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The Cambridge Undergraduate History Journal is a bi-annual publication featuring scholarly articles written by Undergraduate students at the University of Cambridge. It is a primarily student-run publication with a blind peer review selection process, soliciting submissions from a range of faculties. Authors retain all rights to scholarship presented in the Journal.

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Letter from the Editor

SONYA PRIYAM PASSI
Trinity

> "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world
> and that is an idea whose time has come."
>
> *- Victor Hugo, Les Misérables*

It is with great excitement that I introduce the founding issue of the Cambridge Undergraduate History Journal. The Journal exists to showcase the talents of our undergraduates and in so doing, to promote wider learning through shared scholarship. During my undergraduate years, I revelled in the sheer spectrum of papers available in the Historical Tripos, was inspired by the support and enthusiasm of my teachers, and humbled by the talent of my peers. However, I often found myself lost in intellectual isolation, and hope that this Journal, which is intended to be a biannual publication, will help to fill the silence of undergraduate study.

The Journal opens with a panel discussion between four American historians on the presidency of Barack Obama, followed by a fascinating and deeply personal interview with Professor Mikuláš Teich of Robinson College. Our aim through these first two items is to bridge the gap that exists between academics and students and to provide an informal setting for intellectual dialogue. We then present a collection of excellent articles from six Cambridge undergraduates. Both the number and standard of submissions received was overwhelming, making the process of selection a difficult and often frustrating task. Taken together, the articles presented here are a testament to the value and power of historical research and to the ingenuity of ideas and elegance of style that exist within our undergraduate body.

My sincerest thanks go to all those who submitted their work for consideration and to the editorial board who have worked tirelessly to produce this first issue. In addition, I would like to express warm gratitude to our featured academics: Professor Mikuláš Teich, Dr David Garrow, Dr Andrew Preston, Professor Michael O'Brien, and Mr Dan Matlin. I am also extremely grateful to Dan, together with Dr Shruti Kapila, for their efforts as faculty advisers. My final thanks go to Dr William O'Reilly for his confidence, wisdom, and patience.

As you explore this inaugural issue, I hope that you find plenty of food for thought and come away feeling encouraged to submit your own historical scholarship for publication. The next issue will be released in Michaelmas 2010 and I draw your attention to the "Submissions Guidelines" for further details. It is only with your support that the Journal can recognise its full potential as a Cambridge institution, benefiting generations of undergraduate historians to come.

Sonya
Editor-in-Chief
26 April 2010

Cambridge Historians on the Obama Presidency

SONYA PRIYAM PASSI & CHRISTIAN BJOERN BAK
Trinity & Christ's

The following panel discussion, conducted on 9 March 2010, is an observation of the Obama Presidency within its historical context. David Garrow won the Pulitzer prize in Biography for his book, "Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference", and is currently writing a biography of Barack Obama. Daniel Matlin is a research fellow with broad interests in twentieth century American cultural and intellectual history and more specifically the histories of race and racism. Michael O'Brien is an intellectual and cultural historian of the American South, and Andrew Preston is an American foreign relations expert, with a particular interest in the intersection between religion and politics.

* * *

Q *Obama's strongest suit during the 2008 election was his ability to communicate successfully with the American people. Has he brought this with him in to office?*

A Garrow: I believe that last year the White House consistently made errors in over-exposing him. He was on TV too much and his omnipresence reduced his ability to make big, dramatic statements. I think they also erred significantly in not being more assertive on the substance of the healthcare measure back last summer ... They were able to use the internet in very interesting and varied ways in the campaign but I don't think anyone has demonstrated that you can use the internet as a tool of governance or coalition-building in Congress. If anything, in the last four or five months, they've begun to suffer rather badly on the internet because so much of the web activism is well left of Obama. Whether it's the health bill with the public option or immigration or "don't ask don't tell" for gays in the military ... he's now taking an awful lot of flak on the internet.

O'Brien: Plus, you have to remember that the whole rhetoric of election campaigns is fundamentally different. The informal rhetoric of the election could not be brought in to the more formal setting of the White House. I mean, can you run a presidency on facebook? I don't think you can. And of course, he's inherited a terrible economy and it's rather difficult to be that uplifting in this situation ... That said, it wasn't exactly clear to me that he had much of a message in the campaign. There were platitudes about hope and change but the whole point of it was not what he said but who he was; he was an African American, he was young, he was cool - it was his persona.

Garrow: I very much agree with Michael [O'Brien]. We have all of these people, especially the critics on the left, claiming that they feel some place between disappointed and betrayed but I think it would be very hard to find anyone who knew Obama back in Chicago who is surprised by anything that has happened. I think people may have naively set their expectations too high.

Does having a black president do more to help or hinder the cause of African Americans?

Matlin: I think that the symbolism of a black president can cut both ways. On the one hand it can be very positive and inspirational. On the other, it becomes easier for some conservatives to say that America is now a society in which a black man can become president; that this is an

equal society where everyone has a fair chance. The effect of this is to undercut continuing efforts for reform and hamper attempts to expand the civil rights agenda.

O'Brien: Well, he's not a very black president. From the beginning he had to convince African Americans that he was one of them. And it wasn't easy to do that. He brilliantly navigated his way through his various identities and kept his image open to his various constituencies. Towards the end many African Americans jumped on board because he was winning, but I don't think there is a very close bond.

Matlin: Also, it's important to consider the challenges that not only Obama but other black politicians of his generation face when they are trying to win elections in multi-racial constituencies - governorships and the senate. There have only been four black senators in the United States since the Second World War. The success of the civil rights generation of black elected politicians was usually at the level of being mayor or congressman for a district with a heavily concentrated black electorate. What people like Obama, Deval Patrick in Massachusetts, and Cory Booker in Newark have tried to do is, at the symbolic level, to distance themselves from what the earlier generation have done. And I think Obama was very effective in presenting himself as a reconciler and a healer, and as someone who wanted to move on as much as to build on the achievements of black civil rights generation politicians; in a sense to present America as moving on from the moment of protest.

At the end of 2009, Jimmy Carter went on the record saying, "I think an overwhelming portion of the intensely demonstrated animosity towards President Obama is based on the fact that he is a black man; that he is an African American". How far would you agree with this statement?

O'Brien: I think it's clear. I mean - most presidents get a break for a while - about a year. And Obama got about a week and that is partly racial. It also seems to me that the level of partisanship in the United States is unprecedented.

Preston: I agree with Mike [O'Brien]. I would say a lot of it is racial, but, I think if you had had another candidate who was seen as being an orthodox-McGovern-liberal as Obama has been portrayed (I think in a lot of senses inaccurately), that person would also have been deprived a honeymoon period from the Right. If John Kerry or John Edwards had won - I realise that that now seems implausible - but had someone with Edwards's message won, I don't think he would have had a honeymoon period either.

O'Brien: Still, I think it is his race that allows people to think that he's not really an American - that black people aren't really American.

Did Obama's victory in the primaries halt the forward movement of American conservatism?

Preston: I don't think it was Obama who weakened American conservatism: it was George W. Bush and the reaction against his presidency. People who saw the 2006 midterms and the 2008 election as a realigning moment are now seeing that that really was not the case because 2008 and 2006 were not referendums on ideology - on liberalism or conservatism. It was a competency issue. It wasn't a realignment.

Garrow: I think two of the most visible things that we are seeing at present are the odd simultaneity of intense - often hateful - partisanship at the extremes, coupled with unusually large and unpredictable swings in mass public opinion. So the degree of hatefulness that you see towards Obama on the extremes is different in magnitude to the nastiest stuff that was targeted at say JFK, LBJ, and Carter (we'll leave Clinton aside for the moment). But, then, we get

something like that Massachusetts result with Scott Brown and should we think of it as simply anti-Washington or anti-incumbent? There is a large degree of stylistic overlap between Brown's campaign and Obama's. So we end up with this seemingly bizarre situation where an Obama-like campaign is being used to repudiate Obama.

O'Brien: Although I wouldn't overstate the Massachusetts case too much. Massachusetts has elected Republicans with some regularity in recent years. I think Kennedy sitting in that seat distorted the electoral mathematics and the normal situation just reasserted itself.

Matlin: On this question of partisanship, I'm just wondering whether in the next few months we'll see a bit of a change of direction from Obama. He came to the White House presenting himself very much as trying to end a particularly partisan period in American politics, and in The Audacity of Hope he talks about the last 30 or 40 years through the lens of the "culture wars" and presents himself as a reconciler trying to take the best from American political traditions across the spectrum. But I wonder whether the last year hasn't shown us that the American political culture is inherently partisan. I mean, here is someone who came along presenting himself as a healer yet who finds himself being labeled a socialist or Hitler - or both!

O'Brien: I would say it's been a very partisan atmosphere for years. But the Republicans are much better at it than the Democrats - they are much more ruthless.

During the election the liberal media was so enamoured with the very idea of Obama that they really struggled to deliver a balanced view of him. Have the rose-tinted glasses come off?

Garrow: No. Not with regard to Obama himself. Now, that doesn't mean that there is any shortage of Washington journalists that are eager to pick off staff scalps, but the mainstream liberal media has continued to be consistently respectful.

O'Brien: Obama's complicated. He's the most complicated president we've had in years in terms of his intellect, his background, his literary gifts ... it's hard to pin down his ideological position. He's really interesting and I think a lot of the press is still trying to figure out what they've got on their hands and I don't think they want to rush to judgement on it.

Matlin: I think the liberal media remain very respectful of his personal integrity. At the same time, when you think back to the primaries, there were plenty of liberal journalists who were backing Clinton and had a critique of Obama - not so much of his integrity but that this was someone who was inexperienced, who waffled, who was over-reliant on rhetoric and not enough on ideas. I think if you read the op-ed pages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, you will still see liberal critics making those arguments. So, I don't think he's had an entirely free ride from the liberal media, but I do think that in terms of his personal integrity he does command a lot of respect.

What does Obama have to do to meet expectations?

O'Brien: All presidencies are failures; it's just a case of how big a failure.

Garrow: We haven't mentioned so far either of the two most important words for Obama - Afghanistan and Iraq. Up until about a month or so ago, it seemed like there wasn't going to be any good news out of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Seemingly they are having some tactical successes but I defer to Andrew [Preston] on this ...

Preston: The trends aren't entirely favourable. Both situations are so difficult to get a handle on. Just when you think things seem to be improving in Iraq, they seem to get worse. If the situation in Iraq deteriorates can Obama withdraw those troops? It's a no-win situation: if he does withdraw them, he's going to be facing a firestorm of criticism in the US, especially if the situation continues to deteriorate. And then all of a sudden it's 'Obama's War', not George W. Bush's. And then it's Obama's failure.

In Afghanistan, ever since he had that prolonged, agonising review in the summer and fall of last year and then decided to have a mini-surge, things have seemed stable. How long will that situation last? Anything could happen - a coup in Pakistan, for example. That's the problem with foreign policy: what happens when something big hits? Obama hasn't yet faced his big crisis as all presidents do.

Garrow: For the moment, he is relatively fortunate that neither Iran nor North Korea have done anything violently wacky. What are the odds that that will remain the case for the next two and a half years?

Preston: That's a good point, but we know he will face the day when Iran has nuclear capabilities. What does he do then? Bush and the European allies have really gone out on a limb by saying this cannot happen, Iran cannot get a bomb. But there's nothing anyone can do to stop Iran getting the bomb short of war or some sort of massive military strike. So by saying that this cannot happen, you are either setting yourself up for a massive climb down or for some sort of military scenario, which I don't think is in anyone's interest. So how he deals with Iran is going to be very interesting.

O'Brien: Well he wouldn't do it of course. The Israelis would do it ...

Matlin: It does seem to me that the overall shape of Obama's foreign policy is still very unclear and he's left himself quite a lot of room for manoeuvre. On the one hand, he came in saying that he wanted to wind down Iraq. On the other hand, he came in saying he wanted to ramp up Afghanistan. And I think there are shades of the 1960 Kennedy campaign when he was attacking the complacency of the Eisenhower administration in its prosecution of the Cold War. I think Obama's claim that Iraq had been a diversion from the real fight against Islamist terrorism has left him the option to pursue a more aggressive line on Afghanistan and Iran and other issues, but it's not clear whether he's going to wind down wars or become more Hawkish.

Preston: It wouldn't surprise me if we get an announcement that some American high-level official has been meeting with Iranian officials and there is going to be some sort of denouement. Then you solve the Israeli problem – or at least the problem of a possible war. And America is in this situation like it was in 1969-70. Nixon and Kissinger totally re-calibrated American foreign policy - the opening of China, Detente, and what not - and it wouldn't surprise me, under the same pressures, that Obama does something similar. He's the realist's darling. People like Brent Scowcroft love Obama and his foreign policy. And moralists on both the right and left really don't like it.

O'Brien: But I doubt his presidency is going to be decided in foreign policy. The fate of his presidency rests on how he handles the economy.

Let's move on to think about his global reputation. George Bush, to his credit, built strong relationships with European leaders, especially Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, but also, after Chirac and Schröder, he made a lot of effort to built a strong relationship with Paris and Berlin. Obama has not actively pursued the same course. Will American leverage suffer because he did not cultivate these relationships?

Garrow: The one thing I would say before I pass over to Andrew [Preston], is that I would bet that in any six month period, Bush spent five times the amount of time on the phone with foreign leaders than Obama has. That's how it feels in any case: that he hasn't put much time into doing reach-out.

Preston: He's obviously been preoccupied with the economy and healthcare. I'm not sure Obama needs to cultivate relationships with foreign leaders because he hasn't faced his big crisis. George Bush was on the phone a lot because he was constantly begging people for their vote in the UN or some sort of support. I mean, the world will always need America - America plays the role the UN doesn't in that it essentially has a regulatory role in managing the world system. It doesn't necessarily do a good job but it really is indispensable for better or worse, and Obama can't change that. And with regards to Europe, Obama is a very different president. He's not a transatlantic president - he has a Kenyan father, and an Indonesian childhood - he's a post-colonial president in some ways. His memories of the British are not the Blitz and the "special relationship", his memories are stories from his father about British colonialism. I don't think he has this automatic, almost mythic, tie to Europe as other leaders have, and I'm not sure that's a bad thing either.

If you had the lead article in the New York Times next week comparing Obama to any former president - not for similarity but rather interest's sake - who would you pick and why?

Matlin: I would pick John F. Kennedy, because I think image was so important to both of their elections and I think the jury of political historians is still out about whether JFK was a man of political substance. The same is true about Obama.

Garrow: Jimmy Carter.

O'Brien: You stole my choice.

Garrow: One of the defining elements to the Carter presidency was how the liberal wing of the Democratic Party turned on him, challenged him unsuccessfully, but wounded him perhaps fatally. He was then confronted with an unsolvable foreign policy crisis in terms of the Iranian hostage situation and was perhaps consistently seen as getting less-than-adequate counsel and advice from staff. Unfortunately that is emerging as a very pronounced theme of the Obama presidency this spring, and it needs to be turned around.

O'Brien: I would say Carter but for different reasons. He got elected in large part in reaction to the failure of another president (Nixon) and he also came from a group that hadn't been elected to the Presidency before. There was a sense amongst some people that a Southerner couldn't be president, and there are people who think the same about African Americans. In terms of intellect, I would probably say Woodrow Wilson. Not that they have the same kind of intellect, because I think Obama's is a lot more subtle, but in terms of intellectual record I would say they are similar.

Preston: I'm going to say Richard Nixon: not because they are similar personalities or have similar values but because of the circumstances in which they both inherited the presidency. Nixon inherited an unpopular war, didn't just withdraw immediately, de-escalated it in some ways

while escalating it in others, and I think there are similarities to how Obama is dealing with the dual issues of Afghanistan and Iraq, though of course these are two separate conflicts. I also think Obama is complicated like Nixon (although hopefully in a much better way), and on foreign policy he is pragmatic and has the realist instincts which Nixon had.

I think its interesting that all of the examples that we are choosing are from the mid-twentieth century, when America was in a state of crisis whichever way you looked at it: foreign policy, economics, social stability, race relations. It says a lot of the circumstances that Obama stepped in to.

Garrow: I think if we let Obama answer his own question he would say Abraham Lincoln, FDR, and Ronald Reagan. I don't think he would want to hear two Jimmy Carters and a Richard Nixon!

Professor Mikuláš Teich on Nations, Socialism, and the demise of Czechoslovakia

LINDSEY MANNION & MATTHEW ECCLES
Trinity Hall & Trinity Hall

Professor Mikuláš Teich is an eminent historian and founding-fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge. Born 24 July 1918 in Košice, Slovakia, he studied chemistry and physics at the Masaryk University, Brno, where he joined a group of communist, social democratic, and left-wing Catholic students. In 1939 he left Czechoslovakia for England following the German occupation - boarding the train at Žilina he was to see his parents for the last time. Following their arrest in 1944 they died in the concentration camps. In England he met Alice Scwharz, an Austrian, and they were married in 1944. After the War Mikuláš and Alice returned to Czechoslovakia in the hope of a socialist regeneration of the country. Although his education was scientific Mikuláš converted to historical scholarship in the mid-1950s as an historian of science. Mikuláš and Alice left Czechoslovakia in 1968 for research in America; their departure coincided with the Soviet invasion of the same year. In 1977 he became a Fellow and in 1983 an Emeritus Fellow of Robinson College. Mikuláš still lives in Cambridge with his wife.

* * *

Q The National Context series of books have been very successful, and many Cambridge students use them. Why do you think this is?

A Well this I don't know. When Robinson college started I invited Roy Porter to a dinner and I asked him, 'Roy, what are you doing now?', and he said 'the Enlightenment in Europe'. I said, 'well what do you know about the Austrian Enlightenment?' He said 'nothing'. To be quite precise, I asked, 'what do students know about it'? He said 'nothing'. I said 'you can't do the European Enlightenment without the Austrian Enlightenment. And he said, 'well, why don't we do a seminar?' And so it all started. Because of my background – coming from central Europe and growing up with four languages – I was very aware that the national question is very important and underestimated in this country. My wife comes from Vienna and we travel practically every year to Vienna and we've got connections with academics there, especially historians. I noticed in the 70s and 80s when I asked the national question, they were not interested at all, and in fact some of my friends were not at all clear about what you could say about the Austrian nation. As you know in politics even today it's important at least for some part of the Austrian Right to think clearly in terms of being German not Austrian, but to be quite fair nobody - no politician, no intellectual - would now say that there is no such thing as an Austrian nationality. But to come back to your question, it is fair to say that because of my interests, and because Roy Porter was very perceptive and brilliant we decided to do these National Context volumes.

You wrote in a letter to the CUP that 'the parochial notion that history only happens in a few nations will be dispelled from a series such as the National Context collection'. Has focusing on history off the beaten path, perhaps Czech history or Austrian history, been the most formative influence on your scholarship?

No, not at all. I've been an internationalist all my life. In fact, my wife and I we studied at Leeds and I was the Chairman of the International Student Society and my wife Alice was the secretary, so no. We do not separate the national from the international – they are two sides of the same

question. Let me put it this way, and I hope I won't shock you. Take Great Britain. Now, first of all, politicians sometimes say "the British nation" but they have stopped doing it. They speak about the Scots, the English, but they very seldom talk about the "nation". And it's the Scots and the Welsh and the Irish who one way or another asked the question. The English never. Why? Because the English say, "we know we are English, we are the best" and so on and that's it. Not that this was an element, but I just want to say that in other countries the problem is in a different way the same. As an historian I find that the national question is a very important one and historians in many ways are not prepared to tackle it.

Why were you prepared to tackle it?

Because I thought it necessary to do it. I'll give you an example of how parochial the reporters for the CUP were when we suggested the 'Industrial Revolution in National Context'. We said that we'd do the Balkans and the prospective author, who incidentally later became the President of Bulgaria for a short time after 1989, Lyuben Berov, said 'I want to do the whole lot'. I wasn't quite sure but I knew him well and I knew him as a competent historian. So 30 to 35 pages for all of the Balkans was what we told the CUP. But we got a very nasty report about it. I don't know whether you are familiar with the process – you suggest something, you get an anonymous report and people are very rude because they can be – they are anonymous. And, this particular person, I don't know who it was, was especially rude. They said, 'whoever heard of the industrial revolution in the Balkans? There was none and so it is stupid to have 25 or 30 pages.' And, I wrote back to CUP and said I want to point out that your reporter is ignorant of the history of central and Eastern Europe.

I don't want you to get an idea, you know, that I had an agenda of 'enlightening' – giving light from the East to the West – but I just thought that historiography should be alerted that this is a problem which needs to be addressed in a more scholarly fashion. It's an important issue because of how the national question has been played and is being played. And not in an abstract way, in concrete ways too: the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, the reformation and so on.

The introduction to the series states the aim was to reach a 'wide range of readers', including students and educated readers...

Absolutely, absolutely. That was Roy Porter's idea from the beginning.

Roy Porter has been described as having 'legendary energy'. As someone who knew him very well, how would you describe him?

Well absolutely that. I asked him once, 'Roy, how can you manage it?' He said 'well I'm one of the lucky people' or 'few people', I'm not sure whether he used 'few' or 'lucky', 'that need only four hours sleep'. Now, if you only sleep four hours and you are in danger then of course... But this is how he was able to do his writing, teaching, lecturing, broadcasting – and being in love with many women.

Do you think that your background as a continental European gives you a different view on history from British historians?

When I was 80, Roy Porter edited, with a German scholar, a Festschrift for me. And in the Festschrift he pointed out that I was able to combine the best things from the English historiography or British historiography and the continental, or something like this. I feel sometimes that more should be known about Central and Eastern Europe than is known, and then when I am in Prague or Vienna, or even Germany, I feel they should know more about the English.

Do you feel that you've had success in highlighting the lack of history being written about Central and Eastern Europe?

My personal feeling, and I have no evidence for what I'm going to say to you, it's really only my gut feeling, is that by my academic peers it's looked upon with suspicion. The interesting thing is that of all the volumes with Porter, still the one that sells most is *The National Question in Europe*, the one that tackles the national question. In other words, somebody must like it, so in that sense, I should be happy. But my feeling is that amongst my academic peers – not everybody is as enthusiastic about me, I can tell you that.

Do you have a favourite book in the series?

I think *The National Question in Europe* is a good one; *The Enlightenment in National Context* is too. Actually, *Enlightenment*, I have to tell you, did not sell well at all at the beginning. After it was sold out Roy Porter wanted them to have it reprinted and they said 'no, we are not going to reprint it, because it sells with great difficulty'. We made an analysis; the authors are first class, the book is good and it doesn't sell well. But last year it was reprinted after so many years.

Nationalism and nations was one of the first things that we studied upon arriving here in Cambridge, as part of our 'Historical Argument and Practice' paper. Given your political background, why did you choose to deal with questions of national context and nationalism itself?

Well, each phenomenon has got infinite facets, but I'm going to choose two in order to try to answer your question. Take your own family. I don't know what your background is, but the questions 'who am I?' and 'who is the other?' is something which is, it's the wrong word but, endemic. If you look back, this question played genuinely in the life of everybody. It has been asked subjectively, at the same time objectively so, but at the same time it's been instrumentalised. For an historian there is another side to it. I for one have come to the conclusion - it's not something that I have myself concluded, but I have accepted this conclusion by some people – that it's physically the peasantry that is the basis of the nation. Other social groups are part of instrumentalisation. If physically the peasantry isn't there, no amount of other things can create the national question; it's the physical existence in the history of the nation of the peasantry that's important. If I said that in a modern history seminar run by Richard Evans they would look at me like I've come from Mars! The best examples are in the colonial countries. The Indian question was a peasantry question; the Chinese question was a peasantry question. All the Gandhis and Nehrus in the world could not succeed if they could not mobilise this physical mass.

Do you think nationalism is a positive or a negative force?

It can be both. Hitler was a nationalist and his nationalism was a negative thing. In every country it goes both ways. There is no absolute. There is no absolute side to it.

What was it like for you growing up in Czechoslovakia?

Well, I come from Slovakia. It is quite important – I hope I'm not presumptuous when I say important – that I come from Slovakia. I grew up in central Slovakia in a village and when I started my elementary schooling my parents moved to the next town, an industrial town and the centre of Slovak political Catholicism. I was exposed very soon to social questions, to political questions. And, as I told you, I grew up with four languages, so you understand this is something to do with my further development. The fact that I come from Slovakia and lived in Czechoslovakia for the first 20 years, and then returned in '46 for another 22 years, obviously had a profound influence on my life and understanding of history and politics.

How does it feel to know that the country you grew up in no longer exists as a political entity?

I am a dinosaur in the sense that I regret the break-up of Czechoslovakia, but I understand the reasons why it happened. It happened basically because the Czech bourgeois politicians, neither

the Czech nor Slovak communist politicians, were prepared to tackle the national question of Slovakia. It was never solved properly and the result was the break-up that I regret.

Did the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia affect your belief in socialism?

No, not at all. The point is this: as an historian I must ask, is the 80 year existence of the Soviet Union or 40 years of socialism in a country an aberration in history? I don't believe that aberrations exist, because what is normal? When I returned to Czechoslovakia I went with firm beliefs that I was going to help in a small way to build a better life. I had no reason to go - my parents perished in the concentration camp, I had nobody there really… But contrary to what I thought in 1946 (that socialism as it should be was already established in the Soviet Union) in the 1960s I realised that this was only the beginning and not the end. Capitalism – if there is something like this, if it is something like a 'social order' – has beginnings somewhere too. It didn't exist, as some people say, in Roman times, yet you sometimes read stupid things about how Rome had capitalism. So capitalism has a beginning somewhere and it developed in every country differently: in Britain differently from France, in Austria, Germany and America, all in historically different ways. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the start of capitalism is in 1300 in Italy. Now Florence in 1300 is quite a different cup of tea from London in 1700, and different again to London in 1851, the year of the Crystal Palace Exhibition, when Britain was at a peak. Serfdom was only abolished in Russia in 1861. Ten years. If 1300, just for the sake of argument, is the beginning and 1851 is the first peak, we are talking about 550 years. Now the Soviet Union existed 80 years and in fact in 1945/6, there were people among the communist leaders like the Bulgarian Georgi Dimitrov, or the Czech Klement Gottwald who thought we could do a Czechoslovak road to socialism, or a Bulgarian road to socialism. With China you have to think in these terms…

Your final book, Slovakia in History, is soon to be published. Why have you intellectually returned to the country?

Well, after *Bohemia in History* was published I felt duty-bound (incidentally, again the reporters, anonymous, were very critical and scathing and warned the commissioning editor, but it turned out to be quite a success because there is nothing comparable in English). But of course it's more than duty; it is an attempt to give people who are interested in Slovakia access to a book comparable to the sister volume *Bohemian in History*.

You've mentioned your wife, Alice, who is also an historian, several times. How did you meet?

I came to Britain in 1939 and I got a private scholarship to go to Exeter to study Chemistry because I could not continue with medicine, which I had been studying in Prague. Chemistry was not my particular love, but there it is. For my sins I finished with a PhD. In Exeter there was a refugee club that was sponsored by the Quakers. And there people from central Europe and Eastern Europe who happened to be in Exeter got to know each other. This was organised by Alice's father, who was a watchmaker. I came one Sunday and he said to me, 'well, this is my daughter', and I, in a brilliant way in which I sometimes respond, said 'my condolences!' And that is how it started. We then both went to Leeds University and graduated, she in economics. After 1946, I went back to Czechoslovakia and she joined me, then later we had two children. We celebrated this January our 70th anniversary.

While you were working in Czechoslovakia after the war you were the Acting Secretary of the Socialist Academy. It was an institution that aimed to disseminate scientific and political knowledge. Why was it important to you to popularise science?

That's a good question. When I came to this country in '39, while I was in general interested in politics and so on, I really was still ignorant. And when I was a medical student in Prague, I read popular articles on science. In fact I regularly read a magazine that was called 'Science and Life'.

When I came to this country and became seriously interested in politics, the history of science and so on, I realised how many first-class scientists were involved in popularising science. One of them especially, named J. B. S. Haldane, influenced me very greatly. I said to myself when I returned to Czechoslovakia, in a modest way, I would try to do the same. This Socialist Academy had existed between the Wars and I was involved in its regeneration. Due to political circumstances I became the Acting General Secretary. I liked doing it because I thought that the popularisation of science and knowledge is an altogether important element.

There is a general feeling today that our generation is quite apathetic and unengaged when it comes to politics. Why do you think this is?

If there is less interest among students in politics this reflects the general social attitude towards politics. People are very critical and some are disgusted. The question is really how and why did it come to pass this way. There is a difference in the history, in my view, of how British university students were interested in politics from the Continent. Judging by my own life experience but also by my knowledge, students here played a much greater role and were much more interested in politics than their peers on the Continent. And this is something to do with the different political and class history of this country. At Oxford and Cambridge, there was always an interest in politics. Especially in Oxford people were predestined – the best of them – to play a big role in politics.

You were one of the Founding Fellows of Robinson College. What was it like to be part of the birth of an institution that plays a formative role in the education of thousands of people?

The people who proposed this thought that I could be the first librarian, and obviously I liked this idea because I was already an assistant librarian at the tender age of 11 or 12 in the small town where I grew up. So I returned to my vocation after so many years. I was aware that it was an important thing and I tried to do it and well. Although, when the warden and the senior tutor interviewed me, they asked me about my vision and so on… I had great plans, but the senior tutor, who unfortunately died – the people I know are all dead now – damped me immediately. He told me that a librarian is a minor officer in the college and that I should remember where my place is.

Nick Clegg is an alumnus of Robinson. Would you like to see Mr Clegg as the next Prime Minister?

Not particularly, no. I certainly won't vote for him. And those people with whom I discuss politics, they never mention Clegg ... I have to say to you that I am taken aback by your question!

And finally, how does it feel to have been interviewed as part of the first issue of the Cambridge Undergraduate History Journal?

Well, that warms my heart and I tell you that sincerely, not only because I want to be polite.

The Spanish Civil War: A Revolution Betrayed?

LIAM McNULTY
🛡 *Homerton*

Of the many debates that continue to occupy historiography on the Spanish Civil War, that concerning its revolutionary dimension is undoubtedly one of the most contentious. This article seeks to explore this debate by a critical assessment of the opinions of the two main revolutionary groupings: the anarchists and the Partido Obrero Unificaćion Marxista (POUM) on the one hand, and the Republicans and Communists on the other. By considering the thoughts of the war's leading participants as revealed by their own words, as well as engaging with the voluminous secondary literature on this topic, it argues that the latter publicly presented views on the revolution that obscured the underlying interests motivating their positions and actions.

The perceived dichotomy between the war for democracy favoured by the Republicans and the Stalinists on one hand, and the revolution cherished by the anarchists and the Partido Obrero Unificación Marxista (POUM) on the other, is amongst the most contested issues of the Spanish Civil War. Much of the debate focuses upon competing views associated with these two sides: there were those such as Largo Cabellero who believed that 'first we must win the war and afterwards we can talk of revolution' and others, like anarchist Camillo Berneri, who held that 'the dilemma, war or revolution, has no meaning', that is, war and revolution were inseparable.[1] The argument put forward in this article is that the former view, associated with the Republicans, moderate Socialists and Stalinists, was advanced for reasons that were neither wholly disinterested nor honest. It does not seek to tarnish the bravery and commitment of many who fought in the Comintern's International Brigades, or to advance the position that those members of the Popular Front who fought on a point of principle against Fascism engaged in any sort of subterfuge.

It does seek, however, to validate Leon Trotsky's comment that in 'civil war, far more than in ordinary war, politics dominate strategy' by suggesting that the Popular Front government and the Comintern put political considerations above practical ones with reference to the role of the revolution in the struggle against Fascism.[2] This prioritisation was justified in the name of strengthening the war effort yet precluded measures that could have aided in the defeat of the Nationalist side. This article argues that the means used by the Popular Front to

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[1] Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: The Experience of Civil War 1936-1939* (Harmondsworth, 1981), p. 321; Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War, Revolution, Reaction and Revenge* (London, 2006), p.238. Berneri was an Italian professor of Philosophy and an anarchist militant, murdered by members of the PCE during the 'May Days' in 1937.

[2] Pierre Broué, 'Trotsky and the Spanish Revolution' in Fourth International, vol. 4, 1, 1967, http:// www.whatnextjournal.co.uk /Pages/History/Spanciv.html (Accessed 1 February 2010).

enact its policies were therefore detrimental to its own side in the Civil War. The intention is not to argue that a revolutionary strategy would necessarily have worked, since that is a counter-factual issue that cannot be settled conclusively. The following will instead look at the background in which the revolution occurred in order to appreciate the problems besetting the Second Republic on the eve of Franco's coup d'état in 1936. It will then look at the fractious period immediately afterwards, and assess Republican and Stalinist attitudes towards the idea of a popular revolution. It will by turns judge the impact of the revolution, and in particular collectivisation, on the war effort; the government's approach towards military strategy and organisation; and finally it will critically evaluate Moscow's part in shaping Popular Front policy towards the Revolution.

It is important to understand why a revolution occurred in Spain so as to appreciate the merits of the arguments put forward by figures such as Berneri. One important theme of modern Spanish history has been the weakness of political democracy and the uneven development of industrial capitalism. Whilst capitalist relations of production were prevalent in Spain (especially in Catalonia, where industry had boomed during the First World War) they were accompanied by the persistent power and influence of Monarchy, Church and, in the south, rural latifundistas. In the southern regions of the country, about two per cent of the population owned over two-thirds of the land, preserving the existence of a low-wage economy which provided few incentives for modernization and hampered the development of Spanish capitalism.[3] Politically, Preston makes the comparison with Prussia, where the bourgeoisie were politically dependent on an uneasy relationship with the old elites.[4] Another comparison could be Russia in the twilight of Tsarism, where the combined and uneven development of capitalism put increasing strains on the existing political system.[5]

Spain handled the transition towards mass democracy in a manner similar to that of Italy; that is to say, badly. In a process resembling the Italian trasformismo, the Spanish political elites perpetuated their rule through electoral fraud and widespread intimidation, alternating power between them in a manner so regular as to acquire the term turno pacifico. Indeed, Salavadó goes so far as to say that 'the functioning of Liberal Spain hinged on electoral falsification, widespread political apathy and, when necessary, physical violence.'[6] Like Italy, Spain too failed to integrate the masses into the political system and thus failed to adequately contain their

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[3] Fraser, *Blood of Spain,* p. 38.

[4] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* pp. 18-22.

[5] Fraser, *Blood of Spain,* p. 39.

[6] F. J. R. Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War: Origins, Course and Outcomes* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 4.

interests within the channels of liberal democracy in the age of mass politics. Spain's powerful anarchist movement and the prevalence of political violence can therefore be seen as symptoms of the failure to integrate the developing industrial and agricultural proletariat into the political system.[7] This point is demonstrated both by the general strike of 1917 and the violent military reaction to it by the Liberal state.[8] Following the shock defeat of the Spanish army in Annual in 1921, and the increase in social violence, the political class suffered a loss in its prestige. Consequently, the right-wing press and Spain's economic elites began to call for an authoritarian solution to the nation's problems. It is no surprise, then, that the King supported the creation of a dictatorship under Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1923 to put a lid on the simmering class tensions.[9]

By the time of the foundation of the Second Republic in 1931, therefore, Spanish democracy was in a precarious state. Moreover, the Republic itself raised the often-contradictory expectations of its followers to an unrealistically high level. Liberal republicans were of the opinion that the establishment of the Republic was reform enough in itself, while the Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol (PSOE) had a more radical agenda of social reform.[10] Meanwhile, the anarchists made no theoretical difference between a monarchical and democratic state. To make matters worse, even the most minor reforms, such as the Law of Municipal Boundaries to prevent landowners bringing in labour from other areas to drive down wages, were bitterly resisted by the latifundista, who resorted to illegal lockouts to render the reforms effectively worthless.[11] Indeed, when the Right returned to power they attempted to reverse most of the reforms of the previous three years, a sign that any threat to landowner autonomy or profitability was not going to be tolerated, especially not in the context of crippling competition in agricultural produce from South America and Australia during the Depression era. The reaction by the workers was an attempted insurrection and the formation of the Austrian Commune in October 1934, which was put down with pitiless violence by the Legionnaires.[12]

With working-class militancy, political violence, a history of dictatorship and pronunciamenti, and a Catholic Church espousing that voting for even liberal candidates could

[7] S. G. Payne, 'Political Violence during the Spanish Second Republic', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25, 2-3 (1990), pp. 269-288.

[8] Fraser, *Blood of Spain,* p. 37.

[9] Ibid., p. 20.

[10] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 38.

[11] Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain* (London, 1992), p. 100.

[12] Felix Morrow, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* (New York, 1974), p. 68.

be considered a mortal sin, it is doubtful that such a level of socio-political polarisation could have been resolved within the constitutionalism of the Second Republic even if it had survived the Civil War.[13] Indeed, Morrow makes the point that the pre-meditated resort to arms by the ruling class in July 1936, when there was no immediate and explicit threat of proletarian revolution, was proof enough that democracy was finished.[14] In this respect Spain was far from unique. As Hobsbawm notes, the inter-war years saw a high incidence of liberal democracies disappearing on the European continent, always to be replaced by anti-democratic regimes from the Right.[15] At the very first meeting of ministers Prieto, the Socialist Minister of Finance, revealed that the financial position of the new regime was being endangered from the start by the large-scale withdrawal of wealth from the country. Moreover, even before the Republic was established Primo de Rivera's supporters had been collecting money from aristocrats, landowners, bankers and industrialists to publicise authoritarian ideas and to buy arms. Clearly democracy itself was too dangerous for some elements of the ruling class to countenance.[16] Speaking in Pamplona soon after the coup d'etat, General Mola made clear the motivations of the Nationalist side:

> We have to create the impression of mastery eliminating without scruples or
> hesitation all those who do not think as we do. There can be no cowardice.
> If we vacillate one moment and fail to proceed with the greatest
> determination, we will not win. Anyone who helps or hides a Communist or
> a supporter of the Popular Front will be shot.[17]

With this in mind, Fraser's judgement is justified: 'A socio-political crisis which could not be resolved politically would have to be settled by other means; class struggle by civil war.'[18] Dolores Ibárruri's view that Spain was experiencing a 'bourgeois democratic revolution', on the other hand, appears very doubtful.[19] The reaction of the proletariat to the Generals' uprising of 17 July 1936 provides evidence that the Civil War was not perceived as a war for liberal democracy but as an expression of class conflict. On their own initiative, the workers set up revolutionary committees in towns and villages across Spain, and peasants immediately began to collectivise

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[13] Ian Gibson, *The Death of Lorca* (London, 1973), p. 30.

[14] Morrow, *Revolution,* p. 70.

[15] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (London, 2007), p. 111.

[16] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 41.

[17] Ibid., p. 103.

[18] Fraser, *Blood of Spain,* p. 46.

[19] Antony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War* (London, 2002)*,* p. 171. Ibarruri was a senior member of the PCE.

land. Even the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) was taken by surprise: 'We had set out to defend ourselves, to defend the working class against the military, not to make the revolution,' recalled Andreu Capdevila, a leading Barcelona CNT militant.[20] In rural districts, hatred that had built up over decades was unleashed against the remaining landowners and the priests who had given moral justification to their exploitative practices.[21]

Such was the scale of working-class resistance in areas where Franco's rebellion eventually triumphed that Preston and Thomas believe it could have been strangled at birth if the government had given arms to the unions.[22] The very fact that the workers were not armed confirms the view that the government knew the workers were fighting for more than the Second Republic. Despite Franco's communications to the Spanish garrisons being intercepted by a loyal operator in Madrid, the government did not divulge the news in any form until the next morning. Even then it sought to affirm that, 'the movement is exclusively limited to certain cities of the protectorate Zone [Morocco]...' By three o'clock in the afternoon it was well aware of the scale of the rebellion but issued a statement saying, 'The Government speaks again in order to confirm the absolute tranquility of the whole Peninsula.'[23] Quiroga was desperate not to arm the workers because he knew rightly that he would never get those arms back. Following Quiroga's resignation on 18 July, his successor, the Republican Martínez Barrio, went as far as to contact the rising's leader, General Mola, assuring him that the new government would pursue a more right-wing course and even offering him the position of Minister of War.[24]

Unfortunately for the Generals, the workers did not heed the government. The CNT-FAI seized arms from government stores in Barcelona with the aid of friendly Assault Guards. José Giral, Barrio's replacement as Prime Minister, accepted the inevitable and finally authorised the distribution of arms to the workers. An indication of the workers' motivations was given by Miguel Nunez, who many years later was to become a member of the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC) leadership: 'The people were fighting for all those things which the reactionary forces of this country had so long denied them... The people were not fighting for a bourgeois democracy, let's be quite clear about that.'[25] The Popular Front government hesitated

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[20] Ronald Fraser, 'The Popular Experience of War and Revolution 1936-1939' in Paul Preston, *Revolution and War in Spain* (London, 1984), p. 226.

[21] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, p. 104.

[22] Ibid., p.109; Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London, 1961), p. 135.

[23] Morrow, *Revolution,* pp. 77-8.

[24] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* pp. 110-1.

[25] Fraser, 'The Popular Experience of War', p. 230.

in the face of the coup d'etat. They realised that the only way to suppress the coup was by arming the working-class yet did not want to face the prospect of a full-blown proletarian revolution. In subsequent months, the Popular Front government would engage in attempts to re-establish its own structures of power, establish its autonomy from the CNT and the workers, and forge increasing links with the U.S.S.R. It is with this process that the rest of the article is largely concerned.

Much of the debate about the Spanish Revolution of July and August 1936 centres on the question over whether it helped or hindered the war effort. Jackson is quite dismissive of the collectivisations and Preston argues that 'war was no time for economic experiments.'[26] Chomsky makes the argument, however, that in Jackson's case, the evidential basis for such a scant treatment of this aspect of the war is lacking and arguably reveals an inherent liberal bias against spontaneous popular action.[27] As Broué and Témime make clear, the collectivised industries had many advantages. In their view:

> [The] mechanisation and rationalisation, introduced in numerous
> enterprises... had considerably augmented production. The workers accepted
> the enormous sacrifices with enthusiasm because, in most cases, they had the
> conviction that the factory belonged to them and that at last they were
> working for themselves and their class brothers.[28]

This sense of popular engagement with the war effort is not something to be underestimated in a war that was both popular and military in essence. Moreover, the strong commitment to welfare, education and medical care found in many collectivised enterprises was responsible for raising the morale of the rearguard and giving the dispossessed masses a reason for fighting.[29] Despite many technicians and managers having fled or been shot, the CNT showed great skill in converting factories to war production. One example of such a conversion was turning a factory producing lipstick cases into one producing cartridges.[30] The point is often made that collectivised industries were inherently inefficient but there is reason to believe that this verdict is simplistic and overly harsh. Many of the industries lost their internal markets in the Nationalist zone, a problem that would not have been resolved by a reversion to private ownership. Indeed,

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[26] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 243.

[27] Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 75.

[28] Pierre Broué and Emile Témime, *The Revolution and Civil War in Spain* (London, 1970)*,* pp. 150-1.

[29] George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, *Spain at War: the Spanish Civil War in Context, 1931-1939* (London, 1995), p. 143.

[30] Raymond Carr, *The Spanish Tragedy: The Civil War in persepective* (London, 1977)*,* p. 97.

even the President of Catalonia, Lluís Companys, was of the opinion that the 'workers in the arms factories in Barcelona had been working fifty-six hours and more each week and that no case of sabotage or indiscipline had taken place,' until the workers were demoralized by central government.'

The government in Madrid, however, controlled the gold reserves and the supply of credit. This is important because the existing institutions of the Republic were overtly hostile to the collectivised factories.[31] 'Only in exchange for government control would they give financial assistance,' complained Juan Fábregas, CNT delegate on the Economic Council of Catalonia. This is a point corroborated by Prime Minister Juan Négrin who told journalist Louis Fischer that, 'We will take advantage of their plight to gain control of the factories.'[32] Thus, it is difficult to see how the factories could have thrived under a government desperate to ensure they failed, no matter what their individual merits. Companies even wrote to Prieto lamenting how 'much more could have been achieved had the means for expanding the industry not been denied them by the Central Government.'[33] This suggests that what Preston calls 'bureaucratic harassment' actually endangered war production as much as the chaotic nature of anarchist collectivisation, and in doing so squandered much-needed popular enthusiasm for the war effort.[34]

A similar argument can be made against the other facet of the counter-revolutionary policy of subsequent Popular Front governments and the Communists; that is, the disbandment of the militias and constitution of a regular army. It is impossible to deny the disorganised nature of the CNT-FAI militia but that is not to say that the only alternative was a regular army built on hierarchical lines. In their newspaper, La Battala, Ignacio Iglesias of the POUM articulated an alternative strategy, which had been formulated in early 1937: '[It] was not a classic war, the situation did not require a regular army with hierarchized [sic] commands which inevitably destroyed the revolutionary spirit of the working class, but a popular revolutionary army. If the premise were accepted the war could be fought only in a traditional manner...the simplistic but true conclusion had to be reached that the enemy was bound to win. He had an army, trained soldiers, superior arms.'[35] This was dismissed outright by the Stalinists in the PCE

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[31] Ibid., p. 141.

[32] Ibid., p. 103.

[33] Chomsky, *American Power,* p. 75.

[34] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 248.

[35] Victor Alba and Stephen Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism Versus Soviet Communism: A History of the P.O.U.M in the Spanish Civil War,* (London, 2009), p. 172.

who instead called for 'Discipline, Hierarchy, and Organisation', and who were ultimately able to force the point because of the Republic's reliance of Soviet weaponry.[36]

There is evidence that the experience of the Popular Army was an alienating affair. Stephen Sander, a devoted communist and member of the International Brigades, to some extent corroborates this view in a letter to Virginia Woolf: 'The political commissars... bully so much that even people who were quite enthusiastic Party Members have been driven into hating the whole thing.'[37] Timoeto Ruiz, a young peasant militiaman who had hitherto yearned for a centralised command structure, similarly began to feel uneasy when it arrived. He also sheds some light on the arguments concerning the use of a revolutionary military strategy:

> A great mistake was being made in thinking that the war could be waged with classic strategies. This wasn't a traditional war - it was a civil war, a political war. A war between democracy and fascism, certainly - but a popular war. Yet all the creative possibilities and instincts of a people in revolution were not allowed to develop... For if we hadn't been convinced that the democratic countries would come to our aid, different forms of struggle would have developed... [and] it would have become a popular, revolutionary war.[38]

Paulino Garcia, a communist student and one of the first political commissars of the Communist 5th Regiment, shared this view:

> But a more revolutionary course will only frighten the democracies," people said. What nonsense! The capitalist democracies were frightened enough by what was happening in Spain. "Stalin won't agree," said others. But what was that case? Would Stalin not have had to do what he did anyway- and a lot more, perhaps - if we had pursued a more revolutionary course? Could he afford to be seen betraying a proletarian revolution?[39]

It was clear that greater co-ordination under some form of unified structure was needed to continue the war. The question of government control of industry and the military, however, should not be seen in terms of government control versus the absence government control. The key issue was what sort of government it was to be, and in whose interest it was to govern. A

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[36] Fraser, 'The Popular Experience of War', p. 238.

[37] Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War*, pp. 152-3.

[38] Ibid., p. 233.

[39] Fraser, *Blood of Spain,* p. 329.

possible answer to this question would have been to join the collectives together under a revolutionary political body (such as already existed in Catalonia in the form of the Committee for Militias) and create a situation of 'dual power'.[40] The POUM realised this much too late, following their expulsion from the Generalitat at the request of the PSUC.[41]The responsibility therefore fell instead upon the anarchists (on whose support the POUM were often reliant) who, in their refusal to take political power from Companys in Catalonia on ideological grounds, allowed the Republic to rebuild its structures and reclaim its power. Thus, as Salvadó concludes, 'although it had been badly mauled, the legitimacy of the Republican state was never in dispute.'[42] As Broué and Témime argue, at some stage the autonomous committees had to pass from being bodies controlled by leaders of political organisations, to become 'elected bodies subject to recall, acting democratically according to the law of the majority, not the rule of summit agreements,' like the Russian soviets or the German Räte.[43] Without comprehensive alternative structures of power it was inevitable that the anarchists (and even the POUM in the Generalitat of Catalonia) would drift into government with the Republicans and the Communists, that is, groups that were intent on emasculating the revolution.[44] Strikingly, the President of the Republic, Manuel Azaña agreed:

> Because of the suppression of military insurrection and at a time when the government lacked any combined means of action, there was an uprising of the proletariat which was not directed against the government itself... A revolution must have the support of the mandate, must take over the government, must direct the country in accordance with its views. This had not been done... The old order could have been replaced by a revolutionary one. This was not so. [45]

The creation of a system of governance capable of harnessing popular support and enthusiasm for the war effort was it seems never seriously considered. Such a system could have involved the use of guerrilla and terrorist tactics at the rearguard, as well as greater popular involvement in the

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[40] Defined by Lenin in V.I. Lenin, 'The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution', *Collected Works,* vol. 24 (Moscow, 1977), as 'a transitional phase in the revolution's development, when it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution but has not yet reached a 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry', p.61.

[41] For the POUM position, see Alba and Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism,* pp. 119-140.

[42] Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 104.

[43] Broué and Témime, *The Revolution,* p. 188.

[44] Morrow, *Revolution,* p. 89.

[45] P. Broué, 'Trotsky and the Spanish Revolution' in Fourth International, vol. 4, no. 1, April 1967, http://www.whatnextjournal.co.uk/Pages/History/Spanciv.html (Accessed 1 February 2010).

defence of urban areas. Guerrilla tactics had been used with great effect against the French between 1806 and 1814 – Spain was, after all, the country that had given the military strategy its name.[46] Alpert argues that from the limited experience of guerrilla warfare during the Civil War, 'republican guerrilla units appear to have been able, by relatively minor acts of sabotage, to have alarmed their enemy, and it may well be asked why this method of fighting was not expanded.'[47] Tellingly, the Italian Stalinist, Palmiro Togliatti, later wrote that guerrilla warfare might have been successful because pro-leftist peasants and workers populated so much of the territory conquered by the rebels.[48] Hobsbawm too wonders why it was not used, describing guerrilla warfare as a 'strange omission'. [49] His incomprehension may stem from the fact that he accepts the Communists' motives in the Civil War at face value. Alpert provides a plausible answer to this question, noting that 'the essential independence of guerrillas was anathema both to the authoritarian centralists of government and to the conservative officers who organised the Republic army, let alone to the Communists who played such an important part in giving the army its tone.'[50]

Ironically, and one might argue, the PCE themselves realised the importance of popular support when, in a moment of pragmatism during the defence of Madrid, they 'did not hesitate to appeal to the workers of Madrid to glorify the proletarian revolution they were carrying out.'[51] The Communist-dominated Junta employed methods in Irún and San Sebastián which the militants of the CNT and the POUM had advocated elsewhere, but which were rejected by the PCE, such as the arming of the people and harnessing the energy of the committees.[52] This is evidence that the combined use of revolutionary and military tactics could have been much more effective than the blinkered use of one over the other. An illustrative comparison is the failed defence of Málaga. Franz Borkenau (hardly a sympathiser of the CNT-FAI) who spent several days in the area prior to the fall of Málaga on 8 February 1937 wrote that 'a fight of despair' with mass involvement of the sort that 'the anarchists might have led' might have saved the city. His conclusion was that the defence failed because Lieutenant Colonel Villalba, 'interpreted this task as a purely military one, whereas in reality he had no military means at his disposal, only the

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[46] Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War*, p. 153.

[47] M. Alpert, 'Soldiers, Politics and War', in Preston, *Revolution and War in Spain,* p. 220.

[48] Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War*, p. 153.

[49] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes,* p. 160.

[50] Alpert, 'Soldiers, Politics and War', pp. 220-1.

[51] Broué and Témime, *The Revolution,* p. 247.

[52] Ibid.

forces of a popular movement.'[53] It is undoubtedly this sort of incident that led Alpert to remark: 'What is striking in the contrast between the two armies is that the 'revolutionary' one was often the more conservative.'[54]

The government also refused to take simple but dramatic actions that would have made victory more likely. For instance, before entering government Caballero was supportive of independence for Morocco. However, when approached by Moroccan nationalists he came under pressure from his government colleagues to reject their request for independence. The reason was that it would have threatened French interests in Algeria and may have upset Britain who was dealing with unrest from Egyptians and Palestinian Arabs. In granting independence, the Republic could have wielded the 'instrument of revolutionary defeatism in the enemy army' due to the reliance of the Nationalists on troops from the protectorate.[55] According to Alpert there was a constant supply of men from Morocco, with possibly up to 70,000 men from the region serving in the Nationalist army; there was clearly, it appears, scope for causing Franco serious problems.[56]

It is clear from their hesitancy to arm the workers in July 1936 and their desire to uphold private property that the Republicans and moderate Socialists in the government were inherently opposed to popular revolution and thus their call for political and military centralism under the Popular Front was not a disinterested demand.[57] On 9 November, Companys expressed this view clearly when he told the press that:

> It is in the interest of all to save the honour and glory of the revolution...
> Councils and little councils, commissions, committees, and initiatives exist in
> excess... There are more than a dozen reasons obliging us to set up a strong
> government with full powers that will impose its authority.[58]

Equally problematic was Stalinist policy on the matter, also motivated by political reasons rather than an objective assessment of how to win the war against Fascism. Garcia's comments make clear that Stalin's views had an impact on policy in Spain – not least because of the role of the Comintern, the NKVD and the U.S.S.R.'s control of armaments and the Republic's gold. At the

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[53] Chomsky, *American Power,* pp. 82-3.

[54] Alpert, 'Soldiers, Politics and War'*,* p. 220.

[55] Broué and Témime, *The Revolution,* pp. 266-7.

[56] Alpert, 'Soldiers, Politics and War'*,* p. 219.

[57] Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 157.

[58] Alba and Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism,* p. 167.

Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the 'Popular Front' policy was adopted because it was in Russian interests to maintain relations with democratic capitalist states against Germany and Italy.[59] The Spanish Communists made this very clear in August 1936, when Santiago Carrillo said: 'in fighting fascism we are not struggling for a socialist revolution, but for the democratic republic.'[60] The USSR provided arms to the Second Republic on this basis, wishing to preserve bourgeois democracy over Fascism, and therefore, 'the defence of republic order and respect for property.'[61] In order to reassure the rest of the powers attending the Committee for Non-Intervention in London, Stalin's ambassador to the committee explained, 'Obviously we are going to supply some weapons. But be reassured; it is not for the revolution. Very much to the contrary, as you will see.'[62]

The USSR and, by implication, the leadership of the PCE therefore held a position which was against the revolutionary aspect of the war from the very start, regardless of military considerations. The most convincing reason as to why Stalin helped the Republic at all is given by Fernando Claudin, then a member of the PCE and later a theorist of Eurocommunism, who echoes Garcia:

> Refusal to help the Spanish proletariat, given the tremendous sympathy its
> fight would arouse even in the Social Democratic labour movement, would
> have dealt a heavy blow to the standing of the USSR among the workers
> throughout the world. And although Stalin's international strategy was based
> fundamentally on using the contradictions between the imperialist powers,
> and not on the world revolutionary movement, it could not to without the
> support of the international labour movement.[63]

Similar points were made at the time in the Parisian radical newspaper L'Oeuvre.[64] There was, however, a further political motive for Stalin. Claudin continued: 'A Spanish socialist republic... independent of the Comintern and the USSR... would command the weapon of open criticism,

[59] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* pp. 148-9.

[60] Alba and Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism,* p. 163.

[61] Communique by the French Communist Party, announcing the view of the central committee of the Communist Party of Spain in ibid.

[62] J. Rous, 'Espagne 1936-Espagne 1939: La révolution assassinée', in Al Richardson (ed.), *The Spanish Civil War: The View from the Left* (Monmouth, 2007), p. 362.

[63] Ibid*.,* pp. 160-1.

[64] *L'Oeuvre,* 23 October 1936, quoted in ibid., p. 364.

the possibility of denouncing frankly before the proletariat of the world the conduct of the Moscow government, should the latter refuse to help the Spanish revolution.'[65]

The USSR and the Comintern were engaged in a delicate balancing act; to be seen to be helping the Spanish working-class in the struggle against Fascism through their support for the Popular Front, but to also emasculate the revolutionary elements of that struggle so as not to be seen by the democratic powers to be spreading revolution on the European continent. To this end, Stalin instructed his agents 'to keep the Republic alive' while making 'every effort to ensure that the revolutionary aspects of the struggle were silenced.'[66] The Realpolitik of the Soviet policy is betrayed with uncharacteristic clarity in the pages of the British Communist paper the Daily Worker on 9 September 1936:

> If the Soviet Government took any step which added further fuel to the
> present inflammable situation in Europe, it would be welcomed by the
> Fascists of all countries and would split the democratic forces, thus directly
> preparing the way for a so-called "preventative war" against Bolshevism as
> represented by the USSR.[67]

To carry out the silencing of the revolutionary aspects of the war, the Communists backed Prieto in insisting that his party colleague Caballero replace Giral in September 1936, and that the CNT join the government in November, to ensure their complicity in the dismantling of the popular revolution. This also involved marginalising groups critical of the USSR. In Catalonia, for example, the PSUC seized on the suggestion by the POUM's Andreu Nin that Trotsky should be given political asylum by the Generalitat to have the group expelled from its positions. As early as the formation of the Popular Front electoral lists in 1935, Jesús Hernandez of the PCE attempted to have the POUM expelled on political grounds.[68] Within a month of the start of the war, he declared to a French newspaper that the communists would 'make short work of the anarchists after the defeat of Franco.'[69] This is a view reflected in Pravda on 17 December 1936: 'So far as Catalonia is concerned, the cleaning up of Trotskyist and Anarcho-Syndicalist

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[65] Ibid., p. 161.

[66] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 150.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Fraser, *Blood of Spain,* p. 560.

[69] Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War,* p. 272.

elements there has already begun, and it will be carried out there with the same energy as in the USSR.'[70]

The Pravda correspondent Mikhail Koltsov, 'Stalin's eyes and ears' in Spain, according to the journalist Louis Fischer, had already in his diary of the previous summer connected Nin personally with the internal politics of the USSR.[71] Koltsov described Nin as having 'assumed the leadership of the united Spanish Trotskyists-Bukharanists' and accusing the POUM of 'speaking with repugnant demagoguery against the Soviet Union.'[72] Indicative of the increasing power of the USSR over Republican policy, the special Soviet consul to Barcelona, Vladimir Antonov-Ovseyenko, warned Companys that if Trotsky was granted asylum, the USSR would suspend aid to the Spanish Republic, and on December 12 echoed the PSUC demand for the expulsion of the POUM from the Generalitat.[73]

With the above in mind, we might ask what Stalin would have done had there been a revolution in Spain without a civil war, producing a situation in which arguments about military efficiency were not relevant. It can be speculated that the USSR would not have supported it for the reasons outlined by Claudin, especially given the prestige it would bestow upon the anti-Stalinist anarchists and Trotskyists. Furthermore, the climate within the USSR itself, with the purges of the Old Bolsheviks that began in August 1936, was conducive to counter-revolution and mass terror, not revolution. In fact, it was not only revolutionary groups such as the Trotskyists and Anarchists who were targeted. Such was the paranoid climate of USSR. in this period that countless veterans of the Civil War, including Koltsov and Antonov-Ovseyenko, were executed in the purges. Despite Koltsov's unceasing loyalty to Stalinism since he had cut all ties with the Left Opposition in the 1920s, his days were numbered once he was summoned back to Moscow. His massively popular book about his exploits, and his avidly-read reports for Pravda told tales of revolutionary idealism in Spain, starkly at odds with the grey and sterile world of 1930s Stalinist Russia. Louis Fischer expresses the problem:

> The cause of Spain aroused intense enthusiasm throughout Russia. Many
> communists and non-communists hoped that the events in Spain might lend
> new life to the dying flame of the Russian revolution. Not Stalin. He had

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[70] Chomsky, *American Power,* p. 69.

[71] Paul Preston, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (London, 2009), p. 206.

[72] Alba and Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism,* p. 163.

[73] Ibid., p. 166.

consented to sell the Spanish Republic arms. But not to make revolution. He intended in the near future to snuff out the flame with Russian blood.[74]

The effect of the Stalinist policy was striking, and underscores the demoralisation of the Spanish people, whose enthusiasm saved the Republic from an early defeat in the summer of 1936. Writing in Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell clearly perceived the difference in atmosphere that this counter-revolutionary policy created by the eve of the May Days in 1937. 'A deep change had come over the town...', he wrote, 'the people - the civilian population - had lost much of their interest in the war... the normal division of society into rich and poor, upper class and lower class, was reasserting itself.'[75] The most damning indictment of the PCE policy, however, comes from the recollections of their former cadres. The military commander Valentín González González ('El Campesino') later admitted upon escaping the USSR in 1949 'that the Kremlin does not serve the interests of the peoples of the world, but makes them serve its own interests.' These sentiments were echoed by Jesús Hernandez, one of the Communist members of the Caballero government, who wrote that he and his comrades 'acted more like Soviet subjects than sons of the Spanish people' on behalf of 'a rabidly chauvinistic internationalism, which began and ended with the towers of the Kremlin.'[76]

It is clear, therefore, that we must not take at face value claims that the war against Franco could only be won by crushing the organs of popular revolution and organising a conventional military force. The Republicans had their own reasons to oppose revolution, as demonstrated by their prevarication in the face of the uprising in July 1936, while the Popular Front government was reliant on limited but much-needed assistance from the USSR. The latter, as we have seen, had a clearly-defined policy with regards to the revolutionary aspects of the Spanish Civil War and, concomitantly, the PCE's policy was more often than not driven by the foreign policy requirements of Moscow. Moreover, the context in which Spain found herself in 1936 was in any case such that liberal democracy was unlikely to have been strong enough to contain the turbulence that had been sweeping Europe since October 1917. The revolutionary proletariat, the anarchists and POUM realised this fact but either were not able to or refused to take power themselves; the Popular Front realised it too and went out of its way to suppress the revolution. Backed by the Stalinists, the Popular Front then proceeded to dismantle the revolution through the manipulation of credit, the destruction of collectives and the use of force and terror. The result was a coalition of Republicans, Communists and moderate Socialists

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[74] Preston, *We Saw Spain Die,* p. 242.

[75] George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London, 1989), pp. 109-11.

[76] Chomsky, *American Power,* pp. 72-3.

united in their total aversion to the popular revolution. They took steps that were justified in the name of military efficiency but that in reality smothered popular initiative and may actually have reduced the chances of defeating Franco's superior forces militarily.

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One Nation Under God: A Reassessment

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Corpus Christi

The idea of a period of religious harmony in the 1950s has existed since Will Herberg's 1955 work Protestant, Catholic, Jew. *Inspired by Wendy Wall's* Inventing the 'American Way' *(2008), this piece offers an alternative insight into religious and political tensions during the Cold War. It does so through an analysis of American Catholic opinions as represented by the Catholic Worker Movement and publications such as Commonweal, organized by liberal or left-wing Catholics who stood in opposition to prominent conservative Catholics, such as Senator Joseph McCarthy and Francis Cardinal Spellman. In revealing tensions between Catholics, it disrupts the conventional view of this period as one harmony and consensus.*

The notion of a period of religious harmony in the Cold War was described in 1955 by Will Herberg in his seminal study *Protestant, Catholic, Jew.* Herberg argued that during the 1950s, religion was the way in which Americans could find common ground with each other. Binding religion with the American identity, Herberg wrote that 'unless one is either a Protestant, a Catholic, or a Jew, one is "nothing"'.[1] In addition, the author described an 'American Way', or a civil religion, which was the 'operative faith of the people', a 'spiritual structure, a structure of ideas and ideals, of aspirations and values, of beliefs and standards', which was nurtured and influenced by the three 'official' religions.[2] More recently, Martin Marty has argued for some kind of unification of 'one nation, under God' throughout the century in the third volume of his *Modern American Religion* series. Here he describes a 'vortex pulling disparate forces together', a 'centripetal tendency', and the search for common ground and themes during the Second World War.[3] The Cold War saw this unity strengthened, as the nation grasped towards a cohesive stance against atheistic communism.

Wendy Wall, however, has challenged this idea of national consensus. In *Inventing the 'American Way'*, she argues that America's mid-century consensus was a 'political project', whereby government elites, businesses and interfaith activists, amongst others, promoted the idea of an 'American Way' to advance their own agendas.[4] Thus, Wall argues, the mid-century 'consensus' did not exist in the way that previous historians have proposed, with differences of opinion amongst the nation's lites being concealed from the public, and grassroots dissent movement - although suppressed - still existing. In actuality, the moves toward consensus were artificial

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[1] W. Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (New York, 1960).

[2] Ibid., p. 75.

[3] M. Marty, *Modern American Religion: Volume 3: Under God, Indivisible, 1941-1960* (Chicago, 1996), p. 95.

[4] W. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford, 2008), p. 5.

political movements that had their roots in the 1930s. More specifically, the notion that the US was 'tri-faith' was created by élites who were trying to 'define the nation through a contrast with Fascist or Communist enemies'.[5] In this way, Wall distinguishes between ecumenical religiosity, which she believes was the aim of 1950s religiously anticommunist propaganda, and the religious pluralism of the 'tri-faith' or 'Judeo-Christian' vision of America, exemplified by Herberg.[6] Wall concludes, however, that the interfaith movement did replace the old notion that 'Americanism' was synonymous with 'Protestantism', although this was an incomplete process.[7] While the mid-century consensus did not exist naturally in society, it is Wall's contention that this striving for commonality undertaken by cultural élites helped create a 'linguistic framework' that was distinctly 'American', which consequently 'helped to create a cultural reality'.[8]

To illustrate these underlying tensions and disagreements that Wall has highlighted, this essay will focus on Catholic Americans during the Cold War. Historians have traditionally portrayed Catholics as conservative and vehemently anticommunist, as those most likely to support that epitome of Cold War anticommunist hysteria, Senator Joseph McCarthy. However, it will be shown that Catholics during this period could be liberal, like the readers of the Commonweal, or radically left-wing, like those in the Catholic Worker Movement. In short, there were competing ideas on how to deal with the communist threat, which created divisions within the Catholic community.

Contemporary commentators generally believed that most Catholics supported McCarthy, who was himself born and raised a Catholic in Wisconsin. The political sociologist, Seymour Lipset, believed that McCarthy 'received disproportionate support from Catholics… Republicans, the less educated, the lower class, manual workers, farmers, older people and the Irish'.[9] Certainly, Catholic backing of the Senator ran seven to nine percent ahead of national and Protestant support.[10] However, on closer analysis it can be seen that his support base came from conservative Americans, Protestant or Catholic, suggesting that religious allegiances were not necessarily the primary influence on political opinion. Indeed, it is noteworthy that McCarthy

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[5] Ibid, p. 10.

[6] Ibid, pp. 243, 224.

[7] Ibid, p. 283.

[8] Ibid, p. 11.

[9] Quoted in J. Hennesy, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York, 1981), p. 293.

[10] Ibid.

very rarely referred to his own faith publicly, suggesting that he himself believed that reference to Catholicism would not gain him greater support.

Further, Catholic opposition to McCarthy and others who used his methods was not insignificant.[11] Eugene McCarthy, a member of the House of Representatives from 1949 to 1959, argued that Joe McCarthy's methods were immoral and were incongruent with Catholic teachings.[12] Bernard J. Sheil, bishop of Chicago, was also opposed to the Senator, arguing in 1954 that the Catholic Church should not support 'publicity-mad politicos' and should condemn 'calculated deceit' as well as 'lies, calumny', and 'the absence of charity'.[13] Thus, the Catholic response to communism during the Cold War years was far from coherent or unified. Commonweal, a liberal Catholic publication, did not support McCarthy, causing tensions between the magazine and other Catholic newspapers like the Brooklyn Tablet. According to Commonweal the senator used 'mere assertion' instead of hard evidence to condemn supposed communists in society. The Senator also destroyed the means by which a 'moderate and constructive approach' could be used to tackle the issue of communism within the US.[14] More than simply opposing McCarthy himself, Commonweal went further, condemning all those who believed in and used his methods as 'hyper-emotional' and 'super-patriotic'. Like the Catholic Workers, the newspaper believed that the impoverished sectors of American society underlined the ways in which the US government was un-Christian.[15] Illustrating the disunity in Catholic opinion, then, the Tablet condemned Commonweal for being 'weak' and 'fuzzy' on communism, while *Time* magazine observed how the magazine's '"progressive opinion" had stirred up many a furore among Catholics'.[16]

Those belonging to the Catholic Worker Movement, created by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933, were uncompromising in their opposition to McCarthy and all those who used his methods. Ammon Hennacy, one of the most influential Catholic Workers during the 1950s, described how Catholic Workers 'refuse to "red-bait"' because they are 'opposed to the restriction of freedom to anyone'.[17] In addition, Hennacy pointed out that 'McCarthy has never

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[11] D.F. Crosby, *God, Church and Flag: Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the Catholic Church, 1950-1957* (Chapel Hill, 1978), p. 84.

[12] Ibid., p. 53.

[13] Bishop Sheil quoted in S.J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2nd edn (Baltimore, 1996), p. 93.

[14] Crosby, *God*, p. 54.

[15] N.L. Roberts, *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker* (Albany, 1984), p. 175.

[16] Crosby, *God*, p. 15; 'Commonweal and Woe', *Time*, 15 October 1951.

[17] Hennacy to Mr Garcey, November 9, 1953. Series W-2, Box 1, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (hereafter DD-CW/MU).

advocated measures that would give justice to the poor', and he believed that to cease the expansion of communism the world must remove the 'exploiter who oppresses the poor' and not just by 'calling them names'.[18] Further, Hennacy believed that McCarthy 'spread lies and hatred' and was 'unchristian' because of his actions.[19] This candid language was not just restricted to letters that Hennacy wrote to readers of the Catholic Worker; in one of the paper's articles, Hennacy wrote that 'in the name of freedom [McCarthy] destroys freedom', and in the same way, 'Hitlers, Mussolinis, Francos and Perons enslaved the world'.[20] Going a step further, Michael Harrington believed that the problems associated with McCarthy - 'the slander of reputation, the assassination of character, the destruction of careers' - were 'not the property of McCarthy alone', and were in fact part of the Eisenhower administration.[21] The workers, therefore, could not support a government that used these methods.

The Catholic Workers were opposed not just to McCarthy, but also to anticommunist measures put in place by the American government, such as the Smith Act of 1940. By this Act, it was made a criminal offence to teach or advocate the forcible overthrow of the government or to join or support an organization considered subversive. Those who accepted the Smith Act, the newspaper argued, would 'weaken [their] Faith and pave the way for our ultimate absorption in the future godless state of Capitalism'.[22] The newspaper was similarly angered by the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953, with Dorothy Day describing how she prayed for them on the day of their execution, and believed that there should have been 'love and great yearning for their salvation', as opposed to support for the execution.[23] Similarly, Ammon Hennacy argued that 'Jesus said to love your enemy and not to kill' and that it was the US that committed 'the awful sin of making the first A bomb', thus making the US government guiltier than the Rosenbergs.[24] In short, the Catholic Workers believed that secularism was a greater evil than Communism, as it was the root of evil governmental systems in the world.[25]

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[18] Hennacy to Fr. Gabriel Diefenbach, 1 January 1954. Series W-2, Box 1, DD-CW/MU.

[19] Hennacy to Mr Vallester, 10 November 1954. Series W-2, Box 1, DD-CW/MU.

[20] Hennacy, 'A Declaration of Conscience: 'These Are Times That Try Men's Souls'', *Catholic Worker* (January, 1954).

[21] M. Harrington, 'The 'Times' and McCarthy', *Catholic Worker* (February, 1954).

[22] 'The Smith Act', *Catholic Worker* (November, 1949).

[23] Day, 'Meditation on the Rosenbergs', *Catholic Worker* (August, 1954).

[24] Hennacy, to Mr Vaicelinas , 2 September 1953. Series W-2, Box 1, DD-CW/MU.

[25] 'Secularism vs. Communism', *Catholic Worker* (October, 1948).

The newspaper even criticised the actions and beliefs of Cardinal Spellman, the most influential Catholic in the US. Dorothy Day and the Workers supported the gravediggers' strike at Calvary Cemetery in New York, in opposition to the Cardinal, who believed the strikers were communists. 'I admit to the accusation of strikebreaker', he said, 'and I am proud of it. If stopping a strike like this isn't a thing of honor, then I don't know what honor is'.[26] Instead, the newspaper depicted the events at Calvary Cemetery as 'a classical lesson in how not to deal with a strike', remarking that 'no matter how rabidly anti-Catholic they may be they still treat him [Spellman] with that odd mixture of vague distrust and respect that Americans usually reserve for visiting English royalty'.[27] Further, the Catholic Worker explained how Spellman's opinion that the strike was communist-inspired was caused by 'some strange information' offered to the Cardinal by an adviser. They concluded that Spellman had 'dealt a hard blow to the CIO [the Congress of Industrial Organizations] and labor in general'.[28] In an interview, Day described Spellman as Catholics' 'spiritual leader' in New York, but 'not our ruler', and argued that Catholics should have 'beliefs or loyalties other than those of the Pope or one of his cardinals'.[29] The Workers thus supported freedom of conscience over blind obedience.

The Catholic Workers were too radical to concur with the 'American national religion', which promoted capitalism, individual success and patriotism. In a letter from the Catholic Worker to a reader of the newspaper in 1952, Michael Harrington wrote that 'if there were a clear choice to be made between Americanism and Christ, the Catholic knows his way'.[30] Indeed, it was the worry of the Catholic Workers that assimilation and conformity in American society would cause Catholics 'to surrender the vision of Christ'.[31] In April 1948, the Catholic Worker published an article entitled 'We Are Un-American, We Are Catholics', in which the US was described as a place where a 'materialistic and atheistic philosophy of the capitalist state' held sway.[32] The author went on to argue that 'the policy of the United States is anti-Catholic because

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[26] 'Strike in the Churchyard', *Time,* 14 March 1949.

[27] 'Cardinal brings end to NY Strike', *Catholic Worker* (April, 1949).

[28] Ibid.

[29] Interview by Robert Coles in 'Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion', quoted in F.G. Boehrer 'Christian Anarchism and the Catholic Worker Movement: Roman Catholic Authority and Identity in the United States' (PhD dissertation, Syracuse University, 2001), p. 244.

[30] Harrington to John Randall, 1 June, 1952. Series W-2, Box 1, DD-CW/MU.

[31] Ibid.

[32] 'We Are Un-American, We Are Catholics', *Catholic Worker* (April, 1948).

it is atheistic', as Christianity did not inform governmental policy.[33] Thus, the Catholic Workers were evidently considerably far removed from 'official' policy and thought.

They also received considerable criticism from other American Catholics, with one priest pronouncing that 'there is no place in the Church of Christ for religious centaurs, collaborators... deluded professional liberals'.[34] Indeed, there were certainly those within the Catholic hierarchy who believed that the movement did not belong within the Catholic Church, such as Monsignor Edward Gaffney, for example, who requested that the newspaper stop using 'Catholic' within the title, as it implied some kind of official church support. In response to this, Day eloquently argued that 'we cannot simply cease the publication of a review which has been built up... this would be a great scandal to our readers'. [35] Her coherent and reasoned response proved successful; she was never again asked to change the name of the newspaper. Ultimately, however, Day said that she would have desisted in any of her acts of opposition or criticism, and even ceased publication, if she had been expressly ordered to do so by the Chancery.[36]

Despite their radically left ideology, however, the Catholic Workers did not support the Soviet Union. Indeed, Day wrote that her insurmountable objection to Soviet Communism was that 'it preaches class war and atheism'. The Catholic Workers were pacifists, and therefore the militant outlook of the USSR, and the participation of the Soviet Union in the arms race and development of nuclear weaponry, was directly at odds with the Catholic Workers beliefs and ideals. She also argued that communism had to be voluntary, not 'imposed by the dictatorship of the proletariat' as in the USSR.[37]

Catholic anti-communism was not as straightforward as we are often led to believe. Liberal stances on communism existed, ranging from the radical as epitomised by the Catholic Worker, to the moderate such as that embodied by Commonweal. Not all Catholics within American society by any means supported Senator McCarthy, and indeed there were those who were quite outspoken in their criticism of him. Thus, while American Catholics were united in their belief that Soviet Communism was immoral, there was no united stance on how to deal with the communist threat at home or abroad.

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Hennessey, *American Catholics*, p. 294.

[35] Day to Monsignor Gaffrey, dated 'the Feasts Sts. Pespetua and Felicity'. Series W-2, Box 1, DD-CW/MU.

[36] D. Wright, 'The Catholic Worker Movement: A Radical-Conservative Paradox', Graduate Seminar Paper (Old Dominion University, 1979), p. 26.

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'Viking Empires'? Scandinavian Kingship and the nature and orchestration of Viking raids, c.800-c.950

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🛡 *Pembroke*

To what extent were Viking raids part of a more general process of expansion by Scandinavian rulers? Theories of 'state-formation' have long suggested that early Viking age Scandinavia (c.800-c.950) witnessed the consolidation of regional power into kingdoms, and that the Viking raids were the external aggression of these new realms. This paper analyses the basis and stability of 'royal' authority in Scandinavia during this period, looks for evidence of royal orchestration of the raids, and compares them with the Carolingian conquests to determine the extent to which this was the case.

'The paradox of early medieval states', writes Janet Nelson, 'was that their stability depended upon chronic instability, as kings made constant efforts to expand their territory… inevitably at their neighbours' expense'.[1] This depiction of the 'great game' among early medieval kingdoms is by no means unfamiliar to an historian of the early Viking age, c.800-c.950 A.D., for nowhere is this more evident than with regard to the Frankish empire under the Carolingians. The importance of external warfare as a means of exercising royal control over violence has been recognised by many commentators, and the ability of the Carolingians to direct aggression against their enemies, both internal and external, has therefore been seen as vital to the cohesion of the Frankish realm.[2] In many ways one can attribute their later success, beginning with Pippin II's tenure as mayor of the palace and culminating in Charlemagne's coronation as emperor in 800, to the strong leadership of the Frankish polity in war.[3] As Timothy Reuter has noted, in a comparison that is of particular importance to this study, 'for most of Europe in the eighth or ninth century it was the Franks who were the Vikings'.[4] To what extent, however, were the Franks simply receiving a taste of their own medicine in the ninth and tenth centuries?

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[1] J.L. Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, II (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 383-430, at p. 387.

[2] See for example Matthew Innes, *Introduction to Early Medieval Western Europe, 300-900: the sword, the plough and the book* (London, 2007), pp. 407-18; Paul Fouracre, 'Frankish Gaul to 814', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, pp. 85-109.

[3] See in particular Fouracre 1995; Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, 2008); J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* (Manchester, 2005).

[4] T. Reuter, 'Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 35 (1985), pp. 75-94, at p. 91.

Whether or not the Viking raids can be viewed in the same light as Carolingian expansionism, and the extent to which this picture can be extrapolated and used to explain the phenomenon of Scandinavian raids as a result, is difficult to ascertain. Contemporaries were certainly prone to regarding them in the same manner. Of the Danish ruler Godofrid, for example, Einhard writes that he 'was so puffed up with empty ambition that he planned to make himself master of the whole of Germany. He had come to look upon Frisia and Saxony as provinces belonging to him… now he boasted that he would soon come with a huge army to Aachen itself'.[5] Brought into contact with the Danes through Charlemagne's conquest of Saxony and faced with the relatively new phenomenon of Scandinavian attacks - the first reported incidence of contact between the two having been as recent as 782 - it should come as no surprise that our author chose to describe Frankish relations with the Danes in terms that he understood.[6] Indeed, for those who were accustomed to Charlemagne's campaigning, what other way of interpreting external aggression was there than to see it as a similar attempt at royally-orchestrated expansion? To borrow another of Reuter's observations, the Frankish sources for this period certainly imply something about the Carolingian view of plundering expeditions: that 'they were, or should be, under royal control and direction'.[7]

Yet given the well-accepted deficiencies of the source material, chiefly that we have no contemporary documentary evidence from within Scandinavia itself - save a few scattered runic inscriptions - until the late eleventh century, historians have struggled to determine whether or not this was the case in reality.[8] Where archaeological evidence has been used to fill the gap it has proved highly suggestive, albeit in a way that simply cannot be verified without considerable reinterpretation of the documentary material we do possess. Klavs Randsborg, for example, made great use of significant archaeological finds in his survey of Viking-age Denmark, arguing that what we see constitutes a process of state-formation in the Scandinavian homelands of which the Viking raids themselves were a symptom.[9] Indeed, for Randsborg, 'the raids on the west… can be seen in the light of Viking behaviour as a whole, and as part of the critical changes leading to and stemming from the foundation of a state in the area', whilst even Else Roesdahl has argued that 'a need for peace and prosperity amongst the leading groups in society

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[5] Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, in *Two lives of Charlemagne: Einhard and Notker the Stammerer*, trans. L. Thorpe (London, 1969), pp. 49-92, at p. 68.

[6] *Royal Frankish Annals* (henceforth *R.F.A.*), in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, trans. B.W. Scholz (Michigan, 1970), pp. 35-126, at p. 59.

[7] Reuter, 'Plunder and Tribute', p. 80.

[8] For a discussion of the body of source material see Birgit Sawyer and Peter Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia: from conversion to reformation circa 800-1500* (London, 1993), pp. 1-26.

[9] See K. Randsborg, *The Viking Age in Denmark: the formation of a state* (New York, 1980).

must originally have led to the unification of large areas under one king, and explains people's willingness to accept him as sovereign'.[10] More recent interpretations have occasionally argued from a similar perspective, the most extreme example of which can be seen in Forte, Oram, and Pedersen's suggestively titled book 'Viking Empires'.[11] Using similar archaeological evidence to that which state-formation theories have long been based upon, Forte, Oram, and Pedersen begin by arguing that:

> '…the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed a simultaneous professionalisation of the military and a decreased military activity which is evidenced by the lack of social stratification in sixth- to ninth-century graves in Denmark. The relative peacefulness safeguarded by the successful fortification of southern Scandinavia, combined with the improvements in the design of ships, allowed the Scandinavians to re-focus their attention overseas and become what we now call 'Vikings'.[12]

In stark contrast to such conclusions, studies focusing primarily upon the existing documentary material have suggested a very different picture, seeking to dispel the state-formation myth and arguing that power remained very much in the hands of local elites during this period. Such studies have argued that central overlordship was difficult to construct, and that it was even more difficult to maintain, being inherently unstable and rarely lasting more than a few generations.[13] The same period of Scandinavian history characterised by some historians as one of 'relative peacefulness' has thus been termed 'a turmoil of warring princes' by others; due to the wholly incomplete picture presented by our sources it seems unlikely that this debate shall be fully resolved.[14]

It is therefore the proposal of this paper that a new approach is required to this old question, one which seeks to compare Viking raids to what we have already seen to be the textbook example of centrally-orchestrated warfare during the early Middle Ages: that of the Carolingians. In considering the nature of the Scandinavian kingdoms during the early Viking age we shall attempt to ascertain the extent and basis of a ruler's power during this period, what their priorities may have been, and which threats they faced. With this in mind, we shall then

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[10] Ibid., p. 2; Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (London, 1987), pp. 65-6.

[11] See Angelo Forte, Richard Oram, and Frederik Pedersen, *Viking Empires* (Cambridge, 2005).

[12] Forte, Oram, and Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, p. 2.

[13] See in particular Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 39-56.

[14] T. D. Kendrick, *A History of the Vikings* (London, 1930), p. 93.

proceed to focus on the raids themselves and the Frankish response, their interaction with the Vikings, and their consequences. As a result this paper shall be primarily continental in focus, concentrating on Viking raids on Francia and on the internal politics of the Scandinavian kingdoms during this period, particularly the Danish kingdom as this receives the most substantial coverage in our documentary sources. Our analysis shall be based primarily upon documentary material, with archaeological evidence supplemented where possible. It is hoped that by careful evaluation of the Frankish sources we shall be able to ascertain what was truly taking place in Scandinavia during the early Viking age, be it state-formation or not, and the consequences this has for our interpretation of the Viking raids.[15]

An outline of the political history of the Danish kingdom during the early Viking age is sufficiently well known as to need no overview here, yet there are several significant events within this period which require highlighting, for they provide an insight into the nature of the Scandinavian kingdoms and the power of their rulers at this time.[16] The reign of Godofrid (c. 804-810 are the years in which he is mentioned in the Royal Frankish Annals), for example, is particularly significant, for it arguably presents a picture of Danish kingship at its strongest during the early Viking age. Godofrid is responsible for the first recorded Danish attacks on Frankish territory and, whilst Mathew Innes has warned us that where Carolingian sources refer to the 'king of the Danes' this may well reflect 'imprecise Frankish perceptions, not Danish realities', Godofrid - whatever the nature of his authority - certainly seems to have behaved like a king.[17] In 804 he responded to Charlemagne's deportation of the Saxons, his neighbours, and their replacement with the Obodrites, by massing 'the entire cavalry of his kingdom' on the border in a grand show of force.[18] That same year he proceeded to conduct negotiations with the Franks, albeit via emissaries, whilst in the next six years until his death he led several campaigns to render his new neighbours tributary; in 808, for example, this involved the sacking of the port of Reric, the transfer of the merchants who inhabited it, and the reinforcement of the fortifications along the Danish-Saxon border.[19]

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[15] For balanced summaries of the Viking raids in this period see Simon Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia and Anglo-Saxon England to 911', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, II, pp. 190-201; P. Sawyer, 'The Viking Expansion', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, I (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 105-20.

[16] For a political summary of Denmark during this period see K.L. Maund, "A Turmoil of Warring Princes': Political Leadership in Ninth-century Denmark', in *The Haskins Society Journal* 6 (1994), pp. 29-47.

[17] Innes, *Introduction*, p. 517.

[18] *R.F.A.*, p. 83.

[19] Ibid., pp. 83-4, 88-9.

What we encounter here, therefore, is a Danish king with considerable strength and substantial manpower at his disposal. Where Lund has shown that there is no evidence to suppose that the medieval Scandinavian system of levying troops, the Leding, existed during this period, the annalist's comment that Godofrid was able to mass 'the entire cavalry of his kingdom' suggests a considerable degree of personal authority on the part of this king.[20] Such personal influence would also have been necessary to orchestrate the campaign against northern Frisia that these annal entries also record. Roesdahl has interpreted these events in the light of ongoing developments in Denmark and argued that the sack of Reric constituted an attempt by Godofrid to divert revenue away from ports under the control of his neighbours and into the developing commercial settlement of Hedeby, where she suggests Godofrid deported the merchants to, and which excavations have suggested was growing during the early ninth century.[21] Why Hedeby was particularly important to Godofrid might be revealed through comparison with another politically divided society of this period, early Viking age Ireland, where local rulers can be seen to have competed for control of local churches and used them as pillars of their own authority.[22] Godofrid may well have been doing something similar with local emporia; the destruction of Reric certainly suggests that they were important to him and it is likely, therefore, that his authority was in some part based on the wealth he could glean through control of local trade.

Such wealth, and the fact that it granted the ability to pay a military following, would certainly go some way towards answering the question of how Godofrid was able to mass such a force on the Saxon border in 804.[23] What is more, it also highlights the significance of his attempts to collect tribute from the Obodrites, as this may well have been another crucial source of wealth and it is likely that, prior to the Frankish conquest of Saxony, northern Frisia had been a regular stomping ground of Danish kings. In light of this, Maund's conclusion that Godofrid's activities should be seen as 'less a direct challenge to Charlemagne than a campaign against local – and possibly long term – enemies on his borders, which drew Frankish attention since it had now become significant to them, their domains having recently been extended thus far', certainly seems justified.[24] The idea that Godofrid enjoyed a considerable degree of authority, albeit

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[20] N. Lund, 'If the Vikings knew a *Leding* – what was it like?', in Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke (eds), *Developments around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age* (Stockholm, 1994), pp. 100-5.

[21] Else Roesdahl, *Viking Age Denmark* (London,1982), p. 73.

[22] For Viking age Ireland see in particular Clare Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: the Dynasty of Ivarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007).

[23] For the means by which Scandinavian rulers could have raised troops see Guy Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450-900* (London, 2003), pp. 89, 106-10.

[24] Maund, 'A Turmoil', p. 35.

locally, is further reinforced by the annal entry of 808's reference to his reinforcement of the fortifications along the southern Danish border, something many historians have taken as a reference to the Danevirke.[25] Certainly the fact that the earliest sections of this great rampart can be dated dendrochronologically to c.737 speaks of considerable power on the part of the ruler who ordered and oversaw construction, and Roesdahl has suggested that Godofrid could have repaired or added to it in the early ninth century.[26]

The picture which we are presented with is therefore one of considerable authority on the part of this Danish king. And yet we should be prepared to consider that this power was very much personal rather than institutional. Godofrid's murder in 810 by one of his retainers, despite having just led what was presented as a very successful ravaging of Frisia, and the subsequent disintegration of the Danish kingdom into an ongoing power struggle, not only reinforces Sawyer's conclusions regarding the inherent instability and uncertainty of any sort of central authority in Scandinavia during this period, but also enhances the notion that individual authority was the fundamental basis of Scandinavian royal power during this period.[27] Whether it was Godofrid's personality or that he owned a powerful conglomeration of lands we shall never know, but he certainly enjoyed some quality his successors lacked. Whatever it may have been, we have seen that it was predicated on his control of the crucial trading settlements which provided the wealth that would have been vital to his ability to raise and maintain an armed following; his concern in the early 800s for the defence of Hedeby and its commercial development certainly suggests that this was where his priorities lay.

Our sources suggest, however, that the succession crisis which followed the death of Godofrid's successor, Hemming, in 812, challenged the ability of Danish rulers to do even this, as outlying regions over which Godofrid and his predecessors had, by implication, enjoyed overlordship began to challenge the status quo and sought to cast off the Danish yoke. This was first evinced in the aftermath of Harald and Reginfrid's accession, when in 813 the Royal Frankish Annals note that the Vestfold area of southern Norway now refused to accept the brothers' overlordship and they were forced to campaign in this area.[28] Their very absence was opportunity enough for the defeated sons of Godofrid to return to Denmark, precipitating another round of civil war which was further to weaken Danish royal authority and lead the defeated Harald Klak to flee to the court of the emperor Louis the Pious, for whom he would

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[25] *R.F.A.*, pp. 88-9; for example Randsborg, *The Viking Age*, p. 14.

[26] Roesdahl, *Viking Age Denmark*, pp. 141-6.

[27] *R.F.A.*, pp. 91-2; Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, pp. 39-56.

[28] *R.F.A.*, p. 96.

famously undergo conversion and baptism as part of an ongoing campaign to secure his support in 826.[29]

 Whilst our sources dry up over the course of the ninth century, a fact that is in itself indicative of the continuing weakness of Danish royal power, what information we do have suggests that such trends continued. A brief overview is necessary here in order to get a sense of the instability that affected the peninsula over the course of the next century. After having beseeched the emperor to restrain his Danish vassal in 817, two of the sons of Godofrid were forced to accept Harald as co-ruler in 819, until in 827 Horik I was finally able to drive him out and establish himself as sole king.[30] After a relatively long reign, Horik was killed in 854 in a civil war with his nephew Gudrum, who had returned from living in piratical exile and challenged the throne.[31] In the aftermath of this war - as was the case after that between Sigfrid and Anulo in 812 - the subsequent weakness of the Danish royalty was again exposed by a telling annal entry. In 857 Roric, a Danish vassal of Lothar II who held the area around Dorestad, took a fleet to Denmark with the agreement of his Frankish liege and forced concessions from the Danish king Horik II, presumably the surviving child mentioned in 854, occupying an area of southern Jutland.[32] For almost two decades after this there was no mention of a Danish ruler (which again is significant in itself), until in 873 we hear of two kings, Halfdan and Sigfrid, sending ambassadors eager that a peace treaty be ratified.[33] Indeed, so eager were these kings for peace that they apparently requested that Frankish king Louis the German look upon them 'as if they were his sons, while they for their part would venerate him as a father all the days of their life'.[34] Without doubt there is a degree of political spin being applied by the annalist, yet this request nevertheless implied recognition of Frankish superiority on the part of the Danish kings, which it is difficult to imagine a ruler such as Godofrid being eager to accept. What is more, towards the end of the ninth century Adam of Bremen informs us that such was the weakness of Danish royal power that a Swedish dynasty was able to take control of the important centres of commerce, including Hedeby, which, as we have seen, the Danish kingship was very reliant upon.

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[29] Ibid., pp. 96, 119.

[30] Ibid., pp. 104, 106, 122.

[31] T. Reuter (trans.), *The Annals of Fulda, Ninth Century Histories* (henceforth *A.F.*) (Manchester, 1992), II, p. 36.

[32] *A.F.*, p. 39.

[33] Ibid., p. 70.

[34] Ibid., p. 71.

It is well accepted by historians that royal power was seized at this time by a dynasty that lasted until the foundation of the Jelling dynasty by Gorm the Old in the tenth century.[35]

This evaluation of Danish kingship suggests several conclusions that are also applicable to Norway and Sweden in the early Viking age. Foremost amongst these are the nature of Scandinavian kingship, its material basis, and the individual, rather than recognisably official, nature of power. As we saw above, the reign of Godofrid serves as an excellent example of the maximum potential of Danish power during this period and, just as we argued that it was based most fundamentally on a ruler's personal authority and his ability to control key local commercial settlements, so the same can be said for Scandinavian kings in general. The account of Ohthere the Norwegian at the court of King Alfred is particularly significant here, for in it Ohthere described his power as being based foremost upon the wealth he gained through trading and tribute-taking from the neighbouring Finns.[36] Likewise, even if one accepts the claims of twelfth-century saga literature that Harald Fairhair was able to unite Norway in the aftermath of the collapse of central Danish power in the late ninth century, it is highly unlikely that his power could have been based on anything other than these rudimentary elements, and indeed reflected more his personal influence than any sort of recognisable central government capable of orchestrating a campaign of external expansion.[37]

Such an interpretation is further reinforced by the description of a typical Scandinavian kingdom found in the Vita Anskarii. This realm, which Rimbert refers to as the kingdom of the Cori, is described as having consisted of five towns.[38] As such it was a target of both Danish and Swedish aggression, having once been subject to Swedish overlordship but now refusing to recognise this, and we are told that the invaders' priority was 'to seize their goods and to subject them to themselves'.[39] The Vita Anskarii, alongside Adam of Bremen, also serves as our sole documentary insight into early Viking-age Sweden, and these accounts suggest that a similar

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[35] Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. F.J. Tschan (New York, 1959), pp. 44, 47; N. Lund, 'Scandinavia, c. 700-1066', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, II, pp. 202-27, at pp. 211-12.

[36] *Ohthere's Account*, in N. Lund and C.E. Fell (eds), *Two Voyagers at the Court of King Alfred: the ventures of Ohthere and Wulfstan together with the description of Northern Europe from the Old English Orosius* (York, 1984), pp. 18-22, at p. 20.

[37] For saga material relating to Harald Fairhair see A. Finlay (trans.), *Fagrskinna. A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Lieden, 2004), pp. 41-54; for a balanced account of this reign see C. Krag, 'The Early Unification of Norway', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, I, pp. 184-201, at pp. 185-9.

[38] C.H. Robinson (ed.), *Anskar, The Apostle of the North, 801-865, translated from the Vita Anskarii by Bishop Rimbert his fellow missionary and successor* (London, 1921); online edn, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/anskar.html, accessed 20 November 2007, ch. 30.

[39] Robinson, *Anskar*, ch. 30.

political instability to that found in Denmark also existed here. Rimbert, for example, recorded the attempt of one Anund, a former king who had been living in exile among the Danes, to re-take power with Danish support, though he eventually settled for a substantial pay-off.[40] This example is particularly interesting in the light of the ongoing interaction between Danish and Swedish rulers recorded in the Vita and in Adam of Bremen, and even more so given Lund's suggestion that the Swedish dynasty, which Adam of Bremen states conquered the Danish kingdom at the end of the ninth century, may simply have been a group of Danish exiles living in Sweden.[41]

It seems that what we witness in this period, therefore, is the localised, Scandinavian dimension of the 'great game' that, as we have already seen, the Carolingians were particularly skilled at turning to their advantage in the continental arena. The valuable trading settlements that clearly formed the material basis of royal power across Scandinavia were the pieces involved in this game, as rival local kings attempted to wrest control of these from each other, and thus increase their own power and influence. Indeed, as Lund has noted, just as Irish monasteries were no less prone to Irish attacks than Viking ones, so Scandinavian towns were lucrative targets for local rulers seeking to expand their power in the region.[42] As this suggests, raiding and tribute taking were the other means by which Scandinavian rulers acquired the wealth necessary to recruit an armed following. What is more, as Lindkvist has argued, tribute-taking also solved the problem of how to impose overlordship on 'external territories that could not be controlled by a distant ruler because the means of administration were few in a mainly illiterate culture'.[43] Undoubtedly, one major consequence of this ongoing competition was a constant stream of political exiles, such as local chieftains defeated by the expanding power of a ruler such as Godofrid, or defeated royal claimants such as Harald Klak and his descendants, who fled to Francia and entered the service of the Carolingians.

Rival local kings were clearly keen to harbour exiles from neighbouring kingdoms, something Sigfrid the Dane had even tried against the Carolingians with the Saxon rebel Widukind in 777, in order that these claimants might later weaken their neighbours by invading, or even become a compliant and tributary ruler if their coup was successful.[44] Indeed, we have

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[40] Ibid., ch. 19.

[41] N. Lund, 'Allies of God or Man? The Viking Expansion in a European Perspective', *Viator,* 20 (1989), pp. 45-59, at p. 53; Adam of Bremen, *History*, pp. 44, 47; Robinson, *Anskar*, ch. 24-6, 30.

[42] Lund, 'Allies', p. 54.

[43] T. Lindkvist, 'Early Political Organisation: Introductory Survey', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, I, pp. 160-7, at p. 163.

[44] *R.F.A.*, p. 55.

already seen numerous other examples of this practice, such as the sons of Godofrid, who had fled to Sweden after their defeat by Anulo's faction in the civil war of 812, and Anund the Swedish ruler. This was a tactic that the Franks also engaged in, behaving in a thoroughly Byzantine manner by supporting rival claimants to the Danish throne throughout the ninth century.[45] Examples such as Louis the Pious's sponsoring of Harald Klak and Lothar II's support of Rorik's invasion of Denmark in 857, demonstrate that the Franks played a major part in the instability which characterised the Scandinavian kingdoms during this period. As such we are forcibly reminded of the inherently unstable nature of Scandinavian royal authority during this period and the individual, rather than institutional, nature of power. Rulers did not automatically receive power because they claimed to be the king, or were so-called by their supporters; instead powerful individuals with authority over key local settlements made use of their wealth to recruit a following and then laid claim to a royal title, the concept of which was, in itself, still imperfectly formed during this period.

Such instability alone, however, does not prove that Viking raids cannot be seen as part of a greater expansionism on the part of Scandinavian rulers. Whilst their individual power clearly cannot be favourably compared with that of the Carolingians, one should note that periods of serious instability marked the reigns of Charles Martel and Pippin III as they sought to consolidate their position. Indeed, it was largely in response to such instability that these rulers engaged in campaigns of subjugation and conquest, thereby quelling insurrection and consolidating their ties with the nobility at the same time.[46] It could well be that the Viking raids form part of a similar process. Where we have already seen that Scandinavian rulers were eager to expand their kingdoms locally through raiding and tribute-taking, it is not difficult to imagine that Viking raids might have been a part of the same phenomenon and simply reflect an expansion of the horizons of Scandinavian rulers as they now sought to target the sedentary populations of continental Europe too.

Evidence of Scandinavian rulers personally leading raids during the ninth and early tenth centuries is, however, particularly scarce; indeed the only examples we do have are Godofrid's ravaging of Frisia, which we noted above, and an attack by Horik I on Hamburg in 845, which, whilst managing to sack the town, ended in defeat with Horik 'ready to release all the captives

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[45] T. Reuter, 'Charlemagne and the world beyond the Rhine', in Joanna Story (ed.), *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 183-194, at p. 184; for the Byzantine style of diplomacy adopted by the Franks see Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (eds), *Byzantine Diplomacy: papers of the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990* (Aldershot, 1992).

[46] For the role of warfare in the reign of Charles Martel see Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 57-120; for the role of warfare in the reign of Pippin III see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751-987* (London, 1983), pp. 41-53.

and make every effort to restore all the stolen treasures'.[47] What is more, it was not long after this humiliating defeat that the annals record that Horik was forced to share power with his nephews, beginning the civil war that would lead to his death in 854.[48] In fact, the vast majority of our evidence shows Scandinavian kings went to pains to disclaim responsibility for the actions of their subjects. In 836, for example, the Annals of St. Bertin record that the Northmen devastated Dorestad and Frisia, but that Horik, king of the Danes, sent envoys who 'offered terms of friendship and obedience and declared that he had in no way given his agreement to their urgent requests [to support the attacks]'.[49] In 838 Horik's envoys again gained an audience with the emperor and this time reported that Horik, 'because of his loyalty to the emperor… had captured and ordered to be killed the majority of those pirates who had lately attacked our territory'.[50] This sort of control is clearly something the Franks felt a ruler ought to be able to exert, for 847 saw Louis, Charles, and Lothar sending a united threat to Horik that they would invade his kingdom if he did not restrain his people from attacking the empire. Although we might seriously doubt whether Horik was able to order such restraint, this did not stop the ambassadors sent by Halfdan and Sigfrid in 873 from optimistically promising that 'henceforth no one from their lords' kingdom would disturb the king's kingdom, nor inflict damage on anyone in it'.[51]

Such evidence clearly suggests that Scandinavian rulers did not take part in the vast majority of Viking raids during this period and even sought to distance themselves from all responsibility for them. As a result these rulers cannot be said to have responded to the instability which plagued their kingdoms by launching a uniting campaign of expansion, their behaviour cannot be said to have been similar to that of the Carolingians, and it cannot be said that the Viking raids were simply the result of an expansion of Scandinavian horizons as their rulers sought to take part in the 'great game' as it existed on the continent. As an aside we note an intriguing passage from Adam of Bremen that sheds some light on why this might have been, for Adam suggests that, for Scandinavian rulers, the risks involved in taking part in distant raids were often far greater than the potential gains. Significantly, Adam links the defeat of a Viking force by Arnulf of the East Franks in 891 with further political unrest in Denmark, and even

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[47] *A.F.*, p. 23; J.L. Nelson (trans.), *The Annals of St Bertin* (henceforth *A.B.*) (Manchester, 1991), pp. 61-2.

[48] *A.B.*, p. 69.

[49] Ibid., p. 35.

[50] Ibid., p. 40.

[51] *A.F.*, p. 71.

with the later 'Swedish' conquest.[52] Indeed Adam comments that Arnulf had overwhelmed the Danes 'to the point of utter destruction' and we are left to wonder whether there was any royal participation in this raid and whether, as with Horik I in 845, the ruler's authority was critically weakened by his defeat.[53] In light of this, Sawyer seems to be correct in arguing that 'Scandinavian kings did not at first take part in distant raids. They had other sources of wealth, including trade, and their kingdoms were too unstable to allow long absences'.[54] Given the constant challenges these rulers faced from both their neighbouring kings and returning exiles with a claim to power, it is likely that Scandinavian rulers during this period would have been unable to engage in any form of overseas conquest - their priorities, it seems, were far closer to home and their ambitions far more modest.

The Viking raids, as such, must be seen as a fundamentally different phenomenon to royally orchestrated Carolingian expansionism and cannot be explained by the continental ambitions of Scandinavian rulers. In so far as we have looked for signs of strong kingship capable of directing the aggression of warrior elites towards neighbouring realms we have not found sufficient evidence to support the theories of state-formation propounded by historians such as Randsborg and Forte, Oram, and Pedersen. We have not uncovered conclusive evidence which suggests that Scandinavian rulers were capable of leading sustained campaigns of expansion and we have not found any evidence whatsoever of Scandinavian rulers leading or even exerting any form of control over their subjects' raiding activities. What we have inadvertently uncovered, however, is the very factor which does explain the scale and frequency of Viking raids in the ninth and early tenth century: the correspondingly fluid nature of Scandinavian politics and the constant stream of political exiles which this instability produced. These were the individuals, it seems, who were responsible for the vast majority of Viking raids on the continent as they sought to build their own individual power and reputation through profitable raiding on the settled populations of continental Europe. Indeed, as Halsall has argued, 'the Viking raids can be seen as a manifestation of a particular set of political relationships between core and periphery. As some kings became powerful and imposed their will upon broader areas, losing factions were driven abroad'.[55]

The power of these individuals, like that of Scandinavian kings, was very much individual and was based entirely upon their success as raiders. In order to compete in the struggle of

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[52] Adam of Bremen, *History*, pp. 43, 44, 47.

[53] Ibid., p. 43.

[54] Peter Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe AD 700-1100* (London, 1982), p. 4.

[55] Halsall, *Warfare*, p. 106.

Scandinavian politics they faced exactly the same challenge as their rivals currently in power back home: to amass sufficient wealth and prestige to recruit a following. For the exiles on the continent the primary method of doing this was raiding. We have already encountered numerous examples of this behaviour, such as the career of Roric, nephew of Harald Klak, who built his reputation with raids on Frisia before being granted land to hold from Lothar I and returning to Denmark to force concessions from Horik II. We noted the example of Gudrum, the nephew of Horik I, who returned from exile having 'lived a piratical existence' to challenge for the throne and these, it is clear, are only the tip of the iceberg. In 873, for example, we hear of Rudolf, 'a certain Northman of royal stock', who had frequently raided Frisia and was killed in a battle in the Ostergau region.[56] In the 880s, meanwhile, the leaders of Viking bands are named as Godofrid and Sigfrid, the latter of whom has been linked by some historians with the Sigfrid who was ruling in Denmark in 873 and who may soon after have been ousted by the 'Swedish' dynasty that seized power around this time.[57] It is evident therefore that we are dealing with an incredibly complex phenomenon that actually reflected the ongoing political instability, not the consolidation, of the Scandinavian kingdoms. The real irony is that by pursuing a Byzantine style of diplomacy and supporting exiles with a claim to power, the Franks only increased the political strife in Scandinavia and thus contributed to the process that was actually generating Viking raids.

In a fascinating comparison, Halsall has suggested that the political turmoil of the Scandinavian homelands during the early Viking period was in many ways reminiscent of the fluctuations in power that produced barbarian migrations in the fourth and fifth centuries, and there was certainly a nomadic feel to these raids.[58] In particular one notes the discrete nature of Viking raider bands, their core composing of the personal following of particular leaders, the individuals recorded in the Frankish sources as 'king' or 'dux', and yet their ability to come together to form far larger armies in order to carry out sustained campaigns of conquest or to attack better defended targets, such as cities.[59] Of the latter point no better example is needed than the Great Army, whose leaders can certainly be said to have intended to conquer the British Isles, yet they were not Scandinavian royalty seeking to build an empire, as Sven Forkbeard and Knut would attempt in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries: they were exiles looking for a

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[56] *A.F.*, pp. 72-3; for Rudolf's career see *A.B.*, pp. 112, 177; *The Annals of Xanten*, in Rosamond McKitterick and Caroline Burt (eds), *The Vikings in Europe Source Book* (Cambridge University Faculty of History, 2007), pp. 36-46, at p. 46.

[57] *A.F.*, pp. 91-3, 97; *The Annals of St Vaast*, in *The Vikings in Europe Source Book*, pp.20-35, at p. 28; *A.B.*, p. 224-5; Maund, 'A Turmoil', pp. 45-6; Lund, 'Scandinavia, c. 700-1066', p. 211.

[58] Halsall, *Warfare*, p. 106.

[59] Ibid.

new homeland.[60] A further insight is provided by the Annals of St. Bertin, which record that in 861 a particular Viking army 'split up according to their brotherhoods'.[61] It is likely that these are the separate groups we are talking about, the core followings of individual Viking leaders. Whether these were based on ties of kin or loyalties formed through long-term raiding together is difficult to say. What is evident, however, is that we are not dealing with a united, centrally-led host, but a number of individual raiding bands who were just as prone to grouping together as they were to fighting each other, a point well-demonstrated by the Nantes Chronicle's account of a battle between two Viking bands over loot.[62]

This point is further reinforced by Simon Coupland's study of Scandinavian integration into the Frankish political system, which has demonstrated that many of the exiles leading Viking bands were eager to incorporate themselves into the Frankish kingdoms and receive lands from their new lords in return for recognition of overlordship, baptism into the Christian faith, and a promise to defend these benefices from further Scandinavian attacks.[63] Coupland observes that this was a largely successful method of dealing with Viking raids on the part of the Franks, albeit one that could not continue indefinitely, and, as such, the setting of a precedent as early as the reign of Charlemagne that helps us explain the eventual grant of Normandy to Rollo in the early tenth century.[64] This study once again suggests that we are not dealing with a coherent, centrally orchestrated policy of expansion, but a varied, individual yet related, almost nomadic series of raids which is best described as being inherently 'Viking' - a term which is perfectly summed up by the notion of 'having a career as a Viking', which many Scandinavian exiles can be said to have done before returning home to challenge for power or integrating themselves into the political systems of the societies they had previously targeted.[65]

It is therefore the conclusion of this paper that Viking raids in the early Viking age cannot be said to have been part of greater expansionism on the part of Scandinavian rulers as they bear no comparison with other centrally-orchestrated expansionist policies of this period, such as that of the Carolingians. The raids were in fact indicative of ongoing political turmoil within the Scandinavian homelands. This conclusion lies at odds with those of state-formation

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[60] For the campaigns of the Great Army in the British Isles, its leadership, and its relation to the political situation in Scandinavia see Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles, 850-880* (Oxford, 1997).

[61] *A.B.*, p. 96.

[62] *The Nantes Chronicle*, in *The Vikings in Europe Source Book*, pp. 65-70, at p. 69.

[63] Simon Coupland, 'From Poachers to Gamekeepers: Scandinavian Warlords and Carolingian Kings', in *Early Medieval Europe,* 7 (1998), pp. 85-114.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings*, p. 145.

theorists, and supports instead those of historians such as P. Sawyer, who has stated that whilst 'in the late tenth and eleventh centuries Scandinavian kings led Viking raids, their ninth century predecessors did not', and Maund, who has argued that 'Viking activity might have been a pastime for "princes-in-waiting" and even kings'.[66] It was without doubt political exiles who were responsible for the vast majority of Viking raids on the continent during this period. The raids themselves should therefore be seen as proof of the fact that Scandinavian kingship was by no means a fully-formed and widely accepted concept during this period, and that individual rulers simply could not have embarked upon the campaigns that their exiled subjects did.

The conclusions drawn in this paper would also suggest that one should consider the Viking raids as a completely different phenomenon to later campaigns of expansion led by Scandinavian rulers such as Sven Forkbeard and Knut. Whereas the early raids can be seen to be fundamentally 'Viking', a term which should indeed carry connotations of almost nomadic 'individualism', these later campaigns can be seen to have been a far more 'Scandinavian-European' phenomenon, as Scandinavian rulers arguably behaved in a far more continental, almost Carolingian, manner in this later period. They clearly adopted, for example, all the theoretical trappings of Frankish kingship: they minted their own coinage, led campaigns in a Carolingian manner, set up monuments, such as the Jelling stone, which granted a dynastic rather than individual dimension to their power, thereby consolidating their right to rule, and even adopted Christianity and used the church to buttress their authority.[67] As a result, we can conclude that historians have frequently made precisely the same mistake that the Frankish sources often did by imposing a political agenda on the Viking raids that simply did not exist. Having ignored the inherently 'Viking' nature of the raids they assumed that they must have been symptomatic of a greater expansion which itself must have been centrally directed. This is not to argue that the raids were not indicative of political developments within Scandinavia, for they clearly were; rather, it has been argued that they actually demonstrated the instability of the northern kingdoms during this period and were testament to the fact that royal power was not yet a coherent and widely acknowledged concept.

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[66] Ibid.; Maund, 'A Turmoil', p. 47.

[67] For a discussion of the later Viking age rulers see Birgit Sawyer and Peter Sawyer, 'Scandinavia enters Christian Europe', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, I, pp. 147-59; I. Skovgaard-Petersen, 'The Making of the Danish Kingdom', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, I, pp. 168-83; Krag, ''The Early Unification of Norway'; T. Lindkvist, 'Kings and Provinces in Sweden', in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, I, pp. 221-34.

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The Culture of Collecting in Edwardian Britain: A Literary Snapshot

Alastair Beddow
🛡 *Queens'*

This paper considers how attitudes towards the acquisition of objects in Britain developed during the Edwardian period by exploring two novels: John Galsworthy's The Man of Property *(1906) and Arnold Bennett's* Anna of the Five Towns *(1902). It argues that the act of acquisition comprised two simultaneous processes: in the first the object became a medium for the transference of given values and in the second the object was figured as a possession. The acquisition of objects as represented in the two novels under discussion exemplified wider debates about ownership and the production of commodities in Edwardian society.*

> Our relationship to the accumulation of objects is as profound and as
> significant as our relationship to each other, to language, and to time and
> space, and as complex.[1]

When the South Kensington Museum changed its name to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899, it had already amassed an impressive collection of diverse objects, from art and ceramics to furniture and other 'artificial curiosities'.[2] The museum, which now has a collection spanning some 3,000 years of historical artefacts, was established to improve standards of British design and was typical of the expanding museum culture of Victorian Britain. By the end of the nineteenth-century, British society had developed a fascination for collecting and displaying objects in the home as well as in museums, and the complex relationship between human and object was to acquire further nuances into the Edwardian period. This paper will consider how attitudes towards the acquisition of objects in Britain developed during the early twentieth century by exploring two turn-of-the-century novels: John Galsworthy's trilogy *The Man of Property* (1906) and Arnold Bennett's *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902). It will be argued that the acquisition of objects as represented in these novels was typical of Edwardian British culture in general, and should be thought of as an act comprising two simultaneous processes: in the first, the object became a medium for the transference of given values (economic, social or otherwise) and, in the second, the object was figured as a possession, the endpoint of an act of acquisition. This way of thinking about objects encapsulates what Bill Brown has called 'the slippage between *having* (possessing a particular object) and *being* (the identification of one's self

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[1] S. M. Pearce, in Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London, 1994), p. 4.

[2] A. S. Cocks, *The Victoria and Albert Museum: the making of the collection* (Leicester, 1980), p. 11.

with that object)'.[3] Objects that are acquired in the novels are therefore both objects in themselves and represent an idea or a value beyond their manifest physical properties.

The acquisition of objects marks a point at which the human and the material worlds collide. The term 'object' is understood here to refer to what Flora Kaplan usefully describes as 'the *things* of culture, belonging to the material world, that have been made, altered or utilised by human beings'.[4] The acquisition of an object, whether it is a chair or a painting for example, is stimulated by the intention to counter a desire or need created by not possessing the object; purchasing a given object may thus be motivated by its aesthetic or functional properties, or, most typically, by some mixture of the two. Objects are therefore almost always deliberately, rather than randomly, acquired. Indeed, the very fact that the market offers a choice of objects obliges the consumer to be selective and discriminate between available items. The reasons behind the selection of a given object are of paramount interest in this paper. In the Edwardian period, as the purchasing power of the middle classes grew, the market for household objects expanded to meet this demand. Part of this growth in spending, as Douglas Mao indicates, can be attributed to contemporary economic thinking that advocated consumption as a remedy for economic ills.[5] Consequently, Edwardian Britain and the fictional writing of the period were characterised by an attraction towards, and an emphasis on, interiors, domesticity and the objects that make up those interior settings.

At the point of acquisition objects become imbued with a range of values, as the person acquiring the object makes a choice that prioritises what is seen to be 'valuable' in one particular object over its alternatives. Value is the product of a system of exchange, yet value need not be understood only in the restricted economic sense of monetary worth (although this is obviously important); instead, an object's value may depend upon its social worth, its perceived authenticity, or its aesthetic qualities. In this sense, objects do not become valuable in themselves, but a so-called 'world of value' is created when humans interact with objects by acquiring them. Put simply, a value is 'a judgement made about [objects] by subjects'.[6] A painting, for example, only gains its value when somebody deems it to be valuable. An object, particularly in a novel, becomes a sign that can be read or interpreted to unpick the values that it represents. Thus, in

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[3] B. Brown, *A Sense of Things: the object matter of American literature* (Chicago, 2003), p. 13.

[4] F. E. S. Kaplan, *Museums and the making of ourselves: the role of objects in national identity* (London, 1994), p. 1.

[5] H. C. Long, *The Edwardian house: the middle-class home in Britain 1880-1914* (Manchester, 1993), p. 18; D. Mao, *Solid objects: modernism and the test of production* (Princeton, 1998), p. 19.

[6] J. Clifford, *The predicament of culture: twentieth century ethnography, literature and art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988.), p. 220; A. Appadurai, in Pearce, *Interpreting Objects*, p. 76.

The Man of Property the Forsytes struggle with the concept that value is subjective – 'If he cannot rely on definite values of property, his compass is amiss' – and the whole novel hinges on the discrepancy between Soames and Bosinney's value judgements, and on the fallout that ensues.[7]

The older members of the Forsyte family represent late Victorian property values, and Galsworthy's novel illustrates what happened when these values were shaken by the onset of twentieth-century liberalism. At the turn of the century, evidence of the growing disposable income of the middle classes could be found in the increase of 'non-essential' objects that found their way into the home, making it inevitable that 'the house became one of the key means of displaying wealth and status'.[8] For the Forsytes, displaying objects in the house is a means of communicating social position because the objects owned are valued for their economic and social value and so are coded as luxurious and expensive. For example, Swithin Forsyte's highly ornate group of Italian marble statues is displayed prominently in his house (and our attention drawn to them in the narrative) because the observer is supposed to notice how they 'diffuse an atmosphere of culture through the room'.[9] The statues have been primarily acquired not for personal gratification, but because, as signifiers of Swithin's wealth and taste, they prompt a reaction from other people. As if to reinforce the point, Swithin justifies his purchase of the statues by making it known that: 'The poor foreign dey-vil that made it… asked me five hundred – I gave him four. It's worth eight'.[10] Swithin confuses price with value because for him valuable objects are indicators of social credentials; other members of the family quibble over the suggested economic value of the statues, and Soames judges them to be '*vieux jeu*' – no longer fashionable. This episode highlights that the value of objects is ultimately subjective; it is Bovine who makes the final interpretation of the statues as being remarkable for their 'naïveté', a deliberately vacuous judgement that undermines Swithin's pomposity.

Whereas the Forsytes are dominated by the thought of money and possessions, Bennett's Anna Tellwright is a character with very little sense of the economic value of objects. Growing up with a parsimonious father, who inflicts a restrained lifestyle upon his daughters despite his enormous wealth, Anna is unable to comprehend objects in terms of monetary value: '"A hundred!..." Anna was aghast. The sum appeared larger to her than all the thousands and tens of

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[7] J. Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*. A trilogy, the first book of which was *The Man of Property*, first published 1906 (New York, 2004), p. 212.

[8] Long, *The Edwardian house*, p. 18.

[9] Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*, p. 46.

[10] Ibid., p. 47.

thousands which she had received in the morning'.[11] When Anna inherits her mother's money she is therefore unsure what to do with it and feels intimidated by her father towards not spending any of it. Value for Anna is relative and she uses her possessions as a benchmark to judge others. She figures the debt that the Price family owes her, for example, as being worth two years of shopping bills. Anna's father 'takes a practical view of money' through his well-admired 'good investments', but Anna cannot understand what she calls this 'mysterious begetting of money by money'.[12] Tellwright's capital accumulates and is not exchanged for goods so cannot be easily translated into object value; for Anna the money just represents a series of numbers in a book since she is 'denied' the tactile value of 'fingering even the token'.[13] The Tellwright's home, like the Price's bill of exchange, 'subverts the established order of object value' because the objects they own actually conceal, rather than reveal, the economic status of the Tellwrights.[14]

It is because people make value judgements in this way that objects function as useful novelistic devices for illustrating particular aspects of a character. Just as objects gain value when they are acquired, these values can be extrapolated backwards and transferred onto the person who owns the object; the idea that objects reflect back onto their owners is what David Trotter has called the 'Principle of Relevance'.[15] Swithin's marble statues not only indicate a man who has the financial means to acquire such expensive items, but also reveal something of his *parvenu* aspirations and slightly vulgar taste. This method of characterisation became a familiar trope in the Edwardian novel as characters came to be defined in relation to the property they owned. Trotter argues that Galsworthy's novel is 'pained by relevance' because, as Galsworthy's own narration acknowledges, possession is emphasised as the dominant character trait of the Forsytes: 'without habitats, composed of circumstance, property, acquaintances… a Forsyte is inconceivable'.[16] In contrast, Bossiney is defined by his lack of 'non-essential' objects: his rooms double as his office space and are only filled with 'the necessaries of life'.[17] Trotter, like Virginia Woolf before him, makes the fair criticism that Galsworthy's novel relies too heavily on the 'Principle of Relevance', but the use of objects should not be dismissed outright as a method of

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[11] A. Bennett, *Anna of the Five Towns [1902]* (London, 1971), p. 44.

[12] J. Batchelor, *The Edwardian novelists* (London, 1982), p. 166; Bennett, *Anna of the five towns*, p. 109.

[13] Ibid., p. 110.

[14] M. Jones, in Pearce, *Interpreting Objects*, p. 92.

[15] D. Trotter, *The English novel in history 1895-1920* (London, 1993), p. 6.

[16] Ibid., p. 88.

[17] Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*, p. 83.

characterisation because objects do provide a viable medium through which one can construct a system of values.[18]

I have argued thus far that the objects that were acquired during the Edwardian period were important because, through their role as signifiers of values, the objects could reveal something about themselves and the people who own them. But because values are not inherent in an object, but are rather the product of a series of interactions, the meaning of an object is not fixed. To unpick the significance of an object, a reader depends on the availability of contextual information. Objects, therefore, continually change their value – or in Trotter's term their 'Relevance' – over time as their surroundings, or the relationship of object to owner, changes. An example of this shift in value can be seen in the description of the dresser that is found in Anna Tellwright's kitchen. The dresser, used for containing crockery and other kitchen equipment, has a functional value and to Anna it is simply thought of as 'the dresser', since it is taken for granted that it will fulfil its function and so has become naturalised in the surroundings of the kitchen. Bennett draws attention, however, to the fact that the dresser is the type of object 'assiduously collected by amateurs of old oak' because of its 'humanised air of use and occupation'; over time the dresser has gained an antique value because it is considered to be an 'authentic' piece, desired for its 'honest' craftsmanship despite the fact that to Anna it is simply 'the dresser'.[19] If the dresser were to be 'transferred to the dining rooms of curiosity-hunters' it would remain the same object but it would be valued not for its functionality but for its aesthetic qualities as a quasi-historical artefact.[20]

Both novels engage with a tension between aesthetic and functional value, or between art and property, which is explored through the acquisition of various objects. At the centre of *The Man of Property* is a conflict between Soames and Bosinney over the plans for Soames's proposed housing development at Robin Hill. The novel sets 'the architect's devotion to his idea' against Soames's wish to achieve 'the very best article that could be obtained for the money'.[21] Bosinney, a figure who represents the individual artist – the craftsman – continually has to battle to promote the aesthetics of his design in the face of the economic restraints imposed by Soames. More generally, the Forsytes' love of property taps into a contemporary debate in Edwardian society about the relative merits of unique, artisanal objects and their mass-produced equivalents. Indeed, finding a way to unite good design and affordability in everyday objects was a major

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[18] See V. Woolf, *A woman's essays* (London, 1992), pp. 77-84.

[19] Bennett, *Anna of the Five Towns*, p. 105, 107.

[20] Ibid., p.106.

[21] Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*, p. 101.

concern of the Edwardians and central to the Arts and Crafts movement.[22] The rapid expansion of machine production divided the market in two: mass-production based on the principles of low cost and speed competed with high-end products associated with artistic quality and visual innovation.[23] This duality is represented by Price's factory in Bennett's novel, which is 'badly located, badly planned, and badly constructed', and which cannot compete with Mynors's considerably more efficient works.[24] Mynors, informed by utilitarian principles, is the better businessman and he sounds surprised when Anna asks why he only makes 'cheap stuff': 'Don't you think it's better to please a thousand folks than to please ten?'[25] However, Bennett seems to share Williams Morris's view that hand-crafted objects were 'morally and aesthetically superior' to those made by machine, and sees an inevitable decline in the 'supremacy of the most ancient of crafts [i.e. hand-crafted pottery]'.[26] Whereas the acquisition of hand-made objects for Galsworthy signals a kind of elitism (for example, Swithin's statues), for Bennett handicraft evokes a nostalgic view of life in the Potteries that is deeply sceptical of industrialisation.

So far I have shown how acquired objects were important for communicating values, particularly about personal character, in the Edwardian novel and within Edwardian society more generally. I now wish to turn my focus away from the physical objects being acquired to the activity of acquisition itself, and to what happened when objects were collected. The act of acquisition transforms material goods into possessions and results in a sense of ownership, or a fetishism of objects, where objects become intricately linked with personal experience. Once they become possessions, objects, such as Anna's dresser, tend to be valued primarily as acquisitions and so the mere fact of ownership distorts the human-object relationship I have outlined above and causes people to take for granted the functional properties of objects.[27] When objects form part of a collection (the term collection is used here in its widest sense, which includes, for example, a room full of objects) they are defined by their relationship to their owner first and their aesthetic or functional values second. According to Bill Brown, collected objects offer up 'a challenge to Western reason and the logic of capital', since the act of

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[22] For a detailed discussion of the aims of the Arts and Crafts movements see E. Cumming and W. Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London, 1991), pp. 9-31.

[23] P. Sparke, *An introduction to design and culture in the twentieth century* (London, 1986), pp. 10-15.

[24] Bennett, *Anna of the Five Towns*, p. 48.

[25] Ibid., p. 117.

[26] C. Poulson, in Poulson (ed.), *William Morris on art and design* (Sheffield, 1996), p. 5; Bennett, *Anna of the Five Towns*, p. 114.

[27] For a discussion of how we become conscious once again of the 'thingness' of objects see B. Brown, 'Thing theory', *Critical Inquiry,* XXVIII (2001) pp. 1-22.

collecting defies capitalism's insistence that objects serve a useful purpose.[28] In a collection of antique clocks, for example, the primary role of each object is not to tell the time but it is simply to exist, to be collected. In *Anna of the Five Towns* this 'uselessness of collected objects' is clearly shown in the description of the Sutton's drawing room:[29]

> 'The luxury of the abode was mainly due to Alderman Sutton's inability to refuse anything to his daughter: rich draperies, large or quaint chairs, occasional tables, dwarf screens, hand-painted mirrors, and an opulence of bric-a-brac.'[30]

The room is nothing more than a cluttered collection of what is pejoratively deemed 'bric-a-brac' – the use of pluralised nouns reinforces an image of excess in this passage – in which the very mass of objects overwhelms any sense of functional value; the collected objects no longer act as viable commodities – they are, and remain, mere objects.

As a consequence of the process of collecting, or fetishism, Peter Gathercole argues that objects 'are assumed to be what they are not', by which he means that the acquisition process may impose values upon an object which are relevant only to the individual and may seem irrational to other people.[31] By grouping objects together into a collection, the collector prioritises similarity and yet simultaneously celebrates differences. For example, although each decorative plate in a collection may be very similar, the slight differences between plates ensure that each object has a value in relation to the other plates in the collection. Collecting can therefore be distinguished from similar activities such as hoarding because the collector seeks to find order among disorder and to confer what Walter Benjamin calls 'connoisseur value' – the value of individual taste – upon objects.[32] Both Soames and Old Jolyon collect paintings in *The Man of Property*, but for different reasons. For Old Jolyon, the paintings offer a physical token to remind him of his estranged son whereas Soames's pictures are 'nearly all landscapes with figures in the foreground, a sign of some mysterious revolt against London', and so represent an attempt to own a pastoral idyll or a 'retreat for the mind from life's urgent urban contingencies'.[33] Collections of objects thus bring with them temporal associations of memory,

[28] Brown, *A Sense of Things*, p. 117.

[29] D. J. Sherman, and I. Rogoff, in Sherman and Rogoff (eds.), *Museum culture: histories, discourses, spectacles* (London, 1994), p. xiv.

[30] Bennett, *Anna of the Five Towns*, p. 96.

[31] P. Gathercole, in S. M. Pearce (ed.), *Museum studies in material culture* (London, 1989), p. 73.

[32] W. Benjamin, *Reflections: essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings* (New York, 1978), p. 155.

[33] Galsworthy, *The Man of Property*, p. 50; J. Batchelor, *Edwardian novelists*, p. 193.

ritual or habit through which moments of the past can be relived. It is significant that the paintings belonging to both Jolyon and Soames are never publicly hung; Soames's canvasses are 'stacked against the wall' because 'he had no room to hang [them]'.[34] Thus for both men, the act of collecting is their most intimate gesture in the novel.

The relationship of human to object, as represented by the process of acquisition, is difficult to pin down because it is shaped largely by individual experience. Yet, as I have argued, the process of acquiring objects involves both the conveyance of value onto those objects and a rendering of those objects as possessions. This dual approach to thinking about objects does not confine itself to the attitudes of the Edwardian period but this was an era particularly concerned with property rights and possession. As I have already suggested, later writers, such as Virginia Woolf, reacted against the over-reliance on objects as a means of characterisation in fiction and showed that sometimes objects may be, in Trotter's sense of the term, *irrelevant*. The Edwardian middle classes were influenced by a nostalgia for the Victorian spirit of consumption yet at the same time were highly aware of ongoing debates about craftsmanship and mass-production, and the effects of industrialisation on society. Bennett acknowledged a sense of change sweeping across the Edwardian period but did not fully embrace modernity. Galsworthy's novel exposed the destructive nature of the human desire for possession, but, in Irene's eventual return to Soames at the dénouement, ended with an implicit acceptance of this system. Both novels support the observation from Susan Pearce which prefaces this paper about the profoundness of our relationship to the accumulation of objects – and the view of Walter Benjamin that 'ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects' – through their depiction of characters defined by interactions with the object world of Edwardian Britain.[35]

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[34] Galsworthy, *The Man of Property*, p. 50.

[35] W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London, 1999), p .69.

'They pickle their limbs in salt, as we do hams': The meeting of bodies in the New World

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Peterhouse

This article will explore the ways in which the body was interpreted, used, and understood by Early Modern European travelers who were at the forefront of empire building in the 'New World' of the Americas. It argues that in encountering and subsequently conquering the 'Other's' body, European ideas about the body as an indicator of identity in terms of sexuality, religion, geography and civility were challenged. Overall, the essay seeks to undo the binary opposition between the European body and the Native American body, which the authors of these sources tried so hard to psychologically maintain in the face of the bodily 'melting-pot' of the Americas.

> Those whose condition is such that their function is the use of their bodies and nothing better can be expected of them, those, I say, are slaves of nature. It is better for them to be ruled thus.
>
> - ARISTOTLE, *The politics*[1]

Aristotle's theory that there were such creatures in the world as natural slaves - that some bodies were intrinsically servile - was a principle to which many seeking to justify empire in early modern Europe subscribed. This article will focus on the interaction between European and native bodies during the discovery and conquest of the 'New World', and will explore how the actual experience of empire impacted upon the way the body was interpreted and used by European travelers who were at the forefront of empire-building during the sixteenth century. On the one hand the body was regarded as an important index of the level of native civilization, and impressions about the Amerindians' ability to control their bodies and nature were therefore directly pertinent to the issue of their colonial subjugation. At the same time, this article will also highlight the important effects that encountering and conquering the 'Other's' body had on European ideas about sexuality, religion, geography and civility. Whilst some of the discourse, especially regarding nudity and cannibalism, seems to have been more specifically impacted by the discovery of the Americas, it will be argued below that European conquistadores often fitted new experiences into pre-existing ideas about bodily differences and, in many cases, imagination rather than direct observation and reflection was demonstrably at work. [2]

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[1] Aristotle, *The Politics,* trans. T. A. Sinclair and T. J. Saunders (London, 1981), Book I, pp. 68-69.

[2] J. H. Elliot, *The Old World and the New, 1440-1650* (Cambridge, 1970).

As integral as a sense of difference between the Amerindian and the European body was, throughout our sources there is in fact an oscillation between declarations of fundamental bodily differences and acknowledgements, conscious or not, of physical similarity. Likewise, although many of the sources are based on assumptions of racial or gendered superiority, a sense of vulnerability and danger on the part of Europeans is equally latent. Arguably, some of this ambivalence derived from a repugnance of the 'Plinian' characteristics of the Amerindian that were 'parts of the self which the self could not tolerate'.[3] From their observations on the 'Indian' body, the characteristics which Europeans most valued and deplored in their own bodies – and how these changed and varied – can be observed. Thus, rather than understanding early modern imperialism in the New World merely as the discovery and colonization of new lands and riches, it must also be understood as a meeting of peoples, and the body thus regarded as a key site of study in the imperial encounter.[4]

From the apparently routine and objective descriptions of early sixteenth-century encounters between Europeans and 'native' Americans, the search for some kind of social order often began with the body. This preliminary form of structuring society – and of accepting and excluding people based on their bodily comportment – prefigured the processes that Pablo Mitchell has explored in colonial New Mexico of 1880-1920, the principal difference being the increased systematization of citizenship requirements as America was further colonized.[5] Peter Martyr, an Italian-born chaplain at the Spanish court, wrote to Pope Leo X, relating to him the discovery of 'large landes and many regyons whiche shal hereafter receaue owre nations, tounges, and maners: and therwith embrase owre relygion'.[6] Evidently the comportment of the body, the 'manners', and the languages of the Indians were not of European standard, and so the 'civilizing' of the peoples of those 'landes' became a prerequisite for their evangelization and colonization.

This implicit and oppositional framework of corporeality is evinced in the Spanish Dominican priest Bartolomé de las Casas's second-hand account – based on Christopher

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[3] Peter Mason, *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other* (London, 1990), p. 41. Here, 'Plinian' refers to the European tradition of relating to non-European exotic peoples.

[4] For emphasis on the discovery of the New World as a meeting of peoples, see David Abulafia, *The Discovery of New Mankind: Encounters in the Age of Columbus* (London, 1980).

[5] P. Mitchell, *Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race, and Conquest in Modernizing New Mexico, 1880-1920* (Chicago, 2005), pp. 5-6.

[6] Stephen J. Greenblatt, 'Learning to curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century', in F. Chiappelli (ed.), *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* (London, 1976), vol. II, p. 562.

Columbus's journal – of the meeting of Columbus and the inhabitants of Guanahaní in October 1492:

> The Indians, who witnessed these actions in great numbers, were astonished
> when they saw the Christians, frightened by their beards, their whiteness, and
> their clothes; they went up to the bearded men, especially the Admiral since,
> by the eminence and authority of his person, and also because he was
> dressed in scarlet, they assumed him to be the leader, and ran their hands
> over the beards, marveling at them, because they had none, and carefully
> inspecting the whiteness of the hands and faces.[7]

Where linguistic communication was not possible, Las Casas interpreted the Indian response to the appearance of Christians through analysis of body language. Importantly, this account is more than a narrative of native reaction to the Spanish arrival: because neither Columbus nor Las Casas could understand what was causing the Indians to 'marvel' or to be 'frightened', it stands as an interpretation of the bodily distinctions that mattered to the *Spanish*. Writing the account invited Las Casas to imaginatively objectify the Spanish, observe their bodies anew in comparison with the natives. Evidently, the manifest physical distinctions for Las Casas and Columbus were, 'their beards, their whiteness and their clothes' in opposition, by inference, to the natives' smoothness, nakedness, and coloured complexions. Given that the hands and faces of the Spanish explorers, having been at sea for over two months, were probably not so white in comparison with the Indians' skin confirms the proposition that the account reflects Las Casas's – and Columbus's – own values of bodily differentiation, rather than those of the Indians.

As Stephen Greenblatt has argued, nakedness was a recurrent motif in early accounts of New World peoples.[8] Jean de Léry, for example, a French Calvinist pastor who spent more than ten years living in Brazil, observed that the Indians went 'about their affairs as naked as they come out of their mother's womb'.[9] To a ruling class obsessed with the symbolism of dress, as per the 'scarlet' of Columbus' dress which denoted leadership, the Indians' physical appearance, particularly their nudity, was taken as a token of cultural void, or of 'cultural nudity'.[10] This

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[7] P. Hulme, 'Tales of Distinction: European Ethnography in the Caribbean', in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era,* S. B. Schwartz (ed.) (Cambridge, 1994), p. 161.

[8] Stephen J. Greenblatt, 'Learning to Curse', p. 563.

[9] Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America,* trans. J. Whatley (California, 1993), p. 57.

[10] Greenblatt, 'Learning to Curse', p. 562.

'cultural nudity', was, as Robert Berkhofer has argued, transferred into two main tropes used by Europeans for picturing the 'Native Indian'. The first was that of the 'Noble Savage' – as popularized by the French essayist Michel de Montaigne in *Of Cannibals* – 'who [knew] happily how to enjoy their condition and to be content'.[11] Secondly, there was the image of the 'Savage Cannibal', as promulgated in the 1550 debate at Valladolid by Las Casas's opponent, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. The Native Americans with whom early European colonisers met were thus quickly categorised as a means of facilitating an understanding of these new peoples. This declension of the 'Other' as either 'savage' or 'noble' also suggests a division within European opinion when it came to drawing comparisons between themselves and their future subjects.

Arguably, despite the importance of the interaction with nude natives, a yet more powerful influence on European understandings of the body in the New World was the discovery of cannibals in the Americas. Most sixteenth-century reports of cannibalism were not eyewitness accounts: Columbus, for example, relied on hearsay, never actually visiting the island of the Caribs. However, that so many accounts of the New World draw on the theme of cannibalism is still significant. Both Peter Martyr, an acknowledged friend of Columbus who never came to the New World, and Jean de Léry were fixated on the habits of the cannibal. In his *History to the Land of Brazil*, de Léry devoted a whole chapter to studying the rituals of cannibalism among the Tupinamba people of Brazil. He described it thus:

> Then the other women, and chiefly the old ones (who are more covetous of eating human flesh than the young ones…) scald and rub the dead body to remove its outer skin, and blanch it the way our cooks over here do when they prepare a pig for roasting…the old women are assembled beside it to receive the fat that drips off along the posts of the big, high wooden grills… licking their fingers… gnawing them right down to the bone.[12]

Martyr's description of the Carib made similar comparison:

> These repulsive creatures…castrate the boys they catch, in the way we do roosters or pigs…they make a feast of their guts and their extremities while they are fresh; they pickle their limbs in salt, as we do hams.[13]

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[11] Michel de Montaigne. 'Of Cannibals', in *The Complete Works: Essay, Travel Journal, Letter*, trans. D. M. Frame (Stamford, 1958), p. 156.

[12] De Léry, *History of a Voyage,* p. 10.

[13] Peter Martyr, 'On Tainos, Caribs, the flora and Fauna of the Indies, and the Golden Age of Life According to Nature', in G. Symcox and B. Sullivan, *Christopher Columbus and the Enterprise of the Indies: A Brief History with Documents* (New York, 2005), p.167.

Although we must again caveat whatever conclusions may be drawn from this with the acknowledgement that Martyr's account was second-hand, the passage still serves to illustrate the nature of European accounts of New World cannibalism. Both Martyr and de Léry described the consumption of human flesh with reference to European culinary practices, perhaps suggesting that the attempted domestication of the act made it all the more deplorable. At the same time, as Frank Lestringant contests in *Cannibals,* the figure of the cannibal and its association with 'licking', 'gnawing', covetousness and such 'feasts' allowed Martyr and de Léry to blur the boundary between savage mankind and the 'most repugnant animality'.[14] To highlight this even further, Martyr compared the Carib cannibals with the gentle Tainos: while this latter tribe was living in 'the Golden Age of Life According to Nature', using 'root crop for food', cannibalism became the foremost characteristic of the former.[15] Indeed, cannibalism presented wholesale challenge to Martyr's conception of the body and, in response to this, his typecasting of various 'Indians' came to depend almost entirely on the extent to which they partook in cannibalism. If they did, they become the 'Other' and are consequently located very much outside of Europe. A world map known as the *Carta Marina*, produced by Martin Waldseemüller in 1516, reinforced this point: it depicted cannibalism as the defining feature of Brazil, and cannibalism thus became an ontological category.[16]

De Léry, on the other hand, could not conceive of cannibalism without reference to Europe, the Eucharist controversy and the French Wars of Religion.[17] He polemically compared the cannibalism of the Outecas with the Catholicism of the French expedition's leader, Nicolas Durand de Villegegnon, who 'wanted to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ raw'.[18] Although de Léry condemned cannibalism in the New World, his enemy remained – for their theophagy – European Catholics. Most abhorrent to him, then, were those who, despite being Christian, replicated 'savage' bodily behaviour. He recounted that, ' some Norman interpreters, who lived eight or nine years in that country… some of them, surpassing even savages in their inhumanity,

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[14] F. Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, (Cambridge, 1997) p. 69.

[15] Martyr, 'On Tainos', pp. 167-169.

[16] A. Metcalfe, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil* (Austin, Texas, 2005), p. 49; also see M. Waldseemüller, *Carta Marina,* online edn, [http://www.myloc.gov/Exhibitions/EarlyAmericas/Interactives/ Maps/html/cartamarina1516, accessed 16th December 2008].

[17] De Léry, *History of a Voyage,* p. 15.

[18] Ibid., p. 41.

even boasted in my hearing of having killed and eaten prisoners'.[19] In addition to the literal fear of being eaten, de Léry also communicated a fear of cultural assimilation. Despite dehumanizing the 'savage, there remained the possibility of men, both the cannibal and the victim, being reduced 'to mere matter', which by foregrounding the body would undermine the primacy of the soul, a prospect that provoked the fears and disgust of European travelers.

But if these travelers' conceptions of the body had been challenged in a novel way, they still relied on existing models for understanding this 'grotesque' body, and, in particular, that of the cannibal. As Peter Mason argues in *Deconstructing America,* 'it is the *European* image of the Wild Man, with its positive and negative characteristics, which influences European perceptions and representations of the new world'.[20] In Columbus's description of the Indians he encountered during his first voyage, for example, a classic image of the European Wild Man is presented:

> They found certain men with bows and arrows… and asked one of them to
> come and speak with the Admiral… He was more ugly in appearance that
> the others that he had seen. His face was painted with charcoal… his hair
> was very long, gathered and tied behind, bound up with parrot feathers, and
> he was as naked as the others. The Admiral assumed that he was one of the
> Caribs who eat men.[21]

The jump between identifying an Indian Wild Man and pronouncing him a 'Carib' was short. An apparent excess of hair and a lack of shame immediately constituted what Columbus already understood as 'Other-ness', and now as belonging to the 'Carib'. Arguably, many of these first-hand reflections on the body in the New World were informed by imagination. For instance, many of the early representations of Indians show them in native dress, but with European physical characteristics: Guliano Dati's 1493 woodcut frontispiece to the metric version of one of Columbus's letters depicted the Amerindian men not in accordance with ethnographic reality, but bearded, as within European Wild Man tradition.[22] Moreover, in de Léry's description of Tupinamba cannibalism, the emphasis on the role of the old women – 'who are more covetous of eating human flesh' – is far from a unique instance, for, as Mason argues, 'there [was] a specific group which was believed to have engage repeatedly and with pleasure in anthropophagi:

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[19] Ibid., p. 127.

[20] Mason, *Deconstructing America,* p. 47.

[21] Ibid., p. 48.

[22] Ibid.

the witches'.[23] The motif of the greedy old woman cannibal is also found throughout the Flemish engraver Theador de Bry's *Grand Voyages*: in the 'Distribution of boiled parts to women and children', the sagging breasts of the 'old hag cannibal' are emphasized as much as her status as a Wild Woman.[24] Clearly, much as the discovery of the New World challenged European ideas about the body and its moral limits, Europeans still relied upon pre-existing means of categorizing and understanding those bodies with which they did not want to identify.

In many of these sources, the authors' fascination with the culinary perversion of cannibalism is intertwined with observations on sexuality in colonial Latin America. For instance, one of the early German editions of Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici – printed in 1502, and which became known as *Mundos Novus*, one of the best selling accounts of the New World – carried a front-cover depicting 'Cannibals of the West Indies'.[25] A tranquil group of Carib men, women and children are illustrated in native dress, feasting on roasted arms and legs. In the background, ominously, a European ship observes the scene. Together with cannibalism, both lesbianism and homosexual relations are also explicitly referenced: the Caribs are taking part in an orgy of bodily intemperance. Such lurid images of culinary and sexual perversion sold well in Europe, with twenty editions of these letters appearing within five years of its initial publication, and they should perhaps be considered as part of a larger effort to rationalize colonization. At the same time, however, the ships in the background seem to be suspended between the possibility of conquest and the dangers posed by these homosexual cannibals, that of 'engulfment, dismemberment and emasculation'.[26] There is an uncertain ambiguity between a sense of colonial machismo, self-righteousness, and bodily superiority, and, on the other hand, a fear of coming into contact with the 'Other's' body.

In *Modus Novus,* for example, Vespucci's reaction to naked Indian women swung between desire and repulsion:

> What we came to know of their life and ways was that they go about
> completely naked… They have no hair on their body but for long black hair
> on their heads, the women especially which makes them very beautiful…
> They are inordinately lustful, the women much more than the men…They
> are fleshy women, and one does not see that part of their shame which he

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[23] Ibid., p. 55.

[24] B. Bucher, *Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of Illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages* (Chicago, 1981), p. 176.

[25] Martyr, 'On Tainos', p. 168.

[26] Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender, and Bodies Out of Place* (Oxford, 2004), p. 28.

who has not seen these women can imagine, for they cover everything with their thighs, except for that part for which nature did not provide, which is to speak discreetly the pubis… they show themselves to be very desirous to copulate with us Christians.[27]

Vespucci effectively blamed his lingering voyeurism on the naked bodies of those being colonized, and on their 'inordinate lust'. Similarly, de Léry, in his *History of a Voyage to the land of Brazil,* made the unconvincing claim that, 'this crude nakedness in such a woman is much less alluring than one might expect'.[28] Nevertheless, despite the strict ecclesiastical discourse espousing impenetrable physical boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized, the image of the naked, incorrigible female savage is inevitably, as Janet Whately argues, 'the focus for erotic attraction and fear in many of these narratives'.[29] As with cannibals, the body of, in particular the female 'savage', challenged European male ideas about the body: perverse sexual behavior on the part of the 'Indian' could justify colonialism, but, in the relatively uncontrolled context of the New World, the European body was not as different from or as intransigent towards the same body from which it sought to distance itself. In other words, the experience of witnessing apparently perverse sexual behavior evoked in them, often subconsciously, the worst fears of the bounds of their own bodily depravity.

The way in which Europeans related the body with geographic knowledge during these early years of conquest in the Americas further highlights the use of the body to digest new experiences, not to mention how those new experiences challenged the assumptions in which *a priori* European ideas of the body had been based. In particular, as with the unknown category of the 'cannibal', unknown land, that which was to be conquered was often gendered by those seeking to colonize it. The female body was used by many of these early 'conquistadors' as a boundary marker: sailors bound wooden female figures to their prows; they baptized their ships with female names, while cartographers depicted the female body as entire continents. Explorers called unknown land 'virgin territories', and assigned to known lands female names, such as 'America', derived, reputedly, from the name of Amerigo Vespucci. As Ann McClintock argues in *Imperial Leather,* there were myriad ways in which women's bodies 'served as mediating and

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[27] Amerigo Vespucci, 'Letters from a New World', trans. D. Jacobson (Michigan, 1992), pp. 61-64.

[28] Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage*, p. 67.

[29] Ibid., Introduction, p. xxii.

threshold figures by which men oriented themselves in space, as agents of power and agents of knowledge'.[30]

Columbus, for example, wrote in 1492 that the ancient mariners had got the shape of the earth wrong: it was not round after all; rather, it was round 'upon which is shaped something like a woman's breast', towards which he was sailing.[31] The very conquest of the New World was similarly described as the natural meeting of man and woman, or as the seduction of woman by man, as per the famous engraving called 'America' (c. 1574) by Theodor Galle, after a drawing by Jan Van der Straet.[32] Here, Vespucci is shown approaching a naked indigenous woman who is seductively leaning back on a hammock, holding out a hand invitingly, and motioning him to sow within her with the male seeds of civilization that she might oppose the cannibalism occurring in the background. In contrast to the subservience of the woman, Vespucci stands erect, fully clothed, and gripping the symbolic instruments of male imperialism: the flag, astrolabe, and sword. The indigenous woman's body is thus associated with an illegitimate society, 'as an impassive counterpart to the thrust of male technology' represented by the body of Vespucci.[33] In this way, the body and its sexual prerogative were employed to rationalize and familiarise the act of conquest.

However, in spite of the polemic of corporeal strength and superiority, we may detect in both Columbus's analogy and in Jan van der Straet's drawing a 'double story of discovery', a story that highlights a sense of both anxiety and vulnerability felt most readily through the body of the 'conquistador'. The cannibal scene in the background of the drawing shows a group of female cannibals spit-roasting a human leg. Suspended between land and sea – and between the naked 'savage' and the armored European ship in the background – Vespucci is clearly threatened by the backgrounded cannibalism in which the male body is quite literally in pieces, disordered and transformed into 'mere matter'. Female sexuality is implicitly represented as cannibalistic. Behind colonial rhetoric evidently lay a fear of the loss of boundaries and of bodily assimilation with the savage. And it *is* the body and identity of Vespucci, rather than the 'Other', soon-to-be-colonized body and land of the woman, which becomes the focus of the image. As Peter Mason suggests, 'openings of the body are openings to the exteriority in general,

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[30] Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Imperial Conquest* (London, 1995), p. 24.

[31] As cited in, S. E. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus* (Boston, 1942), p. 557.

[32] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 25.

[33] P. Hulme, 'Polytropic Man: Tropes of Sexuality and Mobility in Early Colonial Discourse', in *Europe and its Others,* F. Barker, P. Hulme, M. Iversen and D. Loxley (eds) (Colchester, 1985), vol. II, p. 21.

and thereby to the other'.[34] The depiction of naked indigenous people, especially women, on maps, and as the embodiment of land, therefore served as a psychological buttress to the reality that European bodies in the New World occupied a transitional space of the vast unknown, and were recurrently confronted by the accompanying dangers of this.

The experience of discovery and colonization greatly affected the way Europeans in the New World understood their bodies, and in turn they use their ideas of the body to bring the discovery and conquest of new lands and of new peoples into a realm of comprehension. A variety of sources portray a variety of experiences and means of understanding the body in relation to empire, but throughout a recurrent tension can be detected: while, on the one hand, Europeans fell back on extant means of interpreting the 'Other's' body in comparison with their own, and of comparing their own legitimate body and enterprise with the illegitimate body and status of the soon-to-be-colonized, a sense of uneasiness and anxiety nevertheless surrounded the situation of the body in a transitional context where races met and mixed. This dual reaction pervaded the accounts of those who experienced the discovery of, what was for them at least, a 'New World'. The notion that their civility, as indicated through their bodily comportment, endowed them with the right to conquest did not always meld with the recognition of similarities between themselves and their future subjects. In the end, despite some genuine 'ethnographic' interest and self-reflection, for the most part our sources indicate that Europeans continued to perceive, in relation to their own bodies at least, a dichotomy between the body and the mind. The former remained under the dominion of the latter, and it was this sense of Aristotelian supremacy that convinced Europeans of their rights over the native bodies of the New World.

Further Reading

Berkhofer, R. F., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (Vintage, 1979).

Greenblatt, S. J., 'Learning to curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century', in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old,* ed. Chiappelli, F. (California, 1976).

Léry, J. de, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America,* trans. J. Whatley (California, 1993).

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[34] Mason, *Deconstructing America*, p. 149.

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   D. M. Frame (Stanford, CA, 1958).

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Excluding Majorities: the Shi'ites and political power in Iraq, 1914-1924

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Corpus Christi

In a new world wrought by the wreck of empires after the First World War, many new states were born, of which Iraq was one. This article critically assesses the early period of the state, and in particular the exclusion from political power suffered by the Shi`ite population, who formed a numerical majority in the polity. It will seek to demonstrate that such exclusion was in large part a product of a cultural alienation that originated under Ottoman rule, and that was perpetuated and exaccerbated under British and later monarchial rule. It seeks to offer some conclusions about the nature of modern nationalism, and judge the rhetoric of "self-determination" in the cold light of historical experience.

Following the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and attempts at nation building embarked upon in its aftermath, the nature of the sectarian struggle in Iraq between adherents of the Sunni and Shi'ite faiths has received much attention. These recent trials, however, do not appear especially novel to those acquainted with Iraq's relatively short history. A state assembled from the three Ottoman *villayets* (provinces) of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul at the end of the First World War, Iraq has been to varying degrees riddled with division since its very inception. Historiography has duly reflected this fact through repeated study of the negotiation of fault-lines during Iraq's formative years under the occupation and Mandate of Great Britain, and in the period following its independence in 1932. The very study of division in Iraq betrays a belief that cohesion and integration are the inevitable outcomes of a successful 'national identity', that intangible yet much-celebrated phenomenon that supposedly moors the modern nation-state through an increase in allegiance to the state and its institutions. A sense of national identity thus stands apparently in contradistinction to so-called primordial loyalties, such as those towards village, tribe, ethnic or religious community.[1] This process of nationalising loyalties, so to speak, has often seemed impossible in Iraq, and yet, writing in the aftermath of the First Gulf War, Liora Lukitz wrote of the peculiar 'sensitivity' to any discussion of seemingly structural problems within the population: to dwell on their origins was seen as 'anti-progressive'.[2] This inherent strain in the research agenda is less acute today, but ideas such as partition still reek of radicalism, or alternatively of a cowardly abandonment of the nation-state ideal after nearly ninety years of efforts to this end.

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[1] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London, 1991), passim.

[2] Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: the search for national identity* (London, 1995), pp. 1-2.

If one takes the story back those ninety years, we are forced to question Britain's role in perpetuating the problems with which Iraq is faced today. Britain indeed played a highly dubious role in creating and preserving in Iraq a territorial unit of questionable viability in sync with its own interests in the region, and orchestrated a political system which fundamentally promoted a long-lasting Sunni hegemony, despite the fact that it was well aware that over half the population were in fact Shi`ites. British religious census figures from 1919 put the Shi`ite population at 1,500,000 out of a total Iraqi population of 2,850,000, translating to some 53 percent. The Sunnis meanwhile formed 22 percent of the population.[3] The asymmetry of power institutionalised during the Mandate has been a continuing source of tension in the state ever since and must disrupt the 'sense of having done well' that Britain left with in 1932.[4] It will be argued in this paper, however, that the exclusion of the Shi`ite majority was not simply a 'structural' reality, or the result of a European power securing its interests through a collaborative elite in a world where indirect rule was the more elegant alternative to direct imperialism – such an approach has been well-covered by historical writing on the subject in any case.[5] Focus will instead be on the ideological exclusion that it is argued below prefigured and sustained political exclusion – variously the Shi`ites were enemies of Islam, of progressive politics, and of Arab nationalism. Latterly they were depicted as alien to Iraqi national identity itself. In the following, consideration of Shi`ite exclusion will find its roots in Ottoman Mesopotamia and be brought up to around 1924, when the Anglo-Iraq treaty was ratified by the Iraqi government, implying an end to the British Mandate.

I

The Shi`ite population of Iraq was long accustomed to exclusion from the realm of political power when the new state was born after the First World War. Their split with the Sunni Muslims of the Mesopotamian region stemmed from the original crisis over the Islamic Caliphate after the death of the last Prophet, but this 'deep-rooted cleavage between the two great branches of the Islamic faith' was not just a historical relic; it was clear to Sir Arnold Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner in Iraq 1918-1920, that it remained 'a factor of profound

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[3] Foreign Office (FO) 371/4152/175918 in *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932*, 10 vols, vol. 3 (Slough, 1992).

[4] Albert Hourani, forward to Peter Sluglett's, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country*, 2nd edn, first published 1976 (London, 2007), p. ix. See also, Elie Kedourie's opinions on the Sunni-dominated Iraq created by the British and his vilification of historians, such as Stephen Longrigg, who have compared the Iraqi case favourably against the French in Syria. *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies*, 2nd edn, first published 1970 (London, 1984), pp. 351-394.

[5] For example, Sluglett's *Britain in Iraq*. Cf. Priya Satia's critique of this work, which she views as fundamentally flawed by the notion of "interdependence" and therefore the implication that Britain and the Sunni elite were 'ethically equivalent' in their objectives for Iraq. 'Review of Sluglett, Peter, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country*'. H-Albion, H-Net Reviews, February 2008.

importance in all political discussions' for the period in question.[6] For the last four centuries of the Sunni Ottoman Empire the theological divide had been rendered an intensely political struggle by the coming to power of the Shi`ite Safavid dynasty in neighbouring Persia in 1501, succeeded by the Shi`ite Qajars in the late-eighteenth century. Mesopotamia's geographic location and its mixed population of Sunnis and Shi`ites, Arabs and Persians, meant it became 'a front-line in the two powers' tug of war', a historical factor that bequeathed a powerful legacy for the Mandate period.[7]

For the Sunni Ottoman elite, the loyalties of the Shi`ite populations within the mixed cities of Baghdad and Basra, and the Shi`ite shrine cities of Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, and Kadhimain, were constantly suspect because of their Persian affiliations. Consequently, it was predominantly Sunnis that found employment in the higher echelons of government service, while Shi`ite magnates and those of the intermediate strata were denied opportunities of patronage and advancement both in the imperial capital, Istanbul, and provincial capitals, such as Damascus. Shi`ite regions were also typically more socially and economically disadvantaged.[8] In addition, Shi`ite educational opportunities were restricted since such institutions of public education that existed at the time were inevitably perceived as channels of Sunni propaganda unpalatable to the majority of Shi`ites.[9] The role of education is significant to bear in mind especially for the later period, for it proved a recurring justification for political exclusion. The historical experience was naturally not homogenous: Lebanese Shi`ites, for example, fared better for being located away from the troubled 'front-line' region. Some men attained positions as local emirs or in the Ottoman military, and during significant eras of decentralisation in the Ottoman Empire, such as after 1750, the Shi'i imami, alongside other notables, were able to assert what Juan Cole has seen as unprecedented levels of local autonomy.[10] Periods of resurgent

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[6] Arnold T. Wilson, *Loyalties: Mesopotamia 1914-17* (London, 1930), p. 235; see also Arnold T. Wilson, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920: A Clash of Loyalties* (London, 1931), pp. 314-5. The Shi'ites were those who favoured the accession to power of the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, `Ali ibn Abi Talib, while the Sunni recognized the rights of four elected caliphs, of whom `Ali was only the last. Sunni Muslims subsequently recognized the rule of the sultan-caliphs, while the Shi`ites did not.

[7] Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: the Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam* (London, 2002), pp. 4-5; Selim Deringil, 'The Struggle against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq: A Study in Ottoman Counter-Propaganda', *Die Welt des Islams*, 1 (1990), pp. 45-62, at pp. 46-8.

[8] Cole, *Sacred Space*, pp. 16-25.

[9] Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, p. 220; Deringil, 'Struggle against Shiism', pp. 52-4. Yitzhak Nakash suggests that some headway was made in Shi`ite secular education during the early Young Turk period, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, 1994), p. 52, but Ghassan Atiyyah cites that in the year 1909-10 there was not a single Shi`ite student in any government school, *Iraq: 1908-1921, a socio-political study* (Beirut, 1973), n.3 at p. 98.

[10] Ibid., p 22. He does remind us, however, that Sunni governors at all times ruled over the imamis, and the Shi`ite shrine cities usually had Sunni caretakers appointed to them.

Ottoman power at the centre saw the erosion of such autonomy, however, while symbolical acts of imperial violence, such as the Karabala Massacre of 1843, when 5000 Shi`ites were killed in reprisal after the city refused to accept a Turkish garrison, no doubt retained a potency in the memory of the community in the later period.[11]

It was not simply an incidental fact that the neighbouring Shi`ite Persia was a constant challenge from the sixteenth-century onwards to the claim of the Ottoman Sultanate to universal Muslim dominion, nor the fact that a significant source of the shrine cities' revenue came from the Shi`ite-ruled state of Awadh (Oudh) in India, which was under British control after its annexation in 1856. But the problem was not simply one of Ottoman religious legitimacy: more importantly, especially in light of the later period, the Shi'ites' cross-territorial interests constituted a threat to Ottoman state-building efforts, which themselves had been intensive in the decades preceding the First World War. This had come in reaction to the rise of ethnic nationalism within the Empire and intrusion from without; as Feroz Ahmad has suggested, 'the key to an understanding of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth-century seems to be its lack of social base and its determination to create one'.[12]

Thus, whereas in past times the multiethnic subject population needed only to show the state obedience and in return enjoyed a degree of autonomy under the millet system, a newer conception of state/society relations that developed out of the Tanzimat era (1839-76) and into the period of Young Turk rule (1908-18) required an 'active [subscription] to a normative standard of values', values which now included loyalty to the Ottoman state.[13] Indeed, across the world and particularly in Western Europe where much of this foreign intrusion originated, the period marked the rise of more strictly delineated 'nation states' which conceived that that they should be the exclusive or at least primary claimant on their subjects' loyalties. Such a thrust was often secular in nature but for the Ottomans the old world of loyalties to the Caliph and the Sultan's dynasty could hardly be eschewed when its strongest claim to legitimacy was as head of the Islamic nation. This struggle for authority on its own and European terms caused a great ideological fissure in the final decades of the Empire, and has drawn Elie Kedourie, a Baghdadi Jew with little love of the successor state, to claim that the Ottoman Empire 'died of Europe'.[14]

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[11] Ibid., pp. 25-6.

[12] Feroz Ahmad, 'The State and intervention in Turkey', *Turcica,* 16 (1984), pp. 51-64, at p. 56.

[13] Deringil, 'Struggle against Shiism', pp. 60-1.

[14] Elie Kedourie, 'The End of the Ottoman Empire', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3, 4 (1968), pp. 19-28, at p. 22.

Arguably, as a result of this state-building struggle, anyone whose allegiances were divided, or saw themselves as part of a competing nation, automatically became a threat to the integrity of the Empire. This in turn gave impetus to the active exclusion of the Shi`ite population, perceived to be a rapidly growing force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[15] The First World War itself might be seen in the broader historical context as a fight for nation states. The new Iraqi state was thus born into an increasingly bordered world in which Europeans had successfully inculcated upon others the idea that the nation-state was the only legitimate unit of political organisation, and would go on to prove to be even more preoccupied with whom to include and exclude from the body politic.

As much as we must bear in mind external causes for ideological and consequently political exclusion, we must consider too some of the causes emanating from within the group. The structure of the Shi`ite population, for example, helped perpetuate its exclusion during the Ottoman and later period. As a body, the Shi`ites did not have a single recognised leader comparable to the Ottoman Sultan for Sunnis who could unite their political ambitions, which were hard to identify to begin with. Amongst the clerical class of mujtahids in the shrine cities there developed more centralised leadership in the nineteenth-century, but there remained fundamentally a gap between the clerics and the laity that would remain irreconcilable in the new state too. The mujtahids could pronounce religious edicts called fatwas that every Shi`ite was bound to heed, but there were few other mechanisms by which the Shi`ites could be mobilised *en masse*. The mujtahids were also divided amongst themselves, particularly on the issue of the Persian ethnicity and political orientations of a substantial and powerful minority amongst them versus the Arab majority. Under the Mandate, this divide was to prove a crucial fault line that made possible their exclusion from Iraqi politics altogether.

There was also an urban-rural division at work amongst the Shi`ites: whereas the holy towns were active centres of religious learning and pilgrimages, which brought to them a degree of wealth, status, and independence, the bulk of the Shi`ite population were relatively recent tribal converts.[16] Some fell under the sphere of the shrine cities' influence, but many others were far removed from the largesse of the towns. They had converted to Shi`ism in the nineteenth-century partly because they saw it as an anti-government religion, and one with which they could negotiate the changes wrought in their nomadic way of life by Ottoman settlement policies. For the most part they retained a distinctly tribal identity, lived a largely subsistence way of life, and

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[15] For example, a former Ottoman Consul, Ali Riza Bey, stated in a report proposing measures to counter the Shi`ite threat that the rise of Shi`ism had become a 'uncrossable sea' between the Caliphate and the Muslims of the Far East, causing their 'enslave[ment] by the infidels', Deringil, 'Struggle against Shi`ism', p. 49.

[16] Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, p. 25.

were seen by Ottoman officials as ignorant peasants.[17] Many unsurprisingly distrusted and resented the state, which was to them a sum of the various Sunni Ottoman officials and overlords who extorted taxation and tribute from them, and ruthlessly faced them down when they showed any signs of resistance.

It goes without saying, therefore, that the majority of the Shi`ite population had little experience of political power before the creation of the new state, which became in itself a justification for their exclusion under British rule. Indeed, once exclusion had been embedded structurally by way of poverty and chronic under-education, and crucially via a powerful ideological canon encompassing the religious, ethnic, and socio-economic characteristics of the Shi`ite population, it became hard to contest. The incoming British civil administration was well aware that 'the Shi'iahs under a Sunni Government laboured under disabilities', and perceived that 'the Sunnis enjoyed advantages which no neutral regime could recognise'; it would remain to be seen how 'neutral' the new regime would prove to be.[18]

II

The British Civil Administration in Iraq was constructed in the wake of a military occupation that by November 1918 had brought the three provinces under effective control. Shi`ite opinion during the War had largely rallied to the Ottoman cause and in November 1914, the ulema of Najaf and Karbala declared jihad against the British invasion. For its part, Britain had sought time and again to play on a reputation as protector of the holy sites to win favour amongst the Shi`ite population of the world, notably those of India.[19] Sir Percy Cox, Civil Commissioner of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force in Iraq between 1916 and 1918, had at first ordered that the holy places should form 'separate enclaves not under direct British control'.[20] Indeed, for a time the administration found it suited its interests to keep order through local leaders, like Sheikh Muhammad Ali in Karbala, but at the end of 1917 political officers had been sent to both Najaf and Karbala, stripping them of the autonomy they had won

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[17] Jean Luizard, *La Formation de l'Irak Contemporain* (Paris, 2002), p 195; Cole, *Sacred Space*, pp. 29-30.

[18] 'Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Al 'Iraq 1914-1918', 1918, India Office Records (IOR) L/P&S/10/752.

[19] This built on the somewhat conspicuous position Britain had hitherto earned as patron to global Shi`ism through facilitation of the pilgrimage of thousands of Indians to Iraq, and by distribution (via the British agent in Baghdad) of the 'Oudh Bequest', a large annual benefaction to the shrine cities coming out of Shi`ite-ruled Awadh after 1850. See Cole, *Sacred Space*, pp. 78-98.

[20] Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, p. 220; 'Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories', pp. 28-9.

by ousting Turkish forces during the War.[21] In January 1918 Gertrude Bell, later Oriental Secretary to Cox, visited the cities and tellingly remarked that 'the alienation of the Shias has been a great asset to us…'[22] There followed administrative changes that divided Karbala, Najaf, and Kufa as a political unit, and lowered their Divisional status to that of districts.[23]

Shi`ite lay leaders were as ever scarce but the civil administration was well aware of the potential for disruption wielded by the Shi`ite mujtahids. In an influential report Bell cited an infamous incident where a mujtahid from Samarra, Muhammad Hasan Shirazi, had led a successful rebellion against the Iranian government's decision to award a lucrative fifty-year tobacco monopoly to Britain in 1892.[24] Such experiences created an ambivalence towards Shi`ites in the new state and confirmed Ottoman suspicions that 'the Persians of Kerbala and Najaf are moved rather by Persian political relations with the Government of the Iraq than by the growing tranquillity and prosperity of Mesopotamia'.[25] Accordingly, the mujtahids were never regarded as a body of opinion worthy of consultation when setting up the new state, highlighted sharply in 1919 when Wilson conducted a 'plebiscite' to discover what prevailing opinions towards British rule amongst the notables of Iraq were.

Amongst generally pro-British sentiment after the War, or rather anti-Ottoman feeling, some of the views expressed in Najaf and Karbala proved quite unsettling for a man ever-convinced of the virtue of direct British rule.[26] Religious opinion in Karbala in particular, mobilised under the pro-constitutionalist mujtahid Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, resulted in a petition signed by religious notables that read: 'we the people of Karbala… have selected one of the sons of the Sharif Husayn to be an Amir over us bound by an assembly elected by the

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[21] Najaf and Karbala were self-governing after they expelled Turkish forces in 1915 and 1916 respectively. The anti-Ottomanism of the 'Shaikhly families' in control in Najaf and Karbala gained them the support of the unarmed clerics as well as the tacit approval of Cox in Baghdad, who in 1916 mandated them to maintain order in the two cities. 'Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories', pp. 27-33.

[22] Letter to Sir Valentine Chirol, quoted in Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, p. 221; see also, 'Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories', p. 6, and Atiyyah, *Iraq*, for a description of the uprisings against British rule in Najaf and Karbala initiated by the now dispossessed local elite, which led to the murder of a British A.P.O. in Najaf in March 1919, pp. 229-233.

[23] In 1917 Najaf became a district of the Shamiya Division and Karbala a district of the Hilla Division, Atiyyah, *Iraq*, p. 228.

[24] 'Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia for 1920', prepared on behalf of the Acting Civil Commissioner by Miss Gertrude L. Bell, 1920. IOR L/P&S/10/752. The Review, published as a white paper in 1920, remains a widely used source. For an analysis of the importance of Muhammad Hasan Shirazi's stand against the Qajar's government's award of the concession, see Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, p. 210.

[25] 'Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories', p. 33.

[26] Cf. 'Self-Determination in Iraq, 1919', FO 248/1250.

people of Iraq [to] enact the rules approved by the clergymen of this nation and [to administer] its affairs'.[27] The petition encompassed many of the most salient points made by the Persian mujtahids during the recent constitutional period in Iran, in which they had been actively involved, including the configuration of a political system that would allow the mujtahids to dominate state affairs. This petition did not accompany the rest when they were sent to London; officials claimed it had not met the deadline. Consequently, it appeared that 'Karbala had the distinction of being practically the only place of importance in Iraq which expressed no opinion' on the matter.[28]

As we shall see, the Karbala mujtahids could not be dismissed quite so easily, but this seemingly petty incident offers a window into analysing some important aspects of the causes and consequences of Shi`ite exclusion in the new state. After what seemed like the advent of a more consensual style of politics under British administration, the wilful omission of the dissident Karbala petition revealed that in fact the architects of the new state would not countenance opinions that did not suit their interests, even if some amongst them were well aware that 'the Shi'ah problem is probably the most formidable in this country'.[29] Furthermore, for a group habitually excluded from politics, the mujtahids' use of the petition form showed a willingness to engage in the political process of state formation; its dismissal no doubt consolidated a political estrangement that meant that thereafter they would in effect deliberately exclude themselves from such modern state institutions as would not guarantee to represent their views fairly, a not insignificant consequence as their protest against forthcoming elections would soon afterwards demonstrate.

The petition was, however, useful to the Administration itself since it confirmed the key ideological basis for excluding the mujtahids from the state-building process, that is, that they sought absolute hegemony. B. H. Bourdillon, a political secretary in Baghdad at the time and future Deputy High Commission, spoke retrospectively of those 'Shiah divines… who saw in our presence in Iraq a fatal barrier to that domination in temporal matters to which they aspired'.[30] Wilson believed the mujtahids had been hostile to organised government of any kind

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[27] Text dated 15 Rabi al-Awwal 1337/January 1919; quoted in Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, p. 64. The quotation refers to the Sunni Hashemite dynasty led by Sharif Hussain, who had declared himself King of the Hejaz region during the First World War. After the war Sharif Hussain's son Abdullah was pronounced King of Transjordon and his son Faisal was first installed in French-controlled Syria and latterly in Iraq (see below).

[28] Administrative Report of Political Officer, Hilla, 5 April 1920, FO 371/5074/5285.

[29] Gertrude Bell, letter to father from Baghdad, 3 October 1920, from *The Gertrude Bell Papers* at http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/.

[30] B. H. Bourdillon, 'The Political Situation in Iraq', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, 6 (1924), pp. 273-287, at p. 276.

for centuries and sought to create an "Islamic kingdom" instead, whilst Bell wrote of the 'very devil' of a 'theocratic state under Shar'ah law' that the mujtahids saw as their end goal.[31] The impossibility of allowing such a theocracy to prevail in Iraq consequently not only legitimated but also made imperative on ideological grounds the exclusion of the mujtahids from the state-building process. When Philip Ireland wrote some five years after Iraq's independence that the mujtahids were dismissed as a body of opinion because 'they would allow no idols other than of their own making', this might just as well have been a comment on the Civil Administration.[32]

The very strength of such stereotypes exposed some of the preconceptions that Britain arrived in Mesopotamia with – which new experiences seemed only to be useful in confirming - including the belief that in the 'orient' religion was predominant over politics, that key divide between pre-modernity and modernity. In Iraq, the mujtahids, whose authority 'rest[ed] on an intimate acquaintance with accumulated knowledge entirely irrelevant to human affairs and worthless in any branch of human activity', were represented as an unstable, despotic force 'reek[ing] with antiquity' and preventing maturity in the political system.[33] Ronald Storrs, colonial official and prominent member of the Arab Bureau set up in December 1915 to centralise Middle Eastern intelligence, described conversations with the mujtahids of Kadhimain, Najaf, and Karbala as a 'waste of verbiage'.[34] Sheikh Muhammad Qadhem al-Yazdi, the most important Shi'ite authority in Najaf, was described typically theatrically as 'a very old man in white… his beard and his fingernails dyed brilliant red with henna'.[35] For Bell, the mujtahids were comparable to a temporally powerful Pope, 'obstructing the Government at every turn'.[36] 'The remedy', she claimed, was '…that which has been found in Italy. Pope and mujtahid end by being regarded merely as silly old men…', stripped of all political function.

The ordinary Shi`ite population did not escape British attention either in the effort to depict them as ideologically quite apart from the values of the emerging state. The author Ethel Stevens who had travelled widely in the region wrote romantically of the 'the emotionalism of the faithful, [which] are somehow alien to the stern spirit of Islam…'[37] The procession of

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[31] Wilson, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 252-4, 310-1; Bell, 'Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia', p. 143.

[32] Philip W. Ireland, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* (London, 1937), pp. 174-5, at p. 246.

[33] Gertrude Bell to F. B., Baghdad 14 March 1920, Lady Bell (ed.), *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (1927), pp. 483-4.

[34] Ronald Storrs, *Orientations*, 2nd edn, first published 1937 (London, 1945), p. 222.

[35] Ibid., pp. 230-3.

[36] Bell, Baghdad 3 October 1920, *Gertrude Bell Papers*.

[37] Ethel S. Stevens, *By Tigris and Euphrates* (London, 1923), pp. 20-1. She also likened the authority of the *mujtahids* with that of the Holy Roman Church as Bell had.

Moharram, when the death of 'Ali was marked by 'with tears and flagellations', reminded her of the 'wailing crowds' of Good Friday celebrations in Catholic countries, whilst to Bell it seemed 'savage' and distinctly anti-modern, for the Shi`ites behaved 'as if it were still the middle ages!'[38] The ordinary Shi`ite for Stevens had through years of domination become 'a sullen fellow, jealous and fanatical, and like the Irish Catholic, always "agin the government"'. He was, in sum, 'the clog upon the wheel of progress in the new state', a frankly damning indictment at a time when Britain was attempting to redeem the barbarity of the Western Front through progress and development in its imperial ventures in the East.[39]

These notions of Shi`ite irrationalism and "civilisational infantilism" correspond to the strategies Uday Mehta has identified as marshalled by liberal imperialists to create 'sustained political exclusion of various groups and "types"', best demonstrated by the denial of representative government to India in the nineteenth-century.[40] In marked contrast to the Shi`is, the Sunnis were credited with a 'closer assimilation with the facts of civilisation'. That such ideas held wide currency is evident; characterisation of the Shi`ites as intrinsically ungovernable is found also in an official report of 1918, wherein it is claimed that 'the strong infusion of Persian blood' was responsible for '…fostering the mysticism, remote to the Semitic mind, which underlies Shi`ah doctrines, and helping give the mixed population of the delta the tinge of political indocility…'[41]

The above well demonstrates too the Administration's denigration of those with Persians connections (which was the entire Shi`ite population apparently), perceived as 'too alien to be allowed to influence the creation of the new state'.[42] The author of the report also betrayed the fact that although it was judged at the outset that both Sunnism and Shi`ism must be treated as equals, in reality the British preferred the 'Semitic' Sunnism that represented Stevens's rational,

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[38] Bell to H.B., Baghdad 13 August 1924, *Letters of Gertrude Bell*, p. 706.

[39] Priya Satia, 'Developing Iraq: Britain, India and the Redemption of Empire and Technology in the First World War', *Past and Present*, 197, 1 (2007), pp. 211-255. Though she mainly focuses on technological developmentalism, her argument that the idea of developing Iraq fulfilled 'a great cultural and military need' generated by the First World War bears implications for the present study in terms of Britain's self-perceived 'civilising mission' in Iraq.

[40] The central tenet of Mehta's argument is that liberalism, even in John Locke's classic exposition, requires people to be 'rational' and able to express their natural-born faculty of 'reason'; self-government could thus be denied to the irrational and those inscrutable groups who could not be judged to have reason. Uday S. Mehta, 'Liberal Strategies of Exclusions', in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeoisie World*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds) (Berkley, 1997), pp. 59-86.

[41] 'Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories', p. 27.

[42] Ireland, *Iraq,* p. 174. The Persian threat was largely a phantom by this point, given that Iranian political and religious interference in Iraq was drastically reduced under Reza Shah's regime in the 1920s.

'stern spirit' of the orthodox faith.[43] This suggests that British attitudes towards Islam in the Middle East were incredibly complex, which binary frameworks regarding cultural discourse such as Edward's Said's 'Orientalism' fail to appreciate. It was thus that religious and racial prejudice produced for the British a Shi`ite population who were at odds with modern politics and would remain indefinitely sectarian and hostile, and a Sunni establishment that would be more congenial partners to nation-building efforts, ideologically legitimising Shi`ite exclusion from the political affairs of the nation.

Having hitherto shown their disregard for Shi`ite opinion, the Administration was taken aback in the summer of 1920 by a fierce revolt in the Euphrates. The rebellion, cast since by some as the formative moment in the creation of an Iraqi nationalism, represented in its so-called leadership a fragile coalition of mujtahids in favour of an Islamic state and a frustrated Sunni Sharifian interest in favour of an Arab government, united temporarily by their goal of Iraqi independence. The scale of the rebellion was intensified by a tangible tide of anti-British – arguably proto-nationalist - feeling amongst the tribal population of Iraq, who were far from subject to the control of either the Sunni or Shi`ite elite. Yet in the British administrative mind it was the Shi`ite mujtahids, depicted as self-interested and fanatical conspirators, that became indissolubly linked with the ferocity and longevity of the uprising.[44] Particularly prominent was Shirazi, architect of the 1919 Karbala petition, who issued a fatwa on 1 March 1920 asserting that all service under the British was unlawful and in May sent a call for jihad to the Shi`ite tribes of the Euphrates through emissaries from Karbala and Najaf, though few amongst the sheikhs were actually responsive.[45] The momentum of the revolt was carried throughout the summer until the British were able to eventually regain control of the central and lower Euphrates in October of 1920.

The revolt represents in hindsight the apex of mujtahid influence in Iraq during this and the later period and yet the mujtahids failed to convert what momentum they had into a realisation of their political ambitions. This had important implications for future Shi`ite exclusion from political power; with their defeat at the hands of British military forces and the

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[43] For example, Wilson in *Loyalties* wrote that, 'At the hands of the British Government Shiism is entitled on historical grounds to equal treatment with Sunnism instead of being regarded as a 'sect", p. 235.

[44] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: the failure of nation building and a history denied* (London, 2003), p. 68; Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, pp. 66-7. Although, as Eliezer Tauber notes, some historians have played up the link between Baghdad and the tribal revolt, particularly the role of the Independence Guard, and its most prominent (Shi`ite) members, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr and the lay political activist Ja'far Abu al-Timman. *The Formation of Modern Syria and Iraq* (London, 1955), pp. 314-5.

[45] Baghdad to Secretary of State for India, 18 March 1920, IOL L/P&S/10/4722; Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, pp. 32-33. For Shirazi's tool-like status in the hands of his son and other activists, see Tauber, *Formation of Modern Syria and Iraq*, p. 288.

rapid disintegration of their unity with the Sharifians that followed, the opportunity to stake a claim in Iraq's political system at a critical time was lost. Although the mujtahids had demonstrated their ability to mobilise local opinion with some effectiveness, the failure of the revolt discredited their reputation with both the Sunni and the Shi`ite population of Iraq, and 'men called to mind and openly expressed the maxim that doctors of divinity should properly be precluded from taking part in the politics of this world by their preoccupation with matters appertaining to the next.'[46] Bell noted that the 'Sunnis all go about protesting that the revolt was solely due to those rogues of Shi'ah' and was pleased with the failed rising for discrediting the mujtahids.[47] The failure of the revolt highlighted that there was little community of interest between the mujtahids and the big tribal sheikhs, the two major components of the Shi`ite elite that could have conceivably led the Shi`ite masses to political power.

It confirmed the necessity of their exclusion as far as the British were concerned too, or at least a rhetorical focus on fanaticism conveniently deflected attention away from the call for independence. Cox refused to allow the most prominent mujtahid of the day, Sheikh al-Shari'ah Isfahani, a part in the negotiations following the revolt in a deliberate attempt to avoid crediting him with legitimate political authority to speak for the Shi`ite population.[48] The revolt indeed illustrated how little hold the disunited Shi`ite religious leadership had over the laity, and revealed the strategic disadvantage of the Shi`ite community as a whole for whom the extreme threat of armed insurrection remained the only real bargaining tool.[49] They could make the country temporarily ungovernable in this way but it could not earn them a share in its governance, a lesson amplified under the reign of King Faisal, a son of Sharif Hussain, installed in Iraq the following year.

III

The Foreign Office in London, encouraged by T. E. Lawrence, considered at this time that Faisal was the best (and only viable) option for securing Britain's considerable interests in Iraq as well as satisfying the demands for Arab self-rule.[50] The Shi`ite mujtahids could hardly

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[46] Report on Iraq Administration, October 1920 - March 1922, FO 371/9004, in *Iraq Administration Reports,* vol. 7.

[47] Bell, Baghdad 12 September and 3 October 1920, *Gertrude Bell Papers.*

[48] Report on Iraq Administration, October 1920 - March 1922, pp. 4-5.

[49] Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, p. 86; Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, p. 229.

[50] At this time, British investments in Iraq stood at some £16 million, and the capitalised value of the oil fields at about £50 million. Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, p. 32. For a discussion of the different schools shaping Mesopotamian policy, see Timothy J. Paris, 'British Middle East Policy-Making after the First World War: the Lawrentian and Wilsonian Schools', *The Historical Journal*, 41, 3 (1998), pp. 773-793.

refuse Faisal's nomination having asked for a son of the Sharif themselves in the 1919 plebiscite, but many made support for him conditional on his ruling free from British interference.[51] Faisal's principal supporters in Iraq were predominantly Sunni, encompassing members of the old Ottoman administration as well as officers that had fought with him in the Arab Revolt. Sunni hegemony was therefore soon widely apparent, despite Faisal's own auspicious start: Faisal's entrance into Baghdad and Basra were apparently met with enthusiasm, and Ireland described in incredulous terms his decision, on first entering Kadhimain, to pray at the mosque 'according to the Shi'a rite…'[52]

In the first Iraqi institution set up – a Council of Ministers established in November 1920 – no Shi`ite had initially been given a portfolio, and only four Shi`ites were invited to join a government of nineteen.[53] For the rest of the 1920s there were only ever token Shi`ites in government, grossly under-representative of their numerical majority.[54] They were rarely appointed to administrative positions, even in wholly Shi`ite provinces, or teaching posts in the state school system.[55] Prejudice amongst Sunni politicians was especially rife: Sati al-Husri, Director of General Education 1921-1927 and a key architect of Iraqi nationalism in this period, viewed Shi`ite colleagues as ignorant and incapable, whilst Bell revealed that Shi`ite absence from ministerial office in 1920 was principally the fault of the (Sunni) Naqib of Baghdad, Abdul Rahman al-Gailani, head of the first Council, who 'turn[ed] down one Shi'ah after another' and eventually had to be 'induced' (by Cox presumably) to offer a Shi`ite from Karbala the Ministry for Education in 1921.[56]

Bell's position is worthy of particular attention, given the prominent role in Iraqi nation building that she has been awarded since. She was, for example, the spearhead for the creation of a national museum in Baghdad, a tool of modern nation-building with roots in colonial policy that accords with Benedict Anderson's thesis on the methods by which imagined communities

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[51] Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, p. 77.

[52] Ireland, *Iraq*, p. 328.

[53] One of the four asked declined the invitation on the basis of ill-health). 'Note on Political Developments in Mesopotamia subsequent to 1 October 1920', FO 371/9004. *Iraq Administration Reports*, vol. 6.

[54] Mohammad A. Tarbush has calculated that of the fifty-nine men who held cabinet positions between 1920 and 1936 (the date of the first military coup in Iraq), only twenty-four per cent were Shi`ites, as compared with fifty-six percent of the population. *The Role of the Military in Politics: A Case Study of Iraq to 1941* (London, 1982), ch. 3.

[55] Bell, Baghdad 22 January 1922, *Gertrude Bell Papers*.

[56] Nakash, *Shi's of Iraq*, p. 111. Husri's position was not insignificant given that the only ministry habitually reserved for Shi`ites was that of Education; Bell, Baghdad 13 February 1921, as well as 26 February and 22 January 1922, and 18 December 1920 for the Naqib's hostility towards the 'savages' in the tribal areas, *Gertrude Bell Papers*.

were turned into political realities in the modern era.[57] Though she knew that any new state would fundamentally lack legitimacy if the Shi`ites were not represented to some degree in its institutions, privately she held that Shi`ite domination of these institutions was at all costs to be prevented. She did not 'for a moment doubt that the final authority must be in the hands of the Sunnis in spite of their numerical inferiority.'[58] Lukitz has argued that Bell was essentially optimistic about the prospects of a Sunni-Shi`ite reconciliation based on their shared Arab roots; our reading of Bell, however, suggests that if this was true reconciliation was evidently only conceived of as a distant possibility.[59] Indeed, Bell believed that '…Sunni Mosul must be retained as a part of the Mesopotamian state in order to adjust the balance', that is, to countenance any further increase in the Shi`ite majority.[60] A concern for Shi`ite exclusion thus had a role in determining the very territory that constitutes Iraq to this day. Later the state forcibly prevented any increase in the size of the Shi`ite constituency by preventing conversions to the faith.[61]

This was the reality of British attempts to install democracy in Iraq. It vindicated somewhat the objections Wilson had had towards the question of Iraqi self-rule. Wilson, replaced by Cox after the 1920 revolt and depicted in the historiography since as a man fundamentally at odds with the spirit and realities of the post-War world, especially Arab self-determination as championed by Bell and Lawrence, was nevertheless not far off the mark when he predicted - albeit in memoirs written most probably with a view to retrospectively justifying his advocation of direct rule - that 'after 200 years of Sunni domination' self-rule in Iraq 'would be the antithesis of a democratic Government.'[62] Bell, a fierce critic of Wilson by 1920, dismissed Shi`ite concerns about under-representation by citing two now oft-repeated reasons: the dearth of educated men familiar with public affairs among them, and the fact that a number of the Shi`ite elite were ethnically Persian.[63] 'Capable Shi'ahs grow on very few bushes', she

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[57] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, chapter 10 on 'Census, Map, Museum'. 2nd revised edn, first published in 1983 (New York, 1991). In the revised thesis Anderson shifted the origins of these modern tools of "nation-building" from nineteenth-century Europe to 'the imaginings of the colonial state', p. 163.

[58] Bell, Baghdad 3 October 1920, *Gertrude Bell Papers*.

[59] Liora Lukitz, *A Quest in the Middle East: Gertrude Bell and the Making of Modern Iraq* (London, 2006), pp. 205-6.

[60] Bell, Baghdad 3 October 1920, *Gertrude Bell Papers*. British strategic interests in Mosul were probably, however, the main reason why the territory was assiduously sought after for the new state.

[61] Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, p. 88.

[62] Wilson, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 314-5. See also Paris, 'British Middle East Policy-Making', for Wilson's politics.

[63] Bell to H.B., Baghdad 7 November 1920, *Letters of Gertrude Bell*, pp. 572-3.

claimed during the formation of Faisal's first Cabinet in 1921.[64] The problem was double-edged, however, since the mujtahids' ban on service under British rule placed any educated and ambitious Shi`ites in a difficult position too, with those who accepted office risking the penalty of excommunication.[65]

As far as the mujtahids were concerned, their hope that Faisal would pursue a more inclusive policy towards them was not born out. He briefly flirted with the idea of using them to bolster his position vis-à-vis Cox when negotiating the terms of an Anglo-Iraq Treaty, intended to replace the Mandate relationship, and perhaps he genuinely sought a sectarian reconciliation, but the fact that he owed his throne to the British and could not effectively rule without British airpower meant that ultimately he could not be seen to encourage the mujtahids too much. A hegemony of violence, supplied by the RAF, was perhaps all that stood between Iraq and a political system more representative of Shi`ite interests.[66] When in April 1922 prominent mujtahids held a conference in Karbala, notionally convened to discuss the Ikwhan threat emanating from Saudi Arabia but in reality intended to galvanise anti-Mandate feeling amongst the tribal sheikhs, Faisal was dissuaded from attending by Cox himself.[67] To the British, consumed as they were by their benevolent mission in Iraq, the conference proved that the mujtahids were in no position 'to gauge the needs of a State which is striving in the path of progress and enlightened self-government'.[68]

When the mujtahids failed to get support from the sheikhs their attention turned towards the forthcoming elections for the new Constituent Assembly, in which they knew they stood to do badly against British-backed candidates. Prominent figures amongst them accordingly issued a fatwa on 5 November 1922 declaring the participation of all Muslims in the elections as unlawful.[69] In so doing, the mujtahids displayed the somewhat naïve belief that their very

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[64] Bell, Baghdad 11 September 1921, *Gertrude Bell Papers.*

[65] Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, pp. 109-111. The ban on taking office technically remained in force until 1927.

[66] The RAF was operational in Iraq throughout the Mandate period and long after. Dodge argues that even in 1932, when the League of Nations formally recognised Iraq as independent, Iraq was dependent on the RAF as 'guarantor of its internal and external sovereignty', *Inventing Iraq,* p 40. Satia has talked of the almost chimerical quality of the air force, used in a harsh regime of aerial surveillance and bombardment to quell unrest, in the British imagination, and the cultural representations of the land and people of Iraq that ideologically justified such a regime of violence, in 'The Defense of Inhumanity: Air Control and the British Idea of Arabia, *American Historical Review*, III, 1 (2006), pp. 16-51.

[67] Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, pp. 78-9.

[68] Report on Iraq Administration, April 1922 - March 1923, FO 371/10095, in *Iraq Administration Reports,* vol. 7.

[69] One of the subsequent *fatwas* read: "we have passed judgement against the elections. Whoever takes part in them is fighting God, the Prophet, and the Imams, and will not be buried in Muslim cemeteries". Quoted in Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, pp. 79-80.

exclusion from Iraqi politics, so assiduously fostered by the British, could itself be turned into a political tool, and that by withholding from elections they could fundamentally threaten the state's basis of legitimacy from the outset. However, whilst the fatwas did disrupt preparations for the election in some areas, by 1923 they began to lose their impact and Faisal, in response to considerable British pressure, had those prime instigators of the agitation who were Persian nationals deported in June 1923. Others followed in protest, another ill-judged effort since Faisal's government was relieved to be rid of their presence and more significantly the Shi`ite population seemed not to react to their departure either. When the self-exiled returned in 1924 - by which time the elections had been completed and the Anglo-Iraq Treaty ratified - it was on the specific condition that they abstained from politics henceforth.

The exclusion of the mujtahids was only one part of the story of the Shi`ite elite in the early 1920s. Faisal undertook a dual approach of on the one hand keeping the mujtahids at a distance, and on the other making a show of bringing the big Shi`ite tribal sheikhs in. As the mujtahids were preparing to leave in 1923, for example, the King secured an amendment to the Electoral Law so as to provide the sheikhs with greater representation in the Constituent Assembly. Faisal thus successfully enlarged the cleavage between the two main branches of the Shi`ite elite, crucially disabling their ability to mobilise the masses.[70] It was not simply political concessions that achieved the break: propaganda that publicised the mujtahids' Persian connections aimed to deliberately drive an ethnic wedge between the Shi`ite elite. In fact, the Arab mujtahids, vying for influence over the population, quietly supported the elections even during the fatwas. British officials noted the fatwas had very little impact on the tribes, though there are of course methodological problems in using official British records as a gauge to understanding Iraqi tribal opinion.[71]

It is an interesting irony that as the economic welfare and political weight of the sheikhs improved through their limited inclusion in politics, their sectarian identity weakened, and their status as part of the Shi`ite elite and their influence amongst tribes people was greatly compromised. They emerged, along with their Sunni counterparts, as a new class in modern Iraq with their interests firmly focused on Baghdad.[72] In a sense the new state therefore exacerbated the very urban-rural divide that it was so adamant existed in Iraqi society. The co-option of the tribal sheikhs under the monarchy also revealed that the Sunni-Shi`ite struggle was far from

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[70] Ibid. pp. 88-94.

[71] Report on Iraq Administration, April 1922 - March 1923, p. 4.

[72] Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq,* p. 90. See also Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements in Iraq* (Princeton, 1978) and Lukitz, *Iraq*, p. 6, for the relative merits and demerits of class-based study of Iraq.

purely, or even predominantly, religious by this period; rather labels that died hard were used in what was largely the politics of power. It also indicates what is an important caveat to the idea of 'political exclusion', since while it is true that Shi`ites were excluded from public office, the monarchy could not survive without a degree of co-operation with the great tribal leaders of the south and centre, all of whom were Shi'ites.[73]

For the rest of the population, who could not so easily shed their sectarian identity, their faith remained significant in shaping their political fortunes. Many ordinary Shi`ites quickly cut their losses with the Persian mujtahids, and yet ironically their demands to play a greater role in the political system after 1923 were ever-more easily ignored because they now ceased to be an active source of danger for the monarchy. Thereafter it was obvious that Arab nationalism espoused by Sunni politicians in Baghdad was not going to be the basis of a resolution to sectarian division since it meant to only include Sunni Arabs, a problem for dissident groups like the Kurds too.[74] The Shi`ites continued to have their ethnic origins and loyalties questioned meanwhile; if they protested about their political discrimination, the age-old claim that they represented a subversive Persian influence was used to place them on the defensive rather than address their grievances.[75] Shi`ite cultural and religious motifs similarly found no place in the texture of Iraqi national identity being framed by men like al-Husri at this time, and their part in the revolt of 1920, for example, never made it into school textbooks. It was thus that the Shi`ite majority was effectively excluded from Iraq's body politic, both by deprivation of office and by ideological and cultural exclusion from the very 'national identity' that was to be the foundation of the nation-state.

IV

The political exclusion of the Shi`ites of Iraq, it has been argued, had a deep-rooted ideological heritage that was nourished by events in the chaotic early years of the new state. If nothing else this argument goes some way towards proving the enduring capacity of stereotypes to regulate relations between those with and without power historically, and demonstrates that states formed in the aftermath of the First World War, under the hazy glow of the "self-

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[73] This was especially true before the creation in the mid-1930s of a large and effective army that could put down tribal rebellions. Peter Sluglett, 'The Implications of Sectarianism in Iraq', talk delivered to the Middle East Centre Antonian Conference on 1 July 2007 at St. Antony's College, Oxford University. [Audio accessed online http:// www.sant.ox.ac.uk/antonians/gaudy07/peter_sluglett.mp3 on 1 March 2009].

[74] Lukitz, *Iraq*, pp. 79-80. Whilst national rhetoric might have been almost exclusively Arab in tone, the Kurds did at least fare better in government: in 1930 it was estimated that Kurds, who formed 17 percent of the Iraqi population, held 22 percent of government posts, whereas the Shi`ites only held 15 percent, Nakash, *Shi`is of Iraq*, p. 110.

[75] Not unlike Cox and Bell's treatment of the Shi`ites in 1920, perhaps; Nakash, *Shi`is of Iraq*, p. 113.

determination" rhetoric, were hardly immune from the debilitating effects of identity-politics. During the Mandate period Britain was intensely concerned about reducing its commitments across the world and simultaneously setting up an Arab government in Iraq that would satisfy its obligations; in this context, ethnic and racial stereotypes were incredibly useful tools. Division and irreconcilable constituents dominated Britain's understanding of Iraq, as it did elsewhere.[76] And yet it was clear that the British Administration did not *invent* Shi`ite exclusion. Instead, in the belief that with a Shi`ite majority in power there could be no Mandate or Treaty, and with the inflection of its own ideological prejudices and considerable material interests in Iraq, the Civil Administration set up a new state that paid only lip-service to Wilsonian's ideals.

It has been demonstrated throughout that the key consequence of exclusion was that the Shi`ites either played an increasingly obstructionist role in Iraqi politics or none at all, to the detriment of the community itself and to the strength and legitimacy of the whole state. Exclusion pushed Shi`ites towards even more radical alternatives later on in the century – communism in the 1950s and 1960s, and radical Islam in the 1970s and 1980s in response partly to the Ba'thist regime's revival of the claim that only Sunni Arabs were real Arabs. By the time the Iran-Iraq War broke out in 1980, the entire Shi`ite population was rendered a potential pro-Iranian enemy within. Sluglett has argued that subsequently many ordinary Shi`ites turned towards such 'primordial pre-state organisations' as family, tribe, and sect to protect them from the state, which, if true, would have deep implications for our very understanding of the process of state formation in the modern era.[77] Whilst there were hopes that the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire would give people new ways of defining themselves, in Iraq at least it is striking the extent to which religious-based sectarian identities have endured because of endemic structural problems that have been exacerbated through particularly virulent periods of exclusionary, identity-based politics. The 'sectarian' struggle in the embryonic state was, as argued above, more often about the politics of ethnicity, race, class, and national identity, each of which had in turn its own complicated relationship with religion.[78] In sum, it seems that imperial rule, whether formal under the Ottomans or covert as under the Civil Administration, Mandate. and monarchy, made somewhat inevitable the virtual colonisation of a large majority of the Iraqi population, not solely through the institutionalisation of certain groups and practices, but through the cementing of particular ideas regarding the myth of the 'modern nation-state' itself.

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[76] Bell remarked on 29 September 1919, in the aftermath of a countrywide, mass-action protest against the British protectorate in Egypt, that 'If India were not so much divided, Hindus against Islam, native princes against Nationalists… we could not hold on at all'. *Gertrude Bell Papers.*

[77] Sluglett, 'Implications of Sectarianism'.

[78] See Lukitz, drawing on Clifford Geertz's view of Islam as a 'cultural system', *Iraq*, p. 149.

The exercise of imperial power was by its very definition exclusive, but it seems that the post-colonial state has been as obsessed with exclusion as formal empires ever were.

Further Reading

Cole, J., *Sacred Space and Holy War: the Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam* (London, 2002).

Dodge, T., *Inventing Iraq: the failure of nation building and a history denied* (London, 2003).

Jankowski, J., and Gershoni, I. (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York, NY, 1997).

Kedourie, E., 'Anti-Shiism in Iraq under the Monarchy', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 24 (1988). pp. 249-53.

Lukitz, L., *Iraq: the search for national identity* (London, 1995).

Tripp, C., *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge, 2002).

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