranked by the World Bank as 134th in “Ease of Doing Business” due to large start-up costs and the maze of permits which are required by the government.

These socialist policies not only continued, but made things worse, under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1966–1977 and 1980–1984), who was responsible for nationalizing the banking industry. This change in the allocation and regulation of capital flows from the private to public sector led to greater restrictions on lending, resulting in an increase in the cost of capital and a subsequent decrease in the rate of investment and economic growth. The advancement of regulation and the encroachment of the license-permit raj further deterred foreign investment, a
stance best exemplified by Indira Gandhi’s expulsion of multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola and IBM in the late 1970s. However, this also allowed for the rise of Indian entrepreneurs within the domestic realm, but even then, conglomerates were strictly limited in their size and wealth by the caps imposed by the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act of 1969 (MRTP).

With the dawning realization that the economic status quo was causing the nation to fall behind, especially in comparison to the Four Asian Tigers, the beginnings of economic change within India came under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (1984–1989), who initiated a series of reforms in 1985, allowing for greater levels of imports and exports, a reduction in taxes, a fivefold increase in the limit set by the MRTP Act, and a relaxation of the elaborate license-permit raj, all of which contributed to a higher rate of economic growth in India. However, Rajiv Gandhi’s government also borrowed money in excessive amounts. Economic crisis meant the value of the rupee began to decline due to political instability following Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination in 1991 and a loss of investor confidence resulting from current-account imbalances. To counteract the decline in the value of the currency, the Reserve Bank of India expended its foreign exchange reserves, depleting them to dangerously low levels.

The Reform Era

Following two brief terms with Prime Ministers V. P. Singh and Chandra Sekhar Singh, India elected P. V. Narasimha Rao (1991–1996) as Prime Minister. Rao began to initiate sweeping reforms in response to the impending economic disaster. In an already volatile economic situation, a spark in the form of the rapid escalation of oil prices during the Persian Gulf War was all that was necessary to ignite a balance-of-payments crisis. India had only enough foreign reserves to afford two more weeks of imports, and with no foreign lenders willing to finance their current-account deficit, a significant portion of the country’s gold reserves was pledged as collateral for a $2.2 billion emergency loan from the
International Monetary Fund—a desperate attempt to prevent the nation from defaulting.\textsuperscript{15}

The reform process was initiated on July 1, 1991. In the first few days alone, Finance Minister Manmohan Singh slashed the value of the rupee by 20 percent in a move to boost exports, and Commerce Minister P. Chidambaram lifted restrictions on imports and abolished export subsidies.\textsuperscript{16} Under Rao, the two then proceeded to dismantle both the trade and industry sides of the license-permit raj, cutting miles of red tape and fighting corruption in a massive structural overhaul that set a trend towards deregulation and delicensing.\textsuperscript{17} Over the next two years, public industries such as banking, airlines, and petroleum were opened to private investment. The MRTP Act that had constrained expansion was largely eliminated, and institutional investors were allowed to purchase shares in Indian companies. Coupled with a 16 percent reduction in income taxes, the end result was an increase in employment and a decrease in inflation.\textsuperscript{18} At a rate of nearly one reform per week, the cogs of the Indian economy began to mesh again.

In strong contrast to the earlier socialist system, the new economic system advocated an export orientation, a reduction of state involvement in industry, and the removal of entry barriers to multinational capital.\textsuperscript{19} The revision of the protectionist stance to foreign involvement was accomplished by increasing the allowable levels of foreign investment, abolishing restrictions on the importation of raw materials and capital goods, and significantly reducing customs duties.\textsuperscript{20} In the implementation of the convertibility of the current-account in 1993, the rupee was also freed from its fixed and overvalued exchange rate and allowed to fluctuate at the market-determined rate, save for occasional intervention by the Reserve Bank to dampen volatility.\textsuperscript{21} However, the new economic system contained many loopholes and lacked significant regulation, resulting in manipulation in the early years of its implementation.

In 1992, the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) was hit with a massive $230 million scam, the result of poor regulation that
allowed for the exploitation of government securities, which resulted in a 17 percent drop in market value and threatened the entire reform process.\textsuperscript{22} After facing opposition from brokers to reform the BSE, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) decided that a new stock exchange should be created. This led to the founding of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), which proved to be a significant improvement over its predecessor in terms of efficiency, since it used a far more transparent electronic system.\textsuperscript{23} Since the NSE cut out manipulative brokerage practices and had an all-encompassing national reach, it had a major impact on the pace and depth of the reform of Indian capital markets, and ultimately the competition it generated forced the BSE to reform.\textsuperscript{24}

The Post-Reform Era

The 1996 elections proved to P. V. Narasimha Rao that successful macroeconomic reform alone would not necessarily result in reelection. Rao took several hits in various corruption scandals and was blamed for the failure to prevent the 1992 destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya.\textsuperscript{25} Hindu militants had sought the destruction of the mosque, situated at the location of the birthplace of the Hindu warrior-king Rama, so a Hindu temple could be erected in its place.\textsuperscript{26} A religious ceremony organized by several right-wing Hindu groups turned into a mob of more than 200,000 who tore down the mosque, sparking riots and inter-communal violence between Hindus and Muslims that killed more than 2,000.\textsuperscript{27} As a result, Rao suffered an embarrassing defeat, and he was followed by several brief governments led by the United Front and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the BJP ultimately becoming Prime Minister (1998–2004). However, the momentum of the reform movement was not lost. The Hindu nationalist BJP continued the liberalization of the economy under Vajpayee.\textsuperscript{28}
India was able to pass largely unscathed during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis that had devastated the economy of countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, and South Korea. Ironically, Manmohan Singh’s reluctance to reform the rupee to convertibility on the capital account insulated the nation from greater instability in the Asian region. The Reserve Bank of India was able to stabilize the economy and contain excess volatility when necessary by intervention; through monetary policy measures and restrictions on capital flows, the exchange rate of the Indian rupee was for the most part unaffected when compared to other East Asian currencies that had seen rapid devaluation during the crisis.

One of the first actions Atal Bihari Vajpayee took upon assuming the position of Prime Minister in 1998 was a series of nuclear tests known as Pokhran-II, which came as a shock to the international community. The defiant and bold tests brought nationalism and pride within India, a series of nuclear tests by Pakistan in reaction, and sanctions from the United States that proved largely ineffective on the Indian economy. The detonations ignited fear of a nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan, two bitter rivals that had fought several wars in their tumultuous history, with defense spending and arms buildup being a large drain on their respective economies to this day. Foreign aid to India largely ceased, and India was denied almost all access to international credit, which had the most detrimental effect on the Indian economy. However, these sanctions did not last long, and they were lifted in the following years.

The elections of 2004 brought back the “dream team” of economic reformists, headed by none other than Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2004–present) himself, who immediately pushed for stronger relations with the United States and pledged to continue with incremental reforms of the Indian economy. Dr. Singh has presided over the largest periods of growth within the Indian economy to date. The effects of globalization can be felt throughout India, and the country has seen a dramatic expansion of its service sector amidst the information technology
(IT) boom that began in the late 1990s. Unlike China, which uses low-cost manufacturing exports to fuel growth, India has embraced a consumption-driven model with a heavy focus on high-tech services. The current state of the economy of India can be largely attributed to the neo-liberal economic reforms that Manmohan Singh and P. V. Narasimha Rao pushed through two decades earlier.

According to data from the World Bank, GDP growth in India has averaged 6.5 percent since the initiation of the reforms in 1991; the most recent figures for GDP growth are 9.1 percent with a GDP per capita (adjusted for PPP) of $3,300. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India has risen from under $75 million in 1991 to nearly $35 billion. While the living standards have risen sharply in post-reform India, this does not necessarily indicate that everyone is doing well. The percentage of people living in poverty under $2 and $1.25 a day (in terms of PPP) is 75 percent and 42 percent, respectively. While the Indian economy is now among the largest in the world, the country still faces many challenges and has a long way to go in terms of development to realize its true economic potential.

Consequences of Economic Reform

While economic reform has brought newfound wealth to India, this has not been distributed equally among the people. At one end of the spectrum, hundreds of millions have been empowered by reforms that have led to the rapid rise of the service sector and the emergence of a new middle class. At the other, hundreds of millions more still remain in the predominantly agrarian, rural, and destitute areas of India that development has been unable to touch and where the future still remains bleak. The government has been struggling to cope with the growing demands on the state and the inability fully to reform the economy. As a result, the liberalization of India has led to a unique set of consequences for India; growing wealth has led to new opportunities for the Indian...
people, but the nature of development has led to new economic rifts that have left many behind in poverty.

Opportunities and Riches

The economics of reform have driven rapid economic development within India. Growth within India can be largely attributed to a booming services sector, the result of human capital and technological savvy combined with an entrepreneurial spirit. A new economic status quo has brought far more social mobility to a traditionally immobile caste system. Combining these two factors, millions of individuals have been lifted from poverty into a rapidly growing middle class. The greatest assets to the Indian state have proven to be the flourishing service-focused economy and the newly rising middle class, which make it likely that India will be ready to weather the challenges ahead.

The main drivers of the Indian service sector have been information technologies (IT) and communication. Within recent decades, India has witnessed the rise of the new information technologies powerhouse to fuel economic growth. The key to this boom lies with the growing success of higher education in India, with world-class polytechnic universities such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) providing the necessary human capital to promote high-tech services. Furthermore, a culture of education and learning has reinforced this vehicle of social mobility. With the liberalization of India, many multinational corporations have flocked to India, coexisting with domestic companies led by Indian entrepreneurs. Exports in the IT sector have risen from $6.5 billion to $50.4 billion within the last decade alone. Given the strong educational background and steady flow of graduates, India has become and will likely remain one of the foremost nations in software services for the foreseeable future.

India’s domestic IT companies, such as Infosys Technologies, Wipro Technologies, and Tata Consultancy Services, are strong competitors even in the world economy. The domestic IT
market is forecast to grow at a rate of 25 percent a year, the result of healthy Indian entrepreneurship efforts. This transformation has led to the rise of new opportunities for advancement in India. Nandan Nilekani, CEO of Infosys Technologies, notes that “[his company] is symbolic of this moment of possibility for India. [It employs] sixty-six thousand employees and the average age is twenty-seven…It’s about achieving on merit. It’s a company about the future, not about the past.”

While thriving domestically, the country has also become a hotspot for multinational companies seeking lower labor costs. The growth of the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector has been the result of increasing literacy in English combined with the relative affordability of Indian IT workers. In the words of Nandan Nilekani, “Outsourcing has shown [India] can compete in the world and win.” Major companies such as IBM, Cisco, and Intel have invested billions of dollars and have hired thousands of employees in India, which is slated to become a top outsourcing destination for jobs in technology, human resources administration, and business management as they move to the developing world. Therefore, the new IT phenomenon is being driven both by domestic and foreign companies.

In communications, the Internet has begun its rise to prominence in India, with more than 60 million Internet subscribers as of 2009. The country has seen an increase in the popularity of Internet cafés, and websites such as Rediff.com, founded by private entrepreneurs, keep not only India, but also the Indian diaspora, connected. Correlated with the rise of the Internet is the increase in the sales of personal computers, with Acer, Lenovo, HP, and IBM all competing alongside domestic PC companies to satisfy a growing demand for 20 million computers per annum. Along with telecommunications, the Internet is making contributions towards the interconnectivity of India.

Telecommunications is a massive and rapidly growing industry in India, with the number of cell phones owned exceeding an astounding 670 million mobile phones. Part of the success
can be attributed to the government regulatory agency, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), for facilitating rather than deterring growth with the commonly-seen regulations and restrictions. Healthy competition between telecommunications companies has seen major provider Reliance Communications slash its prices to under two cents a minute to call anywhere in India—not to mention the large number of individuals using SMS text messages. The widespread prevalence of mobile phones has revolutionized business and communications within India. These economic developments have spurred the growth of the service sector, which currently accounts for more than 50 percent of India’s GDP.

Communications and information technologies have contributed greatly to the creation of a new middle class by bringing increased social mobility to a traditionally rigid caste system. One example is the story of Shashi Kumar. Hailing from a small village in Bihar, the 29-year-old received an education from his parents and was able to go to college, and he is now a junior executive in a call center; he resides in a nice flat, owns a car, and is able to send his children to be educated at a private school. Kumar is an example of education being an upward force in society that has led to the rise of the new middle class within India, which numbers around 200 million and is rapidly growing.

The growth of the middle class has been the result of the lower classes being brought out of poverty through new opportunities in education and employment. In a decade, the Indian economy has lifted nearly 100 million people out of absolute poverty, an astounding feat. This new middle class is driven by the forces of consumption and entrepreneurship, with many owning TVs, bicycles, and radios and living in brick or cement houses. Their rise is a testament to the increased levels of social mobility in post-reform India, and the middle class will likely become the dominant class in the near future given the continuing rise in GDP. Strong values towards education, shown through the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology and Management, will reinforce increased social mobility in India.
In India’s rising high-tech workforce, the need for human capital—competent, talented, and knowledgeable workers—provides jobs for graduates, generally in the IT and BPO sectors, and is a significant contributor to increased social mobility. Other sectors, such as finance, help employ those with lesser levels of education. Economic growth, especially in the private sector, is helping provide vital jobs and new opportunities to Indians that were unprecedented two decades ago. By unleashing the productive potential of the Indian workforce, especially in the high-tech information and communication sectors, India is poised to become a major player in the world economy.

Obstacles and Pitfalls

Economic development within post-reform India has not been without its flaws. The forces of globalization and development have not acted equally throughout India, bringing rising inequality to its citizens exacerbated by inflation and the rising cost of living. While a minority of the population finds itself getting wealthier, the majority of India has yet to feel the positive effects of reform. The government has been struggling with problems of corruption, and continued reform has met opposition from entrenched interest groups. Major problems that confront future Indian growth include the failure to adequately solve poverty among the lower class, the negative effects of globalization, and the limitations of the government to respond to the challenges India faces today.

One of the most serious problems facing India is a large income disparity between the wealthy and the poor. India is home to more billionaires than any country in Asia—Forbes counted 36 in 2007; however, 900 million of its citizens earn less than $2 a day, a third of the world’s impoverished peoples. The gap between the rich and poor is great, the result of a failure of trickle-down economics. Wealth remains largely concentrated in the hands of a small elite that comprise only a fraction of a percentage of the total population, while 42 percent of Indians live on under $1.25
a day in large slums outside major cities and in other suboptimal living conditions without access to potable water or basic sanitation.\textsuperscript{58} 

The impoverished people of India live in absolute squalor; 770 million people have no access to sanitation, 170 million must drink fetid water, and nearly half of all children are malnourished.\textsuperscript{59} As a result of its budget, the Indian government is ill-equipped to help deal with these cases of extreme poverty. The rich are largely able to ignore the poor, and their newfound wealth leads to extravagant displays and spending. Regarding the poor, Alex Perry of \textit{Time} noted one wealthy Indian as saying that “I don’t want to talk about that other India.”\textsuperscript{60} Instead, the rich and wealthy of India choose to live their opulent and lavish lifestyles while blissfully ignoring the plight of the poor and impoverished who far outnumber them.

In strong contrast to the story of Shashi Kumar, Jaie Bhambruy is a resident of Patilpada, a small settlement 200 kilometers north of Bombay. She is a 32-year-old mother of two one-year-old twins who Alex Perry visited in 2004. Her children were malnourished and were too weak to breastfeed, so she visited the hospital; after a day, she says, “they sent us away [so as] not to embarrass the government,” with the doctors claiming that “[they] have been told not to make an issue of malnutrition.”\textsuperscript{61} Jaie’s story is not uncommon; she is among hundreds of millions still in extreme poverty, largely untouched by the positive effects of the economic reforms.

As India enters into its “demographic dividend,” where the largest portion of the Indian population is of working age, it will be vital that unemployment be kept to a minimum. However, this will be a challenging proposition; current unemployment in India is estimated between 8 percent and 10 percent, and it will be hard to achieve low unemployment levels as the workforce rapidly grows, which can be a blessing and a curse.\textsuperscript{62} Finding jobs for these new entrants into the workforce will be difficult, and with the IT and BPO sectors employing only a million people,
a tiny fraction of the workforce, it is without question that many will remain mired in poverty.\textsuperscript{63}

To exacerbate these effects, Indian development has been characterized by inflation and rapid increases in the cost of living that make subsistence harder for the lower-middle class Indian citizen. Inflation and growth have led general prices to rise at a rate of 7 percent, with the price of basic foodstuffs rising at 10 percent, which exceeds the growth rate; the effect has strained the ability of the destitute to maintain subsistence.\textsuperscript{64} This leads to student riots and nationwide demonstrations, and low tolerance for rising prices results in a negative correlation between inflation and government approval.\textsuperscript{65} Current increases in the cost of living, a result of economic liberalization, are not well handled by the poor of India. While inflation has declined following the reforms, the tolerance for inflation has declined as well.

The democratic government itself is rather limited in the ways it can respond to the situation; the minimal funding the state receives results in fiscal deficits and an inability to take action. Shortcomings of the government include opposition from interest groups to further reform, problems with corruption and poor governance, and the lack of vital infrastructure. Forces against reform are exerted by powerful and entrenched interest groups, such as trade unions, wealthy farmers, and the bureaucracy, which manipulate loopholes in the system and are often a source of corruption. Most importantly, the infrastructure of India is in a dire condition, with energy, transportation, and basic services often or completely unavailable. Whether or not India will be able to succeed in its modernization depends on the government’s ability to adapt to these changes.

Interest groups such as trade unions and wealthy farmers are able to keep current labor laws in place in India, which are designed to protect a minority of workers while leaving the majority of laborers in the unorganized and informal sectors to work in exploitative conditions.\textsuperscript{66} Under current labor laws, it is nearly impossible to terminate a worker, which is a major disincentive for companies seeking to hire. Trade unions exercise a veto
on removing such asinine laws, protecting their 10 million constituents to the detriment of the 470 million workers comprising the workforce, who find it difficult to obtain a job in the formal economy. Until the labor laws can be revised, businesses will be reluctant to hire and workers will be hard-pressed to find a job.

The bureaucracy also has an interest in maintaining the status quo; when the inspector raj makes its “midnight knock” at a factory or company, it is commonly understood that they must be bribed. It is commonplace that those who hold public office use their positions as a means of private gain, which leads to reduced efficiency and is a drain on the resources of the economy. In the words of Gurcharan Das, “In my 30 years in active business in India, I did not meet a single bureaucrat who really understood my business, yet he had the power to ruin it.” While the license raj has been eliminated, many other corrupt regulatory bodies still exist today and must be reformed to promote more vigorous domestic and foreign business.

Finally, infrastructure in India is severely lacking and will impede any further development. Energy in India is in serious shortage, with too few power plants resulting in flickering lights and an inconsistent power supply that is not guaranteed throughout the day. Furthermore, India’s developing-world infrastructure also means inadequate roads, often narrow and in disrepair; factories and farms cannot develop when the transportation network necessary to move goods is simply not there. Poor infrastructure, along with the government’s inability to provide basic services, is a deterrent to foreign companies and an obstacle to domestic development. Ultimately, while India has made great strides since the reforms of 1991, there is still much to be accomplished for the nation to fully realize its potential.
The Future of India

The successes and failures of economic reform pose a unique set of challenges to India as it seeks to claim its place in the global economy as a major power. Economically, the challenges India will face include overcoming extreme and widespread poverty, reducing a growing income disparity between rich and poor, coping with the demographics of the growing population, and improving infrastructure to meet the nation’s growing demands. Politically, India must confront growing regional instability from neighboring countries, fight the forces of religious extremism and sectarian violence that threaten to fracture the state, improve its governing structure and bureaucracy to better suit development, and combat pervasive corruption. The future of India lies in how it tackles these challenges.

Economic Challenges

India’s government struggles to confront many of the challenges it faces due to the low budget of the government; revenues of India are only $171 billion, which is extremely low in comparison to China’s $1.1 trillion or the United States’ $2.1 trillion. One such challenge is poverty, which has plagued India since its inception, with three-quarters of the population living under $2 a day. India’s literacy rate is only 63 percent, which encompasses many of the impoverished; without a grasp on the local language, not even to mention English, these individuals have a limited chance at upward mobility. Access to basic health services and clean drinking water is still severely limited for the majority of the Indian population. Successfully attacking poverty should be one of the first and foremost concerns of the Indian government.
The reforms have resulted in a highly unequal distribution of wealth within India, splitting India economically into the wealthy new urban elite and the rural and agrarian poor. While the emerging middle class serves as the bridge between these two extremities, the impoverished still are the overwhelming majority of the Indian population. Prime Minister Singh has acknowledged that “the single most important challenge in today’s world is the management of change…[and] the problem of growing disparities between rich and poor, which are now becoming acute… I am pained when I see the extent of suffering inflicted on ordinary people.” However, the highly constrained national budget prevents any sort of welfare system for the poor, who are left to fend for themselves. Factoring in corruption and inefficient bureaucracy, nothing short of intelligent innovation on the part of the government will allow it to help alleviate inequality. India simply lacks the safety net that most developed capitalist systems have.

The major demographic trend India faces today is the “demographic dividend,” where the workforce will reach its peak population, with the highest ratio of workers to dependents, which will boost development if the economy can accommodate them with jobs. India will require significantly more jobs to employ the coming influx of new workers; demographers predict that the workforce will expand by more than 270 million workers to 986 million workers by 2030. Whether India benefits or is harmed by this depends on how it will manage labor law reform towards the employment of new workers. It will be vital for the future of India to use the boost in the size of the workforce, since failing to do so would lead to significant increases in unemployment and a decrease in living quality.

Infrastructure will play a key role in promoting further growth and investment from both foreign and domestic sources. Transportation and energy remain the key concerns for Indian infrastructural development. Major challenges towards the building of road networks in India are land disputes and bureaucratic inefficiencies which result in significant delays or prevent roads from being built altogether. As a result of the lack of roads, air-
ports, and seaports, around 40 percent of Indian produce spoils before it can reach the market and overburdened transportation networks hinder the flow of trade and exports, which is extremely detrimental to the trade of manufactured and agricultural goods.77

Electricity and power generation are also key concerns for India, with blackouts often occurring during times of peak demand. Power companies face an interesting problem; more than half of the power consumed is not paid for, much of it either stolen or bribed for to avoid paying power bills.78 Since power is subsidized and commonly stolen, the losses of state-owned power companies have increased to more than $7.1 billion annually.79 As a result of subsidies and corruption, it is impossible for the industry to turn a profit. Without being able to generate revenue, power companies struggle to keep up with demand, which will increase with growth in population. Reforms to the power sector must be made, even in the face of vested interest groups, since a consistent power supply is essential to continued development. These challenges threaten to turn potential foreign investors away from India, and are ultimately detrimental to further growth in the country.

Political Challenges

Geographically, India is located in an unstable region, with Pakistan and Bangladesh sources of Islamic terrorism and Nepal a source for the Maoist insurgency. Pakistan and India have fought four wars since independence, with Kashmir a major point of contention between the two. Defense spending remains a large drain on the already financially-pressed Indian government; India has become the world’s largest arms importer, which it attributes to rivalries with Pakistan and China as well as internal security challenges, the result of ethnic and religious rifts, especially between Hindus and Muslims.80 Achieving better relations between India and Pakistan will be a significant challenge with many economic ramifications.
Religious extremism has been a problem in India, with sectarian violence between Hindus and Muslims being a force of destabilization and a disincentive to foreign investment. The worst instance of religious violence occurred in Gujarat in 2002. The Gujarat massacres occurred when 58 Hindus were burned to death in a railway carriage in Godhra; revenge killings and riots led to the subsequent deaths of more than 1,000 more Indians, predominantly Muslims, and displaced more than 200,000 more.\textsuperscript{81} Police often did nothing to help end the massacres, with one policeman infamously quoted as saying, “We have no orders to save you.”\textsuperscript{82} The most recent major attack occurred in 2008 when Islamic terrorists struck locations across Mumbai, leaving more than 150 dead. Lessening Hindu-Islamic tensions will be a major challenge for the world’s largest democracy, but it will ultimately be in the interest of the state to remove a destabilizing force that is a major deterrent to further investments.

Another problem India must confront is the Naxalite-Maoist insurgency, which presents a serious challenge to India’s development. The Naxals are a group of Communist revolutionaries who have undermined the security and economic stability of the less-developed eastern regions of India. Slow development and poor living conditions have promoted the Maoist revolutionary vision and an anti-globalization agenda. A force 10,000 strong, the Naxals are active in 182 of India’s 625 districts in a region known as the Red Corridor, and their responsibility for thousands of civilian deaths resulted in Prime Minister Singh branding them as “the single biggest challenge” to internal security India has ever faced.\textsuperscript{83} These Naxals are the most disillusioned individuals of India’s liberalization; they are impoverished people who have not experienced the positive effects of the reforms and have expressed their sentiments through violence. Rebel leader Kameswar Baitha explained that “The poor have retaliated against a repressive government…The poor are now waking up.”\textsuperscript{84}

India’s government is often strained to meet domestic needs as a result of low state revenue, which is only made worse by the effects of inefficiency, corruption, and interest groups seek-
Stringent labor laws remain among one of the greatest challenges to promotion of further employment and growth, protected by interest groups which represent only a fraction of the total workforce. Bureaucratic reform will be necessary to curb corruption and increase efficiency in the government. In a study of India’s public services, activist Samuel Paul concluded that “the quality of governance is appalling [in India]”; the government lacks much-needed accountability and must step up to the needs of the people.85

Corruption is one of the greatest problems of the Indian government; many common tasks require a bribe to be completed within the bureaucratic system, which cuts off many of the poor from receiving basic services that should have been available to them on paper. Corruption within the system is a strain on the effectiveness of the state’s limited resources in helping the poor. It is also a major hindrance to doing business in India; inspectors and regulators must often be bribed to keep businesses open and running. As a result, pervasive corruption is often a deterrent to further foreign investment within India. It is a problem that must be mastered to promote continued growth.

Conclusions

Reforms in India, characterized by economic liberalization through privatization, export orientation, reduction of state involvement, and removal of barriers to multinational capital, have led to greater development and growth. Growth has promoted newfound wealth within India; however, this is not equally distributed, with a very small minority becoming ludicrously wealthy and leaving the majority unaffected by development. It has begun to empower the masses, leading to the rise of a growing middle class, but this is still highly restricted to the educated and those with jobs in the formal economy. Success has been largely concentrated in a growing service sector, with India specializing in high-tech services. Nonetheless, the reforms have unleashed some of the potential of the Indian workforce and economy.
The majority of the problems that India faces stem from the unequal distribution of wealth and the government’s inability to help the impoverished, which has led to a significant income disparity. There is a very stark contrast between the living conditions of the wealthy and of the poor. Lacking a proper education and pressured to work through their youth, and with a significant portion being illiterate, the impoverished find it hard to empower themselves. They have no welfare system to fall back onto, the result of the inadequate revenues of the state, and are therefore forced to reside in slums or remain destitute in the predominantly agricultural areas of India. The liberalization of the Indian economy has not yet brought these people the opportunities of employment and increased standards of living.

However, India is still within the transition of development, a process that remains unfinished. The reforms have already shown promise in their ability to empower the poor and create a middle class; their continuance will lead to the reduction of poverty and illiteracy in the country as it continues to develop and modernize. Demographic trends are in favor of more rapid growth in the near future. However imperfect and corrupt the government is, it still upholds a strong democratic tradition that has allowed people to voice their opinions and desires. Furthermore, the culture and values of India have led to a strong entrepreneurial spirit and an ambition to be successful. This vital mentality will help promote the continued development and growth of India into a powerful force within the world economy.
Endnotes


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70 Meredith, pp. 89–90
71 Ibid., pp. 89, 130–131
72 Central Intelligence Agency
73 The World Bank Group. Data on literacy are given as of 2006.
74 Perry, Falling Off the Edge: Travels Through the Dark Heart of Globalization, p. 70
75 Meredith, pp. 132–133
76 Nilekani, p. 219, 225, 241
77 Lak, pp. 241–242
78 Ibid., p. 242
81 Luce, pp. 158–161
82 Kamdar, p. 236
83 Perry, Falling Off the Edge: Travels Through the Dark Heart of Globalization, pp. 29–30
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“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

Winston Churchill in the House of Commons, 20 August 1940

As the bad weather at the beginning of August gave way to an almost unbroken succession of golden summer days, a feeling of suppressed and curiously pleasurable excitement communicated itself to the British people. The atmosphere was quite different from that of the period immediately following Dunkirk. There had then been an element of desperation in the nation’s defiance, a frantic air about its ill-coordinated activities, and behind its stouthearted demeanour a fear of perils which loomed monstrous, new and unassessed.

But many things had changed in two and a half months. In early June the main cause of inward misgiving had been the fact that nobody knew what to do; now everybody had his or her duty, and those who would have to fight held arms of a sort in their hands. Their arch-enemy, moreover, had dwindled in stature as week after week went by and he failed to resume his juggernaut advance or to implement the vague threats with which—sometimes in terms found risible—he bombarded his prospective victims. Their view both of Hitler and of his amphibious aspirations is well reflected in a poem by A.P. Herbert which a Sunday paper printed in those crucial mid-September days:

> “Napoleon tried. The Dutch were on their way.
> A Norman did it—and a Dane or two.
> Some sailor-King may follow one fine day;
> But not, I think, a low land-rat like you.”

More important, the people had by now an implicit faith in their leader; Churchill had tempered the national spirit into a true and well-balanced blade, and in the main the British awaited the outcome with something of the relish which they noted in their Prime Minister, and something of the unassuming fortitude which they admired in their King and Queen.
THE EFFECT OF GLASNOST
ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION

Nicolas Powell

The Soviet Union in 1985 was a shadow of its former self. To be sure, it still appeared to be the massive, multinational, totalitarian empire that it had been for nearly 70 years. But times had changed. The national economy was crumbling; oil, which had been one of the state’s few profitable exports for the previous decade and a half, was declining in both demand and value, and consequently Soviet coffers were being depleted of a critical source of revenue.\(^1\) Agriculture and industry were stagnating, too, and it was clear that if Communist-era collectivization was to continue unabated, major shortages and possibly even famine would follow.\(^2\) The botched war in Afghanistan, where the Soviets lost thousands of troops and ultimately a crucial ideological battle, was another major drain on both the national budget and Party legitimacy. If the system could not handle a relatively minor conflict in a comparatively unimportant country, how could that system be expected to overcome the difficulties of handling a vast empire with myriad problems and myriad peoples?

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The Arrival of Gorbachev

It was in this climate that Mikhail Gorbachev was appointed head of the Soviet Communist Party. Recognizing the economic crisis that was taking place, he implemented a plan to put the Soviet Union back on solid ground. *Perestroika*, as the program was called, was meant to be an economic restructuring that would right the wrongs of the previous generations. The term, first coined during the reign of Peter the Great, was familiar to the people and semantically indicative of progress and advancement. Gorbachev’s implementation of *perestroika* would privatize farms, make industries more efficient, and trim down imports, which at the time vastly outweighed exports.

However, a grand plan must always start somewhere, and *perestroika* was no exception. Gorbachev’s first act was to increase the scrutiny that quality control committees put towards their evaluation of factory products. Unsurprisingly, workers were not happy. They were forced to make products of higher quality—thus investing greater effort—for a negligible increase in wages. There was no motivation for them to do so, and Gorbachev understood that to achieve popular support for his reforms, he would have to compromise on long-held Soviet policy and attach some sort of personal incentive to *perestroika*. But the people were skeptical, and many believed that the plan would simply not have enough of a backing to be successful.

Gorbachev’s confidant and Secretariat of the Soviet Communist Party, Aleksander Yakovlev, was certain it would. In order to gain popular support for *perestroika*, he maintained that it was necessary to concede some individual rights and freedoms, which in turn would inject Gorbachev’s administration with much-needed political legitimacy. Indeed, it was hoped that through these concessions the idealized goals of *perestroika* could come to fruition.

Yakovlev first turned to mass media, where he affected the passage of laws allowing for greater transparency and acknowledgment of the missteps and wrongdoings of the Stalinist
era. Yakovlev also worked to restore other creative works that had been suppressed, such as movies and books, whose creators went on to publish material that previously would have landed them in jail. He returned more than 400,000 religious buildings and places of worship to the people. Schools also began teaching students about the earlier Communist era of Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev, and atrocities such as the Ukrainian forced-famine of the 1930s. The name for this initiative was glasnost—literally, “voice-ness”—and came to signify openness in public affairs, press, politics, education, and even free speech. Newspapers began to publish reports on the Stalinist era, and for the first time people were able to witness, if by second-hand accounts, what acts had been committed. Through glasnost, Gorbachev hoped to attain a certain degree of credibility through which he would be able to implement the economic restructuring of perestroika.

Like perestroika, the term glasnost had long been a part of Russian vernacular, though its rise to popular acceptance and recognition came later with the first wave of liberalization during the 1850s and 1860s. It was molded to become the choice word for the humanists and Slavophiles of the era, who used it to further their ambitions for openness in the political and public sphere. It was meant to allow for greater political transparency while also retaining the absolutism of the monarch, a striking parallel to the aspirations of Gorbachev a century later. So ingrained was it in the Soviet cultural identity that both Lenin and Stalin used glasnost to their own benefit, though each interpreted it uniquely. Lenin linked the term to the earlier Slavophiles, deeming self-criticism and introspection necessary for the healthy functioning of a Communist society. Stalin, on the other hand, co-opted the spirit of glasnost by allowing public display and “press coverage” of his show trials. Khrushchev and Brezhnev followed in Stalin’s footsteps by trying to integrate the principal into both the Soviet Constitution and general political ideology, with mixed results.

It is no surprise, then, that perestroika and glasnost became the preferred terms in the era of reform and collaboration under Gorbachev. Not only did the terms have a history that allowed
Gorbachev to use them to his advantage, but they had also been a mainstay of Soviet political culture for more than a century. This latter point especially proved invaluable in gaining popular support, as the citizenry saw both as familiar concepts, rather than as abstruse, foreign institutions.10

There are several conflicting arguments as to why Gorbachev implemented glasnost at all. One can credit the influence of Yakovlev, but his altruism should not be overstated. Like Gorbachev, he was simply a pragmatist who knew that if the Soviet crisis was to be averted, a significant liberalizing process would have to be undertaken to rectify the country’s economic woes. It is important to understand that both men were still Communists, and conservative ones at that. They were hardly pushing for an overthrow of socialism; in fact, by instituting perestroika through glasnost, they were hoping to strengthen the system.11

Unfortunately for them, and for the rest of party leadership, these events had unintended consequences. Glasnost quickly became nearly impossible to contain. Suddenly liberated minority groups, under-represented and mistreated for ages, began demanding self-determination. Gorbachev and his allies had miscalculated the forces that such a liberal policy might unleash and underestimated the nationalistic bent of these groups and the extent to which they were still culturally distinct. This myopia proved calamitous.12 Gorbachev could indeed have taken a “send in the tanks” attitude, but quelling insurrection through force would have undermined perestroika entirely.

Glasnost did not immediately produce much in the way of mass protest or demonstration. What it did produce was a change in overall mentality. If Communism needed drastic restructuring to continue functioning even at the most basic level, how could that ideology be trusted?13 Moreover, how could Moscow be trusted to implement that restructuring? This was precisely why Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and the other post-Stalin politicians had always dealt with reform as a taboo subject. For Communism to be strengthened, doctrines would have to be relaxed. But if doctrines were relaxed, support for an already extremely unpopular government
would be shaken. It was a delicate balancing act, but one that Gorbachev was willing to attempt. Previous governments had put off this pressing issue for quite long enough, but the situation in 1985 was dire and nearly beyond repair.\textsuperscript{14}

Change was imperative, but Gorbachev was averse to distancing himself entirely from those who had come before him. Unlike Nikita Khrushchev a generation earlier, Gorbachev made no speech denouncing his predecessors and initiated no public break with the past. Instead, he quietly waited for \textit{glasnost} to take effect, which only served to increase the skepticism directed at him. It was understandable that for the populace itself, the wrongs of the past governments and the failures of the previous leaders became the wrongs and the failures of the present.\textsuperscript{15}

The first signs that change was afoot came during a protest on Manezhkaya Square in Moscow in 1987. While not specifically a nationalistic revolt, it did take advantage of key liberties granted by Gorbachev. Its leaders were invited into the home of Moscow’s mayor Boris Yeltsin, who calmly discussed with the protesters their aims, their goals, and their desires. They left having been given a number of allowances and concessions,\textsuperscript{16} and while their movement was not in the end revolutionary, it did set a politically dangerous precedent. The number of groups requesting meetings with high-ranking officials grew rapidly. The end result in these situations was not as important as the idea—now, people could simply request to talk with the mayor and that request might actually be accepted. For many people, and their respective parties, \textit{glasnost} meant freedom to ask for favors and demand rights.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Downfall of an Empire: Three Case Studies}

An empire is defined by Ronald Suny as “a composite state structure in which the metropole is distinct in some way from the periphery and the relationship between the two is conceived or perceived by the metropolitan or peripheral actors as one of justifiable or unjustifiable inequity, subordination, and/or exploi-
nation.” In the Soviet context, Moscow acted as the metropole and the 15 republics and countless ethnic groups made up the periphery.

In analyzing the downfall of the USSR, three factors must be considered: the vitality of the center, the behavior of the peripheries, and the connections between the center and the peripheries. If these relationships all are in good stead, then that empire can be considered healthy. In the Soviet Union, however, all three were rapidly deteriorating. The central government in Moscow was becoming increasingly weak and powerless; the peripheries were struggling for autonomy from Moscow; and the ties between the two were straining. The Communist system was on the verge of collapse.

It was the unforeseen effects of glasnost that weakened the bonds holding together the core and the periphery. As we shall see in the following case studies, the deterioration that precipitated the fall of the Soviet Union was not confined to a single region—it affected the entire periphery—and the effects of glasnost were not the same everywhere.

The Crimean Tatars

The first effect that glasnost had on dissident cultural groups was greater access to historical information. As one of the central tenets of glasnost was openness in regards to the past, historical records and documents became more publicly available. Those whose families had been victimized in earlier years finally had the opportunity to learn what their people had gone through. The new generation experienced an upsurge in national self-awareness and as glasnost was implemented, offshoot dissident organizations began to strengthen. Glasnost brought a new wave of people into separatist movements, which gained in influence accordingly. One such group that experienced an awakening through glasnost was the Crimean Tatars.
The Tatars are an ethnic group that had inhabited the Crimean Peninsula in Ukraine since the Middle Ages. Like many of the minority groups in the Soviet Union, they are of a mixed Turkic and Mongol ancestry and have an appearance quite different from their Slavic counterparts. Famine, pogroms, and war had already decimated much of their population, when, in 1944, Stalin issued a decree that all Tatars remaining in Crimea were to be deported far back out to the Uzbek SSR.

Furious over the forced relocation, they fought back over the next quarter-century, becoming one of the Soviet Union’s most universally disdained peoples. When Nikita Khrushchev promised freedom to all exiled nationalities in 1956, he consciously omitted the Tatars, who managed only to receive the paltry concession of not having to reside in rehabilitation camps. They were still excluded from public office, unable to return to the Crimea, not allowed to speak their language, and barred from practicing Islam. It simply had not been possible under the conditions set down by the regime of the time for the Tatars to successfully resist the authoritarian Communist rule.

This changed with glasnost. Unfettered access to historical information meant that Tatars who knew about the forced relocation of the 1940s only through oral history could now read about it. They could learn about their own people’s history in school, and through newspapers, books, and television. Membership swelled in the unofficial independence movement—the Crimean Tatar National Movement—as new recruits eagerly participated in cultural renewal and rejuvenation. Indeed, it was precisely the awareness bred by glasnost that paved the way for organized protest.

In March of 1987, 3,000 displaced Crimean Tatars mostly from the Kazakh and Uzbek republics signed a petition directed at Gorbachev, demanding that he resolve the nationality dispute and the question of Crimean Tatar exile. When the petition was delivered to Gorbachev, he did not entertain it. As a result of what they considered a slight, 2,000 Crimean Tatars traveled all the way to Moscow and gathered in front of the Kremlin. Headed
by Mustafa Jemiloglu, a Tatar nationalist recently released from jail, the group staged the first *en masse* protests of the *glasnost* era. They demanded an audience with Gorbachev to discuss the issue of reinstatement into Crimea, and when that was denied, they chanted his name and threatened to storm in. Gorbachev finally acquiesced and allowed talks to be held, though only through a proxy, and only behind closed doors.

This was a significant historical milestone for the Soviet Union. Had the same group marched on Moscow just 10 years earlier—much less during Stalin’s regime—it is likely that the participants would have been either thrown into jail or killed. But Gorbachev had tied his own hands. Using force to suppress protest would undermine *glasnost* and endanger the economic restructuring of *perestroika*. On the other hand, allowing protests to take place without fear of governmental reprisal would foster a growing revolutionary spirit that could have equally damaging effects.

Over the next year, Andrei Gromyko, Gorbachev’s proxy and the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, set up a commission that sponsored investigations, held talks, and studied exhaustively the question of Tatar reinstatement. By this time *glasnost* had already taken root in Soviet society and most people were expecting the issue to be resolved in favor of the Tatars, the equality and modernization brought forth by *glasnost* having made talk of repression along ethnic lines politically unacceptable. Surprisingly however, the Tatars lost the cause. The commission decided that the more homogeneous ethnic composition in Ukraine that had developed since the 1940s, in tandem with the prevailing racist undercurrent would prevent the Tatars from making a safe return to their homeland. Thus their demand for repatriation was declined.

For Moscow, this was problematic. As with the march on the Kremlin, Gorbachev was in a position with no favorable outcome. He could reject the committee’s findings, though it was obvious to him that the Tatars would not be warmly received in Ukraine. Alternatively, he could accept the committee’s decision and hope that the Tatar situation would be mediated in some other fashion,
an option that would not sit well with those whose political allegiance rested on the promise of freedom and democracy. The constraints of glasnost meant a hard line approach in the Crimean Tatar situation was impossible.

Gorbachev ultimately overturned the Gromyko ruling and set up a new committee to analyze the state of affairs. Its sole purpose was to negotiate a safe passage back into Ukraine, and once that was accomplished, the Crimean Tatars would be left to their own. For some, a return to their homeland actually created worse living conditions and greater poverty than before. But they were given the option, and in a country so buoyed by social liberalization, that was what mattered. At the very least, the Crimean Tatars were allowed to practice their free will.

Glasnost played a major role in Gorbachev’s political restraint. The climate in which glasnost was enacted, in the midst of economic turmoil, and with the promise of social freedom a key goal, necessitated strict constraints on policy decisions. This is precisely why Gorbachev’s tactics had to be different from those used by past Soviet leaders. Gorbachev could not afford bad press.

The Crimean Tatar situation also exacerbated the already strained ties between Moscow and its peripheries. As the Crimean Tatars gained a degree of self-determination, many other similarly repressed ethnic groups—Chechnyans or the Polish Sorbians, for example—would follow their lead. The Soviet government could not afford to have a multitude of these ethnic groups splintering off from the core, nor did they want to see national groups like those in the Caucasus and the Baltic states break off. If that were to happen, the survival of the Soviet Union would be at risk.

The Caucasus

Another outcome of liberalization through glasnost was that suppressed ethnic tensions were allowed to resurface. Under Communism, official propaganda had forced acculturation under the Soviet flag; citizens were made to see themselves as Soviets
rather than as members of their regional cultural denomination.\textsuperscript{33} Gorbachevian reforms, however, turned this on its head—people were no longer simply Soviet, but rather Georgian, Kazakh, Ukrainian, and so on. \textit{Glasnost} halted cultural assimilation, and people were free to express their own, often national, identities.

This was particularly evident in the Caucasus region—which, located at the convergence of three continents, multiple religions, and dozens of languages and cultures, had a long history of disputes and confrontations. The genocide of the Armenians in 1915 is perhaps the best-known of these, but ethnic warfare had been present for far longer.

The nationalist policy pursued by Soviet Communist leaders, however, required assimilation into both Soviet culture and state, thus uniting the peoples of the Transcaucasus (a political term for the nations of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan). Outward displays of nationalism or nationalistic conflict were all but absent, and the three nations each functioned simply as separate regions within the Empire. Ironically, it was under authoritarian Soviet rule that the Transcaucasus experienced its first era of prolonged peace.\textsuperscript{34} Yet malice among the three nations was never entirely gone, and the belief was that with the greater freedom of expression resulting from \textit{glasnost}, these dormant conflicts would return to the fore.\textsuperscript{35}

And so they did. Coinciding with the Crimean Tatar repatriation, the governmental stranglehold in the Caucasus broke and tension spilled forth. Gunfights, bombings, and lynching started to occur throughout the region, despite strong local efforts to stop them.\textsuperscript{36} The focal point of this clash was the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which had been under Azeri jurisdiction since the Soviet takeover in the early 1920s. However, the region was still populated almost wholly by ethnic Armenians, who spoke Armenian and practiced Armenian orthodoxy. Azerbaijan, with its Muslim-Turkic makeup, presented a cultural threat to the Armenians.

What triggered the conflict was a 1988 referendum enacted by representatives of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and
overseen by a delegate from Moscow. The voters were to decide the region’s political fate. Here too the consequences of *glasnost* are clear—for the first time in 60 years, the people of the Transcaucasus found themselves enfranchised. The expected (and realized) outcome was an overwhelming majority for assimilation into Armenia, but the referendum would make it official. This is generally the accepted starting point of the Nagorno-Karabakh war. Armenia declared the region its own, and the Azeris started fighting. Gorbachev’s response was to send troops into the area, as the immediate priority then was cessation of violence. This hard line approach worked, for a while, until the inhabitants realized that the troops were under strict orders not to interfere with any affray directly, much less shoot at those involved.

What followed was six years of warfare between the two sides, during which thousands died and millions were displaced. A truce was declared on May 16, 1994, at which point a clear Armenian victory had been achieved. The terms of the ceasefire, however, made the status of Nagorno-Karabakh unclear, and the political situation reverted to its pre-war state. In the end, nothing had been achieved.

One might have expected that the Soviet regime would simply assert its dominance after the vote and physically separate the two nations. The war might well have ended then and there. However, as was the case throughout the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was not keen on interfering with the peripheral states. At the outset, Gorbachev himself sided with the Azeris, so it is clear that he had an opinion to voice. But that was all it was—an opinion. Unlike the historically interventionist Soviet regimes before him, Gorbachev was unwilling to arrest the progression of the conflict. The rapid political liberalization that accompanied *glasnost* had made the concept of orderly reform improbable from the very beginning. As the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, said in response to hardline colleagues pushing for military intervention: “it is time to realize that neither socialism, nor friendship, nor good-neighborliness, nor respect can be produced by bayonets, tanks or blood.” Gorbachev could not afford
to lose the support of his political constituents who were aspiring for democracy and freedom. On the other hand, if he let the situations progress unchecked, the Union itself might crumble.  

Clearly, in the case of the Caucasus, increased freedoms and a more open and inclusive political system precipitated the warfare that followed. Gorbachev must have considered Armenia and Azerbaijan insignificant—or unsalvageable—for him to have let them go as he did. In either case, this attitude reveals a startling lack of connection between his government and the governments of the peripheral republics. As such, the conflict can be understood as another step towards a Soviet downfall.

The Baltics

Perhaps the most critical piece of the dissolution puzzle happened in the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—a region that bore little resemblance to the violent, impoverished, and racially diverse Caucasus and Central Asia. They had come under Soviet rule in 1940, far more recently than any other Soviet republic. Moreover, the circumstances of their integration—the treachery of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, wherein Baltic lands were illegally ceded to the Soviets—only served to further engender hatred and acrimony. Lastly, it was easily the most affluent region in the Soviet Union, and the Baltic countries had had access to Western television and radio stations for quite some time.

Such were the political conditions when Gorbachev implemented glasnost. Conflict in the Caucasus and the successful revolt in central Asia had already eaten at the threads holding the country together. Then the Balts, already the least legitimate of Empire’s holdings, were now being given a chance to voice their opinions. A relatively rich, forward-looking cluster of semi-autonomous states breaking from the Union was the worst-case scenario for Moscow—were they to secede, the pretense of Soviet omnipotence would be exposed. Other republics would then
open themselves to secession, as the fears of the Soviet backlash diminished. Therefore, it was necessary—above all else in the Baltic—to prevent independence from becoming a possibility. At the same time, though, the Baltic was the last place where Gorbachev wanted to bring police violence, as it was the region most likely to succeed. Yet he could not allow protests to go unchecked, for they would certainly grow in intensity until the people’s demands were met. The constraints of glasnost, then, forced him to attempt to eliminate the spirit of independence by persuasion instead of coercion, a difficult task.

The Baltic peoples were not completely preoccupied with the issue of independence, however. Early on in the campaign for cultural autonomy, in 1984, only one in eight native Estonians believed that it was the nation’s most pressing issue. Of the population of ethnic Russians (around one third of Estonia’s total population), a mere 1 percent were in that camp. There was a notable group of Restorationists whose political agenda revolved solely around the issue of independence; however, for the average person, this was not altogether pressing. Indeed, the themes that most dominated discussions were those of the environment and economy. One of the first retaliatory measures taken by the Balts on Soviet power in the era of glasnost happened in Latvia, where plans to build a new nuclear power plant on the Daugava River were halted and later scrapped after mass demonstrations forced Soviet construction workers into withdrawal. The environment was something real and important; independence was a distant hope.

The push for independence was especially strengthened by publications in various magazines and newspapers. Looming and Vikerkaar were two of the major literary journals in glasnost-era Estonia, and their influence was vast. Before the reforms, Looming was, with 13 percent of the public reading it, one of the biggest weekly publications in the country. By 1989, 75 percent were reading it. Other written works, like Vikerkaar, produced similar figures. Unsurprisingly, such journals were the frontrunners in the nations’ fight for autonomy and the first to break the
independence “taboo” that had existed for much of the Russian occupation. In Latvia, Atmoda and Diena played a similar role, with subscriptions increasing at a comparable rate.49

It is important to remember that under glasnost, these were hardly subversive publications. They were mainstream, and wrote of nothing illegal—they did not organize protests or severely criticize the regime. They simply took advantage of the freedom of the press in the era of glasnost to promote local movements and unite their readership. Thanks to the rapid progression of glasnost, these periodicals were transformed from underground publications to very familiar actors on the dissident scene, becoming all the more outspoken in their support of the various independence movements that had sprung up around the region since 1985.50 Atmoda, for instance, was a staunch supporter of the Latvian National Movement. At the same time, radio and television provided much-needed vocal and visual support. The press managed to avoid Soviet censorship, though, as it did not technically espouse national sovereignty—simply the organizations that pursued it. In the Baltic region, the media was not a catalyst for independence as such, but it did enhance popular perceptions and the cross-cultural influence of the idea of independence, which was just as important.51 The spokespeople for Gorbachev’s administration called mass media “the most representative and massive rostrum of glasnost [in the Baltic].”

It was through these channels that the concept of sovereignty was transformed from the distant hope mentioned previously to something real and plausible. As Gilbert Parker writes, “the spirit of independence was alive in all three Baltic states, including Estonia and Latvia. They had developed bi-lateral relations in agriculture, ignoring the authority of the Soviet central government, and were reviving the Council of Baltic States, first created in 1934.”52

In Estonia, much of the early resistance took place in the form of rock festivals. Thousands flocked to these; many more listened to them on the radio. The bands would often play nationalistic hymns and songs, and sometimes political leaders would attend
and give speeches. In Latvia, the Helsinki-86, an independence group modeled after the Czechoslovak Charter-77, laid roses at the Latvian Freedom Monument, symbolizing the health and wealth of the Latvian state. This was a bold act; a stern defiance of Soviet power. Sajudis, the Lithuanian nationalist organization, was perhaps the most radical—regularly staging massive protests and publishing very harsh criticism of the regime. But what really brought the Baltic movement together as one was a demonstration known as the Baltic Way.53

What effectively started out as a publicity stunt ended up as one of the most memorable symbols of Baltic independence efforts. On the morning of August 23, 1989, more than 2.3 million people—across all three republics—created a human chain and formed a symbolic “wall” against Soviet oppression. Response in Moscow was scathing, with some calling for a forceful breakup of the protests that had started in the aftermath. Yet Gorbachev hesitated. Yakovlev, the founding father of glasnost, is reported to have stated that “if a single Soviet soldier fired a single bullet on the unarmed crowds, Soviet power would be over.”

Despite his warnings, troops were eventually sent out. The situation had been coming to a head, especially in the southern states of Latvia and Lithuania, and all three states had, by 1991, declared independence. While they were not yet recognized by any member of the international community, it was becoming obvious that Moscow could not maintain power for much longer. In Lithuania, the police could not manage to stop the riots and responded by shooting on the protesters.54 Fourteen died and hundreds more were injured trying to defend the Vilnius radio and television towers and the broadcasts that they were transmitting. Embarrassed and by this time consigned to defeat, the army pulled out. Just five months later, in August of 1991, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became officially independent states.55

Crucially, the Baltic protests were of a different nature than those in Caucasus or Uzbekistan. They were nonviolent for the most part, little blood was shed, and few lives were lost. Moreover, they were legal. What happened between Armenia and Azerbaijan
was not legal—the authorities simply failed to act accordingly. The insurrection in the Baltic was within the law, though, and that is part of the reason for its success. The media reached out to so many of the region’s people and transmitted perfectly allowable messages—revolutionary in character, sure, but lawful. Understandably, a fully-transparent, legitimate media should garner more support than one controlled by the government. And so it did.

Here, too, it becomes clear that glasnost made it nearly impossible for strong ties to be sustained between member states and Soviet government. The political restraint that glasnost demanded meant that Gorbachev could not put an end to the Baltic protests by force. And if not by force, then how else? Minor confrontation was the most that he could plausibly afford. At the same time, though, if the protests were not put down, they would morph into something altogether more dangerous for the Soviet state, as we saw with the Baltic Way.56 It was a catch-22; if Gorbachev could not control the Baltic states, the Communist regime was bound to fall. As Ronald Suny noted earlier, an Empire without its peripheries ceases to be an empire. Such was the case within the Soviet Union by 1991.

Conclusion

The deterioration of stable bonds between the center and the periphery was one of the most notable effects of glasnost. It happened in all of the case studies presented—with the Tatars, the Armenians, the Azeris, and the Balts. It was also the key factor in determining the very demise of the Soviet Union. Had the connections been strong, the breakaway provinces and nations would have had no incentive to disconnect from the regime. Had the power in the center been solid and established, any attempted secession would have been put down.

Indeed, it was the collateral outcome of perestroika through glasnost that brought about the end of Soviet Communism. The
system did not collapse, as is sometimes understood. A collapse would indicate a sudden and complete fall from grace. Instead it crumbled gradually, and certainly not from a high position. It really is one of history’s great paradoxes: to survive, Soviet Communism had to compromise, but if it compromised, it could not survive.

One can criticize Yakovlev, who is generally viewed in retrospect as anti-Soviet, anti-Communist, and more than a little bit naïve, for the misguidance that resulted in the Soviet breakup. The era of stagnation, coinciding with the military failure in Afghanistan, provided Gorbachev with a less than ideal set of circumstances to work with. In addition, maintaining the welfare of the more than 127 separate ethnic groups—few of which had been of any importance to Gorbachev’s predecessors—made peaceful compromise almost impossible. In the end, Gorbachev could do no more than delay the seemingly inevitable. He is praised by many, especially in the West, for his approach in handling the Cold War, but in reality, it was more a matter of circumstances than personality that resulted in Gorbachev acting as he did.

Ironically, Gorbachev himself was unseated by the very people who benefited from his reforms. Boris Yeltsin, who replaced him as president of the Russian Federation, would not have been able to oversee the Soviet Union’s transition to democracy without Gorbachev’s reforms having paved the way. Not only did glasnost cause the Union to break up, but it also curtailed the political career of its creator.

One can wonder how the crisis could have been averted before it got out of hand. Perhaps it would have been prudent for the regime not to institute glasnost at all. Doing so would have forestalled dissent and disintegration, but it is also likely that the Union would have collapsed economically. Looking back, it is surprising that few contemporary thinkers had sufficient knowledge of the gravity of the Soviet situation and the repercussions that glasnost would have on the peripheral states. For better or worse, they simply did not see it coming.


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“Like Herodotus, I think of history as inquiry—not a story but an inquiry, which often (but not always) generates a story in its turn...I always try to begin with simple questions. My books never begin with an ideology, a model, a hypothesis, an argument, or an attempt to prove a particular point. All of these things may or may not come in their turn, but I always start with very simple questions. For *Champlain’s Dream* I asked: Who was this man? Where did he come from? What difference did he make? Why should we care? This question-framing approach for me is fundamental. The most interesting things I find in my inquiries are always things I could not have known in advance. That process of discovery is where history really comes to life for me, and I think for others...”
FEAR ITSELF: THE INFLUENCE OF
NAT TURNER’S REBELLION ON SLAVERY IN VIRGINIA

Preston Metz

Although it was not the only slave revolt of its time, Nat Turner’s Rebellion of 1831 had a huge impact on Southern slave relations. The revolt shocked everyone in Southampton, Virginia. The county, as well as Virginia, considered itself a rather easy-going community when it came to the treatment of slaves. It did admit to the occasional brutal treatment of slaves by a few violent overseers. As a whole, however, Virginia liked to think of itself as significantly more benevolent than the Deep South. In Southampton, this notion especially rang true. The county believed that they treated their slaves well. More than one-third of white families did not even own a single slave. The average number of slaves per family that did own slaves was about 10, which was 10 lower than the minimum number that one needed to have in order to be called a planter. Also, the county had the fourth largest number of freed persons of color in the state. With this state of mind, the people of Southampton were taken completely by surprise when Nat Turner led the bloodiest slave revolt in Southern history.¹ The insurrection had severe repercussions in such an unsuspecting county. It sparked an intense fear in whites towards slaves, as they

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now believed that slaves could at any time rise up against them. Newspapers inflated the panic of the community by exaggerating details in order to increase the fear towards slaves. Some papers increased the number of whites killed or included superfluous descriptions of the blacks involved. The governor of Virginia, John Floyd, also became disturbed. With advice from the governor, the legislature then passed laws in 1833 that reflected the concerns of the community and ultimately restricted black rights even more. The laws affected preaching, literacy, and abolitionist newspapers, all of which whites believed to be the main causes of the rebellion. Although the motives behind the rebellion are unclear, the fear that resulted led to new laws in 1833 that further oppressed blacks in Virginia by restricting education and religion in their lives.

By the early 1830s, the abolitionist movement was just starting to heat up. There had been cries for blacks’ freedom throughout the past, but not until around 1830 was there a real movement. Abolitionists spoke out against slavery and used the language of the Declaration of Independence to reveal slavery’s contradiction of the founding American principles in the document. The movement called for emancipation of blacks, either gradual or immediate. One successful means for spreading the abolitionists’ message was through newspapers. The first major abolitionist newspaper was William Lloyd Garrison’s The Liberator. The first issue of The Liberator was published on New Year’s Day, 1831. Nat Turner’s rebellion would occur only a few months later. In fact, Garrison used the insurrection as an example of what he had been saying slavery would lead to.

The motives behind Nat Turner’s revolt are not clear, other than his belief that he was a chosen leader. Nathaniel Turner was born a slave on October 2, 1800 in Southampton County. From the very beginning of his childhood, Turner believed that God had chosen him for a special purpose. Turner disclosed all of this information in his interviews with lawyer Thomas R. Gray. Gray compiled these interviews while Turner was still in jail and published them in “The Confessions of Nat Turner.” “Confessions” has always been looked upon with some skepticism, but it
is useful for understanding Turner’s state of mind. Turner states that “in [his] childhood a circumstance occurred which made an indelible impression on [his] mind, and laid the ground work of that enthusiasm, which has terminated so fatally to many” in the rebellion. This “circumstance,” was the first of many subsequent revelations by God. Turner believed that he “surely would be a prophet, as the Lord had shewn [him] things that had happened before [his] birth.” Even his parents encouraged this belief, by “saying, in [his] presence, [he] was intended for some great purpose.” The constant praise by his family strengthened Turner’s own conviction, and made it easier for him later to go through with his rebellion. The “ease” with which Turner “learned to read and write,” and his “uncommon intelligence” only fueled his sense of superiority. He felt that he had an “influence over the minds of [his] fellow servants.” This influence was what helped him gain a following among black slaves to whom he preached. Indeed, Nat Turner was a haughty literate slave preacher who thought that he “was ordained for some great purpose in the hands of the Almighty.”

On August 13, 1831, a strange event in the sky occurred, in which the sun appeared to be bluish-green. Turner interpreted this as a sign from God to begin his revolt. So, he and six close followers met in the woods on August 21, 1831, around 3:00 PM. The next morning, around 2:00 AM, Turner and his followers began their attack. They started with Turner’s master, Joseph Travis, and moved on from house to house slaughtering every white person in their sight. Turner and his followers agreed that “neither age nor sex was to be spared” during their rebellion. They certainly stick to this ideal, killing many women and children. In fact, out of the total casualties, which range in reports from 57 to 64, about half were children. In the afternoon of the 22nd, Turner’s group, which had grown to between 50 and 60 slaves, had to split up. Then the militia from Norfolk, a neighboring county, put down one of the parties while the remaining slaves became unorganized. On the 23rd, an unsuccessful attack on Doctor Simon Blunt’s house led to the capture and death of some of the remaining men. Turner and his men were then forced to retreat,
but were met by the Virginia State Militia, which effectively ended
the revolt. Turner was able to escape and hide until October 30,
when he was finally captured. The result of the insurrection was
complete shock and terror in the white community. The intense
destruction of life that came about from seemingly nothing was
what made this rebellion so horrifying. The mystery surrounding
it scared the whites even more than the death toll. Newspapers of
the area often forced the people of Southampton and the rest of
Virginia to consider what was stopping something like this from
happening again if the insurrection had happened without any
known reason.

After the rebellion, local newspapers usually printed ac-
counts that were more myth than truth, which ultimately helped
spread fear throughout the area. While the people of Southampton
were already shocked by the results of the rebellion, the newspa-
sers increased the fear. Some of these reports seemed intention-
ally to do this, while others unintentionally caused excitement.
Southampton did not have a paper of its own, so it relied on
several different newspapers near the county. One item that the
newspapers did not seem to get right was the number of slaves
involved. The Constitutional Whig, of Richmond, Virginia reported
that “150 or 200 runaway slaves from the Dismal Swamp” took part
in the rebellion. While this was most likely thought to be true,
this gross exaggeration of the number of slaves involved no doubt
alarmed citizens even more. Whites must have thought that their
own slaves could take part in a revolt similar to Nat Turner’s if
close to 200 slaves already did. Newspapers also exaggerated the
number of whites who were killed. The Petersburg Intelligencer of
Petersburg, Virginia, reported that “between eighty and a hundred
of the whites have already been butchered.” While there is no
doubt that the insurrection was horrible, doubling the number of
whites who were killed made it seem much worse. Both The
Constitutional Whig and The Petersburg Intelligencer published inac-
curate facts about the rebellion, which made it appear much worse
than it actually was. While these two reports most likely did not
mean to exaggerate the facts, a few newspapers intentionally took
advantage of the rebellion to spread terror among the whites.
One newspaper portrayed the rebellion and Nat Turner himself in a manner deliberately written to spark fear among whites. *The Richmond Enquirer* could not hide its prejudices when it wrote about the insurrection. It described the act as “horrible ferocity” by “monsters.” It wrote that the slaves involved “remind one of a parcel of blood-thirsty wolves rushing down the Alps; or rather like a former incursion of the Indians upon the white settlements.” It could be justified to call the slaves involved “monsters” because their actions were heinous, but the newspaper made it seem that all blacks were these monsters. The depiction of “wolves” “rushing down the Alps” creates an image of angry slaves charging at the town. The connection of slaves to a violent animal of the night portrayed slaves as murderous beasts who were waiting to attack. There seems to be no other motive for including this comparison other than to frighten the whites of the community with this scary image. The next comparison of the slaves to the Indians was even more frightening to whites because it rang closer to home than the Alps. Indians were a serious issue in America, as whites thought of them as a strange, wild race. These are exactly the feelings that the newspaper wanted to evoke towards blacks. The inclusion of all of these descriptions of the slaves was an excessive addition to the article that clearly tried to scare the whites of the area. The article’s warning to the people of Virginia is even more disturbing. The article said that “the case of Nat Turner warns us [that] no black man ought to be permitted to turn a Preacher through the country…the law must be enforced.” Already, there was a cry for legislation based on the feelings caused by the murders. *The Richmond Enquirer* was not the only newspaper deliberately trying to scare whites, however.

John Hampden Pleasants, the senior editor of *The Constitutional Whig*, pointed out the fear-mongering mentality of the newspapers when he said that “editors seem to have applied themselves to the task of alarming the public as much as possible” with “false, absurd, and idle rumors.” While Pleasants’ newspaper printed the incorrect number of slaves involved in the rebellion, he showed that newspapers at the time wanted to “alarm” whites as much as possible, and that newspapers helped increase the fear
in whites after the rebellion. Why newspapers felt compelled to do this is unclear. One reason could be that they wanted to bring about change, such as when *The Richmond Enquirer* stated that “the law must be enforced” to not allow blacks to preach, and they thought “alarming the public as much as possible” was the only way to cause this change. The newspapers made it clear that Nat Turner acted on “the impulse of revenge against the whites, as the enslaver of himself and his race,” and that whites needed to be cautious against another insurrection. The citizens relied on the newspapers for the facts of the rebellion, and no doubt became influenced by the newspapers. While most whites would have most likely responded similarly to the rebellion without the newspaper reports, the newspapers helped burn into their minds that a set of killings of this magnitude could very well happen again. Whites responded in a way that goes along with the message the newspapers tried to spread.

Immediately following the rebellion, many acts of violence and discrimination occurred towards blacks. Pleasants noted that “the people are, naturally enough, wound up to a high pitch of rage, and precaution is even necessary to protect the lives of the captives.” Pleasants yet again made a correct observation that others at the time did not seem to notice. When he later visited Southampton, he saw that the captives had been treated with the same “barbarity [of] the atrocities of the insurgents” because “a spirit of vindictive ferocity had been excited.” Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, the insurrection caused the whites to physically harm not only the slaves involved, but also blacks who did not have any connection to the rebellion. Even though there was no evidence that proved that any form of a slave uprising was planned or carried out in the counties of North Carolina bordering those where the Southampton revolt took place, dozens of blacks, freed or enslaved, were thrown into jails or killed. The rebellion caused unnecessary harm and death to some blacks through retaliation by whites.

Not only did whites unjustifiably harm blacks following the insurrection, but they also wrote to the governor demanding
protection from slaves in the form of arms and legislation. Initially, whites worried more about the immediate physical protection from slaves and requested munitions. In “The Resolutions of Inhabitants of Chesterfield County,” (just north of Southampton) citizens petitioned to the governor:

> We the inhabitants of the upper end of Chesterfield County have amongst us an enemy that is restless in their disposition; and savage in their nature; and feeling alarmed at the fate of the Females and children of Southampton, and not knowing how soon a like Tragedy may take place amongst us. We therefore enter into the following resolutions:

> We also resolve that we will petition the Governor of the State for a Sufficiency of arms and ammunition to arm the men in the Neighbourhood.23

This letter clearly shows that whites wanted arms and ammunition to protect themselves from “savage” slaves because they feared that a “tragedy” like Nat Turner’s would happen again. This also shows that whites began to look at all slaves after the rebellion as “savage” “enemies,” not just as servants.

Other letters looked at a more long-term form of protection, with the requests for legislation. Norborne E. Sutton wrote to the governor suggesting that “slaves should not be permitted to have preaching at any time.”24 Now whites feared black preachers as well. This request could have been influenced by the newspapers of the time, which made similar demands. The letters to the governor show how the mind of whites changed on specific subjects relating to the rebellion. Whites believed that nothing but “disorder and consequences of the most dangerous and alarming result” could come from the relationship between whites and blacks.25 This belief came from the same people who, according to Stephen B. Oates in his book, *The Fires of Jubilee*, prior to the rebellion prided themselves in their just treatment of blacks. Now, some thought that blacks and whites should not interact at all. These letters seemed to have affected the governor, as he became horrified by the rebellion as well.

The governor of Virginia, John Floyd, reacted similarly to the rebellion as the newspapers and citizens did. He feared
further violence and more than willingly gave arms to the people requesting them. He remarked that “the necessity for preserving [arms] is distinctly felt.” It is understandable that he would want to give ammunition to help put down the insurrection, but he said that arms need to be “preserved” for protection from the slaves even after the rebellion had been stopped. He even stated in his journal that “I am daily sending [the people] a portion of arms though I know there is no danger as the slaves were never more humble and subdued.” This note shows just how fearful the governor became after the rebellion. He knew that further arms were not needed, yet he continued to send them to quell the panic in the counties and because of his fear of another insurrection by slaves. Indeed, Floyd said that “I fear much this insurrection in Southampton is to lead to much more disastrous consequences then is at this time apprehended by anybody.” The insurrection fueled the imagination of Floyd and the whites of Virginia with terrible fears over what blacks were capable of. Floyd also started to investigate the causes of the rebellion while he sent ammunition to the counties of Virginia.

Through letters that Floyd received, he came to believe that black preachers and literate blacks could not be trusted. Floyd became so scared of blacks that he actually would “not rest until slavery is abolished in Virginia.” Floyd believed that the best way to solve the problem of slaves was to get rid of them. He was not the only person wishing to abolish slavery after the insurrection. In the 1831–1832 session of the Virginia General Assembly, some delegates, who referred to themselves as abolitionists, argued for the gradual reduction and eventual elimination of the black population of Virginia. Emancipation was one of the means that was put forward to do this. However, the House of Delegates decided not to take any kind of action to remove the black population because they believed that there should be “a more definite development of public opinion.” Instead of embracing emancipation, the General Assembly opted to revise the sections of the current slave code that were part of the insurrection, resulting in the *Supplement to the Revised Codes of Virginia* of 1833.
The Supplement to the Revised Codes of Virginia of 1833 directly reflected the fears and concerns of the newspapers, citizens, and John Floyd. In John Floyd’s letter to the governor of South Carolina, he wrote what he eventually ended up asking of the Virginia General Assembly. Floyd wanted “to confine the slaves to the estates of their masters—prohibit negroes from preaching—[and] absolutely to drive from this state all free negroes.” Floyd showed his new fear of slaves, which arose from Nat Turner’s Rebellion, by his desire to remove and further restrict the liberties of blacks. This request also displayed Floyd’s belief that black preachers were the main reason for the rebellion. Floyd realized that slavery was an issue that needed to be dealt with, and he brought it to the center of the Virginia General Assembly in his Annual Message to the Legislature. Intense debate over slavery followed, which brought about the Supplement to the Revised Codes of Virginia in 1833. It contained new laws dealing with black education, religion, and the distribution of abolitionist newspapers, all of which were key components of Nat Turner’s rebellion and John Floyd’s concerns.

Floyd believed that the insurrection stemmed from black preachers. Floyd stated in November 1831 that “I am fully convinced that every black preacher in the whole country east of the Blue Ridge was in the secret.” Floyd reflected the belief of the newspapers and citizens who thought that because Nat Turner was a preacher, every black preacher could not be trusted and was therefore in on the revolt. The Supplement to the Revised Codes of Virginia dealt with this fear. Section 1 of Chapter 187 said “that no slave, free negro or mulatto, whether he shall be ordained or licensed, or otherwise, shall hereafter undertake to preach…or hold any assembly or meeting, for religious or other purposes.” Section 2 of Chapter 187 said that “any slave, free negro or mulatto, who shall hereafter attend any preaching, meeting or other assembly held…for religious purposes…shall be punished.” Whites attempted to completely remove religion from any black’s life. Again, this directly related to the fact that Nat Turner used religion to support his revolt, and the belief that black preachers were heavily involved in the rebellion. Taking away religion is a
another violation of freedom, and was a hugely unfortunate law, because religion was an important part of slave culture.

Floyd even connected religion to the ability of blacks to read and write. He said that “our females and of the most respectable were persuaded [by preachers] that it was piety to teach negroes to read and write.”36 Once Floyd believed this, it was easy for him to consider that Nat Turner was literate, and therefore think that slaves should no longer be allowed to read and write. Black literacy was another right that the laws of 1833 targeted, and it is because of the rebellion. Section 4 of Chapter 186 states “that all meetings of free negroes or mulattos, at any school-house, church, meeting-house, or other place for teaching them reading or writing…shall be deemed and considered as unlawful assembly.”37 Section 6 of Chapter 186 states “that if any white person…shall assemble with any slaves for the purpose of teaching, and shall teach slaves to read and write, such person, or any white person or persons contracting with such a teacher so to act…shall…be fined.”38 These laws targeted not only slaves but also free blacks, which puts into question how free they actually were. Now, it was unlawful for blacks to be taught or gather to be taught. In *The Revised Codes of Virginia* of 1819, black education was only considered an “evil to the community.”39 But whites wanted to be sure that education of blacks never happened because Nat Turner could read and write, so they made learning illegal. This also tried to limit the ability of blacks to read abolitionist newspapers, another concern of Floyd.

Floyd was convinced that the newspapers of abolitionists were what caused black preachers to organize a revolt. He believed “that the plans as published by those Northern presses were adopted and acted upon by [black preachers].”40 He believed that these papers from the North connected religion to rebellion. He stated that “[abolitionist papers] began first, by making [blacks] religious…telling the blacks…the black man was as good as the white—that all men were born free and equal…that the white people rebelled against England to obtain freedom, so have the blacks a right to do.”41 Floyd despised abolitionist papers because they gave blacks the idea that it was right to rise up against the
people who oppressed them. Floyd seemed to be the only person convinced that abolitionist papers were the root of the rebellion, but his belief was directly dealt with in the new laws passed in 1833. Section 7 of Chapter 187 stated that “if any person shall here after write, print, or cause to be written or printed any book, pamphlet or other writing, advising persons of color within this state to make insurrection, or to rebel…shall be punished.” This section clearly tried to calm the worries Floyd had about abolitionist papers circulating among blacks. All of these laws reflected the white fear that resulted from the murders. They made sure that another rebellion would not happen again. Now, even supposed free blacks were having their rights severely restricted. As a result, black oppression became even worse.  

Nat Turner’s rebellion sent a shockwave through Virginia that was felt by the citizens of Southampton all the way up to Governor John Floyd. It created real terror in a white population as unsuspecting as Southampton, which considered itself to be very lax towards its slaves. Initially, what resulted from this terror was unjust violence and arrests of blacks who were not involved in the rebellion at all because whites suddenly felt they could no longer trust their slaves. James McDowell, Junior, in his speech in the House of Delegates, stated that the panic came from “the suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed could be acted over at any time in any place, that the materials for it were spread through the land and always ready for a like explosion.” With this state of mind, whites demanded immediate protection in the form of arms and laws. Hearing the whites’ call, Governor John Floyd felt that slavery was an issue that had to be dealt with immediately, and his request to the General Assembly spearheaded the revival of debates over slavery. Indeed, Nat Turner’s rebellion brought the issue of slavery to the forefront of political discussion again, which ultimately led to the laws passed in the Supplement to the Revised Codes of Virginia. The new laws in the “Slaves, Free Negroes, And Mulattoes” section directly related to the concerns that emerged from the killings. The laws targeted black education, religion, and distribution of abolitionist newspapers. These three subjects were believed to be
the cause of the rebellion, and were therefore quickly restricted. As a result, black oppression increased. The grip of slavery was further tightened around southern blacks, never to be loosened again in the remaining years of slavery's existence.
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8 Ibid., p. 308
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10 Ibid., p. 309
11 Tragle, p. 4
12 Ibid., pp. xv-xviii
16 Ibid., p. 43
17 Ibid., p. 44
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23 Inhabitants of Chesterfield County to Governor John Floyd, autumn 1831
24 Norborne E. Sutton to Governor John Floyd, September 21, 1831
25 Ibid.
31 Ibid., p. 58
33 Ibid., pp. 275-276
35 Ibid.
36 Floyd to Hamilton, November 19, 1831, in The Southampton Slave Revolt, pp. 275-276
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A great man lays upon posterity the duty of understanding him. The task is not easy even with those well-defined, four-square personalities, who belong to a recognizable type, whose purpose was single and whose career was the product of obvious causes; for we have still in our interpretation to recover an atmosphere which is not our own. It is harder when the man in question falls under no accepted category, and in each feature demands a new analysis. It is hardest of all with one who sets classification at defiance, and seems to unite in himself every contrary, who dominates his generation like some portent of nature, a mystery to his contemporaries and an enigma to his successors. In such a case his interpreter must search not only among the arcana of his age, its hidden forces and imponderable elements, but among the profundities of the human spirit.

Oliver Cromwell has long passed beyond the mists of calumny. He is no longer Hyde’s “brave bad man”; still less is he the hypocrite, the vulgar usurper, the bandit of genius, of Hume and Hallam. By common consent he stands in the first rank of greatness, but there is little agreement on the specific character of that greatness. He is admired by the disciples of the most divergent faiths. Some see in him the apostle of liberty, the patron of all free communions, forgetting his attempts to found an established discipline. Constitutionalists claim him as one of the pioneers of the parliamentary system, though he had little patience with government by debate, and played havoc with many parliaments. He has been hailed as a soldier-saint, in spite of notable blots on his scutcheon. He has been called a religious genius, but on his religion it is not easy to be dogmatic; like Bunyan’s Much-afraid, when he went through the River none could understand what he said. Modern devotees of force have seen in him the super-man who marches steadfastly to his goal amid the crash of ancient fabrics, but they have forgotten his torturing hours of indecision. He has been described as tramping with his heavy boots relentlessly through his age, but his steps were mainly slow and hesitating, and he often stumbled...
SCOTTISH IMMIGRATION
TO NORTH AMERICA BEFORE 1800

Collin Henson

Introduction

Immigrants have greatly influenced the culture of the United States since before the first European settlements in North America. Scottish emigrants came to North America before 1800, and they came primarily for economic reasons, to meet the demand for skilled and unskilled labor in the colonies, and to purchase land.

Furthermore, Scottish immigration had lasting social and cultural impacts on North America. Even today, the descendants of Scottish immigrants show pride in their heritage by playing bagpipes, wearing kilts, participating in cultural festivals, such as Highland games, and in the drink of Scotland, whiskey. The colonial Scots are responsible for over a hundred place names in the United States, such as the towns of Aberdeen and Glasgow. The colonial Scots also helped found St. Andrews societies that helped pave the way for Scottish immigration in the 1800s by providing charity to the poor. The many Presbyterian churches that began with Scottish economic immigration before 1800 are another lasting institution of the colonial Scots. In addition, some

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of America’s most famous founding fathers came from Scottish
descent, including founding fathers Alexander Hamilton and
Patrick Henry, and the first Secretary of War, Henry Knox. They
are among the many Scots who immigrated to North America for
economic reasons before 1800. The Scots who came prior to 1800
established the first Scottish links with North America, helped
found important institutions and contributed to the development
of many regions of North America.

The turn of the 19th century delineates a key time for
Scottish immigration because after 1800, the Industrial Revolu-
tion came into strong effect. The Scottish emigration after 1800
reflected the general trend of immigration during the Industrial
Revolution of mainly poor immigrants seeking opportunities in
America. Before 1800, the immigration to North America rep-
resented all levels of Scottish society who were mainly seeking
economic opportunity.

Trade

One of the main reasons that Scots emigrated to North
America was for trade. Scottish trade dates back to the beginning
of non-Spanish colonization of North America. In the first half of
the 16th century, one of the first areas in North America where
Scots sought economic settlement was the West Indies. Europe
saw the Caribbean as an area where great wealth could be made. As
with other European powers, Scotland also began to see North
America as a potential source of wealth. By the middle of the 17th
century, Scottish traders lived in Swedish, Dutch, French, and
English colonies. Scottish peddlers and merchants were part of
the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. These early links, formed
before English colonization, illustrate the early developments
of Scottish trade to North America. Scotland was agriculturally
poor, therefore the country’s economy relied on trade, and the
new markets in North America offered another opportunity for
Scottish merchants.
Some Scottish residents of Sweden helped fund the colony of New Sweden in what became part of the 13 colonies. Dr. James Robertson and James Forbes provided funding for the South Company of Sweden to trade with the Indies. In addition, Scottish merchants and settlers took part in New Sweden; Richard Clerck acted as the Swedish West India Company commissary beginning in 1646, an important post for a Scot in a foreign trading company. The Swedish venture represents an early Scottish economic attempt in the settlement of North America. Although the commissary was only a minor portion of the Swedish venture, the Scottish element was indeed present with the first non-Spanish colonies in North America.

Although Scots did not undertake colonization themselves, they were very influential members of the trading community. For example, the ship Martha of London brought a cargo of tobacco from the West Indies to the Clyde near Glasgow in January 1639. The presence of early Scottish maritime business shows that direct Scottish trade existed with the colonies, which would eventually lead to permanent settlement by Scottish traders.

In the latter half of the 17th century, Scotland continued its trade with the Caribbean, despite the Navigation Acts, a series of laws restricting the use of foreign shipping for trade between England and its colonies in order to force colonial development into lines favorable to England. These laws also stopped direct colonial trade with the Netherlands, France, and other European countries. Scotland attempted to gain economic links with the rich new world, but still maintained only a fledgling trade with the Caribbean, which would eventually blossom into large-scale trade and increased immigration from Scotland, as a result of the increased demand for the goods produced on North American plantations.

Scots also had economic links with the northern English colonies before 1700. Newfoundland was an integral part of Scotland’s trade under the Navigation Acts. Scottish vessels brought goods, such as molasses, rum, and sugar, from the West Indies and delivered the goods through Newfoundland ports to Scotland.
Scottish merchants used Newfoundland to circumnavigate the Navigation Acts and trade with the lower colonies, providing Caribbean goods for Scotland and the far Northern colonies.

Scots also immigrated to Rupert’s Land in Canada in the latter half of the 17th century because of trading in the region, paving the way for the fur industry that became a major factor in Scottish immigration to the frontier. Scots in the territory were part of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The company recruited Scots from the Orkney Islands in the north of Scotland, who were adapted to cold climates that also would be found in northern Canada. This recruitment began with Hudson’s Bay ships sent around Scotland to avoid privateers and which happened to stop in the Orkneys to recruit sailors. James Sinclair, Calvin Oliphant, James Harrison, David Reidie, Magnus Brown, and George Forrest were among the first recorded to have been recruited by the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1683. Rupert’s Land was at least partially settled by the Hudson Bay Company and the Scots, who were employed by the company and provided key labor in the business venture that would eventually lead to Scottish trading communities in the region. Due to the limited opportunities in Scotland, labor with the Hudson’s Bay Company provided an economic opportunity for Northern Scots.

The most ambitious of Scottish attempts at colonization for trade was the Darien scheme, which the Scots created to make economic gains from gold in that region. The project consisted of building a colony on the Isthmus of Panama between the two major gold ports of the Spanish Cartagena and Portobello. The endeavor at Darien began on July 1698, when five ships carried 1,500 immigrants to the colony. Scots attempted the expedition despite opposition from various parties, including the English, the Spanish, and the Catholic Church. The English wanted to maintain good relations with their Spanish allies. The Spanish felt their trade routes were threatened. Even the Pope was against the colonization of Scottish Calvinists in a Catholic region.

William Patterson, a Scottish Caribbean merchant and organizer of the Darien expedition, promoted the project, despite
the major obstacles in the way of any chance of success. The project became popular in Scotland, as investors flocked to the project. Scots came to the project in hopes of economic gain on their investments. More than 1,500 Scottish investors subscribed 400,000 pounds sterling of capital to the expedition. Many Scots, inspired by economic gain and patriotism, wanted Scotland to expand to North America. Contributions came from all levels of society from clergy, tradesmen, farmers, merchants, lawyers, physicians, mariners, soldiers, landowners, professors, as well as laborers, servants, and students.

The rush to invest and join in the Darien expedition showed the desire of the Scots to conduct profitable trade ventures. Despite the copious amounts of capital invested in the company’s success, the organizers of the expedition had no knowledge of the market in the Caribbean to trade goods. A shortage of food together with epidemic disease, which claimed the lives of 300 colonists, caused the colony to be abandoned.

A second expedition of 1,100 immigrants that landed in late 1699 failed because a Spanish flotilla surrounded the settlement and forced its surrender in April 1700. The survivors of the Darien company settled elsewhere in the Atlantic in colonies like Jamaica, South Carolina, and New York. The failure of the Darien expedition exhausted most of the financial capital of the Company of Scotland, so that it was only able to undertake small trading ventures in the East Indies and other locations. Although the overall venture was a failure, it led to a Union with England due to the financial strain it put on Scotland. It inevitably allowed an increase of trade and settlement upon the lifting of the Navigation Acts. The Darien expedition was the greatest attempt of Scotland to form its own colony in North America and, although it failed, it allowed large-scale economic links to develop between North America and Scotland. The Union also allowed easier trade between Scotland and the North American colonies.

Scottish trade after the Union with England increased because of the tobacco trade in the Chesapeake Bay region opening to Scottish merchants. The main trading group was the Glasgow
merchant firm in the 1740s, because they had cheaper tobacco than London, as they had resident merchants in Virginia, who stockpiled tobacco.24 Scottish residents, who purchased tobacco, and storekeepers from around the 1720s were found in areas, such as Norfolk, Virginia, where they controlled tobacco operations.25 The towns of the tobacco trade housed substantial Scottish populations as companies, like Glasgow-based Alexander Spiers and Company, sent employees to work in Norfolk, Virginia.26 Scots were important in the Chesapeake region, as they provided the capital to fund the lucrative tobacco trade in Virginia and Maryland.27 A Scottish population of traders developed in the first half of the 1700s that would help pave the way for trading throughout the colonies. The Glasgow tobacco trade would develop after the end of the Navigation Acts in Scotland, which allowed Scottish traders to cultivate economic links with the Chesapeake Bay region. These new relations helped build the Scottish tobacco trade through the formation of firms that controlled the majority of the region’s tobacco trade.

By the late 1700s trade shifted northward. A major area of trade was New York. Besides being a point of settlement, it was an important trading port for Scottish merchants and attracted a resident population of traders. Between 1756 and 1774, the Scots’ Society admitted 260 members of Scottish descent, including Reverend Doctor John Witherspoon and Lewis Morris, who were two signers of the Declaration of Independence.28 Prominent Scots, as the society and trade companies demonstrate, had clearly established a population in New York when they sought trade opportunities and used the region as a major trading port for Scottish trade throughout North America.

Another area of trade that Scots became heavily involved in, during the late 1700s, was the northern fur trade. Scots began to dominate the fur trade, as companies, especially the Hudson’s Bay Company, employed Scottish immigrants, and Scots immigrated to either participate in the trade directly or work for companies that did. Seventy-eight percent of the Hudson’s Bay Company in the late 1700s was comprised of Scots from the Orkney Islands.29
Northern Scottish islanders were significantly involved in the fur trade in the former French territories and some settled in the region with the Native Americans or in British settlements in the region. Scottish settlement for trade expanded in the late 1700s, but the American Revolution changed the dynamics of the settlement to focus either on the far north or the Caribbean.

Though there was little emigration during the war, except for the men who came to fight and settle with the Scottish regiments, the Revolution did cause a Scottish population shift. Loyalist Scots emigrated from the American colonies to either Canada or the northern territories or the Caribbean. After the Revolution ended the tobacco trade, Scots went to the Caribbean mainly for trade, as the sugar islands became Glasgow’s premier overseas center of trade by 1790. Scottish trade changed dramatically over the course of Scottish immigration to North America from small forays by Scottish merchants to the large-scale emigration from Scotland to work for Scottish trading companies.

Economic Hardship and the Promise of Escape from Hardship

Another factor that shaped Scottish immigration to North America was economic hardship in Scotland, along with the promise of wealth that North America had to offer. Scottish proprietors in North America often issued promotional pamphlets in Scotland to attract indentured servants. In the late 17th century, Governor Barclay of East New Jersey sent agents to Scotland to promote the colony. The pamphlets and grants attracted a proportionately large number of indentured servants. About half of the early settlers were indentured servants, and many of them came in family units to settle. These emigrants came seeking economic incentives, better living conditions, and the promise of a milder climate. Economic hardships in Scotland and the poor condition of Scottish land provided a major impetus for Scottish immigration to East New Jersey.
In the early 1700s in the southern colonies, Scots came seeking the promise of economic freedom in the region. Governor Johnston of North Carolina offered incentives in the form of tax exemptions and land grants to immigrants in the region, which led to the first Highlander emigration in 1739, when 350 Highlanders settled in Bladen County. However, only 22 were allocated land. Many of the Highlanders arrived at the valley and came as indentured servants for three to seven years to enable themselves to gain more land under the headright land grant system. The Highlanders came after the correspondence between Neil McNeil, a leader of the group, and his brother, the captain of a merchant ship trading in North America, sent favorable reports to the settlers. These immigrants came seeking a better life offered by land tax incentives and land ownership opportunities. The tax incentives offered an opportunity that immigrants would not have in Scotland’s high-rent land market, where there was little land for farming. The ability to become a landowner, a fairly high position in Scotland, was a major influence on the migration of the Highlanders.

In addition, prominent Scots, who already lived in the northern colonies, encouraged immigration. Dr. John Witherspoon, the Scottish-born president of Princeton College, encouraged Scottish immigration to Nova Scotia and Ryegate in colonial New York by mentioning the viability of the settlement’s climate. The promising reports of a mild climate and rich land helped attract Scottish immigrants to the northern colonies. The potential to have profitable land offered another reason for Scots to emigrate to North America from the poor climate of Scotland.

After the Revolution, Scottish economic depression prompted mass emigration to the northern territories. The reason for mass migration was twofold. First, landowners were turning estates in Glengarry into sheep farms, and second, there were two poor harvests in 1783 and 1784. This forced the people to emigrate to Canada to seek a better life and economic freedom. The depression was especially hard in the islands of Scotland and in the Highlands, where the destitute left for the Canadian territories.
In 1791, 1,500 individuals left the Highlands either for Carolina, due to the established Scottish population, or for Canada and Nova Scotia. From the western isles of Scotland, 200 destitute individuals left for Prince Edward Island in 1793. Economic strain prompted by the enclosing of Scottish land, coupled with the economic depression of poor harvests, caused large-scale emigration to the northern colonies, which offered the potential to purchase land.

The increase in Scottish emigrants that began in the late 1700s occurred because of the Scottish gentry’s practice of enclosure and land improvement efforts, and a series of poor harvests. The moneyed landowners, to improve the land and profits, took to enclosing their land, and sent their cattle to the English market. The enclosure of land for stock raising was ruinous for the average tenant, as land rents skyrocketed. After the Revolutionary War, an estate in Badenoch went from 400 pound sterling in 1762, to 1,347 pounds in 1786. The poor situation of the tenants, as they had been put in abject poverty, provided the economic impetus to head to North America, where the emigrants thought that they could escape financial burden. Economic hardship and the promise of an escape from hardship were important to Scottish immigration to North America throughout the period before 1800.

Land and Economic Opportunity

The main economic reason for Scottish emigration was the promise of land and status. In the early half of the 17th century, Scotland needed settlements to help in its plan to form economic links to North America. The Scots first began settling in North America in significant numbers with the help of the English. King James VI granted James Hay, a Scot, the proprietary patent to settle all the Caribees. In the first half of the 18th century, Scots became planters and overseers on the plantations in the Caribbean, and by the middle of the century a quarter of landholders in Jamaica were Scots. These planters and landholders, who came
to gain status and wealth, represent how land motivated rich Scots to immigrate to gain status. The English also granted high-ranking Scots charters to colonize the Americas, because the Union of the Monarchies allowed the monarchs to rule both Scotland and England through rewarding nobles with economic opportunities.

Sir William Alexander of Scotland was given a charter in September 1621. He recruited immigrants from Kirkcudbright, Scotland and formed the Anglo-Scottish Company in 1629 to encourage settlement in Nova Scotia. However, in 1629, the colony ended after three expeditions of Scots failed to establish a colony, due to French attacks and orders of the Scottish King to disband the enterprise, and so the remaining colonists surrendered to the French. Another charter colony that failed was the Cape Breton colony in Nova Scotia that ended with the Treaty of St.-Germain-en-Laye between England and France that gave the territory to France. Affluent Scots wanted colonization of the New World for economic gain by obtaining land and, though they failed, the formation of charter companies and high charters led to more ambitious attempts to colonize North America in the late 17th century.

Scots also attempted to settle already colonized lands, seeking economic territories. In 1640, Captain Andrew Forrester landed 36 Scottish colonists on Long Island and claimed the land for the Dowager of Scotland. The bold claim to the land shows Scotland’s desire to expand its landholding into North America by forming business ventures and sending individual adventurers to attempt to profit from the wealth that the New World had to offer.

In addition, Scottish proprietors were very Anglicized, as they followed the English example by issuing promotional pamphlets in Scotland that showed the economic benefit, such as the availability of land in North America, and they hired gardeners, and attempted improvements such as the first cloth factory in Scotland. Scottish proprietors in East New Jersey attempted to use English methods to produce profit through factories and attracting settlers to their lands in North America. The proprietors of
East New Jersey combined the English plan for the colony, selling land in farming units, with their own social model. Proprietors offered incentives for indentured servitude that attracted many emigrants, as indentured servants were given land grants at the completion of their indenture and fee-paying passengers were given land grants based on the number of indentured servants that they had imported. Proprietors did this because they needed laborers to serve on their plantations and produce profit, while also needing to offer lucrative incentives to attract immigrants to their lands. The Scottish owners of the colony used the colony as an economic venture and brought Scottish immigrants to produce profit on their lands.

Some of these professionals gained prominence, such as James Kinloch, who emigrated in 1703, and gained nearly 10,000 acres of land by 1737, which shows that some Scots found great economic advantage in emigrating to the Carolinas. Another example is Alexander Nisbet, who came as an indentured servant to South Carolina in 1721, to work as a storekeeper and in 1737, received 1,180 acres of land granted to him in Craven County. The two individuals rose from little capital to great economic power through land ownership also in East New Jersey, illustrating the immediate incentives and long-term rewards that attracted Scottish immigrants to the colonies.

Many Scottish planters came to South Carolina due to the availability of land and slave labor in the early 1700s. In North Carolina, the governor, Gabriel Johnston, a Scot, encouraged Scottish immigrants to settle in North Carolina with economic land grants in the region. Scottish planters, who settled in North Carolina, were mainly merchants who took part in the tobacco trade. One such Scottish merchant was Alexander Stewart, who also acted as a planter. Scots also came seeking land to make their fortunes, and in one migration, a large group came following the encouragement of the governor of North Carolina and positive recommendations from an existing planter population. The outlook of many immigrants was that North Carolina would provide cheap and productive land to the settlers. In the 1730s,
some Highlanders conducted a mass migration to the Cape Fear Valley in North Carolina, following the land incentives. The Highlanders sought the cheap and plentiful land offered by the Scottish governor of the colony.

In addition, Highlanders settled in southern Georgia. The Highlanders were meant to serve as a buffer between English and Spanish colonies, and many of them were indentured servants. In 1737, 60 indentured servants sailed from Inverness to Georgia to protect the southern frontier and the emigration continued with later Highlanders. In 1748, Oglethorpe’s regiment disbanded, and 150 members of the regiment settled in Georgia, where they received land at Darien, Georgia. The soldiers stayed due to the promise of land, and the Highlander population attracted more Highland immigrants who provided labor to the frontier. Prominent land-owning Scots, and indentured servants, settled the Carolinas and Georgia, serving as labor, and in the case of Georgia, as defenders. By the time of the American Revolution, 15,000 Highlanders had settled in the colonies. The availability of land attracted large numbers of Scots to the southern colonies, as the Scots came seeking opportunities.

During the first half of the 18th century, Scottish immigration was mainly to the Southern colonies. However after the Seven Years’ War, Scottish immigration shifted northward, as the former French colonies became open to British immigration. Scottish settlers already in the colonies encouraged immigration into the northern colonies, while individuals and companies provided a major impetus to Scottish movement, as individuals banded together to purchase land in the colony. Companies formed to obtain land grants to promote settlement in the northern colonies, with the help of Scots already settled in the region. Lowland Scots formed joint-stock companies to settle in the New World and hoped to profit from the settlements.

Two of the most prominent companies that were engaged in settlement were the Scots-America Company of Farmers and the United Company of Farmers for the Shires of Perth and Stirling. These companies formed to promote large-scale settlement on their
lands and profit from settlement by farmers. The Scots-America Company of Farmers purchased land in Ryegate, New York in 1773, in a partnership with the Pagan family of Glasgow and New York. The company began sending its settlers to the land in 1774, with the ship, Matty. Needing to acquire land for settlement, the United Company of Farmers sent Alexander Harvey to America, where he purchased land in Barnet, south of Ryegate to provide for the settlement of the company’s laborers. The company then sent emigrants to the region. But the American Revolution prevented any large-scale emigration. Although the companies only sent a fraction of their planned emigrants, they were just a few of many companies that attempted to send immigrants into North America to profit from the plentiful land.

In addition, the British government also needed to solve the problem of defense on the northern frontier, so they decided to offer land grants to Scottish veterans. Scotland and America 1600-1800 states:

As the northern New York frontier lands around Crown Point became the epicenter of the war between the British and the French in North America during the 1750s, so it became a priority for settlement after the end of the war in 1763, and the object of the royal proclamation of October 1763, promising land grants on the New York frontier to British veterans of that war.

Many of the survivors of Montgomery’s 77th Regiment of Foot, decimated at the siege of Havana in 1762, knew the region in New York as fertile and open for settlement, and it became known for Scottish settlement.

The veterans of the regiments settled in the northern colonies because they were promised land grants and had heard favorable reports about the land. The most notable example of a Scot using the land grants is Sir William Johnson, who received land following the Seven Years’ War, and took advantage of the government land grants by settling Scottish Highlanders on the Kingsborough Patent in New York around 1764. The Kingsborough Patent offered economic opportunities for Highlanders and led to a mass migration of Scots to the New York frontier seeking land grants offered by the government. In 1773, 400 Highlanders,
led by John Macdonnell, left for New York and mainly settled on land owned by Scottish military officers. The Highlanders settled on the cheap, abundant land, which they could not have done in Scotland, following favorable reports of the land.

The American Revolution transformed Scottish immigration to the northern territories, because after the war, the number of Scots immigrating to Canada increased due to economic hardships in Scotland and the settlement of troops after the war. During the rebellion, the government halted emigration from Scotland, starting with the proclamation on the 4th of September 1775, that lasted the duration of the war with no evidence of any violations. Though the act ended civilian migration during the war, a number of individuals emigrated with Scottish regiments or to serve in the Royal Highland Emigrants that was created in Canada at the start of the war. On the eve of the war, the ship Glasgow Packet sailed for Boston with several Scots, who pledged themselves to the regiment of the Royal Highland Emigrants and inevitably joined the regiment. The men from the regiment were encouraged to stay in Canada with land granted to Colonel Small in 1783, for the settlement of the regiment. The land grants offered economic incentive to settle in Canada and offered economic opportunities to the soldiers and solved the political and economic problem of resettlement in Scotland, where available land was scarce.

Due to the overcrowding in the Highlands, the government offered land incentives to soldiers to settle in Canada. Glengarry County was especially important, as Johnson’s Regiment in the 84th Regiment of Foot settled there because of the land grants given to soldiers and officers. The land grants encouraged the settlement of families, as each captain’s child who came of age brought the family an allotment of 200 acres. Some men, such as Mr. Bethune, founder of St. Gabriel’s Church in Montréal, who received 3,000 acres for his service as a chaplain took great advantage of the land grants. Due to land incentives offered by the government, large numbers of immigrants, including many former soldiers, settled in Canada. The desire for land and wealth from land was the main reason for Scottish emigration to the North American colonies.
Due to the availability of land, Scots came to North America seeking the promise of land. Rich Scots and Scottish companies, along with poor Highlanders, all came to North America to profit from land that they would not have been able to obtain in Scotland. From the beginnings of Scottish immigration in the early 1600s to the late 17th century, land and economic opportunity were the most important factors in Scottish immigration into North America.

Prisoners and Rebels as Unskilled Laborers

The demand for unskilled labor in the growing economies of the colonies was another impetus for Scottish emigration. Another way Scots would enter the colonies besides emigration was as indentured servants to satisfy the demand for labor in North America. After Cromwell overthrew Charles I in 1649, many supporters of the deposed king were sold as indentured servants. In September of 1650, an act of the Council of State arranged for the shipping of 900 Scots prisoners to Virginia and 150 to New England. The indentured servants were sold in the colonies for labor and often, once their contract of indenture was finished, they were unable to return to Scotland. Scots were also sent to the Caribbean, and on October 21, 1651, the Council of State ordered Scottish prisoners to be sent to the Bermudas. These reluctant emigrants served to meet the demands for unskilled labor in the growing colonies.

In the late 1600s, Scots attempted to establish independent colonies in the Americas in order to obtain economic gain and freedom. Their most successful early colony was in East New Jersey. In 1682, five Scottish investors out of 24 investors bought shares in the colony of East New Jersey. Needing labor, the proprietors of the colony began to finance the transportation of criminals and emigrants to the colony. The Privy Council, a group of high advisors, authorized the merchants to transport Covenanters to emigrants, the people who fought the imposition of a religious covenant by the King, and criminals to the colonies. The Covenanters, besides
being transported to solve political problems in Scotland, also helped meet the demands for unskilled labor within the colonies in the farming of the region.

Scots also settled in the Caribbean in the middle of the 17th century after being sent there as unskilled labor for the growing economies of the colonies. After the defeat of Charles II at the Battle of Worcester, the London government decide to sell Scottish prisoners as indentured servants.83 In May 1654, the government issued a contract to a London merchant, Mr. Parris, to transport 500 Scottish prisoners to Barbados.84 The prisoners would serve as labor in the expanding plantations in Barbados. In addition, the demand for unskilled labor by the English landowners in the Caribbean in the late 1600s, required indentured servants that England could not sufficiently supply, so the English recruited and shipped Scottish indentured laborers from English ports.85 The government in Barbados saw Scottish indentured servants as more reliable and better for the defense of the colony.86 Scots served necessary labor that, although sometimes discouraged, was generally approved by the residents of the territories, even if the territory was foreign. They could be found on Dutch islands, having immigrated there on the sugar ships of John Browne.87 Although relatively few Scots lived in the Caribbean in the late 1600s, they made up a vocal part of their communities. Scots were important in serving in militias in the Caribbean, where the local administrations used Scots to bolster their defenses because the Scots were traditionally considered excellent warriors.88 Scots recruited by the administration for defense and labor were important members of the colony.

The Union with England provided a boon to Scottish trade and settlement in the Chesapeake region after 1707. Many Scots were forcibly sent to the region to be indentured labor after the 1715 Jacobite rebellion. In August 1716, 638 men, prisoners of the Jacobite rebellion, consented to transportation and duly departed for the colonies on ships chartered by Sir Thomas Johnson, who contracted with ship captains bound not just for the islands, but for Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina. In order to expedite
the process, Johnson left the indentures in the hands of the captains who were paid 40 shillings a head in advance to transport the prisoners, and who would pocket the indenture’s market value when the contract was sold.89 Two-hundred ninety of the prisoners were destined for the Chesapeake area.90 The prisoners were meant to provide unskilled labor for the plantations in the region, while providing the transporting merchants profit from the sale of indentures. Besides their use as necessary labor in the colonies, the prisoners also provided profit to the merchants who transported them.

Interestingly enough, these immigrants sometimes encouraged further emigration from Scotland to the Chesapeake, resulting in the establishment of firm Scottish populations in the regions of deportation. Francis Home wrote to his family to settle in Virginia, and his nephew George Home subsequently immigrated to Virginia in 1721.91 More prisoners were banished and sold to the Chesapeake after the 1745 rebellion. After the 1745 rebellion, the government sent 155 prisoners to Maryland, where 80 became indentured servants.92 Besides the major rebellions, the government also sent common prisoners to be used as labor in the Chesapeake. Throughout the first half of the 1700s, the High Court of Justiciary banished criminals to the Chesapeake to be sold as indentured servants.93 The Chesapeake indentured servants helped fill the demand for labor on the many Scottish or Scottish-supported tobacco plantations. Conversely, Scottish immigration into Carolina was gradual.94 Many Scots came as indentured servants for forced labor on plantations after the Jacobite Rebellion.95 These indentured servants in the early 1700s provided unskilled labor on plantations in the rapidly growing cash crop economy of the Carolinas.

Another instance of forced transport for basic labor was to the West Indies, following the rebellions in Scotland. The prisoners of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, and the prisoners of the 1745 rebellion were banished, as indentured servants, to serve as labor in the West Indies.96 In 1716, 160 Jacobite prisoners were transported to Antigua, Montserrat, St. Kitts, and Barbados, while
in 1745, 425 prisoners of the rebellion were shipped to Barbados and Jamaica. The government also sold criminals to the West Indies, as between 1707 and 1763, 600 Scottish prisoners were sold as indentured servants in the Caribbean. The forced Scottish indentured servants helped provide labor for the islands’ plantations in the sugar industry of the colonies.

Jamaica had the highest rate of Scottish immigration in the Caribbean, as many indentured servants came to the colony. The government forcibly settled unskilled Scottish prisoners after the 1745 rebellion. On March 31, 1747, Captain Charles Friend and Captain George Snow brought 130 rebel prisoners to Jamaica for sale as indentured servants for seven years. The prisoners provided income to the transporting merchants, while providing labor to their buyers in the industries of the island. Unskilled laborers, either prisoners or indentured servants, were sent to the colonies to provide labor to the regions and many stayed at the destination because of banishment or favorable prospects in the colonies.

Although sent against their wills, the unskilled indentured servants, many of them criminals and rebels, served as important laborers in the economies of the colonies. As they were unable to return to Scotland, they settled in the colonies and formed an important Scottish element throughout the colonies.

Skilled Labor

One of the most influential Scottish groups in the colonies was comprised of skilled laborers, doctors and clergy. The immigration of skilled Scots to the colonies began in the early 1700s. Skilled artisans either were sent to the Chesapeake as indentured servants or came willingly in the first half of the 18th century. An example of this is the purchase of James Borthwick by Colonel Charles Grymes, who employed him as a schoolmaster and bookkeeper, an example of highly skilled indentured servants in the colonies. Many of the indentured servants, who voyaged to the
Chesapeake, did so willingly and were skilled artisans searching for opportunities. Scottish clergymen also immigrated to the Chesapeake to fill the need for Scottish holy men. Episcopalian Scottish clergymen went to the colonies seeking employment after the Church of Scotland adopted Presbyterianism. Many of these ministers came from northeastern Scotland after the Jacobite rebellion because of the need for ministers in the colonies. The ministers provided religious services to the growing number of Scots in the colonies, which required trained clergy that only Scottish immigrants could provide.

Besides the Jacobite transports and those who came directly following those transports, most indentured servants came as individuals, except for some small groups that were contracted by merchants. When the indentured servants were transported in groups, they seem to have been used in specified skilled labor. Some highly skilled professionals came individually as indentured servants. Robert Wilson, one of the few surgeons in North America, sailed as an indentured servant to Charleston in 1753. Thus, some Scots made up important members of the professional and merchant classes. The indentured, skilled servants were important members of the Southern colonies, as they offered services to the owners of their contracts that helped solve the demands for a professional class in the southern colonies.

The Caribbean was an important area of Scottish settlement of skilled indentured servants. Between 1707 and 1763, 60 Scottish indentured servants were sent to Jamaica with many of them being skilled emigrants like barbers, coopers, carpenters, and distillers. The laborers filled the roles of artisans in the economy and emigrated because of the potential for employment. As with the mainland colonies, professionals and clergymen also immigrated into the Caribbean colonies to meet the demand for professionals. Besides the Scottish ministers, several Scottish doctors immigrated to the Leewards, including Charles Hamilton before 1738, Thomas Fraser to Antigua in 1749, and John Cunningham, a surgeon in St. Kitts around 1740, providing integral medical supports in the colonies. The clergymen and doctors
helped to fill highly skilled roles in the Caribbean isles and meet the demands for skilled professionals in the economy of the area.

Willing, skilled Scottish immigrants came to North America, due to the need of skilled labor within the developed regions of the colony. The clergy followed the Scottish populations and served as necessary ecclesiastical labor for the Scottish communities. Scottish physicians and artisans became important members of the growing economies of the British colonies.

Conclusion

Scottish emigration from its earliest forays into Europe had been for economic reasons for trade, employment as skilled or unskilled labor, or land. The Scots initially came to North America to trade, despite the laws against them or as labor for the colonizing powers in the region. Scots attempted to challenge the existing powers in North America because of the resistance of other European powers and the scattered nature of the immigration to the colonies for varied economic reasons.

Scotland’s future and emigration to North America was linked to its Union with England. The Union opened trade and immigration from Scotland to the English colonies. Scots began to emigrate and form integral parts of their respective colonies, as they provided labor, professional services, religious services, and trade throughout the English colonies, especially in the Chesapeake region, where they were important tobacco traders.

Economic ties continued to grow in North America, as Scots came to make their fortunes in areas like the Hudson’s Bay and the Caribbean. Until the American Revolution, Scots continued to immigrate into the colonies, as companies and people attempted to profit from the wealth of North America. Following the Revolution, rising poverty in Scotland and economic incentives, including land grants, attracted waves of Scottish emigrants seeking relief from their hardships.
Without economic incentives and the demand for labor in North America before 1800 the Scottish connection to North America that survives to this day might never have been so strong. Institutions like the College of William and Mary might never have been founded. Also, the established Scottish populations that came before 1800 paved the way for the large-scale immigration of Scots to North America in the late 1800s. The later Scots followed in the footsteps of the economic immigrants from before 1800 because these Scots found established populations of Scots. These later immigrants made use of the charitable societies created before 1800 by Scots, who came seeking economic opportunities. Trade, land, economic hardship, and labor helped bring Scottish populations that helped to form institutions that remain to this day, including their work on American documents, such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.
1  David Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America* 1607-1785 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press) p. 17
3  Dobson, p. 22
4  Devine, pp. 21-22
5  Dobson, p. 35
6  Ibid., p. 68
7  Ibid., pp. 38-39
8  Devine, p. 43
9  Ibid., p. 43
10 Ibid., p. 43
11 Ibid., p. 43
12 Ibid., p. 45
13 Ibid., p. 45
15 Devine, p. 43
16 Ibid., pp. 42-43
17 Ibid., p. 43
18 Murdoch, p. 28
19 Dobson, p. 79
20 Devine, p. 46
21 Ibid., p. 46
22 Dobson, p. 80
24 Dobson, p. 101
25 Ibid., p. 102
26 Ibid., p. 102
27 Devine, p. 70
28 Murdoch, p. 54
29 Devine, p. 202
31 Devine, p. 232
32 Dobson, p. 184
34 Ibid., p. 114
35 Murdoch, p. 48
36 Dobson, p. 111
37 Ibid., p. 116
38 Ibid., p. 137
39 Ibid., p. 185
40 Ibid., p. 185
41 Ibid., p. 190
42 Ibid., p. 191
44 Ibid., p. 60
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“Tyranny set in stone”
Roger Kimball
*The New Criterion*, November 2009

...In 1948, The Soviets blockaded Berlin, a preliminary, they hoped, to annexing it entirely. The Berlin airlift, orchestrated by the American army general, Lucius Clay, provisioned the city with some 4,500 tons of food, fuel, and other necessities every day for nearly a year—at its peak, 1,500 flights a day were crowding in and out of Tempelhof airport. Finally, in May 1949, the Soviets gave up and lifted the blockade.

The airlift was an extraordinary act of political defiance as well as an unprecedented logistical feat. But it did not overcome the contradiction that was Berlin. Increasingly, East Germans voted with their feet. By 1960, a thousand people a day were fleeing East Germany via Berlin. Walter Ulbricht, the GDR’s Communist dictator, pleaded with Nikita Kruschev to do something to staunch the flow of human capital. The following summer, Kruschev, having taken the measure of JFK and his lieutenants, decided to close the border. At a dinner on August 12, he gleefully announced to his companions: “We’re going to close Berlin. We’ll just put up serpentine barbed wire and the West will stand there, like dumb sheep.”

Work began at midnight. The Russian soldiers had been told to withdraw if challenged. But no challenge came from JFK’s ovine entourage. In the succeeding months, the barbed wire was replaced by masonry and metal. The wall gradually encircled the whole of West Berlin. Some three-hundred guard towers punctuated the wall. A second, inner wall sprang up. The “death strip” between was mined and booby-trapped. Guard dogs accompanied the soldiers on their rounds. Erich Honecker, who replaced Ulbricht in 1971, issued a shoot-on-sight order. Somewhere between a hundred and two hundred people were killed trying to scale, or tunnel under, the wall, another 1,000 trying to flee elsewhere from East Germany. For Honecker, it was a small price to pay. Between 1949 and 1962, some two and a half million people had fled East Germany to the West. From 1962 to 1989, his draconian measures reduced the flood to a trickle of 5,000.
Never in Rome’s history had she faced more bleak or dire circumstances. One hundred thousand men had fallen in less than two years due to the deceptive genius of Rome’s most fearsome opponent, Hannibal Barca. Compared to his feats of military magic, Attila, Jugurtha, and Pyrrhus’s campaigns seem insignificant. Born in Carthage but raised in Spain, Hannibal was a dominant leader with a strong personality who, from his childhood, was trained in the art of war. Perhaps the most renowned Roman historian, Titus Livy, describes Hannibal’s personality: “Power to command and readiness to obey are rare associates; but in Hannibal they were perfectly united.” This deadly combination started a war known as the Hannibalic War, which caused massive destruction in the ancient Mediterranean world and left a lasting impression in history. The land of Italy was drenched in the blood of her soldiers, and the safety of Rome herself was endangered upon Hannibal’s arrival at the head of a ferocious army of cutthroat Africans, Spaniards, and Gauls, which emerged from the barren wasteland of the Alps. The Hannibalic war, or more commonly known as the Second Punic War (218–201 BC),
disastrously changed Rome’s history, and it was only after the darkest moment had come that the light of victory shone. This 17-year war was fought between Carthage and the Rome, both countries that had been established for more than 500 years prior to the war.

Set at odds across the Mediterranean, Rome and Carthage (modern-day Tunisia) clashed several times throughout their history. Each country was competing to gain control over the valuable commercial island of Sicily and the precious silver mines of Spain, and it was not long before war reared its ugly head. In 264 BC, disputes in Sicily reached their highest point and hostilities began. What followed is known as the First Punic War, which paired a naval-minded Carthage against the legions of Rome. The conflicts took place almost entirely in Sicily and Africa, as no Carthaginian dared to attempt an invasion of Italy. After defeats on both sides, Carthage pulled out of Sicily, leaving it entirely in the possession of Rome and perhaps her most constant ally, Hiero, King of Syracuse. The last Carthaginian general, Hamilcar, Hannibal’s father, was forced to concede to the Romans. One of the chief writers on the Punic wars, the Greek historian Polybius, gives us a very positive view of Hamilcar’s actions:

So long as there had been some reasonable chance of success, he had left no stratagem untried... and if ever there was a general who tested every prospect of victory to the full, it was he. But when Fortune had turned against him and he was left with no other possibility of saving the troops under his command, he showed his good sense and practical capacity in yielding to the inevitable and sending a delegation to negotiate for peace; for it is after all the duty of the commander to know when he is beaten, no less than when he is victorious.4

Afterwards, bitter towards the Romans for the loss Carthage endured, Hamilcar crossed into Spain and firmly established Carthaginian hegemony among the warring tribes of the wild Gauls who infested the land. Before leaving for Spain, he made Hannibal swear to forever be an enemy of Rome, and it was this oath that effectively doomed hundreds of thousands of Romans. Hannibal’s War lasted for 17 years, with Hannibal himself spending nearly all the years in Italy, ravaging the countryside. In spite
of the presence of Hannibal and the destruction of their armies, Rome saw the war through to its victorious conclusion, upholding its allies and nation through a brilliant army, which was created by the revolutionary fusion of citizens and soldiers. Eventually, this force conquered the known world and established itself in western culture. In Hannibal’s War, we see Rome at her finest, boldly holding on to the idea of liberty even when faced with overwhelming trials. However, despite the glorious survival and victory of Rome, the events set in motion by the Hannibalic War ultimately led her to destruction, both morally and forcibly. In this paper we will examine three points concerning the war. The first regards the course of the war, the destructive battles of Cannae and Zama, and the ultimate victory. In the second, we will discuss the ideology behind the war, why the men at the sharp end fought, and what made Rome continue and thrive. Finally, we will examine the aftereffects of the war, and the events brought about and set in motion as a consequence of the war.

History of the Hannibalic War

In many ways, the Hannibalic War was inevitable. The renowned poet Virgil wrote that Dido, the founder of Carthage, cursed Rome after a dispute with its founder, Aeneas: “All you Tyrrians [Carthaginians], hunt those men in the future, hate them….” and, thus, peace with Rome was never a viable option for Carthage. From the historian Polybius’s standpoint, though, the Hannibalic War was started for three reasons. The first reason was Hamilcar Barca’s hatred of Rome, and thus, Hannibal’s. This hatred caused Hamilcar to amass a mercenary army (without the direct authorization of Carthage) and drove Hannibal to lead the army over the Alps and into Italy. Secondly, and most importantly, the war was started on account of Rome’s growing imperialism. After the First Punic War was completed, Carthage’s army of mercenaries, the mainstay of its military, revolted and devastated the countryside, putting Carthage in an awkward position of near helplessness. Realizing Carthage was in a precarious position, Rome saw it
could profit from Carthage’s distress and stated its intention of declaring war against Carthage. In order to avert such a disaster, Carthage was forced to cede the fertile island Sardinia to Rome, along with a sum of 1,200 talents of gold. Rome’s actions enraged Hamilcar Barca, who then left for Spain, determined to assault Rome once he had built up an army. The third cause of the war was Carthage’s conquest of Spain, which the Romans both feared and envied. Thus the board was set, and Hannibal made the first move.

After his father and brother-in-law had died, Hannibal took command of the mercenary army in Spain, which was composed of all nationalities in the Carthaginian sphere of influence. Determined to start a war, Hannibal besieged the wealthy town of Saguntum, which was strongly allied with Rome. Hannibal ignored many Roman threats and razed the town, allowing few of the inhabitants to reach safety. Carthage supported its young general and refused to surrender him to the Romans as a criminal. Enraged at the unprovoked attack and massacre of her allies, Rome declared war against Carthage, sparking a 17-year conflict that would doom millions of men, women, children, and the states of both of the combatants. Once war had been declared, Hannibal moved with his troops to the far east of Spain, crossed the Rhône, and entered the frosty Alps. Hannibal’s driving purpose was to invade Italy and start a revolt among the Roman allies. He spent 15 days in the mountains, but in those 15 days his army dwindled from around 59,000 to 26,000. When they arrived on the other side of the Alps, his army was exhausted and disheartened. After solidifying relationships with the Cisalpine Celts, Hannibal rapidly moved his troops, his ranks now swelled with thousands of barbarians. He encountered the Romans on the north side of the river Po, defeated them in a small battle, and crossed the river into Roman territory. On the other side of the Po, he was again resisted by the Romans, near Trebia. This time Hannibal engaged them decisively, surrounding them by means of deception, and slaughtering most of the consular army. However, as 19th-century German historian Theodor Mommsen says, the Roman Legionnaires held fast.
The Roman infantry proved itself worthy of its name: at the beginning of the battle it fought with very decided superiority against the infantry of the enemy, and even when the repulse of the Roman horse allowed the enemy’s cavalry and light-armed troops to turn their attacks against the Roman infantry, it ceased indeed to gain on the foe, but it obstinately maintained its ground.10

The Roman infantry, even when surrounded, was a force to be reckoned with, and Hannibal knew his army would not hold against the disciplined might of the Roman legions.11

Hannibal trekked further south into Roman territory, marching through the noxious swamps and forests of northern Italy, while many of his Celts, who were unaccustomed to such hardship, fell dead or deserted. At last, he reached Lake Trasimene, not far from modern day Florence, and was confronted with reports of an approaching Roman army under the command of the consul Gaius Flaminius, a conceited demagogue. Remarking on this battle, Polybius tells us that “there is no more precious asset for a general than a knowledge of his opponent’s guiding principles and character.”12 Hannibal, ever the good general, knew his man, and set a trap for Flaminius, who marched into the ambush, and paid for it with his life and that of his men. Around 15,000 Romans fell to Hannibal’s forces that dark day. Livy tells us of the horrible grief that abounded in Rome once the news of the disaster reached them.

During the next few days the crowd at the city gates was composed of more women than men, waiting and hoping for the sight of some loved face, or at least for news. They pressed around any chance comer, hungry for tidings, and nothing could tear them away…until they had tried to get every detail from beginning to end. The expression on their faces as they walked away told plainly enough the nature of the news they had received…13

However, Hannibal’s ultimate purpose failed, Polybius says,

For until this moment, even though the Romans had been defeated in two battles, not a single Italian city had gone over to the Carthaginians, all of them had kept faith with Rome, although some of them were suffering severely. Such was the awe and respect with which the allies regarded the Roman state.14
Soon after the tragedy at Lake Trasimene, a detachment of 4,000 mounted troops fell into the hands of Hannibal, a fresh disaster upon the minds of the Romans. Desperate for a victory and distraught at the loss of so many sons and fathers, the Senate declared Maximus Fabius the dictator of Rome. The dictatorship was a rare occurrence in Roman history, for generally the power was split between two Consuls to avoid a monarchy, and thus, establishing a dictator was only done under the most critical circumstances. Immediately upon installation, Fabius levied a new army and marched to confront Hannibal. The people’s hopes rose. Perhaps here was a man who would defeat Hannibal and restore stability to Italy. However, Fabius was not what they had expected. Realizing that his men were raw recruits, Fabius did not dare to risk Italy’s fate on a single battle against an army of veteran, battle-honed troops. Instead, he followed Hannibal about the country, engaging in guerrilla-type warfare, always staying within sight of Hannibal, but never accepting battle. In the long run, this type of warfare was best for the Romans. For in the time Fabius was dictator, Hannibal continually lost men and was low on supplies. In spite of this, Hannibal devastated the land of Rome’s allies, burning the countryside directly before the eyes of a Roman army, which infuriated the common people in Rome. Therefore, directly after his term was expired, Fabius was retired as dictator, because the people failed to appreciate long-term tactics, but instead were focused upon immediate victory. The Consuls were elected, the patrician Lucius Aemilius Paulus and the plebian Gaius Terentius Varro, a popular leader with no experience. These two raised eight legions and an equal amount of allies, (approximately 80,000 men) to drive Hannibal from Italy. Before they left to fight Hannibal, Fabius implored Paulus to avoid direct confrontation at all costs, for he knew that Varro was determined to engage Hannibal and that the results could be disastrous for Rome. While Fabius’ tactics may have seemed weak and cowardly, they had kept Rome from destruction. With that word of warning, Varro and Paulus marched for Cannae, “to make it famous in history as the scene of a catastrophic Roman defeat. Destiny itself was at its heels.”
In the case of a split command, the constitution of Rome allowed each consul to command the army on different days, a foolish tradition. Paulus would spend his day fortifying the camp and watching Hannibal, while Varro would hurry after Hannibal, eager for battle. Eventually, Hannibal noticed the tension and offered battle to Varro, who accepted wholeheartedly. Ever the brilliant tactician, Hannibal positioned himself with his back to the sun and in a place where there was plenty of dust. As the battle started, the wind blew dust into the Romans’ eyes and the bright sun impeded their vision, adding to the destruction. Hannibal’s center was composed of his most worthless troops, the Celts and the Spaniards, with the elite Libyans on their sides, and the cavalry positioned to the Africans’ flanks. Ignoring the unfavorable ground, Varro led 70,000 of his 80,000 troops out into the valley of Cannae. In order to match the forces opposed to them, the Romans were forced to shrink their lines, and bunch up. To do so was self-defeating, for the Roman line had been designed to give each soldier maximum maneuverability. The lines were met and joined, the Romans by their sheer weight pushing the center back, creating great slaughter among the Celts and the Spaniards. Slowly, the Carthaginian center retreated, drawing the Romans into a tighter and tighter box, with the Libyans circling around the edges. The Roman cavalry had not stood long against the enemy cavalry, and fled the battle, leaving the flanks unguarded. Swiveling around from the pursuit, the Carthaginian cavalry surrounded the 70,000 brave souls, creating a panic which achieved the destruction of the Roman army. Modern author Victor Davis Hanson remarks in his book *Carnage and Culture*, “Confusion and terror only grew greater as dusk neared, as each Roman pushed blindly and was shoved into the enemy at all sides. Stacked in rows to the depth of thirty-five and more, the size of the unwieldy mass began to ensure its destruction.”

Livy also tells us that 500 Numidians (African soldiers, especially feared horsemen) pretended to desert and rode to the back of the Roman line. Once the soldiers in their vicinity were not paying attention to them, they drew their hidden swords and began “striking at the soldiers’ backs, hamstringing them,” and
causing terrible destruction.” The slaughter was so continuous that many Romans were left alive on the battlefield, and Livy says that many were found “with the sinews in their thighs and behind their knees sliced through, baring their throats and necks and begging for anyone who would spill what little blood they had left. Some had their heads buried in the ground, having apparently dug themselves holes and by smothering their faces with earth had choked themselves to death.” Strangest of all, Livy goes on to say, was a Numidian, with nose and ears horribly lacerated, who was found alive under the body of a Roman who had died in the act of tearing his enemy with his teeth. The famously early Church father Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, writes that the carnage was so great that “even Hannibal, cruel as he was, was yet sated with the blood of his bitterest enemies, and gave orders that they be spared.”

Such was the battle of Cannae. Total Roman and allied casualties have been estimated anywhere from 50,000 to 70,000; it was a massacre. Lucius Aemilius Paulus died in the butchery, falling nobly on the battlefield, never having left his troops, while Varro managed to escape with some 40 horsemen. Out of the survivors, only around 10,000 had managed to get away; the rest had been captured along with their camp. Hannibal, however, did not press on Rome after the battle, and Livy says it was that day’s delay that many saw was the “salvation of the City and of the Empire.” Once the smoke had cleared, Hannibal sent a delegation to Rome offering to release the prisoners of Cannae for a ransom. Though the Romans had lost an enormous army, they replied with stern assurance that they would not ransom men who had surrendered, an order reminiscent of the early wars of Rome. Polybius says, “In this way Hannibal experienced less joy from his victory than disappointment, when he saw with amazement the unshaken resolve and the lofty spirit which the Romans showed in their resolutions.” Rome lost anywhere from 50,000 to 70,000 brothers, husbands, fathers, and sons but would not give up; they would stay the course. This so disheartened Hannibal that to the day he left Italy, he never once thought he could take the walls of Rome. Although later in the war he marched on Rome, he never
attempted to besiege the city. The inability of Hannibal, after one of the greatest victories in history, to spark a revolt in Rome, foretold the true course of the war, and how it would end.

The same year as the disaster at Cannae, Hannibal sent his brother Mago back to Carthage for reinforcements, and when he arrived at Carthage he spread the news of their victory at Cannae and their successes in Italy (at this point nearly the entire toe of Italy had joined the Carthaginians). The Carthaginians were ecstatic about Hannibal’s triumphs and urged the sending of reinforcements. However, Hanno, the leader of the peace-party at Carthage, argued against the action. Livy records the meeting, where Hanno says:

‘Here are two questions which I should wish… Mago to answer: first, in spite of the fact that the Roman power was utterly destroyed at Cannae, and the knowledge that the whole of Italy is in revolt, has any single member of the Latin Confederacy come over to us? Secondly, has any man belonging to the five and thirty tribes of Rome deserted to Hannibal?’

After Mago answered both questions in the negative, Hanno went on to ask,

‘Has the word ‘peace’ ever been breathed in Rome at all?’

‘No,’ said Mago.

‘Very well then,’ replied Hanno; ‘in the conduct of the war we have not advanced one inch: the situation is precisely the same as when Hannibal first crossed into Italy.’

Eventually the reinforcements were sent to Hannibal, but Hanno’s point had been made: Rome had not, and never would, sue for peace. At this time, the war in Spain, which had continued with varying progress, was changed drastically as the brother commanders, Gnaeus and Publius Scipio, were both tragically slain by the Carthaginians. The world seemed to be crumbling around the Romans. Their allies were rebelling, their armies were defeated, and their provinces were slipping from their grasp. Fabius and a general named Marcus Claudius Marcellus, however, restored order to the country and, arguably, the survival of Rome over the next few years was due largely to them. Plutarch, the acclaimed Greek historian, says that Hannibal feared “Marcellus when he
was in motion, and Fabius when he sat still.” Their personalities were far different, for where Fabius was quiet and steady, Marcellus was bold and vigorous. Ironically, this combination allowed them successfully to combat Hannibal, and the two men, along with the unwavering Senate, kept the Roman state and Latin allies going. This allowed Rome to send a new army to Spain. After much debate, the Senate chose Publius Cornelius Scipio to head the expedition. Scipio would later become the most renowned Roman general in the history of the Republic. Upon arriving in Spain, Scipio besieged and captured the main Carthaginian base, and within a few years, had overthrown the Carthaginian Empire which had been set up and nourished by Hamilcar Barca. Scipio’s brilliance was a mixture of good fortune, careful analysis, and courage. No Carthaginian could stand against him in battle, and he quickly won over the Spanish with his self-control and humane actions, a stark contrast to the haughty rule of the Carthaginians.

One of the generals in Spain, Hasdrubal, a brother of Hannibal, managed to escape Scipio’s claws and marched over the Alps to join his brother in the conquest of Italy, bringing with him a sizable army of mercenaries and Gauls. He was confronted in northern Italy, at the river Metaurus, by two Consular armies, and was defeated and slain in battle. Hannibal was met with the news of the defeat and of his brother’s death at the same time, when the Romans threw his brother’s head at the foot of his fortifications. Livy the tells us that Hannibal, “under the double blow of so great a public and personal distress exclaimed: ‘Now, at last, I see the destiny of Carthage plain!’” Hannibal knew that he had failed in his mission to destroy Rome, and he knew Carthage would have to pay for the destruction he had wrought. After subjugating Spain, Scipio returned to Italy and began urging the Senate to allow him to invade Africa, which, in his mind, was the only sure way to draw Hannibal away from Italy.

In 204 B.C., Scipio crossed over to Africa and began a campaign against the Carthaginians and the Numidians, with the help of the daring Numidian prince, Masinissa. One year later, Hannibal was recalled to Africa to stop Scipio’s destruction. As
he left the Italian shores, he lamented that “Hannibal has been conquered not by the Roman people... but by the envy and continual disparagement of the Carthaginian Senate,”28 which repeatedly failed to send him support. Once back in Africa, Hannibal marched to confront Scipio at Zama in 202 B.C. with his veteran troops, the same troops who had slain the hundreds of thousands at Cannae, Trasimene, and Trebia. Before entering the battle, Hannibal reminded them of their previous magnificent victories. However, nothing could make them forget that they were now in the same hopeless position that Rome had been in 10 years before. Polybius remarks that “The Carthaginians were fighting for their very survival...the Romans for the empire and sovereignty of the world.”29 The fate of the world hung upon this battle, as the Livy says, “Before the next night they [the world] would know whether Rome or Carthage was destined to give laws to the nations.”30 It was a brilliant clash of the two greatest generals of the century, arguably the greatest in the history of the ancient Mediterranean, yet in the end it was decided by the courage and dedication of their troops. In the question of courage and loyalty, the Romans had outshone the Carthaginians the entire war. Hannibal fought until his troops abandoned him, and then he fled the battlefield, recognizing he was beaten. He made his way back to Carthage and ordered his countrymen and to send envoys to sue for peace. After much debate in the Roman Senate, the truce was ratified and sent back to Scipio, with orders to work out the specifics according to his judgment. Scipio proposed a relatively light peace treaty, considering the circumstances, which effectively constrained Carthage to Africa. Hannibal urged the people to accept it, even pulling a pro-war speaker down from the speaking platform. For though Hannibal had sworn always to hate Rome, he, like his father, was too loyal to sacrifice his country in his personal hate. Upon his insistence, the treaty was approved, but when the Romans ordered the Carthaginians to surrender Hannibal as a criminal, the Romans were informed he had fled. Hannibal went to Greece, where he eventually stirred up the strife of war against the Romans until his suicide in 183 BC. Such was the war against Hannibal.
The Ideology behind The Hannibalic War

Of all the ideas that drove the Romans in the Hannibalic War, nationalism was by far the most important. Whenever the commander would rally his troops, he would always remind them of their precarious position as a country, and the need to defend the fatherland. Patriotism defined the Roman society. In the most desperate times of economic crisis, the Senate was forced to rely on people’s loyalty to replenish the exhausted gold supplies, asking for loans from individuals. The response was instantaneous and widespread. Families that had been taxed to near-poverty contributed their family treasures; senators donated nearly all their golden ornaments, and soldiers volunteered to fight for Roman credit. On the flip side, the Carthaginian military had little to no use for patriotism, and as Victor Davis Hanson notes, Hannibal’s army, “Probably did not contain a single voting Carthaginian citizen.”\(^{31}\) The Carthaginian army was mainly rallied and banded together because of their mutual lust for wealth or hatred of Rome, two conditions which could be neglected or displaced. Rome’s patriotism had given rise to a military ideal which would immerse itself in Western culture, the idea of a citizen army. This philosophy had been inherent in Roman society throughout their history, first emerging from the levies conducted by the Consuls to defend the city, and eventually morphing into the large-scale drafts conducted by the Senate in the Hannibalic War. Civic militarism\(^{32}\) was the idea that the state could take an ordinary farmer, train him, equip him, and use him to fight more fiercely than any mercenary because he believed in what he was fighting for. While the Carthaginians believed in their mercenaries securing them victory, Rome relied on her own people, a supply more easily reproduced, and often replicated with a fiercer drive than before. Subsequently, when the state went to war, it was the people who would be at the sharp end who voted to fight, and Livy says no measure could be taken “without their direct approval.”\(^{33}\) Thus, the men who would fight Hannibal in Italy voted to replace their countrymen who had been murdered at Cannae, fully confident
of victory and eager to avenge their deaths. Hannibal could only muster mercenaries who would expect to be paid, and when pay became short, they would simply leave. Not so the Romans, who, when pay was short, voted to continue fighting on for credit. They were fighting for freedom, not wealth. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his famous argument *A Discourse on the Political Economy*, notes this and writes about the time when Rome fell into the same position as Carthage:

There may come a time when the citizens, no longer looking upon themselves as interested in the common cause, will cease to be the defenders of the country, and the Magistrates will prefer the command of mercenaries to that of freemen…Such was the state of Rome towards the end of the Republic…for all the victories of the early Romans…had been won by brave citizens, who were ready, at need, to give their blood in the service of their country, but would never sell it.34

Victor Davis Hanson says, “Roman yeomen in vast numbers had voluntarily imposed civic musters, voted through their local assemblies for war, and marched to Cannae under elected generals, determined to rid Carthaginian invaders from Italian soil.”35 This above all other reasons is why they were able to continue the war even when times were desperate and dark. Their citizens would not give in, and their loyalty to their Republic was turned into a most efficient fighting weapon, which eventually wore Hannibal down and defeated him. Along with Rome’s people, her Senate would not consider peace, but instead, when times were darkest, fought the hardest to keep their nation from failing. Rome’s resilience led Polybius to remark, “It is when the Romans stand in real danger that they are most to be feared.”36 Carthage, unlike Rome, when faced with armies at her gates and allies revolting from her control, sued for peace, but it was not their cowardly spirit which betrayed them. Instead, it was their inability to construct and maintain a military based on patriotism and nationalism. Polybius knew this, and likewise noted:

[The Carthaginians] employ foreign and mercenary troops, whereas those of the Romans are citizens and natives of their own country; so in this respect too we must judge the Roman political system to be superior to the Carthaginian. The Carthaginians depend at all
times on the courage of mercenaries to safeguard their prospects of freedom, but the Romans rely on the bravery of their own citizens and the help of their allies. The result is that even if they happen to be defeated at the outset, the Romans carry on the war with all their resources, but this is impossible for the Carthaginians.37

Livy, too, observed the important difference:

Nor had they [the Carthaginians] the strength or resources which enabled the Romans to endure these calamities: for the Romans had their own populace and that of Latium to supply a greater and more numerous body of young soldiers continually growing up to take the place of their losses, however great; whereas both the city and the rural population of Carthage were utterly unwarlike—they were forced to hire mercenaries from the Africans, a fickle and untrustworthy people, swayed by the least breath which seemed to promise them some advantage.38

Because of civic militarism, never in her history would Rome be bested in a war that her citizens had voted to fight. Again, Victor Davis Hanson puts it well:

[The] enemies of Rome slaughtered nearly a half million legionaries on the battlefield. In the end, all that glorious fighting was for naught. Nearly all of these would-be conquerors ended up dead or in chains, their armies butchered, enslaved, crucified, or in retreat. They were, after all, fighting a frightening system and an idea, not a mere army. The most stunning victories of these enemies of Rome meant yet another Roman army on the horizon, while their own armies melted away with a single defeat.39

The Romans won the Hannibalic War because they refused to capitulate, and instead continued to bring themselves to battle, even when faced with massive defeats.

The Aftermath of the War

The most immediate effects of the Hannibalic War was that it set the stage for the Third Punic War, (149–146 B.C.), which effectively destroyed Carthage. The famous Roman statesman and Senator, Cato the Elder, grew uneasy about the growth of Carthage’s power after the Hannibalic War and often spoke in
the Senate against Carthage. Cato had been sent as an envoy to the Carthaginians to settle a dispute between the Carthaginians and the African prince, Masinissa, when he first took note of their rising power. Plutarch tells us of their growth:

[Cato] finding Carthage, not (as the Romans thought) low and in an ill condition, but well-manned, full of riches and all sorts of arms and ammunition and perceiving the Carthaginians carry it high, he conceived that it was not time for the Romans to adjust affairs between them and Masinissa; but rather that they themselves would fall into danger, unless they should find means to check this rapid new growth of their ancient irreconcilable enemy.40

Cato was so affected by what he saw, that in every speech he gave afterward, he ended his words with saying, “Also Carthage, methinks, ought utterly to be destroyed.”41 His words eventually won over the Senate, which declared war upon Carthage (the Roman historian Appian says Rome did so with no good excuse), and surrounded the city. The Carthaginians fought back with a desperate determination and several times succeeded in driving the Romans back, causing great losses both in men and material. But their antagonist was the general Scipio Aemelianus, the adopted grandson of the great Scipio Africanus, and like his grandfather, he was both lucky and courageous. After three years of fighting, the Romans broke into Carthage, and slowly took the city apart, house by house, street by street for six days, until on the seventh the Carthaginians offered to surrender. The Romans accepted the proposal, and some 50,000 exhausted men, women, and children shuffled out, later to live out their lives in slavery. Afterward, Carthage was completely destroyed; that once-great city that produced heroes such as Hamilcar and Hannibal, was completely razed. Polybius gives us an extended look at the effect of Rome’s victory in the world.

A great many different reports were current in Greece on the subject of the final defeat of the Carthaginians by the Romans, and these contrasting versions reflected a wide divergence of opinion. Some people praised the Romans for having pursued a wise and statesmanlike policy to defend their empire. To remove the fear which had constantly hung over them and to destroy the city which had repeatedly disputed the rule of the world with them and thus to ensure the
supremacy of their own country—these, it was held, were the actions of intelligent and far-sighted men.

But others took the opposite view, and argued that far from upholding the principles by which they had won their supremacy, the Romans were gradually abandoning these and turning towards the same craving for power which had afflicted the Athenians and Spartans… In the past the Romans had made war upon all peoples, but only to the point at which their opponents had been defeated and had acknowledged that they would obey them and execute their commands. But now they had given a foretaste of their future intentions in their behavior towards Perseus, which had involved the destruction, root and branch, of the Macedonian Kingdom, and the new policy had reached its climax in the decision concerning Carthage. The Carthaginians had committed no irretrievable offense against their opponents, yet the Romans had inflicted penalties which were not only harsh but final, even though the enemy had agreed to accept all their conditions and obey all their commands.⁴²

The Hannibalic War defined and doomed Rome in many ways, the most important of which was the domination by Rome in the affairs of the Mediterranean. In the Hannibalic War, Carthage was weakened, and was basically removed from intrusion in Rome’s dealings with the world. No longer was there the annoying competition and interference of a second major power in the immediate area. Now the western sphere of the Mediterranean was effectively dominated by the Romans; the trade routes, the allies, and the roads were all under Roman jurisdiction. As a result, two things happened that eventually led to the culmination of Roman power in the known world. First, Rome, suddenly placed in a position of power, began to hunger for more control, and set herself on the path to civil war and strife. Rome began to pursue imperial motives that would have been seen as appalling a century before, and, as Polybius stated, was no longer concerned with merely subduing countries—Rome wanted domination. Second, as an effect of these imperial motives, Rome’s Senate became oppressive, resulting in a seditious and irate populace. Admittedly this was a problem Rome faced throughout her history, but it was even more acute after the birth of imperialism. The honored Roman historian Sallust tells of this evil:
Down to the destruction of Carthage, the people and Senate shared the government peaceably and with due restraint, and the citizens did not compete for glory or power; fear of its enemies preserved the good morals of the state. But when the people were relieved of this fear, the favorite vices of prosperity—license and pride—appeared as a natural consequence. Thus the peace and quiet which they had longed for in time of adversity proved, when they obtained it, to be even more grievous and bitter than the adversity. For the nobles started to use their position, and the people their liberty, to gratify their selfish passions, every man snatching and seizing what he could for himself. So the whole community was split into parties, and the Republic, which hitherto had been the common interest of all, was torn asunder.43

Because of the victories over Carthage, Rome also became much haughtier in her treatment of her allies, and alliances once honored were now exploited. Author Russell Kirk particularly highlights the dispute, “The Romans began to rend one another—class against class, allies against the claims of Rome…general against general, Senate against people.”44 All these events eventually led to the fall of the Roman Empire and the widespread dispersal of Western culture.

When Cato protested against the rising power of Carthage, Scipio Nasica, the grandson of Scipio Africanus, argued that while Rome’s power and prosperity ought to be protected, Carthage should stand. The 20th century historian Nigel Bagnall tells us of Nasica’s conviction:

Shortly before the Third Punic war he [Nasica] warned the Senate that...Carthage should not be destroyed as a rival. Were this to occur, there would be no check to Rome’s arrogant disregard for the legitimate interests and concerns of smaller states. Moreover, in the absence of any external threat, the Roman Confederation would be in danger of disintegrating as fractious political and social groups pursued their own self-interested ends.45

He was exactly right, and Rome suffered severely from the destruction of Carthage. In 90-88 B.C., Rome’s Italian allies broke off from the Confederation and established their own government in an event known as the Social War. This led to Rome being forced to concede citizenship to all the free males in Italy. The Social War
was only a beginning; eventually Rome’s conflict with her allies led to the Spanish War, Mithridatic War, the Jugurthine War and many others. The destruction of Carthage and the planting of imperialism were both aftereffects of the Hannibalic War, and both had drastic consequences: disorder, rioting, brutal conquests, and the deaths and enslavements of millions of innocent people.

Conclusion

My thesis is that the Hannibalic War led to the eventual destruction of Rome. Although in the Hannibalic War we see Rome’s resiliency, and its brilliance in the most desperate of situations, the effects of the war brought decay to the Roman Republic, and, even more devastatingly, caused the fall of the Roman Empire. Imperialism was the cause of the decay of the Roman Republic, but forces far more dangerous were introduced in Rome as a result of the Second Punic War. Augustine reveals the evil that changed the course of Rome’s future.

It was at that time also [soon after the Hannibalic War] that the pro-consul Cn. Manlius, after subduing the Galatians, introduced into Rome the luxury of Asia, more destructive than all hostile armies. It was then that iron bedsteads and expensive carpets were first used; then, too, that female singers were admitted at banquets, and other licentious abominations were introduced.46

But how was this a result of the Hannibalic War? Augustine gives us a clue to that question.

“Scipio [Nasica] wished you [Rome] to be hard-pressed by an enemy, that you might not abandon your selves to luxurious manner; but so abandoned are you, that not even when crushed by the enemy is your luxury repressed.”47 Nasica saw that without an ever-present enemy, Rome would not only import the luxuries of Asia, but would become enslaved to them, since it was not driven by its precarious position to be fearful for its existence. Sallust, the honored Roman historian, concurs with Augustine’s view:
When Carthage, Rome’s rival in her quest for empire, had been annihilated, every land and sea lay open to her. It was then that fortune turned unkind and confounded all her enterprises. To the men who had so easily endured toil and peril, anxiety and adversity, the leisure and riches which are generally regarded as so desirable proved a burden and a curse. Growing love of money, and the lust for power which followed it, engendered every kind of evil. Avarice destroyed her integrity, and every other virtue, and instead taught men to be proud and cruel, to neglect religion, and to hold nothing too sacred to sell.48

These vices led, less than 100 years after the conclusion of the Hannibalic War, to Rome’s Senate accepting bribes from the African despot, Jugurtha, who bought their good will. Upon leaving Rome from his successful business, Jugurtha, delightedly disgusted, remarked: “Yonder city is up for sale, and its days are numbered if it finds a buyer.”49 Later in the war against Jugurtha, the Romans managed to overcome the corruption which had seeped into their system, but the point was clear to Sallust. Rome was falling into a pit, which was gradually sucking their leaders and people further and further into immorality. Even more, the effeminacy of the East seeped in and fatally damaged the fighting spirit of the Romans, making them lax and indolent. This effeminacy ultimately destroyed Rome. When the barbarians sacked and pillaged Rome, they did so because the Romans would not defend their borders, but instead entrusted their lives to mercenaries who were oftentimes little better than the invaders. Rome was brought down because they would not learn from Carthage’s mistake; they stopped voting to bring themselves to fight, for they would not abandon their idle way of life. They had chosen to forget the principles their country was founded upon; the principles their forefathers had employed against the Carthaginians.

When Hannibal crossed the Alps into Italy, he started a chain of events that would tear apart his country, his enemy, and eventually the world. The hundreds of thousands that were doomed to death as a result of Hannibal’s crossing were but a tiny fraction of the millions upon millions of Gauls, Britons, Persians, Africans, and Romans who were to suffer from the disastrous decay of the Republic and the oppressive imperialism of the later Empire.

2 Livy, p. 26

3 The second major war of Rome and Carthage is known by many names, and while the Romans called it the Second Punic War, (Punic meaning Phoenician, since Carthage was originally from Phoenicia), the Greeks referred to it as the Hannibalic War. In naming the war, I am mostly going to side with the Greeks since the war was almost entirely brought about by and centered on the impressive figure of Hannibal.


6 Polybius, pp. 187–188

7 This mercenary revolt lasted three years (241–237 B.C.) and was mainly the result of the mercenaries not receiving their pay on a regular basis, (something that occurred quite often in the Punic wars). The revolt spread throughout Africa, and many of the towns joined, angry at the exorbitant taxes that Carthage had imposed upon them during the First Punic War.


9 The ancient name for the Celts or Gauls that inhabited the Italian side of the Alps.


11 Hannibal knew his troops were inferior to the discipline of the legionnaires, because he almost never risked outright ‘shock’ battle. At Cannae, he only managed to defeat them by surrounding and flanking them. At Trebia, he would have been defeated had it not been for the men he had in ambush. The one major time he faced the Romans in open head-on battle was at Zama, and he was utterly defeated.

12 Polybius, p. 247
The Numidians would slice the tendons in the backs of the Roman’s knees or legs, effectively dropping the legionary and leaving him helpless on the ground. The enormous number of wounded left on the battlefield was largely due to this tactic.

Publius Cornelius Scipio was the son of Publius Scipio, one of the brother commanders in Spain. The younger Scipio would later be distinguished with the title Africanus for his exploits in the Hannibalic War.

Appian and Livy claim that this battle, the battle at the Metaurus, was the reverse of Cannae, since they were comparable in scale. According to Livy, the Carthaginians lost 57,000 at the Metaurus, and the Romans 50,000 at Cannae. Still, the dead at Cannae have been recorded as anywhere from 50,000 to 70,000.

The idea of civic militarism was not inherently Roman, but was instead developed and used by the Greeks. However, the Romans improved on the Greek idea and applied it on a widespread scale.

36 Polybius, p. 244
37 Ibid., pp. 345–346
38 Livy, p. 570
39 Hanson, p. 128
40 Plutarch, p. 478
41 Ibid., p. 478
42 Polybius, p. 535
46 Augustine, p. 99
47 Ibid., p. 37. Augustine writes here of the time when the Goths sacked Rome. The Romans were enraptured by their luxuries, and, even though their capital city was in flames, refused to fight off the invaders.
48 Sallust, p. 181 (Emphasis mine)
49 Ibid., p. 73
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As for the method, it may explain much for me to state that my favorite historian is Tacitus, who dealt mainly with high-placed scoundrels, but that the finest compliment I ever heard paid a historian was tendered by Thomas Hobbes in the foreword to his translation of *The Peloponnesian War*, in which he referred to Thucydides as “one who, though he never digress to read a Lecture, Moral or Political, upon his own Text, nor enter into men’s hearts, further than the Actions themselves evidently guide him… filleth his Narrations with that choice of matter, and ordereth them with that Judgement, and with such perspicuity and efficacy expresseth himself that (as Plutarch saith) he maketh his Auditor a Spectator. For he setteth his Reader in the Assemblies of the People, and in their Senates, at their debating; in the Streets, at their Seditions; and in the Field, at their Battels.” There indeed is something worth aiming at, however far short of attainment we fall.
THE SIX COMPANIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Kathleen Rao

The discovery of gold in California was what attracted many of the first Chinese immigrants to the United States in 1849. As more Chinese immigrated to California, cities such as San Francisco began to see the rise of Chinese communities and Chinatowns. Due to the increase in population, there was a need for the Chinese to establish some sort of social organization for mutual help and protection. Each social organization or huiguan would represent and protect the welfare of people from different districts in China. Eventually, a group of these associations in San Francisco collaborated with one another to form the Chinese Six Companies or The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. At the same time, much of America believed that the organization’s main job was to import contract laborers, and many historians have been puzzled by the actual purpose of the organization or have disregarded it in their records of the California Chinese completely. However, the Six Companies was actually created as a response to racism and discrimination and was the most important organization that pushed for mutual aid and protection of rights. Though some historians argue that the Six Companies imported contract laborers and was detrimental to the Chinese

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cause in the late 19th century, the organization was successful in breaking down racist barriers and defending Chinese civil rights due to its democratic structure and Western methods of negotiation, and the adoption of these tactics ultimately contributed to the development of mainland China’s nationalistic diplomatic attitude towards the Western world.

The first *huiguan* in California was the Kong Chow Association, a district group which included all the Cantonese from six of the 72 districts of Kwangtung province since the majority of California Chinese were from these districts. Each organization was based on common lineage or geographical origins, and the Chinese immigrants “possessed a strong base of support in the character and complexity of their social organization” that was “the product of thousands of years of evolution.” By 1854, there were six distinct district associations or companies that had been organized, and there were more than 40,000 Cantonese in California. These *huiguan* established the tradition of mutual aid on which the Six Companies later based their organization, and these practices could be traced back to other *huiguan* functioning in China. According to Reverend William Speer, who led the first Protestant mission in San Francisco’s Chinatown in 1853, “in China it is common to have councils, and in foreign lands *ui-kans* (company halls). The company furnishes beds, fuel and water to guests who remain but for a short period. Means are bestowed for the latter to enable them to return to China.” Speer also noted that the *huiguan* generally gave the Chinese protection against the government and in business transactions. Unfortunately, the exact year the Six Companies was founded is unknown because any records have been lost, possibly in fires or the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, which destroyed Chinatown. The company, eventually taken over by merchants, was originally founded as the Chung Wah Kung Saw, Meeting Hall of the Chinese People, or the *Zhonghua Huiguan*, The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, though Americans called it the Six Companies. The San Francisco organization acted as the main intermediary between the Chinese community and white society and was the only organization that represented all of the Chinese in the United States.
Anti-Chinese sentiment, one of the main factors that led to the creation of the Six Companies, existed as early as 1850 when “white laborers found themselves unable to compete with the industrious Cantonese in the labor market.” Griffith of *The Western Historical Quarterly* notes that there was a period of time when Chinese immigrants were praised for being industrious and frugal, but they soon were ostracized for being a source of competition to white labor and a “blight upon the American moral code.” In the *California Law Review* Charles J. McClain summarizes the situation by saying that the Chinese “worked too hard, saved too much and spent too little.” Many scholars believe that an unwillingness of Chinese workers to assimilate into American society and culture, to learn English, and to live outside an isolated community were the biggest reasons for the discrimination they received. Scholar Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen believes that “the anti-Chinese sentiment was also the result of a mixture of racism and an inability to understand the customs and cultures of the Asian peoples” because magazines, newspapers, and most of America scandalized Chinatowns and tended to focus on the worst aspects of Chinese society such as “smuggling, robberies, murders, and prostitution.” As a result, anti-Chinese legislation began to make its way through the legislative houses of many levels of government. However, Hansen argues that the development of the Six Companies was actually “strengthened by the series of exclusion laws enacted from 1882 to 1904.” In fact, C.N. Reynolds asserts in the *American Journal of Sociology* that the tendency of the Chinese to form organizations like the *huiguan* and Six Companies was “accentuated by the early development of discrimination against the Chinese and the exploitation of their labor,” especially in the mining industry. The Chinese faced violence and unfriendly acts from Congress or state legislatures including a foreign miner’s tax that required Chinese immigrant miners or foreign miners who were not native-born citizens of the United States to pay up to $20 a month. In 1854, the Chinese were also banned from testifying in court when white men were involved. Thus, the Chinese felt they needed an organization whereby their civil and legal rights might be defended and protected, and “the individual district
companies could not perform this function because anti-Chinese feelings and discriminating legislation were directed not to certain Chinese but all of them.” Another function of the Six Companies that developed due to exclusion from American courts was settling disputes between family organizations in conflict over business deals for individual rights and between fighting tongs. The tongs were all-inclusive groups formed by members of the other district clans who felt discriminated against, and they began also as groups for mutual aid but degenerated into organizations for the “promotion and control of illegal enterprises” such as gambling, prostitution, and using opium products. These disputes among individual clans were not brought to American courts because the majority of Americans were plainly prejudiced against the Chinese, so they became the responsibility of the Six Companies.

As a whole, the Six Companies itself faced accusations that the organization was a labor broker that imported “coolies,” and this claim heightened tensions during the Panic of 1873 as the Chinese were seen as competition for labor, and Chinese merchants appeared to have a secure hold on a part of the market. As early as 1852, complaints about the influx of Chinese workers and those who were already settled arose in the California mining regions, and the resulting report from the California Assembly Committee stated that many of the Chinese had not come to California voluntarily but rather had been “imported as servile labor by foreign capitalists and were held to labor under contracts not recognized by American law.” Since the immigrants had no desire to become American citizens, the reports urged the state and national governments to pass anti-Chinese legislation, specifically the Foreign Miners’ Tax.

In response, the Six Companies was able to successfully combat racism by using Western style lobbying, treaty making, and even United States courts to seek compensation for violence against the Chinese and prevent discriminatory legislation from being passed by the local, state, and federal governments. In an article published in 1975 in the American Journal of Sociology, the scholars Ivan Light and Charles Choy Wong appear to dismiss the past im-
portance of the Six Companies. In the report on Chinatown, they stated that “the recognized leaders have been unwilling to declare their communities social disaster areas” and that “they have done nothing to publicize unwholesome conditions in Chinatowns and so to prepare a case for claiming federal assistance.” They argue that “what government aid does penetrate the Chinese community is unsystematic, insufficient, subject to yearly renewals, and no result of initiatives taken by the Six Companies.” As an explanation, Light and Wong make the claim that “cultural tradition still plays [a role] in the Six Companies’ obstinate unwillingness to solicit public welfare assistance.” This viewpoint, although made in the 20th century, reflects the belief of many others in the previous century that the Six Companies was ineffective in promoting Chinese interests in American society. For instance, the *San Francisco Post* in 1878 argued that “non-assimilation is not only an ingrained fact, it is fast becoming an aggressive policy on the part of the Chinese Merchants.” Other papers such as the *Daily Alta California* portrayed the Chinese in the same way, but criticism was not limited to articles in periodicals. In 1884, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field observed that “[American] institutions have made no impression on [the Chinese] during the more than 30 years they have been in the country.” This theme of depicting the Chinese as indifferent to the political landscape has reappeared many times in modern scholarship and among legislators despite the fact that the Chinese made effective use of an important American institution—the courts—to advance their interests. Hansen explains that “since [the Chinese] arrived in the United States under the auspices of the Chinese Six Companies and worked together in certain communities, they were seen as an element incapable of being assimilated into the melting pot of American society.” In addition, McClain believes that the argument that portrayed the Chinese as self-preservationists who came to America just to make a fortune before returning home was most to blame for the prejudice they received. The rumor that the Six Companies was a labor broker also plagued their reputation in journalism and newspapers. The *San Francisco Bulletin* of 1878 stated that the Six Companies “imported [laborers]
by the shiploads, and just as long as they could make immense profits upon the chattels they will bring them.” In terms of “coolie” importation, Hansen believes that the “immense cultural differences that existed between the Chinese and the Americans help to explain the role of the Six Companies as the lubricant in the process by which Chinese laborers were hired to satisfy the demands of businessmen for a cheap and efficient labor force.”

His argument supports the idea that the Six Companies recruited contract laborers because “Chinese smuggling was an extremely lucrative business” and that the organization helped smuggle the laborers into the United States and Mexico after Chinese exclusion acts were passed. Sarah M. Griffith adds that Chinese merchants who headed organizations such as the Six Companies were often labor contractors who worked closely with white employers to hire large groups of Chinese “to clear land, lay railroad track, and work in mining camps and in the homes of wealthy whites as cooks.”

Despite the arguments questioning the purpose of the organization, the company was quite successful and effective in its aggressive use of American institutions to protect Chinese interests. By analyzing its methods of fighting racism, William Hoy, the eventual secretary of the Six Companies, and Yucheng Qin, a professor at the University of Hawai‘i-Hilo, show that the company proved it was able to solve problems in a coordinated, diplomatic fashion instead of illegally or violently as Americans at that time would have expected after hearing misguided, exaggerated information that Chinatowns were filled primarily with criminal activities. Although it is true that Hoy is biased in his opinions, he claims that the “early writings of American journalists and historians branding the Six Companies as a coolie importing agency and a secret tribunal were all born out of racial prejudice, malice, bias, and a total lack of social understanding.” Qin also points out that “no one has ever seen a contract between the Six Companies and any Chinese laborers.” Though Hansen believes the Six Companies did have a key role in importing contract laborers, he also says the Six Companies did not directly manage the smuggling operations. Based on evidence of the Six Companies’ activities, the leading organization of the Chinese was actually very
committed to the Chinese people’s battle for civil rights, and the
methods that were used somewhat assimilated the Chinese into
American society. According to Hoy, discriminatory laws such as
acts to prevent immigration were “fought by the Six Companies
by protests, appeals, and memorials to the city, state and Federal
governments.”

Interestingly, though Hansen has a different viewpoint on the Six Companies’ role in “coolie” importation, he does not deny that “the Six Companies did everything within their power to defend the Chinese in the United States from acts of violence and discrimination.” Forms of protest and appeals included establishing an 1876 memorial called “A Memorial from Representative Chinamen in America” to President Grant, publishing articles in American newspapers, writing petitions to American governments, and filing lawsuits in courts, tools that have come to characterize American values and ways of seeking a redress of grievances. These actions contributed to the effectiveness of the Six Companies and show that the Six Companies did try to integrate Chinese society in California in that respect.

In addition to denying “coolie” importation and protesting discriminatory laws, the Six Companies lobbied for its interests by using the United States Constitution to its advantage in fighting against immigration restriction. Scholars have noted that Chinese proved themselves very capable, determined, and skillful in their challenges to Chinese exclusion acts and other discriminatory laws before the federal courts. Their main argument was the promise of equality, and they demanded that the United States uphold it. In a statement to Congress, the Six Companies stated that they “were willing to pay taxes cheerfully, when taxed equally with others, but such discrimination [such as unfair taxation] also contradicted America’s claim to be a free country.” Although district clans avoided the courts, the Six Companies as a whole used them to discuss the status of immigrants. To help navigate the courts, the Six Companies sponsored a great deal of Chinese civil rights litigation and hired lawyers who were “familiar with the complexities of U.S. law to advise them on how to counteract anti-Chinese legislation.” Experienced white attorneys were also willing to represent Chinese in court cases before the federal
courts because the Chinese paid them quite well, and one of the complaints against the Chinese was that they hired the best legal talent. An example of the company’s use of the courts was in the case *Lin Sing v. Washburn* in 1862 involving a California law that imposed a tax of $2.50 called the Chinese Police Tax on almost all California Chinese. The Six Companies made their case to the California Supreme Court that this was unfair taxation towards the Chinese and succeeded in striking down the law. The court concluded that the tax “singled out the Chinese for taxation [and] discriminated against foreign trade.” In another lawsuit, the Six Companies was able to overturn a “Queue Ordinance” that cut off the queues of all Chinese men committed to the county jail. In the wake of the passage of the Geary Act that required all Chinese to register and carry identifying documentation, the Six Companies instructed all Chinese in the United States to ignore the law and contribute money to cover the legal costs of arguing the act’s unconstitutionality. Although the act was upheld, Hansen states “the action of the Six Companies in this instance was indicative of the high degree of moral authority that it possessed with regard to the Chinese community in the United States.”

To win the favor of American officials, the Six Companies successfully employed treaties and diplomacy characteristic of Western nation states. By doing so, the Six Companies was crucial to defending Chinese immigration. When American lawyer, legislator, and diplomat, Anson Burlingame, made a visit to California in the late 19th century, the presidents of the Six Companies visited him to draw attention to the issues of Chinese equality and rights and to protest the foreign Miners’ License Tax that exclusively targeted Chinese miners. With Burlingame, evidence shows that the negotiations were successful for the Six Companies. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 basically gave the Chinese protection that had been given to other minorities. Though the treaty did withhold rights to becoming naturalized, Article 4 gave the Chinese “liberty of conscience,” freedom from religious persecution, and protected Chinese cemeteries from disturbance, and other parts of the treaty protected their access to education and the right to maintain schools. In addition, a huge leap for the Chinese was
that the article secured for them equal protection under the 14th Amendment and also the right to free immigration. By participating in the negotiation of this treaty the Six Companies demonstrated the group’s devotion to preventing Chinese exclusion. The only time the push for immigration lessened considerably was during the Panic of 1873 when anti-Chinese sentiment was so high that the companies wrote letters home discouraging Chinese to come to California. As Hansen explains, complaints that “the Chinese work for very low wages and thus had the effect of reducing wages in general led to acts of violence and discrimination against them in the towns of the West.” Unfortunately, it is true that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was a big blow to the Six Companies’ cause and Chinese immigration, but the organization’s wide-ranging efforts before then cannot be ignored. After the Burlingame Treaty was passed, the Six Companies “tried to use the very principle of the nation-state system—the sanctity of treaties—to justify its protest” and to prove that they would honor Western-style treaties and styles of negotiation. In an address to members of Congress that included Senator Wade from Ohio at a banquet held by the Six Companies, the leaders of the Six Companies stated that “China is a very old nation, but our people have learned many new things from America.”

The Six Companies was also necessary to the breaking down of racist barriers into quasi-assimilation in American society because they were committed to improving the reputation of the Chinese in the eyes of the American public. At the banquet for Congress members, the Six Companies pointed out their contribution to the country in terms of trade and the construction of the transcontinental railroad. In Chinatown itself, the organization hired a watchman and even a private white police force to patrol Chinatown to catch any illegal activity that would misrepresent Chinese values. The group also tried to send some Chinese vagrants back to China, and on November 17, 1876, the Six Companies informed a police judge that “they would provide passage home for three mendicants who were convicted and sentenced in the Police Court.” Another effort to improve the American public’s opinion of the Chinese was to rid the city of
prostitution. The companies prevented ships carrying prostitutes from docking, gathered prostitutes in Chinatown to be sent back to China, and helped American officials identify prostitutes who were pretending to be the wives of sailors or men in San Francisco. Also, since their formation, the Six Companies fought to break the strong anti-social influence of the fighting tongs, and worked to get the tongs to cease their illegal activities and use of violence.60 Carrying on the traditions established in the early huiguan in the 1850s, “the Six Companies continued to work on improving the Chinese image, which they hoped would regain the confidence of the American public and authorities in the Chinese, who would thus achieve acceptance and equality.” 61 These efforts received praise from American newspapers. In 1868, the San Francisco Alta California stated: “In this concern for the morals and well-being of their countrymen and countrywomen, [the Six Companies] set us an example we might well follow.”62

Thus, in terms of fitting in with American society, the Six Companies may have upheld cultural aspects of China or other traditions but were effective in adapting to Western institutions to defend their rights. It would be an error to overlook the importance of the Six Companies in terms of advancing Chinese rights. It is apparent that the longevity of the Six Companies can be accounted for by its democratic structure and ways of dealing with problems. The organization was “jointly officered and administered by the presidents of each of the five district companies” and would “handle only problems or affairs which affected the interest and welfare of all the California Chinese, such, for example, as fighting anti-Chinese legislation, or protesting against persecution of Chinese in the mines and elsewhere.”63 Furthermore, “by united agreement the Six Companies was empowered to speak and act for all the California Chinese in problems and affairs which affected the majority of the population,” and therefore, the organization was able to have widespread effects.64 Hoy asserts that the Six Companies was “probably to the best interests of the political and administrative expression of the Chinese in the adjustment of community affairs and problems” because it was “self-government on a small scale and at its best and essentially
Qin agrees and states “the only unified Chinese action against anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States came from the leaders of the Six Companies, who not only brought Chinese *huiguan* traditions with them to California but also quickly adopted democratic ideas when they arrived.” In addition, Hansen adds that “the Six Companies never flagged in their support for the immigrants—legal or otherwise—nor in attempts to promote and maintain the unity and cultural identity of the Chinese in the land of their adoption.” He believes that “although their importance in this sense has declined in recent decades, during the formative years of the development of the Chinese communities in the United States, they were a particularly vital ingredient in their preservation and survival.”

The legacy of the Six Companies can be seen in the nationalist diplomacy of the Qing dynasty after it superseded the Six Companies in performing many of their functions dealing with the Chinese in California. To fill a void created by the Qing government, the Six Companies acted as an intermediate organization between the Chinese government and the authorities of other nations. The Qing government finally sent a diplomat to the United States in 1878, and the consulate carried on the Six Companies’ tactics by filing “a petition for a writ of *habeas corpus* in the Federal Circuit Court on behalf of several Chinese crewmen who were denied entry into the United States” and using courts to slowly break down exclusion acts. For instance, the Qing government was active in a case where the court found that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 could not be applied to Chinese who had “left the United States before the law went into effect,” a step towards getting the act repealed. The policies that the Qing legation adopted in America could almost be seen as a continuation of the Six Companies’ policies.

Therefore, before the Qing dynasty was able to send a representative of the Chinese to the United States, the responsibility of speaking for the interests of the Chinese was left to the Six Companies. Throughout its history the American public has always had a “certain misunderstanding of the nature and purpose
of the Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco during the three quarter century of its history.” Many historians and journalists portray them as a slave importation organization or ineffective at dealing with the welfare of the Chinese in San Francisco, but the Six Companies was actually very successful in fighting for Chinese civil rights. The successes of the organization were quite remarkable considering how difficult it was in the late 19th century for a group of immigrants such as the Chinese to cope with the hostile political and legal environment that existed in the United States. The California Chinese had “come from a totally alien culture, an authoritarian society, where the concept of implementing social change through organs of government was certainly unknown,” but “somehow they were able to adapt to the new political environment and to exploit those opportunities that presented themselves.” The reasons they were able to do so were their use of Western courts and diplomacy and their efforts as a reformer of Chinatown to improve the image of the Chinese in the eyes of America.
Endnotes

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9 Hoy, p. 7
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13 Ibid., p. 44
14 Reynolds, p. 615
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16 Ibid., p. 9
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21 Ibid., pp. 1354-1355
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THE EUROPEAN STRUGGLE FOR THE NILE VALLEY
AND THE MOTIVES AND FACTORS BEHIND
THE BRITISH DECISION TO INVADE THE SUDAN

Jae Hyun Lee

Introduction

The wide expanse of the seemingly barren wasteland we call the Sudan and the conflicts surrounding it from 1880 to 1900 reveal the multifaceted drivers behind the expansionist policies of European states in the late 19th century and highlight the complex nature of colonial enterprises undertaken at the time. Between 1885 when the Sudan was abandoned, and 1896, when orders were given for its conquest, there was a clear shift in the perception of the Sudan by outsiders. What caused this dramatic shift in view within the British political leadership? What motives played a major role in the decision to retake the land, and how were the situations that led to it created?

Through an analysis of British and American newspaper articles, British Parliamentary records, and first-hand records of the campaign, this paper seeks to examine the questions outlined above by analyzing the various factors behind and the causes of the decisions made in London at the time. The change in the

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perception of the Sudan from a barren wasteland to a strategic area of interest was caused by the increased involvement of other European powers in the Nile area, actions which alarmed and concerned decision makers in London. Its re-conquest was ordered following the exhaustion of all effective diplomatic means and carried out in a strategic manner both to secure a European alliance and to persuade the British public of its importance in advance. Although the British Conservative leadership had always recognized the strategic value of the Nile Valley, its relative importance and the stance and action deemed appropriate for the region changed significantly based on the movements of other European powers, and the timing of Britain’s actions were carefully measured to gain political support at home and to prevent diplomatic isolation abroad.

Historical Context

In the late 19th century, the powers of Europe were competing for territory in Africa, a process of invasion, occupation, and colonization that historians commonly refer to as the Scramble for Africa. The 1880s and 1890s were times of transition, when indirect rule through military influence and economic dependence was replaced by the direct conquest and administration by European powers, as nine-tenths of the African continent was split up among European governments within just 16 years.¹

Of all the powers of Europe, Britain had stood out for its dominance over the global economy and politics through the establishment of the British Empire, a vast dominion of territories that encompassed nearly a quarter of the world’s land surface by the late 19th century.² Trade and commerce among the various dominions supported the British economy, and India was at the heart of this international trade. Consequently, securing passage to India was naturally of vital importance to Britain, an importance well recognized by both the British public and the political leadership.³ For this very reason, the Suez Canal, the “second lifeline to India,” was at the top of Britain’s priority list.⁴
Initially, however, Egypt was not the primary concern of the Cabinet in London; the Ottoman Empire was. The British provided massive aid to the Turks in an effort to build up the Ottomans as a shield against the Russians, whom the British felt could possibly threaten the Suez passage from the north. The British relied on the combined force of the British Navy with allied Turkish troops in the Near East to protect the route to India from potential Russian threats. Egypt, therefore, was of very little concern until the 1880s, as the thought went that should Constantinople fall to the Russians, the Suez Canal would be made vulnerable to Russian incursion. In fact, the original English strategy was to keep the Sultan and the Khedive as close allies who could act as reliable checks to Russian dreams of expansion. As Benjamin Disraeli remarked in 1876, it was the belief of the British Government that “Constantinople is the key of India, and not Egypt and the Suez Canal.”

Nonetheless, the British were dragged into Egypt. In 1876, the Sultan became bankrupt, as did the Khedive. Europeans began to demand the money the Khedive had borrowed, and the French went so far as to depose Ismail as Khedive. The British too decided to intervene in order to keep the balance of power with France. Yet, the general policy of the British remained non-intervention.

The decisive turning point was the Urabi Revolt (1879-1882), in which Egyptian soldiers against European influence in modernization efforts rose up against the Khedival Government. To preserve its own interests, Britain invaded Alexandria and established a permanent British advisor in the Khedive’s court. The Cabinet was prompted by the need to protect the Suez Canal and to preserve the claims of individual British citizens to the Egyptian treasury. Following the Battle of Tel el-Kebir on 13 September 1882, in which the British crushed the Urabi revolt, Egypt became a de facto protectorate of Britain.
The Egyptian rule over the Sudan began with the initial invasion of 1820. In 1860, the Egyptian government prohibited the slave trade after continued pressure from Britain. The slave trade was of great economic importance to the Sudanese, and thus dissatisfaction grew among the native population under Egyptian rule.

Furthermore, the prevalent exploitation and corruption of the parasitic bureaucracy of the Egyptian-administered Sudan contributed to the increase in social discontent. Egyptian provincial governors exploited the population to provide for themselves and their men, and little was done to improve the lives of the Sudanese natives. On the whole, the decades of Egyptian rule had generated a deeply-ingrained hatred of foreigners in Sudan and the mood was ripe for a revolution.

In 1881, a nationwide revolt with a partly religious motivation broke out under the leadership of Mohammed Ahmed, the self-proclaimed mahdi. Several Egyptian attempts to quell the revolt ended in vain, and the Mahdist movement increased its sphere of influence to dominate most of the Sudan.

In 1882, the Ansar, armed with spears and swords, overwhelmed a 7,000-man Egyptian force not far from Al Ubayyid and seized their rifles and ammunition. The Mahdi followed up on this victory by laying siege to Al Ubayyid and starving it into submission after four months. The Ansar, now with a force of roughly 30,000 men, then defeated an 8,000-man Egyptian relief force at Sheikan. The Mahdi followed by capturing Darfur and imprisoning Rudolf Slatin, an Austrian in the Khedive’s service, who later became the first Egyptian appointed governor of Darfur province. This defeat signaled the beginning of the loss of Egyptian control of the Sudan, and by January 1884, the Mahdi’s forces were threatening Khartoum, the capital of Egyptian Sudan.

In response, the British government sent Charles Gordon to Khartoum to lead the evacuation of Egyptians and Europeans
from the city. Upon his arrival on 18 February 1884, however, Gordon realized that any evacuation would be at great risk of losing many men as the Mahdist troops were nearby and closing in on the city. Thus he resolved to make preparations for a siege of the city and called for reinforcements from Egypt and Britain.

Gladstone’s Cabinet in London was reluctant to involve itself in the Sudan conflict. The Liberals were firmly against colonial expansion, and Gladstone did not want to risk stretching the British Empire to the Sudan. Nonetheless, the public and the Queen put pressure on the government to take measures to rescue Gordon, the Queen remarking that she was “much aggrieved and annoyed” by the Egyptian situation. The public too did not wish the “brave champion of the English cause” to be allowed to be killed by fanatic barbarians. In May, The New York Times wrote:

The newspapers, in this country and in England, which approve the abandonment of Gordon, do not represent the feeling of the British people. As we have said before, if calamity befell Gordon it would be directly traceable to the criminal negligence of Mr. Gladstone’s Government, and would be the signal for the overwhelming defeat of that Government.

After much delay, a relief mission was organized, but Khartoum fell to the Mahdist forces on 26 January 1885, days before the British rescue mission finally arrived. The Cabinet immediately ordered General Garnet Wolseley, in charge of the rescue mission, to retreat to the Egyptian border, and ultimately decided to abandon the Sudan to the Mahdists.

Unhindered by British intervention, the Ansar continued its conquest after Khartoum towards the South, and by the end of 1885, only the areas surrounding Wadi Halfa on the northern frontier, Suakin on the eastern coast, and Equatoria on the southern strip remained free of Mahdist occupation.
A Mahdist Sudan itself was viewed as no real threat to British interests, and the burden of financing a campaign of reconquest was perceived to be greater than the potential benefit Britain could gain from a Sudan under British control. Moreover, with regard to the English settlements which feared the revival of the slave trade, anti-imperialists argued that such concerns were unnecessary as the slave trade can not function when the Egyptian market is closed, effectively rebutting the humanitarian argument for invasion made at the time.

Nevertheless, the Sudan was recognized as being strategically important to Britain even before the Mahdist rebellion. The preservation of the “Egyptian highway” which lay at the core of England’s Eastern Empire was deemed necessary well before 1884, and the British were making sure that no other European power got itself involved in the Upper Nile Valley. The French had their eyes on Egypt and the Sudan as well, however. The French construction of the Suez Canal well demonstrated the French interest in the region, and The New York Times wrote in 1884 that “France, ostensibly neutral, is watching keenly for any chance of advantageous intervention.” Moreover, Italy, a relatively new colonial power, also took interest in the Nile area. Italy wished to send 20,000 troops into the Sudan and occupy it in August 1885, a proposal that was never realized.

The British after Gordon

The British were not idle after the Mahdi seized control over the Sudan. Horatio Kitchener played a major role in the preparation for what would make possible the re-conquest of the Sudan. Appointed as Governor of Suakin in 1886, Kitchener was promoted to Sirdar of the Egyptian Army in 1892. He succeeded in raising a local army, as he increased the number of competent native troops and strengthened their training.
After Gordon was killed by the Ansars in the Battle of Khartoum, most politicians in Britain had shifted their views to favor staying in Egypt. Unlike before, the only major politicians remaining as fervent advocates of withdrawal were Gladstone and his close supporters. Despite continued requests by the French for withdrawal from Egypt, the Government responded by saying that Egypt would collapse without British military presence and continued to wield great influence in the Khedive’s Court. By 1889, Cairo had become the pivot of the British Mediterranean strategy.

Having decided to keep Egypt for Britain, Lord Evelyn Baring, the British Consul-General in Cairo, came to the conclusion that Britain could not afford to let any other European power obtain a hold over any part of the Nile Valley. This meant that the Upper Nile would have to be protected from European encroachment, as threats of enemies damming the Upper Nile and starving Egypt were serious concerns to Britain.

Nonetheless, many were reluctant to engage in a full-scale invasion. Baring strongly advised Prime Minister Lord Salisbury against it, as its huge costs would be a significant burden. The Mahdists had no technology to dam up the Upper Nile, and thus presented little threat to the security of Egypt. There was no compelling need to step in.

In the minds of Englishmen another major factor was in play—British prestige. The belief in the excellence of moral suasion and free partnership of the mid-century was now fading away, as Boers and Irishmen used their rights against the British and as Indians and Burmans went against Britain as well. The British were driven into preferring cold administration and control, and prestige and insurance became important. Policy grew more committed to warding off of hypothetical dangers. Fear of the worst was driving policymaking to a great extent.

Around late 1890, Baring was more willing to support the re-conquest of the Sudan. He pointed to three main reasons. First, diplomacy could not be relied upon forever to keep foreign powers out of the Nile. Second, the Mahdist forces were quickly
losing control, meaning that the military expeditions might succeed quickly and without much difficulty. Lastly, Egyptian finances had improved considerably, making it possible for Egypt to pay for the expedition.

This led to the conquest of Tokar in February 1891, which not only meant territorial expansion on the Red Sea coast for Britain but also a generally increased military presence in the Sudan.24 The conquest was seen as a potential first step in the reconquest of the Sudan, something which was increasingly viewed as necessary due to Italian advances and Mahdist atrocities.25

France, Italy, Germany, and the Congo Free State

During this period, the French repeated their claims over the Nile River and exerted their power on the international diplomatic stage. In June 1889, Spuller, the French Foreign Minister, tried to get Salisbury to agree on terms for withdrawal from Egypt, an offer that was declined by London. However, talks with France over African territories were never abandoned by Britain, and with the goal of handing over interests in West Africa to the French for concessions in the East, negotiations continued.

The continuation of negotiations was virtually unavoidable as Salisbury had forgotten that France had been part of a 1862 treaty regarding the status of Zanzibar and thus had a right to be involved in further treaties regarding the state when signing the Anglo-German Agreement on 1 July 1890. The knowledge that Britain and Germany had signed a treaty without any French consultation was badly received in Paris, and the French demanded compensation.

At first, France demanded recognition of its gains in Tunisia. However, Salisbury was hesitant as there was firm Italian opposition, one which was backed by the Germans. So instead he looked to West Africa. The two countries agreed to a French boundary that gave the French the whole of Upper Niger, central
and western Sudan, and a free hand in Madagascar. The agreement was signed on 5 August 1890.26

The French, however, had not abandoned their ambitions on the Nile. The Colonial Party regretted not having involved France in Egyptian affairs when Britain did, and sought to increase France’s presence in East Africa.27 France continued to challenge the agreements between England and the other European powers, and with the Italian conquest of Kassala, French tolerance for what was going on in the Upper Nile was over.28 Furthermore, France was pushing for Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia to sign a treaty opening up the supply line to Ethiopia, and a channel for constant trade and interaction was opened between French Somaliland and Ethiopia.29

Italy had its own ambitions in East Africa. The Italian public felt that they had gotten too little in Africa, and Signor Francesco Crispi, the Italian Prime Minister, was being heavily criticized for his rather submissive attitudes towards Great Britain.30 In May 1889, Crispi signed the Treaty of Wuchale with Ethiopia, stripping Ethiopia of its diplomatic powers and proclaiming it as an Italian protectorate to the powers of Europe according to the Italian version of the treaty.31 Article 17 of the Italian version of the treaty required all Ethiopian affairs with foreign states to go through Italy, and this was recognized by Queen Victoria and Kaiser Wilhelm although not by France.32 The Italian Prime Minister also claimed the town of Kassala, a town at the Atbara tributary of the Nile, and expressed Italy’s ambitions for more coastal territory. This was not received well by the British. Soon after the news reached London, Baring advised Salisbury:

They would soon strike the valley of the Nile…at Khartoum…the establishment of a civilized power in the Nile Valley would be a calamity to Egypt. Whatever power holds the Upper Nile Valley must, by the mere force of its geographical situation, dominate Egypt.33

The original argument for abandoning the Sudan in 1884 had been based on the premise that Great Britain was closer to Khartoum than any other major power, but now it was becoming uncertain whether this would still hold true in future years. Furthermore,
Kassala was a very important location in the East African trade, possibly even bringing in economic motives for Britain to prevent Italian domination of the area. However, Baring was careful not to get Salisbury to stop the Italian advance at the expense of a premature conquest of the Sudan, for he feared this would disorganize Egyptian finances. Instead, he advised Salisbury to maintain a strictly defensive policy.

Following Baring’s advice, Salisbury first resorted to diplomacy. On 7 March 1890, he summoned the Italian ambassador to London and warned the Italians to stay away from the Nile. Later, he also sent Baring to Rome to try to set limits to Italian advances. Despite such efforts, the talks with Crispi were a failure, and the negotiations failed to yield fruitful resolutions. By February 1891, however, Crispi was out of office, and in March and April of that year his successor made agreements with the British which surrendered to Britain the Italian claims to the Nile Valley.

Nonetheless, with Crispi back in power in 1893, the Italians attacked the Mahdists at the Battle of Kassala on 17 July 1894, taking control over the Kassala region. Around this time, Crispi expressly laid out his wish to remain in amiable relations with England, as Italy needed British assistance in resolving various issues, mostly in areas where France was blocking Italian advances. With the conquest of Kassala and the friendly atmosphere between Italy and Britain, the possibility of a re-conquest of the Sudan led by the British and supported by the Italians was raised, with Kassala to provide a convenient starting point for the march into Khartoum and Omdurman.

In Germany under Bismarck, the main objective of foreign policy was to prevent other major powers from allying with France. During the Egyptian crisis in 1882, Bismarck was doing his best in exploiting the crisis to drive Britain and France apart. In 1889, the Germans were pushing for a drive into the African interior under the leadership of Wilhelm II who had risen to the throne in the previous year. However, the actions of the Emperor were checked by Bismarck, and in January 1889 the Chancellor
offered the British an alliance as a way to balance the growing ties between France and Russia.

The major issue between Germany and Britain was Uganda. Uganda was located at the heart of the Nile basin, and Lord Salisbury had decided that it was essential to get hold of the area to secure the entire Nile Valley and to prepare for a possible attack on Sudan from the south. The problem was the German protectorate over the Zanzibar territories just east of the Nile Basin. The British wanted the Germans out of Uganda, and Salisbury notified the German ambassador in May 1890 that Uganda should be under British influence, a notification which quickly led to the drafting of an Anglo-German agreement regarding the African issue as a whole. Under Caprivi, the new German Chancellor, the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty was signed on 1 July 1890. The treaty handed Germany the Caprivi Strip in Southern Africa as well as the islands of Heligoland in the North Sea. In return, Britain was given control over the Zanzibar lands and other parts of East Africa as well as a vow from the Germans not to interfere in British affairs regarding the Sultanate of Zanzibar.

Lastly, the Congo Free State was also involved in the affairs of the Nile. As a result of the 1894 British-Congolese treaty, the Lado Enclave was leased to King Leopold II of Belgium until his death. The Belgians proceeded to establish posts along the Nile as far north as Lado in the newly-acquired territory, and although the Belgians posed no grave threat to British hegemony in the region, they occupied a significant portion of the White Nile until Leopold’s death in 1910.36

Ethiopia

In February 1893, Menelik of Ethiopia announced to both Rome and Paris that he would renounce the Treaty of Wuchale as of 1 May 1894. On 5 May 1894, an Anglo-Italian protocol was issued, which placed the hinterland of France’s Obok colony37 in Italian hands. Paris quickly understood that the British were
trying to close off French access to the Nile Valley from the east, and strove to preserve Ethiopian independence. Léonce Lagarde, the Governor of French Somaliland, \(^{38}\) continuously supplied the Ethiopians with modern weaponry from Djibouti under the approval of the Quai d’Orsay. \(^{39}\) On 2 March 1896, the Ethiopians crushed the Italians at the Battle of Adowa, halting Italian expansion and causing the fall of Crispi’s Cabinet.

Salisbury was alarmed by the situation in Ethiopia. Menelik had exchanged messengers with the Khalifa and declared good intentions. The French, who had provided vital help in the war against the Italians, sent Lagarde to offer Menelik a hundred thousand rifles and a large addition of territory for a treaty that delineated Ethiopian support for France in the Nile. On 20 March 1897, Menelik pledged support for France’s aspirations in the Upper Nile and promised to contain the British with French-armed Ethiopian soldiers. \(^{40}\) Soon after, the contacts between Addis Abeba, Omdurman, and Paris reached the Foreign Office, causing much anxiety in London. \(^{41}\)

The British quickly responded by sending a mission to Addis Abeba led by Rennel Rodd in April 1897, leading to the signing of the secret agreement not to ship weapons to Sudan in the Anglo-Ethiopian settlement of 14 May 1897. \(^{42}\) This, however, was considered a failure in London as Rodd was unable to get a promise of neutrality in the European struggle from Menelik and only a vague assurance of neutrality in a possible British war against the Mahdists. \(^{43}\)

The Invasion

Alarmed by the Abyssinian success and the Mahdist threat to Kassala, the British Government decided to assist Italy by making a demonstration in Northern Sudan. \(^{44}\) The action was prompted by the Italian call for help, as on 10 March 1896 Ferrero, the Italian ambassador, asked for British help. Upon accepting the Italian request, Salisbury explained his objectives to Lord Cromer \(^{45}\):
The decision...was inspired specially by a desire to help the Italians at Kassala, and to prevent the Dervishes from winning a conspicuous success which might have far-reaching results. In addition, we desired to kill two birds with one stone, and to use the same military effort to plant the foot of Egypt rather farther up the Nile. For this reason we preferred it to any movement from Suakin or in the direction of Kassala, because there would be no ulterior profit in those movements.45

Since 1889, the Foreign Office had striven to shut other European powers out of the Nile, primarily through diplomacy. However, in 1896 Salisbury had realized that surety could only be found in eventually occupying the whole of the Nile Valley, and saw a dire need for fast action as “there are four, if not five, Powers that are steadily advancing towards the upper waters of the Nile.”47 His preparations for an eventual operation took place not only in the North but also in the South through the construction of the Uganda railway,48 which he pushed for with great speed, showing his devotion to a mission of re-conquest.

The Italian disaster provided Salisbury with a pretext for invasion which could be accepted by both the House of Commons and the Triple Alliance.49 The support of the Triple Alliance was crucial as European support was necessary to finance the operations through Egyptian funds. Before the launch of the mission, an application was made for a grant from the reserve funds of the Caisse de la Dette,50 a council of European commissioners responsible for managing Egypt’s financial state, and it was approved with a 4-2 decision. Germany, Austria, and Italy sided with England while France and Russia voted against the proposal.51 The road was paved for the march on Dongola.

To the British public, Salisbury explained that the operation was to prevent the invasion of Egypt.52 In the House of Commons, Lord Cromer’s reports of violent activity of the Mahdists and the Khalifa’s proclamation of the jihad against the Italians were used as the basis for the argument for invasion.53 The Liberals remained inactive in opposing the invasion of the Sudan, and only a few members of Parliament like Morley seriously criticized Salisbury’s policy.
Nonetheless, despite the weak Liberal opposition and the large Conservative majority, members of the Cabinet were concerned that should the Egyptian army be beaten, a rescue force of British troops would have to be brought in, and in such a case there was fear that the public may abandon the Conservative Government. Considering this, Salisbury’s Cabinet was careful and explained in Parliament that the move towards Dongola would be made, but that the scope of the advance would be determined by the amount of resistance they met.

French Advances

In 1896, France recognized the Sudan as an independent state under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey. France was, according to the French newspaper *L’Éclair*, “acting in these regions by the express desire of the Mahdi, and in conformity of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.” France sent Major Jean-Baptist Marchand to the Nile region on 25 June 1896. Furthermore, three French missions were sent to Khartoum in 1897 after the pact between the French and the Khalifa, raising concerns in London.

Faced with a diplomatic failure in Ethiopia and increasing French encroachments in the Nile Valley, Salisbury was in a difficult position. In November 1897 Kitchener was asking for British reinforcements for the strike on Khartoum, but Cromer was proposing an attack from the south. Other ministers doubted whether public opinion and Parliament would approve of the money and troops needed to take Khartoum. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer advised Salisbury, there were worries about the repercussions of a military invasion:

There is, no doubt, a sentiment about Khartoum. But suppose it taken, after a stiff and costly fight, what then? Can we stop there?.... And are we prepared to undertake the conquest and administration of all the country that used to be dependent on the Khedive in Ismail’s time? Egypt certainly could not afford to do it now; possibly later she might....I don’t want to add a Khartoum expedition to our present
engagements; to which, by the way, the soldiers would add the normal demands, at present, in Crete and South Africa. 59

By 1898, French actions in the Sudan had become much more manifest. Missions sent by the French Government had penetrated into Bahr-El-Ghazel, a province located in the southwest. Military tension was also to be found in the region, as the possibility of a French-Abyssinian-Russian alliance was quickly becoming a reality. 60

Meanwhile, in January 1898, most of the Egyptian army had made its way south to a point where the Nile met the Atbara. Kitchener telegraphed again for British troops on 1 January 1898, and at last Salisbury was forced to take a direct part in the re-conquest. The settlement of the Sudan problem had become a more pressing concern than ever, and direct British military commitment was the strongest card Salisbury could play.

With British reinforcements, Kitchener was able to accelerate his march on Khartoum. On September 2, he had 8,200 British and 17,000 Egyptians and Sudanese men assembled only seven miles north of Omdurman. 61 Later that day, the Battle of Omdurman, which killed 10,000 Ansars and destroyed Mahdist Soudan, was fought and won by the British and Egyptian forces. The Union Jack and the Egyptian flag were now hoisted in Khartoum.

After Omdurman

While Kitchener was fighting in Omdurman, French military presence in Fashoda, a town 400 miles south of Sudan, had become a reality. L’Echo de Paris, a French newspaper, declared that “The Sirdar’s forces dare not fire upon Major Marchand, for France is behind him. England must now consent to a European conference unless she wants war.” 62 In response to the situation, Britain ordered Kitchener to head to Fashoda where the French troops were positioned. The mood for war was growing.
ber, Britain was making preparations for war at an extraordinary scale “never seen since Napoleon’s time.”

Marchand had established military posts in Bahr-el-Ghazel, an area that was reachable by water from the other French colonies. France demanded access to the Nile, a right that she had declared she would rather fight for than forgo. Lord Salisbury, however, had also declared that the territories of the Egyptian Sudan were absolutely nonnegotiable. Should France gain a strip of the Sudan, it could easily cut the British Cape to Cairo route, send gunboats down the Nile, and threaten Lower Egypt directly by damming the river. To Salisbury, these threats were much too grave to allow, and he was willing to go through war with the French to preclude such potential dangers.

Furthermore, the possibility of a strengthened French-Russian alliance, one that had begun in 1892, was brought up in the British and American papers at the time. As it turns out, Russia had offered to join France in a war against Great Britain, an offer that was declined by the French.

With all these possibilities, Major Marchand’s actions in Fashoda greatly alarmed London. Kitchener’s troops made it down to Fashoda to confront Marchand, and as negotiations took place between Britain and France at the Foreign Office and the Quai d’Orsay, Britain repeated its position that the Nile Valley was absolutely nonnegotiable.

After months of negotiation without much progress, on 4 November 1898, Delcassé, the French Foreign Minister, gave in to British pressure and ordered Marchand to withdraw from Fashoda, primarily for two main reasons. France’s relative weakness in naval force reduced its chances for victory, and France needed England’s support in case of a German aggression, as the fear of a second Franco-Prussian war was always on the minds of the French. However, Delcassé did continue to push for a string of smaller posts that would have allowed the French to control a corridor to the White Nile. Lord Salisbury rejected France’s idea of occupying forts, as he sought to fully control the headwaters of the Nile. A few months later, on 21 March 1899, the disputes
between France and England over Upper Nile Valley were resolved by an agreement signed by Lord Salisbury and Paul Cambon.\textsuperscript{67} France had renounced all claims to Fashoda, and the Nile Valley was secured for Britain.

Conclusions

British foreign policy in the late 19th century followed the pragmatism of \textit{realpolitik}, where decisions were made based strictly on preserving national interest. In regard to Britain’s foreign policy, the protection of its international trade network took priority. The lifeline at the heart of this trans-oceanic trade, the Suez Canal, was so important to British interests, both commercial and strategic, that by the 1880s, its safety was generally accepted as a vital national interest. Britain’s policy in the Near East focused on securing passage to India and the East, and through this came about the necessity of protecting Egypt from foreign powers. The importance of the Sudan arose in this very context.

In terms of the resources it had to offer or the commercial benefits the land could provide, the Sudan was a loss-making possession. However, due to Sudan’s strategic location along the Upper Nile, control over the Sudan meant that the flow of the Nile could be interrupted, and Egypt could be threatened with starvation, flooding, and direct military incursions. This strategic nature of Sudan’s location made it a key British interest to keep the Sudan from any power that could bring such possible threats. London did not view the Mahdist regime as having the ability to carry out such threats, and thus saw no need to deplete Egyptian and British resources to conquer a vast expanse of the desert. With other European powers, however, the situation was quite different. On a broad level, Britain used diplomacy to block off potential threats to the Nile Valley, as the pacts with Germany, Italy, and Abyssinia demonstrate. The only major European power that was unwilling to accept the placement of the entire Nile Valley under the British sphere of influence was France, and France was why Salisbury saw the need to conquer the Sudan.
Salisbury hoped to avoid a scenario where the joint forces of the French from the south and the Russians from the north threatened to cut off the highway to the East. In addition to the Franco-Russian military alliance, the frequent French diplomatic activities with the Khalifa and Abyssinia alarmed London, and the military actualization of the beginning of such a plan was the decisive factor that persuaded Salisbury that Britain could no longer leave the Upper Nile Valley unguarded.

Nonetheless, the actions undertaken by the several European powers were clearly not the only factors considered by Salisbury’s Cabinet in the making of its decisions. It must be understood that even Salisbury did not have an entirely consistent approach to handling the Sudan. That the Nile Valley had to remain under British control was a principle London stuck with throughout the late 19th century, but as to how that was to be done and to what degree sacrifices could be justified under the name of upholding that principle were the subject of much debate even within the Government, Parliament, and the many advisors and military officers serving Britain. Ultimately, it was Salisbury’s Cabinet that decided to push for a full-scale re-conquest of the Sudan with British army regiments fighting in the campaign, but until that decision was made in January 1898, various alternatives were looked for and quite often preferred. Direct British military commitment was the last option for Salisbury, and as evinced by his delays between 1896 and 1898, it was not his initial wish but the dire circumstances that led to that decision.

This very fact that direct military action was the last resort goes to show how even with a large Conservative majority in Parliament and a formidable navy, Britain could not simply engage in military campaigns wherever it wished. The members of Parliament, even with the Conservatives’ leaning towards imperialist policies, had to be persuaded that the mission was both winnable and worthwhile. The fact that the Liberals were rather silent in their opposition went to help Salisbury. Public opinion also had to be considered. The memories of Gordon had created a nostalgic sentiment favorable to restoring British pride and serving Gordon’s
cause by reintroducing European civilization to Sudan, but the costs involved and the financial burden a military campaign would entail could easily direct public opinion against the Government. This is why Salisbury tried to persuade the public that there was a real and tangible threat against Egypt in his advocacy of the mission to Dongola, since a mere desire for the re-conquest of the Sudan was not going to be enough to justify military invasion to the public. These domestic factors, directly linked to whether Salisbury could remain in power and get the funds to finance the operation, were critical players in the decision-making process.

On the international level, the conflicts over the Nile demonstrate the rivalries among the various European powers and Britain’s need to form alliances before taking serious action at the time. Despite our common knowledge of the British dominance at the time, Salisbury made sure he secured the support of the Triple Alliance before launching the Sudan campaign, effectively demonstrating the crucial and perpetual role of international alliances in Britain’s foreign policy.

To conclude, the conflict over the Nile Valley was not a mere diplomatic chess game between Britain and France. It was the clashing point where the European powers raced against each other at full speed, forming tight alliances and trying to persuade the public at home to support the cause. We must also note that the perception of the Sudan was not uniform throughout the late 19th century: its strategic worth increased as a direct result of the heated fight over its control by the powers of Europe. Without the French, the Italians, and the Belgians, the Sudan would have remained a barren wasteland not worth the money to conquer. With all these nations racing for control, the land became a strategic point to secure at all costs.

All in all, the British conquest of the Sudan was a victory for Salisbury. He was able to lay out his plans without losing public support, and the missions in the Nile Valley did not result in the fall of his Government. Furthermore, through securing the support of Germany and Italy and encouraging the Ethiopians to remain uninvolved. Salisbury was able to attain a diplomatic
victory by weakening France’s position in the area. In the end, Britain’s naval superiority and France’s acknowledgement of its prospects in a military clash with Britain’s naval superiority led to the fruition of a decisive diplomatic victory for Britain in March 1899. The Sudan was conquered, the Nile was safe, and Britain had secured its lifeline to India.
Endnotes

2 Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, “British Empire (Historical State, United Kingdom)”
3 Robinson, p. 119
4 Ibid., p. 16
5 Ibid., p. 77
6 Benjamin Disraeli was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 10 February 1874 to 21 April 1880.
7 Ibid., p. 82
8 Robinson, p. 94
10 Byron Farwell, *Queen Victoria’s Little Wars* (New York: Norton, 1985) p. 270
11 Fadllala, p. 24
12 “Mahdi” is Arabic for “The Expected One.”
13 “Ansar” is the Arabic term for “helpers” and in the context of 19th century Sudan refers to the followers of Muhammad Ahmad (the Mahdi) and his descendants.
14 Farwell, p. 280
16 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
20 Horatio Kitchener was a British soldier and administrator who was appointed commander of the Egyptian Army in 1892 and led the Anglo-Egyptian re-conquest of the Sudan.
22 Robinson, p. 284
23 Ibid., p. 288
24 Tokar is a small town near the Red Sea located approximately 100 kilometers southeast of Suakin.

“Sudan” in this context refers to the vast stretch of land south of the Sahara from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, not the former territories of the Egyptian Sudan.

The Colonial Party, also called the French Colonial Union (Union Coloniale Française), was an influential group of French Merchants established for the purpose of promoting continued French colonialism.

Kassala is a town located about 400 kilometers east of Khartoum, located just west of Italian Eritrea, a colony established in 1890 as a part of Italian East Africa.

Menelik II was emperor of Ethiopia from 1889 to 1913.

“England and Italy in Africa,” *The Times* (23 August 1890)

The Treaty of Wuchale was a treaty signed by Ethiopian King Menelik II of Shewa with Count Pietro Antonelli of Italy on 2 May 1889. The treaty ceded Ethiopian territories to Italy in return for financial assistance and military supplies. Disputes over Article 17 of the treaty caused the First Italo-Ethiopian War. The Italian version of the article stated that Ethiopia was obliged to conduct all foreign affairs through Italy, declaring Ethiopia a de-facto Italian protectorate. However, the Amharic (Ethiopian) version of the treaty merely gave Ethiopia the option of communicating with other foreign powers through Italy.


Robinson, p. 285

Francesco Crispi was the Prime Minister of Italy from 29 July 1887 to 6 February 1891 and from 15 December 1893 to 10 March 1896.


Obok is a small port town in Djibouti, in what used to be French Somaliland. Here the Obok Colony can be interpreted as French Somaliland.

Marcus, p. 95

Quai d’Orsay is a wharf in Paris, and the site of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs since the mid-19th century.
Here Quai d’Orsay is synonymous with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

40 Ibid., p. 102
41 Addis Abeba became the capital of Ethiopia with the rise of Menelik II as Emperor of Ethiopia.
42 Wack, p. 103
43 Robinson, p. 361
45 Lord Evelyn Baring, the British Controller-General in Egypt, was the first Earl of Cromer and thus commonly referred to as Lord Cromer.
46 Robinson, p. 348
47 Ibid., p. 350
48 Ibid., p. 350
49 The Triple Alliance was a military alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy from 1882 to the start of World War I.
50 Caisse de la Dette (French for Commission of the Public Debt) was an international commission established by Khedival decree on 2 May 1876 to supervise the Egyptian payment of the loans to the European governments following the construction of the Suez Canal.
51 Churchill, p. 85
52 Robinson, p. 352
54 Robinson, p. 352
55 Ibid., p. 353
56 “French Help for the Mahdi,” The New York Times (29 October 1897)
57 Ibid.
58 Robinson, p. 363
59 Ibid., p. 364
60 “Situation in Africa Serious,” The New York Times (16 January 1898)
61 Farwell, p. 35
62 “Britain’s Advance in Africa,” The New York Times (18 September 1898)
64 “Avalon Project—the Franco-Russian Alliance Military Convention—August 18, 1892,” Avalon Project—Documents

65 “Wanted To Fight Britain: Russia Offered to Aid France at the Time of the Fashoda Affair,” The New York Times (19 February 1904)

66 Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, “Theophile Delcassé (French Statesman)”

67 Paul Camdon was the French ambassador to Britain from 1898 to 1920.

68 Although the Congo Free State was not an official Belgian colony, under the (brutal) leadership of King Leopold of Belgium, Belgians ruled and administered the Congo Free State.

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...From a Child, I was fond of Reading, and all the little Money that came into my Hands was ever laid out in Books. Pleased with the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, my first Collection was of John Bunyan’s *Works*, in separate little Volumes. I afterwards sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton’s *Historical Collections*; they were small Chapman’s Books and cheap, 40 or 50 in all.—My Father’s little Library consisted chiefly of Books in polemic Divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted, that at a time when I had such a Thirst for Knowledge, more proper Books had not fallen in my Way, since it was now resolv’d I should not be a Clergyman. Plutarch’s Lives there was, in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time was spent to great Advantage. There was also a Book of Defoe’s called an *Essay on Projects* and another of Dr Mather’s call’d *Essays to do Good*, which perhaps gave me a Turn of Thinking that had an Influence on some of the principal Events of my Life.

This Bookish inclination at length determin’d my Father to make me a Printer, tho’ he had already one Son, (James) of that Profession. In 1717 my Brother James return’d from England with a Press & Letters to set up his Business in Boston. I lik’d it much better than that of my Father, but still had a Hankering for the Sea.—To prevent the apprehended Effect of such an Inclination, my Father was impatient to have me bound to my Brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded and signed the Indentures, when I was yet but 12 Years old.—I was to serve as an Apprentice till I was 21 Years of Age, only I was to be allow’d Journeyman’s Wages during the last Year. In a little time I made great Proficiency in the Business, and became a useful Hand to my Brother. I now had Access to better Books. An Acquaintance with the Apprentices of Booksellers, enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon & clean. Often I sat up in my Room reading the greatest Part of the Night, when the Book was borrow’d in the Evening & to be return’d early in the Morning lest it should be miss’d or wanted.—And after some time an ingenious Tradesman who had a pretty Collection of Books, who frequented our Printing House, took Notice of me, invited me to his Library, & very kindly lent me such Books as I chose to read.
I must now close my afflicting Duty, by pronouncing upon you the awful Sentence of the Law; which is, that you Benjamin Merrill, be carried to the Place from whence you came, that you be drawn from thence to the Place of Execution, where you are to be hanged by the Neck; that you be cut down while yet alive, that your Bowels be taken out and burnt before your Face, that your Head be cut off, your Body be divided into Four Quarters, and this to be at his Majesty's Disposal; and the Lord have Mercy on your Soul.

—Chief Justice of Hillsborough, North Carolina

Thus transpired the demise of the young, admired colonel of the Regulators, Benjamin Merrill. That fateful, sweltering day of June 19, 1771, he and 11 of his compatriots were condemned to the gallows for high treason. But what heinous actions did these men commit? What reprehensible crime could constitute such a punishment? The answer lies in the failure of the Regulator Rebellion, or Insurrection, a prolonged conflict in the North Carolina backcountry from 1766 to 1771.
Introduction

Today, this unsuccessful revolution is best known as the War of Regulation, or more simply, the Regulation. The backcountry men of neighboring South Carolina, who protested the legislature’s inability to establish local government in the western settlements, first assumed the moniker of “Regulator.” The term was later adopted in the 1760s to denote persons of the North Carolina backcountry whose purpose was to “regularize” the protocols and procedures at their local governments. These Regulators, a group consisting of 6,000 or 7,000 men, endeavored to obtain redress of their grievances from their colonial government. When their peaceful, legal measures were repeatedly blocked, primarily by then-Governor William Tryon, the backcountry men resorted to open violence. Led by a diversity of personalities, both sides incurred losses of property, materials, and lives. Their hostilities culminated in the Battle of Alamance, which essentially concluded the war with a Tryonian victory. In the aftermath of Alamance, the governor’s forces decimated Regulator strongholds, hanged a select number of the Regulator rebels, and required more than 6,000 individuals to swear an oath of allegiance to the King. Though the larger portion of the insurrection had been subdued by 1771, the Regulator movement persisted in the backcountry throughout much of the 1770s.

On the eve of the American Revolution, the Regulators would appear to be America’s first Patriots; however such was not the case. Although the Regulators prefigured the larger American Revolution with their willingness to fight for fairer taxation and governance against their ruling body, they were not always the anti-British Patriots historians have assumed them to be. The Regulators were certainly not American Patriots: for the most part, they were loyal British subjects.

This study tracks a select group of leading war personalities so as to describe the character of those involved in the war and aid in the overall comprehension of the Regulator movement. Closer investigation of more than 100 Regulator documents re-
veals the backcountry men’s unswerving loyalty to the monarchy; other records demonstrate their opposition to the Patriot cause. Furthermore, by tracing the conflict from its inception through the post-Revolutionary period, the truth behind this long misrepresented war comes to light.

Historical context

The royal colony of North Carolina was established in 1729, though immigration to the region had begun nearly seven decades previous, in 1663. By the date that North Carolina had come under the Crown law, it was the least populated of the English colonies in America, with just 30,000 to 35,000 inhabitants, who were primarily centered along the coast. Merely 47 years later, the population had increased by tenfold, making North Carolina the fourth most populous colony by 1776. Thousands from Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia traversed the “Great Wagon Road,” extending through the Shenandoah Valley into the North Carolina backcountry. The population had grown so rapidly that by 1766, William Tryon commented, “this province is settling faster than any on the continent, last autumn and winter, upwards of one thousand wagons passed thro’ Salisbury with the purpose to settle in this province chiefly.” And settle it they did: by 1776, more than half of North Carolina’s population located themselves in the westernmost counties of the colony, such as Orange, Anson, Granville, Rowan, and Mecklenburg. In these areas, complaints pertaining to unfair representation, taxation, extortion, corruption of local officials, and subjugation of the poor would soon flourish. Additionally, economic hardship, Easterner versus Westerner tension, dramatic population increases, religious unrest, and a spirit of individuality and independence were significant in the cultivation of conflict in the North Carolina Piedmont, or backcountry region.

The Carolina Piedmont was characterized by several enticing qualities: fertile soil, a prime climate for the cultiva-
tion of crops, the relative peacefulness of the Catawba Indians in comparison with other tribes in the surrounding provinces’ frontiers, and quite significantly, the laxity of North Carolina’s religious ordinances when contrasted with those of Virginia. The demographic that flocked to North Carolina mainly consisted of independent farmers, usually those of meager means. In the lush colony, they could engage in subsistence agriculture, producing corn, peas, beans, wheat, flour, and livestock—beef, and pork. The more prosperous individuals, though not large in number, could afford to raise tobacco crops and harvest lumber, both of which were in high demand for export. However, these new settlers had not anticipated the rampant speculation that would ensue in the backcountry region.

Having spent much of their limited funds to travel to the territory, many immigrants lacked the necessary finances to purchase the land on which they settled. Hoping for what later became known as preemption, the right to first improve the land and make a profit sufficient to purchase it, families squatted on some of the millions of acres owned by large absentee speculators. Speculators, who often procured the territories through their connection or participation in colonial government, had initially promised to settle people in the Piedmont. Yet, when approached by families, speculators would only offer to sell their property at inflated costs, due to the “improvements” to the land. These “improvements,” were the very toil of the settlers, such as the clearing of fields, the planting of crops, and the construction of homes. The indignant squatters were backed into a corner: either they could desert the land on which they had sweat equity in search of cheaper land, or they could purchase the land at the enlarged price tag. Both were quite unattractive options, and such situations bred resentment amongst the poor farmers, who felt cheated by the wealthy of the province.

North Carolina’s societal structure was characterized by four distinct classes: the gentry, who were planters, merchants, public officials, clergy, and lawyers, small farmers, such as the people of the backcountry, indentured servants, and slaves. The
gentry, though only 5 percent of the total population of the colony, dominated the political spectrum. Public officials, including sheriffs and judges, were appointed upon the recommendations of their fellow, affluent officials instead of by vote of the people. Thus, the infamous “courthouse rings” began, whereby the elite obtained legal authority over the three descending tiers of classes. Furthermore, sheriffs and clerks were not paid direct salaries; rather, their commissions came from the fees that they collected. Therefore, the men holding these positions were encouraged to impose excessive fees on the farmers as a method of gaining additional income. While the backcountry farmers had little representation in their local governments, they exerted even less influence in the North Carolina General Assembly; those living in the eastern areas of the province often determined the decisions regarding taxation and other important matters.

In 1747, Governor Gabriel Johnston urged the General Assembly to erect public edifices at the expense of North Carolina’s citizens:

> When your dealings were but small and navigation inconsiderable…there was then no great hardship in continuing the seat of government where it has been for several years past, in allowing the officers to keep the public records in their private houses.…But now…when the province is peopled quite up to the head of the Pee Dee River…it is highly necessary to appoint a place nearer the center of the country where his Majesty’s courts may be held, where offices may be built for keeping the public registers.

The assembly did not, by any means, object to the suggestion:

> The many inconveniences arriving from the unsettled way in which the public offices and records have been kept are so strongly felt that we shall carefully consider of a proper place where a public business may be transacted for the future without hurry and confusion.

After two decades, the construction of a magnificent palace in New Bern, “the finest building in North America,” was complete. Unfortunately, the curing of “many inconveniences” for the legislature resulted in a multitude of inconveniences for the population of the backcountry. The palace, originally estimated to be 5,000 pounds to construct, cost the “infant and impoverished state” more
than 15,000 pounds. An acute hike in tax increases resulted, which was scarcely manageable for the majority of westerners, for the access to money in the backcountry was limited and a variety of other taxes already existed. In a letter to the \textit{Virginia Gazette}, citizen “Atticus” directed his disgust at the new head of the legislature, Governor William Tryon, for using the backcountry men to “gratify [his] vanity…regardless of every moral, as well as legal obligation.” For people who could barely afford their land and basic necessities, such extravagance became a symbol of their exploitation by the elite of the province. Surely, in their minds, the moneyed interests of the easterner-dominated legislature did not reflect the backcountry’s immediate needs or desires.

Their feelings were further solidified by events to come. Upon the death of the treasurer of North Carolina, a sizable amount of what was assumed to be public money—an estimated several thousand pounds—was found in his estate. Despite the obvious embezzlement of funds, the public received no word as to where the money would be diverted, and taxes did not in any way decrease. This news and similar cases further infuriated the inhabitants of Anson, Mecklenburg, Orange, and Rowan counties, who were unwilling to give up their precious funds to line the coffers of the rich. Thus, this would partially instigate their petitioning for redress of grievances.

The corruption of officials was not limited to embezzlement. A deposition given by a John McDonald tells the tale of Benjamin Phillips, a sub-sheriff of the county who “came into the range of [McDonald’s] creatures, and ketcht one of his creatures, to the value of eight pounds and carried him off, under a pretence.” This pretence more specifically was a “writ of ejectment,” which falsely asserted that McDonald would be evicted if he did not pay a certain fee. McDonald was forced to comply, though he had no previous knowledge that such a writ had been issued. That afternoon, another sub-sheriff arrived at his home to obtain the same payment. Though McDonald was never compensated for his horse, he “was obliged to pay” the fee once more. This particular incident of an official charging an individual with a crime, indiscriminately
confiscating articles of the individual’s property for payment of the fine, and then later claiming that the individual paid no such fine was not an uncommon occurrence. Numerous depositions given by the inhabitants of the backcountry stand as a testament to the pervasiveness, and arbitrariness, of this practice.\textsuperscript{23}

Moreover, the backcountry men endured tremendous stresses due to the drought of 1758.\textsuperscript{24} By 1764, many areas were still in desperate need of relief.\textsuperscript{25} With their crops, mainly corn, frying in the heat and aridity, small farmers were left unable to purchase necessary oddities and supplies.\textsuperscript{26} Credit as it is known today was unavailable at that time, the only viable sources being the elite of the province. Yet, to accept credit from such persons would endanger the economic independence of the small farmers, which had been a primary incentive for their movement to the backcountry. Those who defaulted on their loans were subject to the whims of their creditors, who could destroy the settlers’ economic vitality by confiscating their possessions, livestock, and even their land in the name of repayment. Unfortunately, it was not an infrequent occurrence for a creditor to claim that debts had not properly been paid and seize an amount greater than the original debt.\textsuperscript{27} When such cases were tried in local courts, the judges, who were usually part of the elite themselves, consistently decided in favor of the wealthy interests.\textsuperscript{28} This blatant injustice bred antagonism between the Piedmont peoples and the courts, for the courts were not abiding by the governing principles of the British Constitution, which guaranteed equal rights to its citizens.

Furthermore, court fees were outrageously costly. When the affluent Edmund Fanning charged farmer Touchstone was not paying his debts, the “loss of time and expences [were] to his very great damage and this really [the inhabitants of Orange Count humbly appended] must be the case with everyone who should enter into the Law Contest with [the] powerful antagonists.” Judges’ salaries were paid through court fees and fines, thus they unduly raised court costs. As a result, the backcountry men could not rely upon the law as it would “terminate inevitably in the ruin” of their families.\textsuperscript{29} This fear of economic destruction at the hands
of the elite fed the growing despair of the Piedmont farmers, who knew that to oppose the wealthy in local courts would only result in defeat. The vulnerability of their position distinguished the people of the backcountry from those living farther east.

The disparities between the coastal populations and their western counterparts were further exacerbated by their differences in beliefs. While many of the colony’s original coastal settlers were English members of the Anglican Church, the backcountry became a refuge for religious dissenters. The new immigrants to the Piedmont were principally Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, Germans belonging to a diversity of Protestant sects, and Highland Scots. During the 1740s, a series of religious revivals were sweeping through the colonies. With the Great Awakening came a wave of religious fervor that shook the backcountry. Itinerant preachers, such as Charles Woodmason, traveled through the Piedmont, giving intensely expressive sermons to the “new lights,” who had experienced profound, individualized, emotional conversions and realized their “spirit within.” These teachings conditioned the backcountry men to become increasingly active members of their communities and take action when necessary; thus, all of the aforementioned groups contributed to the Regulation, with the exception of the Moravians.

One German group was the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United Brethren or *Unitas Fratrum*, colloquially termed the Moravians, who began their settlement of North Carolina in 1753. Following prolonged negotiations, Parliament declared in 1749, “an Act for encouraging the people known by the name of *Unitas Fratrum* or United Brethren, to settle his majesty’s colonies in America.” In accordance with this act, the Moravians were to be “exempted from personal military service for a reasonable compensation, and to be permitted, instead of taking an oath, in cases where the laws require it, to make a solemn affirmation or declaration.” In the negotiations process, the Brethren conversed with various lords and gentlemen, several of whom offered to provide the Moravians with land grants in America. However, none of these deals was carried out save the 1751 purchase of 100,000
acres in North Carolina from the Earl of Granville, who was, at the time, president of the Privy Council. The colony of North Carolina wanted the Brethren to improve the backcountry land, as well as “serve both in a temporal and spiritual sense.”35 Thus, the Moravians located themselves in the Piedmont, where they behaved themselves in accordance with the attitudes of the Great Awakening.36

Germans migrating from Pennsylvania made up a large portion of the backcountry population. The majority of these immigrants settled in Alamance, Guilford, Randolph, Davidson, Forsyth, Stokes, Rowan, Cabarrus, Stanly, Lincoln, Gaston, Catawba, and Burke, which would later become the counties embroiled in the Regulator movement. With them, the new settlers brought their culture, religions, language, and spirit of resistance to oppression. However, because many were unschooled or insufficiently educated in English, it became difficult to advance beyond the occupation of a farmer. German immigrants lacking proficiency in English were easier to take advantage of, which consequently, caused them to be a prime target for corrupt officials.37 Hence, a German sect nicknamed Dunkers rejected the court system, relying instead on their own congregations to act as judges in matters of dispute. These Dunkers of the backcountry emphasized personal duty to the exaction of justice and the nurturing of one’s “spirit within.”38 Separate Baptists39 and Lutherans were also groups from northern colonies that settled in the Carolinas during the Great Awakening.40

Like the German Protestants, most Quakers came to the Piedmont from the middle colonies. Though Quakerism was established in England, many Quakers or “Friends” sought religious freedom in the New World. Led by the charismatic William Penn, these dissenters settled in what is now the State of Pennsylvania. Those who subsequently moved to the Carolinas were attracted by the aforementioned incentives, but like the German Protestants, they retained their customs and beliefs. They wore simple garb, frowning upon ostentatious displays of wealth or the fine trappings of the elite. Furthermore, they contributed to the intense religious
climate in the backcountry with their vocal support of an “inner light” and individuality in one’s journey with God. Traditionally, members of this group had not been shy to question authority, and this would remain true during the War of Regulation.  

Yet another religious sect to center in the North Carolina Piedmont was the Presbyterian Church, which had originated in Scotland as a faction in dispute with the Anglican Church. Unfortunately, the absence of complete records from the colony’s infancy prevents historians from determining the exact settlement date of Presbyterians in Granville, Orange, Rowan, and Mecklenburg Counties, though Presbyterian presence is known to have existed prior to 1750, and some settlements in the upper country prior to initial survey of the territory. As early as 1740, settlers had dispersed along the backcountry’s Catawba River. One of the first ministers in North Carolina was the Presbyterian Alexander Craighead, who “cherished the spirit of independence” and engaged in “teaching the principles of the gospel independence.” Most notably, Craighead “poured forth his principles of religious and civil government, undisturbed by the jealousy of the government, too distant to be aware of his doings, or too careless to be interested in the poor and distant emigrants on the Catawba.” His sermons, along with those of other Great Awakening itinerant preachers, would be witnessed by future Regulators.

Together, these evangelical religious groups promoted a spirit of individuality and resistance in the backcountry that was feared by the Anglican elite on the coast and did in fact, encourage people to express their opposition to what they perceived to be unfair in their government. As Majorleine Kars, author of a comprehensive history of the Regulators put it, “religious radicals threatened the elites by their explicit critique of the establishment ways and by the example of their own lives.”

The tumultuous political, religious, and economic climate of the Piedmont could not be indefinitely sustained. The fiscal burdens were often too great for many farmers to bear, and the direness of their predicament nourished a growing sense of helplessness. They drew strength from the central teachings of the Great
Awakening, incorporating the individualist character into their personas. Moreover, the unrest generated by the infringements on poor backcountry men’s rights, which ranged from inequitable representation in the General Assembly and local government to unjust taxation, would propel men to commit acts of rebellion.

Advent of the Regulation

Following the end of the Seven Years War, also referred to as the French and Indian War, the British Parliament passed a series of laws designed to increase revenue from the colonies. The Stamp Act, passed in February of 1765, aroused much controversy, especially in North Carolina. When thinking about the Sons of Liberty, often Samuel Adams and the firebrands of Boston come to mind, not the angry citizens on the coastal ports of North Carolina. Indeed, these men did form their “association” in this southern colony as early as January of 1766, and thereupon started immediate and effective protest against the act.48 The backcountry men did not unite with the prosperous merchants and individuals protesting the act; however, early Patriot successes may have encouraged the Regulators, who that same year held their first meeting.49

In 1766, radical Protestants formed the Sandy Creek Association.50 The organization’s purpose is best characterized by the statement of farmer George Sims, who duly noted that, “it is not our mode or Form of Government, nor yet the body of our Laws that we are quarreling with, but the malpractices [of local officers].”51 Often regarded as the unofficial birth of the Regulation,52 the association’s efforts as a vigilant organization were largely a failure, as its tasks to reform local corruption and “cursed practices”53 were not carried out. Its lack of success can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the vehement disapproval of public officials, who actively discredited and intimidated the members of the Association.54 Perhaps more unexpectedly, the Sons of Liberty ardently objected to the Sandy Creek Association, as the farmers
were of a lower economic status and therefore looked upon as an unruly mob (a hypocritical stance that would not be forgotten by the Regulators). Without firm leadership and direction, the organization collapsed in 1767, but its efforts were not entirely in vain, for out of the initial mission of the Sandy Creek Association emerged a strengthened Regulator movement.

One particular area would become the seat of Regulators sentiment—Hillsborough, “The Capital of the Backcountry.” Originally christened as Childsburg, renamed Hillsborough in 1766 by Orange County, the town was home to just over 13,000 white and 700 African American inhabitants. All public transactions were completed in Hillsborough, making it a minor center for commerce in the rural area. Additionally, the courthouses in Hillsborough served for the majority of the Piedmont region. Many principal figures of the War of Regulation settled in the area, including the “unscrupulous and libertine” Edmund Fanning, who constructed a magnificent Masonic mansion there, much to the aggravation of his Piedmont neighbors. The constant activity and presence of so many diverse individuals in such close proximity to one another would eventually make this town the breeding ground for revolution.

The Personalities

The War of Regulation was a conflict characterized by distinctive personalities on each of the opposing factions. On one side stood the Regulators, with Herman Husband, Rednap Howell, James Hunter, William Butler, Ninian Hamilton, and Benjamin Merrill. On the Tryonian side, or anti-Regulator group, stood Governor William Tryon, Hugh Waddell, Alexander Martin, William Cooper, Francis Nash, John Rutherford, Maurice Morris, John Ashe, Richard Henderson, and most notoriously, Edmund Fanning. In this section, information will be provided regarding the backgrounds of Regulators Husband and Howell, as well as those of anti-Regulators like Tryon, Waddell, Morris, and Fanning.
First and foremost amongst the former party was the spiritually wandering Herman Husband, who was born an Anglican but transferred his loyalties to the Presbyterian Church. During the Great Awakening, he prayed to be “one of the elect” and upon experiencing conversion, became a Quaker. Though mistakenly referred to as the “Quaker Preacher,” in some historical accounts, he lost his membership in the Society of Friends four years prior to the Regulation. The reputedly sober, passionate, and intelligent Husband first arrived in North Carolina in 1751 with the intent to establish himself as a farmer. By 1766, Husband was a driving force behind the Sandy Creek Association, and had produced many pamphlets touting the Regulator cause. Rednap Howell, a New Jersey schoolteacher, was another Regulator who took pen to paper. Howell became the resident poet and songwriter of the Regulation with his witty ditties. Such exploits led these men to assume a principal role of leadership in the upcoming war, though they lacked the formal training of their opponents, especially that of the governor.

William Tryon was a military man, by all accounts. On April 1, 1765, he assumed the royal governorship following the death of his predecessor, Arthur Dobbs. As governor, he possessed the power to appoint judges, sheriffs, and all members of the Upper House of the North Carolina General Assembly. Tryon was unaccustomed to such responsibilities, having only previously held commissions in the King’s army prior to assuming this colonial position. His prowess in military affairs was undeniable: he was even deemed “the Great Wolf of the North” following his numerous campaigns. The willingness with which he later took up arms against the Regulators can be attributed to these aspects of his background and character. Additionally, the governor’s affinity for wealth and power was a quality that would place him in uncompromising opposition to the underprivileged Regulators.

Tryon’s acquaintances were, likewise, men of military measure. By 1766, Hugh Waddell had engaged in malicious activities to protest the Stamp Act. Together with the future anti-Regulator
Sarah A. Sadlier

John Ashe, he prevented the landing of the *Diligence*, a former British warship carrying stamps to the port of Brunswick.69 When a stamp collector had two merchants arrested for not having their clearance papers properly stamped, Waddell rallied 580 men to retrieve the merchants and seek out the collector, who had been residing in the governor’s house for protection. However, this obstacle did not deter Waddell, who had the man brought out and forced to resign his commission.70 Despite Waddell’s transgressions, the governor still saw fit to give him command during the War of Regulation. Other Patriots, such as Maurice Moore, who briefly lost his position as a judge due to his involvement in the opposition to the Stamp Act, would also join the Tryonians.71 Coincidently, some of Tryon’s most staunch supporters were located in the backcountry hotbed of Hillsborough. At the advent of the Regulation, Moore was serving with Richard Henderson as an associate justice on the Hillsborough court, which was located near the plantation of future anti-Regulator general Francis Nash.72 Though these men were vilified by the general populace of the Piedmont as egocentric elite, one particular individual became the quintessence of all that was abhorrent in the wealthy.

The Regulators’ rage centered upon one Edmund Fanning, the crooked clerk of Orange County. One Howell refrain summed up the antipathy directed at the crooked official:

When Fanning first to Orange came
He looked both pale and wan
An old patched coat upon his back,
An old mare he rode on.

Both man and mare warn’t worth five pounds
As I’ve been told;
But by his civil robberies
He’s laced his coat with gold.73

Whether or not the first stanza bears any truth is questionable, for Fanning was a man of means prior to his arrival in Hillsborough. Born on Long Island, the young man attended Yale. He was an
extremely ambitious individual, and according to most Regulator accounts, bent on the accumulation of wealth.\textsuperscript{74} By 1771, Fanning had accrued 29 costly land plots in addition to his 10,000 acres of farmland.\textsuperscript{75} From his business orders, it is known that Fanning did, in fact, have in his possession a double gold laced coat and jacket.\textsuperscript{76} Most recently, he had supported the construction of the expensive capitol building in New Bern. He also made a substantial number of enemies from his duties collecting excessive debts and taxes from the settlers. As a Superior Court judge, a position gained through his connections to a large land speculator named Eustace McCulloch, Fanning overwhelmingly decided cases in favor of the richer inhabitants of the province. By quelling the farmers who fought for their rights against the speculators, Fanning facilitated the mistreatment and injustices inflicted against those in the backcountry.\textsuperscript{77}

Escalating Conflict

As the abuses accumulated in the collective conscience of the Piedmont, the Regulator Association was born. The first official meeting of these men was held in January of 1768 for the purpose of “regulating publick Grievances & abuses of Power.” They vowed to oppose the collection of taxes until they were “satisfied” that they were “agreeable to Law,” meaning that the taxes were according to the royal directive and not those crafted by corrupt local officials.\textsuperscript{78} These backcountry crusaders would resolutely oppose the fraudulent court proceedings and secure fair trials for all as mandated by the British constitution. To accomplish their lofty purposes, the Regulators prudently planned to petition their governor and the General Assembly, while also seeking to elect representatives who better represented “the judgment of the Majority” (though how the Regulators intended to achieve the latter objective was not specified in their notes). Ultimately, they desired to “enjoy all the Priviledges & Liberties” of their constitution and “to preserve it in its ancient Foundation that it [would] stand firm & unshaken.”\textsuperscript{79}
When they met in March, the Regulators once again complained that their constitutional rights under Crown Law had been violated, considering that they were “Free-Men-British Subjects” who contributed their “Proportion in all Public Taxations.” Yet the Regulators did not share the “Rights and Benefits which they [the easterners] Enjoy, tho’ equally Entitled to them.” Therefore, they felt deserving of redress and issued a petition to the General Assembly:

Not allowing the country the right that they have been entitled to as English subjects, for the King requires no money from His subjects but what they are made sensible what use it’s for; we are obliged to seek redress by denying paying any more until we have a full settlement for what is past and have a true regulation with our Officers as our grievances are too many to notify in a small piece of writing.

In their plea, the Regulators requested that the Assembly call forth a court session in which both parties could deliberate on a settlement of the escalating quarrel. They issued the warning that it was their “right to enquire into the nature of [their] Constitution” and their concerns that “by arbitrary proceedings” they would be “debarred of that right.” They concluded with the assurance that they would have “full settlement” with those in government “in every particular point that is matter of doubt.” The Regulators truly believed that their fundamental right to fair, honest trials and governance as guaranteed by the constitution had been violated. Herman Husband remarked that, “as these practices are contrary to Law, it is our duty to put a stop to them before they quite ruin our County; and before we become slaves to these lawless Wrenches.” When their complaints were callously ignored by the Assembly and governor, the backcountry men became even more determined to protect their guaranteed rights.

Undissuaded, the Regulators continued to hold conferences, the minutes of which were printed at regular intervals. In *Regulator Advertisement No. 7*, published April 25, 1768, the Regulators admitted that the “powers of persuasion and argument” had kept them from returning to Hillsborough, where open conflict would surely break into open violence. The limited leadership of
men such as Husband, James Hunter, William Hunter, and Nini-
ian Hamilton sought to restrain the Regulators from aggression,
and so placed their faith in persistent petitioning.83 To this end,
they convened at the dwelling of George Adam Salling on the
Rocky River. There, they agreed upon the “Articles of Settlement
and Oath,” which was in essence, another appeal for their cause
to the legislature. The “Articles” included: the procurement of a
fair account of taxes paid and what those taxes were used for; a
list of taxable rates for all the inhabitants of the area; the examination
of the fees and court costs charged according to the laws of the
province, as well as a review of the tax instituted in the previous
year. These objectives reflected, what Husband called, “a regular,
plain, and uniform Method” of dealing with the public books of
account, which would limit the abuses of officers84 and “do equal
right and justice…according to Law.”85 Nevertheless, the Legisla-
ture still viewed the Regulators’ legal lobbying as an indicator of
irreverence to Crown Law.

Despite their seemingly rebellious acts, the backcountry
men took great pains to ensure that their loyalty to the King was
evident. Even in their resolution to boycott taxes and take up arms
should any colonial militia force them to comply, they remained
faithful to the monarchy. In the preamble to an oath that was taken
by a substantial body of the county, inhabitants of Anson wrote,
“we acknowledge ourselves true and lawful subjects to the crown
of Great Britain and therefore have entered into a league with
each other and have taken the following Oath & subscribed our
names, being willing to pay four shillings for the King’s Dues.”86
At the conclusion of their Advertisement Number 7, the Regulators
proudly proclaimed, “God save the King George the Third.”87
They unfailingly professed their enduring loyalty to the King of
England at every opportunity:

Being conscious of our loyalty to King George the Third now on the
British Throne and our firm attachment to the present Establishment
and form of Government which we sincerely believe all our grievances
are quite opposite & contrary to the downright roguish practices of
ignorant and unworthy men who have crept into Posts of Office and
practised upon our ignorance and new settled situation.88
From this extract it becomes clear that the Regulators did not feel subjugated by the Crown, as did the later Patriots. Rather, they placed the blame for their discontent on corrupt officials. Furthermore, in their Advertisement No. 11, the Regulators reassured the public that they exhibited “neither Disloyalty to the best of Kings nor Disaffection to the wholesomest Constitution now in Being, nor yet Dissatisfaction to your present Legislative Body gave rise to these Commotions which now make so much noise throughout the Province.” The Regulators were of the belief that their purpose was a noble one, as they were battling against the extortion of the poor, destitute populace, exorbitant fees, and corruption in their local bureaucracy. In their gatherings, it was agreed that representatives of this group would meet with one sheriff and vestryman to discuss the unlawful fees extracted from deeds, indentures, administrations, “and the reasons in a great measure namely the under equal chances the poor and weak have in contentions with the rich and powerful.” Thus, they were willing to submit their situation to arbitration, more inclined to pursue a course of peace than that of war.

In one of their final advertisements in May of 1786, the Regulators’ petition of 486 men concluded that their grievances were due to the fact that the inhabitants of Orange County paid greater fees than those of eastern counties, and that such fees were greater than those prescribed by the law. A suspicion prevailed that the backcountry men were “misused.” The continual rejection of their appeals by the General Assembly promoted, “discontent growing more and more so as to threaten a disturbance of the public peace.” Therefore, the Regulators pleaded for “a fair hearing in... so just and equitable and undertaking and an opportunity to be heard.” Once again, their solicitations fell on deaf ears. According to one jury of New Bern district, the Regulators “avowedly profess[ed] this Disobedience and Opposition to those Laws.” Other government figures followed suit, hastily labeling the Regulators as traitors to the King and country. Fanning lamented that the formerly “well regulated County of Orange, is now (O my favourite County and people how art thou fallen)
the very nest and bosom of rioting and rebellion,” and that the “Contagion and spirit of rebellion,” had pervaded the Piedmont.

In spite of the Regulator commitment to non-violence, the backcountry men’s frustration with their unchanging circumstances inevitably manifested itself in their reactions to local authority. By the mid-1786, the duties of the sheriffs were becoming increasingly difficult. Sheriff Francis Lock of the Rowan County found it utterly impossible to collect taxes, due to the fact that he “was violently opposed in the execution of his said office particularly by those who had lately styled themselves Regulators by which means he declares he is rendered incapable of making a further settlement.”

Things were not going so well for the loathed Edmund Fanning either, leading him to contemplate his increasingly perilous situation. Surrounded by his Regulator neighbors, he wrote in haste to his friend, Governor Tryon, expressing his deepest concerns. In his paranoia, he relayed the rumor that 1,500 men were to “execute their vengeance” on him, but he did “not apprehend such inevitable death.” Fanning’s attempt at bravado aside, it is clear that he feared the brunt of the Regulator forces bearing down upon Hillsborough. This fear was augmented by the assessments of Captain Thackston and others, who determined that less than 100 men who possessed the “spirit and courage” to combat the Regulators could be enrolled in the militia. With the court sessions of the following week rapidly approaching, Fanning expected “an attack from the whole united force of the Regulators.” However, never one to admit cowardice, Fanning vowed to “bravely repulse them or nobly die.” He implored the governor to raise a militia “to oppose them,” for “so powerful are they though,” that they “[threaten] the Constitution and Government.” This statement is quite extreme, as the Regulators were behaving in accordance with the Constitution and were not in violation of its principles. Nevertheless, Fanning’s self-enriching practices were endangered by “these traitorous Dogs,” as he called them, and thus he needed a militia to preserve himself and his money-minded interests from the Regulator reformers.
Tryon trusted Fanning’s appraisal of the state of affairs in Hillsborough. In June of 1768, he commended Fanning, whom he had appointed to Colonel, for his “prudent and spirited behavior” in dealing with the Regulators. In Tryon’s opinion, these “rebels” were doing nothing more than instigating “disturbances.”99 The North Carolina Governor’s Council echoed Tryon’s judgments. Upon receiving petitions from the inhabitants of Orange County, who “manifestly tend to the subversion of the Constitution of this Government,” the Council discarded them as an excuse for the insurrection. It was the general opinion of the council that grievances of the Regulators “by no means Warrant[ed] the extraordinary steps,” which encompassed “the Obstruction of the Course of Justice, to insult of Publick Officers of the Government in the Execution of their Offices and to the injury of private property.”100 This unsympathetic approach to dealing with the Regulators failed to promote healing between the two opposing factions.

James Thackson, one of the Justices of the Peace, experienced the wrath of the Regulators firsthand when he entered their camp in August of 1786. When the justice attempted to gather taxes from the body, they swore “that they would kill any man who should dare to take anything from any of them till they came to a Settlement.” Thackson recalled that William Butler declared, “We are determined not to pay the Tax for the next three years, for the Edifice or Governor’s House We want no such House, nor will we pay for it.”101 In a similar deposition, Justice of the Peace Ransom Sutherland observed that the Regulators “seemed unanimously to deny paying their Taxes.” When Sutherland entered the plantation of George Sally, where 200 or so people were gathered, he realized the futility of his situation. Had he exerted an effort to collect the taxes, he was sure that he would have been killed.102 Still, James Hunter defended the Regulators because their purpose was “to declare [themselves] against unlawful taxation” rather than the practice of taxation altogether.103 Tryon, however, doubted the validity of the Regulators and their correction of “pretended abuses of power.” He reassured the British government of his ability to crush the insurrection and severely punish its ringleaders.104
For the duration of the late summer and early fall of 1768, the situation in the Piedmont appeared as though it might improve. Tyree Harris, the sheriff of Orange County confidently wrote to Tryon that the Regulators were “ready to comply with, and be obedient to the Laws of the Government, and that they believed it was the general Intent of the people to do the same in short.”

Perhaps with this in mind, Tryon acted on some of the Regulator complaints, ordering the attorney general to prosecute all the public officials in Orange County who had abused their offices. However, Tryon was a man who demanded that his rule be followed, and so he directed Harris to go to a Regulator meeting, one of the “unlawful assemblies…confederating under a solemn engagement to obstruct the Laws,” and obtain all unpaid taxes.

The Regulators quickly responded, heartened that Tryon had acted on some of their grievances, but perturbed by his accusations of misconduct. They did not view themselves as rebels, and for Tryon to possess such a misconception of them as “rather bent on destroying the peace of this Government,” “truly affected” them and with “sorrow and concern.” They blamed the falsehoods said about them for the conflict, for they knew in “their hearts and Consciences they were guilty of no other Crime, but endeavoring to obtain justice, and detect fraudulent practices in the officers which has been so common in this Province.” Fearful that Tryon was amassing armed forces to hang and condemn their leaders, the backcountry men sent an anxious letter to the governor, reassuring him of their unwavering loyalty to his master, the King. They begged with Tryon not to raise militia against them, professing their “true faith and allegiance,” veneration of the British Constitution, and to defend the King “to the last drop of blood.”

Alas, their last hope in Tryon was undermined when his corrective measures were not effectively carried out. The Regulators mourned the loss of their brief success:

[Y]our gracious promise of setting upon your arrival at Hillsborough a Proclamation forbidding all Officers the taking or even demanding illegal and exorbitant Fees on pain of your highest displeasure gave us...
some encouragement and hope of redress especially on information you had really performed your promise but when we were assured the register had in open violence thereof taken nine shillings and four pence expressly contrary to Law for recording of deeds our hopes Vanished fearing your orders to the Attorney General may be as little regarded and that a poor man will get no real redress for. The extortion continued unabated. The Regulators had expected the governor to act in their favor, believing that with the “timely aid of that respectable Body [the General Assembly],” Tryon could “curb the insolence and avarice of these overblown Members of the Commonwealth and thereby haply for all Parties establish Peace, Harmony and Concord throughout the Country.” Now, it seemed as though this prospect was forever dashed. Only when the Regulators, the “unhappy object of oppression,” were left without the “most distant prospect or latent means of redress,” did they resort to extra-legal measures. Over the coming year, their frustration would evolve into aggression and confrontation.

The Fracases

In September of 1768, the General Court was to be held in Hillsborough. Prior to the commencement of the court’s proceedings, Herman Husband and William Hunter were arrested for their roles in the Regulator command structure. In a conversation with a Mr. McPherson of Hillsborough, Fanning is said to have commented, “[Husband] must surely Die as sure as thee is Born of a Woman.” When this information was relayed through Regulator intelligence, a group of 400 men led by the 70-year-old Scotsman Ninian Hamilton marched to Hillsborough to liberate Hunter and Husband. After a 20-mile nightlong march the group arrived in Hillsborough, where they were met by none other than Edmund Fanning and his posse of 19 other men. According to Tryon’s version of events, the “mob however were disappointed by the most resolute behavior of Colo Fanning” and disbursed. Hamilton most certainly did not appreciate Fanning’s “disposition,”
but in an attempt to prevent bloodshed, ordered this disbandment of his men.115

When the general populace of the backcountry heard of the impending trial of Husband and Hunter, people began to gather as early as 28 hours before the trial. By the evening before the trial, at least 3,000 were camped within the vicinity of the town of Hillsborough. This mass of humanity all shared one common purpose: to ensure a fair trial for the two charged Regulators.116 At 2 o’clock the verdict was issued—Husband was acquitted, but William Hunter, James Hunter, and Ninian Hamilton were all judged guilty and fined 1,000 pounds and six months imprisonment. The crowd was livid, for the latter two men had not even been charged with a crime! Furthermore, Fanning was found guilty on seven charges of extortion, but his fee was only a measly penny for each charge. The Regulators seethed with this rank injustice.117

In the subsequent months, the Tryonian terminology shifted for the Regulators: whereas they had previously called by their assumed name, they were now deemed “insurgents.”118 Nonetheless, the Regulators doggedly continued to complain about the treasurers, lawyers, sheriffs, and clerks involved in the extortion and abuse of power.119 One tax collector, Major Lynch, who grew so frustrated with his inability to collect taxes, raised a small force that seized livestock and crops throughout the countryside. The unfortunate Lynch was himself lynched by the Regulators of Bute County.120 In late September of 1768, a Council of War was called to determine what should be done regarding the increasingly violent circumstances. Though the majority of the esteemed body suggested that the Regulators be pardoned, it was only on the prerequisite that they hand over their leaders and pay all of the taxes due by every “insurgent Person who had been of the Confederacy and that they nor either of them for the future obstruct any Public Officer in the due execution of His Office.” The Governor, however, had more violent intentions: he urged the council to “reconsider of their opinion,” and proposed that the militia be enacted to “compel the Regulators to submit themselves to Government.” The counsel acquiesced to Tryon’s
demands but instead of arresting the Regulators as Tryon desired, they recommended that an Oath of Allegiance be administered to the rebels.121

Tryon was not alone in his conviction to harshly deal with the so-called insurgents. Another year of unresolved argument with the people who “stile[d] themselves as Regulators,” convinced the elite of the province that stronger measures should be taken to tame the rebellion. By March of 1770, Judge Maurice Moore suggested to the governor that there were more sinister, unstoppable forces at work. Claiming that the regulation was “an evil,” which “no Civil Process can remedy,” he urged Tryon to take greater action.122 A group of men, led by Edmund Fanning, Francis Nash, and Alexander Martin took it upon themselves to form an organization of men who would defend each other should the Regulators become violent. From notes of their meeting, it is clear that they considered the Regulators to be enemies of the King:

We esteem it a Duty inculcated by our Blessed Religion (the best natural institution on earth) & a Doctrine clearly established by Holy Writ that every man is by Nature a soldier against the Traitors of his King, & those who would disturb the peace of Society, or Violate the Laws of his Country.123

Likewise, Tryon wanted to “extinguish this dangerous flame” of rebellion in the backcountry.124 It had long been evident that he too felt that the people of the Piedmont, who were “setting forth the Insults and indignities offered to His Majesty’s Government,” and were unfaithful to the King. Thus, abiding myths continued to propagate and circulate from these sources that the Regulators were rebelling against the King’s rule.125 The Tryonians made a concerted effort to gather testimony of the Regulators’ lawlessness and disloyalty to George the Third.126 Most notably, deponents untruthfully swore that the Regulators were “committing the most unheard of Acts of violence and riot, drunk damnation to King George (thereby meaning as he apprehended the King of England).”127
On the morning of September 24, 1770, tensions with the Regulators hit their boiling point. It was the second day of proceedings at the Hillsborough Superior Court, and already there was a ruckus in the town streets. The moment the doors of the courthouse opened, a crowd of irate people carrying clubs, whips, and switches streamed in. Judge Richard Henderson was facing a mob of more than 150. Unsurprisingly, Henderson found himself “under a necessity of attempting to soften and turn away the fury of this mad people,” who demanded that he try the cases of some charged Regulators. Additionally, they had the audacity to charge the court with injustice. When the attorney of the court entered, the mob “fell on him in the most furious manner;” and only “with great difficulty did he save his life by taking refuge in a neighboring Store House.” Then, when their arch-nemesis Fanning entered, the mob seized him “with hideous shouts of barbarian cruelty,” leading Henderson to fear that Fanning “would instantly become a sacrifice to their rage and madness.” Only by taking shelter in a nearby store was Fanning able to spare himself from further beating. Though the crowd continued to pelt the store with rocks and bricks, he survived, abandoning his earlier conviction to “bravely repulse them or nobly die.” This scene lasted for an excess of four hours, until Henderson finally convinced the court to adjourn and release Fanning in exchange for Henderson’s agreement to try the Regulator cases the next day. Predictably, the apprehensive judge fled that evening.

The mob only gained momentum as the night wore on. Ralph McNair, who was in the odd position of being an acquaintance of both Fanning and Husband, was in Hillsborough at the time of the riot:

The following night he heard a Party or Parties of this said People called Regulators patrolling the streets to the terror of the Inhabitants, That the [McNair’s] House was assaulted by Persons unknown, his windows broke, and he also heard the windows of several other Houses broke about the same time, and he supposes by the same people…and that the Regulators exasperated threat, did, as he was informed on Tuesday the 25th day of September aforesaid, assault the House of Col. Fanning aforesaid, break and destroy a consider-
able part of his household furniture, drink & spill the liquors in his Celler, and almost totally demolished his house, the ruins whereof he the Deponent saw the day following.\textsuperscript{133} Subsequently, Regulator leadership prudently condemned the decimation of Fanning’s house and materials. However, this was a political ploy as they did not want to appear the lawless rebels as they had been branded. Once again, they took out an advertisement in the paper, insisting that Fanning should “Authorise some Lawfull officer to come & Bring the person or persons Accused to Justice, & and further we will Not Molest but rather Assist in taking Such Felons.” Still, the Regulators included the phrase “loyal subjects” in their writing, thus indicating their unswerving faithfulness to the King.\textsuperscript{134} On November 14, Judge Henderson’s barn was set ablaze by “were committed maliciously and clandestinely by some evil minded persons unknown.”\textsuperscript{135} Though the perpetrators were unidentified, public suspicion was undoubtedly bestowed upon the Regulators.

Sheriff John Butler of Orange County testified that the Regulators were becoming increasingly belligerent, and “would not pay [their taxes] till the public accounts were settled.” Believing that his life would have been in “great Danger,” he did not pursue the collection of taxes, as had been his original intent. Curiously, Butler was asked to associate the Regulators with Herman Husband, who was at the time, still a member of the House of General Assembly. Butler’s response indicated that Husband maintained good relations with the Regulators, but the “Common Oppinion is that Mr. Husbands doth not Approve of their Conduct.”\textsuperscript{136} The question was most likely asked to prompt Butler to say something incriminating of Husband, who the Tryonian forces were looking to detain for trumped-up charges, such as libel.

In nearby Anson County, Sheriff William Pickett and Deputy Sheriff James Terry were fearful for their lives.\textsuperscript{137} Pickett reiterated his fears and his reason as to why he could not carry out the law, which included the “Lawless violence if they should proceed in the collecting of the Taxes…of the said County who style themselves Regulators.”\textsuperscript{138} The sheriffs were unable to collect
taxes as the locals refused to pay, providing the “reason that they were ill-used by officers and did not know what they paid their Money for.” This was a widespread phenomenon, as taxes across the backcountry remained uncollected. Pickett also witnessed “the Regulators pull [the justices] off the Bench, took their seats and Continued Dancing, &c., for some time, and believe[d] with intent to prevent the usual Course of Justice; and hath often seen Advertisements Threatening to whip Sheriffs if they assembled to serve any Process.” This atmosphere of fear further inspired the elite to want to crush the Regulator rebels.

By November 20, 1770, Tryon was receiving reports that the Regulator troops intended to travel to New Bern with the purpose of pressuring the legislature to finally redress their grievances and block Fanning from taking his seat in the House of Assembly. To head the Regulators off, Tryon dispatched Colonel John Simpson and his regiment, advising Simpson to “repel Force with Force” if such action was necessitated. However, aware that the Regulators might march before Simpson was able to acquire sufficient numbers, he instructed him to go to New Bern to protect “the peace of government,” expressing a great pride and sense of nobility in their purpose. From his camp in New Burn, Tryon informed Colonel John Simpson of the Pitt Regiment that a detachment of militia was in New Bern, ready to defend in case the Regulators attacked. If Simpson found it “impossible to obstruct them,” on the road to New Bern, he was to join the existing militia in New Bern with the utmost speed. With his 358 men, Simpson readied himself for the six days of marching to New Bern, assuring himself as much as Tryon that more men would join him. However, his letter to Tryon bears a glaring omen, for “the greatest deficiency” of Simpson’s men were those from the westernmost parts of the county. In an effort to prevent soldiers from deserting to the Regulator cause, a punishment of 150 lashes was doled out to all those who dared to “breed a Mutiny.” In the coming months, it would be difficult, even with the draft, to maintain sufficient numbers to combat the Regulators.
A legal method for providing for the dissolution of the Regulator mobs was first mentioned in assembly meetings on December 21, 1770. Just a day earlier, Herman Husband had been expelled from the Assembly because he was a “principal mover and promoter of the late Riots,” and he was promptly arrested. With this in mind, Representative Johnston presented a “spirited Bill to the House upon the subject of punishing the Regulators” that would, among other things, enable the Governor to draft a militia to quell the rebellion. In their note to Tryon, John Frohock and Alexander Martin were of the opinion that such a bill was “severe—but desperate diseases must have desperate Remedies.”

In January of 1771, the general assembly passed the Johnston Riot Act, which allowed trials to be held in regions other than where the rioting had occurred. Those accused who fled the authorities would be declared “outlaws,” and it became lawful “for anyone to kill and destroy such offender and his lands and the chattels shall be confiscated to the King for the use of Government.” The purpose of this was to ensure the conviction of the rioters, namely the Regulators, who had “so unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assembled.” Moreover, the Riot Act was ex post facto, meaning that those who had violated the provisions of the act in the past could be indicted. Tryon would use this act to subdue the “insurrection” in the backcountry.

This publication of such an inflammatory act and Herman Husband’s imprisonment inflamed the countryside, radicalizing more farmers. The resulting mob that amassed to liberate Husband from the gaol was heard of by the court members, and without delay, they freed Husband and proclaimed him “an honest man.” Husband had been somewhat prophetic, for upon his arrest, he had infuriated the members of the House by stating that his followers would secure his release, through force if necessary. Upon learning of Husband’s acquittal, the mob dispersed and returned to their farms, but even outside the realm of politics, the Regulators’ lives were engulfed in turmoil. North Carolina still suffered from crop shortages during this period, resulting in augmented agitation amongst backcountry men.
Astonishingly, February was a relatively non-violent period, but the tensions between the opposing factions were mounting. On the 7th, Tryon took the preemptive measure of banning the selling or disposing of firearms and ammunitions, as it was “essential to the publick safety” in case these weapons “should come into the hands of the said people called Regulators or the Mob.” Until future decree, no powder, bullets, or lead could be purchased in the colony.153 In March, when court was in session in Salisbury of Rowan County, 400 or 500 Regulators,154 under James Hunter and Jeremiah Fields among others,155 collectively gathered with their arms to confront corrupt public officials of the county. John Frohock, a clerk of the court and a secretary and surveyor of the Land Office, admitted that he knew of the suffering inflicted by “such oppressive dealings” and that “he himself had in some cases taken too much fees.” Under pressure from the Regulator forces, Frohock and several other officers agreed to submit their dispute to arbitration on the third Tuesday in May of that year, which “gave general satisfaction.”156 The proposal signed proudly satisfied the Regulator goal to recover fees exacted through corrupt practices. The Regulators, the “People who [were] desirous of nothing more than Justice and Peace with every person whatsoever,” resolved that “all Debates hereafter may subside.”157

While these auspicious developments in Salisbury pointed towards peace, the politicians in New Bern had different ideas. During this month, the first 32 people were indicted under the Johnston Riot Act for the destruction of Fanning’s house the previous November. Several of the “outlawed” persons were not even in Hillsborough at the time. However, that did not preclude conviction.158 The Special Courts in New Bern continued their crusade against the Regulators, deeming them “all such wicked, seditious, evil, designing and disaffected Persons” who attempted “to perpetrate such enormous crimes or Offenses, as being enemies to his Majesty’s Person and Government, and to the liberty, happiness and tranquility of his good and faithful subjects of the Province.”159 Most disdainful of all was none other than Governor Tryon. On March 18, 1771, the young Colonel Alexander Martin and now Colonel John Frohock, addressed a letter to Tryon ad-
vising that the Regulators be treated with justice and a course of reconciliation be pursued. Martin and Frohock professed that the Regulators had “no Intention to disturb the Court or to injure the Person or property of any one, only to petition the Court for a redress of Grievances against Officers taking exorbitant Fees, and that their Arms were not for Offense, but to defend themselves if assaulted.” Less than three years earlier, Regulators had similarly urged Tryon to “forgive all our past offences by your gracious Proclamation, that peace and tranquility may be restored again, to all the Inhabitants of this Province, and confiding in your assistance and favor to execute the Laws against said exactions and extortions and conclude.” However, both parties’ efforts were to no avail: Tryon was resolute in his condemnation of the Regulators and would remain so.

In a response to Tryon’s uncompromising attitude, the Regulators assumed a more offensive position. Damning all lawyers and court officials, the Regulators outlawed Edmund Fanning, indicating that he could be killed on sight. With these developments, the members of the Hillsborough court grew so fearful of their now hazardous occupation that they adjourned until September of that year. The perpetually military-minded Tryon dealt with these occurrences as best he knew how—by raising an army.

Conduct of the War

As early as November 21, 1768, Representative Kennan had presented a bill to the North Carolina General Assembly recommending the establishment of a militia. When the governor marched his army to the Piedmont in May of 1771, he faced an increasing difficulty in acquiring troops “owing to a disaffection among the Inhabitants of the County [of Orange].” In the counties of Orange, Anson, and Rowan, it is estimated that between 6,000 and 7,000 men supported the Regulators. This is an astounding figure when, at that time, there were only 8,000 taxable men in that area. When Captain William Burney was
sent to enlist men, he could only persuade 74 to join the militia, a pathetic number considering the Regulator forces numbered between 2,000 to 4,000. Even Tryon’s personal efforts to enlist men fell flat:

[Tryon] tried to prevail upon them to march against the rebels but on one man’s absolute refusal he ordered him to turn out of the Ranks for a Traitor which he very readily did and all the Regiment followed or were following him; the Governor perceiving his mistake says Gentlemen you mistook me I only meant should they come down and destroy all your livings would you not fight them; they answered yes on which he dismissed them, they then gathered in Companys of 6, 8, 10 & 12 growling and swearing would the Mob come down they would join them. In Dobbs a general muster was called for the same purpose, but only seven men attended.

This account, composed by Regulator leadership Rednap Howell as a letter to fellow Regulator James Hunter, demonstrates the extreme opposition that the Governor faced. The disinclination to join Tryonian ranks was not limited to a singular county. In Bute, the colonel of the county was instructed to raise 50 men for the militia. Some 900 armed men assembled before him, but not one enlisted. They then proceeded to break “their ranks without leave of their commanders, and proclaimed themselves for the Regulators.” The general populace supported the Regulator cause, thus the governor was forced to buy his army, transforming the conflict into a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight. Only when Tryon offered the generous sum of 40 pounds did his ranks began to fill with volunteers.

In its totality, Tryon’s army consisted of 1,100 men, most of whom were from the eastern half of the province. The elite officers, many of whom would also participate in the American Revolution, composed nearly one tenth of Tryon’s forces. Life under Tryon’s command presented some undeniable advantages. Those enlisted into Nathaniel Hart’s Company of the Orange County militia received a payment per day of two shillings, which was more attractive than the nonexistent salaries of the Regulators. Furthermore, soldiers were to receive rations of one pound of flour and one and a half of meat, along with a “haversack,”
which was much similar to a rucksack and used to carry their rations and supplies.\textsuperscript{176} Company captains received more than seven shillings and lieutenants received five.\textsuperscript{177} However, many backcountry men could not be bought.

Besides the Moravians, all of the previously mentioned backcountry religious groups contributed in some way to the Regulator movement. Even Quakers’ religious beliefs did not preclude their involvement in the war, for at least 23 Orange County Regulators participated in battle, though Quakers like Jesse Lane and Edward Thornbrough, were later disowned for such actions.\textsuperscript{178} The Moravians, who had once fled Georgia because of conflict, had once again been caught in the midst of war. Characteristically, they remained neutral, however, this was no simple task. Nineteenth century historian Robert Gottfield noted that the Regulator movement put them in “great danger” from the Tryonians and Regulators, both of whom expected the Brethren to join their respective sides.\textsuperscript{179}

The Governor further alienated the people of the back-country by taking prisoners along his forces’ routes. In retaliation, Regulator spies stole supplies and letters from the marching army. One daring Regulator troupe even disguised themselves as Indians, blackened their faces, and burglarized Tryon’s power wagon, seizing its contents. This daring feat only infuriated Tryon who, on his march to Hillsborough,\textsuperscript{180} began impressing valuable supplies belonging to the local inhabitants.\textsuperscript{181} After two weeks of terrorizing the countryside, the governor sought a shift in strategy.

On May 13, the Council of War was held in Tryon’s encampment. Based on intelligence ascertained, it was concluded that the Army would change its course, foregoing the original plan and instead travel the road from Hillsborough to Salisbury. They would advance with “all possible expedition” past the Little and Great Alamance Rivers until they met with General Waddell’s camp,\textsuperscript{182} which had been compelled to reposition itself after Waddell lost a substantial number of his soldiers to the Regulators.\textsuperscript{183} This crucial decision made by the Council of War would ultimately result in the demise of the Regulators.
The Battle of Alamance

By nightfall, Tryon’s army was encamped on the west side of the Little Alamance. A “strong Detachment” had been given the task to seize possession of the Great Alamance’s west banks, so as to deny the Regulators the advantageous position. This would mark the beginning of the end for the Regulators. Three days later, Tryon’s highly organized forces and those of the disorganized Regulators were both camped in the vicinity of the Great Alamance Creek. The previous day the Regulators had entreated the governor with one final plea for arbitration, but the impetuous Tryon was in no mood for compromise. A council of North Carolina militia officers had previously determined that the insurgents had superiority in numbers, and thus had been more cautious to advance on the group, but Tryon was anxious to crush the rebels, ordering his command to march within 300 feet of the Regulator encampment. Regulators David Caldwell, Robert Mateer, and Robert Thompson approached Tryon, but he brashly took Mateer and Thompson prisoner, the latter of whom was shot within sight of his cohorts. The governor declined all peace proposals and through invocation of the Johnston Riot Act, left the Regulators only one hour and 10 minutes to relinquish their arms, pay their due taxes, “swear to be subjects of the laws of their country,” and surrender the outlawed leaders for execution, or if they should refuse, fight to the death.

Before the termination of the hour, Tryon’s Aide-de-Camp asked the Regulators if they desired additional time. The Regulators were more than willing to receive this offer, and the Aide-de-Camp promised that they would have two more hours, which gave the Regulators “great hopes of an accommodation.” It was around this time that a fatal miscommunication occurred; for the Regulators thought that they had more time to negotiate. According to a Regulator account, when the Aide-de-Camp returned a short time later, a Tryonian cannon was “fired in the midst of the people, which killed one man, & frightened” a great multitude
of the Regulators, who fled from the field. However, in “An authentik account of the Battle of Alamance,” a Tryonian soldier claimed that the Regulators provoked the governor’s troops:

Battle! Battle! Immediately after a considerable Body of them appeared in Sight, and waved their Hats, daring the Men to advance; upon which the Army continued moving towards them, until they were within thirty Yards of the Enemy when his Excellency sent an Aide-de-Camp to inform them that the Hour was elapsed, and that he should immediately fire and be damned.

Today, general historical opinion is that the Governor’s troops had indeed fired the first shot after the end of the first hour. After the exchange of bullets between the two armies, the Governor signaled for parley, but the Regulators were unfamiliar with the formal conduct of war and continued to battle. Tryon assumed that the Regulators refused to give quarter (they would show no mercy to captured or defeated enemies), so he continued to fight. It is estimated at between one to two hours later, the battle was finished, as all the Regulators who were not killed, wounded, or captured had retreated from Alamance. Regulator accounts state that their loss took place after two hours of intense battle, while the triumphant Tryonian forces proclaim their victory to have been achieved in a mere hour and 15 minutes.

Conflicting accounts of the battle present different figures for the numbers of each force. The “authentik account,” placed 2,300 Regulators on the battlefield, with 600 only actively participating in the fight. The Regulators supposedly had 100 killed, 200 wounded, and 20 were taken prisoner, while the Tryonian forces, or “loyalists” as the soldiers called them, had nine killed and 60 wounded. A year after Alamance, Morgan Edwards reported that 4,000 Regulators were present along with 2,000 Tryonians. Though these forces are much enlarged from those of the “authentik” account, Edwards claimed that only three Tryonians and 12 Regulators perished in the struggle. He attributed the lack of deaths to poor shots, for the “lodging in the trees an incredible number of balls which the hunters have since picked out and killed more deer and turkeys than they killed of their antagonists.” A Regulator account in the Boston Gazette similarly stated that “4,000
rebels” met the governor’s forces yet only 300 reportedly stayed to fight and only nine were killed with 30 unaccounted for. Historians today estimate around 1,500 Regulators were at the battle; however, due to the discrepancies of the primary accounts, the true numbers of each side will remain a mystery.

The Factors of Failure

The Regulators’ spirits had been buoyed by their initial successes. At Alamance, the Regulators utilized guerrilla tactics. Like the British regulars in the coming Revolution, Tryon’s military marched in conventional European formation for the day, which is to say they marched in predictable rows. This made them exceedingly vulnerable to sharpshooters, who possessed the cover of the surrounding woods and structures. However, the fatal fault of the Regulators was their lack of ammunition, which did not sustain them for the duration of the battle.

In just five years, Benjamin Franklin would remark, “we must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.” Had this sage logic been applied to earlier Regulator strategy, perhaps they would have garnered greater success in their rebellion. Lack of leadership and tight organization was ultimately devastating. Herman Husband galloped away from Alamance prior to the battle, a time in which his presence was most required. When coordinator James Hunter was asked to lead the troops in this crucial moment, he replied that every man should be his own commander. Without firm direction, the fighting fell into disarray. As the Regulators fled the battlefield, their dreams of victory were left with their fallen comrades: dying.
While the Regulators lamented their irrecoverable loss, the governor’s forces reveled in their triumph. In the order book of the Tryonian militia, an officer logged his exultation for the “Glorious Victory Obtained over the Obstinate & Infatuated Rebels at about Five Miles Distant from the Great Alamance camp under the conduct & valour of our Noble & Victorious General Tryon, Governor.” Tryon was exultant over the victory that was obtained through the “Providence of God,” as he put it. He congratulated his soldiers for their “Valour and Steady Conduct,” and announced, “the fate of the Constitution Depended on the Success of the Day & the Important Service thereby Rendered to their King & Country.” In this moment of supreme triumph, Tryon once again promoted the misinterpretation that made the Regulators appear enemies to the monarch and the very Constitution whose provisions they endeavored to protect. Nevertheless, the Governor stood convinced in the correctness of his perception, and would ensure that the Regulators be treated as the rebellious traitors he believed them to be.

With the Regulator forces in shambles, Tryon’s militia embarked on a vengeful reprisal. The day following the battle, a man named James Few was captured and speedily executed, which according to a Tryonian soldier, “gave great satisfaction to the men, and at this time it was a necessary sacrifice to appease the murmurings of the Troops, who were importunate that public justice should be immediately executed against some of the outlaws that were taken in the action, and in opposing of whom they had braved so many dangers and suffered such loss of lives and blood, and without such satisfaction some refused to march forward.” Few, the Protestant carpenter and father of twins, was offered a reprieve if he renounced the Regulators and their cause, but confident of their righteousness, he declined. Immediately upon his refusal, his neck was thrust through the dreaded noose.

This was all apparently “made necessary by the laws of war.” However, to imply that the Regulators were not forewarned
of the consequences of their actions would be untruthful. The aforementioned Ralph McNair had warned Herman Husband of the dire punishments the backcountry men would surely face. A tantalizing reward of 1,000 acres of land and $100 was issued for the capture, dead or alive, of four Regulator leaders—Herman Husband, Rednap Howell, James Hunter, and William Butler. Some former Regulators were even permitted to join in the manhunt, provided that their children remained under the watchful eyes of authorities as insurance, should the former Regulators join with their leaders. The governor’s troops used the Johnston Riot Act as justification for the destruction of the plantations and homes of the Regulators. Within days of Alamance, they marched to the humble home of James Hunter, which was promptly set ablaze and burned to the ground. By that evening, the militia had reached Husband’s plantation, 600 acres of fertile land. From his home, they extracted a “large parcel of treasonable papers,” which they took along with his livestock and cattle. Hoping to find clues as Husband’s whereabouts, they found none. In the Quaker areas, the army seized six wagonloads of flour and Edmund Fanning was given leave to arrest anyone who he saw fit.

Meanwhile, Tryonian soldiers were being compensated for their contributions. The governor’s philosophy mirrored that of industrialist Jay Gould, who said more than a century later, “I’ll hire half the working class to kill the other half.” Tryon had doled out the necessary funds to buy the service of poorer civilians, and had used them to suppress the Insurrection of their countrymen. On average, these men earned around 60 pounds for the service with Tryon. His militia would receive pensions for their participation in the Battle and soldiers were able to obtain pensions of 20 pounds per year provided that they were still in some way disabled. Those soldiers gravely injured received lifetime pensions, and those who willingly volunteered their horses, ferries, armaments, and wagons during the conflict were given restitution. They even received compensation for their damaged possessions, such as William Mebam’s “bursted” gun. Yet, those Regulators who sustained injuries were denigrated, their homes
and possessions ravaged by those who were being rewarded for their services.

On the pitch-black night of June 1, the Baptist Captain Merrill was taken prisoner by the Governor’s forces as he lay sleeping in his bed. According to a soldier in the militia, “Capt. Merrill had headed four hundred Regulators at the Action of Alamance, and afterwards endeavoured to rally and raise forces.” Contradictory to this statement, Merrill had not even been present at Alamance. Encamped on his plantation, the army devastated the region, taking flour and livestock from the surrounding population, even the neutral Moravians.

Within two weeks, Tryon was ready to finish with these rebellious affairs of the Regulators. He had received an appointment for the governorship of New York, and did not care to tarry longer than necessary in North Carolina. Fugitive Regulators, like James Hunter, roamed the countryside, in search of safety and shelter. Those taken prisoner were either subject to severe lashing or tied together into lines and forced to march through the countryside with the ransacking army. Once again, Tryon proclaimed that all those who “lay down their Arms, take the Oath of Allegiance and promise to pay all Taxes that are now due or may hereafter become due by them respectively and submit to the Laws of this Country shall have His Majestys most Gracious and Free Pardon for all Treasons, Insurrections and Rebellions done or committed on or before the Sixteenth of May last.” Almost immediately, thousands of men were entering the camps to recite the oath. James Green was later paid a fee of 25 pounds for “Enrolling & Assisting in Swearing 3,000 Persons stiled Regulators.” In the end, over 6,400 would capitulate and deliver the oath. However, what Tryon perceived to be a magnanimous gesture was not so for the 36 or so outlawed fugitives, whom he refused to grant pardon to by oath alone.

Ninian or “Niny” Hamilton, had 22 petitioners plea for his pardon, on account of his wife and three children who depended “on his support and his industry and honesty.” Hamilton, a notable presence at Regulator meetings and the
Hillsborough Riot along with his outlawed brother Matthew, blamed “his Ignorance of the Nature of the Government[,] the Springs Causing Regularity and good order among men[,] and Being unacquainted With the Blessings he Enjoyed under a British Constitution” as his reasoning for joining with “other Misguided men.” Thoroughly penitent for his “Errors Committed,” Hamilton thickly laid his apologies, harshly criticizing himself while complimenting those forces that could ensure his pardon. Niny laid his faith in the “Lenity,” “Compashon,” and “Mercies” of his judgment board—he was spared from the hangman’s noose.

The petitions of Jeremiah Fields was formatted in a manner much similar to Hamilton’s, so much so that a couple of sentences match verbatim, albeit with fewer spelling errors. Like Hamilton and James Hunter, he played the “family card” as a means of exacting sympathy from his readers, pleading for his life chiefly because he was the “husband of an unhappy Woman and father of five Small Children.” He had 18 additional persons petitioning on his account, who were of the opinion that he was “very Industrious and honest, though he was “unhappily Deluded by some means or other To Tack Part in a matter he Did not Know the Consequence of.” Fields was similarly absolved.

John Butler, the sheriff and brother to Regulator leader William Butler, wrote to the government on his brother’s behalf: “I Humbly hope that mercy may yet be found with your Excellency for one who is very sensible of his folly and who Sincerely promises never to be one of Such a Riotous party again.” William Butler sent his own letter, in which he addressed the governor as “His Majesty’s Captain General” and referred to the members of his “His Majesty’s Honorable Council.” In his petition, Butler represented his involvement with the Regulator Movement, “being fully Convinced that the principles which they had espoused were Erroneous.” Additionally, he claimed that he was “influenced to Commit Sundry outrages against the Laws of this government.” Butler’s “humbly hoping and begging” for pardon did not come to fruition, but he managed a timely escape that insured his survival.
Another Outlawed Regulator, James Fruit, requested pardon for his involvement, for which “he sheweth such great signs of Penitence for the past follies of his life promising ever obedience to the Laws of this province as becomes a Subject of great Britain.” The unique element in his petition was the 127 signatures of inhabitants of Orange County, who pledged to that Fruit had “behaved himself as a useful member of Society and in all things a subject of great Britain, until he unfortunately fell in with that most Extraordinary set of Enthusiastick people Called Regulators.” Among the signatories were John Butler and one John Pugh,240 whose own petitions would later fail, and Pugh would himself be hanged.

In the plea on Pugh’s behalf, the petitioners deemed him as a “good member of Society and a Subject of Great Britain and being Conscious of his Loyalty to his gracious Sovereign king george the third now upon the British throne.” John Pugh considered himself to be such an admirable British subject that, he thought of “Necessaty that he was not the John Pugh Intended in the indictment and therefore Neglected giving himself up Agreeable to the Lemited time Specified in the Proclamation and as he was forced to Betake himself to Distant Parts for his Safety Leaving a wife & one small child.” However, these characterizations, along with the testament of his “Detestation to all Rebellious or Illegal Proceedings and knowing himself absolutely Clear of the Crime Charged in the Indictment,”241 were not sufficient to save his neck from the noose.

The common elements shared amongst all of these petitions was the accused people’s devotion to their British Government and the King. Though they had been made to look as rebels and “traitorous Dogs,” these men, above all else, professed their enduring loyalty to the mother country. Yet, this would fail to convince Tryon and his elite followers, many of who had determined long ago that these men had intended for revolution against the monarchy.
Twelve Regulators were sentenced on June 15, 1771 for their crimes of high treason and violation of the Johnston Riot Act. Tryon, eager to see punishment done to those who dared to question authority, unduly influenced the judges, calling for the administration of the death penalty. Upon hearing the sentencing, the governor immediately issued his orders for the morning of the 19th. Hangings were choreographed events, and this particular one would be no exception. In an effort to ensure that spectators had an unobstructed view, the woods near the execution site were to be cleared. Five hours later, Tryon’s victorious militia, in uniform and with their arms, was to march in formation through Oblong Square to the dreaded spot. They would accompany the convicted 12 and the light horse soldiers were to cover their flanks to “Prevent the mobs crowding the men.”

On the hot morning June 19, 1771, onlookers jeered as 12 men trudged to gallows, accompanied by the forces under command of Colonel Ashe. Six of these men stood atop wooden barrels, awaiting their impending doom. Fortunately, the six others had been pardoned and released from the punishment of death, of grace that “was granted in compliance with the wishes of the Army, the Officers having recommended them as objects of mercy,” though “the evidence against them being clear.” Now, the six atop the barrels were to suffer the fate of their fellow Regulator, James Few, who had been hanged just a month previous. Benjamin Merrill stood, a tall, proud captain of the Rowan County militia. At his sides were Captain Messer, Robert Matear, John Pugh and two others who will remain anonymous to the annals of time. When the judge passed Merrill’s sentence, he insinuated that the harshness of the sentence was due to Merrill’s inability to refrain himself from “wrath and violent action.” Now, as he stood before the morbidly interested crowd with the noose around his neck, he played his part in the dramatic scene:
I stand here exposed to the world as a criminal. My life will soon be a change. God is my comforter and supporter. I am condemned to die for opposing Government. All you that are present take warning by my miserable end when I shall be hung up as a spectacle before you....I considered this unhappy affair and thought possibly the contentions in the country might be brought to some determination without injury to any, and in this mind I joined the Regulation...As to my private life, I do not know of any particular charge against me. I received, by the grace of God, a change fifteen years ago; but have, since that time, been a backslider; yet Providence, which is my chief security, has been pleased to give me comfort, under these evils, in my last hour; and altho’ the halter is now around my neck, believe me, I would not change stations with any man on the ground. All you, who think you stand, take heed lest ye fall.

This final speech led Baptist Morgan Edwards to comment that Merrill “bore an excellent character, insomuch that one of his enemies was heard to say, ‘That if all went to the gallows with Capt. Merrill’s character, hanging would be an honourable death.’” Yet, this “honorable death, would not be a consolation to the families that the victims had left behind. Furthermore, a single grave was to suffice for all six of the dead men. This was the treatment that men received for opposing the ill practices of their government, a lesson that would not soon be forgotten by the inhabitants of the backcountry.

Aftermath

The day after the hangings, Governor Tryon publicly announced his commission for the position of Governor of New York and speedily departed the colony. His successor, the 34-year-old Josiah Martin, was like Tryon, an affluent military man. Nevertheless, Martin was somewhat more flexible and open-minded than his predecessor. Initially believing the accounts of the former governor and the wealthy, Martin assumed that the Regulators advocated rebellion against the King. However, his visit to the backcountry led him to believe otherwise. To his chagrin, he realized that “the resentment of the Government was craftily worked up against the
oppressed and the protection which the oppressors treacherously acquired where the injured and ignorant people expected to find it in drove them to acts of desperation and confederated them in violences.”250 As a result, Martin recommended to the legislature that the Regulators still outlawed be shown mercy.251

Sympathy for the Regulators was not limited to the governor, for in other colonies, Patriots recognized the resemblance between their struggle against the King and that of the Regulators against their local governments. Nevertheless, the General Assembly and elite of North Carolina were reluctant to assume such a stance. By January of 1773, the Legislature was ready to “extinguish the remembrance of that unhappy Insurrection, which lately disturbed the peace property and security and aimed at subversion of the Constitution.” They endeavored to prevent such a rebellion again by protecting the due process and curbing corruption in local government:

The Institution of Courts of Justice is the basis of Government, and claims attention equal to the importance of the object. In the formation of Laws to establish a system of Jurisdiction for this Province, we shall use our utmost endeavours to found them on principles consistent with the circumstances of those who are to be Governed by them to make their scope liberal, their end beneficial, and these blessings permanent. Courts derive much respect from the character of those who preside in them; and the provision we may make for the support of Judges, we shall endeavour to render equal to the importance of the Trust, and not unworthy the acceptance of men of abilities and integrity.252

Those very rights that the Regulators had fought for were finally being realized though the individuals involved were still perceived as rebels by the government of North Carolina.

Even as late as 1773, service in the “valiant expedition” against the Regulators was still rewarded by the legislature. One Henry Costin, who served in the Battle of Alamance, was awarded a life-long pension for a leg injury, “as the Assembly have so Generously rewarded every Person who ventured their lives on that Expedition in the Service of their Country.”253 Thus, it is evident that the Legislature still believed in the correctness of their actions
regarding the Regulators. The Eastern and Western sections of the province remained somewhat separate entities, not any more unified than they had been in 1771, at the end of the war.254

When traveling Son of Liberty Josiah Quincy arrived in North Carolina in 1773, he met with eastern, anti-Regulator Patriots William Hooper and Robert Howe, who reinforced his perceptions of the Regulators. They spun tales of the traitorous rebels, whose lawlessness were unparalleled in the colony. Upon meeting westerner Colonel Dry, a friend of the Regulators, Quincy’s opinions of the backcountry men began to shift; Dry provided Quincy with “an entire different account of things,” which left the Son of Liberty to form his “own opinion” of the supposed wrongdoers. He, along with the governor, now believed that the Regulators were the victims rather than the perpetrators.255

In March of 1775, Governor Martin sent a dispatch to William Legree, Earl of Dartmouth, complaining of the rampant patriotism in the eastern part of the Colony. To his satisfaction, he noted that “the people in the Western parts of this Province withstanding for the most part steadily all the efforts of the factions to seduce them from their duty.”256 Therefore, the people of the backcountry were exhibiting strong loyalties to the King, while those men who had accused them of disloyalty nearly four years before were now condemning the King and Parliament. From a Sloop of War in the Cape Fear River, Legree responded to Martin, “According to my information a Committee was appointed to this Provincial Congress to gain over the late Insurgents in the Western Counties, who had heretofore made to me the strongest professions of their loyalty and duty to the King and of their resolution to support his Majesty’s Government.”257 This is quite the role reversal, for less than four years previous, the Regulators were the “insurgents” who were endeavoring to assure authorities of their “loyalty and duty to the King.” Now, the Easterners, the Patriots arguing for liberty from Crown Rule, were being deemed as such rebels. The Regulators likely assumed that the new Patriot administration would be as unjust as the King’s, for many of the men who had abused their officers under Tryon had become
Patriots. Additionally, the backcountry dwellers had learned the consequences of being branded as traitors to the Crown during the Regulation; thus they were ever more determined to prove their unswerving loyalty to George III. This desire coupled with the role of anti-Regulators in the Patriot forces gave the backcountry men substantial reason to demonstrate a robust support of the King.

A mere six months later, after the battles of Lexington and Concord, settlements had finally been achieved between the Regulators and the legislature. In a conference held with “the Chiefs of the Regulators,” it was concluded that those of North Carolina should “apprehend no danger from them.” Furthermore, every Regulator was to be protected from punitive actions. Animosity had substantially subsided between the Regulators and the Easterners, and the door was opened for the Regulators to join the North Carolina General Assembly, which was now under Patriot control. The Congress then appointed Maurice Moore, Richard Caswell and the Reverend Patillo to meet with the backcountry men. All of these men had sided with Tryon in the War of Regulation; nevertheless, a compromise between their party and the backcountry men was reached, for the Easterners astutely realized that the Regulators were more valuable as allies than enemies. At a convention held in Hillsborough, some Westerner friends of Regulators were elected to serve in the colony’s assembly after some anti-Regulators took positions in the new Patriot government. For the first time, the number of Westerners in the body outnumbered Easterners. While this may have appeared to be “the dawn of a new era” in North Carolina, the conflict between Loyalist and Patriot sentiment would soon tear the East and West apart once again.

In the subsequent months, fellow colonists would come to appreciate the Regulators’ devout loyalties to the King. On November 28, 1775, the Continental Congress passed a resolution sending to ministers “to go immediately amongst the Regulators and Highlanders in the Colony of North Carolina, for the purpose of informing them of the nature of the present dispute between
Great Britain and the Colonies.” The purpose of such an action was to encourage these groups to unite with the Patriot cause. Aware of the backcountry men’s profound Loyalist sympathies, the ministers were to offer each man “forty Dollars per month for their services,” which was at the time, a generous sum, but necessary if they were to sway the Loyalists of the Piedmont.

The effects of the Continental Congress’ measures were minimal at best. In January of 1776, Josiah Martin conferred to Legree, “The people called Regulators (for whom I hoped before this time to have received his Majesty’s Pardon) to the number of between two and three thousand men have given me the strongest assurances of their joining the King’s standard when ever they shall be called upon.” From his own Sloop of War, the Scorpion, Martin mulled over the fact that only half of the Regulators had weapons to fight the Patriots with, though he sanguinely commented upon these “friends of Government in the back Country and the notable exertions of the King’s loyal subjects.” Martin expected the arrival of British regulars and was resolved to make “every possible preparation in [his] power to favor and forward the General’s plan of Operations.” To this effort, Martin encouraged the “King’s loyal subjects” to resist the Patriot influences, through violence if necessary. This strategy split the Carolinas into two distinct factions. Martin maintained correspondence with the “disaffected in the western part of the Province,” establishing a command structure for their militia and offering colonels commissions to former Regulators. Furthermore, he promised that if the Regulator-Loyalist militias made it to Brunswick, North Carolina by February 15, 5,000 British regulars would be waiting to back them.

The backcountry men readily met this challenge. By February 13, 1776, the Regulators and the Tories were gaining control over parts of the province, intending to make their deadline of the 15th. The Patriot militia, under former anti-Regulator Colonel Caswell, was the face of the Rebel forces, hoped that they would be “well-flogged” before reaching their destination. Anti-Regulators Colonel John Rutherford and Colonel Ashe had
near 2,000 men each under their command and intended to face the Regulators should they beat Caswell. Rutherford noted that if, “three or four more of our Colonels in this Province raise as many, which I expect will soon be the case, they will be able to attack ten thousand Regulars, and beat them too, as I think our men will fight with great resolution.” When the Regulators met with the Patriot army three days later, the results were disastrous for the former party. In a letter to Robert Howe, the colonel was informed that “the insurrection is entirely suppressed, with respect to the Regulators” and the “Highlanders are dispersed.” With less than 5,000 men, the Patriots had “undoubtedly awe[d] the Highlanders into submission.” This comes as little surprise, for the joint Regulator-Tory force possessed only some 900 men. Still, the North Carolina Provincial Council saw fit to thank “every denomination for their late very important services rendered their Country in effectually suppressing the late daring and dangerous insurrection of the Highlanders and Regulators.” Overall, the efforts of the British and their Loyalist allies were a failure, for the British warships were forced to abandon Brunswick Harbor, and at least 20 of the Tories were taken into custody.

As the Regulators undertook a desperate retreat, parties of men were dispersed throughout the colony to apprehend all of the Regulators and backcountry men who had fought at Brunswick. An inhabitant of North Carolina gleefully celebrated “the immediate defeat of those disturbers of government called Highlanders and Regulators who had embodied themselves to a great number.” The “joy this event ha[d] disfused through this Province,” was further augmented by the defeat of the British forces in that region. The inhabitant once again observed that British must have been “amazingly mortified… in finding that this weak, poor, and insignificant Carolina, in less than 15 days, could turn out more than 10,000 independent gentlemen volunteers, and within that time to pursue them to the very scene of action.” This Patriot victory was, undoubtedly, a tremendous blow for all loyalists in colony, including those in the Piedmont.
Just 26 days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, General James Moore in a letter to Cornelius Harnett regaled the latest events as recently, “the number of Highlanders and Regulators taken [prisoner by the Patriots amounted] to 54 men.”271 Following the Brunswick fiasco, Josiah Martin was captured and declared an enemy of North Carolina, after which time, he was cut off from all communications with those in the colony, including those of the backcountry.272 His replacement, Richard Caswell, observed that there were still the “rising of Tories, and forming of conspiracies: the former among the Highlanders & Regulators” as late as September of 1777. Once again “the Insurgents,” the backcountry men made a concerted effort to push into Patriot-held territory.273 However, the Patriot militia was “ready to treat them as they deserved,” which convinced them to desist “from proceeding any further.”274

As the war was winding down in late 1781, the Regulators were still valiantly fighting, though many had grown weary after a decade of struggle. In a letter addressed to Patriot Governor Burke, who assumed Caswell’s position, Andrew Armstrong related to him information on the progress of the war. After briefly discussing the “King’s militia” or Regulators, who were still wreaking havoc in the backcountry,275 he went on to describe a Tory regiment from Hillsborough, which agreed to have every man “return home could they only have assurance of not being hanged.” Armstrong advised that their pardons be granted because it was “certainly as easy to reduce the number of our enemies by pardoning than by killing them and much better suited to [the] present condition.”276 At last, the hotbed of Hillsborough was cooling. And so, the Regulators’ ultimate efforts to prove their loyalty to the King and to defend British sovereignty over the Americas came to its inglorious end.
Dispelling the Myths

On the surface, the Regulators, with their grievances and protest against the government, appear to be a microcosm of the later Patriots of the American Revolution. Thus, historians have erroneously dubbed the War of Regulation as the “catalyst” of the American Revolution. William Fitch was among the numerous 19th and 20th century scholars who went so far as to claim that Alamance was the first battle of the War of Independence. Author Joseph Seawell believed it “reasonable to regard the Regulators in the Province of North Carolina as the vanguard of the American Revolution,” and thus the War of Regulation was “the very inception of the American Revolution, seven years before the battle of Concord.” However, these conclusions are quite simply false. The Regulators opposed corruption in state and local government rather than Crown Rule. Hillsborough historian Francis Nash put it best when he said, “to say that the same spirit inspired the Regulators that inspired the Sons of Liberty, or the Lexington Minute Men, is to my mind, sentimental slush, not historical truth.”

Though the ideals of the Regulators appear to be reflected in the maxims of the patriots, such as “no taxation without representation,” the Regulators, more often than not, were loyalists during the War of Independence. This principle is best illustrated by tracing leading individuals of the Regulation; for example, the formerly outlawed James Hunter was found on a Tory register in January of 1776. He was also elected Sheriff of Guilford County by popular vote in 1778, demonstrating that most of the area’s inhabitants approved of his political position. Meanwhile, staunch anti-Regulators like William Hooper, Alexander Martin, and Francis Nash became fervent Patriot Rebels.

Hooper, a lawyer by profession with a reputation for eloquence, was sent as a delegate to the First Continental Congress in 1774. As a delegate, the slender, reserved Hooper was renowned for his bold flair for writing. After the expiration of the session,
Hooper was appointed to the Second Continental Congress, where he ironically penned a statement that echoes the pleas of the Regulators:

That our petitions have been treated with disdain, is now become the smallest part of our complaint: ministerial insolence is lost in ministerial barbarity. It has, by an exertion peculiarly ingenious, procured those very measures, which it laid us under the hard necessity of pursuing, to be stigmatized in parliament as rebellious.

In addition to this manuscript, Hooper’s signature is preserved on one of the most well-known documents in our nation’s history: the Declaration of Independence. Turmoil in his private life necessitated that he retire from his office in 1777, yet he continued to give vocal support to the Revolutionary cause from his home in North Carolina.

The handsome Colonel Alexander Martin, a former member of Tryon’s army, albeit sympathetic to the Regulators’ plight, joined the Colonial Assembly of Guilford County in 1774. Merely a year later, he was appointed to the position of Lieutenant Colonel in the Continental Army. Following the Battle of Brandywine, he was promoted to Colonel. He was even present when his compatriot General Francis Nash was killed at Germantown. Following the Revolution, the distinguished veteran was elected as state senator and held the prestigious position of Speaker of the Senate during the period between 1780 and 1782, after which time, he served as the governor of North Carolina for six terms, and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Federalist President John Adams.

The legislature later saw fit to honor Martin for the “skill and wisdom” with which “he directed public thought into new channels,” and noted that “he was the leading influence in North Carolina” during the formative days of our burgeoning new nation.

Nevertheless, there were exceptions to this seemingly paradoxical pattern, a certain John Rutherfurd being one such example. A member of North Carolina’s exclusive official class, Rutherfurd participated in the administrations of both Arthur Dobbs and William Tryon. During the former’s term, he bore the reputation of a somewhat questionable, incompetent official; under
the latter, he served in multiple expeditions against the Regulators, and obtained a position of Lieutenant Governor, in which, he commanded the militias. Rutherfurd held the Regulators in nothing short of contempt, for they “could not be looked upon otherwise than as Disturbers of the Public Peace of the Colony.”

In the years preceding and concurrent to the American Revolution, Rutherfurd remained steadfastly loyal to the British government, and much like Husband, Hunter, Butler and Howell a decade earlier, his lands were auctioned off by the winning side of the conflict.

The despised Fanning departed from the Carolina back-country soon after Alamance. He headed to New York, where he accompanied Loyalist Tryon as his personal secretary. In 1783, the year that marked the official end of the American Revolution, he was named lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia. Following the conclusion of this appointment, he became lieutenant governor of Prince Edward Island, after which time he retired to England. Though he lost most of his colonial land in the Revolution, he died at the age of 81 an exceedingly wealthy man.

Some were not so fortunate as Fanning; General Hugh Waddell perished of disease three years before the Revolution, though his earlier tendencies indicate that he was greatly inclined towards the Patriot cause. Maurice Moore, or the “honest attorney” as he was known in North Carolina, resisted the Stamp Act. He was a judge in opposition to the Regulators, yet he was also critical of Tryon’s treatment of them. He was one of the justices who convicted the 12 Regulators on counts of high treason, but the Patriot Moore compromised with the former Regulators at Hillsborough in 1775. His legacy would live on in his son, who would become an associate justice on the United States Supreme Court.

Ever the agitator, Herman Husband continued with his rebellious ways. After fleeing North Carolina for Pennsylvania, he laid relatively low for a period, continuing to publish articles and pamphlets in the Regulators’ defense. He assumed the name “Tuscape Death,” masquerading as an itinerant preacher. During
the Revolution, he was elected to the colony’s assembly and backed far-reaching legislation. In 1794, he became a principal leader in the Whiskey Rebellion. For his role in this insurrection, he was imprisoned and subsequently sentenced to death, though the intercession of his friends ultimately gained him reprieve. His fellow outlawed Regulator Rednap Howell transplanted himself to Maryland, the birthplace of Husband. In the neighboring colony of Virginia, William Butler made his permanent residence. All three of these individuals would never return to North Carolina.

Changing Interpretations

History is often written by the victor, and in the immediate weeks after Alamance, those writers came forth. Misinformation about the plots and deceptions of the Regulators spread like wildfire. Public opinion initially swung in favor of Tryon’s camp, hailing the victorious governor as a hero. One Virginia Gazette article read:

Thus has his Excellency the Governor, at the Head of a handful of Troops, compared to the Numbers of Regulators, thro’ the immediate Hand of Divine Providence, broke this dangerous and daring Conspiracy, that every day increased, and threatened to overwhelm this once Flourishing province in one Scene of horrid Confusion and lawless Fury! For who but the Almighty Ruler of Heaven and Earth could guide the Balls from the Rifles of the Regulators to fly over the Heads of our troops in the Day of the Battle, as they did by tens Thousands; which otherwise, as if they were at least five Times the Number of our Troops, must have cut them off by Hundreds, and left the Field a dismal Scene of Blood and Carnage.

Clearly, the public demonized the Regulators and such propaganda was why they were viewed as treasonous. In this article, the victory against the Regulators seems all the more caused by the “Hand of the Divine” since the Regulators were reported as being five times greater in number when they were barely twice the number. Since most of them had fled the battlefield when the shooting erupted, this portrayal is all together inaccurate. The Essex Gazette published the supposed contents of the papers in Herman Husband’s home,
“by which it appears, the insurgents were confident they should defeat the Governor, and were determined to put every man in his army to death.” This claim was such an absurd distortion of fact, for the former Quaker Husband disapproved wholeheartedly of violence, yet such glaring falsehoods initially pervaded the cultural commons.

Many of the untruths regarding the Regulators were due to the bragging and fabrications of Tryon. Thus, many articles praised his leadership in bringing down the Regulators:

I suppose Col. Trion has done more for the Support of Government in North America, than all the Governors in it. If that most daring and dangerous Rebellion that has happen’d this Age, had not been quelled by Him, an universal Revolt would have succeeded in all the Colonies: For you may depend upon it, this was the last Scheme of all the Sons of Faction, to Collect a Body there, as they supposed that Government the least able to resist them: But God be thanked that they have found a Tryon!

However, as the Regulators’ stories of Alamance made their ways to the newspapers, interpretations of the Regulation somewhat shifted. As early as July of 1771, the Boston Gazette observed that a “murdering temper...governed the actors of the tragedy at Alamance.” The newspaper asserted that the Regulators were “reduced to those extremities which excited their villainous oppressors, not to relieve, but to murder them.” Nevertheless, there were still those who rejected the Regulators and opposed such inflammatory rhetoric, the North Carolina Sons of Liberty being one such group. These defenders of liberty and freedom maliciously burned in effigy the authors of the articles praising the Regulators.

On a more moderate note, another article focused on Tryon’s bragging, for the “world has found by universal experience, that many in power are never without flatterers, who set their most infamous actions in a false glare.” These “infamous actions,” primarily those at Alamance, were overshadowed by Tryon’s biased accounts of the affair. The authors of the article hoped, “that every sensible American will suspend his censures of our unfortunate fellow-subjects in the back parts of North
Carolina, till we can have a more circumstantial account of them than any which the advocates for Governor Tryon have yet given us.” William Clark, a historian of the late 19th century who extensively reviewed the Regulation, blamed the war on Tryon. His conjecture was that Tryon’s rejection of a more peaceful course of settlement prevented the grievances of the Regulators from being “eased and quieted.” Had Tryon not objected to the efforts at arbitration, “the Regulators in all the counties would have followed that example, and the interior of the Province would have been pacified without any martial display on the part of the Governor, and without the expenditure of money or the loss of a single drop of blood.”

One Presbyterian historian of the early 19th century predicted that, “in the future history of Carolina, the war of the Regulation will stand prominent as the struggle of liberty and justice against oppression, not less glorious than Lexington or Bunker Hill, for the principles displayed, though less honored for the immediate effects.” This was not far off, as 21st century historian Annie Sutton Cameron, author of the *Hillsborough and the Regulators*, was of the opinion that, “the Regulators were right in principle, as the American Revolution later demonstrated, although wrong in strategy and tactics, and that they contributed much of permanent worth to the American political scene.” The Alamance Museum was of a similar mindset when they listed the contributions to the Regulators:

1. Their boldness in taking up arms against corruption contributed, by example, to the later clash, which resulted in American independence.

2. The men trained on the battlefield by Governor Tryon became a battle-tested militia against England when the Revolutionary war broke out four years later.

3. Many of the Regulator ideas were incorporated into the first North Carolina Constitution of 1776.
Thus, while the Regulators were not Patriots (Rebels) during the American Revolution, their struggles against injustice in local and state government were recognized as valuable, if only centuries later.

Conclusion

At the North Carolina colonial convention in 1776, a Declaration of Human Rights was issued. Article II stated, “the People of this State ought to have the sole and exclusive Right of rule regulating the internal Government and Police thereof.” Article X decreed that, “excessive Bail should not be required, nor excessive Fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual Punishments inflicted.” And finally article XVII stated, “That the People have a Right to assemble together, to consult for their common Good, to instruct their Representatives, and to apply to the Legislature for Redress of Grievances.” To the Regulators, this document would have produced a mixed sense of bitterness and accomplishment, for it encompassed the very rights for which they had fought; yet these rights had not been recognized until nearly five years after the conclusion of the Regulation. The cruel and unusual punishment inflicted on the men like Benjamin Merrill was now verily condemned.

After the disaster at Alamance, many Regulators fled the Piedmont to escape persecution. As many as 1,500 families readily departed, some in the quest for independence; some in the pursuit of freedom from the oppression of the elite. These men formed lasting communities in the Appalachians, developing societies like the Watauga Association. In Tennessee, former Regulators established the independent state of Franklin. Additionally, the spirit of the Regulator movement was reflected in the Populism that pervaded the Midwestern states in the late 1800s. The Populists endeavored to obtain fairer treatment under the law and fought against the corruption of the elite and freedom from agrarian debt, yet their effort initially proved unsuccessful as well. However, as with the Regulators, Populist goals were later incorporated into state constitutions.
That which stood for Tryon’s victory, the infamous palace in New Bern, was engulfed by a conflagration in 1798.\textsuperscript{320} While the symbol of his dominance is gone, a modest monument attests to the struggles of the Regulators. A simple marble pedestal houses a plaque, which reads:

On this spot were hanged
By order of a Tory court
June 19, 1771
Merrill, Messer, Matter, Pugh
And two other Regulators.\textsuperscript{321}

The ultimate tragedy and irony of this inscription is “By order of a Tory court,” for the Regulators were themselves stalwart Loyalists. The Regulators were not fighting against the King, but rather the corrupt local officials and unsympathetic governor. Furthermore, they had not intended to become the rebels that they were labeled; rather, the misconceptions regarding their intent blinded the public from seeing their true dispositions—those who desired the rule of law, not the rule of reprehensible, avaricious men.
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