# Cloth, Clothing, and Cloth-Theft in Defoe's England

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*Melissa is a senior history major who wrote this article for the lower division course, Historical Research and Writing, which is required of all history majors. Dr. Newton Key taught the course, which focused on the historical context and sources of Daniel Defoe's* Moll Flanders.

Daniel Defoe's famous novel *Moll Flanders* has been used by historians and literary critics alike to study early eighteenth century London, gender roles, the colonial trade, and the criminal world into which the heroine Moll sank.[1] The novel can also be used to reveal the role of textiles in early modern England.[2] Daniel Defoe uses cloth as a metaphor for many social transactions throughout *Moll Flanders*. The heroine's name, Flanders, even describes an illegally imported lace fabric while Moll herself steals cloth because it could easily be converted to cash. This paper focuses on the historical context of cloth, clothing, and the theft of cloth in the novel to argue that clothing represents the possibility of advancement within society, greed, and a readily available cash form.

Was the second-hand clothes trade respectable in eighteenth century London? According to Beverly Lemire, although the trade mainly consisted of clothes obtained by legitimate means, thieves provided a large portion of the trade.[3] "Fashion …inspired the theft of clothing on a massive scale by both amateur and professional thieves."[4] Madeleine Ginsburg, however, argues that "second-hand clothes dealing was regarded as a respectable and profitable way of earning a living, carried out by the clothes brokers and salesmen."[5] Ginsburg claims that personal servants brought the majority of second-hand clothes to the market.[6] Whether or not the theft of clothing was large scale, it became perpetuated by fashion obsession, greed, and the ease in transferring the stolen goods for cash.

Defoe asserts fashion obsession accompanied by social advancement contributed to crime which remained a major social problem in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Moll Flanders steals, primarily cloth, to advance her social standing. Moll obtains money for the cloth and buys exceedingly expensive clothes to imitate a higher social rank.

English society was highly stratified. M. Dorothy George writes, "[i]t was an age of minute social distinctions, lines were drawn between the artisan and the labourer, the master and journeyman …often

[with] distinctive dress."[7] Moll realizes the importance of dressing the part of a lady, having "clothes to set me off.... [T]hey entertained me ...but like they thought I had been, namely a widow of great fortune" (103). Moll's Irish landowner woos her in order to gain an imaginary fortune, which he suspects Moll possesses because of her fine dress.

The hierarchy extended into all aspects of life. "Society" consisted primarily of the gentry while lower levels merely existed.[8] The highest ranks of society dictated ways of life to the lower ranks.[9] A person's social status required identification by their clothing. As the *London Spy* noted, "[s]hopkeepers can distinguish a Country Man as well by his Looks, as a Parson by his Robes ...to promote the sale of their goods."[10] Moll dresses genteelly and desires being mistaken for a gentlewoman. Such deceit directs Moll's entire life.

Fashion awareness was a socio-economic issue in early modern London. Samuel Pepys, a wealthy diarist writing in the 1660s, was minutely aware of the social implications of his and his wife's dress (a concern, perhaps, due to his lowly origins.[11]

Mr. Clerke's coming to dine with me next Monday, I went to my wife and agreed upon matters; and at last for my honour am forced to make her [his wife] presently a new Moyre gown to be seen by Mrs. Clerke, which troubles me to part with so much money.[12]

A person had to maintain appearances to belong to certain social groups. The correct clothing became an important part of appearance. Pepys thought "clothes[,] I perceive more and more every day, is a great matter."[13] Moll desires the status of a gentlewoman, even though the goal is essentially unattainable because she was born to a convict in Newgate Prison.

Early modern Londoners thought of society as relatively stable allowing little movement through the social ranks. But the lines became blurred when people chose to wear clothes not befitting their position in life and deceit prevailed. Madeleine Ginsburg writes, "clothes implied status and ...wearing what was inappropriate ...might be socially misleading."[14] Moll purposely misleads gentleman on at least four occasions, and each time she marries well, and higher than her own station. Each gentleman speculates Moll possesses a fortune based upon her dress. Pepys noted a similar social mistake based on dress, "taking Captain Herbert home to my lodging ...who did seriously enquire after who was that in the black dress with my wife yesterday, and would not believe that it was my wife's maid Mercer; but it was she."[15] Servants during this time were not issued a standard uniform, but often wore the cast-off clothing of their mistress or master.[16]

Distinguishing between divisions of society became almost impossible. Henry Fielding, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, asserted,

one known division of the people in this nation is into the nobility, the gentry, and the commonalty, what alterations have happened among the two former of these, I shall not at present inquire; but the last, in their customs, manners, and habits, are greatly changed from what they were ...the lower sort [of people] ...is changed ...the simplicity of their manners into craft; their frugality into luxury; their humility into pride, and their subjection into equality.[17]

Clothing became a vehicle to a better life by imitation. And clothing which was unaffordable, was
[18]

bought second-hand or stolen.     Defoe notes, "there are temptations which it is not in the power of human nature to resist, and few know what would be their case if driven to the same exigencies, as covetousness is the root of all evil, so poverty is the worst of all snares" (140). Then as now, consumers desire to wear fashionable clothing. Greed causes people to desire fine articles of clothing and better lives, sometimes extremely beyond their means. Moll stole a way up the social ladder.

In January 1734, *The Gentleman's Magazine* called for the re-establishment of the sumptuary laws, "of great importance for preserving the distinction and order so necessary to the different ranks of men."[19] Sumptuary laws prohibited different classes from wearing the same attire. Fielding noted that without such laws,

the nobleman will emulate the grandeur of a prince and the gentleman will aspire to the proper state of the nobleman, the tradesman steps from behind his counter into the vacant place of the gentleman; nor doth the confusion end here; it reaches the very dregs of the people, who aspiring still to a degree beyond that which belongs to them.[20]

Defoe's Moll claims, "I had nearly 200 pounds for my share [a significant sum].... I had still a cast for an easy life.... [P]overty brought me in, so avarice kept me in" (151). In the end, Moll depends upon her own cunning and skill as a thief to obtain her dream of wealth.

Crime increased because population and poverty rose in England during the early eighteenth century.[21] England continued transporting criminals to the New World. When Moll Flanders finds herself in jeopardy and becomes a criminal, she primarily steals cloth. Her first theft includes a laced child-bed linen, more linen, a smock, and three silk handkerchiefs. These types of items were readily available and easily shifted away from the crime scene. As historian, Lemire notes, "clothing was the most sought-after, and at the same time, most easily disposable commodity in this period."[22] *The Newgate Calendar*, a summary of the most notable felons hung at Tyburn Cross, records thefts of shoes, handkerchiefs, a coat, and 108 yards of woollen cloth.[23] Even Pepys's wife was robbed of clothing.

Bringing home in a coach her new ferraddin waistecoate, in Cheapside a man asked her whether that was the way to the Tower; and while she was answering him, another on the other side snatched away her bundle out of her lap and could not be recovered, but ran away with it; which vexes me cruelly, but it cannot be helped.[24]

Cloth became easily converted into cash and inflamed the lust for a fortune.

The second-hand clothes trade allowed ease for disposal of stolen goods. Shopkeepers, pawnbrokers, chapmen, and tradesmen were instrumental in dispersing second-hand cloth and clothing.[25] Corrupt cloth brokers and pawnbrokers were thieves themselves.[26] A notorious criminal of the time was Jonathan Wild, "the Prince of Robbers."[27] Jonathan Wild planned with fellow thieves to steal items and then return those items to the rightful owners for a reward.[28] This activity netted the thief a larger sum than would be gained by re-selling the item. In *Moll Flanders*, the governess provides a similar pawnbroker service for Moll, by disposing of stolen items.

Robbery victims promoted thieving, by advertising rewards for returned items in newspapers.[29] For example, an advertisement in the *London Gazette* during 1714 reads,

lost from the Vine Tavern in Thames-street ...a bundle with 2 large and 2 small down pillows, several suits of laced headcloths and ruffles, 2 suits of fine Macklin Lace Pinnar broad, with other linnen, and things of value; whoever shall bring or discover these things, so as they may be had again, to Mr. Crowch, Poulterer at Smithfield Bars, shall have a reward ...for the whole, or proportionable for any part, and no questions asked.[30]

The enticement of quick money and anonymity provided the thief with an incentive to steal.

Theft of clothing, a major problem in early modern London, depended upon pawnbrokers and merchants willing to turn items into cash.[31] Fielding thought, "that if there were no receivers there would be no thieves, indeed could not the thief find a market for his goods, there would be an absolute end of several kinds of thefts; such as shoplifting, burglary, &c., the objects of which are generally goods and not money."[32] A thief often traded an item for services or essential goods.[33] A stolen item could easily become lost in the maze of London shops, taken to the country by a chapman, or the piece totally re-done by a tailor.[34] People spent extra money on clothes and the clothing market attempted tomeet its new-found popularity.[35] Thievery provided the extra clothing needed by the market.

Defoe's view of social transactions, as asserted in *Moll Flanders*, corroborates Lemire's theory that the second-hand clothes trade seemed destined to corruption. Clothes turned into cash swiftly, *via* the pawnbrokers and second-hand clothes dealers. In early modern England, people were concerned with the appearance of possessing status and class. As Defoe's Moll demonstrates so well, clothing made the woman.

1. Daniel Defoe wrote *Moll Flanders* in 1722, and the description of London is reminiscent of the early 18th century, although the author claims that the novel was written towards the end of Moll's life in 1683. Martin C. Battestin, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 39, *British Novelists, 1660-1800* (Detroit, 1985).

2. Daniel Defoe, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous, Moll Flanders* (New York, 1989). Page references in text (in parenthesis) are from this edition.

3. Beverly Lemire, "Peddling Fashion: Salesmen, Pawnbrokers, Taylors, Thieves and the Second-hand Clothes Trade in England, *c.* 1700-1800," *Textile History* 22 (1991): 77.

4. Beverly Lemire, "Peddling Fashion," *Textile History*, 77.

5. Madeleine Ginsburg, "Rags to Riches: The Second-Hand Clothes Trade 1700-1978," *Costume* 14 (1980): 121.

6. Ibid.

7. M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the 18th Century* (New York, 1965), 156-7.

8. Douglas Hay & Nicholas Rogers, *Eighteenth-Century English Society* (Oxford, 1997), 24.

9. Ibid., 24.

10. [Edward Ward], *The London Spy*, March 1699, 13.

11. Pepys' father was employed as a tailor and his mother was a domestic servant at the time of their marriage while Pepys eventually became the most important British naval official. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, eds., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1921), "Pepys, Samuel."

12. Samuel Pepys, *Everybody's Pepys: The Diary of Samuel Pepys, 1660-1669*, ed. O.F. Morshead (New York, 1926), 160.

13. Ibid., 259.

14. Ginsburg, "Rags to Riches," 121.

15. Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys,* vol. 6, *1665*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley, 1972), 238.

16. Ginsburg, "Rags to Riches," 122.

17. Henry Fielding, *Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers*, vol. 13, *The Works of Henry Fielding: Legal Writings* (New York, 1967), 11 & 14.

18. Lemire, "Peddling Fashion," 69.

19. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan. 1734, 13.

20. Fielding, "Late Increase of Robbers," 23.

21. George, *London Life*, 25-6.

22. Beverly Lemire, "The Theft of Clothes and Popular Consumerism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990): 257.

23. Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, eds., *The Newgate Calendar* (London, 1824), 1:47-8, 56 & 207.

24. Pepys, *Everybody's Pepys*, 163.

25. Beverly Lemire, "Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes," *Journal of British Studies* 27 (Jan. 1988): 13.

26. Lemire, "The Theft of Clothes," 267.

27. Knapp and Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar*, 225.

28. Ibid., 227.

29. Lemire, " The Theft of Clothes," 259.

30. *The London Gazette,* Jan. 25-29, 1714.

31. The theft of clothing accounted for 27.1% of the recorded larceny prosecutions in urban areas between 1620-1680. Beverly Lemire, "Theft of Clothes," 257.

32. Fielding, "Late Increase of Robbers," 76.

33. Lemire, "Peddling Fashion," 73.

34. Ibid., 77.

35. Ibid., 69.

# The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857: The Indian View

*Ron Peters*

The following two articles, Ron Peters on the Indian perspective of the Sepoy Mutiny and Greg Aydt on the Cuban perspective of the Spanish-American War, are written by two M.A. in History graduate students at Eastern Illinois. Both first wrote the essays in Dr. Roger Beck's seminar in European Imperialism. Both are presented here as historical responses to consideration of the "Other" in history.

We're marchin' on relief over Injia's sunny plains,

A little front o' Christmas time an' just be'ind the Rains,

Ho! get away, you bullock-man, you've 'eard the bugle blowed,

There's a regiment a-comin' down the Grand Trunk Road.

Rudyard Kipling, "Route Marchin"

An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!

Yes, Din! Din! Din!

You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!

Though I've belted you and flayed you,

By the living Gawd that made you,

You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

Rudyard Kipling, "Gunga Din"

European conflicts embroiled indigenous peoples and foreign trading companies into eighteenth-century wars of imperial conquest. In 1746, Marquis de Joseph Dupleix captured Madras during the War of Austrian Succession and augmented French forces with native Indian soldiers (Sepoys). The French *Compagnie des Indes* and the English East India Company actively recruited native alliances for the next

fifteen years in their struggle to control the Coast and the adjacent Carnatic province. The French capture of Madras showed the English the military necessity for an East India Company Sepoy army. In 1756, Clive marched 1,200 Madras Sepoys and 800 East India Company soldiers and secured Bengal for the company. The Seven Years War produced two changes for the East India Company: the French *Compagnie des Indes* surrendered its holdings in India and the East India Company assumed political and military control of India.[1] Ninety-six years after the Treaty of Paris (1761), the East India Company's Sepoy army turned against its masters.

The revolt of 1857 was not the first mutiny. British regular and European East India Company troops revolted in 1766: the Sepoys remained steadfast and entertained no equivocation of duty.[2] When the British violated the Sepoys' enlistment promises, the Sepoys reacted and mutinied. At Vellor in 1806, at Barrackpur in 1824 and 1852, in the North-West Provinces in 1844, and in the Punjab in 1849-50, the Sepoy solders mutinied in order to right military grievances.[3] A long grievance list produced the tumultuous, violent results of 1857.

Individuals had widely differing motivations for enlisting in the army. European and Indian ranks and files evolved from distinct military cultures. European troops entered military service as a last resort: to escape from poverty, domestic crisis, or to evade criminal or civil justice.[4] Indians, despite caste or religion, entered the East India Company's regiments for mercenary reasons and status.[5] Peers who examined government records concluded that Indian soldiers committed less crime, were rarely arrested on drunk and disorderly charges, and displayed higher moral standards than English Commonwealth soldiers.[6] were the reasons for mutiny as multifarious as those for enlisting?

What reasons provoked the Sepoys to mutiny? *The Illustrated London News*, of August 22, 1857, stated:

The public begin to perceive that not two or three, but a thousand, causes have been at work, and that if we are to retain India a radical reform, not only of our military and administrative systems, must be introduced, but our social and political relations with the Indian tribes, peoples, races, and nations, must undergo a change large and thorough enough to merit the name of a Revolution.

*The Illustrated London News* voiced many of the mutiny's root causes within the framework of the East India Company's military and administrative departments, but naively missed the main cause-reform. East India Company employees and officers, both military and administrative, introduced many reforms. Social reforms produced animosities and distrust among the native people. The English outlawed "Thuggee" and "Dakoiti" cults as a method to control lawless and dangerous behavior. Familial reforms targeted Sati, infanticide, and the husband's right to

execute his wife. Company directors abolished slavery. Missionaries implemented education (in English language and writing), and established orphanages. Both Hindus and Muslims viewed these "improvements" as methods to convert the people to Christianity. But, the people viewed the British anti-caste behavior and attitude as the greatest threat to the native religion and culture.[7]

Some social reforms directly destabilized local political hegemony. Local land reform, European settlement, tax farming, and the East India Company's policies of annexation outwardly appear as social reforms, but represented political agendas. Early in the nineteenth century, the English began land reforms in the North-West provinces. Feudal landlords watched in horror as the Company gave land to the peasantry and collected taxes from them. The landlords lost their lands and tax revenue. During the 1857 Mutiny, the Bundelkhand *thakurs* (landlords) also rebelled against the English. These landlords operated independently from the actions of the Sepoy mutineers and the local rebelling potentates.[8] European settlement and tax farming produced animosities from the local elite, local merchants, and the local peasantry. The policy of annexation, especially the Oudh situation, created bitter hatred toward the Company and formed major military problems.

The 1857 rebellion centered on the Company's annexation of Oudh. In 1818, Sir John Malcolm had exiled the Mahratta Peshwa, Baji Rao, on an £80,000 annual pension to the kingdom of Oudh. Baji Rao sired two sons, both of which died as infants. Hindu law required a son to officiate at the funeral and release the father's soul. The custom with the Hindu allowed an adopted son to fulfill this sacred duty. Raji Rao adopted Nana Sahib (Nana Govina Dhondu Pant), a son of friend, an affinial relative and of the same caste as the Peshwa. After the Peshwa's death, Nana Sahib petitioned the East India Company for the annual pension of his adopted father. The East India Company refused to grant the annuity and Nana Sahib sent emissaries to England on his behalf. Nana Sahib's emissaries failed and complained that all India's gold could not out-bribe the East India Company's power over the Crown and Parliament.[9]

Sixty-year old William Sleeman toured the Oudh countryside and drafted evidence of misrule. Governor-General Dalhousie composed an ultimatum to Wajid Ali Shah: turn over the Kingdom of Oudh or the British would use military force. Wajid Ali Shah refused to sign the document in the name of his son, Birjis Qadr. In response, the Company annexed Oudh.[10]

The key link to these two ousted dynasties rested in the Nana Sahib's Muslim secretary, Azimullah. Azimullah, highly educated in English and diplomacy, petitioned the British Crown in Nana Sahib's behalf. Azimullah utterly hated the British. Azimullah's intrigues linked not only two dynasties but two religions, Hindu

and Muslim. Azimullah printed pamphlets that called for a *Jihad* against the infidel. Azimullah gathered disaffected Indian officers (Hindu and Muslim) and presented seditious ideas. Azimullah expressed the extent of his intrigues and seditious plans to the Turkish general Umar Pasha in 1856, to garner Turkish support. It was Azimullah who formed an infrastructure of Indian agents to distribute seditious anti-British propaganda and not Russian agents, as the British believed. In July 1857 *The Illustrated London News* wrote:

we have the strongest reasons to suspect, that Russian emissaries are, and have long been, at work, not only at the outposts and frontiers of our Indian Empire, but in the very heart of the country, in exciting disatisfaction against British rule, and in stirring up the native population against us.… [T]hose who know Russia best, and India most, do not treat this supposition with scorn; but, on the contrary, find too many reasons for believing that every act of hostility against us …is more or less connected with Russian intrigues and Russian money.[11]

British arrogance refused to accept the idea that the Company produced the anti-British sentiments and that the Indians themselves could mastermind a rebellion.

Sepoy disaffection reflected a long list of varied grievances and a long history of errors. In 1796 the British forced "all sorts of novelties" upon the Sepoy army.

[The Sepoy] was to be drilled after a new English fashion…, dressed after a new English fashion…, shaved after a new English fashion.… They were stripping him, indeed, of his distinctive Oriental character.[12]

Before the 1796 Sepoy reorganization, British officers commanding Sepoy troops knew the language and respected the culture of the Sepoy troops. Officers and enlisted Sepoys dressed in oriental style. The Company utilized the "irregular system" principle: Sepoy officers commanded the companies and British officers commanded the regiments and brigades. Reorganization regulated the Sepoy officers into inferior positions and introduced British line officers into the Sepoy companies. Promotions of Sepoy officers followed the English establishment-seniority over merit-consequently, few able young Sepoy officers received promotions. English officers also failed to inspire the native troops, nor found the needed respect of the Sepoys.[13] Even the British press and public recognized the failings of the Company's officers.

The East India Company recruited young individuals to fill vacancies within the regimental officer corps. These English officers had no prior military experience nor did these officers know the language, customs, or even the faces of the men under their command.[14] The majority of the officers were ignorant of the military drills, looked down upon the enlisted natives, and refused to associate with the native soldiers.[15] Consequently, British sergeants and native Indian officers commanded

the regiments. "The average regimental officer was 'a youngster who makes curry, drinks champagne and avoids the sun.' Leaving their Indian troops to the care of Indian officers and British sergeants, European officers became increasingly remote and disdainful …carried the moods of schoolboys into the work of men."[16] Failing to gain respect from the individual native soldier, regimental officers faltered in preventing mutiny and rebellion.

In 1838 the British Indian army invaded Afghanistan. This invasion resulted from British fears of Russian and Persian plots with Dost Mohamed, the Afghanistan Amir. Governor-General Lord Auckland decided to replace the Amir of Afghanistan. Kabul fell and the mission seemed accomplished, but the Afghanistan people did not want their Amir replaced. The British Indian army at Kabul, now found themselves besieged by the Afghanistan people and retreated back to India. India no longer viewed the British military as an invincible power. Britain lost the respect of the Indian people and especially the Sepoys.[17]

As respect and military discipline for the British dimmed after the Afghanistan affair, reform movements targeted the military. The British maintained military discipline by stern corporal punishments for even minor infractions of military protocol. Reformers viewed military justice as unusually cruel and thought the use of the lash as unnecessary in the Bengal army. The East India Company recruited high caste Bengal individuals for the Sepoy army and discouraged low caste members of society.

The eighteenth-century Bengal army took into its ranks what were available, and these tended to be the traditional military peasantries of North India which comprised dominant land-owning and land-controlling groups who combined with seasonal military employment. Membership in these societies was consolidated through the adoption (or invention in some cases) of ritual and practices intended to mark them out as exclusive and elevated above the rest of rural society. Such customs, in British eyes, subsequently came to define these recruits as being from the higher castes. British officers were convinced that the sense of honour they identified as pervading these groups made for a superior recruit, one who would be impelled to obey and perform well by his own sense of self-respect, and not by the draconian discipline believed necessary in regiments of European soldiers.[18]

Bengal military courts had never emphasized the "lash" for infractions of military duty. In 1835 Governor-General Lord William Bentinck outlawed corporal punishment in all the Sepoy armies. In 1845 Governor-General Lord Hardinge rescinded Bentinck's order and reestablished flogging.[19] Reinstatement of flogging insulted the Sepoy soldiers and especially the Bengals.

When a Sepoy enlisted, the East India Company granted him certain privileges. One of these privileges existed in the enlistment's geographical extent. Six Sepoy

regiments enlisted with the provision calling for foreign service, and the other regiments would serve in India only. The Barrackpur mutinies (1824 and 1852) resulted when Bengal regiments received orders to fight in Burma. According to one historian, if the British had used enlisted foreign service regiments, or the high command had called forth volunteers for the Burma expedition, the Sepoys would not have revolted.[20]

The kingdom of Oudh constituted the centerpiece for the 1857 Mutiny. On February 7, 1856 the East India Company annexed Oudh and over ninety percent of the Bengal army (and a large portion of the Bombay army), the Company recruited had come from Oudh villages. Sepoys employed by the Company enjoyed a unique privilege. Prior to annexation, Oudh Sepoys possessed the right of petition to the British Resident at the Court of Lucknow (Lakhnoa). Malleson writes that, "this right of petition was a privilege the value of which can be realised by those who have any knowledge of the working of courts of justice in a native state. The Resident of Lakhnao was, in the eyes of the native judge, the advocate of the petitioning Sepoys."[21] This produced prestige and benefits for the Sepoy. Villagers regarded this privilege highly and, consequently, almost every family had a representative to the court in the form of a Sepoy. Oudh's annexation deprived this immemorial privilege and destroyed the Sepoy's position of importance and influence in his own country. When the Mutiny broke-out in May 1857, Oudh's Sepoys displayed great hatred toward the British.[22]

Religion played a significant part in the Mutiny. The Indian people, whether Hindu or Muslim, viewed Christianity with suspicion and loathing. Indian people viewed missionary schools and orphanages as institutions that only benefitted the British by making Christian converts. British officers and/or their wives distributed bibles and religious tracts to Sepoys. The native people viewed reform of Sati and infanticide as methods to destroy indigenous beliefs. Hindus felt extreme bitterness and hatred about British attempts at caste dismantlement. Religion isolated the British from the native people, who viewed the English as hypocritical practitioners of Christianity. The Indian people and Sepoys especially targeted missionaries and proselytizing military officers during the Mutiny.[23] Indian religious retribution required an atonement with the lives of British men, women, and children.

Using religion, conspirators spread anti-British propaganda. This propaganda addressed both Hindu and Muslim. Azimullah printed seditious material against the British, but an Oudh *thakur* (the Maulaví of Faizábád, named Ahmad-ullah, or Ahmad Shah) promoted and fomented the most extensive network of propaganda. The Maulaví recruited many other learned men and priests to pass information across the countryside. Ahmad-ullah manufactured and disseminated rumors, both personally and through this network. One rumor claimed that the British intended to marry Crimean War army widows to Sepoy troops. The marriage of a Sepoy to a

white women would have destroyed the Sepoy's caste and force the Sepoy to accept Christianity. Another rumor circulated about money, currency made from leather and not paper or specie. Accepting this currency would have destroyed the Hindus' caste. The British inadvertently issued the best propaganda tool of Ahmad-ullah: the 1853 Pattern Enfield rifle and the new .577 Metford-Pritchitt cartridge. The cartridge produced the spark to inflame the Sepoys into mutiny.[24] Kaye explains that

there was one thing wanting to the conspirators-the means, the instrument-with which to kindle to action the great body of their countrymen…. [W]hen they heard of the new cartridge-a cartridge smeared with animal fat and which they were told was bitten, [they had] the weapon they wanted…. To tell a body of Hindus, already suspicious of their foreign master, that they would be required to bite a cartridge smeared with the fat of their sacred animal, and to tell Muhammadans that they would be required to bite a cartridge smeared with the fat of an animal whose flesh was forbidden to them, was tantamount to tell them that their foreign master intended to make them break with their religion…. In this lesser sense, then, and in this only, did the cartridges produce mutiny. They were the instruments used by conspirators; and those conspirators were successful in their use of the instruments only because …the minds of the Sipáhis and of certain sections of the population had been prepared to believe every act testifying to bad faith on the part of their foreign masters.[25]

The anti-British rumor/propaganda implementation epitomized the skill and daring of the rebellion's leaders.

The 1857 India Mutiny resulted from changing British attitudes. Initially, Britain maintained a conservative attitude towards India. Edmund Burke and Adam Smith argued for control over the East India Company's affairs in India. Pitt's India Act (1784) established reorganization and regulation of the East India Company's Indian administration, and placed the company under Parliament's responsibility. The thrust of Pitt's India Act rested in principles to preserve and promote India's practices, institutions and traditions.[26] George Bearce writes, "Burke understood that the right ordering of society depended on 'a limited state and a prescribed use of powers' and that the political order existed to free not to oppress men."[27] British attitudes toward India eroded from Burke's enlightened approach. When Parliament chose Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General of India (1786-93, 1805-28), Cornwallis implemented imperial policies instead of limited or conservative policies and introduced British principles and institutions. Whig governmental theory dominated Cornwallis's administrative aims to prevent corruption in India. Cornwallis lacked faith and trust in the Indian governmental institutions and Anglicized the Indian political administration. Administration changes produced the first reforms and led the way for further reforms.[28]

Imperial sentiments emerged during the era of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the Industrial Revolution. Evangelical Christian missionary zeal introduced controversial elements for both advocates and opponents of imperialism. Initially, Indian missionary work evoked opposition from both the imperialists and the anti-imperialists as detrimental to the welfare of India.[29] By the 1830s, imperial sentiments altered. New intellectual attitudes replaced conservative Burkean ones. Adam Smith expounded on the economic theory of *laissez-faire*, Jeremy Bentham's theories spawned the Utilitarian movement, and John Wesley inspired various British religious sects with missionary zeal. Consequently, from the 1830s to the 1857 Mutiny, humanitarian reformers and Christian missionaries flooded India and incensed the Indian people.[30]

The Mutiny and the aftermath produced British public opinion changes. Initial reports of the massacre of English women, children and soldiers galvanized the British public. Britain wanted revenge for the deaths of British white subjects. On July 18, 1857, *The Illustrated London News* wrote, "after the suppression of the revolt, and the punishment of the ringleaders …there must be no smouldering discontent left unnoticed and unsuspected…. [W]hat the Sword of Might has gained, the Sword of Right must preserve." But, the British public also questioned revenge as a method of policy from the rebellion's outbreak.

We owe the people of India much. We owe them peace, we owe them security, we owe them good government; and if we pay them these debts many blessings will follow. By these means we may be enabled to make amends for the arbitrariness of our rule by its justice and its beneficence. Let us not make the mistake of thinking that we owe them Christianity, and of endeavouring to force it upon them before they are ripe to receive it. Christianity was never yet successfully inculcated by the sword, and never will be. Soldiers and railroads are what are needed in India; and, if the savage outbreak of Meerut and Delhi prove of providing both, that Mutiny, distressing as it is, will have, in all probability, the great merit of being the last, and of preparing the way for the permanent pacification and real prosperity of India.[31]

Contemporary newspapers challenged the East India Company's administrative methods: "what shall be said of the fitness of the East India Company to rule, or of the efficacy of the Board of Control to keep the Company right when, from motives of economy, sheer apathy, carelessness, or ignorance, it manifests an inclination to go wrong?"[32] After the brutal suppression of the Mutiny, British opinion against the East India Company's administration policies produced direct Crown rule and administration. The Mutiny shattered Company rule over India and, ironically, the suppressed Mutiny achieved one of its goals. After the Mutiny, while

[s]tanding guard over Green [probably, Jamie Green, native cook of a Mutinied regiment, condemned for treason and spying] and Sarvur Khan as they awaited

execution, Forbes-Mitchell prevented his fellow Highlanders from procuring "pork from the bazaar to break their castes" and provided the condemned men with a last meal and a hookah. Out of gratitude, Green confessed to Forbes-Mitchell that he was no native Christian but Mohamed Ali Khan, the Rohilkhand nobleman who had accompanied Azimullah to London and Constantinople, where together they had "formed the resolution of attempting to over throw the Company's Government. "Thank God," Mohamed Ali said, "we have succeeded in doing that, for from the newspapers which you lent me, I see that the Company's rule has gone, and that their charter for robbery and confiscation will not be renewed." He and Sarvur Khan were hanged the next morning.[33]

From the eighteenth century, the East India Company set in motion the causes for the 1857 Mutiny. Religion played a central role in shaping Indian animosity. Reform measures, well intentioned, alienated both Sepoys and the populace. British defeat in the Afghanistan campaign, destroyed Sepoy confidence in British invincibility. Company annexation of Oudh produced loathing and hatred for English policies. Into this volatile brew, add two individuals-Azimullah and the Maulavi of Oudh-both masters of propaganda and the end result equals rebellion. The East India Company generated the seeds of the 1857 rebellion-as the Company exchanged its role as trader/merchant to imperial/trader/nation administrator, the Mutiny grew.

1. John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (New York, 1991), 273-330; G. B. Malleson, *The Indian Mutiny of 1857* (London, 1898), 2-7; and Julian S. Corbett, *England in the Seven Year's War*, vol. I, *1756-59* (Novato, 1992), 336-50.

2. Malleson, *The Indian Mutiny* (London, 1898), 7.

3. Ibid., 8; Sir John Kaye, *Kaye's and Malleson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8* (London, 1897-8), I: 149-50. Kaye presents evidence that the Sepoys in the Bengal army mutinied after their European counterparts. Both the English troops and the Sepoys mutinied over pay. The English revolted when promised pay failed to arrive-the Sepoys revolted over lower pay scale and denial of bonus.

4. Douglas M. Peers, "Sepoys, Soldiers and the Lash: Race, Caste and Army Discipline in India, 1820-50," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23 (May 1995): 213-4, points out that though British regular soldiers resembled the Victorian image as the scum of the earth, the East India Company regiments contained a higher class of individuals (craftsmen, artisans, and clerks) and enlisted as a means to better their position.

5. Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, 185-6. See also, Michael H. Fisher, review of "British and Indian Interactions before the British Raj in India, 1730s-1857," *Journal of British Studies* 36 (July 1997): 368; and Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny: India 1857* (New York, 1978), 40-58.

6. Peers, "Army Discipline in India," 213-33. Keay, *The Honourable Company*, 205, notes that the East India Company always had a serious alcohol abuse problem: "Fort Marlborough's quite astronomical liquor bills which in one month alone came to more than the value of all the pepper exported that year. 'The monstrous month' in question was July 1716 …during which the nineteen covenanted servants entitled to the Company's table appeared to have consumed '74 dozen and half of wine [mostly very expensive Claret], 24 dozen and a half of Burton Ale and Pale beer, 2 pipes (240 gal. !) and 42 gallon of Madeira wine, 6 flasks of Shiraz [Persian wine], 274 bottles of toddy, 3 Leaguers and 3 Quarters of Batavia arrack, and 164 gallons of Goa [toddy].' "

7. Dan M. Hockman, "The Sepoy Rebellion" (M.S. thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 1963), 63-71. "Thuggee was an organized system of murder and robbery directed by professionals who accomplished their tasks systematically and artistically.… Dakoiti was similar to thuggee in that it had a hereditary caste and religious rites.… Dakoits went in bands of thirty or forty.… [M]urder was merely incidental to the main purpose of robbery.… Sati was a

popular respected institution of divine self-sacrifice, but what made the crime such an abhorrence was that the wife was unwilling to sacrifice herself."

8. Tapti Roy, "Visions of the Rebels: A Study of 1857 in Bundelkhand," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, 1 (1993): 217-26.

9. Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered: The Cownpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857* (New York, 1996), 34-49.

10. Ibid., 64-6.

11. "The Mutiny in India," *The Illustrated London News*, July 4, 1857, 1.

12. Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, I, 158.

13. Malleson, *Indian Mutiny*, 8-9, 11-3, accuses the British army of "Horse Guards" mentality: officers cared more for tradition, appearance and style than actual useable knowledge of his Sepoy troops. See also, Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*, 48.

14. "Errors of Indian Policy," *The Illustrated London News*, Aug. 22, 1857, 1.

15. "The Debate on India," *The Illustrated London News*, Aug. 1, 1857,106.

16. Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 10-1.

17. Ibid., 16-21.

18. Peers, "Army Discipline in India," 217-8.

19. Ibid., 211-4. For a contrary view, endorsing the need for corporal punishments, see "Errors of Indian Policy," *The Illustrated London News*, Aug. 22, 1857, 1: "Another mistake, which has excited the disapproval of calm and humane men such as Colonel Hodgson, was the abolition, from misjudging philanthropy, of flogging in the native army, by which discipline has relaxed, and the European officer rendered powerless to inflict punishment…. [C]orporal punishment could not be abolished without the greatest detriment to the service."

20. Malleson, *Indian Mutiny*, 13-4; Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, 193-8.

21. Ibid., 15.

22. Ibid., 15-6; Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 60-2, 66, 110; Kaye, *Indian Mutiny*, 1:99, 106, 187n., 254; 3:233-5; 5:286, 288, 291.

23. Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, 1:182, 346-9, 352; Hibbert, *Great Mutiny*, 51-3, 60, 66; Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 90, 548-9.

24. Malleson, *Indian Mutiny*, 16-20; Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, 5:294, 4:378-9; Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*, 54-5, 61; Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 89.

25. Kaye, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, 5:292-3.

26. George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India, 1784-1758* (London, 1961), 11-4.

27. Ibid., 19.

28. Ibid., 34-51.

29. Ibid., 60-4.

30. Ibid., 65-101.

31. "The Mutiny in India," *The Illustrated London News*, July 4, 1857, 2.

32. "The Debate on India," *The Illustrated London News*, Aug. 1, 1857, 1.

33. Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, 537.

# The Spanish-American War: The Cuban Perspective

*Gregory Aydt*

History graduate student Greg Aydt wrote this article, winner of the Hamand History Graduate Writing Award, for Dr. Beck's seminar on Imperialism. Like the previous article, it attempts an alternative perspective to an often-viewed historical problem. Greg presented a paper at the Southern Illinois Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference and is writing a thesis on Montana lynchings.

The traditional view of the Spanish-American War begins with the infamous explosion of the U.S. battleship Maine, and proceeds through convincing American army and navy victories. This narrative however, lacks one crucial item: the views of the Cuban people themselves. Even the very name assigned to the war itself seems to ignore this major participant, who was involved from the very beginning. The fight against Spain which the United States joined in 1898 already had been carried on by the Cuban people for several years. Traditionally, historians have viewed the entrance of the United States into the Cuban Revolution as a prerequisite for the defeat of Spain on the island. From the Cuban perspective, this interpretation is open to debate, as is the American motivation for entering the conflict.

Cuba's Second War for Independence began late in February of 1895. A previous attempt to overthrow the Spanish rulers of Cuba had been defeated in 1878, but the intervening years had not seen much improvement in the status of the Cuban people. While the use of the terms Cuban and Spanish may imply that the two sides were of different ethnic backgrounds, this is not necessarily the case. The Indian population of the island had essentially been eliminated when colonization first occurred, and no foreign immigration was allowed. Consequently, about four out of every five Cubans were actually Spaniards, or of second, third or fourth generation Spanish descent. The remainder, about one out of every five Cubans, were Creole mulattos and descendants of former slaves from Africa. This meant that, for the most part, the Cuban Revolution was actually a civil war between republicans from Cuba and monarchists from Spain.[1]

A Cuban patriot named José Martí organized the revolution from his base of operations in the United States. For years, Martí had been working among the Cuban emigrés, both in the United States and in nations throughout Latin America, attempting to plan a revolt against the Spanish government in Cuba. The revolutionary heartland was Florida, where there were sixty-one clubs devoted to Cuban independence. These clubs, known as *juntas*, asked their members to donate one tenth of their earnings to the independence movement. Many members also joined the newly formed Cuban Revolutionary Party during 1892. This party served as the political movement behind the revolution. While the *juntas* were most numerous in Florida, there was also an important independence group in New York. They contributed, not monetarily, but by obtaining the support of two key groups: the labor unions and the newspapers.[2]

By 1894, Martí decided to launch the revolution. One of the primary reasons for his decision to launch the attack at this time was his fear that a growing imperialist movement in the United States might

prompt annexation before independence. Martí had good reason to believe this, as U.S. Secretary of State James G. Blaine was a proponent of expansion. In fact, as early as 1881 Blaine had written, "[i]f ever ceasing to be Spanish, Cuba must necessarily become American and not fall under any other European domination." Martí also observed the attempt by the United States to annex Hawaii in 1893. Though the attempt did not succeed, it caused him to believe that Cuba might be the next target of American expansion. As Blaine wrote in 1881, "Hawaii ...holds in the western sea much the same position as Cuba in the Atlantic. It is the key to the maritime dominion of the Pacific States as Cuba is the key to the Gulf trade."[3]

The similarities between Cuba and Hawaii were more than geographic. Hawaii's economy subsisted on a single crop; ninety-nine percent of the island's exports in 1890 consisted of sugar bound for the United States. When the United States began giving American growers a bounty of two cents per pound, Hawaiian sugar cane growers were devastated. Obviously, owners of sugar cane plantations would find annexation to be beneficial for their pocketbooks. Cuba's situation was almost identical. For this reason, Martí knew that if the United States attempted to bring Cuba into the Union, some wealthy Cubans would support the move. In spite of their small numbers, these people presented a formidable threat to Martí because of their economic power.[4]

A more immediate threat than the economic pressure caused even greater concern. Some Cubans advocated asking the United States to help a potential revolution by sending American troops to support the rebels in the field. From Martí's point of view, however, this was the last thing a Cuban revolution needed. He bitterly opposed seeking any military intervention by United States troops. Martí told why he opposed this in a letter to his friend and fellow patriot Gonzalo de Quesada. He wrote, "I don't want the principle established of putting our fortunes into a body where, because of its influence as a major country, the United States is to exercise the principal part." He expressed his fears less diplomatically, but perhaps more succinctly, when he wrote "[o]nce the United States is in Cuba, who will get her out? "[5]

In 1894, the United States levied a 40 percent tariff on imported sugar.[6] This led to an economic depression in Cuba, causing Cuban sugar producers to begin looking for a way to retain the United States as a possible outlet for excess sugar production. Martí knew that talk of annexation would soon be occurring, both in Havana and Washington. He had already decided that if Cuba was going to experience "the reality of independence," then she must win that independence of her own accord and retain her sovereignty throughout the revolution.[7] With the threat of annexation in mind, Martí stated just before the revolution began, "Cuba must be free from Spain and the United States." After the revolt had begun, he described his reason for launching the attack so quickly. "The Cuban war has broken out in America in time to prevent ...the annexation of Cuba to the United States." José Martí's words drive home the point that he was concerned about both Spanish and American imperialism.[8]

Martí recruited other military leaders to command the revolutionary forces in battle. He chose Máximo Gómez to act as the Commander-in-Chief of his army, and he also obtained the services of Antonio Maceo to lead a portion of the Cuban revolutionaries. Both of these men had been heroes of the earlier war against the Spanish in Cuba, so they would provide the insurrection with instant legitimacy for most of the Cuban people. Gómez personified the spirit of the revolution in the eyes of Cubans, and his dream was to become the George Washington of a newly liberated Cuban nation. General Maceo also served as an inspiration to many Cubans. As a mulatto, his participation in the rebellion convinced the mulattos

and former slaves living in Cuba that they too would benefit from the revolution's success.[9]

While these men led the military battle in Cuba, another important battle raged in the United States. This fight was based in New York, where the local *junta* was filled with several powerful Cuban emigrés. The leader of this organization of unnaturalized Cubans and their supporters was Tomás Estrada Palma, a former schoolteacher now trying to free Cuba using his connections in New York. The goal of the *junta* was to spread news from the revolution among New York's influential newspaper reporters. Another key player in the United States was Martí's close friend and associate Gonzalo de Quesada. De Quesada, although he referred to himself as the Cuban Revolutionary *Chargé d'Affairés*, did not actually hold an official diplomatic post. Nonetheless, this did not prevent him from lobbying for the Cuban cause in Washington. Unlike Martí, the New York *junta* and de Quesada wanted United States intervention to quickly win the revolution for Cuba.[10]

On May 19, 1895, the Spanish killed José Martí in battle. Not only had the Cuban Revolution lost the man who had painstakingly planned and organized the insurrection, but they had also lost the strongest voice against American intervention. To the very end, Martí warned his fellow revolutionaries to guard against possible United States' intervention. The day before he was killed, Martí began a letter to one of his many friends. The letter, though never finished, again expressed Martí's apprehensions about the course of the revolution. "It is my duty," he wrote, "to prevent, by the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading over the West Indies and falling, with that added weight, upon other lands of our America." Certainly, Martí was aware of a danger that others either did not see, or chose to ignore; however, even Martí was not optimistic about his chances of accomplishing his goal. He concluded his statement by noting "I have lived inside the monster and know its insides-and my weapon is only the slingshot of David."[11]

Traditionally, U.S. historians have viewed American intervention in Cuba in 1898 as saving the Cuban revolution from impending defeat. A close examination casts considerable doubt on this perspective. In February 1898, the Spanish general Ramón Blanco ordered a large army into battle against General Gómez, intending to destroy Gómez's troops. The attack failed dismally. By March 1, Gómez reported that "[t]he enemy is crushed and in complete retreat from here, and the time which favored their operation passes without their doing anything." These are definitely not the words of a Commander-in-Chief whose army is on the verge of collapse. In fact, by 1898 it was Spain, not the Cuban revolutionaries, who was on the ropes. While the Spanish generally controlled the populated areas of the island, their armies could not defeat the Cuban rebels in battle.[12]

Not only did the Cubans think they were winning the revolution, so did the American government. Also on March 1, 1898, the U.S. State Department described the status of the military situation on the island for the American Minister to Spain. The State Department noted that "the Spanish armies have not achieved any success over the Cubans in more than two months." The note also pointed out that General Blanco had "failed absolutely" in his attack on Gómez. Furthermore, it stated that "the Cubans continue to dominate the Eastern half of the island, and its columns are operating in the Western provinces without the Spaniards being able to stop them." Finally, it expressed the Department's view of Spain's desperate attempt to pacify the Cubans by offering them autonomy. This it called "an utter and complete failure." The report summed up the status of Cuba by commenting that "the social and economic situation of the country is worse than ever, and the national rehabilitation work appears more than the forces of the autonomous regime can cope with." If the United States government really thought the

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revolution was in danger of failure, they hid it well.

The revolution's military leaders did not feel that their armies needed direct assistance from the United States either. Martí may have been dead, but his policy was continued by Generals Maceo and Gómez. Maceo wanted the United States to recognize the belligerency of the Cuban Republic in a Congressional declaration. By doing this, the U.S. could then provide military equipment to the poorly supplied Cuban rebels. Maceo also knew the declaration would give the revolution a greater sense of moral legitimacy. His opinion on direct military intervention was clear, however. The *New York World* quoted Maceo saying "I should not want our neighbors to have to shed their blood for our cause. We can do that for ourselves." In a letter to the New York *junta's* leader, Maceo left no doubt what he wanted, as well as what he did not want, from the United States: "Do you really want to cut the war down? Bring Cuba 25,000 to 35,000 rifles and a million bullets.… We Cubans do not need any other help."[14]

Further, in yet another letter, Maceo proudly announced, "Cuba is winning its independence by the arms and hearts of its sons. She will be free in a short time without needing any other help." He also feared the end result of U.S. assistance. "Neither do I expect anything from the Americans. We must all depend on our own efforts. It is better to rise or fall without help than to contract debts of gratitude to a neighbor so powerful." In his final note on the topic, Maceo held his ground while acknowledging that many Cubans did not share his opinion: "Nor is American intervention so advantageous to the future of Cuba as most of our compatriots think."[15]

General Gómez was even harsher in his critique of those Cubans who wanted the United States to step in militarily. Those Cubans who disregarded "the North American Republic's absorbing aspirations," in Gómez's opinion, were "morally" on the side of the Spanish. In his mind, to be for U.S. intervention meant to be against the success of the revolution. According to Gómez, "Cuba must not be beholden for its independence in any way, to foreign good graces."[16] American newspaper writer Ambrose Bierce summarised Gómez's opinion in an apocryphal conversation he published on October 3, 1898. Responding to an American general, Bierce imagines Gómez saying, "[i]n other words, Cuba is to have no army of her own, but is to rely altogether upon you. You offer us the independence of a dependency."[17]

The question of whether or not American intervention was necessary for Cuban independence has been debated, even within Cuba, since the Spanish-American War. Initially, most Cuban historians agreed with the consensus of American historians in the belief that American military intervention was indeed critical to the defeat of Spain and the success of the revolution. Gradually, however, Cuban historians began to change their views. By the time the Ninth Historical Congress of Cuba met in 1950, they could unequivocally declare that "Cuba does not owe its independence to the United States of North America, but to the efforts of its own people." The statement proceeds to say that Cuba "brought about even before the intervention of the United States in the Cuban-Spanish conflict the complete exhaustion of Spain's 'last man and last peseta'." Although individual historians retained the traditional view, most determined that American assistance had been unnecessary and unwarranted.[18]

In 1966, several Cuban historians expressed their opinions on the Cuban revolution and American intervention. They admitted their findings were only preliminary and more research needed to be done in Spanish and Cuban archives, but they generally agreed that while the U.S. invasion of Cuba caused the war to end more quickly than it would have otherwise, the end result was not really in doubt by early in 1898. The Spanish were going to be defeated; only the length of the war remained to be determined. As

historian Sergio Aguirre of the University of Havana wrote, "[t]here is no doubt that the United States hastened the final decision, introducing into the struggle the 'knockout' punch. But victory for the Cubans would have come in the end." Aguirre based his opinions on the fact that the Spanish had no comparable response to the invasion of Western Cuba by the revolutionary armies. As he said, "[w]hy presume that this counter-strike would have been able to appear in 1898 or after?"[19]

A more recent historian of Cuban history went one step further. Louis Pérez argued that the United States intervened in Cuba not because they wanted to help the Cubans defeat the Spanish, but because they saw their opportunity to obtain Cuba slipping away in a successful revolution. The U.S. government was well aware that Spain was about to lose Cuba. In 1898 William R. Day, the American Assistant Secretary of State, wrote a confidential memorandum stating that "it is now evident that Spain's struggle in Cuba has become absolutely hopeless." In Pérez's opinion, the U.S. intervened because "[t]he success of Cuban arms ...challenged, too, pretensions of colonial replacement." In other words, the United States could not allow Cuba to become an independent nation, because this would take away the possibility of relatively easy annexation. The United States had tried to annex Hawaii and failed. They wanted a better pretense to annex Cuba. Saving Cubans from the Spanish was an opportunity to assert control in Cuba, but this opportunity was about to disappear in a Spanish defeat.[20]

The force of this argument is supported by President William McKinley's war message to Congress in April 1898. While McKinley requested the authority to intervene militarily in Cuba, he did not state that the U.S. was acting in defense of Cuban independence. In fact, the concept of independence for Cuba was not mentioned at all. The U.S. was entering Cuba to implement a "forcible intervention …as a neutral to stop the war." This would entail "hostile constraint upon both the parties to the contest." Far from aiding the Cubans, the Americans were simply going to prevent either side from winning. Furthermore, the United States intended "to secure in the island the establishment of a stable government, capable of maintaining order and observing its international obligations." The President's message, however, made no mention of whether this government would be an independent Cuban government, or whether it would be under U.S. control. Congress would eventually force McKinley to accept the Teller Amendment, renouncing permanent control of the island, but Cuban independence was still not recognized as part of the compromise.[21]

While the typical American historian interprets the sinking of the U.S. battleship Maine as an accidental factor which caused a great public outcry in the U.S., and ultimately the war with Spain, Pérez has a different interpretation. He believes that the United States government seized on the opportunity which the sinking of the Maine provided them. The Maine accident was used "as a contrived pretext for war rather than a chance precipitant." The public outcry "was not so much a spontaneous response to the destruction of the Maine as it was the result of deliberate and cynical manipulation by pro-war elements, principally the yellow press and expansionist politicians, who seized the occasion to advance larger policy goals." Rather than being swept along against their will with the rising tide of public opinion in favor of war, the President and Congress are seen as taking advantage of the accident to obtain what they already desired: war with Spain for control of Cuba.[22]

There are Cuban historians who believe the American intervention was both necessary and beneficial for Cuba. In 1972, Guillermo de Zéndegui wrote an article in which he praised the United States for entering the Spanish-American War. He admitted that the Cuban patriots and the United States politicians occasionally did not see eye-to-eye on various matters, but he stated that "[t]he foreseeable risks in help from a nascent expansionist power, which at times appeared as serious as they were certain, were worth

facing." This was because the U.S. was "the only nation in the Hemisphere at that time capable of standing up to Spain with force and, if it came to it, imposing a solution satisfactory to the Cuban cause." He was also quite supportive of the Congressional Joint Resolution of April 13, 1898, which amounted to a declaration of war against Spain. He referred to it as "without doubt one of the grandest, most noble, and spontaneous acts in the history of inter-American relations." Similarly, he calls this entire period of American intervention in Cuba "an exemplary chapter" in U.S. history.[23]

He argued that Cuban patriots responded enthusiastically to the announcement that the U.S. was going to intervene in Cuba. As an example, he provided the story of the Spanish General Blanco's attempt to convince General Gómez to enter negotiations before the Americans actually entered Cuba. Blanco warned Gómez that the Yankees were ambitious foreigners anxious to annex the Cuban island. Gómez turned down the offer, informing the Spanish general that, "until now I have had only feelings of admiration for the United States. I have written to President McKinley and to General Miles thanking them for the American intervention in Cuba. I do not see the danger of our being exterminated by the United States, to which you refer in your letter. If that should happen, history will judge them." De Zendegui considered this to be "irrefutable proof of the true feelings of the patriots at that time." Whether Gómez was speaking honestly, or just diplomatically, is difficult to judge. Based on Gómez's previous statements, it appears that he was simply unwilling to admit his true feelings about U.S. intervention in a diplomatic note to his bitter enemy. Nonetheless, De Zéndegui is an example of a Cuban historian who favored U.S. intervention.[24]

The debate over the purposes and goals of U.S. intervention in Cuba provides an interesting example of the way in which different perspectives can lead to completely different interpretations of the same event. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle. By learning the Cuban viewpoint of the Spanish-American War, however, I believe the overall picture of what really happened is made clearer. Cubans and Americans should both benefit from the continuing exchange of ideas and dialogue between historians from these two viewpoints.

1. Guillermo de Zéndegui, "The Welcome Intervention," *Americas* 24 (June-July 1972): 3.

2. David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (Lincoln, 1996), 2.

3. Philip S. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War: the Birth of American Imperialism, 1895-1902* (New York, 1972), xxviii-xxix.

4. Ibid., xxix-xxx.

5. Ibid., xxx.

6. Trask, *War with Spain*, 1.

7. Foner, *Spanish-Cuban-American War*, xxx.

8. Ibid., xxxiv.

9. John Tebbel, *America's Great Patriotic War with Spain: Mixed Motives, Lies and Racism in Cuba and the Philippines, 1898-1915* (Manchester Center, VT, 1996), 7.

10. Ibid., 6-7.

11. Foner, *Spanish-Cuban-American War*, 13.

12. Ibid., 136-7.

13. Ibid., 136.

14. Ibid., 144-5.

15. Ibid., 145-6.

16. Ibid.,147.

17. Ambrose Bierce, *Skepticism and Dissent: Selected Journalism, 1898-1901*, ed. Lawrence I. Berkove (Ann Arbor, 1986), 113.

18. Foner, *Spanish-Cuban-American War*, 140-1.

19. Ibid., 141-2.

20. Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1995), 176-7.

21. Ibid., 177-8.

22. Louis A. Pérez, Jr., "The Meaning of the Maine: Causation and the Historiography of the Spanish-American War," *Pacific Historical Review* 58 (1989): 311.

23. De Zéndegui, "Welcome Intervention," 5-10.

24. Ibid., 8.

# Choosing a Site for the Eastern Illinois State Normal School:

## A Study of Nineteenth-Century Community Planning and Public Health

*Beth Loecke*

*Beth is this year's Distinguished Graduate Student in in Historical Administration at Eastern Illinois. She wrote this article first for Dr. Nora Pat Small's History of American Architecture. Beth's research also uncovered in the University Archives the original copy of the 1895 Charleston newspaper which we have selected for this volume's cover.*

Why was Charleston, a small county seat fighting even to keep its courthouse from moving to another town, chosen as the site for a new State Normal School in 1895? Why was the school located south of the town, when the most convenient means of transport, the railroad, was located to the north? The answers, surprisingly, lie in health scares in Chicago as well as the Columbian World Exposition of 1893.

By the mid-nineteenth century, there was an "instinct for improvement" among community leaders and citizens. People were tired of the ugly, chaotic conditions that existed in cities. It was a commonly held belief that the urban environment was an unnatural and unhealthy place for humans. These ideas transformed into a movement to elevate the urban population by creating more beautiful and natural surroundings. Nature had the power to instill the ideals of America's democratic rural past in the common man. The rural cemetery movement of the 1830s had been translated into a movement for public parks. Public parks were considered necessary to protect public health, provide for recreation, and foster moral improvement and republican virtue, which was disappearing as people lost their connection to the land. City leaders were quick to adopt the vocabulary of sanitary reform in promoting the creation of public parks and squares within the cities.[1]

By the end of the Civil War, the public generally understood that disease was preventable. However, it was hard to motivate the public except when epidemics created crises. Then people were willing to implement measures aimed at controlling diseases. Medical theory at this time blamed filth in the form of noxious odors or miasmas caused by decomposing garbage and waste for epidemics. Therefore, reformers believed that cleanliness could solve many of the nation's

health problems. Epidemics usually initiated massive cleanup campaigns. The New York Metropolitan Board of Health's success in combating the 1866 cholera epidemic prompted other cities to establish municipal boards of health. It also prompted a realization by people that their own health and comfort depended in part on their neighbor's and illustrated the need for more water to secure cleanliness. But, the increased usage of water created drainage and disposal problems since most cities did not have a network of drains and sewers.[2]

Chicago in the 1850s had a reputation for being unhealthy. It was no wonder because the city had no sewer system. Garbage and refuse was thrown into the Chicago River or alleys. Drinking water came from shallow wells or the lakeshore. Since the city had been built on the lake plain, it always had a drainage problem. Chicago's problems and the attempts to fix them mirrored what was occurring nationally.

The 1854 cholera epidemic was especially deadly. As a result, in 1855, the city council established a Sewerage Commission, which brought in Ellis Sylvester Chesbrough, the designer of Boston's water system, to design the first comprehensive sewage system in the country. The system had to be built in the middle of the street because the water table was so close to the surface. The sewers were allowed to drain by gravity into the river. The new system created a drier and somewhat healthier Chicago, but the river and the city's drinking water became more polluted. So in 1864, Chesbrough headed the construction of an intake tunnel in the lake out of the way of mounting river pollution. However, the tunnel never worked right. Freshets and spring floods periodically drove sewage into the water system.[3]

Dr. John H. Rauch and other city health officials proposed the creation of anti-dumping laws with strict enforcement. However, city leaders were afraid that this would drive business out of the city. Instead, they chose to adopt Chesbrough's plan to reverse the river and send the sewage through a canal to the Illinois and Mississippi rivers where the water would dilute and deodorize it. The project was completed in July of 1871 and Chicago's waste became the problem of the smaller communities surrounding her. But, shortly after the project was completed, John Wentworth and William Ogden dug a ditch from the Des Plaines River to the Chicago River to drain some land that they owned. This caused sediment to wash into the canal. A year later, the current slowed and stopped.[4]

Then in the summer of 1879, the Des Plaines River flooded and forced the Chicago River back into the lake beyond the intake pipes. Chicago's citizens were forced to boil their drinking water. The problem occurred again in 1885 and set off outbreaks of typhoid, cholera and dysentery. Out of necessity, the state legislature created the Sanitary District of Chicago and gave it the power to tax and issue bonds to

construct a new canal that ran parallel to the old one. The Chicago River was also deepened and widened. The new Ship and Sanitary Canal again reversed the river. However, this time it drew more water from the lake and had a stronger current. The water purified itself through oxidation and dilution by the time it reached Joliet.[(5)]

The shift from the filth theory of disease to germ theory began in the 1880s as French and German scientists began to demonstrate that germs were the real cause of disease. However, it was the turn-of-the-century before germ theory really began to take hold and campaign for personal hygiene began to appear. Charles V. Chapin, the health commissioner of Providence, Rhode Island, was one of the first people to acknowledge that contagious disease,

[s]pread more among filthy people just because such persons use very little soap and water and allow their faces, hands, belongings and dwellings to become and remain smeared with mucus, saliva, pus and other infectious material.[(6)]

A pure and ample water supply and personal hygiene were essential to preventing the spread of germs.

While the metropolises worked to clean themselves up, small towns and cities tried to grow. During the nineteenth century, it was a widely held belief that with enough capital, political manipulation, and human spirit any town could become a great metropolis. Towns promoted themselves relentlessly in the hopes that they would turn into a bustling center of commerce. If a town was lucky, its promoters might acquire the county seat, a hospital, college or some other public institution, or the railroad might come through. Any of these could ensure the survival of the town and increase its growth. As a result, fierce battles raged between towns for these institutions. Lobbying, pork-barreling, and local donations of land all helped to encourage the government or organizations to bestow these prizes on a town.[(7)]

The booster ethos that prevailed during the nineteenth century equated social unity with progress. The collective will or public spirit of the community as much as its geographic location and natural resources decided its fate. Factionalism or jealousy led to failure and ruined a town's chances for success. No one worked harder at town promotion than the editors of local papers. Newspapers were constantly expounding on the virtues of their town and praising the efforts of its citizens. They also pointed out the town's failure to promote itself. More importantly, the local papers worked to discredit their rivals and never failed to comment on their failures and misfortunes.

In 1894, Charleston experienced a surge of this booster ethos. *The Charleston Plaindealer* published a twenty-four-page souvenir edition on December 21, 1894, which detailed the advantages of the town and highlighted some of its more

prominent businesses and citizens. Among the advantages listed were: location, climate, schools, churches, businesses, transportation facilities, modern houses, electric lights, water-works, and a fire department. The editors then went on to describe the accomplishments of the past year and concluded,

[s]ocially, religiously, municipally and commercially considered, the advancement has been steady and universal. Each of these branches of the municipal system are pushing vigorously and energetically forward.[8]

Charleston was a city on the move.

At the 1893-94 annual meeting of the State Teachers' Association in Springfield the need for more normal institutes in the state was discussed and a committee was appointed to see that the issue was brought before the state legislature. During the winter of 1894, bills for that purpose were introduced in the General Assembly. Coles County Superintendent of Schools, John L. Whisnand, actively worked to secure a school for eastern Illinois. In February 1895, Senator Isaac Craig of Mattoon and Representative W.H. Wallace of Humboldt introduced bills for the establishment of an Eastern Illinois State Normal School.[9]

At the time, Mattoon was generally considered the favorite. She was at the crossroads of the Illinois Central and Big Four railroads, which connected her to most of Illinois. As a result, the town's population had increased more rapidly than Charleston's. By 1890, it had a population of 7,000 compared to Charleston's 4,135.[10] Plus a politician from Mattoon had introduced the bill for the normal school. The increasing size of Mattoon and the chance at the normal school may have spurred some members of the town into action. As the county seat, Charleston wanted to appear progressive. Especially since plans for a new courthouse were being discussed and Mattoon hoped to have the county seat moved. Charleston did not want to loose the county seat.

Shortly after the bill was introduced in the legislature, the *Charleston Scimitar* in proper booster form suggested that Charleston would be missing an excellent opportunity if she did not enter the contest for the normal school. (It is likely that the other city papers were also promoting this course of action during the winter of 1894-95.) It wasn't, however, until April 19, 1895, that the citizens of Charleston made any move on the issue. At that time, a public meeting was held and a committee was appointed to go to Springfield and investigate the town's chances.

On May 22, 1895, Governor Altgeld signed Senate Bill No. 148, which allowed for the appointment of a board of trustees and the creation of an Eastern Illinois State Normal School. Under the provisions of the law, the donation of a site and "other valuable considerations" was required. The bill stipulated that the site should be "not less than forty acres of ground ...with a view of obtaining a good water supply

and other conveniences for the use of the institution." It also stated that the building be "made fire-resisting, and so constructed as to be warmed in the most healthful and economical manner, with ample ventilation in all its parts."[11] Both of these statements reflect concerns that had developed in the nineteenth century in regards to public health and sanitation.

Obviously, the state legislature had learned from Chicago's problems with the public water supply. Otherwise, water would not have been a primary concern in the selection of a site for the normal school. The citizens of Charleston were well aware of the importance of an ample and pure water supply to the board of trustees. Several Charleston papers from the period make reference to Sec. 10 of the law, which required good, pure water. In fact, they emphasized the water supply when promoting Charleston. The board was given a demonstration of the power and effectiveness of the city's waterworks when it came to inspect potential sites for the school. Four streams of water were thrown from the corners of the square over the courthouse dome.[12]

The trustees came back for a second visit in July 1895. At that time, the normal school committee presented Charleston's offer. The offer stated that as long as the school was located within two miles of the courthouse, the citizens promised to donate forty acres of land to be selected from any of the sites shown to the board; donate from $35,000 to $45,000 depending on the value of the site selected; extend water mains to the site and supply the school with water for fifty years at five dollars a year; build a paved or gravel street from the courthouse to the school and provide sidewalks; provide free freight for construction materials; furnish incandescent electric lights to the school for twenty five years at the rate of ten cents per thousand watts and at half the regular rate for arch lights; and provide the school with various grades of coal for heating at fixed rates until July 1, 1901.[13] The selection of the location for the normal school seemed to hinge on the water question. The trustees took water samples from the different towns in the running for the normal school. Charleston had the best and the purest water according to the chemist that conducted the test.[14] The water supply probably helped put Charleston over the top because she offered $70,000 less than Danville and $40,000 less than Mattoon.[15]

Testimonials that appeared in the local papers after Charleston's victory support the importance of the water supply and a healthful site. As the *Urbana Courier* stated,

[a]n analysis of the water from the competing towns showed Charleston's to be the purest, and this, coupled with her unexcelled natural drainage, was undoubtedly the goose that laid the golden egg.[16]

The *Announcement of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School* (1899-1900) also supports this analysis. It reiterates the importance that the board of trustees placed

on considerations of water and drainage in choosing a location for the school. It also states that impure water and imperfect drainage are prime factors of diseases, so provisions must be made to meet these needs especially when large numbers of people will be present.[17] The lessons of nineteenth-century Chicago were not lost on the legislature and the board of trustees.

As medical science demonstrated, disease was spread through germs and plenty of water for washing was needed to combat them. As a result, the board wanted not only a pure supply, but also an ample one. Charleston had both. The report went on to extol the city's water works and the fact that it had always provided a sufficient water supply even during dry seasons. Mattoon could not make the same claim. During 1895, the city's reservoir failed to maintain a sufficient supply of water. In fact, at the time of the trustees' visit to collect water samples, there was a drought and Charleston was furnishing part of Mattoon's water. The citizens of Charleston also helped their case by using water liberally to demonstrate the abundance of their water supply.[18]

The city of Charleston gave the board of trustees ten sites to choose from for the location of the school. The trustees examined the different sites when they visited Charleston in June of 1895. The sites were not equal in the eyes of the citizens of Charleston. If two of the sites were selected, the donation from the community would be $37,000 rather than $40,000. If two other sites were selected, the payment would only be $35,000.[19] Unfortunately, Coleman's book does not contain the map of the sites that went with the city's proposal and the original document has not been found, so it was impossible to determine exactly which sites these were. It is possible however, to reconstruct the ten sites and make some deductions as to why the present site was chosen.

Three of the sites were north of town. J.K. Decker owned two of these sites. One of them had a spring on it. A stream ran through the area and it was wooded. The third site was the Craig forty, which was a mile north of town. These three pieces of property were north and west of the Big Four and Clover Leaf Railroad tracks. According to the 1894 *Charleston Plaindealer*, this was the industrial section of Charleston. While the three sites may have been picturesque, they would have been subject to the noise, soot, and grime from the railroad and other industry. More importantly, placing the normal school north of town would not necessarily have brought the students into Charleston. The school was expected to bring several hundred students and visitors to Charleston. The businessmen of Charleston wanted these people to go through the business district and spend money. This was more likely to happen if the school was located south of the railroad.

The county fairground offered a nice setting with many large trees. It is unlikely, however, that the citizens of Charleston wanted to give up the fairground unless it

was absolutely necessary. From the 1893 plat map, it also appears that the fairground was not 40 acres, which was one of the stipulations from the legislature.

Three more of the sites were on the eastern edge of Charleston. One of these was Trower Park at the end of Jackson Street. However, in examining the 1893 plat map, it also does not appear to be forty acres. The other two sites were the Dunbar forty and the Reat place across the road. These sites met the requirements stipulated in the enabling legislation. They would bring students and visitors through the business district of Charleston. However, there is nothing extraordinary about them.

The three remaining sites were all on the southern edge of town. They were the Wiley tract, the C.E. Bishop site and a piece of land belonging to Mr. Bishop and Monroe White at the foot of Tenth Street. A location at the southern edge of town removed the school from the dirt, grime, and heavy industry of Charleston, especially because the prevailing winds tend to come from the south and east. It also brought students and visitors through the business district and past the homes of the leading citizens of Charleston. This was important to the business and community leaders of Charleston as they wanted to be seen as a progressive and growing town. *The Plaindealer* made a point of describing Charleston as "[a] city of modern houses, exerting the best social and religious influences." It also mentioned the remodeling that had taken place in the business blocks of the city. The new buildings conformed to the styles of the day with plate glass front windows and a substantial appearance.[20] The business leaders also hoped to attract the business of the students and visitors passing through Charleston.

The C.E. Bishop site was the one eventually chosen by the Board of Trustees. It sat at the base of Sixth Street. It was a wooded area with a pond and was used by the town for picnicking. Interestingly enough, the *Charleston Scimitar* had suggested that this hill south of town would be an excellent site for the normal school in May of 1894.[21] Governor Altgeld described the virtues of the site in his speech at the laying of the cornerstone.

Neither geographical location nor other accidental circumstances has caused the concentration of great corporate wealth in our midst or promoted the building of mighty cities. On the other hand you have escaped the intensified form of vice, misery and disintegration of society that are peculiar to centers of population. Dollars may grow in cities but men grow nearer to nature.... The nearer we get to nature the higher we rise in the conception of the world. Here is the place to found schools and academies.[22]

The picturesque surroundings fit in well with the idea that nature was a place for contemplation and thought. Nature also uplifted the spirit and improved the moral character of the individual. It stood in direct opposition to the inherent vice of cities.

All of these characteristics were necessities for an institution of learning.

This particular location also allowed the community leaders to apply the tenets of the "White City," whether it was done consciously or unconsciously on a much smaller scale. The location of the normal school and the courthouse created the perfect vistas, especially since a new courthouse was going to be constructed. Each was to be constructed on a small hill. Running bewtween the square and the normal school site are Sixth and Seventh Street, which at this time were lined with the homes of many of the leading citizens of Charleston. The lots were large and the homes were a mix of late nineteenth century styles. All of the homes had barns and other outbuildings behind them. Large trees graced the area. While not lining the edge of the street as Olmsted and others proposed, they did shade the area and give it the aura of a parkway.

This central axis through Charleston resembles the central axis that Burnham and Root created at the World's Fair. The courthouse and the normal school replace the Administration building and the Peristyles. Sixth and Seventh Streets with their grand homes take the place of the buildings along the Court of Honor. The picturesque surroundings of the normal school and the homes also hint at the landscaping of the fairgrounds. The link between the civic and the cultural exemplified the order and harmony that the "White City" strove to create in an industrialized society. It was repeated in many city plans during this time, including Burnham's Plan for Chicago.

City plans that came out of the World's Fair also placed monumental structures at the entrances to the city. The location of the courthouse and the normal school serve that function in Charleston. The normal school building would have been an imposing sight for anyone entering Charleston on the road from Mattoon. The courthouse would create an equally imposing site to visitors that arrived by train and were brought by cab into town. While not Neoclassical, the Gothic style with Romanesque elements of the normal school building and the Romanesque style of the courthouse gave the vistas an overall sense of order and harmony.

The normal school arrived in Charleston as the result of the boosterism of its community leaders and of the public health concerns of the state legislature and the board of trustees. The site chosen by the board of trustees exemplified the picturesque qualities of nature that provide for contemplation and virtuous edification of the spirit. It also provided Charleston with a central axis that linked the school to the business center of town. Like many other projects throughout the nation, the changes in Charleston espoused the ideals set forth at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and demonstrated the progressive nature of the community.

1. M. Christin Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 3, 34.

2. Suellen Hoy, *Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness* (New York, 1995), 60, 64.

3. Donald L. Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York, 1996), 124-9.

4. Ibid., 130-1.

5. Ibid., 424.

6. Suellen Hoy, *Chasing Dirt*, 107.

7. Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana, 1978), 18.

8. *Charleston (IL) Plaindealer,* souvenir ed., Dec. 21, 1894, 6.

9. *Charleston (IL) Courier*, May 28, 1896.

10. These figures are from the 1890 Federal Census.

11. "An Act to establish and maintain the Eastern Illinois State Normal School," May 22, 1895, Illinois General Assembly, Section 10 and 11, University Archives, Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University.

12. "The Story of a Great Success," *Charleston (IL) Scimitar*, May 29, 1896.

13. R.S. Hodgen, Geo. R. Chambers, Isaiah H. Johnson, "To the Board of Trustees of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School," University Archives, Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University.

14. *Charleston (IL) Plaindealer*, Aug. 29, 1899, 1.

15. "Charleston Gets It. The New Reform School Located at Catfishville," *Mattoon (IL) Weekly Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1895.

16. "Unsolicited Testimonials," *Charleston (IL) Scimitar*, Sept. 20, 1895.

17. *Announcement of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School at Charleston* [1899-1900], n.p.

18. *Charleston (IL) Plaindealer*, Aug. 29, 1899, 1.

19. Charles Coleman, *Eastern Illinois State College: Fifty years of Public Service*, Charleston, Eastern Illinois State College Bulletin, 189 (Jan. 1, 1950), 19.

20. *Charleston (IL) Plaindealer*, Dec. 21, 1894, 4.

21. *Charleston (IL) Scimitar*, May 29, 1896, 1.

22. *Charleston ( IL) Courier*, May, 28, 1896.

# Speaking Out: The Role of the Press in the Suffrage Movement

*Elicia Slate*

*Elicia is a senior undergraduate history major who wrote this article for Dr. Pete Voelz's History of American Journalism. This past year she also wrote a paper on "Royal Bastards," about illegitimacy at the late-Stuart Court, and she delivered a paper on that subject at the Phi Alpha Theta Southern Illinois Regional Conference at Carbondale in April.*

The fight for suffrage was an important movement for women, and the press proved valuable to the cause. Both male and female journalists wrote in support of suffrage and against it. Various newspapers and journals were created in the struggle for rights. Most of these publications come from the nineteenth century when the suffrage movement was decades away from achieving its goals. These publications strove to inform and to motivate and are a lasting testimony to those who spoke out for equality.

The first "acknowledged …'feminist' newspaper to spring from the fledgling woman's rights movement of the nineteenth century" was the *Una*.[1] Paulina Kellogg Wright Davis in Rhode Island created this groundbreaking newspaper in February of 1853. The *Una* was designed to speak to the "real women" of all classes.[2] In June 1853, the paper voiced its dedication to the cause. "We ask to be regarded, respected, and treated as human beings, of full age and natural abilities, as equal sinners, and not as infants or beautiful angels, to whom the rules of civil and social justice do not apply."[3] The women who ran the newspaper saw women as an "oppressed group," and they believed that women should know the truth about their condition. William Lloyd Garrison wrote in the July 1853 issue about "the irony of allowing women to 'sing' but not to 'speak' that 'our Redeemer livith.'"[4]

The *Una*, which sold for $1, counted women's rights activists such as Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Coffin Mott, Susan B. Anthony, William Lloyd Garrison, and Elizabeth Blackwell among its subscribers. Unfortunately, the newspaper that was directed towards all women began to deal more and more with the issues of the wealthy, well-educated white woman.[5] This proved to be the

downfall of the *Una*.

The *Una* was not the only paper devoted to women's equal rights. *The Revolution* occupied "an important place in the history of suffrage journalism and the feminist struggle."[(6)] Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony published this paper from 1868-1870. In one edition, Julia Ward Howe wrote imploring "our sisters...to make common cause with us" to organize not "against men" but "against superstition."[(7)] In addition to equal rights, the paper also dealt with divorce and prostitution.

Cady Stanton and Anthony had printed 10,000 copies of *The Revolution's* first issue. It received mixed reviews. The *Daily Times* deemed it "readable, well-edited and instructive" and the Chicago *Times* praised it as a "readable sheet, well printed and well written, bold and independent." In another favorable review the Providence *Press* said that "the editors of *The Revolution* 'have an irrepressible spirit, and if they do not produce a revolution it will be the first time that justice and freedom persistently set forth fail of accomplishing a grand result.'" But the *Daily Times* wrote that "*The Revolution's* ideas were impracticable" and the *New York Times* said that the paper "was a victim of illogical thinking and that its motto was 'meaningless and foolish.'"[(8)] However, these negative reviews did not deter the editors.

*The Revolution* strove to not only "complain about suffrage" but to actively promote the vote. The publication was too revolutionary for some people and it experienced financial difficulties. Horace Greeley and Wendell Phillips ignored the paper because they felt that it was not conservative enough. The paper was never well off financially. The original subscription price of $2, and later $3, was not enough to sustain the publication. The final blow to *The Revolution* was the founding of a rival paper, the *Woman's Journal*. *The Revolution* was eventually sold for $1 in 1870 and then sold again to the New York *Christian Enquirer*.[(9)]

The paper that helped to end *The Revolution* was conservative in nature. The *Woman's Journal* has been referred to as "'The Suffrage Bible'" and "'The Torchbearer of the Woman Suffrage Cause.'"[(10)] The paper included regular columns, gossip, humor, poetry, letters, and a section about children. The less abrasive nature of this paper probably helped it to attract a larger readership than other papers that were radical in nature. The *Woman's Journal* "stood as a beacon of feminist respectability, charting a course of protest between an oppressive status quo and an abrasive radicalism."[(11)] This publication relied on raising consciousness in a way that was intimate and established a relationship between the reader and the paper. This relationship was also another factor in favor of this publication over other publications such as *The Una*. The editors wanted to prescribe, mobilize, and maintain courses of action while broadening intellectual horizons. In the end, the

*Woman's Journal* became a means by which the conservative branch of the women's suffrage struggle discharged important functions.[12]

The *Una*, *The Revolution,* and the *Woman's Journal* were not the only three equal rights newspapers. In Louisiana, Mrs. Ida Porter Boyer edited a suffrage paper called the *Southern Citizen*. Other newspapers that supported suffrage included the *Woman's Tribune*, *Woman's Column*, *Farmer's Wife,* and the *Woman's Exponent*. Sherilyn Cox Bennison found "at least 12 suffrage newspapers in the American West, all edited by women from 1869 until 1914." These newspapers featured reports on meetings, speech reprints, rebuttals, and arguments for rights. The suffrage papers and journals proved valuable in uniting women by bridging "the gaps of time and distance …across the country" and helped them form the ties that created a social movement. According to scholar Linda Steiner, the suffrage press helped women to evolve "intellectually and emotionally" by "satisfying communal models for acting, thinking, judging and feeling."[13]

There were other ways that publications could support suffrage without becoming suffrage papers. Other newspapers dedicated portions of their publications to the suffrage cause. The Atlanta *Constitution* created a woman suffrage department in July of 1913. The Atlanta *Journal* and the Columbus *Ledger* each published a weekly suffrage column for several years and, in 1914, the Atlanta *Georgian* and the *Ledger* published special suffrage issues.[14] Some non-suffrage papers had staff members that were assigned to the suffrage cause. In this way the newspapers could support the suffrage cause while still providing their previous services. This combination of suffrage and non-suffrage issues probably assisted the cause. Readers drawn to the news might find themselves reading about suffrage and might become interested in the movement. Emma Bugbee covered the suffrage movement for the New York *Tribune*.[15] Bugbee went to suffrage groups to get news from the organization heads.[16] The Equal Suffrage Party reported in 1915 that "forty-five papers had signified their willingness to publish suffrage news."[17]

Not all papers were supportive. The New York *Herald* called participants in an 1853 National Woman's Rights Convention "unsexed in mind" and the convention itself, the "Woman's Wrong Convention."[18] Supportive papers attempted to counteract the negative press and to allow women a chance to consider ideas and arguments for themselves.[19] These negative papers did not deter the suffrage papers from their cause.

In addition to newspapers and journals, supporters of women's suffrage disseminated their ideas in other ways. Leaflets and pro-suffrage pamphlets were common. Mabel Craft Deering, suffrage press chairman for California, wrote a report on the important role that press work played in the suffrage movement. She felt that her most important contribution to the suffrage movement was her

presswork. Her report became a "readable guide for suffrage campaigners" in other states.[20]

The press helped the suffrage movement immensely. Through various newspapers and journals, as well as leaflets and pamphlets, the message of suffrage was disseminated. Cady Stanton wrote that "once enfranchised, women could vote in legislation that would protect the home and family."[21] Her words served to inspire women and to "inform" them that it was their duty to work for suffrage. Finally, "by presenting public issues to their readers, these newspapers subtly but effectively encouraged women to think of themselves as competent, sensible, potentially important persons and to perceive themselves as members of a group with common problems and concerns."[22]

The pro-suffrage publications served to unite supporters of the cause. The newspapers and journals helped to create organizations such as the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA).[23] The suffrage publications served as a means of attracting members and supporters. Despite the fact that these publications began early in the movement, the struggle for rights would have been even more difficult without them. They helped to initiate the movement and to spread its message.

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2. Ibid., 50.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 58.

5. Ibid., 52, 62.

6. Lynne Masel-Walters, "Their Rights and Nothing More: A History of *The Revolution*, 1868-70," *Journalism Quarterly* 53 (1976): 242.

7. Maurine H. Beasley and Sheila J. Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism*, ed. Sanford J. Ungar (Washington, D.C., 1993), 84.

8. Masel-Waters, "Their Rights and Nothing More," 244.

9. Ibid., 246, 244, 249-51.

10. Susan Schultz Huxman, "*The Woman's Journal*, 1870-1890: The Torchbearer for Suffrage," in *A Voice of Their Own,* 87, 90.

11. Ibid., 109.

12. Ibid., 97, 99, 107, 109.

13. A. Elizabeth Taylor, "Revival and Development of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 42 (1958): 350; Martha M. Solomon, "The Role of the Suffrage Press in the Woman's Rights Movement," in *A Voice of Their Own*, 15; Beasley and Gibbons, *Taking Their Place,* 82; Solomon, "The Role of the Suffrage Press."

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*Quarterly* 43 (1959): 11.

15. Jean E. Collins, *She Was There: Stories of Pioneering Women Journalists* (New York, 1980), 21.

16. Ibid., 23.

17. Taylor, "The Last Phase," 11.

18. Solomon, "The Role of the Suffrage Press," 13.

19. Ibid., 13-4.

20. Taylor, "The Last Phase," 13; Rudolph M. Lapp, "Mable Craft Deering: A Young Woman of Advanced Ideas," *California History* 66 (1987): 168.

21. Masel-Walters, "Their Rights and Nothing More," 247.

22. Solomon, "The Role of the Suffrage Press," 14.

23. Masel-Waters, "Their Rights and Nothing More," 245.

# Texas Bandits: A Study of the 1948 Democratic Primary

*Jason Matteson*

*Jason, an undergraduate history major, wrote this narrative of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century political campaign and its implications for Dr. Mark White's upper division course on America in the sixties.*

Lyndon Johnson ranks among the most skilled and productive politicians in United States history. From 1937 till his last day as President in 1969, Johnson introduced, sponsored, or supported much of the most important legislation of the twentieth century. In 1948 though, Johnson's political career came a mere 87 votes away from an abrupt end. In one of the most studied elections in United States history, Johnson's star rose from the House of Representatives, in which he had been an energetic and effective member for 11 years, to a post in the more powerful Senate.[1] If he lost his Senate bid in 1948, he planned to return to Texas to devote time to KTBC, the radio station that he and Lady Bird owned.[2] Johnson ran for the Senate in 1941, with his House seat as insurance, after Senator Morris Sheppard died of a brain hemorrhage. But the stakes in 1948 seemed much higher as he would have to give up his seat in the House of Representatives to run. In 1948, Lyndon Johnson unleashed an aggressive, modern, and crooked campaign because his political career stood in the balance.

In 1941, Johnson led by 5,000 votes through a count of 96% of the ballots. He ended up losing by 1,311.[3] From his defeat, Johnson learned a few very important lessons. First, he realized that being labeled a strong New Dealer probably hampered more than it helped him. For the most part, Texans outside the poorer hill country disliked FDR and the sweeping liberal change he brought in the 1930s. When Johnson announced his 1941 candidacy on the steps of the White House, the picture did not sit well with most Texans.[4]

In 1948, Johnson knew that if he was going to win a statewide race, he would have to shift right. Democrats had traditionally controlled Texas. When the national Democratic agenda shifted to the left in the 1930s, Texas Democrats, along with other southern Democrats, did not follow. Even though the Democrats controlled the state, it remained conservative. In 1948, Johnson did not stress the New Deal programs. He now talked about issues in a way that catered to Texans.

He began his conservative switch in 1947 when he voted for the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act; legislation that significantly set back the power unions gained in the 1930s. When President Truman attempted to veto the bill, Johnson joined in the coalition to override it. Through this bill, Johnson accomplished two important goals in preparation for his 1948 Senate run. He demonstrated his willingness to take a stand against what he deemed as union excesses, and, "with Truman considered a sure loser in 1948" because of his civil rights proposals, he separated himself from the President's liberal administration.[5]

Johnson also took a more conservative position that appeared to be anti-civil rights. By criticizing Truman's legislation, he hoped to endear himself to Texas voters. He argued:

It is the province of the state to run its own elections [an argument against ending poll tax]. I am opposed to the anti-lynching bill because the federal government has no more business enacting a law against one form of murder than another. I am against the FEPC (Fair Employment Practices Commission) because if a man can tell you whom you must hire, he can tell you whom you cannot employ.[6]

He also disagreed with Truman on an issue that was especially important to Texans: control of the tideland oil off the coast of Texas in the Gulf of Mexico. Johnson supported state control, whereas Truman, and other big government liberals felt federal control of these valuable resources was best.

LBJ, being the consummate politician, knew how to maneuver. He knew he would have to mirror, to some degree, the conservative nature of his opponent, Coke Stevenson, if he was going to compete with one of the most popular politicians in Texas history. Stevenson, Robert Caro notes, "had run for public office twelve times-once for County Judge, five times for state legislator, twice for Speaker, twice for Lieutenant Governor and twice for Governor-and he had never been defeated."[7] One Texas state legislator said, "Coke Stevenson was just like Coca-Cola." Stevenson was certainly not a man who actively sought public office. He had spent all of 1947 at home on his ranch, and it took the urging of his political friends to convince him to run for the Senate in 1948. He projected the image of the strong, silent type-a political oddity who did not speak unless asked a question. His ultra-conservative political philosophy suited most Texans: lowering of taxes, reduction of federal control within the state, promotion of a freer market, and "complete destruction of the Communist movement in this country."[8] Liberal critics would often argue that Stevenson was too conservative. They said that he made the deficit he inherited as Governor in 1941 a surplus by 1947, because he slashed state services. They called him a racist because he opposed black voting rights and did nothing to stop wartime lynching in cities like Texarkana. He was labeled an isolationist because he opposed the Marshall Plan and often called [9]

European nations "beggars."

LBJ made use of these views in his campaign against Stevenson. Johnson's mantra throughout the campaign was "Preparedness, Peace, and Progress."[10] By "preparedness," he meant increasing the military might of the United States. In 1948, the threat of communism frightened many Americans. The Soviets had solidified their control of Eastern Europe; the United States was caught in a face-off over West Berlin; in China, the Communists were prevailing over the Nationalists; and the Alger Hiss spy ring made Americans realize communism remained at their backdoor.[11] Johnson made Stevenson's isolationism a key point in his campaign by associating it with communism. He often brought up the contemporary example of Chamberlain appeasing Hitler to demonstrate how an unchecked evil would only grow more powerful.[12] By "peace," LBJ meant supporting the United Nations and international trade. This, of course, went against Stevenson's anti-U.N., anti-Marshall Plan stance, and it was another attack upon his isolationist philosophy. And by "progress," LBJ stuck by some of his New Deal guns by supporting subsidies for farmers, electricity in rural areas, conservation, education, an increase in social security benefits, an increase in the number of hospitals, and protection of labor through a minimum wage and humane working hours.[13] This platform, particularly his stance on labor, demonstrates how Johnson was adept at playing both sides of the political fence in order to latch onto as many votes as possible. He gave the Texas liberals his "progress" agenda, while he catered to conservatives in helping defeat Truman's civil rights legislation and helping pass and uphold the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. Ultimately, the candidates views on communism and labor proved to be the most important issues. Stevenson's silent nature and rigid isolationism would be a hindrance, especially with the new type of campaign LBJ would run.

In his 1942 and 1944 primary campaigns for Governor, Stevenson had won by record-setting margins and avoided run-offs. But his campaign against Johnson was a different matter. Running as an isolationist for a Senate seat was not the same as running for Governor.[14]

The primary election was scheduled for July 24. Stevenson felt he would win a majority of the votes and not have to worry about a run-off election. He enjoyed an enormous lead in the early polls, and he felt his popularity alone would carry him through. LBJ, of course, just hoped that he and the numerous other candidates could keep this from happening. Johnson was aided immensely by the number three candidate was George Peddy. Peddy was a "symbol of uncompromising conservatism," and was a veteran of both world wars and an ardent anti-communist who believed that the state should own and control the tideland oil supply.[15] With views mirroring those of Stevenson, there was little doubt that Peddy would take a lot of votes away from the former Governor. Peddy's entry into the race concerned

Stevenson so much that he made it a priority to convince Peddy people to avoid the run-off between Johnson and himself (as only the two leading vote-getters would participate in a run-off) by voting for Stevenson on July 24.

Unfortunately for Stevenson, Peddy and his people only stepped up their campaign efforts and increased his poll share to 14.5% by July 21. In the election, three days later, Stevenson ended up with 477,077 votes (40%) and won 168 counties. Johnson garnered 405,617 votes (34%) and won 72 counties. Peddy surprised all by capturing 237,195 votes (20%).[16] For Johnson, these were both good and bad election results. They were good, because he and Stevenson would both go into a run-off primary election. They were bad, because he now knew that he would have to win more than 70% of the 237,195 conservative Peddy votes; votes that would more likely go to the conservative Stevenson. But LBJ pressed on with only five weeks to change voters' minds.

With this daunting task ahead of him, Johnson stepped up his new, "modern" campaign with an incredible drive. The campaign contained multiple facets. The first facet was Johnson's means of meeting with the voters. Since June, he had used a new type of aircraft, a helicopter, to talk to and dazzle as many Texans as he could in the short amount of time he had. He dubbed the machine "the Johnson City Windmill." A reporter named Margaret Mayer said:

Coming down on those rural people in those little towns who had never seen anything like it, with that tremendous roar and the dust swirling up, it was an awesome thing. As it was approaching, there was a lot of hurry-up: late-comers rushing to get there. But as it actually started to come down, there was silence-the silence of awe.[17]

People would come from miles around to see it. Word often got around through the distribution of flyers by an advanced party that included the Beau Jesters-a barbershop quartet. During his five-week helicopter campaign, Johnson made roughly 370 landings in mostly rural areas. He even landed in north Texas one time during a Coke Stevenson speech![18] Robert Dalleck estimated that Johnson reached well over 175,000 rural voters during this helicopter campaign.[19] His brother and campaign assistant, Sam Houston Johnson, gave a telling example of the value of this technological display:

One old man in Kickapoo kept staring at Lyndon as he talked about farm prices, never hearing a word. Finally he turned to his wife and said, "If he can keep that damn thing from chopping his head off, he might make a good senator."[20]

Besides the helicopter, Johnson used other avenues on unprecedented scales. LBJ's efforts produced the "first modern mass media campaign."[21] Johnson would go on to spend more money than anyone ever had on polling, billboards, newspaper ads,

radio spots, and mailings. He regularly mailed his *Johnson Journal* to thousands of rural voters. In articles like "Communists favor Coke," he painted a picture of Stevenson as a pawn of northern Communist labor bosses because he favored isolationism.[22] Johnson also followed polls closely. In an average campaign, a candidate might only conduct three or four statewide polls, because they cost so much at $6,000 each. Johnson had them conducted by two or three firms once a week! He also used his knowledge of radio in a very productive way. Prior to 1948, political radio consisted of nothing more than speeches. From his experience at his radio station (KTBC), he knew more could be accomplished with the medium. Aside from speeches, he produced shows with clever scripts, music, and professional direction aimed at his positive points and Stevenson's negative points. Like polling, radio proved very expensive. A single statewide broadcast cost $5,000 to $8,000. LBJ performed a statewide broadcast nearly every day![23]

Stevenson's campaign looked nothing like LBJ's; it appeared, like Stevenson, old-fashioned. He felt that, because he was popular, spending excessive amounts on a campaign would seem wasteful, so he did very little. He delivered occasional radio addresses and purchased some full-page newspaper ads and billboard space. But the crux of his campaign was built on driving from county to county in an old Plymouth to talk to small gatherings of people at county courthouses. Although he probably reached as many as Johnson did on his helicopter campaign, he really showed little organization and lacked a solid agenda.[24] In other words, without the physical effort or willingness to spend money like LBJ, Stevenson's campaign proved lackluster at best.

The striking difference in campaign costs acted therefore as an issue in itself. Texas campaign laws permitted candidates themselves to spend up to $10,000 in a party primary election, $8,000 initially and $2,000 in a run-off. Obviously, more was spent through both legitimate and dubious organizations and campaign committees such as, the "Dallas Veterans for Johnson" or the "Johnson-for-Senate" committee. Johnson's phone bills alone for the campaign exceeded $30,000! He received much of his campaign money from the likes of millionaire publishers, businessmen, and private oilmen. He even received backing from movie studio executives like George Skouras of Twentieth Century-Fox and Howard Hughes of RKO. But most of LBJ's campaign was funded by the brothers George and Herman Brown, who LBJ, as a Representative, had help attain major shipbuilding contracts during World War II. In 1946, he again helped them receive a $21,000,000 contract to build the navy and airforce bases on Guam. With LBJ in Congress, their net worth increased five-fold in a single decade![25] As they had done in 1941, they gave LBJ anything he needed. Stevenson campaigns were always adequately financed, but as a conservative rule of thumb, Stevenson felt the cost of a statewide campaign should never exceed $100,000. LBJ's campaigns always proved to be expensive. His 1937

House campaign was one of the most expensive in Texas history; in 1941, he spent even more.[(26)] In 1948, he went on to spend in excess of a million dollars!

Another secret to LBJ's 1948 success, was his determination and energy. During a two-month period, Johnson made more than 350 speeches and worked an average of 18 hours a day on the campaign. From the middle of June to the end of July, he lost more than 25 pounds.[(27)] He campaigned so intensely that, "his voice fell to a croak and his body …shrank so much that his face became a caricature of itself."[(28)]

The most famous example of his will to win was his reluctance to have painful kidney stones removed for fear he would lose precious campaign time. He first realized that he had the stones around the time he entered the race in early-May. He had them before and passed them. But each day, the pain and nausea only intensified. With doctors advising surgery and the primary election only a few months away, Johnson refused the operation and took pain-killers regularly. By mid-May, he was enduring fever and chill cycles that saw his temperature rise to 104 degrees. He went through six or seven shirts a day, but he never missed a public appearance or left a room until the last hand was shaken.[(29)]

By May 27, the stones had still not passed. After doctors all but demanded he received treatment, he agreed to go to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for a new treatment that would get rid of the stones and allow him to get back on the campaign trail within a week. He agreed to go on the condition that his out-of-state treatment not be released to the press. He worried that Texans would resent him for leaving Texas for treatment.[(30)] On May 30, the experimental treatment, cystoscopic manipulation (removing the stones through the urethra), was performed successfully. In recovery, Johnson kept staffers and three phones in his room at all times. He still worked on his campaign in the hospital, calling Texas as many as 64 times in one day![(31)] Within a week, he returned to Texas, campaigning harder than ever.

The most infamous issue surrounding Johnson's 1948 victory was the tainted vote totals in south Texas that, more than anything else, won the election for him. The second lesson Johnson learned from his 1941 defeat came into play here. He knew ballot tampering played a big role in his losing by 1,311 votes to Pappy O'Daniel. Aside from shifting right politically, LBJ also learned that he must sit on the ballot boxes in as many counties as possible. He knew Stevenson would try to stuff the ballot boxes like O'Daniel did, so Johnson not only ordered his men to watch the voting stations but also instructed his men to outdo Stevenson's men in accumulating fraudulent votes. The run-off election was scheduled for Saturday, August 28. That evening, Stevenson led by 2,119 after 939,468 votes were counted. By 9:00 AM, Sunday, LBJ had gained the lead after 979,877 votes were

counted. By Monday evening, Stevenson regained the lead, and on Thursday, September 2, he was announced as the "official" winner by 362 votes.

Unlike Stevenson, Johnson had prepared for a close race, and besides having his men watch the voting stations for stuffing or withholding, he asked election officials that supported him, like boss George Parr, to withhold their vote totals until the official results were announced. Stevenson was no amateur; he realized Johnson might try to pull something. But he made a mistake in instructing his supporters to only watch the voting stations on Sunday.[32] Johnson ordered his men to watch the stations the entire week. According to H.Y. Price, a Johnson campaign insider, LBJ went so far as to tap Stevenson's phones. Anytime Stevenson or his men called the stations and asked for votes, LBJ immediately called his watchmen and told them to be on their toes.

After the "official" results were announced on Thursday, the real conspiracy began. Early on Friday, September 3, election officials in a little southern Mexican-American town, dominated by George Parr, announced that the returns they released earlier in the week were incorrect. Officials in Alice, said they found an additional 203 ballots in their "Box 13." Of these 203 ballots, 202 were for Johnson, leaving only one for Stevenson! Officials from another Parr-dominated county-Duval-also announced that they had some ballots that were not included in their tally from earlier in the week.[33] After these votes had been counted, LBJ had 87 more votes than Stevenson with a final tally of 494,191 to 494,104.

Of course, this sudden change was no accident. Voting stations in many south Texas counties were controlled by Parr. During Stevenson's three gubernatorial bids, Parr had supported him with large margins like he did with Johnson in 1948. But in 1944, Stevenson made a questionable decision. Parr had asked Stevenson to appoint Jimmy Kazen, a personal and political friend, to the position of District Attorney of Laredo County. Instead, at a military official's request, Stevenson appointed S. Truman Phelps to the position to clean up prostitution around the Laredo airforce base.[34] Parr never forgave Stevenson. Besides, Parr liked LBJ because of his style and courage. Also, in 1946, Johnson had helped Parr receive a pardon for income tax evasion.[35]

Stevenson, of course, was outraged and rightfully declared that LBJ's votes were fraudulent. Johnson countered with claims, also probably accurate, that many of Stevenson's votes were fraudulent. Stevenson initially sought justice with the state Democratic Executive Committee. After a debate that included many harsh accusations, the Committee agreed fraud played a part on both sides but awarded the election to Johnson by a vote of 29 to 28. The deciding vote was placed by Charley Gibson, a drunk committee member rushed in at the last minute by Johnson supporters.[36] With a party convention dominated by Truman Democrats,

assuring Johnson of another sure victory, Stevenson realized that he would now have to seek justice through the courts.

On September 15, Stevenson sent representatives to the residence of T. Whitfield Davidson, a Federal District Judge in north Texas. The Stevenson men asked Davidson to place a restraining order on LBJ's inclusion on the November ballot. To validate seeking justice in the federal courts, Stevenson claimed that the election fraud violated his federal civil rights. Besides, a statewide recount would take too long for Stevenson to have a chance at being included on the November ballot. Davidson issued the order and scheduled a hearing for September 21 in Fort Worth. LBJ knew Davidson was conservative and a friend of Stevenson, but more than that political conflict, he did not understand why he was being treated as if he were guilty before the trial even occurred. He also felt that a statewide election fell under the jurisdiction of the state courts-not the federal courts.

Initially, Johnson's lawyers suggested an appeal to Chief Justice Fred Vinson, but it was too risky. Vinson could rule against Johnson, and there would still be time for Stevenson's placement on the November ballot. So, Johnson prepared for his Federal District Court appearance. By September 18, LBJ had hired the brilliant Washington, D.C., super-attorney Abe Fortas. Fortas realized that Johnson needed the quickest and most reasonable course of action possible, so he decided to appeal to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta immediately after the September 21 hearing.[37] Knowing that the Fifth Circuit was in recess till mid-October, Fortas felt strongly that Justice Hugo Black, the liberal senior justice for the area that included Texas, would be compelled to review the case and make a decision.[38]

At the September 21 hearing, Judge Davidson made the temporary restraining order permanent and ordered the investigation of election results in the southern counties of Duval, Zapata, and Jim Wells. The Johnson team, following their plan, quickly issued an appeal to Judge Joseph Hutchinson of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on September 24 in New Orleans. Like Fortas had predicted, the Court would not be able to hear the case until October 14. So, on September 25, Fortas submitted the case to Justice Black in Washington. Black agreed to hear the case if attorneys for both parties could be present on September 28.[39]

In the meantime, the investigative hearings that Judge Davidson ordered where set to begin on September 27. Davidson ordered the investigation of the three counties because of their peculiar returns. For instance, Duval county saw 99.4% of its ballots go for LBJ! During the investigation, county officials made it difficult to obtain poll tax records and tally sheets. Witnesses proved hard to come by, and much of the potential evidence had disappeared.[40] Also quite bizarre was the fact that the final 203 names on the Jim Wells County's "Box 13" tally sheet were in a different color of ink and in a different handwriting than the previous thousand on

the sheet. Strangely, they were also all in alphabetical order, like someone had just gone down the poll tax sheet and copied names down. Of the 203, "last-minute" voters at "Box 13," only 11 were located and questioned. All said they had not even voted![41]

At any rate, the day after the investigation began, Justice Black heard both cases and sided with the Johnson camp by lifting the restraining order. Without much hesitation, Black passed down the ruling that Johnson's civil rights had been violated through his removal from the November election after the electorate of Texas had chosen him as the Democratic candidate. Anyway, Black said Stevenson should have first brought a voter fraud suit to a state court or even the United States Senate itself, "which has the right to determine its own membership."[42]

With a decision from the Supreme Court, Stevenson was finished, but a mystery lingers: who or what influenced Black's speedy, subjective decision? Some believe either the Texan Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn, or Abe Fortas may have discussed the case and its repercussions with Black. Black's personal political ideology could have been the overwhelming factor. Robert Dalleck put forth the theory that Attorney General Tom Clark had a lot to do with it. Clark actively supported Johnson in the primaries by talking a few New York law firms into donating money to the Johnson campaign.[43] Clark probably would not have wanted his efforts to be in vain. With his position as both the head of the Justice Department and a strong Johnson supporter, Clark had both the means and the motive. Others like Rowland Evans, Robert Novak, and Ronnie Dugger felt that President Truman played a pivotal role.

The full weight of the Truman Administration and the entire liberal wing of the Democratic party now was thrown behind Johnson. For all his conservative transgressions during the 80th Congress, Lyndon Johnson was indefinitely preferable to Dixiecrat Coke Stevenson in the Senate.[44]

On September 25, three days before the Black ruling, LBJ met with Truman on the President's whistle-stop campaign tour of Texas. It is impossible to know exactly what was said, but Johnson did immediately turn to Truman-the man he had opposed on so many issues in the previous couple years-to help raise campaign money after Black's decision.[45]

Interestingly, Johnson never admitted to any wrongdoing in the election, but in an interview with Ronnie Dugger in the early-1970s, Johnson shocked Dugger by showing him a picture of the Jim Wells County officials smiling and holding the Precinct 13 ballot box. When Dugger asked what it meant and how Johnson had received it, LBJ said nothing and grinned. A few years later, Dugger interviewed Luis Salas-a Parr man and the head official at Precinct 13 in 1948. Salas admitted the late returns were fraudulent. Then Dugger was shocked when Salas pulled out a

photograph-the same photograph LBJ had shown him a few years earlier![46]

The subsequent November election proved to be a mere formality. Johnson easily defeated the Republican candidate, Jack Porter, by a margin of more than two to one.[47] So by a margin of 87 (likely illegal) votes in the primary run-off, Lyndon Johnson's political career reached its next level. Students of history can only wonder: if Johnson had lost, would there have ever been full-scale American involvement in Vietnam through which 58,000 young Americans would die, or would the important legislative leaps of the 1960s ever have occurred? The year 1948 contains a moment that may very well have been the difference. Of course, the 1948 election did nothing to alleviate LBJ's all-consuming feeling of insecurity-it only added to it. He had grown up poor and attended a modest teachers' college. He had been defeated in his 1941 Senate attempt, and now, the future of this political giant "rested on the foundation of theft."[48] The jeers of "Landslide Lyndon" pushed him harder to legitimize his place in American history as one of its greatest legislators and as a future President.

1. William S. White, *The Professional: Lyndon B. Johnson* (Boston, 1964), 159.

2. Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (New York, 1966), 22.

3. Sam Houston Johnson, *My Brother Lyndon* (New York, 1969), 71.

4. Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York, 1976), 93.

5. Evans and Novak, 23.

6. Ronnie Dugger, *The Politician: The Life and Times of Lyndon Johnson* (New York, 1982), 310.

7. Robert A. Caro, *Means of Ascent: The Years of Lyndon Johnson* (New York, 1990), 176.

8. Robert Dalleck, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960* (New York, 1991), 315.

9. Ibid., 316-7.

10. Ibid., 299.

11. Ibid., 323.

12. Dugger, 311-2.

13. Dalleck, 300.

14. Ibid., 318.

15. Caro, 179; Dugger, 310.

16. Dalleck, 318.

17. Caro, 217.

18. Dugger, 317-8.

19. Dalleck, 304.

20. Johnson, 74.

21. Dalleck, 307.

22. Dalleck, 324; Dugger, 319-20.

23. Caro, 192.

24. Dalleck, 317.

25. Ibid., 307-10.

26. Caro, 180.

27. Dugger, 315-8.

28. White, 164.

29. Caro, 195-8.

30. Dalleck, 302.

31. Caro, 205-6.

32. Dalleck, 327-8.

33. Dugger, 328.

34. Dalleck, 330; Dugger, 323.

35. Caro, 191.

36. Dugger, 331-2.

37. Dalleck, 336-8.

38. Dugger, 335

39. Dalleck, 338-9.

40. Dugger, 336; Dalleck, 340.

41. Dugger, 331; Dalleck, 332-3.

42. Dalleck, 341.

43. Ibid.

44. Evans and Novak, 25.

45. Dugger, 337.

46. Ibid., 341.

47. Dalleck, 343.

48. Dugger, 329

# The U.S. Space Program and the National Interest

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*Bryan, a M.A. in History graduate, wrote this paper for Dr. Mark White's Diplomatic History seminar. In April 1999, he delivered this paper at the Southern Illinois Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, where it received an award for the best graduate paper at the conference.*

On October 4, 1957 the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I into a successful orbit around the earth. The satellite was an aluminum sphere, twenty-three inches in diameter and weighing 184 pounds. It also contained instruments which for 21 days radioed data concerning cosmic rays, meteoroids, and the density and temperature of the upper atmosphere. But for all the research data which the satellite was transmitting to earth, probably its most important radio broadcast was a steady but meaningless series of beeps which it transmitted over normal radio frequencies to be picked up with delight by all the Soviet citizens and admirers of the Soviet space program back on earth-and with consternation by all the U.S. citizens and admirers of the U.S. space program. Sputnik would crash into the earth's surface some fifty-seven days after it was launched into orbit, but its effects would be felt well into the next decade.

The Soviets then launched another Satellite into orbit on November 3 of that year, this one containing a dog, Laika. Throughout the media the terrible news read Soviets, 2, and the United States, 0, in the suddenly all-important new space race. What was wrong? How could the Soviets who we always thought to be so far behind in technology and scientific development have surpassed us? The fact that the United States was quickly able to launch two satellites of its own, Explorer and Vanguard II, into orbit on the heels of Sputnik II was of little consolation. America had been publicly beaten by the Soviets and second place was simply not good enough.

What came to be known as the Soviet/American "space race" was born of these events at the close of the 1950s and like all races it was built more on hysteria and mass psychological interest than on any substantial phenomenon. What gives a race meaning and importance are the psychological factors upon which the race is built: the fact that an audience is watching the event, that they know in advance what the participants are trying to achieve, and that, in the way that the race is

constructed, there can only be one winner.

The manner in which the American space program developed in the Kennedy years after Sputnik was primarily as a vehicle for American propaganda to promote American prestige throughout the world, and particularly in the Third World. Its purpose was to boost U.S. morale and competitive spirit and to display the superior abilities of the United States. The conscious and public decision to land a man on the moon as made by JFK in his address to the nation on May 25, 1961, is testimony to that premise.

Another, unspoken, purpose of the U.S. space program was a military one. Increasingly, the importance of accurate surveillance of Soviet military installations became a primary concern for the U.S. military and with the development of the Cold War this became almost exclusively a job for the space program and satellites; the policies of the Kennedy administration following the lead of the Eisenhower administration helped to formalize the military's leading, if secretive, role in U.S. space policy. Interestingly, the least important factor behind the development of the U.S. space program was the one for which it would constantly promote itself, scientific space exploration. Although scientific research would always be a part of NASA's mission, it played almost no role in the appropriation of funds and in the choice of which missions would be carried out and in what manner.

All three purposes for the U.S. space program were actually complimentary. The purpose of scientific exploration was often used as a cover to launch military surveillance satellites while the military aspect of the space program and the overall all strategic importance of space was often given as a rationale for undecided congressmen wary of the large expenditures of the space program and not convinced of its value as a propaganda vehicle. But despite these complimentary aspects of the various purposes of the space program, it was its value as a propaganda that caught the eye of the Kennedy administration.

To President Eisenhower amidst the hysteria of the Sputnik launch, there was no "space race." The United States had been working for some time on sending rockets into orbit and in his mind our program was functioning well and on schedule-of what difference was it that the Soviets had managed to put a satellite into orbit one month in front of the United States? Eisenhower was against the mentality developing in the United States that we were in a race with the Soviet Union. He was always sensibly concerned with the possibility of an hysterical state of competition developing between the United States and the Soviet Union particularly in the field of armaments. This hysteria Eisenhower saw as wastefully counterproductive and, with the memories of the McCarthy "red scare" still fresh in his mind from the beginning of the decade, potentially very dangerous. Eisenhower worked actively to calm the American public trying where ever possible to diminish their fears and to convince them that there was no cause for alarm.

Unfortunately, this was to no avail and the "space race" became a reality. The news media fueled peoples fears that the United States was falling behind the Soviets in the critical field of scientific research and consequently 82% of the American public believed that the U.S. was falling behind the Soviets in the development of advanced weapons.[1] A new call was put out to place more focus on the sciences in education. The public also became concerned that there was a "missile gap" in the Soviet's favor with regard to nuclear warheads-this, in fact, turned out to be utterly groundless and that, whatever missile gap there was, it was decidedly in our favor. With the approach of the election year of 1960, a young Senator from Massachusetts took up these concerns and made them a centerpiece for his presidential election campaign and an indictment of eight years of Republican "complacency." In many ways, the American space program made the ideal platform from which Kennedy could show case a new American commitment to excellence and reinvigorate American prestige throughout the world.

In the new global climate, Kennedy's approach and the language of the "space race" had some merit. Eisenhower's point of view was valid domestically: we should not let our own self worth and our own endeavors as a nation be dictated by outside pressures and allow ourselves to be caught up in a competitive atmosphere that could threaten our very ideals and tranquillity. But the Cold War was shaping up as a battle for the future of the Third World, or as Kennedy put it in his speech to the nation on May 25$^{th}$, "the battle for men's minds." Kennedy's larger point that quiet American resolve could all too easily be interpreted by the people of the developing world as American complacency and indifference was a more realistic one internationally. With the Soviets actively courting the nations of the Third World and trying to impress them with their superior abilities and skills, the United States could no longer afford the luxury of assuming that our own talents spoke for themselves. Kennedy was not tied to the space program in particular out of any overarching principle or great interest in space exploration. He was only determined to find some means of improving the prestige of the United States throughout the world. At times, expressing his own doubts about the validity or world-wide importance of space exploration, he even queried his aids to find some suitable equivalent to the space program in its level of grandeur that would also carrying with it some kind of tangible resolution to an immediate and pressing need-an affordable desalinization process was one such equivalent he had in mind.[2] But, aside from the fact that it lacks the lyrical quality of the words "space race," a desalination race also does not seem to capture the imagination in the same way that space exploration does. For a number of reasons which I will discuss later, Kennedy began to focus increasingly on the fledgling U.S. space program as a show case for American ingenuity, putting his confidence in what was at the time an unproven and somewhat demoralized agency whose origins were far from the lofty

ideals Kennedy hoped for it to represent.

Starting with the first satellite, Sputnik, in 1957, there would be within thirty years more than 3,000 space launchings and in excess of 14,000 satellites put into orbit.[3] A large number of these satellites were military satellites and, in fact, the U.S. space program, itself, began with the reconnaissance satellite program in 1954. Ever since the catastrophe at Pearl Harbor, the U.S. military has been obsessed with obtaining accurate military information. In the Cold War, starting with the U2 flights over Soviet military installations, the U.S. military had constantly strived to maintain the advantage over the Russian military in accurate and up-to-date information. Because of the relative openness of U.S. society compared to that of the Soviets this edge had to be maintained through superior surveillance technology as opposed to espionage. Initially the unmatched altitude capabilities of the U2 aircraft allowed U.S. air reconnaissance to be carried out over Soviet airspace with relative impunity and it may well be said that the shooting down of U2 pilot, Gary Powers, in 1960 over Soviet airspace actually put as much drive into the U.S. space program as did the successful Sputnik launch.[4]

At the same time that the U.S. space program was taking shape under NASA, the United States military decided to follow a path of dependency on satellite surveillance as their main source of intelligence gathering. This course created certain needs for the U.S. military which began to show themselves in how the United States was positioning itself in international organizations concerning the nascent field of space law. The great time and effort required to make a successful surveillance satellite launch, not to mention the expenditures in resources, in no way precluded the possibility of the Soviets exerting the much less demanding effort required to knock them out of orbit once they were installed. It is for this reason that the U.S. pursued a policy of peaceful use of space as opposed to what the Soviets would later call for, the non-military use of space. The U.S. had no intention of keeping the military out of space; it was one of its primary motives for going there in the first place. The U.S. also pushed for the restriction of sovereign airspace not to include outer space for much the same reasons. This course of action also forced the U.S. to reduce the visibility of the military in the U.S. space program-it is for this reason that the organization NASA was founded.[5] Finally, to protect their vulnerable surveillance satellites, the United States worked to create an international ban on developing space weapons. Beneath much of the rhetoric of trying to prevent the Cold War from spreading to the heavens, there was, in fact, a deliberate attempt to allow the United States to do just the opposite by giving it cover with which it could set up satellites to spy on the Soviets.

Realizing the need not to appear as the aggressor in using space for military ends, the Congress and the heads of the National Science Advisory Committee put

pressure on Eisenhower to create NASA and to "officially" remove the space program from the Department of Defense. The organization set up to coordinate the newly formed NASA with what would be its biggest client, afterwards, even had its name changed from Civil-Military Liaison Committee to the Aeronautics and Astronautics Coordinating Board in 1960 to erase any public link between the military and the space program.

No matter what public face the U.S. government put on NASA, between 75 and 90% of all of NASA's work would still come from the military.[6] By and large, however, this public relations spin put on by NASA was highly effective and it could well be argued that supplying NASA with an appealing civilian profile may even have had greater "military" impact on the Russians than any other similar program run by the Pentagon because it gave U.S. policy the appearance of taking the higher moral road.[7] Americans were able to cloak actions taken in our own national interest in the broad rhetoric of mankind. The fact that, particularly with regard to space, this was not true is almost irrelevant because, for better or worse, truth in the Cold War became largely just a matter of public perception.

A number of analyses concerning media coverage given to the U.S. space program have lamented its largely uncritical stance and even a brief sampling of the coverage of the *New York Times* from this era illustrates this point.[8] The space program coverage at the time of the Shepard mission and the Kennedy pledge to land a man on the moon is overwhelmingly favorable to the space program. Whatever arguments that are made against the objectives of the program are represented poorly and buried in the back pages. Instead the *Times* focuses the issue of the U.S. space program with almost unfailing consistency as a comparison with the program of the Soviet Union. Hardly an article is printed on the U.S. program without mentioning its counterpart in Russia. The overall point of the importance of the U.S. space program to the national interest is impossible to miss.

This bias is, of course, not entirely the creation of the *New York Times* but is instead more reflective of a general atmosphere throughout the country, what the *Times* itself described following the successful mission of Shepard as "one of …the highest peaks of exultation since the end of World War II."[9] Political leaders promoted and were also swept up in that atmosphere of exultation. Senator Robert Kerr, in commenting on the Shepard mission, said it was "the most climatic thing that happened in my lifetime" (presumably even more important than WWII).[10] Senator Fulbright called the event "the most encouraging accomplishment in technological affairs in recent years" and it was "extremely successful from the point of view of the individual and of the country" in overcoming what he described as a defeatist attitude.[11] Even leaders who were critics of the space program had to preface their remarks with their overall support for the program. Representative

John Blatnik of Minnesota in expressing his misgivings about the program and its tremendous budget had to concede at first that the proposal to land a man on the moon was "important, of course," as if there was no dispute at all as to its essential value to the nation.

The central role of the U.S. space program in the nation's overall foreign policy and military objectives is evident in the way Kennedy presented it to the nation on the night of May 25, 1961. He justified the pledge to land a man on the moon as needed to promote a "freedom doctrine" around the world. The popularity of the space program was made clear in the unquestioning way it was accepted as the ultimate goal of the nation. In commenting on the speech, the *New York Times* on the following day listed the major government initiatives proposed as: the space program and the moon landing, increased foreign economic and military aid, and the strengthening of the Army and Marine corps. The space program has catapulted in a short time from obscurity to the nation's number one priority. Nowhere in the *Times* for that day is there any questioning of the connection between promoting a "freedom doctrine" and the program to land a man on the moon. A connection which on the face of it seems tenuous at best in the rhetoric of the Cold War becomes axiomatic. The U.S. space program had become the centerpiece of the nation's foreign policy.

Not surprisingly, NASA has probably turned out to be better at dealing with the media than any other U.S. government agency, but its creation in 1958 would have far reaching effects beyond its value as a simple public relations vehicle. NASA's creation represented a consolidation of what can be called technocracy in America. The increased government coordination of science, education, industry, and government that it represents has redefined relationships between the public and the private sector and has made them more interdependent.[12] The powers granted to NASA were unprecedented in their scope. It is by and large an independent organization made up of America's scientific and educational elite and backed by America's largest corporations.

With the arrival of the space race in the Cold War era, a large amount of America's faith in itself would be placed in its technological capabilities. Most Americans would come to believe in America's superiority based for the most part on the superiority of our technology as made possible through this cooperation between government, education, and industry. In a full page ad run across the nation following the Shepard Mercury mission, B.F. Goodrich (the tire and rubber company) exclaimed: "Astronaut probes space in a B.F. Goodrich suit." This ad, and other ads like it, reinforced in the public's mind a link between the confidence Americans had in their consumer product technology, their space program, and their patriotism in general. The subtle message behind the B.F. Goodrich ad is that the same expertise that keeps astronauts safe in space keeps you safe on the road and all of this comes not

only from the greatness of B.F. Goodrich but from the American nation and the American system in general. It would be somewhat ironic that so many Americans would go on to gauge the value of their own nation based on technological feats designed initially to impress Third World people. In this respect one can see made manifest the early concerns of Eisenhower that an unbridled state of competition with the Soviets might well obscure from the American people their very own values.[13]

The largely autonomous technocracy that helped to promote this sort of American "cult of technology" was what Eisenhower warned about in his farewell address, referring to it as the dangers of the military-industrial complex. He cautioned Americans of the influence this powerful new complex could bring to bear on America's "economic, political, and even spiritual" character. He concluded that "[w]e must never let the weight of the combination endanger out liberties or democratic process. We should take nothing for granted."

This military-industrial complex would eventually come into its own during the Vietnam war which was coincidentally also the height of the U.S. space program. The farewell statement of Eisenhower, however, as prophetic and pithy as it was also has the air of a Frankenstein warning the world of the creature he had created. These branches of the government that the Eisenhower administration formed and the corresponding industries in the private sector as well as the expertise in higher education which the president and his staff helped coordinate would ultimately be driven by some sort of self will independent of any intelligible control on the part of Eisenhower or his successors. While Eisenhower could not escape his responsibility in the process through his warning farewell remarks he at least showed his concern for what was at stake. Unfortunately, in a culture increasingly content to believe in professional "experts" and to take things for granted, this concern was not shared with sufficient vigor in the public.

Despite all the government and public support behind it, NASA actually got off to a very rocky start and some were at the time even predicting its quick demise. The main problem it faced at the beginning of the space program were its rockets. The Atlas rockets which were meant to provide the thrust for the Mercury space program were actually designed for the military's nuclear missile program; this was the same for the Russians as well as almost all work in rocketry was carried out by the military. The irony of the situation for the Americans was that because their missile program was so much more advanced than that of the Soviets, they were able to build much more weight efficient warheads for their missiles which required much less thrust than did the equivalent missiles of the Soviet Union. Therefore, coming into the space race, the Soviets had the advantage of having much more powerful rockets at their disposal than did the United States. Consequently, at the start of the Kennedy administration in 1961, because of the difficulties posed by

refitting these missile rockets, the U.S. suffered two discouraging and very public failures of their Mercury rockets.

The heads of NASA, being well connected to the scientific and education community, were also aware of the skepticism brewing in those areas concerning the Mercury program as a worthwhile scientific endeavor, beyond its technical problems with the Atlas rockets. A study of physicists at Berkeley conducted at the time showed a large majority convinced that the U.S. space program was largely being carried out for militaristic and propagandistic purposes and that as far as good research was concerned the public was wasting its money.[14] The new president elect, John Kennedy, had at that time just received a memo from his chief scientific advisor, Dr. Jerome Wiesner of MIT, counseling him to cancel the Mercury program. In his words, the problem with the Mercury program was that it "[s]trengthened the popular belief that man in space is the most important aim of our non-military space effort …[a] crash program aimed at placing a man into orbit at the earliest possible time cannot be justified solely on scientific or technical grounds."[15] It seemed that the scientific and education community were upset about the concerns of other groups-government, industry, and military-unduly influencing *their* space program.

With two failures on their hands, NASA was worried that the new president would sour on the idea of a manned space program and they were well aware that his advisor, Wiesner, was filling him with all sorts of fears of a potential public disaster and the possibility of a dead astronaut on his hands. Consequently, they stepped up plans for their next launch. On January 31, 1961, Ham-a highly trained chimpanzee-was blasted off into space and landed safely in the ocean back on earth. His mission was exactly the same one that would be carried out by Alan Shepard a few months later. Everything was set. It was next to impossible, NASA thought, for Kennedy to cancel the Mercury program on the very threshold of success; as it turned out, the ensuing run of events would make it completely impossible.

NASA, of course, was completely unfounded in their fears of Kennedy's dislike of the U.S. manned space program as he would eventually turn out to be probably the greatest presidential booster of NASA in its history. Unlike Eisenhower who seemed so sentimental about America's past, Kennedy was almost impatient for its future. Even though Johnson helped create NASA and was fundamental in giving it such sweeping powers, it was Kennedy more than anyone else who came to be identified with the ideals and premises of the U.S. space program; NASA became Kennedy's tool and the astronauts were Kennedy's friends.[16]

On April 12, 1961, the Soviets became the first nation in history to put a man into orbit. Yuri Gagarin orbited the earth a number of times and returned safely back to

earth to be received with a hero's welcome in the Soviet Union. He was honored with a tremendous parade through Red Square and all around the world curious and undecided eyes watched the Soviets celebrate what was promoted as a stunning achievement of the potential of their system and their own capabilities. A man had climbed into the very heavens and peered down on creation, and that man was a Soviet Communist.

To make matters worse, the U.S., just days after the launch of Gagarin, suffered the humiliating and tragic defeat of its specially trained Cuban émigré forces at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. While the Soviets were navigating the heavens, the United States was bogged down in the Bay of Pigs; the contrast could not possibly have been more striking. After the debacle, president Kennedy sent a memo to vice president Johnson, who had been requested by him to head the Space Council, asking Johnson a number of question as to the future of the U.S. space program. His first question was: what chance do we have of beating the Soviets to the moon? He then inquired about the cost of these proposals and wanted to know if we were doing everything possible to succeed in this endeavor-were we "working twenty-four hours a day?"[17]

Of course, between the successful Soviet orbit launch and the fiasco in Cuba, the media went into a frenzy and special hearings were set up in Congress for James Webb, the new Kennedy appointee to head NASA, to explain to the American people what was going on in the U.S. space program. Representative Fulton put the situation bluntly before Webb: "tell us how much money you need and we on this committee will authorize all you need. I'm tired of being second to the Soviets. I want to be first. I would work the scientists around the clock and stop some of this …scientific business."[18] If the American scientists were concerned about being able to do their "scientific business," the huge appropriations which Congress was to provide proved adequate comfort.

For 1961, the budget of NASA was increased by 11%. For 1962, it was increased by 44%. And in every year from 1963 to 1967, NASA would see its appropriations rise by at least 5 billion dollars; Mr. Fulton was true to his word. These were just the direct appropriations to NASA and of course do not include all the funds included in research grants and spread liberally throughout the scientific academic community or the various subcontracts made with U.S. industry to provide support for the space program.

Alan Shepard became the first American in orbit on May 5th of that year and with that success Kennedy felt sufficiently confident to go before the Congress on May 25th and in a speech often referred to as his second inaugural show his public support for the U.S. manned space program and pledge the United State's commitment to land a man on the moon before the end of the decade.

Project Apollo represented a fundamental change in the philosophy of government as promoted from the White House. It was obviously a broad departure from the fiscal conservativism as practiced by Kennedy's predecessor, Eisenhower. But it also marked an evolution of Roosevelt's philosophy of the New Deal that was so profound that it was almost revolutionary. As opposed to government merely interfering in the private sector, when dire circumstances required it, as a corrective agent, this new philosophy promoted, instead, constant and long term action, in good times or in bad. The new administration came to view project Apollo as part of a broader challenge to the traditional role of federal government. Proponents of the Apollo program within the administration were dissatisfied with existing management of national resources. Viewing the space program as a "catalyst" for social progress, technological revolutions, and the restructuring of institutions, Kennedy and his advisors laid out the blue-prints for an activist federal government that would seek to change society in a progressive manner and effect a positive influence on its citizenry and industry.[19]

The Apollo project, for all its awe-inspiring display of pyrotechnics and skill, had the advantage of falling into an easily recognizable and understood narrative. It involved perhaps the biggest non-military appropriation of funds in U.S. history and created a tremendously large and for the most part unaccountable federal bureaucracy but it did so under the premise of an appealing narrative. The romance and intrigue of the moon, coupled with the story of the frontier, gave Kennedy a way of depicting a march to the moon that was both exciting and familiar to Americans. It took the form of a story-a heroic adventure-complete with heroes and villains.[20] All this drew attention away from what would be normally, in other institutions, seen as dangerously large expenditures and ill-defined systems of public accountability.

In conclusion, the U.S. space program was far different from what its lofty public goals and rhetoric made it seem. It origins were in the U.S. military and the U.S. military would remain its main client. Also, NASA's impact would have repercussions far beyond its given field of space exploration. By promoting a more activist federal government and by setting a precedent for public and private sector cooperation it represents as well a broad based change in the philosophy of American government in addition to a fundamental change in how American government is implemented. But perhaps the most important element of U.S. space program resides in the very psychological realm of the space race from which it rose to prominence.

In a country whose very culture is engrossed in the principles of advertising and promotion and particularly in a president who proved in his election campaign his own adeptness in the manipulation of imagery, the potential value of the moon in

ingraining the image of the United States in the minds of all the worlds people was undeniable. And the spectacle that such a feat would provide the media was equally irresistible; it would be in the words of one American TV journalist-reflecting the words of that great American showman P.T. Barnum-a great expense, some ten dollars per capita, but it was fair enough for "what is by far the greatest show on earth."[21] A cosmonaut goes up into space and comes down; afterward there is hardly a trace of his achievement. But to land on the moon is almost to touch the eternal and universal. If the United States could land a man on the moon, afterward, when every child learns the name of the moon in his or her own language and gazes up at it in wonder, as everyone is bound to do at some point, they will probably also learn that men from the United States walked at one time across that very surface. A subliminal billboard promoting the United States would be placed before the eyes of all the earth's people in the form of the moon; no advertising agency could ask for better penetration than that.

Despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, NASA and the U.S. space program as it took shape in the early sixties was built almost entirely around the premise of national interests. This duplicity, as unfortunate as it is, is in and of itself not the main problem, however. Equal measures of duplicity and misleading rhetoric were made by the Soviets to the people of the Third World as were done by the United States and, although it could be argued that two wrongs do not make a right, it would have been foolhardy to allow the Soviets to seduce the world with the inflated and deceptive merits of their system based on the hopeful belief that people will be able to recognize truth over bombast. The United States had to promote itself and its prestige throughout the world and NASA was an instrumental tool in that endeavor. The real problem is the unbridled and naive enthusiasm into which the American public was allowed to drift while under the distorting influence of American Cold War rhetoric. In presenting an idealized omnipotent image of ourselves to the Third World we ultimately fell victim to the danger of actually confusing that exported image to the world with our own understanding of ourselves. The grand rhetoric of president Kennedy and the U.S. space program was undoubtedly inspirational but its value was largely in the image of commitment, dedication, and achievement which the administration wanted to express to the other nations of the world in the face of what Vice President Johnson described as Communist doubts about the "resolution of the free world and especially …the United States."[22] Great nations must maintain great appearances. Kennedy understood that in a way that Eisenhower did not and he succeeded in presenting a compelling image for the United States to uphold to the world in the great struggle that was the Cold War.

The media's enthusiastic coverage of the Mercury and Apollo programs probably went a long way in helping Americans loose their sense of perspective. Once the frenzy reached a critical mass, of course, any word of restraint would be looked

upon as being reflective of poor patriotic spirit and eventually things would become so distorted that the lunar landing would commonly be seen by many Americans as one of the greatest achievements of the American people. The problem in this, of course, is that this was supposed to be how the people of other nations should see it as it was done with them primarily in mind and had no intrinsic value for the nation itself. It is impossible for political leaders to proscribe one set of rhetoric for international consumption and another for domestic consumption and unfortunately for many Americans this divergence of appearances from reality that became a byproduct of the Cold War was too much for them to work out. Eisenhower was right in pointing out the dangers of the military-industrial complex. The consolidation of power under the rubric of technocracy within that complex is of grave concern. But, perhaps, the real tragedy that came of these events was not so much in the balance of power as it was in the distortion of ideals and the subsequent distortion of the American character and identity.

1. Claus Jensen, *No Down Link,* trans. Barbara Haveland (New York, 1996), 50.

2. James L. Kauffman, *Selling Outer Space: Kennedy, the Media, and Funding for Project Apollo, 1961-1963* (Tuscaloosa, 1994), 15.

3. William J. Durch, *National Interests and the Military Use of Space* (Cambridge, 1984), 2.

4. Ibid, 35.

5. Ibid, 34.

6. Jensen, *No Down Link*, 54.

7. Ibid, 52.

8. Kauffman, *Selling Outer Space*, 17.

9. *New York Times*, May 6, 1961.

10. *New York Times*, May 10, 1961.

11. *New York Times*, May 6, 1961.

12. Ibid, 4.

13. Information for this and the next three paragraphs taken from Jensen, *No Down Link*, 61.

14. Ibid, 62.

15. Walter A. McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (New York, 1985), 309.

16. Jensen, *No Down Link*, 74.

17. Ibid, 66.

18. Ibid, 64.

19. Kauffman, *Selling Outer Space*, 4.

20. Ibid., 5.

21. Jensen, *No Down Link*, 69.

22. *New York Times*, May 3, 1961.

# A New Mexican Revolution?: The Student Movement of 1968

## Anne Feuerborn

The Student Movement in Mexico in 1968 was the first major step to ending overt corruption and bringing about changes promised by the Revolution of 1910. Although few changes in the political system took place at the time, students helped to open the eyes of the Mexican people and encouraged them to demand the rights usurped by the bourgeoisie, as had their revolutionary fathers at the turn of the century. In Latin America, university students had a lot of leverage, originating in the fact that most students came from upper class families. As Richard Renner wrote in 1965, university students and faculty were typically the groups which pointed out the problems within the nation.[1] In particular, the Mexican Student Movement was able to rally much support from their schools and communities by informing them of the corruption within the Mexican government.

Throughout the 1960s, Mexico experienced great economic stability and growth. The government used recent economic success to distract attention from existing problems. Although Mexico was growing richer, there had been virtually no change in the inequalities between classes. There were many who were impoverished, and few saw more than minor improvements in their standard of living. In contrast to those of European descent or foreign-born people, mestizos and Indians remained in poverty; many lived in the slums or poor villages. Repression of the lower classes had increased since World War II, and most of the income growth fell into the pockets of the elite. The lower classes share of the national income fell. The middle class, from which many students came, saw some economic benefits, but they lacked political representation. The way they felt was reflected by Octavio Paz: "without democracy, economic development has no meaning."[2] The Mexican government had sold out to foreign interests, becoming, according to Manuel Aguilar, a "direct agent of big business."[3] Even though the Mexican government had always served the bourgeoisie, the government now openly showed such bias. Such actions contrasted with the ideals for which the *Partido Revolutionario Institucional* (PRI) government was supposed to stand: those of the Revolution of 1910, to be a revolutionary government that worked in the interests of all people.

The Mexican students only had to look across the ocean to see how other students dealt with such matters. Revolts were taking place in Paris, Tokyo, and many other major cities. In Eastern Europe, students called for action towards nationalism and democracy. In the West, students strove to reverse the ills of consumer society. Students modeled their ideas on how to organize and inspire people to action on the examples of students from other nations. Unlike most other student revolutions, Mexican students focused little on university problems, and looked at the grander picture, calling for democracy for the entire nation. Mexican students at first avoided the type of violent or radical protest that was used in the United States and France in the same period, trying to maintain a more conservative program.[4] Still, repression of the Student Movement in Mexico took a similar turn to that of the other nations. The bourgeoisie had the power and the interest to protect their elevated status, and used their means to maintain it. Police and army forces became a major part of the repression, and blamed foreigners and leftist ideas for the uprising.

The trouble between the students and government began with a fight between a preparatory school student and a technical student in Mexico City, a fight that turned a riot, ending with *granaderos* (riot police) beating students. The events of the night so angered the students that days later, the *Instituto Politechnico Nacional* or the Polytechnic Institute (IPN) formed a protest against the *granaderos'* excessive use of force. This protest met with another demonstration organized by *Universidad Nacional Autonima de Mexico* (UNAM) students, members of the

largest university in Mexico, and the union of the two most powerful schools was begun. From that point on, the movement was guided by the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* (CNH-the Strike Committee), the body of student leadership made up of students from both schools, that would plan a series of demonstrations and rallies that took place during the months to come. The movement came to a screeching halt with a bloody massacre in the center of Mexico City on October 2, 1968. This essay discusses this struggle and the forces which helped to make it so powerful.

Although the left was only indirectly involved with the movement, leftist ideals helped to shape the demands which initially lead to this revolt. Before the students took action, the left was largely responsible for inspiring changes in the social welfare system of the government. The left has been alive in Mexico for many years, starting with the most important group, the Mexican Communist Party (*Partido Communista de Mexico*, or PCM), which began in 1918. The PCM organization was not the only place that leftists could be found. In fact, the PRI, the main ruling party of Mexico, at one time almost joined the Socialist International group.[5] The left also existed in other political parties and within the universities in groups which stood for the ideals of leftist thinkers such as Mao, Trotsky, and Castro.

In the late 1940s, communist parties became illegal in many Latin American nations, including Mexico. The Mexican government continued to harass communist groups up until and including the time of the Student Revolution. Meetings had to be held secretly, so it was hard for a Communist party to recruit members. Membership dropped. The left had little real power by the 1960s, but it continued to serve as inspiration for students to take a stand against the government.[6] The intellectual left, what remained of them, was the bridge between leftist ideas and the university student body, voicing the need for anti-imperialism, equality, and social justice. It was the demands of the left, born under the poverty and injustice of the PRI's political monopoly that would be transformed into the reasons for the students' protest.

Aside from the inspiration of leftism within the nation, students were also influenced by the events that had taken place in Cuba just nine years before. The Cuban Revolution showed other Latin American nations that there existed the possibility of a successful revolution in a Latin American nation that does not have a well-developed capitalist system. People who had before believed that any attempt at revolt in Mexico would be unfruitful, saw that the revolution in Cuba served to educate the people, eradicate poverty, and fend off American imperialism. In Mexico, Communist resurgence took place at the university level after the Cuban Revolution, and students raised awareness of government corruption.[7]

Although some students leaders were Communist, the ideology in no way dominated the overall purpose of the protest. Jorge Castaneda states that the student movement "shook the 'perfect dictatorship'."[8] Although the autonomous university had long been the center for criticism, the 1968 generation of students was the first to step into politics in mass numbers in order to oppose the PRI government.[9]

Even though PRI-supported groups existed in the university, they were swept aside by the mass anti-PRI sentiment. On July 26th, the first student demonstration was actually staged by a government-supported group of tech students (the FNET), who held the protest in hopes of limiting opposition against the PRI. Instead, the itinerary changed in the middle of the demonstration, and anti-government sentiment won out. From that day on, the FNET was discredited. Later, the CNH (the Strike Committee) was formed to take over leadership of the movement. The CNH represented what the students wanted unlike the FNET, which played as a puppet for the PRI government. The CNH tried to avoid affiliation with any one group, such as the Socialists or the Communists.

The demands of the CNH included: release of political prisoners, dissolving of the *granadero* force, indemnification for the families of students who were killed by the excessive force of *granaderos*, firing the police chief of Mexico City, and repeal of the penal codes that restricted free speech and press. The real motivation for the revolt went much deeper than the release of political prisoners and removal of government officials. The basis of all protest was social inequality and political repression, and protestors sought to fulfill the promises of the Revolution of 1910. Only certain people in 1968 received benefit by the actions of the government, so the protest tried to reveal PRI corruption. Students wanted to shift the focus of state policies from the elite to the poor, the laborers, and lower and middle classes, who had been shunned by the system. The students wanted the government to stop thinking about American business opportunities and, instead, focus on programs for social service. They fought to bury the repression and corruption that had been Mexican government traditions.[10]

The government of 1968, on the other hand, focused only on a few key elements of Mexican affairs. Any threats to the success of the Olympic Games (to be held in Mexico City that year and a major source of pride for the nation), the PRI monopoly, or the economy called for serious repression.[11] The students represented a threat to

all three and thus faced extreme repression. A preparatory school student commented that "the PRI doesn't go in for dialogues, just monologues."[(12)] The PRI saw to it that people who did not want to comply with the way the PRI worked ended up jobless or worse.

Students openly criticized the presidency, which was essentially a six-year dictatorship. The movement encouraged all people to participate, to demand from the government that which they had been denied. Criticism of the President, previously unheard of, was a part of the students' effort to reveal the government for it what it really was. The more the government repressed the students, the more the government proved that the students were right. As people outside of the university saw outright displays of repression, they became convinced that changes had to be made in their country. Any media that criticized the government was censored. Any public protest was also prohibited, as could be seen by the response of the *granaderos* to the student protests. Even party members were forced to resign their offices if they questioned the way in which the PRI operated.[(13)]

The students found it difficult to demonstrate their dislike for the government because the *granaderos* interfered, no matter how peaceful the demonstrations were. The UNAM Faculty of Philosophy and Letters Strike Committee best described the *granaderos* as an unconstitutional force that uses excessive brutality and disproportionate force, a microcosm for the functions of the Mexican government. The students demanded relatively little of the government-just fulfilling some of the six demands, which the CNH drew up, would have reassured a good amount of the student population. Instead of trying to work out a solution that both the students and the government could agree on, however, the government decided to crush the student rebellion with the greatest force possible. Students admitted that they anticipated being jailed and even beaten by the *granaderos* for participating in the movement, but it was murder that they did not expect. The *granaderos* were ruthless, beating anyone who appeared to be a student, smashing their cars and stealing their belongings. Most people at the demonstration were peaceful; the havoc that came to be associated with the movement was a result of *granadero* action. One student noted that "a demonstration without the police is a peaceful demonstration."[(14)]

Diaz Ordaz, President of Mexico at the time of the Student Movement, attempted to tarnish the movement's image. Ordaz made it seem as though he wanted to help the students, but that they were out of control and unreasonable. In his annual address to the nation he stated that the government had "been criticized for … excessive leniency."[(15)] He also stated in the same address that he would use all means possible to halt the student uprisings. The address made it appear that the students were irrational and that the harsh government actions were justified. Perhaps Ordaz did not realize that if he had tried to negotiate early on, he could have saved many lives. On August 13th, less than a month into the movement, the students had gone to the National Palace to call upon Ordaz, ordering that he come out and face the students. Taking the advice of his counselors, the president did not appear. This was a huge mistake. If he had appeared, those unsure of the validity of the movement may have been impressed by the gesture, and been persuaded to trust the government once again.[(16)]

It was not until July 22 that the government issued a statement that they would meet with the student leaders in private. Previously, the students had stated that any dialogue must be a public affair, and thus refused to take up the offer of the government. The government demanded that the students be patient and comply with their way of doing things, or no demands would be met. The students did not trust the government because they had seen how the government had dealt with other movements. For example, the Physicians' Movement in 1965 had bowed before the government in hopes of receiving compliance with their demands, but in the end, many of the physicians were thrown in jail and none of their demands were met. The students did not believe the government's promises. Nonetheless, their refusal made the students seem disrespectful and radical.

The students had other battles to wage besides just those with the government. Parents of the students did not understand their children's generation, or why they were protesting. Just the fact that the women wore short skirts and the men grew their hair long was evidence for some parents that the students were radicals. Some people believed that the movement only served to make trouble, not understanding that the students tried to keep the peace and wanted to create a better life for all the people of Mexico. Inversely, the students were ashamed of their parents' generation, believing that they would rather be submissive to the government than to fight for what was important.[(17)]

The students gained support by talking one-on-one with people in stores, factories, and neighborhoods. On the buses and street corners, other students asked for donations. Each day the students passed out half a million handbills describing their cause and asking for support, and collected pesos, which were pored back in the funding for advertisement. Students hijacked buses to use as an important tool for propaganda, serving as a stage for speakers, or painted with pro-movement slogans. They had "lightning meetings," which were dialogues

held from the roofs of stores and buses that broke up as soon as a policeman was sighted. Other means of advertising included painting walls of the city with slogans, even painting on the National Palace.

Workers had some problems understanding what the student movement represented. They saw the students as troublemakers. The pirating of buses often caused inconveniences for workers trying to get to their jobs. People wondered why the middle class students were fighting against the PRI system when it was the universities that usually furnished the government with its bureaucrats. Some believed that the students should have started the protest against the university itself, since corrupt government officials were trained there. Even workers who supported the movement rarely participated in the demonstrations, because the workers were heavily controlled by PRI-run unions, and did not want to risk losing what little stability they had. Support for the students sometimes came from small independent unions, but rarely from larger unions because they were PRI-run and did not want changes. Despite negative reactions from workers, the students managed to make some breakthroughs. The movement slowly created some understanding and respect between the workers and the students.[18] Workers eventually came to appreciate the fact that the students were fighting on their behalf also. Even though few workers joined in the marches and demonstrations, a number attended as spectators to show their support.

Students tried their best to rally support in a pacific manner; the best example of this was the Silent March, which took place on September 13. The demonstration was held in silence to prove to the government and the public that the students had discipline and self-control, and that the movement was not just a conglomeration of spontaneous riots. The Silent March was seen as a "sincere" and "touching" demonstration, and encouraged many to support of the movement. The power of the silence helped the movement to gain strength, to capture the confidence of the people. One handbill issued at the demonstration explains the purpose of the day: "You can see that we are not vandals or rebels without a cause-the label that is constantly pinned on us. Our silence proves it."[19]

The Silent March also served to prove that the students had no interest in disturbing the Olympic Games, as the government led the public to believe. The notice that was posted to announce the rally stated specifically that there was no intent whatsoever to interfere with the Olympic festivities. It is true that the students were not pleased with the Olympics. The money that was used to make the city ready for the Games would have been better spent on social programming to limit the poverty of the nation. People were starving in Mexico, yet the government had millions to spend on new buildings and sports complexes, in order to showcase Mexico to the world. As Evelyn Stevens notes, the "incumbent elite was spending too much for circuses and not enough for bread."[20] "Hunger and Misery are the agitators, not us," became a slogan of the student revolution for this reason.[21]

As the movement progressed, the government became frustrated with trying to end the students' protests, so within a week in September, the army of Mexico occupied both the IPN and UNAM. The UNAM occupation was more shocking, since the university, unlike the IPN, was autonomous from the government. Although the army occupation of the two campuses made it difficult for the leaders of the movement to organize mass demonstrations, the occupation helped to build support from more members of the community, including taxi drivers, shop owners, clerks, and peddlers.[22] The government saw that the occupation had not quelled the movement at all, and decided to take severe measures of force against the students.

The climax of the revolution came on October 2, just one day after the army left the university. It was only 10 days until the Olympics were to be held in Mexico City, so the government was worried that student protests would interfere with the success of the Games. For this reason, many army and police troops were on guard for the last major protest of 1968. Witnesses all tell the same story of a peaceful movement turned into a massacre. The demonstration that day was going to consist of a march to the Polytechnic Institute to demand that the army leave. The march was called off because of the concentration of army troops on the route to the school.[23] Instead, the 10,000 or so attendants of the protest listened to "tame" speeches in the Plaza of Three Cultures, right in the heart of Mexico City.[24]

Many claimed that flares dropped from a helicopter above the Plaza signaled the army to start firing upon the crowd. The army blocked off the Plaza exits with tanks. Plainclothes policemen, who wore a white glove on one hand to indicate who they were, appeared from all sides and started to shoot. The speakers called for everyone to stay calm and not to move. But people panicked and started to run for any shelter they could find. The heavy fire only lasted ten minutes, but sporadic shooting continued for more than an hour.

After the shooting ended, there was blood was everywhere-on the walls, on the ground; few people left the Plaza without the blood of others on their clothing. Ambulances were only able to enter the Plaza around 11:00 p.m.,

after the government vehicles had removed most of the dead and injured. The *granaderos* began to make arrests; two thousand or more people were jailed that night, on counts of murder, destruction of government property and kidnaping. Many people were arrested who had nothing to do with the movement, such as those who lived in the housing nearby and happened to be watching the events. Some people were held two years without so much as a hearing, jailed for being victims of circumstance.[25]

Family and friends had no way of finding out what had happened to those who were jailed or killed. They were refused information at jails and hospitals as to who had been admitted. Sometimes it was weeks before a mother found out if their child had lived through the massacre. The government claimed that only forty-three people were killed. Many Mexicans, especially those who had lived through the massacre, believed that many hundreds, probably more than one thousand, were killed that day. The government refused to allow any investigation into the matter. It was as though "causality counts were treated as state secrets."[26] It is believed that the bodies of the dead were taken outside the city and buried or burned. Some witnesses at a prison claim that they saw huge bonfires and smelled burning flesh.[27] Many people disappeared on the 2nd, and it can only be assumed that they were killed.

Since the majority of leaders of the movement were jailed or killed before or on October 2, the movement came to all but a standstill. The CNH members who were not jailed started to argue about which direction to take the movement-to increase demands or stop protesting before things got worse. The protests that continued after the massacre mostly concerned the release of political prisoners, with little attention given to the political demands. The CNH held demonstrations outside the prisons, calling for the release of the political prisoners. The demonstrations helped to restore some hope to the prisoners, who could hear the chant of the students from their cells, that they would be freed. There was support from others besides students also, including some well-known figures. Octavio Paz, a famous writer, resigned his post as an ambassador, and Barrios Sierra quit his job as the rector of UNAM to protest the madness of the government. Foreigners, including reporters, who had come early to the Olympics, stated their disgust. International publications revealed the truth about the lack of democracy and the presence of corruption in Mexico. Despite the support that the students received, the CNH called off the strike on November 25, one month after the Olympics.

Just because the CNH stopped protesting did not mean that students forgot about what the government did. Radical students who were tired of appealing to the government in a civilized manner started an armed rebellion against the government. Out of the student movement grew a passionate and irrational guerilla warfare movement. The fight, which once had the purpose of reforming the state, was now set on destroying it.[28] A committed minority of students entered this phase which lasted only untill, robbing banks and kidnaping. Most people made less radical statements through electoral absenteeism and creation of anti-government literature.

The government took a very casual approach to the aftermath of the movement. The government's weak attempt to justify the events of October 2, was to have the newspaper print a phony story that student sharpshooters had started the incident and had provoked the police. The government cared only that they succeeded in quieting down the students before Mexico hosted the Olympic Games. For the government's part, the Olympics were viewed as a success, because no disruptions occurred. But still, the government faced a problem. The October 2nd incident had provoked a lot of sympathy for the students, and anger towards the government. The movement in general had "ripped away the benevolent mask of authoritarianism and drew attention to the foundation of poverty upon which the economic miracle was built."[29] It was obvious to all that government reform was the only way to stop the conflict between the people and the state.

After Diaz Ordaz left the office of President and Luis Echeverria stepped in, steps were made to legitimize the government in the eyes of the people and reduce the likelihood of insurgency. Those who the public held responsible for the massacre of the students were Ordaz, the Chief of Police, the Secretary of Defense, and the mayor. Echeverria tried to win support of the people by firing the Police Chief and the Mayor of Mexico City. He also made steps towards the demands of the people, making mass participation in government easier by allowing new political parties to be recognized. Government criticism also became more acceptable under Echeverria. The President increased spending on welfare, housing, and education, and expanded the social security program. Another action that regained public support was the release of all the prisoners jailed in 1968 protests by the end of 1971. The former prisoners were also offered state and federal government jobs.[30]

Changes made to the Mexican political system during Echeverria's term were just the start of the breakdown of corruption. Yet in spite of progressive changes, there is still a lot of crookedness deep-rooted in the political system, for the habit of Mexican politics to be unfair and underhanded is hard to break. Still, the Student Movement of 1968 is significant to Mexico today because it was the event which caused a major push towards

ending corruption and giving the people of Mexico a voice. The message which was conveyed to the government was that people were not afraid to stand up to the unjust ways of the government. In the legacy of 1968, student protests persist to the present, objecting to many of the same aspects of the government that the students opposed in 1968.

1. Richard Renner, "Student Unrest in the U.S. and Latin American Universities," *School and Society* (1965), reprinted in *Conflict and Change on Campus*, ed. William W. Brickman and Stanley Lehrer (New York, 1970), 321-4.

2. Octavio Paz, *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid* (New York, 1972).

3. Manuel Aguilar, "A History of Repression in Mexico," in *Mexico '68: The Students Speak* (New York, 1968), 18-20.

4. Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (Lincoln, 1992).

5. Jorge G. Castaneda, *Utopia Unarmed* (New York, 1994).

6. Ibid.

7. Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*.

8. Castaneda, *Utopia Unarmed*.

9. Gilberto Guevara, *La Democracia en la Calle: Cronica del Movimiento Estudantil Mexicano* (Mexico City, 1988).

10. Castaneda, *Utopia Unarmed*.

11. UNAM Faculty of Philosophy and Letters Strike Committee, "The Mexican Student Movement: Its Meaning and Perspective," in *Mexico '68: The Students Speak*, 6-12.

12. Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, trans. Helen R. Lane (Columbia, MO, 1975).

13. UNAM Faculty of Philosophy and Letters Strike Committee, "The Mexican Student Movement," 10.

14. Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Evelyn P. Stevens, *Protest and Response in Mexico* (Boston, 1974).

21. Judith Alder Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis* (New York, 1978).

22. Ibid.

23. "Once More with Violence," *Time*, Oct. 4, 1968, 34-6.

24. Jonathan Kandell, *La Capital* (New York, 1988).

25. Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*.

26. "Once More with Violence," *Time*, Oct. 4, 1968, 34-6.

27. Kandell, *La Capital*.

28. Guevara, *La Democracia en la Calle*.

29. Kandell, *La Capital*.

30. Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*.

# Pleasures of Disorder: New Work on Hanoverian Culture

*Laura Kent*

*This review essay is based on two papers written while Laura was an undergraduate at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign for Professor Walter Arnstein (who coincidentally delivered the Epsilon Mu chapter, Phi Alpha Theta banquet lecture this year) and revised while she was a M.A. in History graduate at Eastern Illinois.*

Brewer, John. *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997.

Baer, Marc. *Theatre and Disorder in Late Georgian London.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

The distinctions that separate high and low culture can at times seem indiscernible. But it is valuable to compare those pastimes considered popular with those in which only the elite took part. John Brewer and Marc Baer consider the integration of high and low culture, particularly in the theatrical arena. Brewer follows the changing attitudes toward "the fine arts" throughout the eighteenth century and the changes that took place within the performance, painting, and literary worlds. Baer, on the other hand, closely studies theatre riots from mid-September through December 17, 1809, which reflect the struggle which occurred when the elite classes began to attend the theatre in greater numbers. The eighteenth century was a time of great cultural change as the court's patronage for the fine arts diminished and a commercial culture emerged within England. Brewer and Baer trace these changes from a courtly to a commercial culture. They also examine the dichotomy remaining in this consumer culture between base popular entertainment and enriching high-minded discussion of ideals.

Brewer states that he intends to "build a bridge between the general reader and academic scholarship, to write an accessible account of the fine arts and literature in eighteenth-century England that would draw on scholarly research" (ix). This he

has accomplished, and has created an entertaining and educational work. The illustrations are especially helpful in clarifying issues and giving the reader a visual memory of contemporary artists and critics. Yet the book gives the reader only a general understanding of the main issues within the cultural history of England during the eighteenth century.

Brewer divides his work into seven parts, including an introduction of the cultural contexts and a conclusion offering some inclusion of the whole of the British Isles. The main focus lies in parts two through four, in which Brewer individually discusses changes in performance, print, and painting primarily in London. In parts five through seven he places these individual changes in national political and social context, providing a definition of an English cultural heritage, and describing provincial culture and travel through Britain. Each of these parts generally focuses on a close study of one or two influential persons within each field. Brewer also makes use of contemporary newspapers, pamphlets, and letters as evidence for the changing attitudes of the general public toward eighteenth-century culture.

Brewer opens by explaining the state of the arts within the English Court. He points out that the early Hanoverian kings were not avid patrons of the arts. George II, for example, despised reading. He states that the monarch became less of a public figure, and he describes George III as "the first 'middle-class' monarch" (21). George III and his wife were moralistic and dull, hampering the liveliness and entertainment that had existed in previous eras. Brewer asserts that this forced artists to look for more commercial employment, and that they often times found private patronage more lucrative than a monarchical commission.

Because artists wanted to reach a large number of people and therefore make more money, an urban setting was the most economically practical environment for cultural development. London soon became not only the business center of England but the cultural center as well. Brewer concentrates on the artistic expression that was present within London's society, but he does acknowledge the existence of provincial artists and writers. In particular he singles out the lives of Thomas Bewick, John Marsh, and Anne Seward, all of whom avoided London and preferred the provinces.

Central to London's cultural development was the rise of the urban coffeehouse; it became a place to discuss cultural and critical ideas. Other important developments included the pleasure garden, concert hall, and exhibition room. In these places, and within social clubs, culture was defined and critiqued. Brewer defines the fine arts as "a field of human endeavor which was neither utilitarian nor rational but pleasing because it affected people's feelings" (87), and suggests that throughout the century the debate over the effect and value of the fine arts to the public continued.

The extension of literacy into a more working class culture is another focus of Brewer's work. He attempts to quantify the number of literate persons within England. Brewer estimates that sixty percent of the male population and forty percent of the female population could read by 1750 (167). Yet he claims that the change in printed matter had less to do with a growing literate public and more to do with changing restrictions on publishing, which allowed a wider range of topics and growth in writing. With more material available to read, the reading styles of the people changed from "intensive" to "extensive" (169). Brewer explains that "intensive" reading occurs in places where printed matter is rare; books are cherished, scrutinized, and re-read many times. "Extensive" reading is only available to cultures that have a wide variety of printed matter and where the book itself becomes less honored and remains an entertainment piece.

As more books became available, selling practices changed. Many booksellers began to allow the borrowing of books for short time at a small price (176). This practice developed into large circulating libraries. An intriguing chart of the borrowings from the Bristol Library (181) shows the number of books borrowed by subject. (History, of course, was almost twice as popular as any other subject listed.) Other changes in the buying of printed material included the development of book clubs, a small town phenomenon, in which people contributed a fixed amount to the club and thus were able, together, to buy more books than the individual would have access to alone. Brewer also comments on the illiterate masses noting that "even those who could not read lived to an unprecedented degree in a culture of print, for the impact of the publishing revolution extended beyond the literate" (187). Reading aloud was a popular pastime. Within the household women read to each other to pass the time and reading out loud occurred in factories as well. Even those who were illiterate were encouraged to buy books for literate guests.

With increased publishing, attitudes towards writers changed as well. Writers were condemned if they wrote simply for profit, yet the professional writer emerged. The distinction of the hack from the author of an original idea allowed the emergence of the professional writer. The theory that an original idea was the property of the creator and that the sale of this property should profit the laborer gave a special place to those writing novels and critiques. Only the hack was condemned for his use of others' ideas to make a profit. This distinction between the author and the hack illustrates the emerging contrast between virtuous culture and low entertainment.

The differentiation between high and low culture is especially visible within the performing arts, yet the line between base and moral entertainment is much harder to draw. Actors were seen as immoral; to illustrate this point Brewer quotes the *Players' Scourge* which stated actors "are the filth and garbage of the earth, the

scum and stain of human nature, the excrements and refuse of all mankind" (334). Players were thought to be immoral because they allowed the audience to sympathize with improper characters, and because in their personal lives many were violent, sexual, and bawdy. The theaters were located in close proximity to whorehouses and taverns, which brought more criticism. There were actors, however, who fought to include performance arts within the realm of highbrow culture. Brewer uses the example of Sarah Siddons who refused to portray immoral characters and personally censored lines she felt beneath her character (346). She was seen as matron, mother, patriot, and exemplified English propriety in spite of her acting career.

Actors like Siddons and David Garrick gave theater a more respectable place within English culture. Garrick was a well-known actor who eventually managed to link his name with that of the respected and revered actor/playwright, William Shakespeare. Garrick strengthened this link with the Bard by revising many of Shakespeare's works (409). Garrick's link to the Bard not only helped his personal career but also established the theater as a part of a national cultural heritage, raising its reputation in the eyes of those who had dismissed it as coarse and unrefined entertainment.

The new import of Italian opera also helped to blur the image of the immoral, improper performer. Women of high social standing held private concerts (400). These concerts were separated from theatrical performance but did change the attitude of the aristocracy toward all performers. The effect that the Italian aria had on English theater is discernible in the popularity of *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay. This piece used a mixture of high and low culture to reach the audience. The mixing of the aria and the traditional ballad reflected the range of social classes in the audience attending the show.

In *The Beggar's Opera,* Gay satirized plots of other contemporary plays and figures. For example, the main character is condemned to die and in the last scene a twist of fate allows the happy ending which was a necessity for operas of the time. The characters of the opera were based on contemporary political and criminal figures. Because this opera was a hybrid of many theatrical genres and highly topical it was popular among many audiences. Brewer claims *The Beggar's Opera* "made this new heterogeneous world of high, low, and commercial art coherent" (429).

Baer also looks at the changes in the theatre and the theatre going public, but he focuses on a particular event, which illustrates the struggle between popular and elite culture then taking place. By the early nineteenth century the theatre had become an arena for the expression of political and social ideals for most classes. The theatre riots of 1809 exemplify the participation of English audiences in theatre and their dissatisfaction at being kept out of decisions affecting their cultural participation.

Because these riots lasted for so long Baer is able to look at the ways the riots changed, why rioters returned, and why ticket prices brought such an uproar from the London audiences. Baer also looks at the importance of theatre to both high and low culture, especially the important role that the theatre played for the working classes. He tries to prove that disorder can have a stabilizing effect on society and that these riots in London actually helped to preserve order. Finally he looks at the way the audience changed during and after these riots; he sees a direct correlation in the riots and the changing atmosphere of the audience, which went from a participatory group to detached and silent just after the theatre riots.

In London only two licensed theatres existed, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, both of which had to be rebuilt between 1809 and 1811 due to fire. During the autumn of 1809 Drury Lane was being rebuilt and Covent Garden was the only theatre that could legally present dramatic performance. During its reconstruction Covent Garden had undergone some major changes in seating; in the type of seating offered, the number of available seats, and the price of those seats. Not only had the manager, Kemble, raised the prices without considering the opinions of the public, but also Covent Garden at this time held a monopoly. Audiences thought these new prices were unfair. Many people felt it was the right of every Englishman to go to the theatre, these new prices might keep people from ever attending a show.

Many people believed these new higher prices were unfair and immoral. The idea of a moral economy was still popular in England at this time. Rioters thought that the prices for tickets at Covent Garden should reflect a just price and that the rise in the theatre's costs should not be covered by the general theatre going public. Some felt the managers should have asked the people if they could raise the prices; some felt they should somehow cut costs. But to offer private boxes and higher prices was not the moral way to increase profits. Thus the riots began and continued for several weeks and the letters OP, which stood for "Old Prices," became the symbol of the rioters and their complaints.

While Baer does allow that the moral economy did influence the OPs he states that "the seemingly obtuse argument of access to legitimate theatre as a constitutional right appears to have been the most important element for the OPs in legitimizing their behavior" (84). He shows that those opposed to the OPs saw them as disrupters of the peace, but the OPs "saw *themselves* as the preservers of British freedom" (80). Because the theatre had become connected to both the popular culture and politics it was a place that allowed for expression of different opinions. Baer says that most European governments "feared the stage as much or more than the press"(81), because the theatre made available new ideas to a wide audience.

To those people who did not often comment on political or social changes, "a place in the audience was also a voice" (177). It was a place to express and receive new ideas and it gave the working classes something to comment on. Baer compares the cultural importance of the theatre in the early nineteenth century to the importance placed on sports in the late twentieth century. These entertainments gave those working class people something to discuss and understand, something to cherish and cheer, yet it was much more a part of the English culture than simply this. The theatre was seen as a part of the English national culture an important part of the English heritage, and it was a place for the audiences to learn how to be English. Baer says the theatre's "social importance lay in the fact that it was one of the few urban arenas--perhaps the only one--where a variety of social orders heard and saw national virtues demonstrated"(193). The theatre and the right to attend shows was of great importance to the English people and these riots reflect the desire of the public to keep the old system intact.

In fact, Baer does argue that the theatre riots show the population's anxiety to social change and desire to contain the changes taking place. This is why he feels that these riots had a stabilizing effect on the population. The rioters showed their desire to return to the old ways, to retain stability by retaining old traditions. The anxiety of the English about social change is evident from these riots. The fact that these riots were relatively peaceful also shows that the OPs did not want to begin a revolution. The riots reflect the conservative ideals of prudence and moderation and the desire to return to the old customs, not a desire to tear down and replace old practices.

The government response to the riots also shows that the rioters were self-controlled. The theatre managers brought in bouncers to protect the theatre and to quiet the crowd, but the government did not use much force during the riots. It was understood that the audience had the right to show approval or disapproval of the shows. Therefore it was difficult to make a legal distinction between rioting and participation in the evenings events. During the riots the audience actually became the actors and seemed to understand that they themselves were putting on the show.

Baer discusses the change that began to take place during and after the riots of audience participation in plays. For many years the participation of the audience in staged shows had been declining. The audience began to take a more passive role in the theatre. Baer argues that the rioters wanted to "destroy the dramatic performances to re-create a balance between stage and audience" (185). In the short run the rioters did balance the focus between stage and audience, but in the long run the stage became the focus of the audience and audience participation in plays declined even further.

Baer shows that an understanding of the theatre riots of 1809 help to give the

historian a greater understanding of the changing attitudes of the English public. It gives an example of a disturbance that was meant not to bring about change but to revive the traditions of the past. The theatre riots show a collective desire of the English to hold onto the past and at the same time the right express their beliefs about an established system. The theatre riots also show the uniqueness of the English public during an era of revolutions: public who cherished and revels in their own past, who are cautious to accept great change, and who exercise their right to express themselves in all aspects of life.

As theatre became an acceptable entertainment for the higher classes, those laborers who had always attended performances became less welcome in the audience. Both Baer and Brewer show cultural changes taking place in Hanovarian England and the struggle that occurs because of these changes.