

*Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution:  
A Real Alternative to Socialism in One Country?*

*by Eva Dragosits*

Leon Trotsky is a controversial person--the spectrum of judgements on him ranges from "a brilliant leader" to "a deformed personality." There is no doubt that he was a highly intelligent man with great organizational talent, but, having a closer look at his career, one realizes that he did not fully use his abilities. Several times he failed to use political opportunities he had; and his greatest theoretical achievement, the theory of permanent revolution, which he had developed in 1905, finally led to his end as a political leader. I try to examine to what extent Trotsky's personality and his political career depended on each other, and why Stalin, skillfully exploiting Trotsky's weaknesses, could so easily outmaneuver his political opponent.

Leon Trotsky, who had been fascinated by revolutionary ideas already at an early age, joined the Mensheviks in 1903. He shared their idea that a coming revolution would be bourgeois and would eventually lead to a second, a socialist, revolution.<sup>1</sup> But by 1905, Trotsky had developed a new idea: the proletariat, having assumed the leadership in the approaching revolution, would also assume the power, and, therefore, the new government would not be bourgeois, but Social Democratic, proletarian. From this embryo he gave birth to the doctrine of "permanent revolution." Support would come from revolutions in Western Europe, which he expected "the Russian spark to ignite," and which would lead Russia directly through the process of ripening industrialization, making possible the proletarian revolution. With this theory, Trotsky was contradicting Lenin who did not believe that a minority could achieve socialism, but was convinced that much time and mass education were needed. Trotsky was convinced that enough strength could be mustered temporarily to take and to hold Russia until the workers of Europe would arise. But the Petersburg uprising in 1905 was not answered by revolutions in the West, contrary to Trotsky's expectations. Trotsky as leader of the St. Petersburg Soviet was sent to exile.<sup>2</sup>

All Russian Social democratic revolutionaries based their concepts of revolution on Marx and Engels, according to whom proletarian revolutions occur in societies which are already

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<sup>1</sup>Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (New York: The Dial Press, 1940), 289.

<sup>2</sup>Thornton Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), 120-4.

industrialized and urbanized under capitalism and therefore are ready for very rapid reconstruction along radically new lines. This society on the morrow of the great workers' revolt was the "first phase" of communism and in the later development of the Marxist movement became known as "socialism". Socialism would be governed by a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and would be a transitional phase followed by the higher phase of communism. In communism the modern productive powers would be completely liberated, material plenty would be achieved, and the government in the old repressive sense would cease to exist.<sup>3</sup>

Applied to the economically backward Russia, Marx's theory required first the creation and experience of a capitalist stage of industrialization, before a socialist revolution could occur and the country finally could proceed to communism.

In 1905, there existed three distinctly different positions towards the coming revolution which, according to Marx, was necessary to achieve socialism.

The Mensheviks thought the coming revolution in Russia would be a bourgeois democratic revolution which would bring the bourgeoisie to power and lead to the political and economic development and the organization of the working class. This would prepare a second, a socialist revolution. The role of the workers was, for the time being, subordinate to that of the liberal bourgeoisie.<sup>4</sup>

Lenin and the Bolsheviks accepted that the revolution would be bourgeois because Russia was too backward for a socialist revolution:

The degree of economic development of Russia...and the degree of class consciousness and organization of the broad masses of the proletariat...make the immediate complete emancipation of the working class impossible.<sup>5</sup>

However, Lenin rejected the notion that the bourgeoisie would lead the revolution because it was too weak and cowardly; therefore, the leading role would likely fall to the proletariat.<sup>6</sup>

Under Russian circumstances, however, the revolution could only succeed through an alliance

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<sup>3</sup>Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), 368-9.

<sup>4</sup>Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, 289.

<sup>5</sup>"Lenin on Revolutionary Tactics, 1905," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 68.

<sup>6</sup>Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, 209.

of the two great oppressed classes, the proletariat and the poor peasantry.<sup>7</sup> The Social Democratic Party would strive to enter any provisional government that might arise in the course of the struggle and would determine the policy of that government. He advocated a two-class government, "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."<sup>8</sup>

The third position was that of Trotsky. He was in complete agreement with Lenin about the lack of revolutionary potential in the liberal bourgeoisie and, therefore, believed that the proletariat would have to do the job which the bourgeoisie was incapable of doing. The revolutionary government would be a government of the workers' democracy, so the "bourgeois revolution" made by the proletariat would tend to flow over into a proletarian revolution.

He further anticipated that the Russian revolution would tend to spread to the West which was ripe for a socialist revolution. The proletariat, once in power, might hold onto it and keep the revolution going "in permanence": the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions would combine into a single, continuous process, dominated throughout by the proletariat.

Trotsky and Lenin both attributed the leading role in the revolution to the proletariat because they thought the bourgeoisie to be incapable of carrying through a revolution, and both wanted the Social Democratic Party to enter the provisional government. But Lenin rejected Trotsky's formula of a "socialist government" or a "dictatorship of the proletariat." He favored a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry:"

The only force capable of gaining "a decisive victory over tsarism", is the people, i.e., the proletariat and the peasantry. And such a victory will be precisely a dictatorship,...<sup>9</sup>

In Trotsky's opinion Lenin overestimated the prospects of independent revolutionary representation of the peasantry.<sup>10</sup> As I have already mentioned, he had developed his own theory of revolution, which I here want to explain in detail.

The basic idea of this theory was that Russia could and would achieve power before the working classes of Western Europe and without passing through a prolonged period of bourgeois democracy. Trotsky considered the peasantry, which plays an important role in Lenin's

<sup>7</sup>John Molyneux, *Leon Trotsky's Theory of Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 20.

<sup>8</sup>Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, 291.

<sup>9</sup>"Lenin on Revolutionary Tactics, 1905," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 68-9.

<sup>10</sup>Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, 289-91.

conception, to be too differentiated and shapeless to form an independent party or policy of its own. The peasantry would be forced to side with the proletariat, but its role would be strictly subordinate. The coalition envisaged by Lenin was not realizable at a political, governmental level;<sup>11</sup>

Our attitude towards the idea of a "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is now quite clear....In our opinion, it simply cannot be realized, at least in its direct meaning.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently the government would pass into the hands of the party and the class that had led the uprising, which could only be the Social Democrats and the proletariat. But, compelled by the logic of the continuing class struggle, the government would not be able to restrict itself to merely democratic measures, but would lead to the socialist revolution.<sup>13</sup>

This is the first aspect of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution: the transition of the democratic revolution into the socialist; Trotsky denied that a long period of democracy would exist.<sup>14</sup>

The second aspect of the theory characterizes the socialist revolution:

For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations are transformed....Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals and usages develop in complicated reciprocal action and do not allow society to reach equilibrium.<sup>15</sup>

The third aspect of the theory concerns internationalism. Russia was an economically and politically backward country, and the material prerequisites for socialism did not yet exist. Trotsky saw the answer to this problem in "internationalization" of the Revolution: "...A Socialist revolution in the West would allow us to turn the temporary supremacy of the working class directly into a Socialist dictatorship."<sup>16</sup> This help from the European proletariat would remove

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<sup>11</sup>Molyneux, *Leon Trotsky's Theory of Revolution*, 25-7.

<sup>12</sup>Leon Trotsky, "The Permanent Revolution," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 136.

<sup>13</sup>Molyneux, *Leon Trotsky's Theory of Revolution*, 25-7.

<sup>14</sup>Trotsky, "The Permanent Revolution," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 130.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 139-40.

<sup>16</sup>Trotsky, "Our Revolution," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 138.

the threat of military restoration of capitalism, would relieve Russia from the pressure of international economic competition, and would make available resources which would allow a rapid development of Russia's productive forces.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, for the Russian working class "nothing remains but to link the fate of its political supremacy and the fate of the Russian revolution with the fate of a Socialist revolution in Europe."<sup>18</sup> Trotsky warned about Lenin's concept, which required a highly centralized Party control over the peasants who were not yet able to govern the state: "The organization of the Party will take the place of the Party itself; the Central Committee will take the place of the organization; and finally, the dictator will take the place of the Central Committee." This shows that Trotsky was aware that out of Lenin's concept a dictatorship would almost certainly be created under the conditions of actual revolution. For his part, Lenin warned about Trotsky: "Whoever wants to approach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at the most absurd and reactionary conclusions, political and economic."<sup>19</sup>

In 1905 Lenin failed to grasp the significance of Trotsky's new theory. He himself started to question some of the settled points of Russian Marxism, like the necessity of a period of capitalist rule, and suggested that workers and peasants "will not surrender" the democratic revolution to the bourgeoisie. He also admitted that "in history certain particular elements of both revolutions become interwoven," thus blurring the old distinction between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution. Lenin came very close to Trotsky's position, but drew back from a sharp break with orthodox Marxism.<sup>20</sup>

In the years between 1905 and 1917, Trotsky continued his independent line, disagreeing with both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on many issues. Nevertheless he tried also to reconcile the two. However, in 1912 the split became final, when Lenin, at the Prague conference proclaimed the Bolshevik faction to be the party. The Mensheviks and a few Bolshevik splinter groups then coalesced against Lenin and formed the August Bloc under Trotsky; but it soon broke apart.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Molyneux, *Leon Trotsky's Theory of Revolution*, 28.

<sup>18</sup>Trotsky, "Our Revolution," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 138.

<sup>19</sup>Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, 293-4.

<sup>20</sup>Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 52.

<sup>21</sup>Issac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879-1921* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 181-200.

Trotsky, who then was in Vienna in exile, kept attacking Lenin in his journal *Borba* ("Struggle"). In 1914, when the war broke out, Trotsky left Vienna and subsequently stayed in Zurich, France, Spain and New York. After the liberal revolution that ousted the Tsar in February 1917, he returned to Petrograd to his position of leadership in the Petrograd Soviet, which was again in the control of the Mensheviks.<sup>22</sup>

In April 1917, Lenin also returned to Petrograd and issued his famous "April Theses," his analysis of the revolutionary situation in Russia. He had changed his concept. In his "April Theses," Lenin believed that the Petrograd Soviet and others throughout the country were strong enough to take power. In a kind of amalgamation of his own and Trotsky's theories he proposed to carry the bourgeois revolution on into a proletarian and peasant revolution as soon as he could secure a Bolshevik majority in the Petrograd Soviet. He presents this in his April Theses:

The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a transition from the first stage of the revolution--which, owing to the insufficient class consciousness and organization of the proletariat, placed the power in the hands of the bourgeoisie--to the second stage, which must place the power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry.

Trotsky saw that Lenin, in his "April Theses," did not want to halt the revolution, even temporarily, at the bourgeois-democratic stage; and Lenin saw in the Russian and international situations an opportunity that convinced him that Trotsky's formula of "permanent revolution" could succeed. The differences between them had narrowed. They both now formed a sort of "pragmatic union" in a determined and concentrated struggle toward the same goal.<sup>23</sup>

After the seizure of power in 1917, which was brilliantly arranged by Trotsky as the chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet,<sup>24</sup> Lenin wanted to minimize his past disagreements with Trotsky. He simplified the scheme of "permanent revolution" for his own use: he believed that a political or bourgeois revolution in backward Russia might "grow over" into a socialist revolution.<sup>25</sup>

It was more difficult for Trotsky to justify his position. Being a leader in the party after 1917

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 213-49.

<sup>23</sup>Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 124.

<sup>24</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 216.

<sup>25</sup>David S. Anin, "Lenin, Trotsky, and Parvus," *Survey* 24 (Winter 1979), 209.

meant that he had to suppress and deny parts of his past. In 1905 he had feared that the party might finally be replaced by a dictator--and in 1917 he himself had joined this party! This was a missing link in Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution: an authoritarian party had to step in order to force the revolution within a backward and incompletely prepared country. Trotsky realized that he had been too optimistic concerning a spontaneous inclination of the proletariat in both Russia and western Europe.

Trotsky's shift in 1917 is a serious repudiation of his previous concept of the party, but an unavoidable step for his theory of permanent revolution. It is certainly a paradox that in 1917 Trotsky's prophecy of 1905 applied not only to Lenin, but to Trotsky himself, as an authoritarian leader of the party.<sup>26</sup>

Trotsky explained his long resistance to Lenin (1903-1917) by saying that "only a man who has struggled with doubts can emerge a firm and principled believer."<sup>27</sup> He criticized the dependence of the Bolsheviks upon Lenin:

"One could write an instructive chapter on the leadership of the Leninists without Lenin. The latter towered so high above his nearest disciples that in his presence they felt that there was no need of their solving theoretical and tactical problems independently. When they happened to be separated from Lenin at a critical moment, they amazed one by their utter helplessness."<sup>28</sup>

He thus justified his former opposition. But also, he produced the unintentional effect that Lenin himself became the heart of the party, the "one and only leader," without whom the Party would likely have blundered badly.<sup>29</sup> With this he unknowingly played in the hands of Stalin who, in a very few years, would very skillfully claim Leninist legitimacy--and use it devastatingly against Trotsky.

Trotsky, appointed War Commissar in March 1918, was a brilliant military leader; his army defeated the Isarist generals in the civil war and repelled invasions by the British, French, Poles,

<sup>26</sup>Robert McNeil, "Trotsky's Trotskyism," *Survey* 24 (Winter 1979), 174-7.

<sup>27</sup>Leon Trotsky, *My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography*. (New York: Pathfinder Press, Inc., 1970), 164.

<sup>28</sup>Trotsky, *My Life*, 170.

<sup>29</sup>Gary Kern, "Trotsky's Autobiography," *The Russian Review* 36 (July 1977), 297-319.

Czechs, Japanese and Americans.<sup>30</sup> Since internationalism played an important role in his theory, Trotsky placed high hopes in both his military activity and in the Communist International (Comintern), which was founded in 1919. He hoped that the revolution, with the help of the Comintern, would gain footholds in central Europe. The Hungarian, Bavarian, and Spartacist revolutions failed, but Trotsky never gave up his belief in the International.<sup>31</sup>

In the sphere of economics, Lenin and Trotsky were following the policy of War Communism between 1917 and 1921, with the abolition of the free market, centralized planning, and militarization of labor.<sup>32</sup> But by the end of 1919 and the beginning of 1920, they had to realize that this program was failing. Soviet Russia was war-ravaged; the peasants were destructively opposing policies of requisitions and rationing; and signs of popular unrest were growing.<sup>33</sup>

Lenin at that time planned the retreat into the New Economic Policy (NEP). This would be a tactical retreat from War Communism, during which capitalism would temporarily be restored and the forces of socialism in Russia would "retrench, recuperate, and then resume their march."<sup>34</sup> Trotsky now joined forces with the party ideologist Nikolai Bukharin, wanting to continue War Communism. They demanded the retention of central planning and administration and tighter discipline, a subordination of democracy to efficiency. At the Tenth Congress in 1921 these two positions were discussed: Lenin's retreat from War Communism and independence for the trade unions versus Trotsky's and Bukharin's idea of strengthening discipline, centralized planning, and incorporation of the unions into the state administration with allowing for a limited free market.<sup>35</sup> The Congress endorsed Lenin's position by an overwhelming majority. Trotsky came out as a loser in the trade union controversy; the Tenth Congress was an important political setback for him. NEP explicitly repudiated the line he had been publicly taking in economic policy.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 126.

<sup>31</sup>Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, 452-6.

<sup>32</sup>Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 126.

<sup>33</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 216.

<sup>34</sup>Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *Stalinism, Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1977), 19.

<sup>35</sup>Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 126-31.

<sup>36</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 217-9.



On March 26, 1922, Lenin suffered the first in a series of strokes that would lead ultimately to his death, and the struggle for succession began. This struggle was fought between Trotsky and the so-called "Troika", Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin. In April 1922, Lenin proposed that Trotsky be appointed vice chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, the governing body of the Soviet Union. If Trotsky had accepted, he would have become Lenin's deputy and potential successor in the Soviet premiership. But when Lenin's condition worsened, Trotsky said to Kamenev:

"Remember, and tell others that the last thing I want is to start a fight at the congress for any changes in organization. I am for preserving the status quo. ... I am against removing Stalin and expelling Ordzhonikidze and displaying Dzerzhinsky..."<sup>37</sup>

Trotsky obviously underestimated Stalin and failed to use his chance for political leadership and the surge of pro-Trotsky feeling that arose in 1922 and 1923 in reaction to the NEP, which was unpopular within the ranks of the Party.

This passivity of Trotsky was probably caused by apathy or depression in the wake of the failure of the Permanent Revolution to transpire. Trotsky, instead of fighting, started to operate with slogans like "the Party is always right", thus justifying his own attitude. It was Stalin who mockingly reminded him that "the Party has sometimes been wrong."<sup>38</sup>

Lenin died on January 21, 1924, and shortly after Stalin was able to drive Trotsky out of the Party and eventually emerge on top.

In autumn 1924, Stalin for the first time presented an independent theory, that of socialism in one country. In April 1924, he had the same opinion on the Russian Revolution as Lenin and Trotsky: it was a stage in the world struggle against capitalism. He asserted that the Soviet Union was not "an end in itself...[but] a link needed to strengthen the chain of revolutionary movement in the countries of the West and the East."<sup>39</sup> By the end of 1924, however, he had reversed his position and spoke of building socialism in an isolated Soviet Russia. His idea was that Russia would be able, with or without help from outside, to accomplish the second historic feat of con-

<sup>37</sup>Kem, "Trotsky's Autobiography," 315.

<sup>38</sup>Anin, "Lenin, Trotsky, and Parvus," 211.

<sup>39</sup>Basil Dmytryshyn, *USSR: A Concise History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 1978), 141.

structing a full socialist society.<sup>40</sup> He rooted his theory firmly in Leninism:

...The victory of Socialism in one country, even if this country is less developed in the capitalist sense, while capitalism is preserved in other countries, even if these countries are more highly developed in the capitalist sense, while capitalism is preserved in other countries, even if these countries are more highly developed in the capitalist sense—is quite possible and probable. Such, briefly, are the foundations of Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution.<sup>41</sup>

So he denied any originality of his own in the matter and claimed Leninist legitimacy by maintaining that it was Lenin who discovered the truth that the victory of socialism in one country is possible.<sup>42</sup>

Stalin emphasized that only in the further progress of world revolution lay final security for the Soviet Revolution. His innovation was that he made the construction of a socialist society at home independent of the international revolution, as is shown in the following: "After consolidating its power and taking the peasantry in tow, the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build up a socialist society."<sup>43</sup> Both conceptions, Stalin's and Trotsky's, therefore envisaged the same end product, an international socialist society, but they differed in timing, temperament, and their means to achieve this. Stalin called for the establishment of socialism in Russia first to be the leading example for an international revolution, Trotsky had the order reversed.<sup>44</sup> His argument was that the temporary rule of the Russian workers might only be converted into a lasting socialist dictatorship, if the European proletariat, by the Russian example, would be inspired to a successful revolution.<sup>45</sup>

In 1924, Trotsky wrote the essay "Lessons of October," which questioned the policy of Stalin and the 'Right' and branded it as counter-revolutionary. This essay set the entire propaganda machine against Trotsky and helped Stalin to emerge as undisputed party leader as well as its

<sup>40</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 377-8.

<sup>41</sup>Stalin, "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists, 1924," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 228-9.

<sup>42</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 378.

<sup>43</sup>Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism, 1924," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 227.

<sup>44</sup>Dmytryshyn, *USSR*, 141.

<sup>45</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 380.

theoretical spokesman.<sup>46</sup>

Stalin's strategy in attacking Trotsky was to draw a fundamental contrast between "Leninism" and "Trotskyism" and an equally fundamental identification between 'Leninism' and 'Stalinism.' He presented his theory of socialism in one country as Lenin's theory and criticized Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution as semi-Menshevik and anti-Leninist. He accused Trotsky of the following: ...Lack of faith in the strength and capabilities of our revolution, lack of faith in the strength and capabilities of the Russian proletariat--that is what lies at the root of "permanent revolution."<sup>47</sup> Stalin cited this as proof of Trotsky's continuing underestimation of the potentialities of the peasant, his early opposition to Lenin's notion of an alliance between workers and laboring peasants as the proletarian dictatorship.<sup>48</sup>

This public attack on "Trotskyism" in 1924 and 1925 marked the beginning of the end for Trotsky and his political cause.<sup>49</sup> Trotsky did not fight back. He was feverish, nervous, racked by influenza, and he kept silent to all the accusations that were made against him in the papers. On January 15, 1925, Trotsky asked to be relieved of the duties of the Revolutionary War Council, and his resignation was accepted.<sup>50</sup>

In 1926, in a last futile effort to resist Stalin's relentless march to dictatorship, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev were briefly aligned against Stalin in the so-called "United Opposition." Zinoviev declared that "only through the NEP could the party lead the country to socialism," but the country could not proceed to socialism through the NEP smoothly, that means without class struggle, and it could not proceed to socialism alone. Stalin argued that Trotskyism "denies the possibility of the victory of socialism in our country through the internal forces of our Revolution."<sup>51</sup>

By August, 1927, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Central Committee and by November 14, 1927, they were expelled from the party. In January, 1928, Trotsky and his family

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<sup>46</sup>Dmytryshyn, *USSR*, 140.

<sup>47</sup>Stalin, "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists, 1924," in Anderson, *Masters of Russian Marxism*, 228-9.

<sup>48</sup>Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929*, 349-50.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 300-1.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 384-5.

left for Alma Ata, from where they went to exile in Mexico. There Trotsky was murdered by an assassin sent by Stalin in 1940.<sup>52</sup> With his departure the Left opposition as a political force was crushed.

Historians agree that Trotsky was a genius as an orator, organizer, and military leader, but failed in appreciating the personal element in Party relations. Anthony D'Augustino puts it as follows: "he fails not in the realm of thought, but where thought translated into practical politics."<sup>53</sup>

Trotsky several times did not see and use the chances that the political situations gave him. Waiting for the revolutions in other countries to occur, he failed to use his real chances. In 1923/24, in the contest with the Triumvirs, Trotsky had aimed his politics only at Zinoviev and Brandler of the German Communist Party, but not at Stalin; and he even later admitted this to be only a "mistake of secondary importance."<sup>54</sup> But this mistake gave Stalin the chance to come to power and subsequently to get rid of Trotsky. Stalin was much more skillful in using Marxism-Leninism as a legitimacy for his theory and politics than Trotsky, who even remained silent under Stalin's attacks.

Trotsky also failed to face reality regarding his theory. He had stressed the international element and the hope that Western revolutions would support the Russian revolutions, but the Western revolutions did not happen. Also the Russian Revolution had rather been carried by soldiers and sailors--peasants--than by the proletariat, contrary to his theory.<sup>55</sup> But Trotsky still did not adapt his theory to reality, but tried to explain reality according to his theory. Trotsky "sometimes was the prisoner of abstract nouns," whereas Stalin "used the words to serve his interests."<sup>56</sup>

Trotsky, despite all his talents and brilliance, was not a politician. Furthermore, he was unable to judge about people with whom he dealt directly and frequently, like notably Stalin.

Stalin's advantage over Trotsky was his strength as a leader. He very pragmatically pushed his ideas through, whereas Trotsky was unable to defend himself and his ideas. Stalin faced reality,

<sup>52</sup>Dmytrivsyn, *USSR*, 142.

<sup>53</sup>Anthony D'Augustino, "Ambiguities of Trotsky's Leninism," *Survey* 24 (Winter 1979), 178.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>55</sup>Anin, "Lenin, Trotsky, and Parvus," 209.

<sup>56</sup>McNeil, "Trotsky's Trotskyism," 176.

carried through his ideas through his contrast of the Leninist party organization, and legitimized them by carefully picked quotes from Marx and Lenin.

Trotsky did not know what to do when his complicated model of permanent revolution did not work. I think that only Stalin, with his strong will to carry out his ideas, no matter what cost, was able to lead the country. He saw the necessity of strong, pragmatic leadership. This pragmatism is what Trotsky lacked.

*The Issue of Messianism as an Historical  
Motive in Russian and Soviet Expansion*

*Mark G. Schmeltzer*

Winston Churchill once called Soviet behavior "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma"<sup>1</sup> Rubinstein further expounds upon the problem, stating that it was, "an amalgam of discrete elements...the end product of a complex interaction of many determinants, which, though always changing are ever present."<sup>2</sup> These accounts are clearly apt in light of the diversity of scholarly interpretations regarding Russia's historical motives in regional and international affairs. Because of the uniqueness of its internal and external developments, many interpretations of present day Soviet policy are possible." Furthermore, he adds that [while] "each has some validity,...none can claim exclusiveness."<sup>3</sup> He then breaks down the varying schools of thought into three general categories. The first claims that the foreign policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is primarily a continuation of "traditional Czarist objectives," and guided by such desires as resources, border security, and a stronger international position. The second, that it is guided strictly by the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of world-wide proletarian revolution and world domination, and a documented hostility toward the nations of Capitalism. And the third argument lies somewhere in the middle of these, between the "traditionalist and the ideological" schools.<sup>4</sup> This "dualistic" theory considers the role of geography, traditional patterns of expansion, changing international climates, and a "Marxian world outlook whose historical antecedent consisted of a deep-rooted Russian messianism."<sup>5</sup>

It is this concept of messianism which, whether Communist or Christian, traditional or revolutionary, Pan-slavic or international, can be detected in a variety of scholarly interpretations. Some of the authors to be considered, particularly those that maintain that 1917 marked a clear line

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<sup>1</sup>Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, (New York: Random House, 1960), 3.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

separating Russia from its past, deny the role of traditional Russian messianism in foreign policy, and reject any argument defining any national, racial or cultural character. However, despite the early Bolshevik insistence on the equality of all nations, and the future "withering away"<sup>6</sup> of the state, the subsequent mutations in the Soviet policy began to display the traditional Russian assumption of itself as heir to an ideology; which it would then export abroad in order to "save the world from itself"<sup>7</sup> There are others, naturally, who claim that terms such as "messianic," "parochial," "ideological," etc., are irrelevant in that they are merely external justifications for traditional, European style imperialist motivations. Such pretexts, according to this view, claim a distinction from the Western world. Their purpose is to motivate their subjects to serve practical political and economic aims.

Indeed, there is an historical conflict with the Western world which can be seen through Russia's relationship with its East European neighbors. Whether any of these are genuine driving forces behind expansion or merely instruments of political power, or some sort of blending of the two, Russia's foreign outlook can be examined in the laboratory of the East European plain. This essay will focus on some of the arguments concerning the role of Russian messianism in territorial, ideological and political expansion in an attempt to shed some light on the "enigma" of Soviet foreign policy.

Numerous difficulties exist in attempting to define a correlation between the Czarist and Soviet empires, not the least of which is the disparity of information between the histories of pre- and post-revolutionary Russia. The lack of officially acknowledged Soviet archival data has forced modern scholars to rest on their speculations and assumptions derived from patterns of behavior and Communist literature.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the unpredictability of Soviet leaders, which is due in part to their adjustments of Marxism to fit varying conditions (i.e. tactics and strategies<sup>9</sup>), leads Paul Winterton to conclude that "there are no experts on the Soviet Union, merely varying degrees

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<sup>6</sup>Peter Meyer, "The Driving Force Behind Soviet Imperialism," chap. in *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy*, Robert A. Goldwin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 668.

<sup>7</sup>Edward Crankshaw, "Russia's Imperial Design," chap. in *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed., Robert A. Goldwin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.), 718.

<sup>8</sup>Ivo J. Lederer, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University, 1962), xvii-xix.

<sup>9</sup>Barrington Moore Jr., "The Pressure Behind Soviet Expansion," chap. in *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, ed., Alvin Z. Rubinstein, (New York: Random House, 1960), 421.

of ignorance."<sup>10</sup> However, Robert C. Tucker of *New Republic* magazine reminds us that recent changes will make future Soviet study easier, since the standard Soviet texts are currently "under reconsideration."<sup>11</sup>

One cannot argue the fact that, at least on the surface, claims about Russia's historic mission have been made. Only their actual impact on popular sentiment and government policy is debatable. While there may have been some disagreement concerning their regional or international function, the thought of the nineteenth century Slavophiles became a central player in the messianic ideal.

Roger Dow characterizes their belief as emphasizing the gulf between the Slavic world and the civilization of Western Europe by claiming a "uniqueness of the Slavic culture," and a disdain for the decadence of the old world.<sup>12</sup> While this can be seen by some as a call to isolation, the idea of a distinct quality of their civilization sustained itself in its traditional belief that Russia was the "third Rome," whose inhabitants were a "spiritually...chosen race," who would one day "astound the world by their example."<sup>13</sup> Edward Crankshaw notes that the other equally important factors guiding Russia's imperial development were strategic and economic, and that no empire building has ever begun on purely altruistic motives.<sup>14</sup> But, this does not diminish the force of "messianic zeal and a new imperial spirit of Pan-Russianism."<sup>15</sup> These latent forces, having been directed inward for so long, were suddenly turned outward and revitalized after the defeat of Napoleon.<sup>16</sup> Alexander went to the Congress of Vienna representing a major power, and saw himself as a Christian monarch whose God-given mission was to "organize Europe," and repel the secular threat of revolution.<sup>17</sup> Crankshaw says the result was that, "Russian thinkers began to elaborate the concept of Russia, backward for so long, but with her vital forces husbanded, bringing to a corrupt

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<sup>10</sup>Quoted in Rubinstein, *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, 407.

<sup>11</sup>Robert C. Tucker, "Czars and Commieczars," *The New Republic*, 204:3,29-35.

<sup>12</sup>Roger Dow, "Proster," chap. in *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy* ed., Robert A. Goldwin (New York: Random House, 1960), 710.

<sup>13</sup>Crankshaw, "Russia's Imperial Design," 710.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 705.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 711.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 710-711

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 710.



and bankrupt world a pristine spiritual impulse.<sup>18</sup> The consequent foreign policy was, according to Crankshaw, the realization for "Russia's historical aspirations towards Constantinople," and the beginnings of Tsarist expansion into the Balkans, fueled and rationalized by this revived messianic spirit.<sup>19</sup>

In "The Utopian Conception of History," Feodor Dostoevsky charged that the old, isolationist Russia did an injustice to mankind. Russia had kept "her treasure, her Orthodoxy, for herself, to seclude herself from Europe," in order to prevent the "Russian idea" from being spoiled by the influence of Western civilization.<sup>20</sup> He proclaimed: "he [who] wishes to be first in the kingdom of God must become a servant to everybody/ This is how I view the Russian mission in its ideal."<sup>21</sup> However, within his view of Russia as the "protectress and guardian" of Orthodox Christianity, lies the mission of unifying Slavdom, even non-Orthodox European Slavs, under the protection of Russia.<sup>22</sup> The right of Russia to serve in this leading role is crucial to Dostoevsky since, without its strength and unifying determination the Slavic people would "exhaust themselves in mutual strife and discord."<sup>23</sup> He also denies that such a conquest would not be a political union since it would be different from anything before it. Unlike the European form of subjugation, the Russian empire would be a "union founded upon the principles of common service to mankind," and "man's regeneration based upon the true principles of Christ."<sup>24</sup>

According to the 19th century philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev, the roots of Orthodox messianism extend further into Russian history than the end of the Napoleonic era, rather they go back considerably further to the start of Russian expansionism, defined by Roger Dow, as the reign of Ivan IV.<sup>25</sup> Berdyaev cites the fall of Constantinople in 1453 as the awakening within the Russian consciousness the idea of Moscow as the "Third Rome". Afterwards this aspiration became "the

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. 710.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 711.

<sup>20</sup>Feodor Dostoevski, "The Utopian Concentration of History," chap. in *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy* ed., Robert A. Goldwin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 19.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 22-3.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Dow, "Proster," 3.

basic idea on which the Muscovite state was formed. The kingdom was consolidated and shaped under the symbol of the messianic idea."<sup>26</sup>

It can be argued that the external manifestation of this ideal was evident in Muscovy's historical rivalry with the "champion of Catholicism"—the kingdom of Poland. Russia and Poland often competed for control of the borderlands and the loyalty of the Ukrainian people, who shared a mixture of religious, linguistic, and cultural traits from both of its embattled neighbors.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the development of a Russian messianism based on religious Orthodoxy, another strain of the messianic tradition evolved which adds to the complexity of Russia's foreign relations. This was the same idea of the peculiarity, even superiority, of Russian culture to the decaying and hostile west; the same type of nationalism later glorified by the Slavophiles. Arnold Toynbee claims that the centralization of the Russian political tradition, which remains an historical constant, arose out of the necessity of defense against western conquests.<sup>28</sup> Berdyaev takes this claim further to show how it became interrelated with the forces of Orthodox messianism in the process of the nationalization of the Church.<sup>29</sup> Berdyaev states that:

Religion and nationality in the Muscovite kingdom grew up together, as they did also in the consciousness of the ancient Hebrew people/ And in the same way as the messianic consciousness was an attribute of Judaism it was an attribute of Russian Orthodoxy also/ But the religious idea of the kingdom took shape in the formation of a powerful state in which the Church was to play a subservient part. The Moscow Orthodox kingdom was a totalitarian state.<sup>30</sup>

In *The New Imperialism*, Hugh Seton-Watson shows how this centralizing, autocratic tradition, driven by its rapidly burgeoning bureaucracy, eventually led to the policy of Russification near the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> This policy toward the non-Russian subjects of its empire,

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<sup>26</sup>Nicholas Berdyaev, "Religion and the Russian State," chap. in *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed., Robert A. Goldwin (Oxford University Press, 1959), 27.

<sup>27</sup>Hugh Seton-Watson, *The New Imperialism* (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971), 14-15.

<sup>28</sup>Arnold J. Toynbee, "Russia and the West," chap. in *Readings in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed., Robert A. Goldwin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 28.

<sup>29</sup>Berdyaev, "Religion and the Russian State," 28.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>Seton-Watson, *The New Imperialism*, 30-1.

displayed the messianic tendencies of nationalism and militarism.<sup>32</sup> Russification was a policy based on the illusion of Russian superiority, and sought to impose its language, culture, and religion upon the conquered non-Russian peoples of the empire, in an attempt at "reducing all Russian subjects to a common denominator."<sup>33</sup>

This is how some scholars have perceived the role and evolution of Russia's messianic character. As mentioned above, there is considerable debate over whether or not it was a "force" in Russian expansionism. Furthermore, an equal degree of controversy exists over whether or not this messianism continued in Soviet expansionist policies.

Those who identify the Russian trait of messianism in motives of Soviet expansionism often do so by citing a parallel between Russia as the spiritual center of Orthodoxy, and the USSR as the ideological nucleus of world Communism. This view holds that the Soviet monopoly on matters of ideology and power over its satellite nations, and the Marxist-Leninist ideal of the inevitable world proletarian revolution, upon which the union was formed are consequences of Russia's assumed sense of ideological superiority and a desire to correct the evils of Western civilization. This view also serves to explain the centralizing, bureaucratic tendencies, as well as its cultural impositions upon the governments of its subject nations. In fact, the apparent similarities between "Russification" and "Sovietization" of incorporated peoples are striking. While it is true that messianic similarities can be seen in the methods and practices of Soviet foreign policy, the real debate concerns itself with motives.

In *The New Imperialism*, Seton-Watson treats the role of Marxist ideology in Russian hands much the same way he saw their use of religious messianism. While he does not overlook the more basic motives of international realpolitik, he describes the historical messianic tendency of Russians to claim exclusiveness to an ideology and view itself as the bastion and protector of that faith, be it religious or political. He further explains the continuity in Soviet expansionism as arriving from a double origin, the first of which is that the Soviets "inherited the Soviet Empire," and all of its non-Russian peoples collected by their Tsarist predecessors.<sup>34</sup> The second is that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) is "inspired by a missionary ideology, which is its duty to impose...on

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<sup>32</sup>ibid., 31.

<sup>33</sup>ibid.

<sup>34</sup>ibid., 9.

those nations which have not yet accepted the Communist faith or Communist institutions."<sup>35</sup> The results of the Soviets' economic, social and political monopolies, and the contradictions between expansionist practices and denials by the government of their own imperialism, are irrelevant to the messianic ideal, or the question of it being, at least part of the original impetus for expansion. This is especially true in light of the Bolshevik faith in the international proletariat. Seton-Watson points out that Lenin saw the role of a Communist government as one of assistance in the acceleration of the natural laws of history to achieve the inevitable triumph of Socialism. However, he did not see this process as a series of "military conquests by the Red Army."<sup>36</sup> Under Stalin, the strategy of the world revolutions quickly changed. Now, only the Soviet Regime could correctly be viewed as providing the "blueprint for socialism," with its "forced collectivization of agriculture and forced planned industrialization."<sup>37</sup> Before long, "Socialist revolution could only mean the extension by force, of the Soviet system to other countries."<sup>38</sup> Seton-Watson shows how the Soviets demonstrated this in their belief that the CPSU was "in possession of the truly proletarian theory, the science of Marxism-Leninism."<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the infallibility of the Soviet party leaders, according to their own accounts, denies all charges of its imperialism. They claimed that any Soviet conquest of another nation "can only be liberation, and can only lead to the establishment of true liberty and social justice."<sup>40</sup>

However, the messianic quality of Soviet Communism is more than just a clever semantic manipulation by government spokesmen. The basic Marxist-Leninist doctrine of world revolution, regardless of any subsequent tactical deviations, did intermingle with the Russian feelings of uniqueness, and played itself out on the world scene with traditional mistrust of the west. Arnold Toynbee constructs this historical bridge by noting, "Eastern and Western Christianity have always been foreign to one another, and have often been mutually apathetic and hostile, as Russia and the West unhappily still are today, when each of them is in what one might call a 'post-Christian' phase

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 130.

of its history."<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the bureaucratic, centralizing administration of official ideology, mentioned above as a traditional messianic tool, was also integrated in the Soviet Communist Party's control over its subjects, both at home and in the satellites of Eastern Europe. Robert C. Tucker, in his recent analysis of current interpretations of the Soviet period, by Russian intellectuals, calls the Soviet government a "neo-czarist order that calls itself socialist."<sup>42</sup> Tucker cites the popular view, "that czarist absolutism, and centralized bureaucratic statism, made a comeback in the framework of the Communist Party state," and traces this "administrative-command system" back to Ivan the Terrible.<sup>43</sup>

Philip E. Mosely explains that the role of territorial disputes in facilitating Soviet suzerainty in the region. The Soviets offered arbitration in national conflicts within its expanding sphere of influence; and the appeal of Moscow as a strong protector of national integrity against aggressors, asked in return for "loyal obedience" and "political conformity" to the interests of the USSR.<sup>44</sup> Here again, Russian historical messianism, in its role as "big brother" over its East European neighbors, resulted from failed regional cooperation, and offered unity in the morass of infighting and "small power imperialism."<sup>45</sup> While it may be quite a stretch to view this relationship as "pan-Slavism," it certainly contained many of the messianic traits of Russia's assumed role as regional protector.

The scholars who cite the prevailing force of Russian messianism throughout its entire history of East European relations attempt to understand or predict Soviet behavior by forging a link between the pre- and post-revolutionary periods. Others, however, disagree on the existence of an overriding historical force in the character of Soviet geopolitics, yet they accept that the role of messianism cannot be a reality in policy. Some of the arguments deal with the distinct nature and international scope of Communism, while others claim that all Russian expansion has resulted from historical needs and geographical constants, (such as the need for access to warm-water sea outlets, foreign resources, and the need to strengthen border security against the great powers of Western Europe. Still others

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<sup>41</sup>Toynbee, "Russia and the West," 681-2.

<sup>42</sup>Tucker, "Czars and Commieczars," 29.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>44</sup>Mosely, Philip E., "Soviet Policy and Nationality Conflicts in East Central Europe," in *The Kremlin and World Politics*, 223-245.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 244-45.

attack the very idea of Russian uniqueness by demonstrating how its expansionist development closely followed traditional European models of imperialism, with its ruthless exploitation of the economies, industries and resources within its conquered territories. According to this view, such is the case in both the Tsarist and Soviet eras. Still another view disputes the prevalence of any deep rooted messianism by claiming that it was a view of a minority of educated elite, and not a popular sentiment among the Russian masses.

The arguments and their variations are too numerous to examine here, and they provide an ample source for further study. However, I should briefly mention an important counterargument to the messianic theory, since it contains many of the above elements. It holds that, regardless of one's historical bent concerning the problem of Russian expansion, all claims of a messianic mission serve only as a pretext for the territorial ambitions of rulers of either state. This approach recognizes such calls to action as a smoke screen for government policy, as well as a tool of state power. Edward Crankshaw admits that ideology is often manipulated to fulfill the thirst for wealth and power by any ruler. He explains how the politically successful are not regularly guided by a purely ideological zeal: "born leaders and organizers are not given to philosophical speculation."<sup>46</sup> This raises yet another important problem in defining motives of policy: that is, the relationship between creed and practice, and leads Lederer to ask, "is a dichotomy between ideology and Realpolitik possible?"<sup>47</sup>

However, Crankshaw still wants to emphasize the role of Russian messianism, and concludes: "There will always be Russians, under whatever regime, who will believe in their mighty destiny to save the world from itself and sweep away the effeteness of Western European culture."<sup>48</sup> The recent changes in the Soviet Union, however, undoubtedly will alter our understanding of the Russian "enigma," as Helene Carrere D'Encausse concludes: "The period of the Russian empire built on a common ideology--monarchial, Christian Russia or totalitarian, Marxist Communism--is over."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Crankshaw, "Russia's Imperial Design," 716.

<sup>47</sup>Lederer, xxii.

<sup>48</sup>Crankshaw, "Russia's Imperial Design," 718.

<sup>49</sup>Helene Carrere D'Encausse, "Springtime of Nations," in *The New Republic*, 204:3., 22.

## *Cheating Nature*

*by George Tiller*

The industrial revolution was, through its entire course, beneficial to the English people. This is true for a number of reasons, the chief one being that the industrial revolution allowed the English to cheat nature by ignoring the limits placed upon every previous society.

The most dreadful limit placed on any society is that imposed by the supply of food. "Nature has scattered the law of nature, restrains them within the proscribed bounds."<sup>1</sup> The English, by achieving the ability to manufacture goods cheaper and better than anyone else, were able to trade for resources on a global scale. This made the "proscribed bounds" more than large enough to accommodate a growing English population.

And grow it did. For a people supposedly dropping like flies from the effects of factory and gin-mill, the English were reproducing at a rate that makes one wonder about English reserve. How badly off were they? "During this season of distress the discouragements to marriage and difficulty of raising a family are so great that progress of population is retarded."<sup>2</sup> In 1760 the population was 6.5 million. By 1811 it grew to 10 million and reached 26 million by 1881. This is the bottom line. If the industrial revolution was not beneficial, the English population would not have grown as much as it did. Segments of the population did suffer terribly; but taken as a whole, the English thrived.

The most effective counter-argument against this is that made by Dr. James Kay. "Instructed in the fatal secret of subsisting on what is barely necessary to life, the laboring classes have ceased to entertain a laudable pride..."<sup>3</sup> It also implies that the English were able to survive only by degrading their quality of life. This argument probably assumes that English laborers had a quality of life higher than actually possessed.

The fact that before the industrial revolution nobody knew or cared about the actual condition

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Malthus, "An Essay on the Principle of Population," in Walter L. Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688: Sources and Problems in British History* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1981), 157.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>3</sup>James Kay, "The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes...in Manchester," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 168.

of the laboring classes is indicative of the other great benefit of the industrial revolution. Malthus writes that only the affairs of the great are found in history. The suffering was anything but inevitable. For the first time, people such as the Luddites and the Yorkshire cloth workers had a cause of their misery that was a human invention. The fact that prosperity was dependent on human decisions made poverty itself a political issue. Engels in his description of the working class of England, represents a milestone in human perception. This is because he ascribes poverty to "Industrialists who grow rich on the misery of the mass of the wage earners."<sup>4</sup> Poverty, considered the fate of the majority of mankind by natural law at the beginning of the industrial revolution, was becoming a matter of political and business decisions by 1844. This implies a hope that mankind had never had before. The recognition of the "workers" as a vital part of society and the resulting concern on their behalf began to occur with the onset of the industrial revolution.

A great deal is said about the misery caused by the industrial revolution. However, given the choices (where they existed), the alternative evil would have been worse. "The immediate effects of this manufacturing phenomenon were a rapid increase of the wealth, industry, population and political influence of the British and...enabled to contend with...the most formidable military and immoral power...."<sup>5</sup> Owen later laments the greed of the manufacture and the abuse of the worker. Were country squires and workshop masters any less grasping? The fact that tenant farmers were pouring into Manchester before and after 1832 from an even worse situation in Ireland suggests that greed was not confined to factory owners.<sup>6</sup> Andrew Ure points to the far greater labor required by artisans and workers in domestic industries for less reward, although his description of factory children as "lively elves" strains his credibility.<sup>7</sup> The Saddler Report contains vivid descriptions of the abuses in certain factories but does not deal with the problems of workers in differing modes of employment. This and the lack of hard statistical data makes the report useless in considering the alternatives facing the English worker.

The demands of the Luddites and the Yorkshire cloth workers, if followed, would not have made their lives better. For them to compete for the markets they needed, they would have caused far

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<sup>4</sup>Friedrich Engels, "The Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 177.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Owen, "Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 163.

<sup>6</sup>Kay, "Physical Conditions," 168.

<sup>7</sup>Andrew Ure, "The Philosophy of Manufactures," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 172-3.



greater degradation, captured fewer markets and created less wealth.<sup>8</sup> As to their concern for employment, the factories created far more opportunity than they destroyed. This is confirmed by John Aikin,<sup>9</sup> Owen, Kay and Ure. Ireland showed the terrible cost of restricting human enterprise.

It is interesting to note that two of the opponents to the factory system believe that most of the ills of the workers were brought upon their own "improvidence."<sup>10</sup> It is also interesting and sad to note that not only did the parents of the factory children not riot over their treatment by the owners but that the children were sent to work by their own parents!<sup>11</sup> Is this development new or was it a holdover from the small workshop and farm? If the latter is the case, then perhaps the industrial revolution made these children's lives better.

The industrial revolution was beneficial to the English people because it gave them options that they had never had before. Goods became cheaper and far more plentiful. The mind became prized for its inventions which broke all restraints on human endeavor. For the first time, poverty itself was seen as something that could be ended; this hope alone made the industrial revolution beneficial to the English people.

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<sup>8</sup>Leeds Woolen Merchants, "In Defense of Machinery," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 167-8.

<sup>9</sup>John Aikin, "A Description of...Manchester," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 162-3..

<sup>10</sup>Kay, "Physical Conditions"; Owen, "Effect," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 168-72, 163-5, passim.

<sup>11</sup>Owen, "Effect," in Arnstein, *The Past Speaks Since 1688*, 164.

*Liberty or Absolutism?: A Brief Study into the  
Course of Freedom During the Reign of Charles II*

by Vernon A. McGuffee II

Undeniably, England experienced the most turbulent period of its long history during the revolution of 1640-1660. The civil wars brought the defeat of the monarchy, trial and execution of the king, and the establishment of the Protectorate. The radical nature of the Interregnum proved to be its worst enemy, however, and in 1660 the Stuart line was restored to the throne. Some historians argue that the effects of the Interregnum on the reign of Charles II are clear. Clayton Roberts concludes that

The English Revolution left a lasting legacy to future generations, a legacy that was religious, political, and intellectual. In the religious realm it created nonconformity.... Puritanism was able to put down roots so deep that no amount of persecution after 1660 could dislodge it... Those who persisted in [nonconformity] brought to English public life an independence, a nonconformist conscience, that did much to make England the home of liberty and individuality. Politically, the revolution ensured the defeat of absolutism and the permanence of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Christopher Hill supports some of his arguments in *God's Englishman*. On nonconformity, he states that "nonconformity in the reigns of Charles II and James II both showed under persecution that it had come to stay, and shook off its revolutionary political associations."<sup>2</sup> As for administrative supremacy, Hill proclaims that the Interregnum "ensured that England was to be ruled by Parliaments and not by absolutist kings"<sup>3</sup> since "divine right in all spheres was in decline by the end of the century."<sup>4</sup> He further argues that the limitation of the king is evident in that "royal interference in economic affairs did not return, nor...royal interference with control of [the gentry's] localities by

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<sup>1</sup>Clayton Roberts and David Roberts, *A History of England: Prehistory to 1714*, Vol. 1 (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1985), 368.

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 257-8.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 259.

the 'natural rulers.'<sup>5</sup> In effect, Roberts and Hill are asserting that one of the legacies of the Revolution and Interregnum was the natural growth of political freedom, that is the limitation of centralized control. However, such an argument is debatable after one examines the success of the Anglican and monarchical agenda, decay of Parliament, and submission of the gentry to the Center. To address this issue, one must first look at the nature of the Cromwellian era, and then observe its influence on the Church, Parliament, and gentry of Restoration England.

Nearly all social and political classes had reason to fear the revolutionary age of Oliver Cromwell. Surely the Anglican bishops held considerable contempt for the rebellion from the start. Although Protestant in doctrine, their emphasis on ritual gave the bishops the appearance of crypto-Catholics. More than once they were attacked as the overinfluential "popish and malignant party"<sup>6</sup> in the Parliamentary debates of 1641. In a large part, the civil wars represented a movement against the Episcopal church in favor of Puritanism. Political persecution such as the removal of the bishops from the House of Lords, the execution of their leader, Archbishop Laud of Canterbury, and their abolition as an institution served to stoke Anglican animosities toward the "Puritan Revolution." The blaze of heretical sects such as the Quakers and Antinomians during the 1650s only served to kindle further the fires of vengeance burning in the hearts of staunch Episcopalians. A strong monarch served for them as an embodiment of protection and reascendency.

Even the traditional Parliament did not remain unscathed under the Cromwellian era. As a body, the Parliamentary ranks watched the war effort whittle away their numbers. Once it became clear in 1648 that Parliament favored reconciliation with the king rather than the king's destruction--as the army wanted--Colonel Thomas Pride purged Parliament, leaving only the body known as the "Rump." Parliament no longer represented England; rather it represented the radical army that established it.<sup>7</sup> When Cromwell returned to an elected form of assembly, he adopted the Instrument of Government. This document, accepted in 1653, altered the franchise by allowing the vote to be held by those with £200 in property rather than the previous 40 shilling freehold.<sup>8</sup> This meant that many of the gentry lost their voice in Parliament while nonpropertied and nondistinguished merchants

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 225.

<sup>6</sup>Conrad Russel, *The Crisis of Parliaments; English History 1509-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 338.

<sup>7</sup>Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain: 1414-1714* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1967), 291.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 299.

took their place. Furthermore, the document gave all effective power to the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. But even the Instrument could not guarantee Parliamentary perpetuance as the assembly discovered when General Lambert dissolved it and put England under the rule of the army in 1659; again the body existed only at the whim of England's armed dictators. During no other period of English history had the Ancient Constitution--the ancient laws of England established by God--been abused in such a manner.

The gentry of England also looked toward a strong monarch for protection. They had begun assuming leadership roles in their communities under Henry VII and Henry VIII.<sup>9</sup> The monarchy eventually found that it could not rule without the support of this class and the gentry would not help a king rule who endangered their lands. In effect, their alliance depended upon preservation of property.<sup>10</sup> Over time the autonomous gentry became synonymous with control of their localities in both a political and a judicial sense. And then, during 1656-1657, the period called the "rule of the Major-Generals," Cromwell made the mistake of trying to rule the counties by force. He placed his officers in what originally started as a mimic of the traditional positions of the royal Lords Lieutenants. However, the powers of the Major-Generals expanded to near authoritarianism--a direct challenge to the local supremacy of the gentry;<sup>11</sup> Cromwell had broken the alliance. The gentry forced Cromwell to relinquish the counties as spheres of influence but the attempt made the "natural rulers" yearn for a lord with the constraints of a monarchy. A monarch had to conform to the unwritten laws of the Ancient Constitution, but a Lord Protector lacked such restraints. Only the rule of a king ensured that the localistic rule of the gentry--a form of property--would remain untouched. Never before had England suffered from such internal strife. Only the wrath of God could cause such lamentation.

The English believed (or wanted to believe) in a divine monarchy more than ever after the experiences of the Interregnum. For example, Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, written sometime before 1653 and published posthumously in 1680, justified the monarchical tradition with Scripture. A quote from this work went as such:

Do we not find that in every family the government of one alone is most natural? God did

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<sup>9</sup>Michael Van Cleave Alexander, *The First of the Tudors: A Study of Henry VII and His Reign* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 128; Roger Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain: 1417-1714*, 308.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 303; Russel, *The Crisis of Parliaments*, 394-5.

always govern his own people by monarchy only. The patriarchs, dukes, and kings were all monarchs. There is not in all the Scripture mention or approbation of any other form of government.<sup>12</sup>

This passage not only attests to the divine relationship of a monarchy, but also attacks any other form of government as irreligious. By abandoning the king in 1649, England also abandoned God and incurred His wrath; thus, its downfall was assured. But now the Stuart line was restored to the throne and the return of God's favor would lead England to be a blessed and prosperous realm. This belief, coupled with the fear of "'41 come again," became the root of royal power.

Punishment was mandatory for those who would bring the wrath of God down upon England. The puritan Presbyterians found themselves persecuted under the reign of Charles II because of their ardent participation in the Parliamentary army. Destruction of the Anglican Church served as their revolutionary incentive in the 1640s. However, during Charles' reign they did not pose a threat to the restored king. Indeed, they helped the Restoration. Nevertheless, the Presbyterians became scapegoats for the wars. In 1682, Aphra Behn reflected this vindictive attitude in her play. As a lengthy quote shows, Ms. Behn linked the anarchy of the Interregnum and the king-killing with political and religious freedoms.

All Laws, the Church and State to Ruin brings,  
 And impudently sets a Rule on Kings;  
 Ruin, destroy, all's good that you decree,  
 By your infallible *Presbytery*,  
 Prosperous at first, in Ills you grew so vain,  
 You thought to play the *Old Game* o'er again:  
 And thus the Cheat was put upon the Nation,  
 First with *Long Parliaments*, next with *Reformation*,  
 And now you hop'd to make a new Invasion:  
 And when you can't prevail by open Force,  
 To cunning tickling Tricks you have recourse,  
 And raise Sedition forth without Remorse.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Robert Filmer, Patriarcha, in *Two Treatises of Government by John Locke; With a Supplement: Patriarcha by Robert Filmer*, ed. Thomas I. Cook (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1947), 270.

<sup>13</sup>Montague Summers, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 1, "The Good Old Cause" (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1967), 424.

Behn reflected the belief that the Presbyterians wanted, again, to undermine Anglicanism and the hereditary monarchy. Only this time, it would be through Church domination and Parliamentary politics rather than outright armed rebellion. Nonconformity had no doubt succeeded in retaining its "revolutionary political associations."

The immediate result of such associations took form in the oppression of all Nonconformists. The Clarendon Code consisting of the Corporation Act of 1661, the Uniformity Act of 1662, the Conventicle Acts of 1664 and 1670, and the Five Mile Act of 1665 offered the best example of this dominant attitude. The Corporation Act required those who held local offices to be active members of the Anglican Church.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the Anglicans were ensured control of all positions of power. The Uniformity Act required all clergy to recognize the Thirty-nine Articles that constituted the doctrine of the Church of England<sup>15</sup>; as a result, the Presbyterians were forced from their ecclesiastical stations as the Articles conflicted with their beliefs. The Corporation Acts attacked the Nonconformists' only remaining avenue of proselytizing by fining individuals who attended unofficial religious services.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the Five Mile Act exiled nonconforming ministers to the allotted distance from corporate towns to remove their influence.<sup>17</sup> Overall, the success of the legislative persecution found testimony in the religious census of 1676. England contained 2,123,362 conformists and 93,104 Nonconformists: a ratio of 22.8 to 1.<sup>18</sup> This evidence attests to the success of the Anglican agenda rather than the expansion of religious freedom. The loyalty of an organized state church was one of the pillars of 17th-century European absolutism.

Parliament, as the body blamed for the civil wars, was especially vulnerable to waves of intense loyalty to the crown. The theory of divine right coupled with fear of "41 come again," expressed itself in a strongly royalist Cavalier Parliament. This body reversed nearly all of the legislation of the Long Parliament (1640-1660). To protect the king from future rebellions, Parliament passed acts to extend treason to documents and declarations and to put the control of the militia in the hands of

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<sup>14</sup>Arvel B. Erickson, and Martin J. Havran, eds., *Readings in English History*, "Corporation Act of 1661" (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 163-4.

<sup>15</sup>Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 43-4.

<sup>16</sup>Ronald Hutton, *Charles the Second: King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 212, 244.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>18</sup>Andrew Browning and David C. Douglas, eds., *English Historical Documents*, Vol. 8: 1660-1714 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 413-4.

the king. Furthermore Charles had control over his personal Coldstream Guards. This unit originated as General Monck's regiment that initiated the restoration of Charles II in 1659. Despite Parliamentary complaints, they continued as a royal force after the rest of the army had been disbanded.<sup>19</sup> Now Charles had total control over all of England's military might. Although the MPs never wanted to create a monarchy powerful enough to infringe upon the privileges of the gentry, their legislation did create the machinery necessary for Charles and his Privy Council to become the backbone of English politics.

The gentry had more to fear than just the devastations of the 1650s. Power and wealth both were slowly transferring from their countryside to the City.<sup>20</sup> Both the gentry and the central government found cooperation an asset. By appealing to the court, the gentry could attain enough power to maintain dominance over the localities. Meanwhile, the government used the gentry as its representatives to rule below the national level.<sup>21</sup> However, the dominant partner in this relationship proved to be the king. For example, Charles effectively used his power to appoint new Justices of the Peace if the current Justices' loyalty became questionable. In addition, the government's involvement in local affairs increased as the counties asked for its mediation in domestic disputes more than ever before.<sup>22</sup> Just as Charles used the fears of the gentry to create the Cavalier Parliament, so did he use those same fears to master the countryside.

Later Stuart England saw the desire for liberty in much the same way as it viewed the "king killing" Presbyterians: liberty promoted the revolution. For this reason, the government saw a need to protect itself from ideas contrary to the preservation of the monarchy. The offense of treason--traditionally an act against the king--found itself expanded not only to cover the written word, but the spoken word as well.<sup>23</sup> The Judgement and Decree of the University of Oxford, issued in 1683, exemplified literary repression when it declared that all works which were "false, seditious and impious;...also heretical and blasphemous, infamous to Christian religion, and destructive of all government in Church and State," would be burned. Furthermore, it demanded instructors to teach "that...Submission and Obedience is to be clear, absolute and without exception of any State or Order

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<sup>19</sup>Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain: 1417-1714*, 326.

<sup>20</sup>Paul Seaward, *The Restoration, 1660-1688* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1986), 28-9.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 27-8.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>23</sup>Hutton, *Restoration*, 156.

of Men."<sup>24</sup> Individual liberty, specifically freedom of the press, did not entrench itself in Restoration England.

In 1681, Charles showed England just how little its freedom extended when compared to the majesty of the Crown. At the Oxford Parliament, the Earl of Shaftsbury called for the exclusion of James--a Catholic--from the throne and the legislated permanence of Parliament.<sup>25</sup> The demands of this party, known as the Whigs, were limitations on the king similar to those imposed upon Charles I in 1641 and 1642. When royalists discovered Shaftsbury's unpublished papers called *The Association*, the Earl's call for the local control of the militias represented another "Militia Bill"--a principal element causing the civil war of 1642.<sup>26</sup> Such a document brought cries of "'41 come again" showing that England remembered the radical nature of the Parliamentary body of 1641 and its attempts to annex legislatively the king's prerogatives. Charles II dissolved the Oxford Parliament for discussing the Exclusion Bill within a week of its congregation.<sup>27</sup> After the Rye House Plot to kill the king and his brother in 1683, England made the necessary choice between civil war and a protectorate or an absolutist state.

The "Tory reaction" ensued.<sup>28</sup> To purge the Whigs from offices, the government revoked the charters of cities by writs of *quo warranto* until they accepted the consent of the king in all elections. Furthermore, Tories had Whigs arrested and tried directly for plotting against the king.<sup>29</sup> Tory persecution of the Whigs showed that 17th-century England lacked comprehension of a loyal opposition. It also showed that Charles was not alone in wanting to ensure the preservation of the ancient monarchy.

But for the king to truly be autonomous, Charles needed financial independence from Parliament--a goal he achieved. The expansion of commerce under Cromwell eventually undermined the Parliamentary desire to keep the king financially dependent. Initially the Commons voted to allow

<sup>24</sup>King William II and Queen Mary II, *State Tracts: 1660-1689*, "Judgement and Decree of the University of Oxford" (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1973; reprint, London: Richard Baldwin, 1692), 153-6.

<sup>25</sup>Browning, *English Historical Documents*, 256, 258.

<sup>26</sup>Arthur Bryant, *King Charles II* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), 326.

<sup>27</sup>Hutton, Charles II, 401; Browning, *English Historical Documents*, 956-7.

<sup>28</sup>Hutton, *Charles II*, 404.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 420.



the king only the Hearth Tax, Customs, and the Excise as sources of revenue.<sup>30</sup> But in 1681 they realized their mistake. A boom in trade led to an increase in customs duties. Because of the organization and efficiency of the English system of trade, Charles did not ask for revenue at the Oxford Parliament.<sup>31</sup> Nor did he summon Parliament before his death in 1685. He had obviously disregarded the Triennial Act of 1664 which stated that "the sitting and holding of Parliament shall not be intermitted or discontinued above three years at the most."<sup>32</sup> But because the document lacked safeguards, Parliament found itself defenseless against the power of the king's ancient prerogatives.

Charles proved to be a success in establishing the machinery for an absolutist state, thanks to Cromwell. Rather than open the door to freedom, the Protectorate caused lamentations that created a conservatively closed society--one that proved determined to reentrench the ancient monarchy and protect it at all levels of government. Through the Clarendon Code, the once tolerant church of the Republic returned to the Anglicanism of the early Stuarts. The willingness of the Cavalier Parliament to legislate the increased potency of the monarchy and its inability effectively to assert its rights led to Charles's position at the pinnacle of political power. The gentry allied with the king rather than oppose him, sacrificing their autonomy for local preeminence. And, in 1681, Charles demonstrated that once the crown became financially independent, the Parliamentary institution became expendable. Thus the king was relieved of all constraints. With these basic mechanics of a strong central government in place, only the cog of perpetuance remained. With his abrupt death in 1685, Charles's dreams fell short of his goal and he left the opportunity to his successors to drive the absolutist machine either to the heavens or to its grave.

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<sup>30</sup>John Miller, *Restoration England: The Reign of Charles II* (New York: Longmans Group Limited, 1985), 77.

<sup>31</sup>Hutton, *Charles II*, 401.

<sup>32</sup>Browning, *English Historical Documents*, 153-4.

*A Brief Historiography of Immigration:  
From Romance to Tragedy*

by *Melissa S. Wright*

When the Congress of the United States enacted the Immigration Law of 1924, a momentous chapter in American history was closed. Unlimited immigration had come to an end, yet the study of American immigration had just begun. Over the past 67 years, countless historians have studied American immigration from many different viewpoints. Within these studies, however, distinct historiographical schools have emerged, making it possible for one to see an overall theme in immigration studies. During the last century, historians' interpretations have evolved from viewing immigration as a romance, in which the immigrant imposes his will upon the society he finds in the United States, to viewing immigration as a tragedy, in which immigrants, a separate group within American society, become society's victims.

One of the first great studies of immigration was undertaken in 1926 by George M. Stephenson in *A History of American Immigration 1820-1924* which examines the role of immigrants in the political history of the United States.<sup>1</sup> A main assumption upon which Stephenson bases his work is that immigrants should be grouped together as a whole. In discussing this assumption, he addresses the contemporary view of the distinct differences between the old and new immigrants. Many historians in the 1920s separated immigrants into two distinct groups: old immigrants, or those who arrived in America before the Civil War; and new immigrants, those who arrived in America after the Civil War. This distinction was made as a result of the political trends of the time. The establishment of communism in Russia in 1917 precipitated the Red Scare in 1920, as America feared communism and anarchy would overtake the United States. This fear, combined with the rise of the second Ku Klux Klan, produced a strong anti-foreign feeling which swept across the United States. The KKK, in an attempt to justify many of its members' older generation immigrant backgrounds, began to distinguish between old and new immigration. They claimed the old immigrants, whose Nordic background enabled them to adapt to American society and accept its values, were acceptable.

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<sup>1</sup>George M. Stephenson, *A History of American Immigration 1820-1924* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1926).

The new anarchist immigrants who spoke unfamiliar languages and did not physically resemble "Americans," however, were a threat to freedom, democracy, and the American way of life. This reasoning, according to Stephenson, was cold-blooded and unfair, as the evidence required to make a fair judgement would not be available for many years to come.<sup>2</sup>

Using this assumption that both old and new immigrants were similar, Stephenson uses the first half of his study to provide basic background history of each of the immigrant groups that arrived in America: British, Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, Dutch, Italians, Jews, and Slavs, establishing a set of reasons for emigration into which all immigrants fell. The immigrants from the United Kingdom escaped from their countries to find material betterment in America. In Britain, the beginning of emigration coincided with the changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution. As relations with employers became more openly hostile and fluctuations in trade caused business depressions and widespread unemployment, emigrants looked to America to relieve their discontent.<sup>3</sup> The Irish suffering centered on their small holdings, which necessitated a one-crop economy. When their potato harvests of the 1840s failed, the Irish were faced with famine. America was their only escape.<sup>4</sup>

Like the Irish and British, the Scandinavians' main reason for emigration was material betterment. They, however, were a step above the average immigrant, as they had adventurous instinct and the desire to improve their material conditions. The Dutch, too possessed that same spirit, according to Stephenson, as they were shrewd, hard-headed, calculating, and industrious.<sup>5</sup>

The Germans also came to America to find a better life, one without German religious and political persecution. As liberalism emerged in Germany, many university professors and students embraced it strongly. The governments, however, did not. Thus, the emigration of individuals was a self-imposed exile of educated and aggressive men and women looking for a better life.<sup>6</sup>

Based on these background summaries, Stephenson concludes that all immigrants' reasons for emigrating fell under one of five categories: pressure from increasing populations, religious zeal and

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 61-3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 11-2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 50-3.

persecution, economic motives, love of adventure, and political ambition.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to sharing the same motives for emigration, all emigrants shared the same characteristics "at the time of departure as well as in later years." The emigrant was incapable of analyzing complex forces operating over a long period of time, and thus to his environment. In addition, he was essentially a non-conformist in the economic, political, social and religious realms before and after immigration. To survive, the emigrant learned the English language and American ways, but never truly rejected the influences of his earlier life. There were some, however, who could not adapt sufficiently to American life, and consequently chose to return home. Without the emigrant's knowledge, America had worked "marvelous transformation," making the emigrant "a living advertisement of American prosperity" and an outcast in his own homeland.<sup>8</sup> To understand fully the emigrant, one had to return to the "cottages of the peasants and to the humble dwellings of the laborers in the factory and on the farm."<sup>9</sup>

Thus, according to Stephenson's metonymy trope, the experiences of the American immigrants, old and new, were similar. In addition to similar backgrounds and personal characteristics, Stephenson also claims that immigrants shared similar experiences in politics in the second half of his book in the sections titled "The Immigrant in Politics 1840-1860," and "The Immigrants in Politics 1860-1914." Using contextualism, a focus on background and trends, Stephenson paints the picture of an immigrant population as it attempted to establish itself in politics.

In the political arena, immigrants were termed special interest blocs as they could, as ethnic groups, swing the vote one way or the other. This was illustrated in 1840-1860 as political parties battled for immigrant groups' support on the issue of slavery. In order to gain the support of the ethnic groups, the Republicans added a campaign plank to attract the Dutch, a Dutch plank, to their party platform and engaged Germans, Scandinavians, and Dutch to speak to their communities in their native tongues. According to Stephenson, the political role of the immigrant was marked and culminated in the momentous election of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to their power of support, immigrants possessed the power to challenge political parties. The Irish and Germans were the most dangerous, claims Stephenson, as they came from

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 118-33.

countries whose government played leading roles in world affairs and had frequently been in disputes with the government of their adopted country. The immigrant's base loyalty would always lie with his homeland. Thus, in Stephenson's romance, immigrants, as a group and not individuals, triumphed over America's obstacles to establish their own place in the world of American politics.<sup>11</sup>

As Congress passed restrictive immigration laws, the masses of immigrants who had come into the United States during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries began to settle permanently and assimilate. As this occurred, historians' views of immigrants and immigration changed accordingly. The materialistic culture of the 1920s was suddenly and forcefully replaced by the Great Depression. Anti-immigrant feelings hardened as native Americans accused immigrants of holding jobs that should have been filled by natives. Immigrant women were special targets of hostility as they had not only taken jobs from natives, but from male heads of households who had families to support. Immigrants were feeding off society, yet giving nothing in return.

In an effort to dispute this common feeling, Carl Wittke, in 1939, wrote *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant*, which still gains accolades from contemporary historians, including John Bodnar, associate professor of history and director of the Oral History Research Center at Indiana University, and John Higham, a widely-published immigration historian.<sup>12</sup> According to Wittke, immigrants were not simply sycophants, but major contributors to the development of "a new composite American civilization." Thus, the immigrants' story was a romance, as they were able to overcome the obstacles of immigration and contribute positively to the ever-evolving American society. As such, signs of immigrants' contributions to American society were widespread.<sup>13</sup>

One major area of immigrant contribution was art. Emmanuel Leutze, a German, painted "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and "Westward Ho," both of which decorate the walls of the nation's capitol. An Austrian, Karl Butler, sculpted the statue of Thomas Jefferson at the University of Virginia and served as the sculpture director of the pan-American Exposition, the St. Louis World's fair, and the Panama-Pacific Exposition.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, immigrants provided America with fiddles, flutes, ballads, folk dances, symphonies,

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 193-203.

<sup>12</sup>John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1985), 223; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 420.

<sup>13</sup>Carl Wittke, *We Who Built America* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1946), xviii.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 363-5.

and choral singing. The father of orchestral music, Gottlieb Graupner, emigrated from Germany, as did the founder of the Boston Conservatory of Music. In 1930, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra boasted 114 members, 72 of whom were naturalized citizens. Immigrants also provided Americans with the Steinway piano, Gemunder violin, and the Schwab organ.<sup>15</sup>

Immigrant talents were not restricted to fine arts. German immigrants pioneered infant feeding, hydrotherapy, appendicitis surgery, x-ray work, and pharmaceuticals. In addition, immigrants were responsible for the development of cantilever bridges, suspension bridges, and the New York subway tunnels. In the area of manufacturing and business, immigrants contributions were innumerable and included cable cars, player pianos, grain elevators, outboard motors, zippers, oil refining, and linotype. Some of the most famous businesses developed by immigrants which still exist today include Bulova Watches, Bausch and Lomb, Schitz, Pabst, Blatz, Annheuser-Busch, and H.J. Heinz.<sup>16</sup>

Thus Wittke, like Stephenson, discourages the use of new and old immigration divisions. In his introduction, Wittke informs the reader that his writing is based on the assumption that we, as human beings, know nothing about a "pure race," as there is no satisfactory scientific method of accurately testing inherent racial qualities. Thus, America is not a set, constructed nation as such, but is rather a constantly evolving and forming nation. Using an organicist approach, Wittke describes the process that each immigrant group experienced as it attempted to contribute to the formation of America. As the immigrant groups assimilated, they also contributed their own talents, transcending the obstacles in America, and, while still retaining some of their homeland values, contributing significantly to the formation of the American civilization.<sup>17</sup>

One of the unique contributions by the immigrants to the formation of America is illustrated in Wittke's chapter on immigrant utopias. He claims that utopian societies could be divided along communist/socialist and religious lines. Reflecting the anti-communist/socialist political views that dominated his times, Wittke contends that religious utopian societies were the better-organized and longer lasting. In addition, the majority of the utopian societies, alleges Wittke, were comprised of immigrants. Thus, American utopian societies constituted "an important chapter in the story of the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 365-78.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 392-401.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., xviii.

immigrants' hopes for a promised land."<sup>18</sup>

While Wittke presents a romance much like Stephenson's, he concentrates mainly on settlement of the frontier, and thus, old immigration. Although Wittke's work has been critically acclaimed by many historians, herein lies his main fault. A difference existed between old and new immigration, as old immigration mainly settled the frontier lands while new immigration was contained in urban areas. His failure to address urban immigration dates his work.

Stephenson's and Wittke's works were representative of the first four decades of the 1900s, as they examined the impact of the immigrant upon the society which received him. The 1950s marked a turn in immigration research as historians began to study the effects of the immigration process and American society upon the newcomer. This shift is quite remarkable when one considers the political context underlying it. Nineteen fifty marked the beginning of McCarthyism, as anti-communism reached hysteric proportions. McCarthy's witch hunts and Hollywood show trials, along with Truman's loyalty oath, pushed anti-immigrant feelings to their highest point since the Red Scare. How does one reconcile historians' approaches to immigration and the political context in which they wrote? Historians of the 1950s sought to defend the immigrants' contributions to American society. They, however, defended the immigrants by establishing them as the victims of American society and the immigration process.

One of the first historians to meet this challenge was Oscar Handlin in his popular *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* published in 1951. Using a blend of psychology, history, and immigrants' personal experiences, Handlin claims that he hopes to "seize upon a single strand woven into the fabric of our past, to understand that strand in its numerous ties and linkages with the rest; and perhaps, by revealing the nature of this part, to throw light upon the essence of the whole."<sup>19</sup> Thus, Handlin's goal is to illustrate emigration as the central experience suffered by a great many human beings, as "emigration took these people out of tradition, accustomed environments, and replanted them in strange ground, among strangers, where strange manners prevailed."<sup>20</sup>

Handlin's tragedy of the immigrants' struggle to survive in a new land begins with a short study

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 361.

<sup>19</sup>Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), 3.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 5.

of the peasant origins of the immigrants, including communal traditions, transformation of agricultural organizations, and epidemics. After tracing the similarities in the immigrants' crossings of the Atlantic, Handlin presents, in great detail, the plight of the immigrant as he arrived in the cities empty-handed. Aching of spirit went hand in hand with aching muscles, as the burdens of his economic role became intolerable. Appealing to the reader's emotions, Handlin dramatically writes about the immigrant: "He was not a man at all...Driven in a helpless alternation of fortunes by the power of remote forces, these were no longer men, not any more men than the cogs spinning in their great machines."<sup>21</sup> Accompanying this economic desperation were loneliness, separation from the community of the village, and despair at the insignificance of their own abilities. These were the elements that victimized American immigrants.<sup>22</sup>

Although Handlin's work signalled a new era in immigrant history, he presented a liberal view of immigration, much like the historians who preceded him. The role of immigrants was tragic rather than heroic, as they "lived in crisis because they were uprooted...while the old roots were sundered, before the new were established, the immigrant existed in an extreme situation...the effects of the shock persisted for many years; and their influence reached down to generations which themselves never paid the cost of crossing."<sup>23</sup>

Four years later, an extremely controversial book appeared, which, while maintaining a theme of tragedy and a liberal ideology, addressed an obstacle faced by many immigrants but addressed directly by few historians: nativism. John Higham, author of *Strangers in the Land*, represents the school of intellectual history that emerged during the inter-war years. Combining the internal approach, which states that creative thought is the most powerful force in history, and the external approach, which presents ideas as the instruments of socio-economic groups and forces, *Strangers in the Land* presents a dialectical structure of progressive history, proposing that deep social crises provide the pivot for change. This conflict is representative of a Marxist viewpoint, and Higham confirms this, stating: "I was drawn to the kind of progressive thought--distinctly socialist rather than communist--that looked forward to a fraternity of people rather than the solidarity of class." Thus, Higham's dialectic is based not on class distinctions, but on another belief that fraternally bonds

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 80-1.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 6.



people together: nativism.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike the historians preceding him, Higham presents a dualism based on differing versions of the meaning of America. According to Higham, two opposing sides have always dominated history: nativists and their adversaries. Nativists historically embodied three traditions: anti-Catholicism, racism, and anti-radicalism. Within the definition of nativism lie the defining features of its adversaries. Social crises occurred as the components of this dualism were, in certain situations, placed directly at odds. Certain new ideas existed, however, which were powerful enough to transcend this dualism. These ideas spread across the whole of society, linking the opposing sides of the dualism together. The most prominent example of this is the concept of war. Historically, races and religion have joined willingly in war efforts. War transcends the dualism of nativism and its adversaries.<sup>25</sup>

Of all the books examined in this essay, *Strangers in the Land* has proven to be thus far the most resilient, as it was reprinted in 1985. In Higham's words,

Most remarkably, it [*Strangers in the Land*] has never come under sustained criticism from any of the schools of historiography that have arisen since its publication, nor has it been superseded by wider syntheses or by a deeper penetration of its subject. *Strangers in the Land* to this day remains a hardy, solitary perennial—an academic phenomenon with a history of its own that begs for explanation.<sup>26</sup>

This quote, unfortunately, is representative of the attitude Higham exhibits throughout his writing. While Higham's argument is indeed strong and his credentials, including education and previous publications, impressive, the reader cannot help being put off by his obvious arrogance.

While Higham's writing may remain an academic phenomenon in his own mind, John Bodnar's *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (1985) presents a serious academic challenge to Higham's view of immigration. Previous treatments of immigration, states Bodnar, have been based on a similar assumption: the immigrant experience was a common experience shared by all. This is incorrect, states Bodnar, "as even the most cursory glance at an immigrant community or stream will suggest that not all newcomers behaved in a similar fashion." Instead, immigrants

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<sup>24</sup>Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 333.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 331.

were fragmented into numerous enclaves arranged by internal status, levels, ideology, and orientation.<sup>27</sup>

The real explanation of immigrant adjustment lay at all the points where the immigrant met modernity and capitalism: the homeland, neighborhood, school, church, workplace, family, and fraternal hall. Thus, "the fragile link between the generations of the last century and the current one is not necessarily cultural or emotional as much as it is the shared need to respond to an evolving capitalism..." Using this metaphor, Bodnar uncovers the nature of immigrant involvement in capitalism to see that values and ideologies the immigrant abandoned and what he retained.<sup>28</sup>

In his first chapter, Bodnar concludes that the economic changes in the immigrants' homelands accounted for the cycle of migration. Manifestations of capitalism were apparent to immigrants in their homelands as cheap goods undercut the local artisan economic base and the rise of industrial cities created massive markets for agricultural products. As a result, immigrants came to America in two streams. The first stream, a minority of craftsmen, artisans, and small farmers, predicted what was about to happen to their economy and took their families to America to establish a new life. The majority of immigrants, who comprised the second stream, were searching for resources which could earn them a more respectable status in their homelands. Thus, the first stream came to America to establish new lives, while the second stream came to take advantage of its fabled gold-paved streets.<sup>29</sup>

The chapters which follow deal with the immigrants' involvement with an adjustment to capitalism. Rather than submit or acquiesce to capitalism, the immigrants simply accepted it, doing what had to be done in order to survive--nothing more. As such, immigrants, in Bodnar's work, did not intentionally attempt to change or better American society. Rather, they simply accepted the society, the victims of capitalism. Based on the immigrants' many responses to capitalism, however, separate classes emerged within the immigrant community, destroying the myth of the monolithic immigrant community. All responses, however, were based on what was best for the family. As a result, the immigrant community lived in a continual dynamic between economy and society, and between class and culture. Bodnar examines this swirl of interaction to uncover the nature of the

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<sup>27</sup>Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, xix.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., xx.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 54-6.

immigrant's involvement with capitalism, determining which values they rejected and which they retained.<sup>30</sup>

Using a Marxist argument, Bodnar presents the assimilation of the immigrant into capitalism, proving that immigrants formed a new culture, "a product of both men and women, believers and non-believers, workers and entrepreneurs, leaders and followers...drawing both a past and a present and continually confronting the limits of what was possible." Thus, the mentality and culture of most immigrants in urban America was a blend of the past and present, centered on the immediate and the attainable.<sup>31</sup>

During the century of 1820-1920, over 35 million immigrants entered the United States. As the first immigrants came ashore, the American society experienced a transformation which would never cease. Historians have studied immigration for over a century, arriving at many different conclusions, ranging from the degree of similarity in immigrant backgrounds to the degree of similarity in immigrant response to capitalism. As new historiographical schools emerge, so will new conclusions, all of which will likely hold some grain of truth. The impact of immigration on American society is immeasurable, and as such, will be the object of historical study for decades to come.

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 206-8.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 209.

## An Interview with Michael Cook Historical Administration Coordinator

Eastern Illinois University offers a unique alternative to the traditional Master of Arts degree in History. Since its inception in 1975, the Historical Administration program has garnered national prominence. Interested in the specifics of the program and concerned over recent rumors regarding the program's uncertain future, *Historia* spoke to Program Coordinator Michael Cook.

*Historia(H):* What does the Historical Administration program prepare students for?

*M.C.:* The program prepares graduates for careers in museums, historical agencies, historical societies and jobs in related fields. These types of jobs require the ability to think historically, to think critically, to conduct historical research and to be aware of the importance of preserving our American heritage.

*H:* How do the courses offered by Historical Administration compare to those found in Eastern's traditional history graduate program?

*M.C.:* While the courses emphasize history, some take a more practical approach to history--how to actually put things into use. Some of the courses offered include U.S. Social and Cultural History, Oral History and Local History Research, History of American Architecture, Archival Photography, as well as museum related courses like History Museum Exhibits, Historical Interpretation, Archives and editing, Care and Management of Historical Artifacts and a seminar in Historical Administration.

*H:* What are some student activities?

*M.C.:* The Greenwood School Museum, located on Hayes Avenue, is used in coursework as a place for students to learn skills needed to plan and install an exhibition and serves as a learning laboratory. The museum houses a photography lab and other equipment used by students. Other sites providing hands-on experience include the Dudley House on Seventh Street and the Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, South of Charleston.

Each class visits and analyzes several historic sites and museums. The Indianapolis Children's

Museum, Conner Prairie Living History Village in Noblesville, Indiana, the Illinois State Museum and the Illinois State Historical Library represent a few of the field trips taken during the year. Other areas of the country are visited on a rotating basis by year. This year's class will visit areas in the South and Southeast, including Colonial Williamsburg.

After two semesters of courses, students begin internships. While some find their own internships, the department keeps a large file and often assists in this process. Internships count for credit and offer a method of practical experience which strengthens students' skills and helps them secure professional employment once they have finished the program.

*H:* Why would someone interested in work at a history museum or agency choose Eastern's program?

*M.C.:* Eastern's program has a remarkable reputation and is one of the few nationally recognized programs in Historical Administration. Important to note is the fact that the past five winners of the Malkovich award (presented to outstanding, young, historical professionals in Illinois) have been graduates of the program.

Established seventeen years ago, the program provides a broadly-based background for people interested in this field. The students are prepared to perform a variety of skills needed to handle the different aspects of museum, archival and historical agency work. Another reason for choosing Eastern's program is that the alumni are very active in the professional organizations of this field and remain in contact with the program, current classes and other alumni.

The program maintains an association for alumni which holds an annual Symposium. The Symposium hosts speakers on topics which vary from year to year. This is an important event as it exposes students to outside speakers and allows them to interact with alumni. This intermingling allows the current class to enter the existing network of the museum related field.

*H:* There was once discussion of dropping the program; how does it stand now?

*M.C.:* The program was able to meet and surpass the university requirement in question and is no longer in any danger of being cut.

*H:* Is there a typical applicant to the program?

*M.C.:* I would not define any of these students as "typical", but many of them do have similarities: all are committed to working in history museums or in historical agencies, most are

experienced in the field, many are volunteers in related institutions, and most of our students are from out of state.

*H:* After completion, are students successfully placed in their chosen field?

*M.C.:* Yes, the placement record is close to 100 percent. The History Department office continually gets notices of opening positions and job announcements and we often help place people not only once, but two or three times at various points in their careers. People like Eastern because of the broad base they receive in the program. The program's alumni are located across the United States and in the Province of Ontario. Many of them hold positions as directors, curators, interpreters, and archivists and some have gone on to be educators or to work in other related fields.

*Historia* thanks Michael Cook for his time and insight and would also like to recognize the rest of the Historical Administration professors: E. Duane Elbert, Wendy Hamand Venet, Robert E. Hennings, David J. Maurer, Christopher Waldrep and Patricia L. Miller. The abilities of these instructors are reflected in a wide range of professional activities, publications, and outstanding accomplishments. For more information concerning the program, its faculty, students or alumni, contact the History Department Office, 224 Coleman, or Michael Cook in office 216E Coleman.

--Cheryl E. Munyer

*Dr. Anita Shelton's "Women in  
Russia's History"*

Dr. Anita Shelton's presentation on Women in Russian history, given on April 9, 1992, dealt with the significance of women in the overall history of Russia. Through her research for this topic she became fully aware that the seemingly marginal history of women, in fact casts new light on the central questions of human existence.

It is this new light that shows, for example, that although the social position of noble women has changed dramatically from the origins of the Russian state, to the present, it has always intertwined with (and often been fused with) the main themes of the whole of Russian history.

There is evidence available that shows women in early Rus history were warriors and matriarchs. The word "amazon" comes through the Greek from the ancient Slavic word *amuzhonnaia*--masculine woman. The Primary Chronicle--the main written source of early medieval Russian history--indicates that Olga, an eleventh century queen of Rus was a shrewd and ambitious ruler.

The significance of this lies in the survival of the myth of the super-competent slavic "amazon" beyond the next phases of greater oppression and into the modern collective consciousness. This is expressed by the popular saying that "women do everything and men can do the rest." The beginning of the phases of oppression came with the Byzantine Orthodox Christianity and continued through the Mongol invasion. Both of these in different ways combined to reduce the Slavic female to the sole role of producers and tenders of children. This oppression remained in this form until Peter I and his mass reconstruction of Russian society forced the beginning of the reemergence of women into broader society.

Dr. Shelton went on to explain that women played an extensive role in the intelligentsia of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. These women were not solely of the nobility; in fact, this is the period when the peasant woman joined the noble woman to pursue the task of eliminating both class and gender inequality. They became especially active during the earliest stages of communist growth in Russia. Ironically, this activity, did not give them any positions of authority in the Bolshevik government. Again they found themselves producing children for the state and its wars, as well as working full time. It is also interesting to note that when the women in the United States were lobbying for the E.R.A. and the legal right to "do it all", Soviet women could not understand this need of American women--they "had it all" and would not mind being so "limited" occasionally.

The women of Russia through the ages have gone from matriarchs to slaves to citizens. These metamorphoses have not always been beneficial or appreciated. That each of these changes corresponded to a change in the complete history of Russia is undeniable.

*--Jeanine L. Reardon*