



PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indiana University Undergraduate Journal of History

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Private Snafu:

What Can a Cartoon Tell Us About the U.S. Military in World War II?

KEENAN SALLA

In the field of military history, where so much study is focused on devastating technologies, brilliant strategies and monumental battlefields, it may seem odd to approach the study of the U.S. military in World War II by examining something as seemingly innocuous as a series of animated cartoon shorts like *Private Snafu*. While studying the history of WWII through the scope of military propaganda may seem less odd to some, particularly those who are familiar with it, it may seem unconventional to focus on the esoteric *Private Snafu* over a grander, and more well know series, such as *Why We Fight*. Framed in one of the most popular forms of contemporary mass media, the *Private Snafu* shorts produced by the U.S. Army and Warner Brothers Studios during the war serve as a unique window into both the concerns of the World War II U.S. military command structure and the culture and composition of the enlisted military.

The concerns of the military command structure, such as enforcing discipline and the dissemination of information, are plainly illustrated by the content of the *Snafu* shorts. Along with hundreds of other training films and other forms of newly arrived mass media, *Private Snafu* would be part of one of the most rapid troop mobilizations in military history. However, one the most interesting facets of the *Private Snafu* shorts is that while they were never made for public consumption, but instead were considered secret military material that was only to be shown to the members of the armed forces, they also featured many of the same popular cultural references and comedic tropes of civilian animation. This allows us to look at *Snafu*'s audience in isolation by observing the differences in content and delivery between the *Snafu* shorts and contemporary civilian animation.

The Origin of *Private Snafu*

While film had been in its nascent stages during the First World War, it had not matured into a format that was taken seriously by many in the establishment, and was still a considerably crude method of recording and delivering information to the masses. However, during the inter-war period the industry boomed. Lifted by the rapidly growing economy of the 1920s and the relatively low price of movies during the Great Depression, the techniques and technology of film production reached a high degree of sophistication by the onset of World War II. Sound and color were now possible, and recording equipment had become much more reliable and portable. This allowed the film to play many crucial roles for the U.S. military in World War II, but its most widespread and arguably effective use would be in the form of training and orientation films. Training films, often referred to as “nuts and bolts” films, centered on conveying technical information, while orientation films focused on showing the soldiers how and why they should be dedicated to fighting for the U.S. military. When the U.S. military saw initial success in using film for these purposes, as much as a 30% reduction in training time in some cases, they greatly expanded both the size and scope of military film production.¹

It was during this period of accelerating production that the *Private Snafu* cartoons were conceived as a combination training and orientation film by legendary director Frank Capra (1897-1991) in his role as a major in the 834th Signal Service Photographic Detachment Unit.² Capra had already made a name for himself in Hollywood with such hits as *It Happened One Night* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, but volunteered for military service at the age of 44 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.³ He found himself under the direct command of Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, who desired to bypass the normal U.S. Army film-making department, the U.S. Army Signal Corps, as he felt they were incapable of producing “sensitive and objective troop information films.”⁴

After the success of Capra's seminal propaganda series *Why We Fight* (1942-1945), which became required viewing for all U.S. troops, he was tasked with the creation of the *Army-Navy Screen Magazine* for the Signal Corps.⁵ The *Screen Magazine* was a 20 minute collection of short films and newsreels that screened before Hollywood features in U.S. military bases. This was a translation of the “show bill” in the civilian world, or the practice of having some number of shorts and newsreels before films in theaters.⁶ These show bills were also where many of the iconic animated characters of today, such as Bugs Bunny and Mickey Mouse, were first revealed to the American public. In the context of military film presentation the show bill could take on even greater meaning, as themes would be constructed by the producers to reinforce information or behavior that the command desired in its troops.⁷

¹ Richard Koszarski, “Subway Commandos: Hollywood Filmmakers at the Signal Corps Photographic Center” *Film History* 14, no. 3/4 (2002): 403.

² Frank Capra, *The Name Above the Title: An Autobiography* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 43.

³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵ Micheal Barrier, *Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in its Golden Age*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 502.

⁶ Eric Smodin, *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 71.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

While today we think of cartoons as almost exclusively the purview of children, they had not yet fully assumed this role in the popular culture of 1940s America. While cartoons certainly saw children as their primary audience, as evidenced by their prevalence in the child-frequented weekend matinee, their presentation alongside many mainstream Hollywood movies as well as the fact that a smaller portion of consumer culture was directed at children relative to today, meant that animated shorts were often made to be appreciated just as much by adults as by children.⁸ Capra had already taken a bold step in using animation in some of the other Army propaganda films to positive effect, so it was not absurd that the Army would desire its own cartoon hero in the vein of Bugs Bunny or Mickey Mouse to complete its show bill.

In 1943, Capra sought to create this series of animated shorts as part of the *Magazine* to disseminate information to illiterate and semi-literate soldiers.⁹ To this end Capra enlisted the talents of Captain Theodor Geisel, later known as Dr. Seuss, (1904-1991) of the Army Signal Corps First Motion Picture Unit and his staff to write the Private Snafu cartoons. Geisel's style of writing is highly evident in many of the early shorts, as they share the rhyming format of his later children's book.¹⁰ The Army did not have its own animation team, so Capra sought out a private studio to produce the shorts. He originally offered Walt Disney Studios the production work, but Disney was outbid by Leon Schlesinger (1884-1949) of Warner Brothers Studios.¹¹ Snafu came to Warner Brothers in its golden age, when the men who shaped the field of American animation in the 20th century were still employed there. Snafu's visual appearance came from altered models of the relatively new character, Elmer Fudd,¹² and his name came from the Army's unofficial acronym SNAFU, or "Situation Normal All Fucked Up" (presented hesitantly as "All Fouled Up" in the first short).¹³ He was voiced by the legendary Mel Blanc (1909-1989), already famous as the voice of Bugs Bunny and innumerable other animated characters and was directed by a string of men who were either already established, or would become giants in, the field of animation; such as Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones and Friz Freleng. All of this meant that the Snafu cartoons are of very high quality. Other than being in black and white, a choice made due to the fact that color projectors would be very rare in the field, they are indiscernible from the material created for the civilian film going population.¹⁴

Snafu's Mission

The U.S. Army's primary goal for Snafu was to provide information to the enlisted man in a format that even the most uneducated among them could understand.¹⁵ Snafu's most common method for achieving this goal was generally to die because he did not heed the advice given to him by his commanding officers. This goal and method is best illustrated by the three Snafu cartoons that address malaria prevention. In *Private Snafu vs. Malarial Mike, It's Murder She Wrote* and *Target: Snafu*, Snafu is reckless with his malaria prevention practices: using mosquito netting and insect repellent, taking the preventative medication and keeping his skin covered, and contracts malaria as a consequence of his careless behavior. Similarly, In *Fighting Tools* and *Gas*, Private Snafu is taught lessons on the importance of training with and maintaining his gear as his neglected equipment fails in the face of the enemy. This importance of knowledge is driven home directly in the short *Snafuperman*, where Snafu neglects his study of the army field manual, insisting that he doesn't need it to beat the Germans. In this short, Snafu is given the powers of the popular comic character Superman by the Technical Fairy First Class, a fairy godmother for the character in the form of tiny, gruff first sergeant. When confronted by a number of crises, he finds that his lack of knowledge of map reading and military technology make him ineffective despite his extraordinary abilities. Through Snafu's repeated negative example soldiers constantly reminded about the consequences of neglecting proper U.S. army methods and practices.

In addition to conveying important training information, Snafu also frequently promoted information discipline, or the practice of not spreading rumors or potentially sensitive information. In *Spies, Rumors, Going Home* and *Censored* Snafu gets himself and his fellow soldiers in mortal peril because of his "loose lips."¹⁶ In an effort to press home the importance of maintaining information discipline over a long period of uneventful service, these shorts seek to explain to the soldiers why they should keep silent about military activity. They accomplished this by showing how bits of information can be collected by different sources and gathered together into something the enemy might find useful, as well as how rumors can damage morale on both the field as well as on the home front.

⁸ Eric Smodin, *Animating Culture*, 72.

⁹ David H. Culbert, "Walt Disney's Private Snafu: The Use of Humor in World War II Army Film." *Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Culture* 1 (1976): 81-96, 82.

¹⁰ Philip Nel, "Children's Literature Goes to War: Dr. Seuss, P.D. Eastman, Munro Leaf and the 'Private Snafu' Films." *Journal of Popular Culture* 40, no. 3 (June 2007): 468-487, 470.

¹¹ Barrier, *Hollywood Cartoons*, 502.

¹² Ibid., 503.

¹³ Doherty, Thomas. *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and World War II*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 67.

¹⁴ Smodin, *Animating Culture*, 73.

¹⁵ Benjamin L. Alpers, "This is the Army: Imagining a Democratic Military in World War II." *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 1 (June 1998): 129-163, 157.

¹⁶ Ironically, *Going Home* would not be released because of a reference to a secret weapon the military decided was too similar to the atomic bomb in production at Los Alamos.

Snafu would also seek to combat dissent in the army in shorts such as *Gripes*, *Infantry Blues* and *The Three Brothers*. In each of these films Snafu is dissatisfied with his role in the army, feeling that those in other branches of the military or at home must have an easier life. Through the work of Technical Fairy First Class, Snafu is shown that the other branches of the military face their own challenges, many of them more difficult or tedious than Snafu's own work, and that the civilians on the home front are all working very hard to support the war effort. At the end of each of the films Snafu learns his lesson and returns to his work with new gusto, for once a positive model for his viewing soldier audience.

The character of Technical Fairy First Class serves a subtle purpose of its own. In an army that saw a generally higher socioeconomic status and level of education among its new enlisted men than its non-commissioned officers, insubordination and a lack of respect for superiors could sometimes be an issue.¹⁷ In an attempt to depict the career non-commissioned officer in a positive light to the newly enlisted man, the Technical Fairy First Class depicts the non-commissioned officer as wise and helpful, but ready to let the recruit learn from his own mistakes. In many of the shorts the Technical Fairy acts as the proverbial monkey's paw, appearing to grant Snafu his wish, only to inevitably have that wish backfire and teach Snafu a valuable lesson.

In addition to desired military procedure and behavior, Snafu also tries to teach the value of frugality. In *Pay Day and A Few Quick Facts: Inflation* Snafu is urged to spend his pay wisely while abroad, so that he can save to own a home back in the U.S. and spare the European residents of the occupied nations the inflation caused by soldiers driving up demand.¹⁸ In *The Chow Hound*, Snafu is urged not to take more than he can eat in one meal so as to avoid wasting food. The point is driven home by the ghost of the wasted steer that went into his canned beef when it drives its horns into Snafu's rear.

In the later stages of the war after the defeat of Germany, the Snafu cartoons undergo some changes. Now that many of the men were experienced and informed, Snafu's role as a training tool was diminished and his role as an everyman representative of the now successful American soldier was enhanced.¹⁹ In *Hot Spot*, Snafu is shown working at super-human levels in the difficult climate and terrain of Iran, while in *No Buddy Atoll* and *Operation: Snafu*, Snafu takes on the role traditionally played by Bugs Bunny to a Japanese soldier's stereotypical Elmer Fudd. While these two cartoons feature a fair amount of bumbling antics by both participants, Snafu comes out on top because of his superior training and cunning.

These two later cartoons, *No Buddy Atoll* and *Operation: Snafu*, also serve as an illustration of the practice of using propaganda to dehumanize the enemy. In the early Snafu cartoons the Germans are depicted as menacing and powerful, constantly threatening Snafu because of his poor decisions. However, they are not often physically depicted, instead represented by swastika emblazoned airplanes or tanks. When they are shown, they are nearly identical rotund men or menacing thugs. In contrast, the Japanese are depicted as short, buck-toothed and wearing the circular glasses popularized in the American consciousness by Hideki Tojo, the prime minister of Japan during the war. While the Japanese were depicted as treacherous and dangerous in the early shorts, in these two later films they were shown as incompetent and doomed to failure. These characterizations were intended to both instill a respect for the abilities of the enemy while at the same time reassuring soldiers that the U.S. military and its troops were the finest on the planet.

In contrast to these light-hearted cartoons at the end of Snafu's run, the Army commissioned a related animated series titled *A Few Quick Facts*, featuring appearances by Snafu, but were not centered around him or structured in story form. Instead, while they still used some humor in their delivery, these shorts were meant to provide more direct instructions and reminders about proper conduct during the occupation and demobilization processes. Most of these shorts were not produced by the same Warner Brothers team that produced the majority of the Snafu shorts, but by teams at UPA, MGM and Disney.

The fact that the military sought to address these issues in the Private Snafu shorts tells us a great deal. First, it indicates that the command structure considered these specific issues to be of sufficient prevalence and importance to commission these shorts, targeted at the widest possible military audience. Second, this indicates that many of the malarial infections suffered by troops could have been prevented, many of the newly enlisted did not treat their non-commissioned officers with due respect, many of the troops were dissatisfied with their role in the army and that many spent their pay without forethought. Through Snafu, the military sought to replace these reckless G.I. behaviors with knowledge, common sense, frugality and a strong work ethic.

¹⁷ Michael Birdwell, "Technical fairy first class? Is this any way to Run an Army?: Private Snafu and World War II," in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 25, no. 2 (June 2005): 203-212, 204.

¹⁸ Referred to as *Inflation* later in this paper.

¹⁹ Culbert, "Humor," 92.

Snafu as the Everysoldier

Although Snafu in many ways could not be more fictional and unrealistic, in some ways he is the closest anyone ever arrived at depicting the typical U.S. soldier as a single character. Snafu was created from the start to be relatable to the average soldier in the U.S. Army. As a young white male, he fit the most basic of demographics, and his Brooklyn accent places him squarely among the working class.²⁰ Snafu's traditional family and "sweet heart gal", Sally-Lou, are also featured in the cartoons, making Snafu a part of a family and sexual structure familiar to the vast majority of his audience. The cartoons' frequent use of Christian imagery, with the Devil being a representative of poor moral decisions, shows an assumption of the dominant religion of its audience as well.

Beyond the assumptions of a straight and male audience, the Snafu cartoons show a candid representation of the era's perception of traditional masculinity and femininity. Semi-nude pinup girls are a constant presence in the background of the cartoons, and women in the cartoons are nearly always sexually objectified. When they objects of sexual desire, women are shown as potential security risks, as in *Going Home* and *Censored*, where Snafu's careful secrets to his girlfriend are immediately spread through local gossip and end up costing him or his unit their lives. Snafu also reinforces the role of man as provider, as in *Pay Day*, where Snafu gambles away his and Sally-Lou's future home. Additionally, in shorts such as *Infantry Blues*, Snafu reinforces the masculine ideal of suffering without complaint as an expression of toughness.

Snafu also gives us some evidence of the presence of materialism in American culture. The shorts *Pay Day* and *Inflation* both show a desire among Americans for material goods. Far from discouraging this value, the Snafu cartoons instead attempt to temper it with frugality and foresight. This is evidenced by the fact that while Snafu's purchases of souvenirs in *Pay Day* is derided, the idea of saving to afford a house in which to start a family upon his return to the States is lauded as a respectable goal.

As much as Snafu shows us which issues command felt pressing when it came to army discipline, he also shows as some of the attitudes towards military service among enlisted men. As many of the men in the army had been either drafted or had enlisted because they would inevitably be drafted, morale was not especially high at the outset of U.S. involvement in the war.²¹ As the Army was unlikely to use time and resources addressing a problem that didn't exist, this must have resulted in dissatisfaction widespread enough for it to have been featured in so many of the Snafu cartoons, contradicting the traditional narrative of military service that acted so powerfully without question or hesitation after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.²²

Snafu's Legacy

While the Private Snafu cartoons would never officially be released for public consumption, they would continue to cause ripples in American popular culture after the war. The most notable of these effects would be found in the work of Theodor Geisel, Philip D. Eastman, and Munro Leaf - all of whom went on to write children's literature in the post-war period. Works by these men used many of the same teaching methods of the Private Snafu cartoons,²³ specifically tropes of wish fulfillment gone wrong and teaching through negative example. Geisel's experience in the war was especially formative, and turned him into a skeptic on the subject of war, as evidenced by his works *Horton Hears a Who* and *The Butter Battle Book*.²⁴

The Snafu cartoons were almost completely lost for decades until the films fell into the hands of collectors and were finally released on VHS as *The Complete, Uncensored Private Snafu* in 1999. With this rediscovery Snafu became part of a new burgeoning interest in the cartoons of the Golden Age of Animation that were too "politically incorrect," featuring racial and sexual stereotypes considered unacceptable to modern sensibilities and as such were hidden away by their respective studios. This desire to hide outmoded social behaviors is unfortunate, as works like Snafu give us a candid insight into the thoughts and behavior of their intended audience.

While it can be easy to dismiss cartoons as a historical source, it has been made clear though the course of this paper that the Private Snafu cartoons represent a valuable primary source for historical analysis. Due to the cartoon's unique place as a pop culture object created for a very specific, but very large, audience analysis of Private Snafu as a primary source not only provides us with insight into the information the U.S. Army wanted to be disseminated to its troops, but also a picture of the weaknesses of U.S. Army organization that its command felt needed to be addressed. Not only do the cartoons tell us a great deal about the concerns and goals of the U.S. military command in regards to discipline and proper practice, but in their quest to be relatable to the broadest possible selection of troops, they also give us an honest representation of the typical American soldier and their culture in World War II.

²⁰ Smodin, *Animating Culture*, 79.

²¹ Birdwell, "Technical Fairy," 205.

²² Smodin, *Animating Culture*, 94.

²³ Nel, "Children's," 469.

²⁴ Ibid., 472.

Morton's Pet?: An Examination of the Nineteenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War, 1861-1863

JARED CROCKER

On April 16, 1861, Governor Oliver P. Morton of Indiana called upon “the loyal and patriotic men of this State” to aid the President in suppressing “an armed rebellion . . . organized in certain States of this Union.”¹ While this call was just for the first six regiments requested of Indiana under Lincoln’s initial call for 75,000 soldiers, it is fitting to apply this call to all soldiers from Indiana who volunteered to fight for the Union during the Civil War. Other calls for volunteers were subsequently issued as it became apparent that the war would not end quickly. One of these regiments formed under a subsequent call is arguably the most renowned regiment furnished by Indiana, the Nineteenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment of the renowned Iron Brigade.

History knows them as the “pet” of Governor Morton and by extension the Republican political machine in Indiana. Morton is widely considered one of the most important governors during the Civil War and was connected through friendship or by alliances to various politicians in Indiana and the nation. When referenced in secondary literature, the status of the relationship between the regiment and the governor is simply stated, “the Nineteenth was the Indiana governor’s pet,” a fact that was supposedly noticed by rival ambitious officers.² A more detailed reason why the regiment was a pet of Morton was because Morton, Solomon Meredith (the first colonel of the Nineteenth), and Company B of the Nineteenth were from Wayne County.³ However, when primary sources are consulted, it is shown that the regiment did not materially benefit from being the “pet regiment” of Governor Morton. In fact, there is little evidence that the regiment was treated any differently or had anything in its organization that truly set it apart from the majority of regiments in the Federal Army. If any favoritism was shown to the regiment it was not shown to the regiment per se but to the regiment’s first colonel, Solomon Meredith, an unsavory political operator who used his connections to advance himself through the ranks and win glory for himself. Regiments that were officered by political appointees with little experience tended to have problems: they were undisciplined in camp and ineffective during drill and on the battlefield. The Nineteenth Indiana experienced all of those problems, but between August 1862 and July 1863 produced a fighting record that made it one of the best regiments in the Army of the Potomac. This is mainly due to the training and iron discipline of their most formative brigadier, John Gibbon.

Once civil war began, Indiana found itself woefully unprepared. On February 11, 1861, Indiana had merely “\$10,368.58 in actual cash” in its coffers, and the majority of this “could not be touched for general or military purposes.”⁴ This lack of funds was of serious consequence as the federal government was “unable to furnish clothing and equipment required by the large force so suddenly brought into service.”⁵ Thus, it fell upon the state to provide equipment for its soldiers.⁶ Governor Morton stated at the beginning of the war, “The stock of arms on hand belonging to the Government was small and generally of a very inferior quality.”⁷ In spite of laws to reorganize the Indiana Militia in 1861, there were only a dozen companies with an aggregate strength of “about five hundred men.”⁸ These laws, therefore, were effectively useless. What these laws did allow for was the conferring of “honorary military titles.”⁹ This rendered the quality of the men as “wholly raw and inexperienced.”¹⁰

The regiment was the mainstay of the American Army in the mid-nineteenth century. In the volunteer service the regiment was recruited from a single state and consisted of two elements, the staff and the line, with an official aggregate strength in excess of 1,000 men.¹¹ The line was divided into ten companies of 101 men each; these companies, when at all possible, were recruited from a single county.¹² These numbers, though, were the “on paper” recruitment strength. As time went on, even before a regiment went into combat for the first time, their numbers would fall

¹ Oliver P. Morton of Indiana: Sketch of His Life and Public Services (Indianapolis: Journal Company, 1876), 15.

² Lance J. Herdegen, *The Men Stood Like Iron: How the Iron Brigade Won its Name* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 29.

³ Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade: A Military History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), 21.

⁴ W.H.H. Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion: Report of the Adjutant General*, Vol. 1. (1869. Reprint, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1960), 3.

⁵ W.H.H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana*. Vol. 1. (Indianapolis: Alexander H Conner, 1869), 311.

⁶ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 8-9.

⁷ W.H.H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana*. Vol. 1. (Indianapolis: Alexander H Conner, 1869), 311.

⁸ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 2.

¹⁰ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 106-107.

¹¹ The “line” refers to the actual combat component of the regiment and this name comes as a result of their use of linear tactics and their lack of specialty; for example, European armies contained regiments of guard units and grenadiers.; William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865: A Treatise on the extent and nature of the mortuary losses in the Union regiments, with full and exhaustive statistics compiled from the official records on file in the state military bureaus and at Washington*. (Albany: Albany Publishing Company 1889), 5.

¹² Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*, 5.

below the initial muster count (or their strength on paper) as men died from disease, deserted, were discharged or placed on detached assignments, or transferred to other regiments. The Nineteenth Indiana had an aggregate strength of 1,054 men on their muster date of July 29, 1861, but when they went into their first major engagement at Brawner's Farm on August 28, 1862, the Nineteenth had an aggregate strength of approximately half their original recruitment number.¹³

It has been noted that one of the reasons the Nineteenth was a pet of the governor lay in the fact that Wayne County provided a company for the regiment. The following Indiana counties provided companies for the Nineteenth: Delaware, Elkhart, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Owen, Randolph, and Wayne. Wayne County was the home county of both Morton and Meredith. Using William F. Fox's study on Civil War regiments as a guide, it is apparent that Company B was not special; thus detracting from the idea that this company, and by extension the regiment, were the favorite of Governor Morton.

Wars are fought by the youth of a country, and this war was no different. Federal soldiers in the Civil War period were a mean age of 25 with the mode age being 18.¹⁴ Company B more or less matched the national average, with a mean age of 21 and a mode age of 18.¹⁵ European armies of the period often designated that the premier company of a regiment be comprised of the tallest men in the regiment. In Fox's treatise he states that the average height of a Union soldier was five feet eight and one-quarter inches; for Company B the average height was five feet eight and two-thirds inches.¹⁶ Company B did possess a greater proportion of farmers than the national average, but this can easily be excused by acknowledging that in the antebellum period, Indiana, like other states in the Old Northwest Territory, was largely a rural state, thus it would naturally have a greater number of enlisted farmers. While in other occupational fields Company B does not match the national average. The men were simply representatives of the vast majority of American society west of the Appalachian Mountains, in 1861. Company B could be unique in that only a single soldier was of non-native birth, but as Indiana had not received many of the immigrants that had begun inundating the states east of the Appalachian Mountains and north and west of Indiana, this is not a surprise or reason to mark the company as any more than a simple oddity.¹⁷

Another way to see if the regiment deserved the designation of "pet" is to examine whether any favoritism was displayed in its officer corps. When Indiana entered the war "there were but few men of any military skill or experience."¹⁸ On July 22, 1861, Congress conferred upon the governors of the various states the right "to commission all regimental and company officer required for the volunteers."¹⁹ This assignment of officers was a very important piece of patronage that a governor could wield in any way he desired. Like all governors, Morton appointed the few men with any prior military experience to positions within the line and staff of the state's military. To satisfy various political factions, he then turned to filling the rest of the positions with the leading men of the state.²⁰

Among the first of the officers appointed to the Nineteenth was Solomon Meredith of Wayne County. Meredith was a native of Guilford County, North Carolina, and a member of the yeomen class, but moved to Indiana as a young adult in May 1829.²¹ The yeoman class was the echelon of Southern whites who owned land but did not own slaves in the antebellum period. Meredith would become a fixture in Indiana's political life, holding a variety of positions.²² As one of the leading members of the Republican Party in Indiana he represented Indiana at the 1860 Republican Convention in Chicago, being "one of the most useful and energetic abettors."²³

For the ranks of lieutenant colonel and major, Morton appointed Robert A. Cameron and Alois Bachman respectively. Cameron was a native New Yorker who arrived in Indiana in 1843.²⁴ Cameron graduated from the Indiana

¹³ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 561 and 564.; In John Gibbon's report of the Battle at Brawner's Farm he stated that his brigade lost a total of "751 men, or considerably over one-third the command." Assuming that 751 men was one-third of the command then the brigade would have totaled 2,253 men which divided by four (the number of regiments in the brigade) then each regiment of the brigade would have 563 men in each regiment. See John Gibbon's Report for the engagement near Gainesville and the Battle of Bull Run, September 3, 1862 *Official Records of The War of the Rebellion*, Series 1, 53 vols., (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1880-1898), 12: 377.

¹⁴ Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*, 5.

¹⁵ Muster Roll, Company B Nineteenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry, July 29, 1861, microfilm, slides 5-6, 5054. Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook 1861-1864: Clothing and equipage Book Description, Co. B Muster and Payrolls. Indiana State Archives, Commission on Public Records. Hereafter the Indiana State Archives is cited as ISA.

¹⁶ Muster Roll, Company B Nineteenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry, ISA.

¹⁷ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era: 1850-1860*. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 127-128.

¹⁸ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 106.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 127-128 and 129-130.; Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, 59.

²¹ Theo T. Scribner, *Indiana's Roll of Honor*, Vol. 2 (Indianapolis: A.D. Streight, 1866), 77.

²² *Ibid.*, 78-81.

²³ *Ibid.*, 79, 81.

²⁴ James Sutherland, *Biographical Sketches of Members of the 41st General Assembly*, State of Indiana, (Indianapolis, 1861), 91, quoted in Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, 21.

Medical College in 1850.²⁵ Similar to Morton and Meredith, Cameron was a pre-Kansas-Nebraska Democrat who joined the emerging Republican Party in the mid-1850s. Bachman was described by one of his contemporaries as “young, rich, educated, with a physical presence rarely equaled.”²⁷ Prior to the war, Bachman formed and commanded one of the few active militia companies in Indiana.²⁸

As the war progressed, vacancies opened among the ranks of the officer corps of the various regiments. Volunteer companies and regiments were local units whose men and officers were often intimately connected through bonds of kinship and friendship, thus promotion by seniority was deemed ineffective in the volunteer service.²⁹ Since this was the case, it was deemed that if men from the outside – regardless if it was at the company or regimental level – were promoted and given command over men of whom they had no prior connection, it would cause “the greatest injury and demoralization” to the men and be counterproductive.³⁰ Any vacancy in line officer positions was filled by the “promotion of the next officer in the ‘regular line’ in each company.”³¹ When vacancies occurred in the staff component of a regiment, the position was filled by promoting officers from the company level of the regiment. This was the general rule. The only times that this rule was not followed was when the next officer in line was rendered unacceptable due to “incompetency, immoral habits, or unfitness be presented by the regimental officers.”³² Just as the governor had the right to commission the original officers, he retained the right for the entirety of the war to commission new officers to fill these vacancies.³³ The Nineteenth promotions at the company were determined by seniority within the company, with only one exception as the next available officer had not received enough experience to take command of the company should that need arise.³⁴

Just as the ranks of the officer corps thinned, the ranks of the enlisted men also diminished for many of the same reasons, but rarely would the enlisted strength of a regiment ever approach the strength it possessed on its date of muster.³⁵ This did not mean that officers would not try and reinforce a regiment. For example, Brigadier General John Gibbon requested that Major General George B. McClellan endorse his request for Morton to fill the depleted ranks of the Nineteenth – one of the regiments in his brigade – from the newly formed, but not yet equipped, regiments, and McClellan gave this request his endorsement.³⁶

Brigadier General Thomas J. Wood also requested that Governor Morton replenish the ranks of the Indiana regiments under his command.³⁷ Wood, though, inadvertently stated in an August 22, 1862, letter why Morton, like other governors, would not fill the ranks of existing regiments. Wood stated that by reinforcing regiments the number of officers would not be increased.³⁸ For Morton, new regiments meant a need for more officers allowing him to spread this patronage even though it denied depleted regiments much needed manpower. It is for this reason that the Nineteenth would never enter battle with more than half of its original muster strength, thus arguing against the Nineteenth Indiana being a “pet” regiment.

At the time of the Civil War, armies were transitioning from the musket, which had been the mainstay of armies for the preceding two centuries, to the rifle musket and the first viable breech loading and repeating rifles; both of which increased an infantryman’s range, accuracy, and rounds fired per minute.³⁹ As the federal government was ill-equipped to arm the hundreds of thousands of volunteers at the start of the war, it was the responsibility of the equally ill-equipped states to arm their volunteers, prior to entering the federal service. Indiana, for example, possessed “less than five hundred stand of effective first class small arms” at the start of the war.⁴⁰

²⁵ Sutherland, *Biographical Sketches*, 91.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ David Stevenson, *Indiana’s Roll of Honor*, Vol. 1. (Indianapolis: self-published, 1864), 381.

²⁸ Stevenson, *Indiana’s Roll of Honor*, 382.

²⁹ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 110.

³⁰ *Ibid.* The exception, though, was in the newly organized regiments officers were appointed from preexisting regiments at the governor’s discretion.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁴ Letter, Solomon Meredith to Oliver P. Morton, February 15, 1862. Oliver P. Morton Papers, Microfilm, ISA.

³⁵ The Nineteenth Indiana was fortunate to report to their station with a full complement of enlisted personal. In an August 22, 1862, letter Thomas Wood wrote to Governor Morton requesting more men be sent to the Indiana regiments in his division as they had been dispatched without their full complement of men. See letter, Thomas J. Wood to Oliver P. Morton, August 22, 1862, Collection number SC 2820, Oliver P. Morton Letters 1862-1864, Indiana Historical Society. Hereafter the Indiana Historical Society is cited IHS.

³⁶ Letter, John Gibbon to Seth Williams (Assistant Adjutant General of the Army of the Potomac), October 7, 1862, Collection number M 0203, Solomon Meredith Papers, IHS.

³⁷ Letter, TJ Wood to OP Morton, August 22, 1862, Oliver P. Morton Letters 1862-1864, IHS.

³⁸ Wood to Morton, August 22, 1862.

³⁹ Earl J. Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat: Reality and Myth* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

⁴⁰ Terrell, *Indiana in the War of Rebellion*, 1: 3.

Since Indiana was initially responsible for arming its soldiers, it is reasonable to suspect that if the Nineteenth was a particular favorite of Governor Morton, or of any major player in state or federal politics, then that regiment should have been armed with one of the various types of rifle muskets or breech loading rifles. Morton stated in an address to the Indiana General Assembly that the State of Indiana ceased to arm the vast majority of its soldiers at the request of the federal government, as the federal government would arm soldiers in the federal service.⁴¹ Thus, if Governor Morton showed particular favoritism to the Nineteenth in terms of arming the regiment, it would have been seen at the onset of the war.

The State of Indiana armed all or the majority of the Eighth, Seventeenth, Nineteenth, Twenty-First, and Twenty-Sixth Infantry Regiments between June 30, 1861, and September 7, 1861.⁴² Of these regiments, the Seventeenth, Nineteenth, Twenty-First, and Twenty-Sixth received an assortment of arms including Enfield Rifle Muskets, unspecified rifle muskets, percussion muskets, and muskets altered to percussion.⁴³ Of these regiments, the Nineteenth received only 192 Enfields – out of 929 firearms issued – as opposed to the Twenty-Sixth who received 182 Enfields and 124 unspecified rifled muskets out of 910 firearms issued.⁴⁴ Of the 666 firearms issued to the Eighth in this two-month period all firearms were one of the varieties of rifle muskets available.⁴⁵ Thus, it can be concluded that the Nineteenth initially was not armed more adequately than the other regiments armed by Indiana in 1861.

The Nineteenth was never armed with anything better than the Springfield or the Enfield. If a letter of request by Meredith for firearms existed, it was the federal government, not the state government that rearmed the regiments, as Morton had stated before the General Assembly.⁴⁶ In a January 1862 report on his division (the division to which the Nineteenth was assigned to), Major General Irvin McDowell stated that nearly all regiments in his division were armed with some form of rifle musket including the Springfield, the preferred rifle musket of the Army of the Potomac.⁴⁷ Even though the Nineteenth was the only regiment to possess the Springfield in its brigade, at least one other regiment was rearmed with the Springfield within a month, long before the brigade entered into battle.⁴⁸ It is reasonable to suspect that if the Nineteenth were a “pet” regiment then they should have received firearms other than the Springfield or the Enfield, which were being issued to virtually all other infantry regiments in the Federal Army.

Firearms were only a part of what made an infantryman complete. The soldier also needed clothing, food, and tents. Governor Morton could have influenced the supplying of the regiment. “During the first months of the war there was no Federal Quartermaster in the State, and the general government furnished no supplies of any kind for the equipment of Indiana troops” so “all necessary supplies were furnished by the State.”⁴⁹ After the regiments entered federal service, the federal government provided for the majority of the needs of the men. At times, though, “the State also furnished larger supplies from time to time, since that, were required for the health and prompt equipment of our troops, and where the Government has failed or was unable to furnish them in time.”⁵⁰

Camp Morton served as the initial training ground for many of the volunteer companies in Indiana. William R. Moore, of Company K of the Nineteenth, noted that while at Camp Morton, he and all the other men ate very well and had access to daily rations of soft bread and “plenty of other good provisions.”⁵¹ The companies of the Nineteenth had not been singled out for better treatment, as all companies assembled at Camp Morton at the time received the same food. This richness of food, though, was not to last when the Nineteenth reached the Army of the Potomac. In June 1862, the regiment returned to garrison duty at Fort Craig after many weeks of campaigning in northern Virginia; William R. Moore wrote home to state that for the first time in weeks the regiment received soft bread. Moore found this fact worthy of note as during this campaign the regiment had only hardtack and salt pork.⁵²

Before the Nineteenth was stationed at Fort Craig, the regiment was stationed on the Kalorama Heights. Disease became rampant at this camp site as it was a plowed up tobacco field with “warm, flat, and unpalatable” water.⁵³

⁴¹ Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, 1: 311.

⁴² Regiments listed in the order of the date that they were armed.

⁴³ Inventory, July 22, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 70-71, ISA.; Inventory, August 5, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 84-85, ISA.; Inventory, September 3, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 95, ISA.

⁴⁴ Inventory, August 5, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 84-85, ISA.; Inventory, September 3, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 95, ISA.; Inventory, September 3, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 95, ISA.

⁴⁵ Inventory, September 7, 1861, Ordinance Records 1861-1863, Microfilm, 98, ISA.

⁴⁶ Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, 1: 311.

⁴⁷ Irvin McDowell's Report on the state of his division, January 26, 1862, Official Records of The War of the Rebellion, Series 1, 53 vols., (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1880-1898), 5: 708.

⁴⁸ Rufus R. Dawes, Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers (Marietta: E.R. Alderman & Sons, 1890), 35.

⁴⁹ Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, 311.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ William R. Moore, Draft I, 69, Collection number M 0212. William Robey Moore Papers and Manuscripts, IHS.

⁵² Moore, Manuscript I, 69.

⁵³ Letter, A.F. Scott to Oliver P. Morton, January 11, 1862, Governor Oliver P. Morton Papers, Microfilm. ISA.

The regiment was moved to the opposite bank of the Potomac, but they were camped “in an old field” where they were “compelled to work in ditches during the day and stand on picket at night for some two weeks,” during which time it rained nearly every day and the men lacked adequate tents and blankets.⁵⁴ These inadequate tents had been provided by the State of Indiana.⁵⁵ By December, the Nineteenth was suffering from much higher sickness and mortality rates than any other regiment stationed along the Potomac.⁵⁶ This compelled the army high command to once again transfer the regiment, this time to Fort Craig, where their health improved.⁵⁷ It is highly doubtful that Morton had any role in the reassigning of the Nineteenth, as A.F. Scott, as agent of the state, wrote to inform Morton of the condition of the Indiana regiments along the Potomac.

As regiments were supplied by the Federal Government, there was little that the State of Indiana could do for its soldiers. William R. Moore noted two instances of the federal government aiding the regiment in the early months of the war. Moore noted that the uniforms issued by the State of Indiana were of a poor quality; in fact, after three months they began to fall apart, earning the regiment the name the “ragged assed Nineteenth.”⁵⁸ Meredith took this issue not to Morton but to President Lincoln. After Meredith explained the situation, Lincoln responded that he would ensure that the regiment received new uniforms, and he did.⁵⁹ The second event occurred while the regiment provided a guard detail at Arlington House. Arlington House served as the headquarters of Major General McDowell’s division. On what Moore called a “cold frosty morning,” McDowell inquired as to the location of his overcoat and Moore made it clear to McDowell that the regiment had none. According to Moore, McDowell responded that he would see to the issue and as there is no complaint about McDowell not seeing to this, it is assumed the regiment received new overcoats.⁶⁰

However, these equipment deficiencies occurred largely at the beginning of the war and also after the ignominious series of defeats culminating at Fredericksburg and the subsequent Mud March. The Mud March is the name of the campaign that Ambrose Burnside attempted in the first weeks of 1863 after the fiasco at Gettysburg. The objective was to turn the flank of the Army of Northern Virginia, but it became bogged down due to inclement weather on the north bank of the Rappahannock and was cancelled. After Joseph Hooker was appointed to command the Army of the Potomac, the Indiana regiments no longer suffered from supply deficiencies. It was reported that in April, less than a month before the Battle of Chancellorsville, the morale of the men was very good and they “were well clothed . . . [and had] good and healthy food.”⁶¹

Regiments were but a small part of an army. These were grouped in brigades and in the federal service these brigades tended to come from a number of states; this reduced the power that a single state politician could have over the regiment. Even though a state politician had little direct influence on most brigades in the federal service, there was indirect influence that could be applied. This indirect influence was channeled through the manipulation of federal politicians and bureaucrats. In the case of the Nineteenth, it was at the brigade level that any favoritism shown to the Nineteenth could be observed. It was noted that “in the politically charged army,” the favoritism shown to the Nineteenth at the brigade level was well known to other officers.⁶²

The Nineteenth was initially assigned to the brigade of Brigadier General Rufus King alongside three Wisconsin regiments. Upon the reforms in the Army of the Potomac in the winter of 1861 and 1862, a new commander was needed for King’s Brigade and this new commander was the recently promoted Brigadier General John Gibbon. Gibbon had been a career regular army officer since his 1847 graduation from West Point until he received a commission in the volunteer service in 1862. Gibbon was one of the officers from the seceded states who chose to stay loyal to the federal government.

Meredith had high praise for the military precision of his regiment in drill and presentation and cited guests, such as Lincoln, certain federal generals, and British officers praising the regiment.⁶³ Regular officers thought otherwise. Irvin McDowell, in a report on the state of his division, noted that the Nineteenth was the least disciplined regiment in King’s Brigade.⁶⁴ In fact, McDowell noted a “special report will be made as to this regiment after a special

⁵⁴ Letter, A.F. Scott to O.P. Morton. January 11, 1862, Governor Oliver P. Morton’s Papers, ISA.

⁵⁵ Letter, David Bachman to Oliver P. Morton, December 2, 1861, Governor Oliver P. Morton’s Papers, Microfilm, ISA. In the same letter it was noted that in contrast to the Nineteenth Indiana, the Sixteenth and Twenty Seventh Indiana were in a good condition.

⁵⁶ Letter, A.F. Scott to O.P. Morton, January 11, 1862, Governor Oliver P. Morton’s Papers, ISA.

⁵⁷ Scott to Morton, January 11, 1862.

⁵⁸ William R. Moore, 87, William Robey Moore Papers and Manuscripts, IHS.

⁵⁹ Moore, 87-88.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶¹ Letter, P.L. Martin to Oliver P. Morton, April 15, 1863, Governor Oliver P. Morton Papers, Microfilm, ISA.

⁶² Herdegen, *The Men Stood Like Iron*, 29.

⁶³ Solomon Meredith Diary for 1862, Thursday May 22, 1862.; Meredith Diary for 1862, Saturday, July 12, 1862.; Meredith Diary for 1862, Thursday March 27, 1862, Solomon Meredith Papers, IHS.

⁶⁴ Irvin McDowell’s Report on the state of his division, January 26, 1862, Official Records of The War of the Rebellion, 5: 708.

inspection.”⁶⁵ It is quite likely certain problems with the regiment were bound to be a result of their indifferent officers who enjoyed the privilege of being excused from certain duties by General King.⁶⁶

The men and officers of the Nineteenth would find that Gibbon was even more concerned about the discipline of the men than McDowell. In a letter to his wife, Gibbon stated he was “hard at work” drilling the brigade and was attempting to “indoctrinate the officers and men into the ways of the regulars.”⁶⁷ While on campaign in the late spring and summer 1862, Gibbon noted that the brigade was discarding at an alarming rate supplies issued to them by the federal government. In response to this Gibbon issued General Order 58 stating he was unsatisfied with the amount of baggage that his brigade discarded; of his four regiments, he called out the Nineteenth as the regiment most guilty of wasteful discarding of baggage.⁶⁸ Gibbon ordered that if the men of the regiment were not in possession of the clothing that had been issued in May, then their pay would be deducted for the cost of the missing clothing even if the soldier had yet to exceed his yearly allowance for clothing.⁶⁹

Meredith and the Nineteenth had a particular problem with Gibbon and his command style. Private Moore did not take kindly to this, for as a volunteer he merely wished to “know enough of military requirements to put down the rebellion” and then once it was done he was “going home to do other things.”⁷⁰ Many of the other enlisted personnel thought along those lines. Another soldier wrote of Gibbon, “if we ever get in a fight he will be the first to fall.”⁷¹ It is reasonable to suspect that other soldiers in the Nineteenth had similar thoughts of killing Gibbon – though none acted on this desire. In the soldier’s mind, killing Gibbon would have been for the ‘betterment’ of the regiment by eliminating someone for whom they had no respect and who appeared to have no respect for them.

Colonel Meredith took a much more subtle way to try to improve the regiment and remove a man with whom he did not get along. At first Meredith attempted to have Brigade Orders Number 58 rescinded, but he was unsuccessful.⁷² As a player in Indiana politics, Meredith had a number of connections and he attempted to use them to convince McDowell to transfer the regiment to another brigade.⁷³ It was within the purview of divisional and corps commanders to shift regiments within their units to accommodate a variety of issues, such as problems among the officers.⁷⁴

Two allies that Meredith called upon were fellow Hoosiers: Secretary of the Interior Caleb Blood Smith and Senator Joseph A. Wright. On June 18, 1862, Smith wrote a letter to Major General Irvin McDowell explaining his thoughts on the situation in Gibbon’s brigade. He stated there was “a want of cordial feeling and harmony” and the situation was “very uncomfortable [for the regiment] and may prove detrimental to the service.”⁷⁵ While acknowledging his lack of military knowledge and stating that what he knew of Gibbon’s military record led him to have no complaints, he saw “that a mutual confidence and respect between officers and men is an essential element of strength in an army.”⁷⁶ Wright was much more subtle in his request to McDowell than Smith. He simply requested that McDowell place Meredith and the regiment in “a situation as may be in accordance with his [Meredith’s] wishes” so as to allow Meredith and the regiment to be in a situation where they might “distinguish themselves in maintaining the flag of our glorious Union.”⁷⁷ What Meredith clearly wanted was the transfer of the regiment. Morton’s connection to this event is unknown. It would be surprising, however, if Morton was not aware of the issue. The fact that Morton did not attempt to affect a transfer of the regiment shows that it was not his “pet.”

While Meredith was unable to get the regiment transferred, he received something much more valuable. John Gibbon was promoted to command the Second Division of the First Corps after the Battle of Antietam, and Meredith

⁶⁵ McDowell’s Report on the state of his division, January 26, 1862, Official Records of The War of the Rebellion, 5: 708.

⁶⁶ Gibbon, *Recollections*, 35-36.

⁶⁷ Letter, John Gibbon to Frances Gibbon, May 15, 1862, Box 1, Folder 2, John Gibbon Manuscript and Papers, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, quoted in Steven J. Wright, “John Gibbon and the Black Hat Brigade,” in *Giants in Their Tall Black Hats: Essays on the Iron Brigade*, ed., Alan T. Nolan and Sharon Eggleston Vipond (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 55. Quoted from *Iron Brigade General 39*, George G. Meade Jr., editor *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, Major General, United States Army* (New York, 1913), II, 125.

⁶⁸ Orders, Brigade Orders Number 58 for Gibbon’s Brigade. June 13, 1862, Solomon Meredith Papers, IHS.

⁶⁹ Letter Solomon Meredith to JP Wood. June 26, 1862. Solomon Meredith Papers. IHS.; Brigade Orders No. 58. Solomon Meredith Papers. IHS.

⁷⁰ William R. Moore. Manuscript I, 101. William Robey Moore Letters and Manuscripts. IHS.

⁷¹ Thomas Crull. Manuscript. Thomas Crull Letters. Privately held by Thomas R. Pratt, Santa Barbra California, quoted in Alan D. Gaff, *On Many a Bloody Field: Four Years in the Iron Brigade* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 133.

⁷² Letter, Solomon Meredith to J.P. Wood, June 26, 1862, Solomon Meredith Diary and Papers. IHS.

⁷³ Initially, Meredith in the company of Indiana’s two senators and the Secretary of the Interior, attempted to convince Secretary of War Stanton to transfer the regiment, Stanton refused this request. Meredith Diary for 1862. Tuesday, June 17, 1862. Solomon Meredith Papers. IHS.

⁷⁴ John Gibbon gave one such an example of this in his *Personal Recollections*. After he was given a division following the Battle of Antietam, he shifted regiments around to produce a combination of brigade commanders that was to his liking. Performing such transfers was fairly easy in the Federal army as senior colonels of brigades often commanded those brigades as a result of a dearth of brigadier generals. John Gibbon, *Personal Recollections of The Civil War* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 100.

⁷⁵ Letter, Caleb B. Smith to Irvin McDowell, June 18, 1862, Box 13, Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook, 1861-1864, Microfilm. ISA.

⁷⁶ Letter, C.B. Smith to Irvin McDowell, June 18, 1862, Box 13, Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook, 1861-1864, ISA.

⁷⁷ Letter, Joseph A. Wright to Irvin McDowell, June 18, 1862, Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook 1861-1864, Microfilm. ISA.

received command of the now famous Iron Brigade, even though other colonels in the brigade were senior to Meredith.⁷⁸

Gibbon, in his *Personal Recollections of the Civil War*, wrote about Meredith receiving command of his old brigade. Even though Gibbon never referred to Meredith by name he wrote that Meredith achieved the rank of brigadier general of volunteers “by political influence . . . a position he was in no way fitted to fill” and “returned to the army with a strong letter from a prominent politician requesting that he be placed in command of my old Brigade.”⁷⁹ Gibbon explained that Meredith received the promotion for “distinguished services in the battle of Antietam, where the Lt. Colonel of this regiment was killed commanding the regiment.”⁸⁰ Meredith, however, was not even on the field at Antietam, let alone in command of the regiment. He was on leave as a result of wounds he had received at the Battle of Brawner’s Farm and was suffering from exhaustion. Gibbon’s suspicions that Meredith received his promotion due to political means were confirmed when he confronted Joseph Hooker over this issue, as it was partly due to Hooker’s recommendation that Meredith received a brigadier generalship. Hooker told Gibbon, after extensive inquiry, “the officer had so many strong friends that he could not resist their solicitations!”⁸¹ It is reasonable to suspect that Morton was one of these friends, but he would have been only one of many friends. It was simply strong connections that won Meredith the promotion. Hooker had made it no secret that he desired the command of the Army of the Potomac, thus securing Meredith’s promotion and putting him in the good graces of men who could place him in that command.

Meredith won more than just the command of the brigade; he won the fight over which officers became the major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel of the regiment. With the respite that occurred after the Battle of Antietam, John Gibbon recommended to George McClellan that Captain John M. Lindley be promoted to lieutenant colonel and Captain William W. Dudley to the rank of major. McClellan endorsed these promotions in a letter to Governor Morton on October 2, 1862.⁸²

Meredith, not surprisingly, had other thoughts about who should fill the vacated positions of lieutenant colonel and major. Meredith recommended to Morton a different arrangement, depriving Captain Lindley of this promotion. Lindley found this arrangement unacceptable as both men promoted (one of whom was Captain Dudley) were both junior to him, and he expressed this opinion to Morton.⁸³ As Lindley was not endorsed by Meredith, it can be assumed that he lacked the correct connections and relationships to those men who could make promotions happen.

Meredith got his promotion to brigadier general soon after this round of promotions, necessitating the filling of his position as colonel. It was typical for the next officer in line of seniority in the staff component to receive promotion when a vacancy opened. Thus it is natural to assume that the newly promoted Samuel Williams and Dudley would both be promoted, thus making the only vacancy that of major. But it was not that easy. With the colonelcy now vacant it was the coveted prize among the officers of the regiment.

Captain Luther B. Wilson of Company E, who was on leave, returned and claimed that he had a commission directly from Morton himself installing him as the new colonel of the Nineteenth.⁸⁴ Needless to say this caused issues in the regiment’s officer corps as the colonelcy was a coveted post for many other officers of the regiment. Even though Meredith had no active role in the regiment (as he was now a brigadier) he saw that it was necessary to give his opinion on the matter. Meredith only knew of this situation from hearsay. He may have wanted Wilson in command of the regiment to appease one of his political allies. Meredith stated that while he would “do anything in his power” for “John Bunson [the political ally in question] and his friends” and “accommodate them through Captain Wilson” it could not be done due to the current political environment of the regiment.⁸⁵ The officers and the men would not accept a Wilson promotion over the heads of his superiors and it would damage the morale of the regiment, particularly now that the army was once again on an active campaign.⁸⁶ Finally this issue was sorted out with the promotion of Williams and Dudley to Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel, respectively.

⁷⁸ When Rufus King was promoted to divisional command, Colonel Lysander Cutler, commander of the Sixth Wisconsin in this brigade, took temporary command of the brigade as the senior colonel. Meredith Diary for 1862, Thursday, March 13, 1862, Solomon Meredith Papers, IHS. Thus simply by seniority, which was one of the key determinisms of promotion, Colonel Lysander Cutler should have been promoted to command the brigade permanently, after Gibbon’s promotion, instead of temporarily as he did. The fact that there were other colonels his senior in the brigade is stated by Meredith himself. Solomon Meredith Diary for 1862, Thursday, March 13, 1862, Solomon Meredith Papers, IHS.

⁷⁹ Gibbon, *Personal Recollections of The Civil War*, 107-108.

⁸⁰ Gibbon, 108.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁸² Letter, George B. McClellan to Oliver P. Morton, October 2, 1861. 19th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Correspondence, Microfilm. ISA.

⁸³ Letter, John M. Lindley to Oliver P. Morton, December 2, 1862, Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook, 1861-1864. Microfilm. ISA.

⁸⁴ Letter, Solomon Meredith to Oliver P. Morton, December 2, 1862, Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook, 1861-1864. Microfilm. ISA.

⁸⁵ Letter, Solomon Meredith to OP Morton, December 2, 1862, Nineteenth Indiana Letterbook ISA.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

The Nineteenth on the whole was no different from other regiments raised by the State of Indiana or those of the other states, thus its designation as a “pet” of Governor Oliver P. Morton needs to be investigated. The enlisted soldiers and the officers were typical of a nineteenth-century regiment. The appointment of Solomon Meredith, while political, was not the only one Governor Morton made nor was Morton only indebted to him and other officers in the regiment. The Nineteenth also did not receive any better treatment than any other regiment, when they were armed and supplied by the state. After the regiment entered into federal service it did not receive better treatment in the field. While the rank and file did not particularly benefit from their connection to Governor Morton, Meredith did benefit occasionally. His connections to the Indiana political machine gave him to leverage to get his way, most important to get a star on his shoulder straps and command of the Iron Brigade.

It is necessary to state that if the Nineteenth was a “pet” of Morton as a result of the favored status that Meredith possessed, then “pet regiments” abounded in the Civil War, for politics was a pastime in nineteenth-century American life. Nearly every single officer, even West Pointers and noncommissioned officers, at one time or another attempted to use their political connections to obtain higher commands or they were the beneficiaries of their higher command as a result of who they knew. Thus, Meredith, and not the Nineteenth Indiana, was Morton’s true pet.

Russian Jews and the 1917 Revolution

AARON LEVINE

The Russian Revolution of 1917 drastically altered Russia in almost every way imaginable, from politics and economics to foreign policy and civil rights. An empire became a nominal republic, ascendant liberal and leftist politicians replaced a tsar, and a new policy toward national and ethnic minorities began to emerge. Each change affected the Jewish population, a small but significant portion of the overall Russian population. Despite this, the impact of the Revolution on Russian Jews has yet to be fully investigated. While the initial euphoria of the Revolution caused the greatest expansion of civil rights for Jews since their arrival in Russia and muted anti-Semitic sentiment and violence, the revolutionary fervor eventually faltered and the major problems and fears of the time reemerged as the dominant concerns. Russia then began to revert back to its anti-Semitic tendencies, to the great detriment of the Russian-Jewish community.

To investigate the events of 1917, it is important to first understand the status of Jews in Russia prior to that year. Before the late eighteenth century, the Russian Empire did not have a significant Jewish population. As a result of the three partitions of Poland-Lithuania, the Russian Empire acquired not just a significant amount of new territory on its western front, but also hundreds of thousands of new Jewish residents.¹ Through the early twentieth century, the Jewish population increased in number partially through other annexations, but mostly through natural population growth. By 1914, more than five million Jews lived in the Russian Empire, though they comprised only slightly more than 3 percent of the total population.²

Through the onset of the 1917 Revolution, the vast majority of Jews lived in these western territories collectively named the Pale of Settlement. In 1791, Catherine II approved a decision that essentially created the Pale as the restrictive area for Jewish habitation, though the official name for the area was created under Nicholas I in the early nineteenth century.³ The Pale stretched from the Baltic Sea, along the Russian borders with Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and Romania, and extended south to encompass some regions on the Black Sea. It included major cities, for Jews and Russia more generally, like Odessa, Vilna, Warsaw, and Kiev, belying the common misconception that all Jews in the Pale lived in *shtetls* (rural Jewish villages). The 1897 census, the last comprehensive one until the 1920s, found that 94 percent of all Russian Jews – just under five million – lived within the territory of the Pale, though they comprised only 11.6 percent of the Pale’s total population.⁴ Though these numbers may have changed by 1917, it is important to remember that the vast majority of Jews lived on a major front of World War I and were actually distant from the critical revolutionary centers of Petrograd and Moscow.

In some limited circumstances, however, Jews could live and conduct business outside the Pale. Reforms under Alexander II in the 1860s, often called the emancipation of the Jews, allowed settlement throughout Russia, but only if the person in question met certain additional standards. On November 27, 1861, Alexander II agreed to a change in the law permitting “Jews possessing certificates of the learned degree...to serve in all Government offices, without their being confined to the Pale established for the residence of Jews.”⁵ It was around this time that significant Jewish communities began to grow in larger Russian cities. This was especially true of Petrograd, which attracted many industrialists, bankers, and students from the Pale.⁶

Since the Russian Empire’s acquisition of a significant Jewish population in the 1790s, government policy had alternated between attempts at assimilating the new population and restricting its civil rights. Between that time and the onset of the Revolution, the Russian Empire experienced a series of violent anti-Semitic events, with the most volatile occurring in the early 1880s and the mid-1900s.

The assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881, spuriously blamed on the Jews, set off the first major round of violent anti-Semitic activities and pogroms.⁷ On April 15, the first pogrom started in the city of Yelisavetgrad, followed by a pogrom in Kiev on April 26, and a larger pogrom in Odessa on May 3.⁸ During this time, dozens of smaller anti-Semitic actions took place in towns across southern Russia, and then continued throughout 1881, culminating with a pogrom in Warsaw. The following excerpt from an account of the Kiev pogrom is broadly repre-

¹ Oleg Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between the Reds and the Whites, 1917-1920*, trans. Timothy J. Portice (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 6.

² Budnitskii, *Between the Reds and Whites*, 6.

³ Ibid., 8 and Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 578.

⁴ Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 578.

⁵ Simon M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (Philadelphia: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1975), II: 166.

⁶ Budnitskii, *Between the Reds and Whites*, 14.

⁷ Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, II: 247.

⁸ Ibid., 249, 252, 257.

⁹ Ibid., 280.

sentative of the events of the time:

An immense crowd of young boys, artisans, and laborers was on the march...the destruction of Jewish houses began...the mob threw itself upon the Jewish synagogue, which, despite its strong bars, locks and shutters, was wrecked in a moment.¹⁰

The instigators looted, raped, and killed with such abandon that some speculated that the authorities, which could and sometimes did rapidly disperse the crowds, often allowed such attacks to take place.¹¹ The pogroms would continue, though sometimes sporadically, through 1884.¹²

A series of laws limiting the rights of Jews accompanied this eruption of anti-Semitic violence. The May Laws, called temporary restrictions as they were allegedly meant to end the pogroms, represented the most significant restrictions on the Jews and provided the foundation for further legal discrimination in the ensuing years. These laws forbade Jews from settling in new towns or cities, restricted their right to own property outside existing areas of settlement, and forbade Jews from conducting business on Sundays and Christian holidays.¹³ This legislation sharply limited Jewish movement outside of the Pale and severely restricted Jewish commercial activity. In the following years, Russian officials capped the number of Jewish doctors in the army, limited movement within the Pale, placed strict quotas on Jewish placement in universities, and restricted the activities of Jewish lawyers, among numerous other discriminatory actions.¹⁴

Similar events occurred throughout the rest of the late nineteenth century, including the expulsion of Jews from Moscow in early 1891.¹⁵ Pogroms continued, albeit more sporadically, but began again in earnest in the early 1900s. In 1903, the Russian Empire gained the dubious distinction of having the first pogrom of the new century.¹⁶ Beginning on April 6 – pogroms often started around Easter and the Jewish holiday of Passover – and following a series of virulently nasty rumors, the Jews of Kishinev fell victim to physical violence, destruction of property, and murder.¹⁷ This pogrom received widespread international condemnation, though this did nothing to halt anti-Semitic activities in the Russian Empire.

The 1905 Revolution, which largely failed to produce any significant reform, witnessed reinvigorated attacks against the Jewish population. During this time, the Black Hundreds emerged, a somewhat undefined amalgamation of pro-tsarist and extreme right wing factions.¹⁸ The Black Hundreds agitated against liberalism and capitalism but especially against Jews; one major leader, Mikhail Menshikov, became an early advocate of racial anti-Semitism.¹⁹ Pogroms in the first half of 1905 took place in a variety of cities including Bialystok and, most infamously, in Zhitomir.²⁰ The pogroms became worse around October, with violence in hundreds of cities, and to reference but one example, over 300 dead in Odessa.²¹ The following years saw continued violence and growth in the power of the Black Hundreds.²² Jews faced expulsion from more cities and in 1908 the education quotas tightened even further.²³ In 1913, the famous Beilis blood libel case occurred, representing the continuation of a centuries-long anti-Semitic accusation.²⁴ These decades of pogroms and violence elicited a variety of responses from the Jewish community. For almost two million Russian Jews between 1881 and 1914, emigration became the solution.²⁵

What, then, can be said about the status of Russian Jews on the eve of the 1917 Revolution? It is clear that a pervasive anti-Semitic sentiment existed throughout the Russian Empire, and that it could easily escalate into physical violence and pogroms. Of course, 1914 witnessed the beginning of World War I, and the displacement of thousands of Jews in the Pale who lived on this important battlefield. Through this lens, the impact that the 1917 Revolution had on Russian Jews and anti-Semitism can be viewed.

The Russian Revolution began in late February 1917 on the streets of Petrograd. Within days, the tsarist regime essentially lost all control and Nicholas II soon abdicated his throne, ending the Russian monarchy and Empire. Some political leaders promptly began to create a new central political structure to lead the country, which they called

¹⁰ Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, II: 253.

¹¹ Ibid., 255.

¹² Budnitskii, *Between the Reds and Whites*, 17.

¹³ Ibid., 312.

¹⁴ Ibid., 342, 350, & 353.

¹⁵ Ibid., 402.

¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷ Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, III: 73-75.

¹⁸ Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 17.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, III: 115.

²¹ Ibid., 128-129.

²² Ibid., 151.

²³ Ibid., 157-158.

²⁴ Budnitskii, *Between the Reds and Whites*, 31.

²⁵ Ibid., 18.

the Provisional Government. By the beginning of March, the Provisional Government began to truly function and issue new laws for Russia, some of which significantly affected the Jewish population. The initial weeks of Revolution were a high point for Russian Jews in 1917, and perhaps in the entirety of modern Russian history.

Issues of equality in the cases of religion, nationality, and class were of paramount importance to the members of the Provisional Government from its inauguration. The so-called Jewish Question explicitly appeared in the earliest discussions within the Provisional Government. In the minutes of a March 4 meeting of the Provisional Government, there arose the issue of the quotas that had restricted Jewish access to education. The members agreed “to abolish percentage quota for Jews entering schools, restoring at the same time the right to continue their education to those students who were dismissed from schools for political subversion.”²⁶ Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the tsarist government had introduced and then progressively tightened restrictions on Jewish students’ ability to go to certain universities, so it is not surprising that the Provisional Government acted swiftly to lift such restrictions. It is curious, however, that this was the first specifically Jewish restriction to be lifted by the Provisional Government, raising the question of whether education was explicitly chosen as the first issue, or if it was just an historical fortuity.

On March 9, the Provisional Government issued a decision “to authorize the Minister of Justice to introduce for the consideration of the Provisional Government a bill abolishing all national and religious restrictions.”²⁷ By March 20, such an action had taken place and Prince L’vov, the newly minted Minister-President of the Government, authorized a law entitled “The Abolition of Restrictions Based on Religion and Nationality.”²⁸ The sweeping nature and significance of this law cannot be overstated, especially for the Jewish population, as it represented a fundamental shift in governmental policy toward religious and national minorities. In grand terms, the law declared, “All restrictions by existing legislation on the rights of citizens of Russia by reasons of their adherence to a particular religious denomination or sect by reason of nationality are abolished.”²⁹ The law, then, applied not only to the Jews of Russia, but other religious minorities, like the Muslim population in the Caucasus and other nationality groups, such as the Finnish and Ukrainians.

Yet, the rest of the law, which listed nine specific restrictions that were lifted, does seem to specifically target legal discrimination against Russian Jews. The first five lifted restrictions placed on the Jewish population by the May Laws of 1882. The first provision abolished any restrictions on “settlement, residence, and travel.”³⁰ With the stroke of a pen, constraints on the movement of Russian Jews disappeared. The second provision eliminated restrictions on the “acquisition of the right of ownership and other material rights to any movable or immovable property, as well as possession, use, and administration of this property and the giving or receiving of mortgages against it.”³¹ Laws attempting to restrict Jewish property rights, which had caused the loss of significant assets and wealth outside of the Pale in the late nineteenth century, were now abolished. Provisions three through five lifted restrictions related to engaging in business, participation in various commercial endeavors, and the ability to hire workers.³² With this, the third major section of the May Laws was repealed.

The remainder of the lifted restrictions also seemed to target constraints on Russian Jews. The law allowed all citizens equal opportunity toward “admission to the state service both civil and military,” as well as “participation in elections to institutions of local self-government ... holding any office in government and public establishments, and fulfilling all duties connected with such offices.”³³ Ability to participate in basic civil functions such as voting, office holding, and serving on a jury were certainly necessary for an administration now committed to equality. The final two provisions, which allowed for the use of “languages and dialects other than Russian” in business and education, in addition to reiterating that abolition of restrictions on education, likely had a significant impact on Jews, as they had faced stringent quotas and predominantly spoke Yiddish as their native language.³⁴

The opening of the 1917 Revolution, at least prescriptively, represented a seismic change in the relationship between the Jews of Russia and the main governing body of the country, now the Provisional Government. The numerous and onerous legal burdens that had once encumbered the Jews were now lifted. Indeed, a March 22 editorial stated, “the act abolishing religious and national restrictions should be considered as the greatest conquest of the revo-

²⁶ Robert Paul Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky, *The Russian Provisional Government 1917: Documents* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), I: 164.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 211-212.

³³ *Ibid.*, 212.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

lution.”³⁵ Change in national law, however, guaranteed neither a shift in behavior at the grassroots level nor a permanent transformation of the underlying anti-Semitic sentiments in Russia. The ensuing months of 1917, from the summer into the fall, witnessed what can be seen as a reversion to standard negative treatment of the Jews in practice, if not by law.

Acts of violent anti-Semitism, such as pogroms or looting and destruction on a smaller scale, were often fanned – if not initiated – by right-wing counterrevolutionary elements in Russian society, including the Black Hundreds. These groups tended to prefer a return to monarchical rule and despised the leftist revolutionaries, especially the Bolsheviks. Pervasive in Black Hundreds propaganda, and anti-Semitic propaganda more generally, was a focus on the so-called “world conspiracy of Jews” to dominate politically and economically, and suppress the aspirations of other groups.³⁶ Such notions were deeply embedded in Russian society by 1917, in no small part due to the widespread popularity of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other related texts, which purported a similar message about the Jews.³⁷

Right wing activists generally assumed that Jews actively and overwhelmingly supported revolutionary parties. As one historian aptly stated:

Since the Jews in Russia had been the object of much oppression, it was only natural that many of them should join the revolutionary parties, which promised to overthrow the regime that had been the cause of their sufferings, including the murder of many of them.³⁸

Yet, a variety of religious or national minorities within Russia could claim similar oppression, but the Black Hundreds did not single them out for persecution. Aside from the underlying strain of anti-Semitism, which certainly contributed to the targeting of Jews, these tsarists claimed, accurately, that Jews disproportionately held important positions in revolutionary political parties. It did not matter that most of these political leaders, including all the Jewish Bolshevik leaders, renounced any association with Judaism.³⁹ Since the Black Hundreds virulently disagreed with the overarching revolutionary policy platform, and Jews were disproportionately involved in the elite echelons of these parties, it made sense to some extent that the Jewish populations was especially targeted in the fight to counter the Revolution.

To understand the impact of these extreme right wing groups on the 1917 Revolution, and on Jews especially, some attempt must be made to enumerate the violent anti-Semitic incidents that took place in that year. In the early twentieth century, the American Jewish Year Book annually published accounts of the status of Jewish communities across the world. When discussing Russia, the Year Book included a section entitled “Attacks on Jews,” which recounted the pogroms, acts of destruction, and murders that occurred that year. The report on Russia in 1917 (published in two separate issues of the Year Book, as the publication used the Hebrew calendar, which does not line up with either the Julian or Gregorian calendar) helps elucidate the status of violent anti-Semitism during 1917, especially between the February and October Revolutions.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of this account is the lack of recorded attacks on Jews from the start of the February Revolution on February 23 until April 7, when a mob destroyed a Jewish market in the town of Plisovka near Kiev.⁴⁰ According to this data (which is not definitive or comprehensive in its accounting of anti-Semitic violence), for just more than one month after the onset of the Revolution, no significant attacks on Jews occurred. As the year progressed, recorded attacks on Jews increased, with notable surges during the summer and then again in the fall. The following is an accounting of the number of attacks in each month through the October Revolution: one in April, six in May, eight in June, three in July, seven in August, four in September, and eleven in October before the onset of the October Revolution.⁴¹ The trend makes it clear that violent anti-Semitic activity increased as the year progressed. The roles of the Black Hundreds and other right-wing counterrevolutionaries were associated with much of this violence, and their role – especially in espousing pro-tsarist views – seemed to have especially increased in the final weeks before the October Revolution.

Records of the attempts to suppress such acts of violence against Jews also shed light on the changing nature of anti-Semitism throughout 1917. It should be noted that many anti-Semitic actions did not spark any sort of response either from state-based groups, such as militias or army units, or from Jewish-organized defenses. In many towns, the protocol for response seemed to be to call the police or local militia to suppress the anti-Semitic agitators. In some cases this initial response was inadequate either because the police were committing the acts themselves, such as in a

³⁵ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, I: 214.

³⁶ Laqueur, *Black Hundred*, 30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Events in 5677* (online; American Jewish Year Book, 1917), http://www.ajcarchives.org/ajc_data/files/1917_1918_4_yearreview.pdf (accessed 2 June 2013), 294.

⁴¹ *Events in 5677*, 293-294 and *Events in 5678* (online; American Jewish Year Book, 1918), http://www.ajcarchives.org/ajc_data/files/1918_1919_4_yearreview.pdf (accessed 2 June 2013), 259-260.

May 5 ritual murder accusation. In other instances, the mobs overwhelmed the local forces, prompting officials to call for assistance from larger cities or the army, like in Olriopol on June 9 when the governor-general had to send for military aid to stop a pogrom his police force could not handle.⁴² The increase in calls to suppress such activities as the year progressed lends credence to the notion that anti-Semitic violence increased throughout the year. A telegram from the Minister of the Interior to Government Commissars on July 18 noted, “No arbitrary seizures of property or land, no acts of violence, no appeals to civil war and violation of military duty are to be tolerated.”⁴³ This message seems to indicate that violent activities, even if anti-Semitic ones were not explicitly noted, were increasing in the summer compared to earlier in the year. As the year came to a close and the Civil War began, anti-Semitic violence continued to increase in frequency and severity, highlighting the surprising dearth of such activities at the beginning of the Revolution.

No attempt at documenting some aspect of the history of Jews during the 1917 Revolution would be complete without discussing the dramatic impact of World War I and the status of civilian refugees from the front. The Russian-German border became a major front of the conflict almost immediately after the major participants in the war formally declared hostilities. Between August and the end of 1914, the Germans fought back a Russian incursion into east Prussia and then advanced into Russian territory in the Baltic region, with plans to launch an offensive on Warsaw.⁴⁴ From the outset, the Pale of Settlement was essentially the focal point of fighting in Eastern Europe until Russia signed a peace deal with Germany in 1918, losing much of this territory in the process. The fighting triggered a massive refugee crisis: by the end of 1915, at least 3.3 million people could be considered civilian refugees, with 500,000 more being added to their ranks by April 1916.⁴⁵ Many ethnic and national minorities in Russia, including Poles and Muslims in the Caucasus, were deeply affected by the war because they tended to live on battlefronts.⁴⁶ However, it can be said with some confidence that the Jewish population and refugees suffered most acutely from the discriminatory treatment they faced during the first years of the war.⁴⁷

Before the Revolution upended the war effort, governmental and army war policy toward Jews was decidedly and virulently negative. On the front, army officials decided the guidelines for how to treat the local communities. Mounting losses and paranoia about suspected spies among the ranks of Jews led many in the army to use the Jewish community as a scapegoat, and thus target them for persecution.⁴⁸ One common practice was to expel the Jews from towns or entire regions, forcing them to flee deeper into Russian territory. Expulsions began as early as September 1914, when an army leader forced the Jewish population in the Polish town of Pulawy to leave.⁴⁹ Before the mass expulsions that began in the summer of 1915, some 600,000 Russian Jews had already been displaced.⁵⁰ As the war progressed, the Jewish population continued to be depleted due to expulsions, but also the continuing German military advance into Russian territory.⁵¹

Though the situation seemed quite desperate for the Jews living on the front, it ironically served to benefit them in one sense; the Russian elite realized that they could no longer restrain Jewish settlement, thus affording Jews the opportunity to live throughout Russia and, in a de facto sense, ending the Pale of Settlement by 1915.⁵² The Provisional Government formally abolished the Pale of Settlement, ended restrictions on Jewish movement, and restored other civil rights to the Jews in March 1917. Interestingly, Gatrell noted that the government ministers did not publically support the violent anti-Semitic attitude pervasive in the army and among its leaders, and that there was “a fundamental political constraint on more extreme manifestations of prejudice against Jews.”⁵³ This notion may have held true among some of the political elite throughout the Revolution, though it likely began to change toward the end of 1917 and especially into the Civil War years.

Many questions remain regarding the treatment of these Jewish refugees before and during the Revolution. It is unclear the extent to which these refugees were harassed both when traveling and settling in new places.⁵⁴ Furthermore, it remains uncertain if Jewish refugees were treated differently from the local Jewish population in cases where evacuees from the front resettled in cities or areas with existing communities. From the available data, pogroms and other violent anti-Semitic activities in 1917 occurred in cities where refugees had settled, including Ekaterinoslav and

⁴² *Events in 5677*, 294 and *Events in 5678*, 259.

⁴³ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, III: 1439.

⁴⁴ Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 17.

⁴⁵ Gatrell, *Whole Empire Walking*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 145.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

Odessa.⁵⁵ In any case, it seems unlikely that groups such as the Black Hundreds would distinguish between different groups of Jews, though further research is needed to investigate this claim. Certainly, the reforms of March 1917 benefitted all Jews in Russia regardless of geographic origin, and likely all suffered from the increasing incidence of anti-Semitic violence that followed.

After reviewing much of the available evidence, it can be said with some confidence that anti-Semitism was surprisingly muted at the beginning of the 1917. Though this seems somewhat intuitive – as the Revolution faltered and Russia moved toward instability and civil war, such pervasive anti-Semitic feelings were bound to resurface – why such sentiments remained subdued for part of the year remains an important question to be analyzed. One possible reason is that because Russian society almost unanimously hated the tsar, and because the tsar and his policies were notoriously anti-Semitic, Russians decided to repudiate anti-Semitism along with the tsar. A number of newspaper editorials from March express this sentiment. A March 7 editorial in *Izvestiia*, regarding the civil rights gains of the Revolution, stated, “Russian citizens know what these freedoms...were converted into by the old regime! Free thought was stifled; freedom of association and of the exchange of ideas among citizens was completely abolished!”⁵⁶ Five days later, another *Izvestiia* editorial reiterated this point, with a greater emphasis on religious freedom, noting, “Under the old regime, Russian citizens were deprived of their rights, but the representatives of nations which were persecuted by law were deprived twice as much.”⁵⁷

Such sentiments were reiterated after the major civil rights bill passed through the Provisional Government. A *Russkiiia Vedmosti* article from March 22 entitled “The Abolition of Religious and National Restrictions,” stated:

Another pillar of the old order has fallen, a survival of barbarism, which has for a long time outraged the popular sense of righteousness, but on which the defenders of the order built on inequality and oppression has so long and persistently leaned...⁵⁸

To cite one more example, a March 23 article entitled “equal rights” in *Nove Vremia* stated, “And one can state with full justification that in no domain of the former state administration did the Russian public so drastically disagree with the government as here,” referring to the recent bill.⁵⁹ Clearly, there was a strong association between the old regime and religious intolerance, if not outright anti-Semitism, and to fully purge Russia of the terror of tsar, anti-Semitism would have to go as well.

Another complementary possibility is that the initial euphoria and unity of the February Revolution overpowered any public expressions of anti-Semitism, at least temporarily. On March 7, revolutionary leaders in the first declaration of the Provisional Government proclaimed that:

The unanimous revolutionary enthusiasm of the people, fully conscious of the gravity of the moment, and the determination of the State Duma, have created the Provisional Government, which consider it to be its sacred and responsible duty to fulfill the hopes of the nation, and lead the country out onto the bright path of free civic organization.⁶⁰

The new government clearly placed its hopes in the idea that society was unified in its discontent with the old system, unanimous in its support of the new government, and optimistic about the future. A March 23 editorial in *Nove Vremia* espoused a similar sentiment, noting, “For all practical purposes, these [religious] discriminations were swept away at the moment when people, in the Petrograd streets, ‘without distinction as to nationality or religion,’ tore the power from the hands” of the tsarist regime.⁶¹ It seems evident that, at least among the governing and societal elite, the unanimity and exhilaration of the initial revolution precluded and prevented legal anti-Semitism and any form of public or violent anti-Semitic activity.

It is possible that there was a spontaneous shift in Russia toward favoring notions of religious and national equality. This seems improbable, though there is evidence that some believed anti-Semitism only existed because the Russian masses were unenlightened. A successful and sustained revolution, then, could have served to foster norms of religious equality. An October 5 editorial in *Rabochaia Gazeta* concerning the rising number of pogroms and violence against Jews affirmed this point and stated, “It should be firmly and clearly understood that several months of revolution are not enough to re-educate at once the masses who lived for centuries in darkness, under the yoke of lawlessness.”⁶² The events that followed the February Revolution belie the notion that Russian society dispelled anti-Semitic tendencies from its midst.

⁵⁵ *Events in 5677*, 294.

⁵⁶ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, vol. 1: 195.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁶⁰ Frank Alfred Golder, *Documents of Russian History 1914-1917*, trans. Emanuel Aronsberg (New York: The Century Co., 1927), 311.

⁶¹ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, I: 212.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 431.

This raises an important question regarding why anti-Semitic violence resurfaced as 1917 progressed. One possible answer is that as the initial unity and euphoria of the Revolution faded, Russia began to fracture along the familiar fault lines of nationality and religion. Attempting to resolve the so-called nationality question had been important since the start of the Revolution for a variety of groups, including Jews, Georgians, Muslims, and Finns. A resolution from an April meeting of the Tenth Conference of the Bund highlighted the importance of the nationality question for the Jewish community. The resolution stated, “in a multi-national state such as Russia the question of the type of democratic republic that will best provide for normal coexistence of various nationalities will come up before the Constituent Assembly with particular acuteness.”⁶³ The Bund then resolved “to found local organs of cultural-national autonomy of the Jewish nation” to prepare for the process of greater autonomy.⁶⁴ Crafting a satisfactory resolution to this question would prove to be quite difficult.

The major political institutions increasingly became concerned about the question of national autonomy in the middle of 1917, highlighting the resurfacing of deeply contentious issues. A June 20 meeting of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies drafted a resolution addressing the problem stating, “the settlement of the national question in Russia is inseparable from the consolidation of the gains of the Russian revolution on a national scale.”⁶⁵ By summer, the political elites recognized the growing unrest throughout Russia and the rising discontent with the government and its policies. Resolving the question of national autonomy would be a step toward greater stability and progress, though an amendable solution could not be found. As late as October, the Provisional Government continued to try to create a workable policy. A report from a commission within the Provisional Government drafted a series of laws regarding autonomy and federation, to be implemented by the Constituent Assembly. The draft stated, “the Russian state is one and indivisible,” but also that “regional autonomy shall be introduced in the Russian state.”⁶⁶ Such a sentiment might have seemed realistic in February, but by October it was certainly unworkable and perhaps a bit naïve.

Indeed, the seeming insolvability of the nationality question dovetailed with increasing fears of anarchy and civil war, which did not bode well for the Jewish population. A September 20 editorial in *Volia Naroda* noted, “against the background of merciless foreign war and defeats of the armies of the Republic, internally the country has entered upon a period of anarchy and, virtually, a period of civil war.”⁶⁷ Quite presciently, the editorial feared that, “In a few more weeks, perhaps a few days, all of Russia will be swept by the fire of dissension, mutual discord, and the complete paralysis of all life.”⁶⁸ The government realized this too, as seen in a September 25 declaration from the Third Coalition Government, which stated:

Waves of anarchy are sweeping over the land, pressure from the foreign foe is increasing, counterrevolution is raising its head, hoping that the prolonged governmental crisis, coupled with the weariness that has seized the entire nation, will enable it to crush the freedom of the Russian people.⁶⁹

Attempting to address this growing problem, however, would prove to be futile.

As such fears rose, so did unrest and violence against the Russian Jews. A September 20 editorial in *Russkiiia Vedomosti* lamented, “a great wave of disorders has spread through Russia...west and east, the center and the borderlands, by turns or simultaneously [have] become the arena of pogroms and all sorts of disorders.”⁷⁰ Clearly Jews living within the former Pale—the borderlands of Russia—and outside it faced increasing danger. An *Izvestiia* article from September 30, which reproduced a “discussion in the Provisional Government on the struggle against anarchy,” noted the “urgent demands that the Government adopt immediate measures for putting down the disorders which have arisen on account of either the food question or the nationality question.” Furthermore, the article stated, “the Jewish population in the former areas of the Jewish Pale...[was] especially alarmed” by the mounting violence.⁷¹ Such fears were clearly justified in the face of escalating reports of pogroms and other anti-Semitic attacks. Indeed, an October 7 article in *Russkiiia Vedomosti* noted this growing concern, but also fears that something much greater and more violent was about to occur to the Russian Jews:

Plunder and murder rage throughout the uezd [specifically the administrative region of Bessarabia in the former Pale]. The authorities are powerless. The militia is unable to cope with the situation. The pogrom movement is mounting. Talk is heard of shifting all the blame to the Jews.⁷²

⁶³ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, I: 428.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 319.

⁶⁷ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, III: 1641.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1715.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1643.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1644.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1648.

The impending Civil War certainly made such dire predictions seem prophetic.

The Jews of Russia, who had lived in that vast country in large numbers since the late eighteenth century, witnessed in 1917 the heights of liberty and the lows of violent intolerance. The February Revolution resulted almost immediately in the granting of full civil rights to the Jewish population, including the freedom of movement outside of the Pale of Settlement. As the year progressed, Russia's longstanding societal fractures overwhelmed the revolutionary euphoria to the detriment of the Jewish community. Anti-Semitic sentiment mounted through the summer and fall leading to even more devastating results just a few months later. An October 26 article in *Isvestiia*, in the last issue before the Bolsheviks seized the newspaper, summed up the situation in Russia and for the Jewish community following the October Revolution quite succinctly. They wrote, "To date the Bolsheviks have seized Petrograd but not all of Russia. The danger of a bloody civil war is threatening. Bloodshed and pogroms—this is what we must prepare ourselves for."⁷³

Within a few months, the Russian Civil War began, with devastating results for Russian Jews. Most historians put Jewish deaths in 1918-1920 between 50,000 and 200,000, mostly within Ukraine, leading historian David Roskies to deem this period "the Holocaust of Ukrainian Jewry."⁷⁴ Of course, about two decades later Russian Jews faced the wrath of the Nazis, and millions more perished. This period of devastation was followed by the Cold War, which included restrictions on Jewish immigration and religious practice. The first few months after February 1917 should be seen as the high point for Russian Jewry if not in all of modern history, then certainly through the end of the twentieth century.

⁷³ Browder and Kerensky, *Provisional Government 1917*, III: 1801.

⁷⁴ Budnitskii, *Between the Reds and Whites*, 1.

Louis XIV's Use of Fashion to Control the Nobility and Express Power

SARAH BARRINGER

Descendants of the king, called princes of the blood, and military generals seeking power and influence began the second phase of the French civil war, known as the *Fronde des nobles*, in 1650, early in Louis XIV's lifetime. Longer and bloodier than the initial rebellion begun by the Parlement of Paris, it had a greater impact on the young Louis. In the revolt, the princes of the blood attempted to take away the monarch's power through legislative acts, and then seize it for themselves. Ultimately, the Fronde lost much of its momentum after Louis XIV's coming-of-age and coronation. The French Wars of Religion, another destabilizing civil war, had only recently ended in 1598. The religious wars lasted for thirty years and shook the nobility's and Europe's belief in the king's strength. The instability of the throne when Louis XIV ascended to it led him to turn to fashion and its established significance to control the nobility and express his power to them and the rest of Europe.

Louis chose fashion to express his power both to his nobles and the rest of the world. The proper dress alone was supposed "to encourage loyalty, satisfy vanity, [and] impress the outside world."¹ With this notion already in place, Louis made certain both himself and his courtiers wore expensive clothes. He enshrined fashion's importance among the elite by making it an integral part of their etiquette as well as an indicator of their wealth due to its high cost. It is debated whether Louis stressed fashion to the extent he did to send his nobles into debt, to distract them from scheming or for an entirely different motive. It has been argued that Louis had to pay for any debt his nobles acquired and therefore would not encourage debt.² However, the general consensus places his motivations on an attempt to send as many nobles as possible into debt in order to have greater control over their actions.

The art style of the time was baroque, a gaudy and elaborate style that contained precisely the elements Louis needed to enchant and suppress his nobles. Baroque was also a style he could easily draw on, as his court was already familiar with it. Louis also chose to dress in bright colors instead of somber blacks, because although black cloth was extremely expensive, it represented sobriety and piety, and Louis was not particularly restrained nor conservative in terms of religion until later in his reign: he held large parties, stayed up late gambling, and ate extravagant amounts of food.³ In this vein, he introduced red heels to draw attention to the feet. They also served as a symbol for "the elevation of his court above the rest of humanity."⁴ Red heels eventually became one of the most popular and widespread trends in Europe. Even William III of Orange, one of Louis's most hostile enemies after Louis attacked the Dutch Republic, wore red heels.⁵

Unlike many courts in Europe at the time, Louis required a different code of dress for each formal event. Most monarchs set a single code for all occasions, in order to keep clothing inexpensive, whereas Louis's system sent many into bankruptcy.⁶ One of the most expensive festivities was the carrousel, to which nobles came clad in the most splendid costumes they could design.⁷ If bankruptcy was Louis's intent, he used fashion in events like these to impose it. Debt severely limited the nobles' financial power and allowed Louis to further manipulate his nobility and empower himself.

The highest elites flocked to the court of Versailles because they "believed that mere physical proximity to the monarch... would elevate [them] to a higher social level" and the king spent almost all of his time at court.⁸ It was therefore necessary for nobles who wanted to remain important to attend the balls and festivities Louis staged and to spend outrageous amounts of money on new clothing. Eventually, most courtiers fell into debt. If they wanted to remain within the court, they were required to ask for a loan from the king. The king would only grant them a loan, or even hear their request for the loan, if they had spent a sufficient amount of time at court.⁹ This endless cycle kept the nobles trapped at Versailles and focused on wearing the proper and most fashionable clothing, which led them to be both too poor and too preoccupied to revolt.¹⁰

¹ Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), xiv.

² Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Alicia M. Annas and Anne Ratzki-Kraatz, comp., *An Elegant Art*, ed. Edward Maeder (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1983), 19.

⁷ Olivier Bernier, *Louis XIV: A Royal Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 102.

⁸ Annas and Ratzki-Kraatz, *An Elegant Art*, 15.

⁹ Bernier, *Louis XIV*, 103.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

Louis XIV chose fashion as his means of influence because it both demonstrated the wearer's wealth and took it away, as fashion was inherently expensive, difficult to maintain, and impractical. Not all clothing was uncomfortable – some aspects were designed specifically to be comfortable – yet much of it was painful or difficult to wear. Shoes were narrow, gowns with wide hips fit only uncomfortably into chairs, hats swept the frames of modestly sized doors, and the lace, ribbons, feathers, and mountains of cloth that accompanied all fashionable attire necessitated close attention to dining etiquette and how one walked in public spaces.¹¹ For certain occasions French noblewomen were required to wear the *grand habit de cour*, a dress with a long train.¹² The longer the train, the more elite the wearer and the more difficult the train was to manage.¹³ Despite the impracticality of the dress's train and sleeves, which required the wearer to bare her shoulders in both mid-winter's cold and summer's sun – something which could easily damage her delicate complexion – the dress held a high place in fashion.¹⁴ Similarly, higher ranking ladies wore the tightest and most restrictive corsets.¹⁵ Because of the extremes of these outfits, in order to appear elegant, nobles devoted many hours to practicing such simple acts as walking and sitting. Should a lady drop her fan or handkerchief, though it would have been inappropriate for her to retrieve it regardless, it would be physically impossible for her to bend over. She would have "relied on a servant or gentleman to pick it up."¹⁶ Her reliance on others emphasized both her delicacy and the fact that she had enough money to hire someone to do everything for her.

A fashionable image, however, did not require inconvenience or discomfort, as nobles could demonstrate their wealth through the acquisition of expensive but comfortable clothing. The lacing of a corset was placed in front of the busk to keep it from rubbing against the skin.¹⁷ Clothing could also be made for the ease of dressing. Aiguillettes, thin strips of iron, were placed inside the ends of ribbons to keep them from fraying and to make it easier to thread them through loops.¹⁸ Well-designed and properly laced corsets improved a lady's posture and showcased her figure, without the lady putting in much effort.¹⁹ Every added comfort increased the cost, but the expense of these costumes came mainly from the difficulty in making the material and then assembling the outfits. Lace took long periods of time to weave and only nobles could afford to buy it in large quantities.²⁰ In addition, it was difficult to first create a repeating pattern by hand and then align the pattern to make the final outfit appear seamless.²¹ The best dresses were custom fitted, especially at the waist and shoulders and with consideration for the wearer's height.²² The more care put into the outfit, the more it cost. Therefore the elite nobles strived to own expensive gowns, jackets and vests, even if they did not always have the money.

Nobles' clothes were also so expensive because of the amount of material needed to make them. Such elaborate garb required many yards of cloth. Despite the occasional skintight garment, such as bodices and breeches, most clothing overflowed with fabric. Skirts, which exaggerated the frame until the nineteenth century, always required copious amounts of fabric. To retain the skirts' huge size, women wore several petticoats and layers of underwear underneath them. Sleeves were also puffed and often, "paned out and tied with ribbons into a series of puffs as virago sleeves."²³ Even breeches, which were known for being skintight, could become masses of cloth. As the amount of cloth used in an outfit increased, the price increased with it.

When possible, nobles dressed their servants in reasonably fashionable clothing to show they possessed the money to buy additional costumes, especially during times of court mourning. Originally, only the elite were allowed to take part in mourning, but it was eventually extended to "all 'persons of quality'...[and later] to the general public."²⁴ Nobles were certain to supply their servants with quality garments during this time. The extension of fashion to the lower class brought even the peasants directly under Louis's influence, as well as bankrupting the nobles.

The nobles' careful crafting of their image relied not only on wearing expensive clothes, but also on keeping them immaculate. When ladies applied makeup to their face or powder to their hair, they wore a dressing jacket to

¹¹ Erin Anapol, Vania Osterland, and Kaitlyn Zydel, "Fashion, Authority and Portrait Engraving as a Courtly Art," University of Miami College of Arts & Sciences, accessed December 16, 2010, <http://www.as.miami.edu/art/art/arh-printmaking-history.pdf>.

¹² Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 2.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Annas and Ratzki-Kraatz, *An Elegant Art*, 45.

¹⁶ Ibid., 48.

¹⁷ Avril Hart and Susan North, *Historical Fashion in Detail: The 17th and 18th Century* (London: V&A Publications, 2007), 12.

¹⁸ Hart and North, *Historical Fashion in Detail*, 138.

¹⁹ Annas and Ratzki-Kraatz, *An Elegant Art*, 45.

²⁰ Hart and North, *Historical Fashion in Detail*, 107.

²¹ Ibid., 64.

²² Hart and North, *Historical Fashion in Detail*, 50.

²³ Nicole Kipar, "Female Baroque Clothing," Nicole Kipar's Late 17th Century Clothing History, accessed December 17, 2010, http://www.kipar.org/baroque-costumes/costumes_female.html.

²⁴ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 16.

protect their gowns from any stray cosmetics.²⁵ Under their luxurious outer garments, courtiers wore “an unending array of chemises, petticoats, fichus and laves” in order to keep the outer garments clean from any sweats or oils on their body.²⁶ Ideally, nobles never partook in activities that would require them to clean their clothing, as they were not farmers or laborers. The most exerting task for a woman was walking in the gardens and for a man, taking part in a hunt. Though reality did not always reflect this, it was important for it appear that it did. The red heels introduced by Louis XIV especially demonstrated the need to avoid appearing unclean. If one wore something as eye catching as red heels, the heels could certainly never be dirty, and if they became so, there had to be someone to clean them.²⁷ Such clothing bespoke the idea that the wearer had a host of servants to dress them, button buttons, tie ribbons, lace corsets and keep everything in pristine order. It also implied that the wearer had a long list of people to create the clothing and synthesize the full outfit, including a “wigmaker, barber, tailor, jeweler, and perfumer.”²⁸ Even if a noble did not have such a sartorial retinue, the grander his clothes, the more the noble appeared to be able to afford all these services and have the time devote to the upkeep of his appearance. Louis understood it was already established that owning expensive clothing and appearing idle made one appear powerful. He strengthened these beliefs so that courtiers would be more focused on fashion than they had ever been in the past, constantly buying new clothing, spending money, and keeping their attire in order.

Louis designated the nobles whom he favored in court by allowing them to attend his morning dressing and evening undressing ceremonies, generating competition among them as they fought to be among the chosen few. These lengthy occasions also allowed the nobles a substantial amount of time to make requests of the king. The privilege of attending his dressing and undressing became extremely desirable, as it was otherwise difficult to find the time to speak with the king. One of the few other opportunities of gaining an audience was as Louis walked down the hall to a political meeting, at which point they would have very little time to address him. Louis also only granted an audience if he thought the noble was worthy enough.²⁹ The select few present at his dressing and undressing were already deemed worthy of his attention, an advantage for which nobles always competed.

Louis also designed a blue silk jacket, the *justaucorps à brevet*, embroidered in silver and gold, which only his most favored courtiers were permitted to wear.³⁰ Only fifty nobles at a time were approved to wear this highly fashionable piece of clothing, which meant that even those who should have by birth been placed among the king’s favorites had to fight for it. As an additional benefit, those with permission to wear the jacket could “follow the King on his hunt whenever the wearer wanted.”³¹ In order to have the chance to rise in society, aristocrats had to spend much of their time at court in fashionable dress.

Louis continued to accentuate fashion’s importance through more official means. He created the *grand maitre de la garde-robe du roi*, “the only new office which he created in his own household.”³² The office oversaw the care of the king’s clothing, which was stored across many rooms.³³ In 1668, Louis passed an edict that required his courtiers to remain fashionable.³⁴ Although it cannot be certain the law was enforced or attached to any punishment, it served as a reminder to nobles of what was important. Many sumptuary laws dictated who could wear what, reserving velvet for barons, dukes, viscounts, and knights.³⁵ Those who could afford velvet easily expressed their status.

Louis XIV similarly used propaganda to encourage the nobility’s dependence on and obsession with fashion. Nobles believed that outside appearance reflected not only personality but also social status. The more expensive and fashionable someone’s clothing was, the greater his or her importance.³⁶ Fairy tales of the time, such as Cinderella and Puss in Boots, reflected the belief that wearing a gorgeous gown or fashionable boots made a character important and heroic.³⁷ Two French Cinderella stories were published in 1697, one written by Charles Perrault and the other by Marie-Catherine de Barneville, Comtesse d’Aulnoy.³⁸ D’Aulnoy’s story had an especially strong emphasis on the importance of fashion: effectively, the dress and shoes were the main characters and Cinderella was only there to

²⁵ Hart and North, *Historical Fashion in Detail*, 52.

²⁶ Annas and Ratzki-Kraatz, *An Elegant Art*, 28.

²⁷ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 15.

²⁸ Anapol, Osterland, and Zydel, “Fashion, Authority and Portrait Engraving as a Courtly Art.”

²⁹ Mounir A. Farah and Andrea Berens Karls, *World History: The Human Experience* (New York: Glencoe/McGraw Hill, 1996), 121-122.

³⁰ Bernier, *Louis XIV*, 101.

³¹ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 56.

³² Ibid., 4.

³³ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁴ Los Angeles County Museum of Art, “Louis XIV and the Court at Versailles,” *Collections Online*, accessed October 23, 2010, <http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=epage;id=500842;type=803>.

³⁵ Anapol, Osterland, and Zydel, “Fashion, Authority and Portrait Engraving as a Courtly Art.”

³⁶ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, xv, quoted from Queen Victoria of England.

³⁷ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, xiii.

³⁸ Joan DeJean, *The Essence of Style* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 100-101.

carry them. When Cinderella comes to the ball, she never even meets the prince, but simply shows off her glamorous gown and “red velvet mules completely encrusted with pearls,” a pair of glamorous shoes she would never have intended to lose.³⁹ On the other hand, in Perrault’s story, Cinderella slips out of her shoe in an attempt to lure the prince after her, as she knows its beauty will attract him.⁴⁰ D’Aulnoy extends the obsession with fashion to men as well, as Prince Charming finds Cinderella’s lost slipper and becomes entranced by its petit size and exquisite craft.⁴¹ He becomes enamored of the shoe, not eating or leaving his room for weeks. The doctors his desperate parents send for declare that the Prince is in love, and Prince Charming himself states that it is the shoe with which he is in love.⁴² D’Aulnoy’s story centers on Parisian fashion, which she makes magical and desirable with her fairytale setting.

About the same time, Charles Perrault wrote the story of *Puss in Boots*. In the story, the youngest son of a miller is presented with his inheritance: a cat. Puss is not particularly extraordinary until the son presents him with a pair of boots and a pouch.⁴³ Once Puss has these, he is able to perform heroic deeds and impress the king with gifts. When the king is riding in the woods, the cat tricks him into believing the miller’s son is a Marquis, whereupon the king gives the miller’s son a set of expensive clothes (Puss explains that the Marquis’s have been stolen). Eventually the miller’s son marries the king’s daughter and the cat becomes a *grand seigneur*.⁴⁴ Just as Cinderella transforms into a high-born lady when she wears a gorgeous gown, Puss becomes witty and courageous and able to procure many great privileges for his master when given a pair of boots. The miller’s son’s relationship with the king is also established when the king presents the son with the clothes of a courtier. These clothes transform the peasant into a noble, despite the numerous social mores of which no peasant would have knowledge. Perrault’s story emphasizes “the virtues of dress, countenance, and youth to win the heart of a princess.”⁴⁵ Perrault also mentions, briefly, that the truly noble need not work for a living. When Puss jumps up onto an ogre’s roof in fear, he finds it difficult because his boots are not suited for walking on tiles. The detail emphasizes that Puss’s boots would never be designed for labor because the nobility have no need to work.

Perrault wrote many other stories, including *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Tom Thumb*, and *Ricky of the Tuft*. All of his stories include similar messages; Perrault calls on women to be beautiful, fashionable, and to properly maintain their attire. Any woman of importance or good qualities in Perrault’s stories possesses beauty or, as in the case of Cinderella, is able to swathe herself in beauty.⁴⁶ Men in his stories are ambitious and clever, always climbing the social ladder.⁴⁷ Puss especially embodies the perfect bourgeois, “who serves his master with complete devotion and diligence” and is therefore ultimately rewarded.⁴⁸ Perrault encourages men to be loyal to the king and serve the king well in order to gain his favor, just as Louis encouraged nobles to do through competition. In his stories Perrault hoped to convey, either by positive or negative examples, the correct mannerisms and personalities of courtiers as well as what material items they would require to achieve power.⁴⁹ D’Aulnoy’s *Finette Cendron* and Perrault’s *Le Maître Chat, ou Le Chat Botté* loudly proclaim fashion as influential, important, and all one needs to become rich and powerful.

Louis also extended his rules of fashion down to the middle class in France, thereby including them in his circle of power. Any person who was reasonably well-dressed could enter the Versailles gardens.⁵⁰ Instead of excluding those outside of the nobility, Louis extended to them not only the exciting prospect of being in the king’s gardens, but even the possibility of seeing the king. This stressed Louis’s power further as it made it clear that the middle class was willing to save their money just to be in his gardens to see the lavish displays.⁵¹ While in the gardens, they might also see such events like the carousel, which would dazzle and impress them.

The fashions of France soon began to appear all across Europe. Although fashion was not responsible for France’s power, it did make the country appear powerful, through the French court’s magnificence.⁵² The court in

³⁹ DeJean, *The Essence of Style*, 101, quoted from the original Cinderella text by Comtesse d’Aulnoy.

⁴⁰ DeJean, *The Essence of Style*, 101.

⁴¹ Ibid., 102.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Jack Zipes, “Setting Standards for Civilization through Fairy Tales: Charles Perrault and his Associates,” in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 25.

⁴⁴ Zipes, “Setting Standards for Civilization through Fairy Tales,” 26.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁰ Bernier, *Louis XIV*, 102.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Madeleine Delpierre, *Dress in France in the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Caroline Beamish (London: Yale University Press, 1997), 1.

France was the grandest in Europe: “Paris tailors were considered the best [and]...dolls wearing the latest style extended French fashions” even to hostile and distant capitals such as London and St. Petersburg.⁵³ Fashion also provided a sense of national identity and patriotism to the wearer.⁵⁴ Accepting another country’s fashion was, to an extent, accepting that national identity. Wearing French clothes while in England or Germany or elsewhere showed respect for France. Fashionable and expensive clothing was already a sign of power, and the spread of French fashion across Europe and the pride nobles all over Europe took in wearing it was Louis’s way of proving that France and its monarch were strong.

Fashion was also important for a more practical reason: the employment of the lower class. Louis XIV banned foreign cloth, lace, and trimmings, which meant fabric had to be made in France by the French.⁵⁵ This led to an increase in the amount of velvet and silk made in France and in the workforce in cloth manufacturing.⁵⁶ Of all high-fashion materials, lace took the most time and effort to make: a narrow strip of lace alone could take months.⁵⁷ Yet, a merchant or a noble’s servant who scrimped and saved could buy a small strip eventually.⁵⁸ Thus, once again, Louis included the middle class in the fashion of the day. The assembly of clothing also took time and money. A court gown alone required three people – the tailor, *couturier* and *marchand de modes* – and its completion took several days.⁵⁹ The French fashion industry employed roughly “a third of wage-earners in Paris...It employed 969,863 individuals compared to only 38,000 in the iron and steel industry.”⁶⁰ Periods of court morning were said to be so drawn out and to involve so many participants that those who made clothing, which included a substantial amount of the population, struggled to survive because the nobility did not buy new, expensive clothing during those times.⁶¹ Thus clothing, to an extent, aided in the circulation of wealth.⁶² Although it was certainly not Louis’s main motivation or even necessarily something he often kept in mind, the extravagant fashion kept many people employed, which helped to empower France.

Across France and Europe, expensive, impractical, flawless, and often uncomfortable clothing was the absolute symbol of status. It had been believed for centuries and would continue to be so after Louis XIV died. Louis, who took an unstable throne in a divided country, used many techniques to unite France and make it stronger. He chose fashion to control nobles; it gave them something to flaunt and be proud of, and it consumed their time and money. He himself admired fashion and how it could make a person appear elegant and powerful, both physically and symbolically. For Louis, fashion was not just something for the body; it was his way to impressively clothe and present his country to the rest of Europe.

⁵³ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁶ Kipar, Nicole. “Male Accessories,” Nicole Kipar’s Late 17th Century Clothing History, accessed December 17, 2010, http://www.kipar.org/baroque-costumes/costumes_male_accessories.html.

⁵⁷ Annas and Ratzki-Kraatz, *An Elegant Art*, 107.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

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Secularizing the Sacred: The Effort to Dechristianize France During the French Revolution

JUSTIN DUNN

In September 1793, Joseph Fouché, a representative of the National Convention, arrived in the district of Nièvre. Though many regions of France were in open revolt, Nièvre was relatively docile; certainly no one believed that the quiet district just south of Paris would be the focal point of one of the Revolution's most radical and controversial movements. Upon his arrival, Fouché implemented a number of "reforms" aimed at dismantling the power of the clergy in the region.

A former priest himself, Fouché was well aware of the power his prior vocation held over the hearts and minds of the French citizenry. This made his decision to leave the Church all the more difficult, but he had recently returned from the Vendée, a region where a mixture of volatile religious grievances exploded into a rebellion that lasted years and resulted in over one hundred thousand deaths.¹ Fouché had seen first-hand the dangers inherent in having a powerful clergy that appealed to the faith of the people. In Nièvre he encouraged priests to renounce their vows of celibacy and if they refused to marry, revolutionary leaders expected them to adopt and care for a child or elderly member of the community. Fouché and his disciples removed religious symbols from all public buildings and the words *Death is an eternal sleep* were inscribed on the stone gates at the entrance of every cemetery.² This stark denial of an afterlife went further than destroying Church property or forbidding clerical celibacy; it assaulted the fundamental religious convictions of an entire nation. Similar actions were being repeated in numerous cities and towns across France and were part of a larger movement known as dechristianization.

Within weeks, the zeal of Fouché spread to Paris and throughout the rest of France. Radicals within the National Convention, such as Jacques Hébert, became the most vocal leaders of the movement, and they used their power and influence to expand the effort to remove Catholicism, and eventually all of Christianity, from French society. Revolutionary Armies marched across the land, leaving "pillaged and closed churches, and smouldering bonfires of ornaments, vestments, and holy pictures all along their route."³ In one district, a Revolutionary Army burned crosses and other holy relics in a bonfire that grew eighty feet high.⁴ However, many French citizens, especially in the rural areas of the country, did not quietly assent to this assault on their religion. Thousands of peasants in Brie attacked the local Jacobin club in mid-December, shouting, "*Long live the Catholic Religion, we want our priests, we want the Mass on Sundays, and Holy Days.*"⁵ Similar scenes on smaller and larger scales played out across France during and after the dechristianization movement. Such examples show that this radical experiment was one in which a small group of revolutionaries – whose ideas were, in many ways, more zealous and fanatical than those they attempted to suppress – largely imposed their views on an unwilling populace. It also calls into question how successful such a movement could have been. While the resistance to the dechristianization movement led to many setbacks and failures in the short-term, the long-term outcomes confuse the issue. The dechristianization movement was a secularizing force imposed upon a people entrenched in tradition, yet despite this it was ultimately successful.

In order to understand why so many people in France were unwilling to abide by this attack on religious life, it is necessary to examine the role religion played under the Old Regime. Christianity, specifically Catholicism, had always played a significant role in French society. There was no separation of church and state; priests functioned as much as administrators and record-keepers as they did guardians of their parishioners' souls. The Catholic Church also "held the monopoly on primary and secondary education...It maintained registers of births, marriages, and deaths and ran the hospital system...under the old regime."⁶ In rural villages, the power and importance of the Church in everyday life was even greater:

In rural areas, not only was the village church the center for the spiritual care of the locals but also it served as the hub of administrative affairs. The church put order into every aspect of country life: the tolling of the church bells ordained the rhythm of the daily cycle, resounding throughout the village when it was time to rise, at noon when it was the hour for a break, and at vespers, in the evening, when it was appropriate to pause and say a prayer. The sound of the bell was also the alarm alerting

¹ James Maxwell Anderson, *Daily Life During the French Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 149.

² William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 259.

³ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁴ Frank Tallett, "Dechristianizing France: The Year II and the Revolutionary Experience," in *Religion, Society and Politics in France Since 1789*, ed. Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 6.

⁵ Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 261.

⁶ Anderson, *Daily Life During the French Revolution*, 143.

the populace of a fire or warning of mischief in the village.⁷

The fact that the most ardent resistance toward dechristianization came from these outlying small towns and villages is, therefore, no coincidence.

However, the influence of the Church extended well beyond the minutiae of maintaining a village's daily schedule. Bishops and priests held a great amount of political and economic power as well. The wealth possessed by individual priests in Old Regime France varied wildly. The archbishop of Paris, for instance, could boast of an annual salary of half a million livre. Some village priests, however, were lucky if they received enough to support their modest lifestyles. The Church as a whole was extremely wealthy, no doubt due in part to the fact that none of its wealth had to go toward paying taxes. The Catholic Church was exempt and even had its own form of taxation in the tithe, which could lay claim to up to twenty-five percent of a person's income in some regions.⁸ Although the tithe was meant to help maintain clerical buildings and fund charitable orders, oftentimes a portion of it went to pay for the extravagant lifestyles of the wealthiest Church leaders. The clergy also made up the entirety of the First Estate in the French parliamentary system, which granted them a number of advantages in a society based heavily on hierarchy and social status. Despite these issues, many people in France trusted and depended upon their local priest as both a leader of the community and as a spiritual guide.

The level of trust that most people placed in their local priest and the Catholic Church is what makes dechristianization such a fascinating topic. European society was intrinsically bound up with Christian dogma and had been since it was made the official religion of the ailing Roman Empire. Religion permeated nearly every aspect of life: it gave hope to the poor, helped spur numerous wars and conflicts but also valuable social reforms, and served as a foundation for the monarchies of many nations. But by 1792, something in France had changed dramatically. That year, Charles Michel, Marquis de Villette, a protégé of Voltaire and writer for the revolutionary newspaper the *Chronique de Paris*, wrote, "it would be worthy of [those] appointed to look after the interests of the Saints, not to forget the interests of the People."⁹ This was a transformational statement. First, it implied that what was in the best interests of the saints – and by extension, the Church that honored and worshiped them – differed from what was in the best interests of the people. Next, it argued that the clergy who were meant to care for the people were failing to do so. Finally, this sentiment was remarkable in that it appeared in a public newspaper, which would have been unthinkable even a few decades prior. Such sentiments were merely the beginning, however. As mentioned previously, Jacques Hébert was a leader and outspoken supporter of the dechristianization movement. He also published his own Revolutionary periodical entitled *Le Père Duchesne*. These colorfully-worded pamphlets were a favorite of firebrands and radical sans-culottes. In one issue, Hébert cursed the Pope and accused his bishops of conspiring to overthrow the government of France.¹⁰ Clearly, something had happened in France that had desacralized the Church to the point that it could be attacked openly and viciously by the press in a public forum. The mindset that informed both Villette and Hébert's attitudes towards the Catholic faith were the same ones that eventually spawned the dechristianization movement.

Dechristianization was merely the most radical and ultimate permutation of the anti-clerical mentality that was bound up with the French Revolution from its very beginning. Ironically, the clergy themselves were responsible for much of the early erosion of Church power. This was especially true for those priests who stood on the lower end of the financial spectrum. Breaking away from the First Estate, a coalition of local parish priests who desired a more democratic Church formed the National Assembly with the Third Estate on June 17, 1789. This body ended the tithe less than a month later. It was the first salvo in a rapid-fire barrage aimed at crippling the Church's influence in France. The government began nationalizing Church property in November and selling it to private landowners in December. Finally, on February 13, 1790, "all monasteries and convents not dedicated to charitable or educational work were closed and new religious vows were forbidden."¹¹ These early efforts weakened the Church, but subsequent acts by the National Assembly would seek to control it.

Church and state had never been truly separate in France, but the relationship was one that usually favored the Catholic Church. This was not the case after July 12, 1790, when the Assembly drafted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This document, for all intents and purposes, nationalized the Catholic Church and made it an arm of the state. Priests' salaries were regulated, formalized, and paid by the government based on how many people lived in their area

⁷ Anderson, *Daily Life During the French Revolution*, 143.

⁸ Ibid., 145.

⁹ Charles Michel, Marquis de Villette, *Lettres choisies sur les principaux événements de la Révolution*, trans. Google Translator (Paris: Clousier, 1792), 170.

¹⁰ Jacques Hébert, "Le Père Duchesne no. 44," in *Le Père Duchesne d'Hébert ou Notice Historique et Bibliographique sur ce Journal*, ed. Charles Brunet, trans. Google Translate (Paris: Librairie de France, 1859), 80.

¹¹ Anderson, *Daily Life During the French Revolution*, 148.

of responsibility.¹² Moreover, bishops would be chosen not by the pope, but by popular elections in which non-Catholics could participate.¹³ The Civil Constitution of the Clergy proved a divisive document. The subsequent forceful imposition of its edicts – and the outcry against them – was one of the primary factors that motivated the dechristianization movement.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy divided public sentiment in regard to religion and its role in society more than almost anything else in French history. After their appeals to the pope went unanswered, many bishops and local priests refused to consent to the document. When, in early 1791, the Assembly mandated that all priests swear an oath of loyalty to the Constitution and state or be dismissed, almost half of the clergy refused. The situation grew more heated when the pope finally issued a condemnation of the Civil Constitution. Some priests who had previously sworn the oath renounced it, and in November 1791 the Assembly deemed all refractory priests, those who refused to swear the loyalty oath, to be counterrevolutionaries. By the summer of 1792, all dissident clergy were ordered to leave the country or face imprisonment or exile. Resistance grew violent in some regions; bands of sans-culottes, led and organized by government officials like Joseph Fouché, roamed the countryside and city streets, arresting and intimidating priests and destroying Church property.¹⁴ Despite this, many people stood behind their local clergy and “encouraged [them] to resist the government and refuse to take the oath.”¹⁵ The resistance to anti-clericalism was linked with anti-republicanism in the minds of many revolutionary leaders and thus necessitated a harsher response. The dechristianization movement had begun in earnest.

Dechristianization is one of the most controversial and least understood aspects of the French Revolution. Historians have argued about its origins, the motivations behind it, and the enduring legacy it has had on French political and religious life.¹⁶ Despite its relative obscurity, the process of dechristianization is an exceedingly important piece of the puzzle for anyone who wishes to study the French Revolution. The bitter divide between the revolutionaries and those opposed to their aims was exacerbated by the movement. Royalists, opponents of the Revolution’s methods, and devout Catholics all found unity under the umbrella of religious persecution; in effect, one of the movement’s unintended consequences was the tying together of these disparate groups who otherwise would not have been as likely to cooperate with one another. Other historians go further still, suggesting that the dechristianization movement was one of the chief causes of the Terror, the most famous episode of the Revolution:

If any single factor was capable of making the Terror an unavoidable development, it would seem to be the rupture between the Catholic Church and the revolution beginning in 1791, adding the ideologically empowering cause of persecuted religion to the motley collection seigniorial complaints and courtly grievances that had gone into making the counter-revolution until that point.¹⁷

In spite of its importance, the success of the dechristianization movement is still fiercely debated in some academic circles. For instance, historian Frank Tallett argued that dechristianization failed in its immediate goals and was largely not supported by the majority of the French people. A strong amount of evidence supports this position and reveals the amazing levels of resistance the movement faced, from rural farmers all the way up to Maximilien Robespierre, the head of the Committee of Public Safety.

Perhaps the movement’s greatest failure was its attempt to replace Catholicism with cults of reason dedicated to republican virtues. Parents refused to send their children to be instructed in the new civic religion; attendance for civil services and government festivals was chronically low. Beyond these practical matters, psychological issues kept the cults of reason from being implemented successfully. Such institutions “brought no magic to assist with the grizzly business of living, and no consolation to the act of dying.”¹⁸ To an eighteenth-century French peasant, faced with back-breaking labor, barren living conditions, and deadly diseases, Catholicism promised a better life after death, something which the various republican cults were sorely lacking. These shortcomings were not from a lack of trying; historian Mona Ozouf claims that the festivals of reason and virtue hosted by the Revolutionary government were attempts at sacralizing and normalizing the tenets of the new cults, thereby instilling them with the same weight as Catholic holidays. They failed, she argues, because instead of promoting a positive agenda, the movement focused on an “enterprise of subtraction and purification,” directed at diluting Catholicism and robbing it of its real value.¹⁹ In

¹² The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790), quoted in *Readings in European History*, vol. 2, ed. J.H. Robinson (Boston: Ginn, 1906), 426.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 425.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Tallett, “Dechristianizing France,” 2.

¹⁷ Dale K. Van Kley, “Christianity as Casualty and Chrysalis of Modernity: The Problem of Dechristianization in the French Revolution,” *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 4 (2003): 1088.

¹⁸ Tallett, “Dechristianizing France,” 4.

¹⁹ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 269.

truth, many of the cults' functions and festivals were very similar to the Catholic faith they were so diligently trying to destroy. Even the most ardent supporters of dechristianization within the government seemed to recognize the need for a set of spiritual guidelines intended to maintain unity and cohesion within society:

The new religion, like the old, had to have its sacred center, the altar of the fatherland, a place that was both religious and civic, on which one might...expose the bread of fraternity....There would have to be the sacralizing presence of a book, the sole receptacle of all moral precepts. This book would be the Declaration of Rights....And there would be a civic Lent, during which people would fast for the sake of liberty. There would be priests, who would be...family men....They would perform exactly the same functions as Catholic priests, presiding at weddings, witnessing births, comforting the sick.²⁰

At least in regard to the establishment of cults, the dechristianization movement seemed less about doing away with the Christian faith than with resetting it. In a very real sense, some dechristianizers could be called primitive Christians. Even the most supportive members of the constitutional clergy – those willing to swear an oath to the Civil Constitution – seemed to see their actions as purifying rather than destroying the Catholic Church. In regard to the Mass, many priests hated that it had become “overladen with baroque additions, weighed down by hateful dogmas, [and] disfigured by a doctrine of tyrannies, persecutions, torture, and blood.”²¹ They condemned it in principle, but continued to hold services all the same. To an historian, these distinctions may seem interesting, but to the average French citizen of the time, they produced confusion and irritation; when faced with the choice between Catholicism and a new institution which resembled it in so many important ways but required a reordering of their world, it is not surprising that many chose the former.

While Ozouf claims that the dechristianization movement was largely a process of dilution and simplification, others like Suzanne Desan see it as “rhetoric of opposition.”²² She argues that “radical revolutionaries had come to view Christianity as the rival cosmological and moral system that had provided the frame and underpinning of the monarchy and the traditional hierarchical order.”²³ Revolutionary leaders saw Catholicism as promoting inequality and servitude in opposition to the republican ideals of liberty and fraternity; they decried it as mysterious superstition arrayed against the Revolution's goals of reason and clarity. Either theory – dilution or opposition – could explain the French government's efforts during the height of the dechristianization movement. To be successful, the dechristianizers would have to confront the immense power Christianity had over the minds and daily routines of the people. By choosing to go about their daily routines as usual, the lower orders of French society inherently protested the dechristianization movement.

Two major efforts on the part of the government were directed at reshaping society. The new calendar and the push to name everything from streets to newborns after revolutionary heroes and virtues both held a great deal of religious importance. The old calendar was consecrated with holy days and festivals, and enshrined Sunday as a day of rest and worship; people often named their children after Biblical heroes and saints. In large part, most French citizens simply ignored the new calendar and many shopkeepers refused to keep their businesses open on Sundays. The new calendar upended centuries of religious meaning, but also cut through and rearranged routine patterns of daily life.

More telling is the failure of the revolutionary government in its effort to encourage republican names. Records from the district of Poitiers indicate that of the nearly six hundred children born there in 1794, only sixty-two were given accepted republican names. Similar statistics are to be found across the country, and the renaming of streets, buildings, and towns fared just as poorly. Eventually, even the Committee of Public Safety requested that all documents include original names in addition to “official” republican names.²⁴ However, acts of resistance on the part of the common people of France extended beyond passive non-interaction.

Villagers sometimes actively defended the assault on their faith, as was the case in the Vendée and elsewhere. Threats of physical violence toward revolutionary officers and mass protests of governmental policy in regards to dechristianization were not uncommon, nor were they isolated to areas that generally resisted the Revolution, as one may expect. The department of the Yonne was located in north-central France, in the heart of the district of Burgundy. In the early years of the Revolution, many in Yonne supported the new government and its policies. Throughout the Revolution, there was no serious counterrevolutionary movement in the region. Even during the anti-clerical phase of the Revolution, Yonne remained stable and un-combative, with ninety percent of the department's clergy swearing the

²⁰ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 268.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 270.

²² Suzanne Desan, “Redefining Revolutionary Liberty: The Rhetoric of Religious Revival During the French Revolution,” *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 1 (1988): 4.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Tallett, “Dechristianizing France,” 6.

oath to the Civil Constitution.²⁵ But in 1794, when officers tried to close the local church in the town of St. Bris in the Yonne, villagers assembled and demanded that they be allowed to attend services. The officer barred the doors only to return the next morning and find that the people had torn them off their hinges entirely. The doors were replaced and locked a second time. Once again, the villagers broke through and began singing psalms with no priest present to guide them.²⁶ In another village in the Yonne, parishioners took holy relics from their church and buried them in the ground to keep the Revolutionary Armies from confiscating or destroying them. This included a massive bell from the church's steeple. The locals also disfigured and burned the statues of liberty that had replaced the crucifixes on their church altars.²⁷ Such actions show that even supporters of the Revolution did not always support dechristianization.

As time passed and the movement grew increasingly radical, even some within the government tried to moderate its excesses. Maximilien Robespierre, shocked and appalled by the actions of the dechristianizers, decried the movement on November 21, 1793. He condemned the effort, saying that it created more fanaticism than it cured. "Atheism," he said in a speech given to a Jacobin club, "is aristocratic; the idea of a great Being that watches over oppressed innocence and punishes triumphant crime is altogether popular."²⁸ The Being that Robespierre spoke of was of his own design. A genuine deist, Robespierre believed in a higher power that ordered the natural workings of the universe. He called this entity the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being was compassionate and embodied the ideal virtues of the new French Republic. In many ways, this Supreme Being was much like the Christian conception of God, but it was free of what Robespierre saw as the excess ceremony of Catholicism:

He [the Supreme Being] did not create kings to devour the human species. Neither did he create priests to harness us like brute beasts to the carriages of kings, and to give the world the example of baseness, pride, perfidy, avarice, debauchery, and falsehood. But he created the universe to celebrate his power; he created men to help and to love one another, and to attain happiness through the path of virtue.²⁹

Robespierre was more in line with the so-called primitive Christians described earlier. He was by no means an atheist. Therefore, the transition towards atheism that the dechristianization movement experienced was very unsettling to him on both a political and spiritual level.

Fearing what dechristianization could do if left unchecked, Robespierre pressed the National Convention to find some way to rein in the more dangerous elements of the movement. They eventually relented and on December 6 issued a proclamation formally reiterating the right of the French people to practice their faith of choice.³⁰ Robespierre was not alone in his disdain for the dechristianization movement. Other powerful members of the Committee of Public Safety as well several prominent revolutionary leaders like Georges Danton feared that the radicalism of the movement was alienating France's neighbors and driving people into the arms of counterrevolutionary organizations.³¹ The dechristianization movement was thus resisted throughout its existence by inhabitants of small villages and by the highest echelons of political power. People struggled against its programs in rebellious regions like the Vendée as well as in docile and otherwise pro-revolutionary areas such as the department of the Yonne. In the short-term, it is difficult to argue that the movement attained the desired outcome of those who led it. Catholicism – or religion in general – was not snuffed out, nor was a cult of reason or allegiance to a Supreme Being ever widespread or more than nominally supported by the people. Despite this, the movement was at least partially successful in other ways, and its long-term consequences proved profound.

The most resounding success of the dechristianization movement was the demolition of the clergy. The anti-clerical movement made this victory possible. Many priests earned their living from state-provided funds and salaries and many of the Church's functions were subject to governmental oversight. Thus, in terms of the Constitutional Church, "the state had created it, and the state could destroy it."³² By Year II of the Revolution (1794), an estimated eighteen to twenty-two thousand priests had abdicated either by choice or against their will. Interestingly, those areas of France which had not been subject to much dechristianization suffered the most abdications. This is more telling than confounding; areas which were less likely to resist the movement were more likely to be led by priests who had

²⁵ Desan, "Redefining Revolutionary Liberty," 2.

²⁶ Ibid., 1.

²⁷ Tallett, "Dechristianizing France," 9.

²⁸ Maximilien Robespierre, quoted in Sylvia Neely, *A Concise History of the French Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 199.

²⁹ Maximilien Robespierre, quoted in Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 92.

³⁰ Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 262.

³¹ Anderson, *Daily Life During the French Revolution*, 151.

³² Tallett, "Dechristianizing France," 10.

taken the oath to the Civil Constitution. The more constitutional priests a district or department had, the easier it was for the government to forcibly remove them.³³ Efforts to force priests to marry were slightly less successful, though it is believed that up to six thousand took marital vows at the behest of the government.³⁴ These abdications, combined with the furious hunting down of refractory priests by Revolutionary Armies and sans-culottes as well as the closure of most churches throughout France, meant that many villages had no local priest at all. These vacancies led to the direst ramifications for the Christian faith in France in the long-term.

It is difficult to argue that any tangible blow superseded that of the seizure of Church property; denied their principle source of prestige and wealth, the clergy were crippled and the Church never fully recovered. However, in matters of religion, it can be argued that intangible and spiritual consequences of actions are just as important in terms of understanding historical phenomena. The vacuum created by the absence of so many local priests had immediate as well as long-term consequences. John McManners put it most succinctly when he wrote, “the lethargical mystique of popular conformity, which made the ancient regime church appear all embracing and so powerful,” was destroyed when priests could no longer hold regular services.³⁵ The psychological hold that the Christian faith and its leaders held over the populace was greatly weakened. People continued to go about their routine, but found that life went on, regardless of whether or not they attended their priest’s sermons at the church. More importantly, many began to realize that they could do themselves what had previously been the sole purview of the clergy. Without priests, simple farmers or artisans began burying the dead, marrying couples, and even hosting church services. Midwives began baptizing newborns in addition to delivering them.³⁶ In many districts, the awe that the Church normally inspired was largely forgotten. This disconnect between the laypeople and their clerical leaders is the single greatest victory of the dechristianization movement.

The results of this victory are clearly evident in modern France, which stands as one of the most secular nations in the world. The dechristianization movement has done centuries afterward what it could not seem to accomplish during the high tide of its power; it has separated Church power from political power and weakened the Church’s ability to play a leading role in society. As Ozouf wrote, “Rights, liberty, the dawn of the modern, secular, liberal world.... [and] the transfer of sacrality onto political and social values [has been] accomplished.”³⁷ It has not necessarily been an easy or flawless transition. There are still lingering tensions within France as to the ultimate cost and validity of the dechristianization movement, and it remains a difficult subject to broach in French classrooms. At a public Mass held in August 1989, a Catholic mother of seven was questioned about her family’s beliefs regarding the Revolution and dechristianization. Her answer is indicative of the problematic issues still simmering within the Catholic community in France:

My children fully understand that it was necessary to publicly repair the crimes that were committed during the Terror. Of course, they learned their history of France and the Revolution at school. But it was their father who taught them what the teachers never say and that is that the Revolution was primarily directed against the Catholics.³⁸

This quote places disproportionate importance on the dechristianization movement, equating it with the Revolution in its entirety. Fair or not, some French citizens associate the radicalism of the dechristianization movement with other Revolutionary programs. It shows that in modern-day France, the effort to secularize society in the eighteenth century still has lingering consequences. Clearly, several issues raised by the French Revolution and the dechristianization movement it spawned remain unsettled, making the historiographical debates surrounding them all the more relevant and important.

What conclusions can be drawn from the study of the dechristianization movement? This essay began by posing two questions: first, was dechristianization a popular movement or one imposed upon the people at large by a small but powerful group and second, was it successful? The answer to the first lies in examining the words and actions of the French people. They signed petitions demanding the freedom to worship as they pleased, they stood by their priests and continued to attend Mass even when no clergy were present, they threatened violence against dechristianizers and sometimes carried out those threats, and they struggled to maintain some semblance of normalcy in their lives. Catholicism proved to be the stabilizing element that many segments of society could cling to amidst the storm of upheaval and change that was the French Revolution. When religion began to be cast aside, the people could not

³³ Michel Vovelle, *The Revolution Against the Church: From Reason to the Supreme Being*, trans. Alan José (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 37.

³⁴ Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 262.

³⁵ John McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church* (London: The Church Historical Society, 1969), 105.

³⁶ Tallett, “Dechristianizing France,” 17.

³⁷ Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 282.

³⁸ Tallett, “Dechristianizing France,” 28.

bear it. Even people such as those residing in the Yonne who supported the Revolution's greater goals showed active forms of resistance to dechristianization. The fact that revolutionary alternatives such as the cults of reason or Robespierre's Supreme Being did not seem to differ from Christianity in many important respects did not help the movement gain traction or legitimacy with the people. Thus, it can be argued that the movement was largely imposed upon the vast majority of people who did not desire to abandon Catholicism.

Despite this, the effort to dechristianize France seems to have achieved success long after its own time. It cannot be said that the leaders of the dechristianization movement succeeded in their original goals, but they did lay the foundation for all future secularist thought in France. Catholicism and religion in general had been brought down to a level where it could be critically analyzed and even refuted. Authors lambasted religious doctrine and destroyed the might of the Church in both practical and abstract terms. The floodgates were open; people in France would never again accept religious dogma wholly without reason or doubt. While the fact that people continued to go about their daily lives, including attending church, if no priest was present indicates that they were resistant to the push to dechristianize society, it also showed them that they could survive without a member of the clergy. The anti-clerical movement and subsequent Civil Constitution of the Clergy divided and weakened the Church, both practically and in the minds of the people. Church lands had been seized, robbing the institution of much of its wealth and government offices moved to fill the void left by their absences. The Catholic Church would never be the same in France, even after it was re-recognized as the quasi-official religion of the state under Napoleon. Therefore, while the dechristianization movement was by no means a popular one and an effort that failed in the short-term, it was ultimately successful in that it desacralized the Christian faith in France and forever crippled the power of the Church.

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A Nation Conceived But Never Achieved:

The Jewish National Consciousness that Never Formed a Nation in the Pale of Settlement, 1900-1920

RACHEL MANELA

Nations develop when there is a centralized state, a particular culture, a rational argument for their formation, and educational and political institutions that promote the formation and dissemination of the nation's philosophy and governing principles. In addition, a vital economy and a common national language are essential to forming a nation.¹ This paper discusses how these factors congealed among the Jews in Eastern Europe between 1900 and 1920, so that for a time a Jewish nation existed. However, due to indecision within the Jewish community, anti-Semitism and persecution, and the Russian government's concerted efforts to block the development of an independent Jewish nation in Eastern Europe, this nation was never fully realized and did not survive.

Between 1900 and 1920 the majority of Jews in Eastern Europe lived in the western borderlands of Russia known as the Pale of Settlement. The Jews who lived in the Pale of Settlement were not always a nation, but during those years, fluctuations in political ideology and social institutions in Russia made it possible for the Jews of the Pale to consider establishing their own independent nation. The Russian Revolution replaced the Tsarist regime with the Soviet Union, and a spirit of nationalism arose among a number of ethnic peoples that had been part of the Tsarist Empire. Barry Trachtenberg writes that the 1905 Revolution in Russia "solidified the nationalist socialist agenda as the dominant emancipationist model for Russian Jewry."² And, while this revolution did not ultimately benefit the nationalist aspirations of the ethnic minorities in Russia and surrounding lands, many of these peoples saw it as a, "high point in their emancipatory [sic] expectations and dreams of national liberation."³ Even before the 1905 Revolution, Jews in Eastern Europe had begun to see themselves as having a distinctly Jewish national identity. David Vital writes that, "The Jews of Eastern Europe did manifestly constitute a discrete, readily identifiable social group that for all practical and theoretical purposes did constitute a nation."⁴ The Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia always had existed on the fringes of society, never fully assimilating but also not standing on their own.

By 1881, there were between seven and eight million Jews living in Europe. Five million of them lived in the borderlands between Russia, Poland, and Germany, with most of them living in the Pale of Settlement, an area established by Tsar Alexander I in 1804 as a place where it was decreed that Jews should live. The Pale encompassed 4 percent of Imperial Russia. Centered in the Ukraine, Lithuania, Belorussia, Latvia, and the Crimea, it ran along the western border of Russia from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.⁵ As time passed, some Jews were permitted to leave, especially if they spoke Russian and attended Russian schools. This created a class of Jews who were educated, worldly, and politically sophisticated. When they returned to the Pale of Settlement, many of them began to plan and work for the Jews of the Pale to have a nation of their own. During the late stages of Imperialist Russia and the early days of the Soviet Union, a series of ethnographic studies were carried out, which provided valuable information about the ethnic groups in Russia that had been woven together to form the Russian people. Because the Jews of the Pale were so numerous and their language and culture so distinct, they could not be ignored when these ethnographies were being developed.

The Jewish playwright and ethnographer Shoyme Z. Rappaport, generally known by his pseudonym S. Ansky or An-sky, was responsible for carrying out the ethnographic study of the Jews. Initially, An-sky did not identify the Jews of the Pale as a distinct people, as defined by the ethnographic criteria of his study, but his goal was to find a justification for considering the Jews in general to be a true *narod* (people/nation).⁶ By 1897, An-sky had been exposed to the ideas and writings of I.L. Peretz and Sholem Aleichem, who are accredited with creating a new Yiddish literary culture.⁷ He then began to think of the Jews in the Pale as a distinct people who formed a nation of their own, separate from Russia and the other nations that surrounded them. In 1909, the newly established Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society funded An-sky to conduct further exploration into the 'Jewish Dark Continent,' referring to the Pale of Settlement. Before the outbreak of World War I put an end to their groundbreaking work, An-sky and his team had traveled to three provinces of the Pale where many of the oldest and most culturally significant shtetls (Jewish towns)

¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 7.

² Barry Trachtenberg, *The Revolutionary Roots of Modern Yiddish 1903-1917* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 22.

³ Trachtenberg, *Modern Yiddish*, 25.

⁴ David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 412.

⁵ Trudy Gold, *The Timechart History of Jewish Civilization, London Jewish Cultural Centre* (Chartwell Books Inc., 2004), 20-21.

⁶ Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2011), 4-5.

⁷ Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent*, 6.

were located.⁸ After World War I, An-sky compiled a study of the devastating impact of the war on the Jews living in the Pale. An-sky's ethnographic study of the 'Jewish Dark Continent' sought answers to 2087 questions about all aspects of the lives of the Jews who lived in the Pale of Settlement. Some of the questions he asked were:

"Is there a belief that pregnant women should not enter the house of a non-Jew... Is it customary everywhere to treat the midwife with respect... Is there a belief that the dead will have no rest in the grave until someone is named after him or her... At what age is a child sent to school... When do school terms begin and end... What manners do people teach a girl... What is the youngest age at which to arrange and make a marriage... What signs of beauty exist for a male and for a female... What kinds of rhymes and tunes do people say and play at weddings... List all the Jewish dances you know... Do the townspeople ever intervene to make peace between husband and wife... Do more divorces happen now or fewer... What do people say when they bring the dead into the cemetery... Do the dead leave their graves at night?"⁹

An-sky's report begins by reversing his earlier position and insisting the Jewish people in the Pale of Settlement do in fact constitute a nation.¹⁰ The five parts of his ethnographic study depict the entire course of a human life: (1) The Child from Conception to Kheyder (school); (2) From the Kheyder to the Wedding; (3) The Wedding; (4) Family Life, and (5) Death. An-sky collected data about all manner of customs, beliefs, and understandings about the world. His findings describe and inventory the distinct culture developed and pursued in the Pale. He found that this culture was separate from the practices of other Jews and other groups who lived in the Russian borderlands. The Jews living in the Pale were a unified people in ways that transcended the mere fact that they lived in the same well-defined area. They had developed a self-conscious identity of themselves as Jews who belonged to an identifiable and unique group of people. As Ernest Gellner notes, proximity alone is not enough for a people to become a nation. They must identify themselves as belonging to a particular group and accept the responsibility that belonging to that group entails. "A mere category of persons becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes."¹¹

In the early 1900s, members of the Jewish intelligentsia were trying to figure out how to transform the unique folk culture of the Jews living in the Pale into a nationalist movement. Their discussions focused on the importance of Yiddish, the everyday language of the Jews in the Pale, as a nationally unifying force. This was the period when the debate over whether to have Hebrew or Yiddish as the national language of the Jews became central to the Jewish nationalist movement. Hebrew, the ancient language of Jewish religious texts, was an essential part of Jewish religious practices, but Yiddish was the language spoken in day-to-day activities and in the social and cultural aspects of life in the Pale of Settlement. Kalman Weisser, in his book *Jewish People Yiddish Nation*, describes Yiddish as, "the spoken language of Ashkenazic Jews."¹² Written with Hebrew characters, it sounds similar to German when spoken. Hebrew was the language Jews used when they spoke to God, but Yiddish was the language Jews spoke to each other at home, in the markets, and in all their ordinary interactions. Yiddish united Jews from different regions of Europe. It was what mothers taught their children; it was the language one would hear in the countryside, in the streets of shtetls, and among Jews in the cities. Yiddish reflected a long Jewish history, and as it traveled and grew with the Jewish people of Eastern Europe as they settled in the Pale, it would define and delineate their surroundings.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, many educated Jews in Eastern Europe began to cultivate the Yiddish language and culture in an effort to shape them into a respectable foundation for a Jewish national identity. However, according to Gellner, a shared language alone is not enough to define a culture, let alone a nation. In the process of forming a nation, "a situation arises in which well defined and educationally sanctioned unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men will willingly and often ardently identify."¹³

In 1908, the First Language Conference was convened in Czernowitz, in what is now modern-day Romania. This conference attracted Jewish intellectuals from all over Eastern Europe, both within and outside the Pale of Settlement. These people came together to discuss Yiddish and its place in the effort to establish a Jewish nation. The goal of many attendees was to make Yiddish the Jewish national language. While Yiddish was spoken in almost every

⁸ Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent*, 10-11.

⁹ An-sky, "The Jewish Ethnographic Program," trans. Nathaniel Deutsch in *The Jewish Dark Continent*, 103-324 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2011), 113, 117, 153, 196, 201, 228, 229, 239, 248, 295.

¹⁰ An-sky, "The Jewish Ethnographic Program," 103.

¹¹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 7.

¹² Kalman Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 7.

¹³ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 54.

Jewish home, it was not necessarily a standardized language, and many people, Jews included, viewed it as a ‘gutter language’ that was not worthy of serious study. However, this attitude toward Yiddish was changing, and according to Dr. Chaim Zhitlovsky who was in attendance, the goal of the conference was “to elevate Yiddish to the plane of national tongue by forging it into a popularistic, [sic] cultural instrumentality”¹⁴ I.L. Peretz asserted that Yiddish was a distinct “mother tongue” of 90 percent of the Jewish people. The Conference emphasized that Yiddish schools were needed, as were books written in Yiddish. While Hebrew would still be recognized as the language that bound together Jews of all times, and would retain its religious role and significance, many attendees at the conference wanted Yiddish to be the national language of the emerging Jewish nation.

Jewish literary societies were crucial in the movement to legitimate Yiddish as the national language of the Jewish people. Jeffrey Veidlinger writes that, “literary societies were the foremost means by which Jews in the early twentieth century Russian Empire organized for cultural activity in the public arena.”¹⁵ These Jewish literary societies pursued a variety of purposes. Some were dedicated to Hebrew, while others were Zionist and sought to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Some even celebrated Jewish writers who wrote solely in Russian. The supporters of Jewish nationalism had expected the literary societies to agree to establish Yiddish as a Jewish national language, “suitable for discussion, deliberation, and other forms of communication and cultural expression in the public sphere.”¹⁶ However, the Jewish literary societies were never able to agree to provide unified support of Yiddish as the national language of the Jews in the Pale of Settlement.

Establishing a Jewish nation in the Pale, with Yiddish as its national language, would require the development and engagement of a strong political organization. This responsibility became the mission of the Jewish socialist political party called the Bund. The Bund is described by David Vital as, “a national, secularist, class oriented in the Marxist mode, syndicalist, revolutionary organization.”¹⁷ David Passow explains that “secularists [such as the Bund] took the firm position that a language spoken by eight to nine million people is unquestionable to be considered a [national] language. They stoutly rejected the contention that Yiddish [was] merely a jargon which includes German, Hebrew and Slavic words.”¹⁸

In the beginning of the 20th Century, efforts by the Bund dramatically increased the number and availability of Yiddish books and periodicals. The appearance of sophisticated journals such as *Literarische Monatshefte* (1908) and *Di Yidishe Velt* (1912-1916) were clear indicators that a Jewish intelligentsia was emerging, writing, and publishing in Yiddish.¹⁹ Despite their support of Yiddish, the leaders of the Bund spoke and conducted their meetings in Russian. They supported Yiddish as the national language of the Jews because it was popular amongst the working class in the Pale; at the same time they saw themselves as separate, since many of them were from the cities. The Bund’s goal was to create a nation, and they used propaganda in Yiddish to stimulate greater Yiddish literacy among the Jewish working class.²⁰

The writer Noah Prylucki used Yiddish out of necessity in order to communicate his nationalist message to people who spoke no other language. The fact that Yiddish papers had such wide readership in the Polish borderland regions challenged arguments for Polish nationalists’ claims of hegemony.²¹ While the Bund had not always been a Yiddishist or nationalist organization, it was clear in the early 1900s that these two things went hand in hand with the Bund’s commitment to socialism. “The first leaders of the Bund to advocate ‘national equality’ for the Jews of Russia explained that such equality entailed freedom of speech, press, and assembly in Yiddish.”²²

According to Gellner, nation building requires a narrative that enables leaders to control the dissemination of information to the masses through an educational system that defines the culture for the people and helps create a national identity.²³ The Bund opposed efforts to assimilate Jews into Russia. Establishing Yiddish schools was one way to do this. Modeling themselves after other emerging nationalist groups, the Bund established Yiddish schools, which taught a standardized form of Yiddish and strengthened the claim that Yiddish was indeed a national language. One of the Bund’s goals for these schools was to inform the masses about the socialist ideology supported by the Bund and gain support for a socialist Jewish nation.

¹⁴ David Passow, *The Prime of Yiddish* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing, 1996), 65, 68, 70.

¹⁵ Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 114.

¹⁶ Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture*, 127.

¹⁷ Vital, *A People Apart*, 415.

¹⁸ Passow, *The Prime of Yiddish*, 72.

¹⁹ Zvi Gitelman, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 108.

²⁰ Gitelman, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics*, 110.

²¹ Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation*, 33, 71.

²² Gitelman, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics*, 113.

²³ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 159.

The Yiddish schools attracted a wide range of students, even though they operated in violation of a law stipulating that Russian was the only language permitted for instruction in school.²⁴ While the number of students at the Yiddish schools may have been comparatively small in relation to the total Jewish population, it is impressive that the teachers and students were willing to go against the Russian State in order to establish and participate in educational institutions that furthered their nationalist goals.²⁵ Kenneth Moss notes that the development of Yiddish, as well as Hebrew schools “reflected a nationalist belief that children were a means to reform the nation.”²⁶

According to Gellner, a nation cannot just rely on culture to unify a people. It also must have a rational and secular foundation.²⁷ Part of the rational and secular foundation of Jewish nationalism among the Eastern European Jews in the first two decades of the twentieth century is evident in the development and popularity of Yiddish literature. Many Jewish scholars and authors were eager to add to the body of Yiddish literary works available to the public and to use their writings to promote the formation of a Jewish nation. By not writing in Hebrew they separated themselves from the religious people. They created a secular language and culture separate from synagogue and also from their gentile neighbors who spoke other languages. Yiddish was a language of the people, not of religion.

Shmuel Niger was a prodigy in the study of Talmud who turned to secular activities in pursuit of Zionism and support of the renaissance in Yiddish literature. He became the foremost Yiddish literary critic and was responsible for the discovery and launch of notable Yiddish writers such as Sholem Ash. Barry Trachtenberg describes him as “intimately involved with nearly every major Yiddish literary movement to appear during the first half of the twentieth century.”²⁸ He promoted an intellectual approach to Yiddish, which he hoped would raise the language to a level equal to that of other more generally recognized national languages. Niger’s works “focused on raising the awareness of Jewish workers to the revolutionary potential of a vibrant Jewish nation.”²⁹ He looked at other nations and saw how the bourgeoisie were responsible for furthering culture and refining the use of language among the people. He did not see this happening among the Jews, and he held the Jewish bourgeoisie responsible for the stunted development of Yiddish. He believed that elitist bourgeois Jews who had chosen to assimilate rather than support Jewish nationalism had done a great disservice to the Jewish people. An outspoken critic and political activist, Niger was arrested and tortured a number of times. When the 1905 Russian Revolution failed to further the cause of Yiddish and Jewish nationalism, Niger saw an opportunity to create a true Yiddish literary culture separate from partisan politics. In 1908, Niger, a Zionist and a Socialist, A. Vayter, a member of the Bund, and Shmarya Gorelik, a non-socialist Zionist started the short-lived journal, *Di Literarische Monatshriftn (The Monthly Literary Journal)*, which cultivated the elegant use of Yiddish in literary works in an attempt to raise Yiddish up as a national language.³⁰ Like Niger, Nokhem Shtif wanted Yiddish to flourish as a national language, deserving of respect and study. He defended Yiddish from Hebraists, elitists, and of course, from those wishing to ignore Yiddish all together.³¹

Sholem Aleichem is regarded as one of the greatest Yiddish writers. Born into a well-to-do Jewish family in 1859 in the Ukraine and originally named Solomon Rabinovich, he grew up in a small shtetl near Kiev. He eventually attended school in Kiev, where he learned both Russian and French. Solomon Rabinovich spoke Russian during the day, but at night, he became Sholem Aleichem, taking a Yiddish greeting meaning ‘peace be with you’ as his pen name. Sholem Aleichem wrote more than forty books, founded and was a constant contributor to a popular Yiddish literary magazine, and produced an anthology of Yiddish literature for which he recruited contributions from the most noted Yiddish authors of the day. His writings enjoyed such great popularity among the Jews of the Pale and around the world that many people learned to read Yiddish just so they could read his stories. In his writings, the humor and wisdom of ordinary Jewish people comes alive. His wit and insight, conveyed through the unforgettable characters he created, tell us much about the resilience of the human spirit, while the picture of shtetl life he provided has preserved that world for the ages.

In his story “Two Anti-Semites,” Sholem Aleichem tells of a traveling salesman named Max Brilliant, who had dark, shining eyes and “real Semitic hair.” Max “speaks Russian like a cripple, and God help us, with a Yiddish sing-song. At every twist and turn, he is reminded who he is and what he is. In short, he’s a sorry creature.”³² To hide his Jewish identity, Max has removed his beard and eats lobster, a non-Kosher food. He is traveling to Kishinev, the site of the 1903 Easter Pogrom, and even though he is not from the area, “his heart was flooded with grief and filled

²⁴ Gitelman, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics*, 115.

²⁵ Gitelman, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics*, 116.

²⁶ Kenneth Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009), 201.

²⁷ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 20-21.

²⁸ Trachtenberg, *Modern Yiddish*, 82.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 89, 94.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 140, 145, 148.

³² Sholem Aleichem, “Two Anti-Semites,” trans. Miriam Waddington in *The Best of Sholom Aleichem* 163-172, ed. Irving Howe and Ruth R. Wisse (New York: New Republic Books, 1979), 164.

with blood when he was told about the atrocities.”³³ Not wanting to hear from the sad people who had survived, he develops a plan. When the train stops, he buys an anti-Semitic newspaper and returns to his rail car, where he covers himself with the paper to hide his identity as a Jew. He hopes that if any Jews come onto the train, they will not want to sit near him, let alone want to talk to him. While he sleeps, another man comes into the rail car and mimics his actions. Later, Chaim Nyemchick, a general inspector for a company, who also travels for work, comes into the car. Sholem Aleichem describes how Chaim too has tried to mask his Jewish identity by adopting the name Albert, even though everyone calls him Patti. With his characteristic humor, Sholem Aleichem writes: “How from Chaim you get an Albert is understandable. Our first move is to get rid of the ‘ch’ in Chaim. Then we say goodbye to the ‘i’ and the ‘m,’ leaving only the ‘a’ by itself. All you now need to do is add the ‘lbert’ to make Albert, and that is just a hop skip and a jump to Patti.”³⁴ The inspector finds it hilarious to discover that not one but two men were lying in the train, with pages from an anti-Semitic newspaper covering them. Patti decides to test his theory about the men being Jewish by whistling a popular Yiddish tune, to which Max responds with the next line of the song. In the end, all three men are singing the Yiddish folk song.³⁵

The moral of the story is that a Jew cannot change who he is, even if he changes his name, participates in ‘Gentile practices,’ and hides under a cover of anti-Semitism. In the end, it is neither their religion nor their physical appearance that unites the three men as Jews. It is the fact that they embraced the Yiddish language and culture by singing a popular folk song, which they all knew, even though they were from different regions. The grief Max feels about what happened to the Jews during the pogrom also reveals his Jewish identity and sensibility, despite his efforts to deny or hide it.

In 1917, Kalman Zingman wrote a utopian fantasy *In der Tsukunft-shtet Edeniya* (In the City of the Future Edeniya) in which he imagines what it would be like to have a modern independent Jewish nation. This story highlights the aspiration for an autonomous Jewish nation existing within Europe, with Yiddish as its predominant language. Zingman’s story is the tale of an unrealized utopian aspiration, just as the aspiration for a Jewish nation in the Pale of Settlement was never fully realized.

By the time Jewish sentiment in the Pale coalesced in favor of the formation of a Jewish Nation, the Soviets were in power and were committed to not allowing the Jewish people to form their own nation. The Soviets continued the anti-Semitism and repression of the Jews that had been all too common under the tsar, contradicting the socialist ideals of the Russian Revolution. While Lenin wrote, in 1903, that there must be opposition to the suppression of nationhood, he also believed that “the idea of a separate Jewish people [was] untenable scientifically.”³⁶ Lenin advocated assimilation of the Jews into Russia as an answer to Jewish nationalism. However, for a period between 1905 and 1907, other ethnic minorities in Russia, such as the Ukrainians and Armenians, were able to advance their nationalist claims. Their struggle to establish independent nations often resulted in open hostilities towards the Soviet State. This may have prompted the Bolsheviks, who had taken power of the Russian government, to consider granting a limited form of nationalism and self-determination for the ethnic minorities; however, the Bolsheviks never considered allowing the Jews of the Pale to form their own nation.³⁷

Stalin defined his own criteria for determining the conditions necessary for a people to form their own nation. A nation would have to satisfy the following conditions: “historically evolved, a stable community of language, territory, an economic life, and a psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture”³⁸ Although Stalin did not think the Jews in the Pale qualified as a nation, the Jews, in fact, met all of his criteria for nationhood. Jews had lived in Europe since 1000. They had resided in Lithuania, Poland, and Germany since at least the 1100s, with a Jewish community established in Kiev in 1124. The oldest surviving Yiddish text is dated 1382.³⁹ Some of the earliest accounts of the expulsion of Jews from Russia occurred as early as the late 1400s. In 1580, a council was formed in Poland to address the Diaspora of the Jews, and a similar council met later in Lithuania. Stalin’s assertion that the Jews did not have an historic claim to the land on which they lived was clearly unfounded because Jews had been in the region for almost eight hundred years. The Jews had a stable community of language, residence, and culture, as well as a psychology and tradition of identifying themselves as a nation.

Gellner asserts that a solely agrarian society cannot be a nation and that a nation needs to have a viable and fully functioning economy that supports industry, trade, and a merchant class.⁴⁰ The Jews in the Pale satisfied these

³³ Aleichem, “Two Anti-Semites,” 165.

³⁴ Aleichem, “Two Anti-Semites,” 168-169.

³⁵ Aleichem, “Two Anti-Semites,” 172.

³⁶ M. Altshuler, “The Attitude of the Communist Party of Russia to Jewish National Survival, 1918-1930,” *YIVO* 14 (1969): 68.

³⁷ Altshuler, “The Attitude of the Communist Party of Russia to Jewish National Survival,” 70.

³⁸ Altshuler, “The Attitude of the Communist Party of Russia to Jewish National Survival,” 71.

³⁹ Trudy Gold, *The Timechart History of Jewish Civilization* (London: Chartwell Books, Inc., 2004), 19.

⁴⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

conditions in their own unique way. David Vital writes that the Jews of Russia never fit into the Russian class system because they were not of Russian origin, despite having lived there for so long. They were a people set apart because of restrictions on where they could live. In addition, their culture, traditions, religion, and language separated them from the main stream of Russian society. However, they did co-exist and engaged in business in Russia with both Jews and non-Jews, although there were limits on Jewish businesses that non-Jews did not face. One of them was that Jewish merchants and artisans could not become members of the guilds, which regulated important aspects of commercial life. Both the cost of membership and the unwillingness of the guilds to include Jews kept them out. Despite this, Jews played a significant part in the economic life of their communities. “They served directly and indirectly as leaseholders, bailiffs, rent collectors, suppliers, distillers of alcohol, inn, tavern, and shop keepers, as cobblers, tailors, carpenters, and as members of other similar crafts.”⁴¹

In his book, *The Jewish Century*, Yuri Slezkine explains that the market economy characterized by trade between Jews and gentiles also supported an advanced banking industry. “Jewish banks based in Warsaw, Vilna, and Odessa had been among the first commercial lending institutions in the Russian Empire.”⁴² When, “in 1915-16, the imperial capital was formally closed to all but specially licensed Jews, at least seven of the seventeen members of the St. Petersburg Stock Exchange Council and twenty-eight of the seventy joint-stock bank managers were Jews or Jewish converts to Christianity.”⁴³ The developed economy of the Jews spread and functioned throughout all strata of the Jewish community, as well as having a significant place in the overall economies of Russia and other Eastern European nations.

While some Jews were townspeople (*mecschantsvo*) many Jews lived in the country or in small rural villages. Sholem Aleichem’s famous character Tevye the Dairyman, whom many know as the protagonist in the musical *Fiddler on The Roof* adapted from Sholem Aleichem’s stories, lived in the countryside and made his living selling milk.⁴⁴ However, from the late 1880s through the first decade of the 1900s, many Jews living in the Pale migrated to the cities. In fact, at the turn of the century, Jews were the most urbanized non-Russian population in Russia, with 52.6% of Jews living in urban areas. Many of the Jews who migrated to the cities sought employment in factories. These Jewish factory workers preferred to work for Jewish business owners, because other factory owners would not accept the Jewish Sabbath or high holy days as reasons to miss work.⁴⁵

All of this points to a vibrant Jewish consciousness, language, culture, history, and economy existing in Eastern European and the Russian territories between 1900 and 1920. At that time, five million of Europe’s seven million Jews lived in Russia, where Russia’s residential policy for Jews concentrated them in and around the Pale of Settlement, making it easy for them to develop and maintain their own language, culture, and economy. Most of this Jewish population spoke Yiddish, with many individuals not able to speak or understand Russian. By 1918, the Bolsheviks, who controlled the Russian government, had established a Commissariat for Jewish National Affairs, which recognized Jews as a significant and important ethnic group in Russia. Why, then, were the Jews unable to establish an independent Jewish nation in the Pale of Settlement?

With the benefit of historical perspective, it is clear that certain things were missing that might have enabled the Jewish nation envisioned in the early twentieth century to solidify and survive in the Pale of Settlement. The language question embodied a level of complexity that was difficult to resolve. Some factions supported Yiddish, while others argued in favor of Hebrew. Some were even dedicated to the language of the ruling class, be it Polish or Russian. Hebraists did not think Yiddish was up to the task of supporting the intellectual weight, historical significance, and religious importance of Jewish texts that were thousands of years old.⁴⁶ When the Jewish literary societies could not reach an agreement on a Jewish national language, it was clear that such a decision would have to be made by a strong central authority, but such an authority did not exist. Without definitive decisions about a Jewish national language and a standardized educational system to promote and teach that language, it was impossible to reach a unified decision on other issues relating to establishing a Jewish nation. The factionalism among the Jews of the Pale regarding the formation of a Jewish nation was a significant barrier. Opinions seemed to differ from city to city and region to region. There were even groups that rejected the whole idea of establishing a Jewish nation in Eastern Europe and Russia.

In the midst of these discussions and debates, the Bund became a primary advocate for Jewish nationalism.

⁴¹ Vital, *A People Apart*, 85.

⁴² Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 118.

⁴³ Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 119.

⁴⁴ Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye and His Daughters* (or *Tevye the Dairyman*), 1894.

Fiddler on the Roof, (Original Broadway musical, 1964; Film adaptation, 1971).

⁴⁵ Vital, *A People Apart*, 416-417.

⁴⁶ Vaidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture*, 114-140.

The Bund and similar groups created charities and social organizations to help the Jews in the Pale of Settlement and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. However, the Bund was not large enough or strong enough to successfully establish the Jewish nation.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle to Jewish nationalism was the fact that the 1917 Russian Revolution had given the Soviets control the Pale of Settlement, and they were adamantly opposed to a Jewish nation in the Pale. The Jews did not have the power to overcome the Russian opposition to an independent Jewish nation in the Pale of Settlement. Thus, even if they had achieved unity of purpose in support of forming a Jewish nation in the Pale, Russia would not have allowed that nation to be established.

Jeffrey Veidlinger writes in his book *Jewish Public Culture* that “the central determinants in a nation’s evolution are both the individual traits with which its people are endowed and that evolve based on their interactions with surrounding peoples, environments, and universal values shared by all peoples.”⁴⁷ Neither Russia nor all the Jews in the Pale had a shared vision and goal of a Jewish nation in Eastern Europe. In fact, many Jews looked forward to leaving Russia and Europe completely. Between 1900 and 1914, almost 2 percent of all Jewish residents of the Pale of Settlement were leaving every year. Most headed to the United States. Some cast their eyes longingly toward Palestine.⁴⁸ Zionists were a powerful faction who did not support the cause of a Jewish state in Eastern Europe. They refused to give up their goal of returning to the ancestral homeland of the Jews and establishing a Jewish nation in Palestine. While Zionism was not strictly a Hebraist movement, Zionists and Hebraists often were attracted to each other and therefore were not supportive of Yiddish.

By the end of World War II, the effort to establish Yiddish as the national language of the Jewish people had lost much of its momentum. The repression of the Jews perpetrated by the Soviet Union, which took up the practice of anti-Semitism from Tsarist Russia, continued to disrupt Jewish nationalism. Finally, the devastation of World War I and the horrors visited upon the Jews by the Holocaust, which exterminated millions of Yiddish-speaking Jews, shattered the hope for a Yiddish-speaking Jewish nation in Eastern Europe. Instead, out of the ashes of the war came a strengthened movement for a new Jewish nation in the land where the Jews had originated. Eventually, Hebrew, not Yiddish, became the national language of Israel. In the end, despite the tragedies that befell the Jews of Europe, and perhaps partially because of the scope of those tragedies, the Zionist cause survived and triumphed. A Jewish nation was established, and has since then thrived, but it was not the one that was conceived and supported by the Jews of the Pale of Settlement between 1900 and 1920.

⁴⁷ Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture*, 271.

⁴⁸ Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 117.

Post-1471 “New Monarchy” under Edward IV and Henry VII

EMILY GLASSFORD

After 1471 and the return of Edward IV to the throne following the Readeption, royal policies saw the renewal of an expanded, powerful monarchy under an active king. Post-Victorian analyses of the late medieval shift in monarchical management have largely fallen into two opposing camps: the “New Monarchy” thesis, supported by such historians as J.R. Green, A.J. Pollard, and Steven Gunn, and the “Tudor Revolution in Government” thesis, put forth by Geoffrey Elton. While the former emphasizes a gradual centralization of power beginning under Yorkist rule and credits these monarchs with a return to the medieval – and in no real sense “new” or novel – management techniques of such monarchs as Edward I, the latter posits that such centralization began only after 1485 and was concentrated primarily in the 1530s as a Tudor phenomenon, building upon the Whiggish influence of “Lancastrian constitutionalism.” Looking at the latter half of Edward IV’s reign and all of Henry VII’s, these late medieval monarchs concentrated power by reining in their nobles, renewing effective treasury-bolstering economic techniques within the context of a general Western European economic upturn, and standardizing and expanding the justice system and governmental bodies, thereby creating the momentum necessary for the authoritative tendencies of later Tudor reign. Given these expansions of monarchical authority under both Yorkist and Tudor rule, the theory of New Monarchy is a much more appropriate description of the period’s developments than Elton’s explanation, and both Edward IV and Henry VII’s policies were essential to the development of bureaucratic modernity in the later Tudor administrations of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

Acknowledging the role of Edward IV’s reign in paving the way for Tudor interventionism and, eventually, the Henrician Reformation, Green was the first to expound on the idea that the Yorkist and early Tudor monarchs created a new kind of monarchical authority.¹ While it is notable that he cited the period of 1471-1509 for this era of change, encompassing both Edward IV and Henry VII within the upswing of crown authority, this initial presentation of what became the New Monarchy thesis equated centralization of monarchical power with despotism, attaching judgment for the perceived removal of liberties in a constitutionalist bend. Again countering Elton’s view of the Tudor dynasty as the starting point of this shift in government and administration, Pollard described the years preceding Henry VII’s rise to the throne as “not years of continuous and all-consuming destructive anarchy,” as both Victorian historians and Elton’s Tudor-centric theory might have portrayed them.² In a more favorable interpretation than Green’s, Pollard saw this process of centralizing the administration as merely an orderly system returning to Edward I’s successful administrative style of management, and he did not attach Green’s constitutionalist judgment to his assessment of this governmental trend because such admirable values as “chivalry could not provide the means for a lasting political solution to England’s problems.”³ Emphasis on noble obedience to a monarch over considerations of the community, exemplified by the royal control of Tudor monarchs, became the solution to a crisis that arose in the absence of active kingship, the unfortunate state of Henry VI’s reign.⁴ Pollard even described the period of 1471-1509 as one in which “royal authority recovered and normal politics were restored,” suggesting that the state of increased authority was actually a return to normalcy rather than a divergence from appropriate practice; the lack of innovation creates, to an extent, a nonthreatening historical narrative.⁵

In his work *Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, Elton, even within the very title of his book, narrowed the focus of his analysis of governmental shift to Henry VIII’s reign and, more specifically, the 1530s of the Henrician Reformation. While this period did see some drastic change in the use of monarchical power, to highlight such a specific period as central in the overall trend of increased monarchical authority and bureaucratic modernity is to ignore the earlier centralization of authority under Edward IV and Henry VII that made the Henrician Reformation possible. Elton cited “new man” Thomas Cromwell as the main source of bureaucratic modernity during Henry VIII’s reign. Given this benchmark of governmental modernity, Elton treated Edward IV and Henry VII’s expansion of the royal household, which became an institutionalized governmental body, as a “temporary aberration” and “quintessentially medieval.”⁶ This perspective placed Henry VIII’s administration as the

¹ A. Goodman, *The New Monarchy: England 1471-1534* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1.

² A.J. Pollard, ed., *The Wars of the Roses* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), 2.

³ Pollard, *Wars*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ S.J. Gunn, *Early Tudor Government, 1485-1558* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995), 5.

savior that brought England into modernity, a conclusion that brings up its own questions of periodization. By implying that the early modern period began squarely with the shifts of the 1530s and Henry VIII's implementation of the English Reformation, Elton created a barrier between the Middle Ages and modernity and painted all medieval government as somewhat backward, contributing to a problematically Whiggish historiographic approach. K.B. McFarlane and G.L. Harriss both "questioned the novelty of many of the attributes of Elton's newly forged sovereign state... finding both the establishment of a national church and the supremacy of statute strongly prefigured in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English polity."⁷ Both Henrician and especially Elizabethan policies were the "outcome of the Yorkist and Tudor experiments," including the expansion of demesne and increased reliance upon regional agents of the crown, and saw the "restoration of the old bureaucratic exchequer after two generations of turmoil," highlighting that these precursors to absolutist monarchy stemmed from the practices of the late Middle Ages.⁸ As Pollard and his disciples similarly pointed out, "only a mature new monarchy could have accomplished [Henry VIII's royal supremacy over the church]."⁹

After Edward IV returned to the throne in 1471, the dynamic between him and his nobles contrasted greatly with the ineffective management of Henry VI's impotent reign, as Edward tightened control over the seemingly unwieldy nobility. This addition of a central authority figure, after an essentially leaderless period, provided a necessary point of stability, as nobles had previously asserted their own claims to power in an attempt to remedy the power void at the head of the body politic. Exemplary of this new relationship between Edward and his nobles was his treatment of Warwick's holdings after his rebellion and death. Simultaneously expanding the crown's influence into local politics and rewarding allegiance, Edward seized the "kingmaker's" holdings and gave a significant portion to his brother, the Duke of Clarence, for switching his allegiance from Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou's faction to his own. The remainder went to the Duke of Gloucester, contributing to a northern power base and extension of the royal household's authority into a region troubled by conflict with Scotland. However, such a grant, which included the title of Earl of Warwick and the income associated with it, was still contingent upon Clarence's continued loyalty, and Edward was unafraid to seize Clarence's holdings and execute him upon finding him guilty of treason in 1478. Although highlighting Edward's often-unappreciated ability to discipline his nobles, historian Christine Carpenter did acknowledge that the extension of the crown into local politics could have some damaging effects. Following the change from Warwick's authority to Clarence's in Warwickshire, Carpenter noted Clarence's inability to provide "extremely assertive noble intervention to bring [the Staffords] and similarly-minded gentry to heel," a phenomenon that turned Warwick's former estates into "the most disordered part of the region."¹⁰ Without Edward's changes in regional leadership to support the national aims of his administration, regional and local stability might not have been sacrificed in this manner.

However, in spite of the effects of this period of intervention on this local level, Carpenter suggested that historical accounts have been unkind to Edward and have failed to appreciate his administrative abilities in Warwickshire following Clarence's execution, even describing Edward's rule there from 1478 to 1483 as "an almost perfect exemplification of how to use royal power to its best advantage."¹¹ He achieved this success because of his ability to balance the gentry's contradictory desires: the aim to pursue their own ambitions without the limitations of royal imposition of power and the simultaneous need for some restraint to prevent the damaging effects of local feuds and some self-destructive ambitions. Unlike the feuding nobles and gentry, much of the clergy remained "unassertive, and even,...cravenly subservient," as in the case of Archbishop Bouchier of Canterbury.¹² Edward's firm hand reinstituted stability in the region of Warwickshire and beyond, displaying the strong, active kingship he exhibited with hegemonies in other regions, such as the Woodville contingency ruling Wales in the prince's name, and on the national stage as well.

In a continuation and expansion of similar policies, Henry VII was an expert at maintaining a tight hold over his nobles, even combining this royal authority with increased revenue for the crown. Using such techniques as bonds and recognizances, peace bonds, the creation of local councils, and the institutionalization of nobles as royal councilors, Henry extended his authority into local dynamics between gentry and nobility and kept a watchful eye over his noble subjects, ensuring at least an outward display of noble cooperation with and obedience to the crown. His monar-

⁷ Gunn, *Government*, 5.

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ Goodman, *New Monarchy*, 3.

¹⁰ C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 517.

¹¹ C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the constitution in England, c. 1437-1509* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 194.

¹² Pollard, *Wars*, 16.

chy became “more bound by institutions and by formal and legal routine than had been the more personal government of medieval kings,” suggesting the beginnings of the bureaucratic features in the fifteenth century that Elton attributed only to Henry VIII’s reign and the defined early modern period.¹³ Financial fears emerged as a political tool to keep a tight reign on nobles such as the Baron of Bergavenny and the Duke of Buckingham, as the potential for debt to the crown prevented the temptation for disobedience in land agreements. Such techniques were beneficial for the crown under either potential end; stability and order would be maintained in local politics should such landowners remain within the terms of the agreement, or the crown would acquire significant financial compensation in the event of failure to uphold the agreements.¹⁴ While this manoeuvre did provide some stability amidst the questionable legitimacy of the new Tudor dynasty, Carpenter argues that such interventionist policies were overly disruptive to local politics, failing to achieve the balance of Edward IV’s brand of rule. The practice of setting up local councils, in particular, proved problematic at militarized borders – primarily Scotland, Wales, and the Pale in Ireland – by threatening the independence and autonomy of those nobles who sought to maintain order in difficult environments. The Percy family in Northumberland and the Fitzgerald earls of Kildare bore the brunt of this policy. While both monarchs crushed uncooperative nobles when necessary – Edward IV’s execution of Clarence is a notable and previously discussed example within his Yorkist reign – Henry did so on a much greater scale and maintained a tighter grip on his nobles overall, even attacking the practice of retaining to weaken the numbers of a noble household as well as its ability to rival the splendour of court.

In spite of the sometimes-obstructive aspects of his greater hold on the nobility, Henry built upon the nobles’ natural role as royal councillors, institutionalizing to a greater extent the Great Council, House of Lords, and Privy Council. Such a standardization of these roles created opportunities for nobles and those members of the gentry incorporated into the royal household to become politically involved in Henry’s court on a consistent basis, mirroring the loyalty reward system of Edward’s demesnes. Henry’s implementation of this system of reward created a new pattern in regional leadership, diverging from the land-ownership basis still remaining in Edward’s version and creating a network of agents whose authority was derived solely from Tudor loyalty. Such representatives of the crown’s interest included the earl of Oxford, who provided military leadership at the Battle of Bosworth Field and in quashing the Northern Rising of 1489, and the earl of Surrey, who replaced the earl of Northumberland as lieutenant in the north, also as a result of the Northern Rising. While the clergy was also involved in these councils and in the politics of the realm, there was a constant power struggle between the Church of England and the “new men” of the period, such as Lovell and Cromwell. This reshaping of the court and royal councils created a “remarkable stability within the ruling groups,” thereby avoiding the factionalism at the heart of the Roses, a phenomenon that plagued Henry VI’s reign and, to some extent, Edward IV’s.¹⁵ In both Edward and Henry VII’s cases, such grants of position allowed the kings to observe the activities of the nobility and gentry closely, reward loyalty, and punish nobles for disobedience to the crown.

Useful on both the national and international stage was the economic expansion of both Edward and Henry’s administrations. Under Edward IV, England finally joined the general economic upturn of the rest of Europe. Burgundy and Flanders proved key to Edward’s international economic success, as the alliance formed through the marriage of his sister Margaret to Charles the Great of Burgundy provided the necessary power base to compete with France. The advantage of the Burgundian alliance for economic benefit can be seen in such instances as the Treaty of Picquigny, a 1475 treaty with France – thanks largely to Charles – that provided both immediate and long-term income for the English crown. Terms of the treaty awarded Edward and his advisors pensions as well as ensuring the payment of customs, providing for English income from international trade. The treaty also offered a ten-year truce, providing some political stability on the international stage. Although the pensions were a favorable outcome of the campaign in France, Edward’s use of taxes to fund a war he did not really fight led to the questioning of his ability to manage funds efficiently and honestly. However, in spite of repeated misappropriations of funds in the same vein, Edward managed to successfully receive parliamentary consent for a high tax rate while maintaining a cooperative relationship with Parliament and proving that the “New Monarchy” did not necessarily mean the dissolution of constitutionalism, nor did it cause the weakening of governmental bodies outside of the crown. Although Edward ran the risk of earning his subjects’ displeasure for his abuse of funds, there was enough overall economic recovery to avoid any taxation crisis, thanks in large part to the Treaty of Picquigny, collection of customs, prevention of piracy, and the absorption of noble

¹³ B. Thompson, ed., *The Reign of Henry VII: Proceedings of the 1993 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford: Paul Watkins Publishing, 1995), 8.

¹⁴ S.J. Gunn, “Politics and Government in England, c. 1460-1550” (lecture presented at University of Oxford, Oxford, Oxfordshire, November 11, 2013).

¹⁵ M.M. Condon, “Ruling Elites in the Reign of Henry VII” in *Patronage, Pedigree, and Power*, ed. C. Ross (Great Britain: Redwood Burn Limited, 1979), 109.

land holdings, such as Clarence's, into the crown. The "Yorkist land revenue experiment" expanded upon the same principle seen in the seizure of Clarence's lands, retaining noble holdings and offering the stewardship of these estates to local men allied with the king as reward for faithful service, encouraging both economic growth and a nonthreatening yet guiding royal presence at the local level from 1471 to 1483.¹⁶

Henry VII, often portrayed as the "stingy" king of the Tudor dynasty, used many of the same techniques to fill the coffers as he did to control the nobility, gentry, and clergy. However, much of this image of thriftiness and a bare, sparse court is a result of Francis Bacon's problematic observations written over a century after the existence of Henry VII's court. While Bacon's accounts exaggerated the myth of the tight-fisted monarch, Henry did expand and standardize sources of monarchical income.¹⁷ Taking advantage of the previously discussed recognizances and peace bonds, Henry also ensured increased revenue from the expansion of crown lands, clerical and lay taxes, feudal dues and wardship, and the customs of expanding trade. With the expansion of crown lands, Henry increased the net annual income from crown lands beyond that of Henry VI, Richard III, and what Henry VIII would achieve before the dissolution of the monasteries, earning approximately £40,000 per year on average between 1502 and 1505.¹⁸ However, this expansive demesne was not without cost, both in unpopular appropriation of estates for such reasons as "supposed idiocy, political unreliability or incapacity to pay large fines for various offences."¹⁹ Such actions contributed to his image as an ignoble and greedy king, somewhat lessening his legitimacy in the eyes of his subjects. In a similarly unpopular manoeuvre, Henry created a more accurate taxation system, thereby increasing revenue from taxation of his subjects. Previous tax assessments had underestimated the amount owed by any given layperson, relying on self-reporting of statistics or collusion between neighbors in reporting under-assessed taxation. Diverging from the previous loose parliamentary dependence on the fifteenth and tenth, in which taxes were imposed at a rate of one fifteenth on counties and one tenth on towns but inaccurately assessed, this new system of taxation imposed a higher tax rate and earned financial stability, if not all the desired and expected political stability.

Evidence to support the "New Monarchy" thesis relies heavily on the expansion and institutionalization of the administration of justice, a process that took effect over the course of both Edward and Henry's reigns as well. The beginnings of this development began with Edward's creation of crown affinities at the local level. Numerous local men were chosen for the office of justice of the peace (JP) or sheriff, extending the tentacles of monarchical authority into the local implementation of justice.²⁰ Again contributing to this network of regional agents, not only did the number of JPs increase during this period, but their number of duties and works expanded as well, taking on a significant role in local administration and in the implementation of peace bonds. These peace bonds served a dual purpose: should the concerned parties obey the terms of the agreement, the source of conflict would be removed, but if they failed to uphold the bond's terms, they would forfeit to the crown substantial fines. The threat of such financial burden was a common tool for keeping a tight rein on potential sources of instability within families of the nobility and gentry throughout Henry VII's reign. The implementation of this policy expanded even further, according to such contemporaries as Polydore Vergil after about 1500, at which point Henry's hold on the throne was more stable than in the 1480s and 1490s, suggesting that such strong assertions of authority became less necessary.²¹ The role of the JP became so substantial in local justice that books on how to be a JP were printed and widely accessible, suggesting a broader standardization of government and the office.²²

The establishment of a broadly accepted judicial procedure allowed for the extension of the crown's authority as well as increased stability for the local polity. The rise of local hegemonies aided in this endeavor in particular regions as well, such as York and Wales, but as previously discussed, there were some drawbacks to interventionist tendencies in politically unstable regions. While ecclesiastical courts were still involved in the deciding of many disputes, the expansion of secular institutions for dealing with civil matters began to chip away at the church's jurisdiction, perpetuating a power struggle between the two parties. This shift from ecclesiastical to civil methods signals the social shift from lineage values to civic ones, emphasising the rise of civic humanism and the impending sixteenth-century Renaissance. As historian J. Watts has noted, a shared language arose at court, seeing the rise of the term "common weal" to describe the civically united political body. Although this concept of government, a system in

¹⁶ Carpenter, *Wars of the Roses*, 200.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁸ Gunn, *Early*, 114.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁰ Carpenter, *Wars*, 193.

²¹ S. Cunningham, "Henry VII and Rebellion in North-Eastern England, 1485-1492: bonds of Allegiance and the Establishment of Tudor Authority," *Northern History* 32 (1996): 51.

²² Gunn, "Politics," 11 Nov. 2013.

which the monarch is beholden to said body of subjects, was not a new concept within this period, originating instead in the republican ideals of Roman government, the dissemination of ideas into an increasingly politically aware polity was a fifteenth-century trend.²³ Such emphasis on the common interests of those subjects below the nobility provided fodder for Cade's Rebellion in 1450, a conflict arising from a common perception of ineffective leadership that failed to fulfill what Fortescue idealized as the *regnum politicum et regale*.²⁴ In more localized and practical terms, the rise of equity courts provided remedies other than the winner-takes-all approach of older forms of courts, thereby preventing the return of dissatisfied complainants to flood the court system and providing long-term solutions for potential sources of local discontent. These courts of chancery allowed for the quick intervention in disputes between landlords and tenants, and chancery's flexibility, speed, and efficiency proved appealing, leading to an increase in number of suits over the course of Edward's reign. With such success, these courts grew even further under Henry VII and Henry VIII.

The process of judicial expansion that began under Edward IV developed to an even greater extent under Henry VII, leading to the rise of institutions such as the Star Chamber. Henry VII, with the aid of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, exhibited a sense of judicial dynamism that led to a boom in conciliar justice over the course of his reign.²⁵ These conciliar courts, with the emphasis in ecclesiastical justice placed on the council rather than the overarching authority of the pope, set the stage to some extent for the Church of England's separation from the Church of Rome in the hearing of cases during the Henrician Reformation. This policy also allowed Henry VII to maintain personal oversight in the administration of justice, thereby exemplifying the "New Monarchy's" emphasis on monarchical authority and centralization, as the king's person was so involved in the workings of this aspect of government. Much like both equity courts and conciliar courts, the Star Chamber proved more appealing than common law courts, aiming for quick and equitable settlements that would be enforced by the crown.²⁶ Largely settling land disputes, the Star Chamber provided an effective route to justice until it became swamped with too many cases because of its popularity. All of these courts offered a divergence from the very medieval practices of the common law courts, providing for compromises in the same vein as peace bonds and other forms of crown intervention in the local polity. Introducing the practice of arbitration, these alternatives to common law courts allowed the king to directly extend his power through his agents, as through his conciliar justice system Henry appointed his most trusted councillors and noblemen to arbitrate disputes. The king could use equity courts and arbitration to extend his authority effectively into every locality, providing an effective extension of interventionism less problematic than some of the regional governmental councils had put in place. As this power extended geographically and hierarchically, the establishment of a new judicial system reinforced the legitimacy and strength of the Tudor monarchy, shoring up many of the doubts in the wake of Henry VII's usurpation of the throne.

Over the course of the second half of Edward IV's reign and all of Henry VII's, spanning the period from 1471 to 1509, England saw a return to a form of active male kingship missing since Henry VI's ascension to the throne. Centralizing the power within the monarch and his institutions, this period ushered in what many historians have dubbed the "New Monarchy," a potentially misleading term referring to a reinvigoration of monarchical authority much in the same vein as Edward I and Henry V. However, the rise of the "New Monarchy" has signaled for some historians a transition into modernity, particularly exemplified by the rise of bureaucratic institutions and the extension of kingly managerial techniques into the nobility, gentry, and general local polity. Although Elton put forth the theory that this transition into modernity was a result of the Henrician Reformation and the developments of the 1530s, McFarlane, Pollard, Gunn, and others have established that the restructuring and reshaping of government throughout Edward and Henry VII's reigns were necessary for the possibility of Henry VIII's policies, establishing a sense of monarchical agency and centralized power. Edward IV and Henry VII diverged from the disorganized ineptitude of Henry VI's rule by disciplining and controlling their nobles, making policies that ensured economic growth, and establishing a judicial system that would both allow the king's involvement with the local polity and maintain some amount of stability in the midst of local feuds. Although the start of the early modern period in England still remains contested and somewhat unclear, what is clear is the role of Yorkist and early Tudor monarchy in paving the way for the authoritative policies of later Tudor monarchs, supporting the "New Monarchy" thesis over Elton's "Tudor Revolution in

²³ J.L. Watts, "The Pressure of the Public on Later Medieval Politics," in *The Fifteenth Century IV: Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, eds. L. Clark and C. Carpenter (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), 159.

²⁴ D. Starkey, "Which Age of Reform," in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*, eds. C. Coleman and D. Starkey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 13.

²⁵ Gunn, *Early*, 81.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

Government.” The general upswing in the crown’s power over this period was necessary for later Tudor success and the rise of the much-debated beginning of modernity. Although to attach such value to modernity is a problematically Whig approach to this historical narrative, implying that medieval characteristics are inherently less sophisticated and a bit backward, Edward IV and Henry VII certainly improved upon the ineffective, weak rule of Henry VI. The return of effective management of nobility, local polity, economy, and justice through the use of new institutions created a strong and active monarchy, providing relief after a period of relative chaos.
