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## Letter from the Editors-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

We are proud to introduce the 32nd edition of Eastern Illinois' University *Historia* to our readership. Our team has been hard at work selecting, editing, and producing a publication that examines a plethora of topics and viewpoints. Topics within the publication range from the spiritual revival of Irish immigrants in the United States, women's education though needlework in the 18th and 19th century, and even the use of historical memory though a car in post-Second World War Germany. We would like to thank our editor Haley Strempel for creating the cover to perfectly encapsulate the dark yet intriguing aspects of our various articles. Although difficult in narrowing our submissions, we have proudly faced each of the hurdles to create a publication informative yet diverse in its presentation.

The following publication would not be possible without Dr. Edmund Wehrle who has guided, supported, and taught us the fundamentals in creating a publication ready for public viewership. We additionally thank the History Department for providing both the skillsets to provide both our authors and our publication the following works showcased in newest volume. Without their aid, there would be no *Historia* and no publication to read from this semester.

Finally, we wish to thank the authors themselves for submitting their publications and working closely with our authors over these past few months. We have been happy to work with you and are proud to make your work reach a broader audience. We hope you all enjoy reading this publication and look forward to future editions!

With Thanks,
Charley Lackey & Sydney Dominguez, editors-in-chief, *Historia,* Vol. 32

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# Faith, Freedom, and the Fight for Independence: Judaism in the American Revolution

Eli Wilhelm

*Eli Wilhelm is a junior undergraduate student at Eastern Illinois University. He is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in History with a Teacher's Licensure and a minor in Political Science. After college he plans on continuing his education by seeking a Master's degree in History.*

In August of 1790, George Washington wrote a letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, "For Happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support," wrote the founding father.[1] Washington aimed to reassure the Jewish community of Newport that their rights would be protected under the United States' Constitution. This is because the Colonists' victory in the American Revolution marked the beginning of a new age of independence for the majority of Patriots. But despite what Washington told the congregation, it was only the beginning of the American Jewish campaign for religious and social equality—as well as economic mobility. This would prove a long and strenuous fight, beginning in the 1600s bleeding all the way into the late nineteenth century.

Figure 1 *Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island. It was erected in 1763 and is still standing today. Image courtesy of the National Park Service.*

The historiography of early Jewish Americans focuses largely on their contribution to the Revolutionary War. However, few studies offer an analysis of how the American Jewish experience and identity changed over time. For instance, historian Samuel Rezneck states that Jews maintained religious integrity in practice. He overlooks, however, the Americanization of Judaism. Moreover, Rezneck hardly discusses the impact the Revolution had on Jews. This is because in relation to other religious minorities, and even other Jews in different parts of the world, the Jewish experience in America was objectively at a much higher standard already. Comparing Jews to other religious minorities is unfair considering the enlightened ideals from the American Revolution granted everybody freedom of religion. Instead, the Jewish standard of living should be compared to their Protestant counterparts who legally and socially had a higher standing in society compared to Jews. Professor and historian of American Jewish history Jonathan Sarna offers a thorough look at how the Revolution created a sudden change in social relations, politics, and religion for Jews in America. Analysis of the academic research of Sarna and Rezneck, in addition to letters and documents from the time, suggests that the

[1] Thomas G. West, *Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America* (Lanham, MD: Bloomsbury Academic, 1997), 149. Note that President Washington used the word "demean" not as we know it today, i.e.: to degrade/to debase. Rather he drew upon an older definition in which demean meant to comport or to conduct oneself well.

prosperity of American Jews is easily overstated. Despite once being the most free Jews in the world, the community faced threats to its economic mobility, political rights, and to its Jewish culture as a whole during and after the Revolution. Such threats ultimately underscore that Jewish life was much less prosperous than most historians seem to recognize.

Jewish history is clearly defined by persecution and prejudice. This history encapsulated Jews and their identity, especially the first Jewish settlers of the New World. These particular Jews are Sephardic Jews, or those who hailed from the Iberian Peninsula. Sarna describes the unique characteristics of Sephardic Jews as, "outwardly Christian but inwardly Jewish."[2] This is due to the policies present in Spain and Portugal under Christian rule that forced Jews to convert or face a gruesome death. However, this would not remain the standard for Jews. When the Netherlands gained independence from Spain, the nation passed the Act of Abjuration, the Dutch's Declaration of Independence from King Phillip II. This act created a high level of toleration for Jews, attracting those who sought opportunities in trade.[3] Amsterdam became home to a thriving Jewish community where Jews could practice their religion freely, though many remained underground due to the culture of Sephardic Jews.

Jews also found success in commercial trade. Beginning in the early 1630s, Iberian-descent Jews would control 8% of the foreign trade in the Dutch Republic. In 1630, the Netherlands captured the Pernambuco colony from the Portuguese. Some Jews, recognizing the colony's economic potential, migrated to the city of Recife, Brazil. Regrettably, this was very short lived, as the Portuguese would recapture Recife. By the year 1654, Jewish life in Recife was non-existent. Jews fled. Some set sail back to Amsterdam in need of protection and safety, while others explored opportunities in the Caribbean. Still other Jews boarded the *Sainte Catherine* which brought the first twenty-three Jewish settlers into the port of New Amsterdam, later New York City, from Recife in 1654.[4]

Jews now had a place where they *could* survive, but they faced challenges that made them question if they *would* survive. For instance, the governor of New Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant, did not want Jews in the colony. Residents of the colony petitioned the Dutch West India Company both for and against letting Jews stay. Ultimately, the company decided that Jews had the right to "travel and trade" as they pleased. Stuyvesant's push to remove Jews from the colony was only the first challenge they faced. As historian Hasia Diner points out, the governor barred Jews from many different trades (despite the orders from the company), enforced special taxes on Jews, prevented them from building homes, and impeded on their right to practice religion. A series of petitions reversed these restrictions which afforded Jews immense legal protection.[5] Pressure from Protestantism unintentionally undermined this religious freedom. Many Jews married outside of the Jewish community to Protestants. When this happened, Jews would raise children to be Protestant, leave the Jewish community, or convert. To prevent dwindling numbers, burial rights became a catalyst to help Jews embrace the value of Judaism. For the community in New York, and all communities formed afterwards, creating burial grounds was the highest priority. This made Jews value communal life for the perseverance of the religion. If Jews violated religious laws, they could be denied burial in Jewish graveyards.[6] In addition to the protective effects of Jewish burial grounds, the permanent arrival of the Torah in America during the 1680s signified Jewish life was thriving.

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[2] Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism; A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 5.
[3] Oliver Thatcher, *Act of Abjuration* (1581), in *The Library of Original Sources*, vol. 5 (Milwaukee, WI: University Research Extension Co., 1907).
[4] Sarna, *American Judaism,* 1-2.
[5] Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 5-7.
[6] Diner, *Jews of the United States,* 28.

Although it first arrived in the 1650's from Amsterdam, the congregation sent it back because the *minyan* could not be maintained.[7] However, the Torah returned to the colony in 1663 due to increasing numbers of American Jews. This showed improvement in Jewish life and practice, especially with the emergence of synagogues and congregations.[8]In 1730, New York Jews built the first American synagogue. Shearith Israel's congregation built the Mill Street Synagogue, which created a new Jewish identity by abandoning many typical Jewish-European systemic practices.[9] This was partly due to the fact that Ashkenazi (central and eastern European Jews) and Sephardic Jews were congregating together, and partly due to the lack of resources and congregants. Typically, Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews would be entirely separate in all aspects of religion and life. But, with a small population of Jews, they had no choice but to congregate together.

*Figure 2: Illustration of the First Mill Street Synagogue. It was demolished in 1818. Image from the Congregation Shearith Israel website.*

Eventually, the Ashkenazi Jews became the majority in colonial America, but Sephardic Jews would retain "religious and cultural hegemony."[10] Religiously, there was not much of a difference between the two Jewish denominations. There were some minor traditional and dietary laws that changed to follow the Sephardic religious practices. This allowed for the formation of an American Jewish identity that was Sephardic in culture but demographically Ashkenazi. Sephardic community leaders also granted women more religious privileges, mainly in the form of being able to worship with the men in the same area of the synagogue. Jewish leaders permitted this because of the small congregation size, status, and the architectural style of the synagogues.[11]

In the Sephardic sect of Judaism, local colonial authorities and politicians possessed some influence over issues within the synagogue and power to reinforce the authority of Jewish leaders. However, the authority of the American synagogue remained supreme. Furthermore, governments rarely involved themselves with local religious issues at all. This allowed for Jewish leaders to govern their congregation with full autonomy and with the priority of preserving Judaism.[12] By the time of the American Revolution, colonial Jews had a unique and distinguishable identity. Characterized by their search for refuge and economic opportunities, Jews had to adapt to their small population size in order to survive. This thrust the population into an era where American Jews, unquestionably, were the freest Jews in the world.[13]

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[7] A *minyan* refers to the quorum of 10 Jewish adults required to hold mandatory religious practices.
[8] Sarna, *American Judaism,* 9-11.
[9] Sarna, *American Judaism,* 17.
[10] Sarna, *American Judaism,* 18.
[11] Sarna, *American Judaism,* 18-19.
[12] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 14-16.
[13] Howard Sachar, *A History of Jews in America*, (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1992), 40.

As the American Revolution broke out, most Jews supported the cause of the Patriots. The higher taxes enforced by Britain on its colonies irritated the colonists, especially Jews since they valued economic freedom. The Townshend Acts and the Proclamation of 1763 further increased the discontent American Jews had with the British. In response, Jewish merchants boycotted British goods to spite taxation and even began promoting their own products to sell to the Patriots. This reflects the value Jewish people placed on their economic freedom, rights cherished since the *Sainte Catherine* landed in 1654. As Diner explains, this economic freedom "depended on the free flow of goods as well as the goodwill of their neighbors."[14] Historians, like Ziv Carmi, argue that the policies enforced by the British were direct impairments to the fundamental value of economic freedom of the early American Jewish peoples. Increased taxes on goods and the diminished economic mobility for Jews, particularly by restricting what land Jews could use to profit, presented a direct impediment on Jewish economic values. In response, Jews launched a multitude of efforts and sacrifices throughout the Revolution to support the Patriots' cause.[15]

Perhaps the most influential way Jews impacted the Revolution came in the form of economic support. The wealthiest Jews lent money to support the Continental Army. Others created goods such as uniforms and rifles to help the army. No doubt, the greatest Jewish contributor was Haym Salomon who earned himself the title of "Broker to the Office of Finance of the United States." But before he became a famous financier, Salomon served the Continental Army in other ways. Arriving as an immigrant from Poland, Salomon became a sutler to the Continental Army after an endorsement from lawyer Leonard Gansevoort. However, he later utilized his linguistic skills and became a commissary supplying German divisions as well. While he was doing this, he spied on the British and helped prisoners of war escape captivity. Furthermore, Salomon joined a plot to burn docks and British ships, which resulted in his capture and sentence to death. Salomon's story did not end here. He managed to escape captivity before his execution.[16]

Rezneck would describe the years following his escape as a much less intense life, yet an even more impactful one. Salomon's name would often appear in Founding Father Robert Morris' official records as "Superintendent of Finance." Most of Salomon's work had come in the form of selling Continental Bills for the Revolution. He made no significant money for himself while doing this. His most famous financial contribution was for George Washington's Yorktown campaign. Washington specifically requested Salomon's help, since there was "no money to finance the campaign." The $20,000 that Salomon gave to the Continental Army was a substantial help in winning the Yorktown campaign, and subsequently, the Revolutionary War.[17] Despite a promise from the United States government, Salomon and his descendants would never be paid back the full amount for his contributions, and Salomon would die penniless. His story represented the wealthiest Patriot Jews of America. Not everyone had the means to donate influential amounts of money to the Continental Army. Instead, other passionate Jews looked elsewhere to support the Patriots.[18]

The fight for freedom resonated with many Jews, which resulted in a relatively substantial number of Jewish enlistees in the Continental Army. Carmi pointed out that around 100 of the 2,500 Jews in America served "across all theatres of battle."[19] The most notable service came from one of the Jewish epicenters: Charleston, South Carolina. Charleston's Jews served under Captain Richard Lushington and would be nicknamed the "Jew Company." It is important to note that this was not

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[14] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 44.
[15] Ziv Carmi, "To Bigotry No Sanction, To Persecution No Assistance: Jews in the American Revolutionary Period," *The Gettysburg Historical Journal* 22 (2023): 61-63.
[16] Samuel Rezneck, *Unrecognized Patriots: The Jews in the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 83-85.
[17] $20,000 is equivalent to nearly $650,000 in today's currency.
[18] Carmi, "To Bigotry No Sanction", 72-73.
[19] Carmi, "To Bigotry No Sanction", 66.

an isolated example, yet it was still unique. There were other companies that shared similar demographics, but what made Lushington's Jew Company different was that Lushington was a Quaker– another religious minority group. This created a distinct and special connection between the Jews and their commander.[20]

Jews, both in the Jew Company and from divisions in Pennsylvania and New York, risked everything fighting for the United States. Carmi draws attention to Francis Salvador, the first openly Jewish person to hold office during the colonial era. Salvador's political career was cut short when in 1776 he became the first documented Revolutionary War Jewish death. Mordecai Sheftall, a prominent businessman and Commissary General for the Continental Army, was the victim of antisemitic treatment by the British after he was caught smuggling gunpowder. The British captured Sheftall while moving gunpowder to Boston for Washington's army. These men, along with every other Jewish man who participated in battle, exhibited bravery while fighting for their freedom. However, not every sacrifice made was done voluntarily.[21]

The most immediate effects of the Revolutionary War was the uprooting of Jewish communities and disruption of their businesses. In war, nobody wins, and this was especially true for the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island and Savannah, Georgia. Rezneck details how these places were home to some of the largest Jewish communities in America at the time. But, these would be left decimated by British invasions. Families had no choice but to leave their possessions behind, which were usually left forever.

The Jewish community of New York is another example of how dislocation affected Jews. The congregation of Shearith Israel had to leave their synagogue. As the British left Boston and entered New York, Jews had to leave and figure out how to make a living, since trade was being disrupted. These upheavals and other "wartime hazards" greatly affected Jewish people, especially those who were "old stock" merchants. Many families lost fortunes because of the Revolutionary War and British occupations.[22] But Sarna claimed American Jews viewed the Revolutionary War as an "initiation right." They saw the establishment of the United States as like the founding of the "Promised Land" or even a "second Jerusalem."[23] The spirituality of the war also appears in the Shearith Israel congregation's letter to governor George Clinton, in which they describe their return to New York as a "return from exile."[24] The Jews told governor Clinton about their love for the United States and their admiration for him. These Jews truly believed that their efforts in the war would not only earn them a renewed sense of economic freedom, but also more rights in the United States.[25]

This, however, would not be the case, and the Jews would face even more challenges in the early years of the nation. In his letter to George Washington, Jonas Phillips, a merchant and veteran of the Revolutionary War, expressed his frustrations with Pennsylvania's state constitution. "By the above law a Jew is deprived of holding any public office or place of government which is contradictory to the bill of Right," Phillips wrote.[26] His reference related to how state constitutions disqualified religious dissenters from holding public office. Promises made in the United States Constitution did not have to be practiced by the states, which were free to legislate themselves. In

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20 George McDaniel, "Looking for Lushington: The Lost Quaker Commander of Charleston's Revolutionary Jewish Militia," *The Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina* (2022): 6-7.
21 Carmi, "To Bigotry No Sanction", 68-70.
22 Rezneck, *Unrecognized Patriots*, 15-18.
23 Sarna, *American Judaism*, 51-52.
24 Israel Joel, Abraham Isaacs, and Jonas N. Phillips, "Items Relating to Congregation Shearith Israel, New York," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* (1920): 33–34.
25 Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution on American Jews," *Modern Judaism* 1 (1981): 154-156.
26 Jonas Phillips to George Washington, letter, September 7, 1787, Founders Online, National Archives.

contradiction, under the federal government there was no law preventing people of various religions from holding office. Sarna highlights this fact in his work saying, "The implications of this were absurd: theoretically, a Jew could be President of the United States, but ineligible to hold even the lowliest political office in Maryland."[27]

By law, this meant Jews were not good enough to be in office in certain states. A person must have sound morals to hold state-level office. This meant that they had to be Protestant. Even in South Carolina, where there was a very prominent Jewish population, for someone to be an elected official, one had to "be of the Protestant religion."[28] This inconsistency proved to be immensely frustrating for Jews. Phillips argued that it would benefit the "Israelites" and the United States "if all religious societies are on equal footing" in the United States, given the moral principles the country fought for in the first place.[29]

For Sarna, the solution to the problem of political inequality would come "through the work of a second group of Revolutionary-era thinkers."[30] Classical Enlightenment texts found their way to America and inspired many Patriots to support "avowed deistic or Unitarian principles."[31] James Madison wrote Virginia's famous Act for Establishing Religious Freedom. In this act, he clarified the place of religion in the United States in his statement:

> *Be it enacted by the General Assembly*, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.[32]

Unfortunately, this Act proved to be ahead of its time because it was not until 1877 that all states removed binding religious requirements from their constitutions. Until then, the Jewish community in the United States faced legal discrimination which would then trickle down to affect aspects of their social lives.

The idea that Protestantism was the basis for sound morals ultimately affected Jews socially as well. Rebecca Samuel was a young Jewish immigrant who wrote a letter back home to her parents. She recounted life in America as a Jew. She reported that there was rejection of Jews in Philadelphia and New York because "there are too many German Gentiles and Jews there."[33] Despite their prominent contributions in the Revolutionary War, American Jews were still looked at with suspicion, and their allegiance was often questioned. Phillips also addressed this in his letter reiterating that "Jews have been true and faithful whigs," and that they were "foremost in aiding and assisting the states with their lives and fortunes."[34] This represented the general consensus amongst Jews in the post-Revolutionary War era. American Jews felt they had done enough to prove their patriotism and were now due full equality and recognition of their sacrifices. Yet because of the

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[27] Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution," 157.
[28] Rawlins Lowndes, "Constitution of South Carolina," 1778, *The Avalon Projec*t, Lillian Goldman Law Library.
[29] Phillips, letter.
[30] Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution," 153.
[31] Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution," 153.
[32] James Madison, "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom," 1785, *Founders Online, National Archives.*
[33] Gary Phillip Zola and Marc Dollinger, "Rebecca Samuel to Her Parents in Hamburg, Germany, Describing Her Experiences in Virginia," in *American Jewish History: A Primary Source Reader* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014) 34-35.
[34] Phillips, letter.

prejudice at this time, Jewish communities would compromise their religion in order to fully and equally integrate themselves within the United States.[35]

Jews adopted several approaches to modifying their religious practices so as not to stand out compared to their Protestant neighbors. Some participated in extra-long special services on government religious holidays. At an Independence Day celebration in 1788, Jews and Christian denominations walked together in the ceremony, but sat at different tables so that the Jewish Kosher diet could be met.[36] Congregations also wrote their own constitutions after the Revolutionary War. These constitutions mimicked the United States by prescribing a more democratic form of religious leadership rather than authoritarianism, which governed colonial Jewish institutions.

Such changes pushed Jewish communities toward a voluntaristic approach instead of threatening members with punishment. More synagogues started to spring up in Jewish cities like Philadelphia and New York. Jewish culture shifted from a "'synagogue-community' to a more voluntaristic 'community of synagogues.'"[37] This gave more power to the people by allowing them to choose where they went for religious practice and simultaneously created more competition between synagogues. In 1805 Shearith Israel even tried implementing a tax on all New York Jews who did not attend their synagogue. This strongly encouraged many Jews to join their congregation rather than others.

This style of American Judaism resulted in two more things. The first was that synagogues began converting other people to meet congregate demands. The second was that there was more leniency with Jews who broke religious laws, such as intermarriage or breaking the Sabbath. Samuel hinted at this in her letter. "Anyone can do what he wants. There is no Rabbi in all of America to excommunicate anyone," she wrote. Regarding Jewish immigrants, she said, "They came to America during the war, as soldiers, and now they can't recognize themselves."[38] The assimilation of Judaism represents an attempt to integrate on a social level with Protestants. Jews also tried to capitalize on post-war economic opportunities available to them, which resulted in what Sarna decried as an age of "lackadaisical religious spirit."[39]

There are many conversations to be had regarding Judaism in early America. The collections of sources from Sarna articulates the threats, challenges, and issues that American Judaism faced. Rezneck, rather than focusing on religion, chooses to talk about the global impact of the post-American Revolution society on Jews. Specifically, he discusses the isolated hate crimes against Jews in America with emphasis on the contributions of Jewish people during the Revolutionary War.[40] Difference also existed between Rezneck's and Sarna's view on American Judaism in regards to the reasons Jews supported the Patriots. Rezneck takes an ideological view, while Sarna takes a more economic standpoint.[41]

By analyzing these sources a clearer connection can be made between the origins of American Judaism, Jewish people's place in the Revolution, and the immediate impact of post-war culture on Jews. That connection shows how Jews went from a small group of twenty-three people who sought a place for economic opportunities free from persecution, to a group which empowered themselves to contribute significantly to a cause they believed in passionately Judaism in early America would be defined by determination and adaptation. Success in the Revolutionary War ultimately regressed the freedoms and culture they worked strenuously to build. After the War,

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[35] Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution," 156-157.
[36] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 38-39.
[37] Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution," 156.
[38] Zola and Dollinger, *Rebecca Samuel to Her Parents,* 1791.
[39] Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution," 151.
[40] Rezneck, *Unrecognized Patriots*, 20.
[41] Carmi, "To Bigotry No Sanction", 54-56.

external forces like Protestantism changed the identity of the American Jews. Protestants unintentionally pressured Jews to alter their religious governance to conform to a more American style of religion just to gain a sense of belonging. Thus, American Jews would have to do far more than just "demean themselves good citizens," in order for[42]

[42] Washington, letter.

**Stitches of Faith: Women's Education in 18th and 19th century American Needlework Samplers**

Haley A. Strempel

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Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, American girls worked tirelessly to attain what many considered their greatest accomplishment: tying the final knot on the back of their embroidery samplers. Girls spent countless hours creating neatly adorned decorative pieces. Upon completing the sampler, proud parents often hung the piece in their home to signify the girl's status, wealth, education, and skills as a future homemaker. In the end, a completed sampler left girls with a material record of their lives, education, and values. Each sampler portrayed common subjects and themes that reveal much about the roles and values of women in society in 18th and 19th century America.[1]

Embroidery samplers were needlework pieces that displayed a women's finest embroidery skills. Today, needlework is often depicted as restrictive and limiting. In some ways, this was true. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, women's roles were limited largely to the home. While they received educations, the skills and lessons taught tended to reinforce gender roles by preparing women for domestic work.[2] However, viewing needlework as solely restrictive misses the ways that it paved the way for future developments for women. If needlework held some back, many others used the craft, an activity considered to be feminine and domestic, as an outlet through which they could express their own opinions—especially religious views. Needlework provided women with education, a recreational outlet, and a path to advocate for themselves later in life. As such, needlework had profound effects on the lives and beliefs of women in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Religion offers a particularly compelling prism through which to study how needlework impacted women's lives. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women were often barred from expressing their own opinions and beliefs in public. In terms of religion, expectations required women to be pious, but they were limited from participating in religion publicly. They could not preach nor hold roles in the church. Despite this, women used needlework to circumvent such limitations. Sampler pieces often included verses, biblical scenes, and other religious symbols like angels and churches. The ways that religious motifs, such as verses and biblical scenery, appeared in needlework pieces varied depending on the creator's decisions, locations, and more. By studying the origins and meanings of these variations, it becomes clear that needlework played a large part in shaping not only the religious beliefs of women in the 18th and 19th centuries, but their values and views on life overall.

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[1] Studies of American needlework pieces from this time have been influenced by several different fields of historical study, including Material Culture and Women's History. Sources that discuss needlework in material culture include: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Of Pens and Needles: Sources in Early American Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (1990) and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of An American Myth* (New York: Vintage Press, 2002). For further reading on women's education during the 18th and 19th centuries, see Margaret A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2005).

[2] Lauren F. Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 71.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, women created needlework for a variety of purposes. Most embroidery samplers, for example, served educational purposes.[3] Needlework was also a recreational pastime for women, who often created pieces to display in their homes. These pieces were intended to be practical or decorative and could range from artistic samplers and complex textiles to something as simple as a napkin or handkerchief. Purposes often overlapped. For example, samplers created for education typically had decorative features as well. Many women created educational samplers with the intention of displaying them in the home, where they would stand as decorative symbols of status, femininity, wealth, and education.[4] As a result, the subjects represented in needlework and choices made in portraying them often reflected and aimed to uphold societal values.

*Figure 1, Williamson, Jane, Untitled, 1827, Silk on linen, 16" x 8", Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.*

Ten-year-old Jane Williamson's 1827 sampler (fig. 1) provides an excellent example of the overlapping purposes in needlework and how girls reflected the values that shaped their communities. The design features three alphabets separated by borders, as well as a number of decorative elements like flowers and vines. Beneath the alphabets, the sampler reads "O' May I seek in early youth / What guards from future harms / Religion, Modesty and Truth / For these have always charms."[5] Her work features both an alphabet and verse, indicating that it was created as part of her education. While the design is relatively simple, it also includes decorative elements like borders and flowers. In some ways, the verse itself also served a decorative purpose. A sampler that promoted values such as "religion, modesty, and truth," would have been intended to show others that Jane's personal values were suitable for a future wife or mother. It would also make clear that Jane had received an education which formed her into a respectable young woman.

[3]For discussions of needlework as an educational tool, see Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith* and Betty Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery: American Samplers & Pictorial Needlework, 1650-1850* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1993). For discussions of needlework as a recreational tool, see Aimee E. Newell, *A Stitch in Time, The Needlework of Aging Women in Antebellum America* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014).
[4]Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, 60.
[5] Jane Williamson, *Untitled,* 1827, Silk on linen, 16" x 8," Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE.

Samplers like Jane's may not reveal much about their creator's personal beliefs, but they do provide insight into the religious values taught to young girls and reflected through needlework. As girls worked on their samplers, they would have been encouraged to think about the significance of the symbols and messages they were embroidering.[6] In the case of religious elements, such as verses or scenes from the Bible, the lessons intended to be taught to students become more evident.[7] Not only did girls refine their needlework skills while creating samplers, but the designs of their samplers

*Figure 2, Fanny Wyman, Untitled Sampler, 24 December 1799, silk on Linen, 22" x 23 ¾," Winterthur Museum.*

were typically intended to facilitate other types of learning as well. Teachers carefully chose and created designs which included verses, quotes, alphabets, and numbers. Decorative Arts historian Betty Ring notes that teachers often controlled the designs of pieces created in needlework produced

[6]Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, 71.
[7]Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, 71.

in schools.[8] While this means it is much harder to interpret the actual perspectives of the young girls who created the pieces, it does provide insight into the lessons and values taught young girls.

Verses embroidered into needlework pieces provide some of the most direct insights into the religious and moral lessons and values conveyed to girls. One common verse found in girls' embroidery during the late 18th and early 19th centuries read: "Next unto God dear parents I address / Myself to you in humble thankfulness / For all your care and pains on me bestow'd/ And means or learning unto me allow'd / Go on I pray and let me still pursue / Those Golden Paths the vulgar never knew."[9] A sampler created by Fanny Wyman (fig. 2), a 14-year-old girl from Massachusetts, featured the above verse perfectly exemplifies the values and lessons taught to young girls through embroidery. In addition to the verse, the piece includes a floral border with a fruit basket, an alphabet, and numbers. That these were all elements commonly featured in other needlework pieces at the time suggests that Fanny's embroidery was less a reflection of her own personal beliefs and thoughts than a reflection of the values Fanny's teacher intended her to learn. Fanny's teacher likely chose the verse because it promoted moral values, like virtue and purity, as well as gratitude to her parents and God. The verse also emphasizes growth and learning in youth, further signaling that the piece was intended to be educational for Fanny. Examining such samplers, it may seem that educational samplers do not provide much insight into the religious beliefs of girls.

However, not all embroidered samplers created by girls in schools were so uniform, and it is important to look for exceptions to common themes and patterns found in needlework of the 18th and 19th centuries, which can indicate which pieces can provide insight into the lives of the girls who created them. In 1789, Hannah Stacy, a student in Marblehead, Massachusetts, created a sampler that read "Why should I make a man my trust / Princes must die and turn to dust /Their breath departs their pomp and pow (er) /And all thoughts vanish in an hour."[10] Beneath the verse stands a lone woman in a large white gown. A horse gallops beside her with butterflies and birds perched in the trees above. In contrast to many of the other samplers created in embroidery schools at the time, Hannah's sampler invokes a unique sense of youthfulness, playfulness and creativity. Her sampler, and many of the others created in Marblehead at the time, were notably unique in design.[11] Throughout embroidery schools in the 18th and 19th centuries, similarities were often found between the samplers created within the same school.[12] Hannah's sampler is similar in style and design to many other samplers created at Marblehead, but small changes in the design make her piece distinctive and unique. While some elements of her piece, like the birds in the trees, are similar to birds in other Marblehead embroideries, the placement of the birds and combination with other elements in the design is completely unique.

The unusual distinction of Hannah's sampler shows that girls had some creative freedom in their works. In addition to the design of the sampler, also unique is the verse selected by Hannah, which is a rebellious contrast to other verses at the time, lines typically chosen to instill virtue and value in young girls and to encourage them to step into their traditionally feminine roles in society. The abundance of needlework pieces and similarities in style in pieces from Marblehead indicate that the pieces were created with the guidance of a teacher, but small differences in design and decorative elements display that the girls had creative freedom in creating their pieces.[13] This suggests that Hannah's sampler is likely, to an extent, her own creation and design. Works such as Hannah's,

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8 Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery*, 131-134.
9 Fanny Wyman, *Untitled Sampler,* 24 December 1799, silk on Linen, 22" x 23 ¾," Winterthur Museum.
10 Hannah Stacy, *Untitled ,* 1789, silk on linen, Hagley Museum, Wilmington, DE.
11 Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery*, 131-134.
12 Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery*, 131-134.
13 Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery*, 131-134.

which indicate a level of uniqueness and originality, offer insight into the perspectives of their creators. These girls appear more involved in the creative process. If girls were more involved in the process of creating their embroidery, and even grew to enjoy it as an activity, it is more likely that they would have imbibed the religious lessons that their teachers meant to instill.

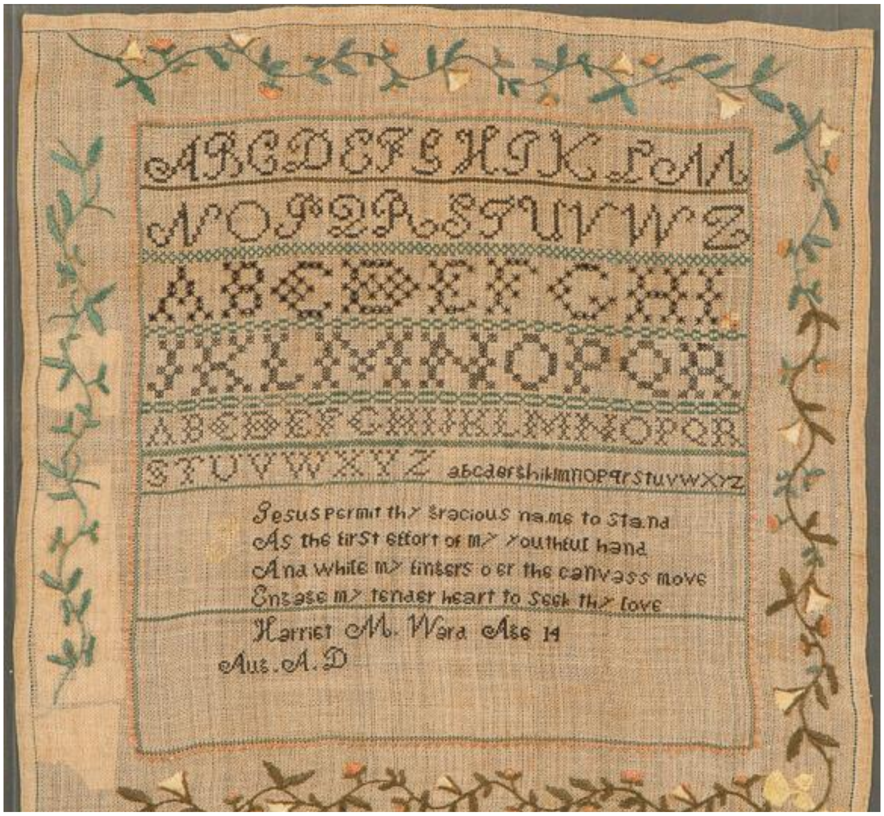

Figure 3, Harriet M. Ward, *Untitled,* c. 1830-1839, silk on linen, 17' x 17'. Winterthur Museum, Winterthur.

Late 19th century embroidery pieces created by older women attest to the idea that women's religious beliefs were shaped by the needlework created in their youth. Older women in the 19th century used embroidery as a means of recreation and nostalgia. For them, it was an activity that allowed them to reflect on their pasts, while also documenting the present.[14] Girls who grew up enjoying the creativity and expression that needlework offered no longer were barred from the creative constraints educational embroidery sometimes imposed. Women were finally able to use embroidery to express themselves with full creative control.[15] Because of this, the embroidery of older women provides unique insight into women's religious beliefs in the 19th century.

Museum director Aimee E. Newell discusses several examples of work done by older women, in her book *A Stitch In Time: The Needlework of Aging Women in Antebellum America*. Newell notes the text on a sampler created by fifty-eight-year-old Esther Banister Richards reads "Cast me not off in the time of my old age / Forsake me not when my strength faileth / Now also when I am old and gray headed / O God forsake me not." Richards "distinguishes her sampler from the many made by girls and young women" by including a verse which asks for God's assistance in aging, writes Newell.[16] Richards' sampler serves as excellent evidence of how older women began to take more control over their embroidery. As they gained more control and creative freedom over their work, women created needlework recreationally and utilized it as an outlet for self-expression.

In addition, the sampler has similarities to themes found in pieces created by young girls, indicating that religious lessons taught by embroidery likely stuck with them throughout their lives. Verses like the ones featured in Fanny Wyman's sampler, discussed earlier in this paper, and a verse

[14]Newell, *A Stitch in Time: The Needlework of Aging Women in Antebellum America*.
[15] Newell, *A Stitch in Time: The Needlework of Aging Women in Antebellum America*.
[16] Newell, *A Stitch in Time: The Needlework of Aging Women in Antebellum America*, 138-141.

from Harriet M. Ward's sampler (fig. 3), created in 1839, which reads "Jesus permit thy gracious name to stand / As the first effort of my youthful hand / And while my fingers o'er the canvas move / engage my tender heart to seek thy love," mirror Richard's verse.[17] In combination with Richard's sampler, these verses reflect how young girls learned to deal with the struggles and experiences that came along with growing up by turning to and relying on God. Richard's inclusion shows that this remained true for many women later into their lives, as they dealt with issues like death and loss.

Location also often affected portrayals of religion, as different denominations and sects were more common in different locations. Needlework examples created in Boston, Massachusetts, for example, reflect the city's strong Puritan roots.[18] Similar instances of Puritan influence can be found in other embroideries created in other locations as well. In 1839, an 11-year-old girl named Mary Chase Lewis from Providence, Rhode Island, created a colorful sampler featuring an alphabet, numbers, and a verse which reads "A Holy Judge- a righteous doom / A bar where none dissemble / A quick passage to the tomb– / How should we stop and tremble! / Great God! As years pass swiftly by, / Write on each heart, thou, thou must die" (fig. 4).[19] On either side of the verse, two memorial statues with birth and death dates stand. While this verse seems grim for a sampler created by a young girl, a number of embroideries created throughout the 18th and 19th centuries which had religious subjects also featured themes of death and the shortness of life. Women often signed and dated their works, and family histories were often stitched into samplers. The inclusion of these elements shows how women used embroidery to be remembered and give themselves a voice, but it also represents the centrality of religion in women's education and lives.[20]

As women were educated through needlework, an increased importance was placed on religion. Puritan educational standards for women often placed an emphasis on literacy to enable women to read scripture and gain salvation.[21] The inclusion of an alphabet alongside Mary's sampler reflects these priorities. The verse featured in Mary's sampler is a reference to Psalm 7, which states "God judgeth the righteous, and him that contemneth God, every day / Except he turn, he hath whet his sword: he hath bent his bow, and made it ready."[22] In choosing the design for this sampler, Mary's teacher would have likely intended to teach practical lessons in writing and reading, as well as religious instruction in the importance of relying on God in order to be saved. Therefore, it can be assumed that the education of girls taught through needlework was highly focused on religion, and that needlework played a large part in cementing that role in women's lives.

The importance of religion is evident in other types of embroidery that became popular in the eighteenth and ninteenth centuries as well. In addition to samplers, girls also created pieces that spoke to events taking place around them. Following George Washington's death, mourning needlework became increasingly popular.[23] Mourning embroidery often included religious verses and symbols and were highly decorative and adorned. The trend towards religious references in these pieces reflects how both needlework and religion served as coping mechanisms. Girls were taught to rely on God for comfort earlier in their youth, and they continued to do so later on in life when faced with difficult situations, such as death or loss.

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[17]Harriet M. Ward, *Untitled,* c. 1830-1839, silk on linen, 17"x 17," Winterthur Museum.

[18] Pamela A. Parmal, *Women's Work: Embroidery in Colonial Boston* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2012) 8.

[19]Mary Chase Lewis, *Untitled,* 1839, silk on Linen, 25" x 17.5, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

[20] Laurel K. Gabel, "A Common Thread: Needlework Samplers and American Gravestones,", *Markers* 19, (March 2002).

[21] Jill K. Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly,* Vol. 14, no. 1, (Spring 1974), 2.

[22] Psalms 7:11-12 (1599 Geneva Bible).

[23] Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery*, 20.

Eventually, schools utilizing needlework as a pedagogical tool became less common in America. Prior to the Civil War, differences in the education of boys and girls were unmistakable. While both boys and girls received education in math and reading, the methods used to teach those skills were very different. In contrast to the formal schooling for boys often, women's education often kept them in the home where they focused on domestic skills.[24] Following the end of the Civil War, women's colleges were established in the East Coast of the United States. Planners modeled the institutions after male colleges, and female colleges were the first to educate women in a way that encouraged them to think deeply and intellectually, as well as to share their own opinions. Women who attended these colleges went on to have careers and lead independent lives. Many became reformers who advocated for women's rights.[25] As higher education changed and women began to advocate for social reforms, schools stopped relying on needlework as an educational tool, one that had previously been used to reinforce women's traditionally feminine roles in society and, in effect, limit women's education.

*Figure 4, Mary Chase Lewis, Untitled, 1839, silk on Linen, 25" x 17.5". Rhode Island Historical Society, Rhode Island.*

While the emphasis on needlework was intended to constrain women in some ways, it also acted as the first step in women attaining access to higher education. Education through needlework allowed women to learn new skills, such as reading and writing. Even though these skills were taught with an emphasis on domesticity, the fact that needlework is one of the few windows into the lives of eighteenth and nineteenth-century American women exemplifies how the effect of learning these skills allowed women to write themselves into history through thread. Every stitch and detail in the pieces which survive today are remnants of the personalities and lives of the women who created them, something that can be hard to find in other types of historical documents. Needlework formed women's values and identities, gave them an outlet for their creativity, and paved the way for better education and new roles outside the home.

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[24] Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, 63.
[25] Conway, "Perspectives", 8.

# A Spiritual Renewal for Italian Immigrants

Katie J. Douglas

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In 1868, Pope Pius IX issued his *Non Expedit* ("It is Not Expedient") policy, officially declining to recognize the newly formed Italian State. This policy prevented Italian Catholics from participating in the politics of the new anti-Papal government. For Italians, the question became this: to be a patriot, or to be a Catholic?[1] This dilemma of allegiance brought anticlerical sentiments, already—already smoldering—to a complete boil.

Irish and German immigrants who made their way to the United States in earlier years held their clergy in high esteem. Therefore, they met the recent wave of Southern European immigrants to America, who appeared less pious, with disapproval. Many non-Catholic Americans simply used the label "new" and "old" to describe the immigration trends that these two groups represented. This wording, however, also often justified mistreatment and mockery of the more recent– almost all Catholic– immigrants as inferior, foreign, and strange. Because of this, the Church avoided adopting such terminology for fear of making Catholicism and foreignness synonymous.[2] Instead, as scholar Richard Linkh detailed, Bishop Francis C. Kelley (1870-1948) put "new" immigrants into two categories that most Catholics accepted, even if they did not always use the same wording. The first category was "self-supporting," which described those who actively kept the practice of their faith without the help of other ethnic groups in the Catholic Church. Leaders in the Church described Poles and Germans as "self-supporting." The second category was the "missionary" group. These were ethnic communities at risk of losing their religion. Clerics typically categorized Italians under the "missionary" label.[3]

The clergy and religious sisters of America and Italy were very much aware of the "Italian problem," or "the relative disinterest of some immigrants in the formal conduct of Catholicism and their failure to create parishes, schools, and other institutions in Italian neighborhoods."[4] Sensing Italian immigrants' need for spiritual nourishment, servants of God from both countries took steps to help them. While some individuals met the Catholic Church's efforts with skepticism, leaders ultimately succeeded in building the faith of Italian immigrants for subsequent generations. The most successful were Italian clergymen and religious sisters. American clergy and religious leaders, most of whom were of Irish descent, were compassionate and deeply invested in their efforts. However, they lacked understanding of the Italian mistrust of the Church and the clergy, grievances that required healing. The American clergy and religious leaders, understandably, also lacked a knowledge of Italian cultural customs and language. Because of this, they fell short; they proved unable to seed and grow the faith of the immigrants as effectively. Some scholars, such as Charles R. Morris, seem to suggest that Irish-American Catholics were ignorant and simply wanted to enforce

[1] "Non Expedit," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed May 5, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/topic/non-expedit.
[2] Richard Linkh, *American Catholicism and the European Immigrants, 1900-1924* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1975), 37.
[3] Linkh, *American Catholicism*, 39.
[4] James R. Barrett and David R. Roediger, "The Irish and the 'Americanization' of the 'New Immigrants' in the Streets and in the Churches of the Urban United States, 1900-1930," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 24 (2005): 3.

the "correct" way of practicing Catholicism, rather than truly aiding Italian immigrants.[5] However, there is a wealth of evidence to suggest the Italian clergy and religious sisters also made equally profound efforts to correct the slipping faith of their people. Under the universal Catholic Church, culture and language played a significant role in the spiritual lives of Italian immigrants. Clergymen and Religious Sisters from their country of origin, therefore, were better able to serve immigrant needs and build a faith that would last in succeeding generations.

The "new" immigrant groups coming over to the United States in the early 20th century looked far different than the first wave that had become established in earlier years. Many, especially Italians, were unskilled laborers in need of work. Sometimes called "birds of passage," they often stayed for only a time in the United States and then returned home to the "Old Country." Observers came to know these workers, who were often poor and illiterate farmers seeking opportunities, as *contadini*.[6] Immigants rarely came alone, but rather practiced what is called *campanilismo,* meaning that villages traveled together and settled in parts of cities as groups.[7] Because this demographic was oftentimes working-age men, they were susceptible to exploitative labor bosses. Known as the *padrone,* these English-speaking Italians provided a way for new immigrants to gain entry into America. Immigrants obtained money for their passage to America, as well as jobs and housing through this system.[8] In return, however, the bosses collected a disproportionate amount of their charges' pay, often leaving those under their care with very little left of what they earned.[9] While not all Italian immigrants matched the above description, the *contadini* immigrating in *campanilismo* groups offers a helpful frame of reference for understanding the hurdles facing a large number of this group.

Scholars have studied the so-called "Italian problem," a phenomenon also related to another concern labeled "leakage," although that term in particular dealt with the total loss of faith rather than simply the failure to support themselves spiritually.[10] Father John Talbot Smith famously remarked that the young Italian man often attended Mass three times in his life: when he was "hatched, matched, and dispatched." In other words, they were only present in church for the major events of baptism, marriage, and funeral rites.[11] Because a large part of the Italian immigrant population consisted of young men, Fr. Smith's quote seems to suggest that at Catholic services, males, and perhaps then a large portion of Italian immigrants all together, were scarce.

An issue that perhaps most significantly contributed to the problem of low Mass attendance was the Italian immigrant's tendency to hold the clergy in low esteem. This anticlericalism was fueled in a large part by the Pope's disapproval of the unification of Italy, a stance rooted in his loss of political power over the country. Frustrated by the Pontiff's failure to support what some saw as a patriotic cause, many Italian citizens turned their backs on the Church.[12] These sentiments then carried over into their new homeland. Some of the priests in Italy also turned a blind eye to and even sided with wealthy landowners that mistreated the contadini—presenting yet another reason immigrants did not generally trust their priests, whom they as not spiritual fathers to be loved, but

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[5]Charles R. Morris, *American Catholic: The Saints and Sinners Who Built America's Most Powerful Church* (New York: Times Books, 1997), 131.

[6] *Contadini* is an Italian term for peasant farmers.

[7] Robert G Spinney, "The New Immigration, 1880–1920," in *City of Big Shoulders: A History of Chicago*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 117-118.

[8] Morris, *American Catholic,* 129.

[9] Spinney*,* "The New Immigration," 118.

[10] Linkh, *American Catholicism,* 38.

[11] Linkh, *American Catholicism,* 40.

[12] James J. Divita, "The Indiana Churches," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 6 (1987): 325.

rather frauds to be feared.[13] Instead of turning to the Catholic Church where encounters with priests were inevitable, Italian immigrants sometimes resorted to other means of religion. A key characteristic of some *campanilismo* groups was a pagan belief system, isolated from the Church. A belief in magic could be seen in the use of special charms like the *corno* or *cornicello*, common possessions among immigrants.[14]

Even practices that clergymen sanctioned in Italy drew suspicion from the American Church. *Festas* were a common religious procession organized primarily by laypeople, organized after a Mass.[15] The community arranged for these traditional to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary or another Saint special to them.[16] At one procession in 1905, parishioners marched with a statue of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel that "had been decked with paper money which had been contributed by the worshipers, several hundred dollars being pinned on the robes of the Virgin, completely hiding the fabric." Other worshippers contributed, "their jewelry at the feet of the figure, and watches and rings were also pinned over the bills."[17] Even when arranged by parishioners with the Church's approval, such processions were still viewed by some as foreign, hysterical, and pagan. As historian Charles R. Morris wrote, the clergy in America "were disdainful of the Italian love of 'tinsel' and 'brass bands.'"[18] Interestingly enough, even the Italian clergy sometimes expressed disapproval of this behavior: "The Rev. Gambera Cav. of the Corona d'Italia has convinced his parishioners of the vulgarity of these processions."[19]

Figure 1. An example of a procession honoring St. Michael the Archangel in Circello, Italy, sometime before 1950. Photograph by Pasquale Paolo Cardo, and licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License.

The scholarly focus on the *campanilismo* and the existing anti-clerical sentiments offers a simple explanation as to why fewer Italian immigrants went to church during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, there is another layer that complicates the story. Historian Linkh noted that American priests observed a numbers problem: Italian immigrants did not have as many priests who were willing to catechize or follow them into America. This was not just an exclusive observation held by the American clergy, as Father Giocchino Maffei expressed regret that the people in Italy "'were left without a guide and without the council of those who had the sacred duty of teaching them.'"[20]

The men and women who dominated the US Catholic Church were mostly "old-school" Irish Catholics. They were starkly different on a cultural level from many Italian immigrants. They prayed their prayers, and they went to Mass on a weekly– if not daily– basis. There were so many Irish bishops that even the German Bishop George Mundelein of Chicago was known as an

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[13] Spinney, "The New Immigration," 119-120.
[14] Spinney, "The New Immigration," 120.
[15] Laypeople, in the Catholic Church, are those who have not received the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
[16] Divita, "The Indiana Churches," 326.
[17] "Parade by Court Order," *Chicago Chronicle,* July 24, 1905.
[18] Morris, *American Catholic*, 90.
[19] "The Procession," *La Tribuna Italiana* (Chicago, IL), Aug 13, 1907.
[20] Linkh, *American Catholicism*, 42-43.

"honorary Irishman."[21] Not only did the established Irish Catholic population have their faith solidly rooted in their culture, but some scholars such as Morris argue that they had a tendency to impose this way of life on others. To some, this was "emotional taxation without representation."[22] This catchy phrase highlights the pre-existing ethnic tension in the Catholic Church in America among the "old" immigrants. These conditions worsened with the arrival of the "new" immigrants who appeared more foreign.

One of the things that these differing ethnic groups of the "old" immigrants held in common was that, unlike the Italian immigrants, they held their clergy in high esteem. Even many of the "new" immigrants shared this characteristic, which is why the extreme anti-clericalism of the Italian immigrants scandalized the rest of the country. Devotion to clergy and nationalism were sentiments that tended to reinforce each other in Ireland. As a result, a strong respect for the hierarchy of the Church and the authority of the ordained united many Irish immigrants. This was heightened in response to the famine that afflicted Ireland in the 1830's. Hard times generated a "devotional revolution" and religious vocations boomed.[23] Irish domination of the Church in the United States, set US Catholics on a collision as Italians, who often held the clergy in low esteem, began to pour into the nation.

The American Clergy and Religious thus initiated a campaign to address the "Italian problem" that so concerned observers. A common solution was the Catholic colonization movement, or the settling of the immigrants outside of cities. The influx of Italian immigrants into the United States taxed the local economies of the urban hubs in which they settled. Reverend Frederick Sedenberg proposed that this problem could resolve itself if Italians moved into rural areas with better opportunities. Behind the stated economic advantages, resettlement proponents saw cities as sinful places, detrimental to the spiritual lives of the immigrants.[24] In 1910, the Catholic Colonization Society formed, inspired by Archbishop John J. Glennon of St. Louis. However, "colonization" on a large scale floundered; in the end, fewer than 1% of Italian immigrants left cities.[25]

Settlement houses, buildings where middle-class people lived and provided a variety of services to the surrounding poor immigrant communities, initially held little support in the Church. There were a few reasons why. The biggest is that the Church had few funds for settlement houses along with the existing churches, schools, hospitals, and orphanages that needed upkeep. There also were not enough Religious Sisters and Brothers that could be used as staff in settlement houses, even if the Church did have the means to do so.[26] Another major issue that people in the Church had with secular settlement houses, such as Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago, was that they tended to focus too much on the material care of the immigrants and not enough on their spiritual life.[27] Pope Leo XIII wrote in an apostolic letter to Cardinal James Gibbons in 1899 that, "from this disregard of the – angelical virtues, erroneously styled passive, the step was a short one to a contempt of the religious life which has in some degree taken hold of minds."[28]

However, the Church's interest in Catholic settlement houses shifted. Church leaders became increasingly wary of secular settlement houses, and suspicions grew that their true purpose

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[21] Morris, *American Catholic,* 115.
[22] Morris, *American Catholic,* 89.
[23] Barrett and Roediger, "The Irish," 21.
[24] Linkh, *American Catholicism,* 76.
[25] Linkh, *American Catholicism*, 82-83.
[26] Linkh, *American Catholicism,* 50.
[27] Linkh, *American Catholicism,* 51.
[28] "Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae," *Papal Encyclicals Online*, accessed April 12, 2026, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/l13teste.htm.

was to sway immigrants away from their faith through the appeal of charity work. The *New World,* a Chicago Catholic newspaper, dismissed settlement houses as "mere roosting places for frousy anarchists, fierce-eyed socialists, professed anti-clerics, and a coterie of long-haired sociologists." Similarly, Father James B. Curry of New York said that settlement workers "look everywhere among our Catholic and Jewish children for recruits" for converts to Protestantism. The solution, then, came through the creation of Catholic settlement houses that focused on the more holistic care of the immigrant. Despite pushback, in the 1890s, a few clergymen and laypeople began urging the Church to develop their own houses.[29] The first of its kind, the *Santa Maria Institute,* opened in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1897. Despite previously mentioned staffing challenges, Bishop William H. Elder acquired the help of two Italian Religious Sisters to begin working in the home.[30] These Catholic settlement houses provided another answer to the problem of Italian immigrants' spiritual neglect.

Scholars like Morris seem to suggest that the concern for low Mass attendance and low regard for the clergy among the Italian immigrants was a uniquely Irish-American, "old" immigrant perspective. To these scholars, the Irish sought to control and to enforce a "correct" way of being Catholic.[31] However, a wealth of evidence confirms that Italian-born Priests and Religious Sisters were just as disturbed by the Italian immigrants' ignorance of the faith, mistrust in the clergy, and general lack of alignment with the precepts of the Church. St. Mother Francesca Xavier Cabrini, one of the most well-known among the Italian Religious Sisters of her day, voiced her own solicitude for her fellow countrymen. Upon seeing evangelical Protestants who were swaying Italian immigrants away from their Catholic faith, she observed that,

> "Some of our poor Italians fall into the nets they weave. If a sound knowledge of our faith is necessary everywhere, it is especially needed in these Protestant towns and shows us how necessary it is to study the Catechism well. How can the poor immigrant be faithful to a truth, to principles that he barely knows? How can he embrace practices of which he has no notion?"[32]

She approached the issue with deep charity, and her maternal care highlights the universal acknowledgement of the "Italian problem."

As previously mentioned, part of the "Italian problem" emerged from the fact that few secular clergy followed their parishioners from Italy to America. With a scarcity of parish priests, much of the work of spiritual guidance for the new immigrants fell into the hands of the missionary orders that arrived from Italy. The Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and the Scalabrinians spearheaded this arduous undertaking. Missionaries opened new hospitals, schools, orphanages, and parochial schools. These developments, in particular organizing Catholic schools, represented a shift away from attending the state-run schools in the old country. One of the reasons the missionaries succeeded was because they were from the same country and had a shared understanding of the language and culture. This shared culture was crucial in serving immigrants, and it pertains to a preference for Italian priests, even if they were not morally upright. As Morris explains, often, European Bishops sent "wayward priests" from their country to America, which was seen "as a kind of Australia." Italian immigrants understandably even found American priests who were fluent in

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[29] Linkh, *American Catholicism*, 51-52.
[30] Linkh, *American Catholicism*, 54.
[31] Morris, *American Catholic*, 131.
[32] Frances Xavier Cabrini, *To the Ends of the Earth*, trans. Phillipa Provenzano, MSC (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2001), 288.

Italian to be "cold and puritanical," and so they "preferred native Italians, even when they were obviously charlatans."[33]

Mother Cabrini at unknown date. She would later become canonized as a Saint after her death in 1917. This image is in the public domain, on the Wikimedia Commons website.

The need for priests with legitimacy was addressed thanks to Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. The Scalabrians, officially known as the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, were organized by Scalabrini in 1887 after Archbishop John Ireland charged a commission with bringing more Italian priests into the new country. The archbishop and his commission's primary goal was to provide service to their flocks in America.[34] Although the Scalabrinians began in New York, they branched off into cities in Missouri and Ohio within their first five years of existence.[35] The mission proved wildly successful, providing the immigrants with priests who spoke Italian, established personal relationships with immigrants, and protected them from exploitation. This missionxpanded eventually to not only include Italian immigrants, but those of many other ethnicities as well.[36]

Bishop Scalabrini also invited Mother Cabrini and her Missionary Sisters to work with the men of his order in New York in service to Italian immigrants.[37] Born Maria Francesca Cabrini, in the northern part of Italy, she joined the Sisters of Providence in 1874, only to start her own religious order, Salesian Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), a few years later. Dedicated to missionary work, she accepted Scalabrini's invitation and first set foot on New York soil with her Sisters 1899. Her mission work was impressively expansive in both nature and place. Cabrini's organizations spread from New York to Washington state in the form of schools, hospitals, orphanages, and social service establishments. One of the sisters' most common methods of outreach were home visits. They provided for both the material and spiritual needs of those who requested home help.[38] Of course, this was not the only good work that they did. Just as so many other Catholic leaders desired, Mother Cabrini established hospitals that focused on a holistic approach of "body and spirit." She and her Sisters worked as translators and advocated for immigrants to receive the Sacraments.[39] Through the kindness of Mother Cabrini and her Sisters, the Italians in America now had a fighting chance.

The clergy and religious sisters who kept Christ's sheepfold from straying healed much of the mistrust towards the clergy. By the second and third immigrant generations, faith was significantly strengthened through the priests who administered the Sacraments as well as the sisters who provided care through hospitals, schools, orphanages, and home outreach. Some immigrants

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33 Morris, *American Catholic*, 129.
34 Silvano M. Tomasi, "Scalabrinians and the Pastoral Care of Immigrants in the United States," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 6 (1987): 257.
35 Tomasi, "Scalabrinians and the Pastoral Care," 259-260.
36 Tomasi, "Scalabrinians and the Pastoral Care," 263.
37 Tomasi, "Scalabrinians and the Pastoral Care," 260.
38 Mary Louise Sullivan, "Mother Cabrini: Missionary to Italian Immigrants," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 6 (1987), 26.
39 Sullivan, "Mother Cabrini," 270.

succumbed to cultural assimilation in order to feel fully participatory in their faith. However, beyond a doubt, the Church served many and helped make the United States of America a new home for immigrants where their old culture thrived.

## "The Fate of the Natives": The Herero-Nama Genocide, German Colonial History, and the *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa*

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The twentieth century is widely considered one of—if not the—bloodiest centuries in the recorded history of mankind. Attempts to properly account for all the wars, genocides, and other events that resulted in mass bloodshed in just one-hundred years has proven a serious challenge for historians; to properly account for the number of dead seems virtually impossible. When speaking of mass atrocities and Germany, mind's naturally gravitate to the Nazi regime of the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, the horrors of Nazism seem to act as a gravitational force which sits at the center of twentieth-century German history. A classic example of this is the Herero-Nama Genocide carried out in German Southwest Africa between 1904 and 1908. The massacre generated an historical discussion, which, as Tilman Dedering noted in 1993, long has been overshadowed by connections to the Holocaust four decades later.[1]

Merit exists in connecting the fate of the Herero and Nama peoples with the groups later targeted by the Nazi regime. Such discussions contribute to our understanding of twentieth-century violence and the history of genocide before its formal definition. Still, there is a serious risk of overcommitting to a tenuous connection at best. Sociologist Reinhart Kössler and historian Isabel Hull stress that German colonial officers at the time viewed the killings as part of a decisive military campaign connected to broader European colonial policies concerning indigenous resistance. Perhaps, then, before any further attempts to connect the Herero-Nama Genocide to other genocides of the twentieth century, it is critical to understand the genocide itself and the immediate context in which it occurred.

The conflict which would eventually become the Herero-Nama Genocide began as a rebellion of the Herero, under one Chief Samuel Maherero rose up against the German colonial presence. The Herero rapidly killed over one hundred German settlers, which quickly drew the attention and ire of the German government, military, and public. Over the course of the next four years, somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000 Africans died as a result of "German suppression;" the *Blue Book* offered an exact number of 92,258 deaths, but there is no real way to confirm or deny this number.[2] The first two stages of the conflict focused on the initial Nama offensive and eventual German counteroffensive. In October 1904 native casualties escalated dramatically into what we consider a genocide; this is considered the third and final stage.

The most infamous action is called the *Vernichtungsbefehl*, extermination order, issued by Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha on October 2, 1904. It read:

> The Herero are no longer German subjects…. The Herero people will have to leave the country. If the people refuse I will force them with Cannons to do so. Within the German boundaries, every Herero, with or without firearms, with or without cattle, will be shot. I won't accommodate

[1] Tilman Dedering, "The German-Herero War of 1904: Revisionism of Genocide or Imaginary Historiography?" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 1 (1993): 80.

[2] Mads Bomholt Nielsen, *Britain, Germany and Colonial Violence in South-West Africa, 1884-1919: The Herero and Nama Genocide*, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022,) 25.

Women and children anymore. I shall drive them back to their
people or I shall give the order to shoot them.[3]

Von Trotha followed up this order with a letter to Governor Theodor Leutwein on October 27 reiterating his vow that the Herero must move or be killed, including women, children, and the elderly. Other comments also reveal von Trotha's potent combination of racism and Social Darwinism. His opinions were fairly common during this time period among the German civil and military leadership. Even after the immediate slaughter had ceased, deaths rates continued to climb as conditions in concentration camps, which included exposure, overwork, disease, physical abuse, and general neglect, were poor. Men like von Trotha and Leutwein acted as part of the larger German imperial machine. The main focus of their campaign from 1904 to 1908 was death, by any means, of select groups within German Southwest Africa who had been deemed as not worthy of living. These policies would slowly fade into the background after 1908, as German colonial rule was restored in the colony, though perhaps with a larger appetite for death and cruelty remained compared to before the rebellion.

A decade later, the governments of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa received a secret telegram on January 4, 1918 from the British Imperial Cabinet. The cabinet instructed them to assemble a report on the conditions within the German colonial territories which had been occupied by Commonwealth forces. This would set off a chain of events which would result in a four-hundred page "blue book" report known as the *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany* (hereafter referred to as the *Blue Book*), compiled by the British Foreign Office and presented to the British Parliament in August of 1918. Though the report served the political purposes of the British government, it also shows how in the decade following the genocide, attempts to document atrocities and pass moral judgement were already well underway. As historians, we find in this report a depiction of genocide, a horrible reality present thirty years before a definition came to being. Events depicted in the report stand on their own—unconnected to the rest of the century, making it an invaluable primary source around which to formulate a contemporary understanding of the Herero-Nama Genocide.

South African General Jan Smuts led the Imperial Cabinet and encouraged the general investigation of German colonial administrations in all colonies occupied by Britain and its dominions. The Imperial Cabinet's January 4th telegram prompted Sir E.H.L Gorges to quickly assemble the *Blue Book* with the assistance of Major Thomas Leslie O'Reilly and A.J. Waters. The motive: the Imperial Cabinet intended to retain possession of as much of Germany's colonial empire as possible regardless of the final outcome of the Great War in the early months of 1918. This plan prompted an inquiry into the "anxiety of the natives," the *raison d-etre* of the *Blue Book* wherein it highlights German New Guinea and Samoa explicitly. Southwest Africa and the treatment of the indigenous peoples became the argument's fuel.

Under Smuts and the Imperial Cabinet sat a group of current and former South African officials, including Lord Buxton, current governor-general, and John Merriman, former prime minister of the Cape Colony. Buxton and Merriman viewed the German colony of Southwest Africa as an intrinsic threat to South African domestic security and advocated for the strongest possible case against returning Southwest Africa to German control at the end of hostilities. It is critical to note here that, while their motivations were purely political, neither they nor the Imperial Cabinet above them advocated for a fabricated piece of propaganda. In fact, Merriman insisted in private letters to Jan Smuts that the investigation be as thorough and accurate as possible: "we must have

[3] Mohamed Adhikari, "'Streams of Blood and Streams of Money': New Perspectives on the Annihilation of the Herero and Nama Peoples of Namibia, 1904-1908," *Kronos*, no. 34 (2008): 304.

the case of the Natives presented with the utmost care and fullness – *ab ovo* – with all written evidence that you can get hold of."[4]

Making the case with "utmost care and fullness" became the work of several members of the British and South African administrations, but there are three worth highlighting in particular. Major Thomas Leslie O'Reilly held responsibility for the first twenty-six chapters of the *Blue Book* outlining the history of the German colony, which constitutes the majority of the report. O'Reilly, an attorney of the Supreme Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division, served as the military magistrate for the Omaruru area of German Southwest Africa starting with its occupation in 1915.[5] He began building a historical and moral case against further German governance with the help of translated German colonial documents, criminal court hearings of German colonial officers and citizens, and oral interviews conducted with the indigenous peoples surrounding Omaruru.[6]

Second among the key authors, Major A.J Waters became a crown prosecutor in Namibia in October 1915 during which he provided the legal case against the further German possession of Southwest Africa. His contribution made up the second portion of the report.[7] The afore-mentioned Sir E.H.L Gorges, third among the important authors, oversaw the project and preface, although O'Reilly did most of the work. It is worth noting that none of these men are German, nor did they have any relationship to the German Colonial Office. It is tempting, then, to discount the report as a relevant primary source in the discussion of German colonial history. Discounting this report, however, would be a mistake, as argued below. It would fail to fully appreciate the herculean effort put forth by these men (and countless unnamed others) to assemble as much information as possible on the colonial management or mismanagement of German Southwest Africa. Their work was to be completed in the span of less than eight months.

Within the first month of occupation in 1915, British Native Affairs officials had already translated over one hundred documents from German into English. By 1917, these included a translation of the Imperial German Criminal Code used in the colonial justice courts and various treaties between the German government and indigenous leaders.[8] Though the official order to create the *Blue Book* would not come until 1918, these early attempts to understand German colonial management and the conditions of local groups such as the Herero and Nama would prove invaluable in allowing O'Reilly and Waters to finish the four-hundred page report in only eight months. The textual information gathered by British officials in this three year period allowed Sir Gorges to confidently declare in the introduction to the *Blue Book*: "Enough should be found in this report to convince the most confirmed sceptic of the unsuitability of the Germans to control natives, and also to show him what can be expected if the unfortunate natives of this part of Africa are ever again handed back to their former *régime*."[9]

Part One of the report lays out a chronological history of German "penetration" of Southwest Africa, including "atrocities committed on the natives" (what we would now consider components of the Herero-Nama Genocide). O'Reilly extensively documented his case and provided a thorough overview of German colonial rule in Southwest Africa. However, for the purposes of this present discussion, this study focuses only focus on Chapters XIII-XX, which deal primarily with the Herero-Nama Genocide itself. O'Reilly utilized two key sources to understand the genocide. These were the autobiography of Theodor Leutwein, former governor of German

[4] Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia*, xv.
[5] Great Britain, *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany* (HMSO, 1918). 11.1
[6] Reinhart Kössler, "Sjambok or Cane? Reading the Blue Book," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 3 (2004): 704.
[7] Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*, vol. 1, Sources for African History (London: Brill, 2003), xvi.
[8] Silvester and Gewald, xvi.
[9] Great Britain, *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany*, 11.

Southwest Africa, and Daniel Kariko, a local African leader whom O'Reilly describes as an "Under-Chief."[10] Beyond these, O'Reilly pulls heavily from a rich collection of personal letters, eyewitness testimonies, and even German literature.

Chapter XV, "How the Hereros Were Exterminated," opens with extensive quotations of *Peter Moor's Journey to South-West Africa* by Gustav Frenssen, a "German author writing for a German public."[11] O'Reilly establishes his-whose skepticism?? skepticism of Frenssen's account of the war with the Herero, stating that he—who? "would naturally take care to conceal the entirely barbaric side of the affair."[12] He then pairs quotations from the text with more eyewitness accounts from local Herero, the intent being to discredit the German account and forward the idea of the Herero as victims of colonial mismanagement and anti-humanitarian conduct. While this is but one short passage from Frenssen's book, Waters clearly was attempting to present this not only as a view of the killings that had occurred in Southwest Africa but the view taken by the average German, assuming they knew anything in the first place. It would require a more in-depth study of Frenssen to see if there is validity to the rhetorical tactic Waters employs here, but, given the typical rigor which both O'Reilly and Waters display throughout the rest of the *Blue Book*, it is likely realistic.

Part Two of the *Blue Book*, penned by Major Waters, posits the "natives" as victims under criminal law and begins to lay out the legal case against return to German ownership.[13] Sources regularly quoted O'Reilly from a variety of individuals and sources, often making it somewhat difficult to keep track of-don't end sentences with prepositions. Waters, by contrast, provides translated German colonial documents, either in their whole or near-whole form. Some of the translated documents provided are the colony's criminal justice code and proceedings from criminal cases. Regarding the criminal code, Waters makes several observations. First, that the "highest court of appeal" was the Governor himself, which would make it a rather daunting task to challenge the colonial government under his control, and impossible to seek accountability above or beyond his reach. Second, that while punishments are clearly laid out (to a draconian degree, Waters argues) the manner in which these are carried out was left entirely "to the whim of the individual official."

Third, while the minutes of the proceeding and the decision itself were to be submitted in writing, there was no mention of the need to record evidence or defense.[14] The *Blue Book* does not explicitly mention if such measures and lack of involvement from outside forces had been the colonial policy before 1904, but the influence that the Herero-Nama Rebellion had on the Germans even after it had been crushed can be seen. German officials prevented drawing any attention to German colonies by giving orders to punish, repress, and crush any sign of disobedience or agitation amongst the African population if deemed necessary.

The criminal proceedings themselves bear special mention, as they came in two varieties: cases tried by the German colonial court (155-184), and cases tried by the South African administration (184-200). In both, Waters focused on cases where a non-German local served as complainant. This created a basic and thorough comparison between justice for "natives" under the Germans and under the South Africans. The Germans, as Waters attempts to illustrate time and time again, often let off their own people easily, dismissing the words of locals, and providing only as many details as strictly necessary. These tendencies, pulled from the Germans' own documents, allowed Waters to create a picture of colonial mismanagement and intentional injustice before the arrival of Commonwealth forces.

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[10] Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia*, xviii.
[11] Great Britain, 61.
[12] Great Britain, 61.
[13] Great Britain, *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany*, 4.
[14] Great Britain, *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany*, 154-55.

The inclusion of the Imperial Supreme Court case regarding one Ludwig Paul Cramer is representative of the German colonial justice system. The Blue Book set out the facts of the case and presented a lengthy explanation of why the judgment was handed down. A summary of the entire case is not necessary here; however, for our purposes, a few notable points stand out. First, the accused, Ludwig Cramer, was a German farmer who appealed his case to the highest court in the (colonial) land. Second, he had been charged with "dangerous assault" against ten native individuals; though that number had been knocked down to eight at a lower court. This case was obviously nothing so light as petty theft or drunken brawl. Third, the Crown Prosecution's attempt to inflict the correct punishment for such a crime was dismissed "with charge to the Treasury;" that is, money was to be paid to the colonial government instead of the victims or their families. Fourth, the court reduced the sentence for eight of the assaults to the maximum penalty of four months in prison and a fine of 2,700 German Marks. Waters uses this case as a gross example of injustice in the courts and the devaluation of native African lives. This is further reinforced by the final detail of note: the prosecution relied heavily on the testimony of two native Africans, both of whom were pressed time and time again to retell their stories to a very skeptical court.[15]

It is curious to note that while the cases of the German colonial courts were long and detailed (Cramer's case goes on for well over ten pages,) the cases of the British colonial courts were presented in short summary, fitting multiple on the same page by listing only the accused, the crime, and the punishment.[16] Let us, for the sake of comparison, constrast Mr. Cramer's four months and 2,700 Marks for "dangerous assault" with punishments handed down by the British courts for murder. For one count of dangerous assault that resulted in the death of a native laborer, a court sentenced one Heinrich Kreft to a year imprisonment with hard labor. Walter Barth was likewise sentenced to three years imprisonment for murdering a native male laborer.[17]

The authors of the *Blue Book* are very much a present force in the assembled information, and their goals are clearly stated and regularly evident. This is both a blessing and a curse. The author's visibility gives the reader a clear sense of what the purpose of this document is, and why certain examples and stories are included. One can point at this document and see its biases. There lies the curse of this document; because it is so clearly biased, one must question to what degree the information presented within can be treated as a reliable and factual assessment of the situation Anglo forces found within German Southwest Africa in 1915.

The year following the publication of the *Blue Book*, the remaining portion of the German Colonial Office published a response to the book, seeking to push back against the thoroughly negative light in which it was cast by the book's authors. The introduction is a blazing indictment of perceived British hypocrisy and naked imperialist ambitions and ends with the question: "Is England of all nations called upon to sit in judgement upon questions affecting the treatment of native populations?"[18] Without dwelling on this text, suffice it to say Part I and Part III, examining pre-war Anglo-German dealings in Southwest Africa and examples of British mistreatment of natives in five of their colonies, are worthy of their own study. What interests us here in Part II, is a direct response to the information gathered by Majors O'Reilly and Waters. The Germans counter-argument rests upon an attack on the materials selected in the creation of the report, arguing: "it is therefore *ab initio* impossible to expect that the selection and the utilization of the material could take place according

[15] Great Britain, 165-66.
[16] Great Britain, 185.
[17] Great Britain, 186-87.
[18] German Colonial Office, *The Treatment of Natives and Other Populations in the Colonial Possessions of Germany and England: An Answer to the English Blue Book of August 1918: "Report on the Natives of Southwest Africa and Their Treatment by Germany* (Berlin: German Colonial Office, 1919), 5.

to just and *bona fide* principles."[19] In other words, because the British sought to excuse their seizure and retention of German colonial territory, they selected only the worst cases out of context and with the intention of showing the Germans as malicious. To this the Germans added that "the authors of the British Blue book… forget that things have happened in English colonial history… which deserve a much harsher condemnation."[20]

German condemnation of the British authors of the *Blue Book* was not solely reserved for the formatting and selection found in the document. The Germans accused the British of subjecting the Herero and other peoples to an "idealized" state which they believed was unreflective of reality.[21] These points are certainly worth considering, and should incline us to caution in dealing with the *Blue Book* as a reliable primary source; but they do not answer the fundamental question of the truth of the allegations. Did German understanding of the British and their imperialistic nature render the accounts untrue? There have been attempts to answer this question in scholarship. The German response to the *Blue Book* must be set aside and the focus moved to German colonial policy in Southwest Africa. In this case the Herero-Nama genocide is notable.

In *Britain, Germany and Colonial Violence in South-West Africa, 1884-1919*, German colonialism is noted by author Mads Nielsen to be heavily based on the British model. Its reputation of being barbaric and heavy-handed had established itself in British stereotypes as early as the 1890s. The Germans found the British model just as brutal or far too lenient to natives. It should also be noted that after the 1904 German-Herero War leading up to 1914, British perceptions of German colonialism had begun to improve.

Nielsen argues that during the 1904 German-Herero War and the Herero-Nama Genocide the German model of total war against the natives was not especially unique in the wider world of Western imperial colonialism. German colonial forces removing and forcibly concentrating natives together for security had been done previously in Cuba, the Philippines, and South Africa[22] This breed of German colonialism looked very different in practice when considering the forms of colonialism it drew from. Jeremy Sarkin argues that the intentional genocide seen in this case is the act that sets the Germans apart.[23]

Mohamed Adhikari estimates that this intentional genocide destroyed around eighty percent of the Herero population.[24] Adhikari blames Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha as the driving force behind the scale and brutality that sets this genocide apart in a "century of genocide." He stresses that von Trotha could not have acted without the permission, or at the very least silent approval, of large sectors of the government, military, and society of both Germany and German Southwest Africa.[25] As to why von Trotha, and the German officials backing him, took the route of Social Darwinist extermination, both Adhikari and Tilman Dedering point to the racist views which dominated German and European colonial policy. Dedering claims that the decimation of Herero after the Battle of Hamakari was a political move, not a military one. Dedering argues that Von

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[19] German Colonial Office, *The Treatment of Natives and Other Populations in the Colonial Possessions of Germany and England*, 27-28.
[20] German Colonial Office, 28.
[21] German Colonial Office, 37.
[22] Nielsen, *Britain, Germany, and Colonial Violence in South-West Africa, 1884-1919*, 35.
[23] Jeremy Sarkin, *Germany's Genocide of the Herero: Kaiser Wilhelm II, His General, His Settlers, His Soldiers*, NED-New edition (New York: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 103.
[24] Mohamed Adhikari, "'Streams of Blood and Streams of Money': New Perspectives on the Annihilation of the Herero and Nama Peoples of Namibia, 1904-1908," *Kronos*, no. 34 (2008): 303.
[25] Mohamed Adhikari, "'Streams of Blood and Streams of Money,'" 305.

Trotha sought not only to destroy any potential military resistance, but to rip out the core of the old Herero social order and hierarchy.[26]

The Herero and Nama rebellions had been largely quelled by 1908, and during this period perceptions of German colonialism in Britain began to improve. This could indicate that the animus towards German colonial officials expressed by Majors O'Reilly and Waters had more to do with wartime animosities than with long-held convictions. O'Reilly and Waters asserted that Germany inhumanly mistreated the native population seems to originate in overviews of historical literature regarding German colonial policy in Southwest Africa. The *Blue Book* as a source of information about German colonialism sanctions the reservations presented by the non-German nature of its authors and its explicitly political underpinnings. Although, there is reason to argue the case of humanitarianism given the nature of the genocide. While considering the British involvement and the German colonial office's response, there is a lack of evidence provided in favor of the Germans argument, though this still needs to be considered.

The immediate context surrounding the *Blue Book* and German colonialism in Southwest Africa can serve as a useful tool in discussions regarding modern German history and genocide. The connection between imperial German treatment of colonial subjects and Nazi persecution during the Holocaust has been long debated in circles of historians. One might consider applying the *Blue Book* to this debate. Andrew Zimmerman, however, argues that German colonial administration in Southwest Africa was not unique to its colonial neighbors, but largely in line with them. Helmut Smith traces a long and ever escalating series of anti-Semitic violence and killings not just in Germany but throughout Europe. German colonial officials such as von Trotha relied upon pre-existing colonial models in their response to Herero and Nama unrest. Still they carried them to new extremes that broke from the past whilst also foreshadowing what was to come.[27] In *Absolute Destruction*, Isabel Hull argues that von Trotha's policies were both reflective of German military culture and an instructional lesson for German commanders as they entered the First World War.[28] Was the Herero-Nama genocide just another event in a flurry of similar events happening throughout Europe and the colonial world? Or do the contents of the *Blue Book* help historians paint a comprehensive image of imperialism and genocide in the late 19th and early 20th centuries?

There is still much of this subject to be explored. Can connections between the Herero-Nama Genocide and the Holocaust become founded? Jürgen Zimmerer's attempt at forging a link between these genocides and the *Blue Book's* findings is one in a long line of scholars debating this topic. Other historians who have debated this topic include Mohamed Adhikari, Isabel O. Hull. Reinhart Kössler, and Jeremy Sarkin. Zimmerer's continuity thesis is alluring to those who wish to connect the two events, even while authors such as Thomas Kühne would caution against drawing a straight link between the two. Helmut Smith notes a vast "chasm" between what occurred under the Nazi regime and what came before. Further research of the *Blue Book* and the Herero-Nama Genocide could be used in this debate.[29]

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26 Dedering, "The German-Herero War of 1904," 84.

27 Andrew Zimmerman,"Race and World Politics: Germany in the Age of Imperialism, 1878–1914," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, edited by Helmut Walser Smith, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.)

28 Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 196.

29 Smith, Helmut Walser, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race Across the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 166.

## Shepherds and Sheep in the Shadow of Death: Masculinity and Faith Among Chaplains and Soldiers During the Great War

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When millions of men from all walks of life donned uniforms and marched off to World War I, thousands of chaplains went with them. Not quite soldiers, and not quite civilians, chaplains occupied an ambiguous space that nevertheless offered a unique and underappreciated perspective on the war. Senior Chaplain to British Forces Frederick B. MacNutt found military service an experience in contrasts. On the one hand, he thrilled at the "self-giving, the sacrifice, the whole-souled service of the Army," but simultaneously MacNutt found himself dismayed by the way his old life of faithful practice amounted to "pusillanimous caution" and "flabby irresolution" by comparison.[1] Many chaplains discovered that commanding officers viewed them as little more than "handymen," and thought little of their value to either the war effort or the spiritual health of the army.[2] Recent scholarship suggests that such experiences were not uncommon: men found that their time at the front presented numerous contradictions between their old life and their present realities. The various ways that men had to identify themselves mixed and collided just as surely as flesh and steel in the war's trenches and fields. How did this meeting, which included uniformed soldiers and clergy, reflect and influenced the identities of all involved? Cultural attitudes about masculinity, spirituality, and race that fulminated before the war shaped the way clergy and soldiers interacted, and these interactions were often marked by deep feelings of both frustration and admiration for the fighting man.

Since the war, official and scholarly interest in these interactions varied widely. Beginning with the U.S. military initiating a history of its own chaplaincy efforts, projects undertaken by the Army and Navy departments took on a new urgency as the need for chaplains grew along with the size of the armed forces. The studies produced by these military officials, however, aimed to serve the training of chaplains themselves, and as such, demonstrated the immediate interests and perspectives of the military alone. More recent scholarship seeks to frame these issues in a broader context. *The Sword of the Lord*, a collection of scholarly essays edited by Doris L. Bergen, traces military chaplaincy as a historical development across several eras, the first effort of its kind. One of the entries addressing World War I investigates the reactions of Canadian soldiers to the chaplains who served them under fire, and highlights their unease about the similarities chaplains exhibited with military commanders in terms of their misunderstanding of frontline soldiers.[3]

Subsequently, other scholars have provided rich insights into the religious context of these men. In his introduction to *American Churches and the First World War*, historian and ordained minister

[1] Frederick B. MacNutt, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in *The Church in the Furnace: Essays by Seventeen Temporary Church of England Chaplains on Active Service in France and Flanders*, ed. Frederick B. MacNutt (London: Macmillan and Co., 1917), 5.

[2] U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, *Up From Handymen: The United States Army Chaplaincy*, vol. 4, *1865-1920*, by Earl F. Stover (Washington D.C.: 1977), v.

[3] Duff Crerar, "'Where's the Padre?' Canadian Memory and the Great War Chaplains," in *The Sword of the Lord: Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Doris L. Bergen (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2004), 141.

Gordon Heath notes that, while American churches greatly contributed to the enthusiasm of communities and individuals for the war effort, the experience of war created significant tensions and disappointments among the faithful who encountered much hardship during the conflict.[4] How American soldiers experienced the war through a religious lens has been a particular interest of historian Jonathan Ebel, who has written several significant works on the subject. Building on the religious context of the war, he argues that for many American Christians, World War I was an opportunity for the expression of "muscular Christianity," and that some soldiers expressed hope that the clergy and chaplains would take note of how to be real Christian men by looking at the soldiers.[5] His book, *Faith in the Fight*, describes a widely-felt inclination among U.S. soldiers in World War I—an inclination encouraged by the military authorities—to equate their time in uniform to a divine mission. For these men, death in war often took on a salvific character for the soldiers.[6]

This essay intends to build on these works to demonstrate that the construction of identity by soldiers and clergymen of World War I amounted to a give-and-take conversation, and that a chronological and regional approach to these issues reveals interesting similarities and variations. Reflections by both chaplains and soldiers, in the form of letters and memoirs, indicate that masculinity, spirituality, and race were often inseparable concepts during the Great War.

## Christianity and the Masculine

When Anglican priest Sabine Baring-Gould composed the words for the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" in 1865, he doubtless had in mind the passage from Paul's second letter to Timothy, where he enjoined Timothy to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."[7] That hymn, and the verse that seemingly inspired it, were indicative of an attitude that was prevalent in the English-speaking Christian world. Contemporary observers and later scholars label this attitude as "muscular Christianity." Richard Andrew Meyer notes the term's prevalence in Britain by at least the late 1850's, when it appeared in Thomas Hughes' novel, *Tom Brown at Oxford*.[8] Hughes' definition of a muscular Christian is a male who wishes to strengthen and discipline his body so that he may defend the helpless, pursue righteousness, and exert dominion over the earth and set it right. This definition is instructive, as Meyer and others argue, as evidence for the development of muscular Christianity as a cultural ideal. Yet, Hughes' novel is also interesting for the distinction it raised between three male archetypes. The first archetype is a man who trains his body for the sake of pleasure and power (Hughes called such figures "musclemen"), the second (the "muscular Christian") is one who pursues physical strength so as to further the purposes of God, while the third type is a man who seeks only to grow his mind.[9] Just as the muscular Christian is differentiated from the strongman, so too is he distinct from the mere intellectual. Hughes wrote that a muscular Christian would, "as a matter of taste, prefer the man who can lift a hundredweight round his head with his little finger to the man who can construct a string of perfect Sorites, or expound the

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[4] Gordon L. Heath, "American Churches and the First World War," in *American Churches in the First World War*, ed. Gordon L. Heath (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 12.
[5] Jonathan Ebel, "The Great War, Religious Authority, and the American Fighting Man," *Church History* 78, no. 1 (March 2009): 109.
[6] Jonathan Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 76.
[7] II Timothy, 2:3 (KJV).
[8] Andrew Richard Meyer, "Contemporary American Sport, Muscular Christianity, Lance Armstrong, and Religious Experience" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, 2010), 7.
[9] Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1888), 113.

doctrine of 'contradictory inconceivables.'"[10] This pair of distinctions, by which muscular Christianity triangulated itself, shows repeatedly in the thinking of soldiers and chaplains during the First World War.

As the identity of muscular Christianity gained purchase in Victorian Britain, it soon migrated across the Atlantic, finding an enthusiastic set of devotees in America. The Young Men's Christian Association, for instance, which Ebel and others note was one of the driving institutional forces for the combination of Christian values and physical fitness through at least the first few decades of the twentieth century, got its start in London in 1841. A decade later, American missionary and naval captain Thomas Valentine Sullivan established the first stateside chapter in Boston. At first, efforts like these were seen as a way to protect men from the temptations of idleness, as famed 19th century American preacher Henry Ward Beecher put it in a public speech on behalf of a local YMCA.[11] A physical expression of godliness quickly gained additional meaning, however, as Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson argued in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1858. While praising the likes of Beecher as a rare public exception, he branded most American Christians as wholly lacking in bodily excellence. For reasons beyond just denying the devil a ready playground, Higginson argued that physical pursuits were religiously virtuous in themselves; their absence, in turn, created a critical barrier to effective ministry. He thundered that a deficit of physical life on the part of American preachers represented "[o]ne of the most potent causes of the ill-concealed alienation between the clergy and the people." If such preachers remained content to while away the time "preaching sermons in the garret to [their] deluded little sisters and their dolls," they would cede the helm of the national destiny to secular men.[12]

The intervening decades which led to the First World War saw many American pastors take to the church pulpit to keep pace with the bully pulpit, as Higginson might have hoped. Fired by the kind of zeal that led Theodore Roosevelt to charge San Juan Hill, and in an answer to the imperialistic mandate from across the Atlantic in the guise of Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden," men like the Methodist minister Matthias S. Kaufman called on the nation to shoulder the yoke of imperialism, applying its strength in a just and righteous effort of civilizing and missionary conquest in places like Cuba and the Philippines.[13] While not a unanimous sentiment by any means, such ideas among American clergy are notable both for their debt to British forerunners in muscular Christianity and political imperialism, as well as their anticipation of a similarly aggressive response to America's entry into World War I. Just as in the struggle for masculinity and imperialism, though, America and its religious supporters would be preceded into war against the Central Powers by their British coreligionists.

### The "Virilist Chaplain" in the Trenches

British journalist C.E. Montague enlisted in World War I at the advanced age of 47 and served both in the trenches and later as an intelligence officer. His experiences prompted him to publish *Disenchantment*, a searing reflection on what the war was like from a soldier's perspective. In a chapter titled "The Sheep That Were Not Fed," Montague offered a colorful description of a common sort of chaplain that he believed would be quite recognizable to most British soldiers:

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[10] Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 113.
[11] Tony Ladd and James A. Mathieson, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport* (Grand Rapids, MI: BridgePoint Books, 1999), 31.
[12] Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Saints, and their Bodies," *Atlantic Monthly* 1, no. 5 (March 1858): 584.
[13] Matthew T. Herbst, "Regime Change, Occupation, and Aggressive Christianity: The Detroit Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the U.S. Occupation of the Philippines," *Methodist History* 43, no. 4 (July 2005): 304.

> There was the man who...felt irresistibly, as many laymen did, that at the moment the war was the central thing in the whole world, and that it was unbearable not to be at the centre of things. And there was, in great force, the large, healthy, pleasant young curate...Sudden, unhoped-for, the war had brought him the chance of escape back to an almost solely physical life, like his own happy youth of rude health, only better...In the eyes of the men he had notable merits. He was a running fountain, more often than not, of good cigarettes...He gladly frequented the least healthy parts of the line, and would frankly mourn the pedantry which denied him a service revolver and did not even allow him the grievous ball-headed club with which a medieval bishop felt himself free to take his own part in a war...Having a caste of his own, not precisely the combatant officer's, he had a tongue less rigidly tied in the men's hearing...These were solid merits.[14]

Such a man was, in Montague's more succinct appellation, the "virilist chaplain."[15] Evident in this pastiche are characteristics of a vigor that was, on balance, more terrible swift sword than glory, hallelujah (to borrow from Julia Howe Ward's "Battle Hymn of the Republic"). Emphasizing the opportunity in war for a return to a younger and more masculine mode of life, he exhibits a sort of reckless courage, visiting where the fighting was thickest to deliver cigarettes and not unction, bringing words of camaraderie and not deliverance. While he seems to get along with the men well enough, Montague notes a hint of hesitation, as the soldiers find that a chaplain of this sort was not what they expected, or perhaps desired. Too quick to prove that he was like one of the soldiers, his zeal for battle could appear just this side of bloodthirstiness, particularly to soldiers who had seen quite a bit of killing and gore.[16] When death awaited any man at any time, what many of them seemed to want, according to Montague, was less a mirror of themselves, and more a foretaste of a world to come. He records that, after a particularly fire-breathing performance by a Scottish priest, one member of the Highlander infantry turned to a comrade and remarked, "A great and strong wind, but the Lord was not in the wind."[17]

Thus chaplains encountered one of the main obstacles to be avoided: becoming too familiar. But the opposite course was often just as dire. A soldier from Nova Scotia, Will R. Bird, after having served several months in the trenches with the 42nd Royal Highlanders, encountered a heated argument between a soldier and a chaplain about the merits of the chaplaincy. The soldier, called simply "Tommy," expressed disgust at the institution, noting that he had been a Methodist before the war but now felt inclined to give up on organized religion. When asked for his reasons, he explained acidly, "Preachers and padres are not any better than brass hats. They're out of touch with the men, and they've lost their hold...there's not a sincere man among them. If there was, he'd be out between the lines trying to stop both sides from killing each other."[18] When the chaplain attempted to argue that he agreed with Tommy and intended to denounce the war, Tommy was, if anything, even angrier. To turn on the war in 1917, after promoting it from pulpit to street corner to trench, would only destroy the last shred of dignity the church had in the eyes of war-weary soldiers like Tommy. To be revealed hypocrites would mean churches had never really been on the side of the enlisted men. If merely a parrot of nationalist and militarist voices, the ability of the churches and

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[14] C.E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (New York: Brentano's Publishers, 1922), 86-88.
[15] Montague, *Disenchantment,* 88.
[16] Montague, *Disenchantment,* 88.
[17] Montague, *Disenchantment,* 90.
[18] Crerar, "'Where's the Padre?'" 141.

clergy to speak words of challenge to power and comfort to the suffering would be lost for an entire generation.[19] The masculinist chaplain had indeed a Scylla and Charybdis to sail in his work on the front lines.

When faced with this perilous course, some chaplains started to reflect on their practice and found it quite different from what they expected it to be at the war's outset. MacNutt, for instance, in a 1916 sermon later adapted into a published essay, reflected on how sharply one's concerns and ways of seeing the world changed amidst the immediacy of the trenches. While he found the voice of the Anglican Church (of which he was a canon) to be appropriately spirited and aggressive at home, he found that it failed to accomplish its aims in the theaters of war. Set against the vigorous effectiveness of the humble enlisted man, he could not help but feel that the clergy and civilian faithful could stand to have a bit more of the silent resolve and simpleminded determination of the soldier in them. This contrast of talk versus action inspired him to wonder if "war, as the militarists claim, in spite of all its detestable and nameless horrors, does not provoke the finest expression of human goodness of which men are capable."[20] He found, along with the psychologist William James, who inspired his musings, that war and religious asceticism had something alike: the supreme effect of providing clarity to a mind clouded by distraction and needless refinements. While MacNutt was under no illusions that the war had done the Church's job for it, he felt nevertheless that the Church would have a tall order to take the manly and self-sacrificial virtues learned in wartime by the men of Britain and channel them into a peaceful saintliness. Indeed, he thought the Church may find that it has some catching up to do when the soldiers return to the pews. He notes that "there are more heroes than saints in the Army by a very long way," yet that, for all their faults, a multitude of these men are so much nearer sainthood than many members of the Church who "have felt the pressure of the great hand and have failed to take its impress, and yet mistake themselves for the finished product."[21] The chaplain in the trenches was apt to find himself serving men who had suffered trials and witnessed wonders the likes of which none of them could have imagined years ago.

One such soldier was Bird, who grew up Methodist and a regular attender of YMCA meetings, but found himself irritated by the mandatory church parades and sermons he was subjected to in the army.[22] It was not these institutional experiences, but rather a remarkable encounter at the front that crystallized his faith. He described in his memoirs how, one night during a bivouac, he found himself welcomed into a makeshift lean-to with two fellow soldiers. With only a tarp for protection, they nevertheless were quickly fast asleep. Soon after he nodded off, however, he awoke to the sheet falling on his face and his brother, who had been reported missing and presumed dead by the army years ago, pulling him to his feet. Bird quickly grabbed his gear and followed his brother, who spoke only in brief instructions, and led him away to some ruins. When Bird dropped his gear for a moment, he bent down to recover it, and looked up to find his brother had disappeared. He searched frantically, but found no sign of him, and slumped down to sleep in sheer exhaustion. When a familiar comrade in the 42nd woke him that morning, he learned to his shock that the bivy he had initially fallen asleep in had been shelled in the night and only his bizarre walk with the vision of his brother had saved his life.[23] He would write that this experience left him with an unshakeable confidence in the existence of the "hereafter," and it was this and not the

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[19] Crerar, "'Where's the Padre?'" 143.
[20] MacNutt, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in *The Church in the Furnace: Essays by Seventeen Temporary Church of England Chaplains on Active Service in France and Flanders*, 5.
[21] MacNutt, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in *The Church in the Furnace: Essays by Seventeen Temporary Church of England Chaplains on Active Service in France and Flanders*, 11.
[22] Will R. Bird, *Ghosts Have Warm Hands* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited: 1968), 41.
[23] Bird, *Ghosts Have Warm Hands*, 38-41.

repeated efforts of the chaplains that formed the core of his faith.[24] Even a chaplain of the good old virilist sort, quick with a light for a man's cigarette or a tale of the glory years on the football pitch, would ring a bit hollow against a story of that sort. Such soldiers as Bird were the men C.E. Montague would say were not fed, and Frederick MacNutt would look longingly to accompany on the post-war road to sainthood.

### Following the Doughboys into Manhood

Upon America's entry into the war, the military chaplains of her armed forces would find that their work often took a different form than they had imagined, as well. Although Congress authorized a minimum chaplain to soldier ratio of 1:1,200, that figure for the U.S. army seems not to have fallen below a 1:1,690 average.[25] In addition to having extra soldiers under their ministerial charge, U.S. chaplains had far less time to care for them than they might have hoped. Chaplains in the American Expeditionary Forces found themselves shunted into various roles which included sorting and censoring the mail, overseeing mess halls, selling bonds, organizing athletic events, and establishing schools.[26]

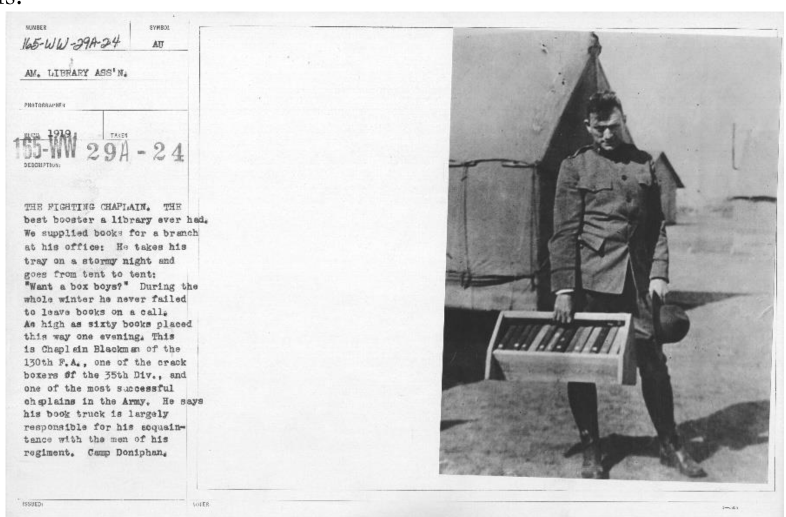


*Figure 1: Among the less spiritual tasks assigned to US chaplains was delivering books to soldiers for the American Library Association, which recorded the contributions of Chaplain Earl Blackmon (who hardly appears enthusiastic about his assignment). Image courtesy of the National Archives, College Park, MD.*

None of these jobs had a direct spiritual component, the majority of them leaned further into the intellectual side of clerical work than the physical, and some functions put the chaplains into an awkward, or even adversarial, position vis-a-vis the soldiers. Royal A. Christian, the porter to Colonel Moorhead C. Kennedy, wrote in his memoirs that, starting with the voyage to France, soldiers were urged by chaplains to self-censor the content of their communications home. One such chaplain, named Dr. Dreaver [first name unknown], urged the men to leave out any mention of discomfort or difficulty, so as not to raise the concerns of their loved ones. Later during the voyage, the chaplains were reviewing soldiers' letters home, and one wrote to his mother in defiance of the proscriptions. He insisted on being frank. "Now mother, I have never lied to you and I'll be darned

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[24] Bird, *Ghosts Have Warm Hands*, 41.
[25] Timothy J. Demy, "Military Chaplains in the First World War," in *American Churches and the First World War*, ed. Gordon L. Heath (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 171.
[26] Demy, "Military Chaplains in the First World War," in *American Churches and the First World War*, 171.

if I am going to let Dr. Dreaver tell me how to start now," he wrote.[27] The officers had a good laugh about it, and the letter was duly withheld from the mail. Though Christian would note that these initial services were well-attended and otherwise convivial, such sermons were hardly ideal first introductions between soldiers and their chaplains.

Once they reached the front and the bullets started to fly past soldiers and chaplains alike, the balance of sanctity seemed to shift dramatically in the direction of the enlisted man. Ebel finds in the wartime soldier publication *The Stars and Stripes* and in several recorded speeches by soldiers themselves the common belief that dying in battle was proof of righteousness and a guarantee of heaven.[28] This conception of casualty as martyrdom, reminiscent of the crusade theology of the Middle Ages, created a fraught proposition for the relationship between soldiers and chaplains. By 1918, chaplains and adjacent volunteer organizations like the YMCA already came in for considerable public criticism by soldiers for their perceived emphasis on petty moral issues such as alcohol consumption, coarse language, and frequenting brothels.[29] Ebel notes a particularly cutting editorial in *The Stars and Stripes,* in which a cleric on his way to France hoping to save soldiers' souls was derided as a "Pharisee," one who was blind to the fact that miraculous salvation came not from the likes of sanctimonious chaplains but rather the noble sacrifices of the soldiers themselves.[30] A more theologically orthodox chaplain, responded in *The Stars and Stripes*. He cautioned against the idea that the war made every fallen soldier a martyr, a notion with no theological or scriptural support. Undaunted, the editors of the publication responded in turn with a slightly altered read of the Gospels, substituting "for a righteous cause" for the original phrase "for my sake" in the famous promise of Jesus to his faithful followers.[31] If theologically dubious, this rhetorical victory for the apparent soldiers' view led Ebel to conclude that if the war represented not just a fight between Allies and Central powers, but a struggle for spiritual authority between clerics and soldiers, "the doughboys forced a victor's peace."[32] It would be hard to argue with this assessment, and it is certainly consonant with the conclusions of British Chaplain Frederick B. MacNutt, who found so much faithful inspiration amongst the men of the front lines, and comparatively so little amongst his fellow clerics. For Americans, like their British colleagues, the Christian male ideal during the war involved holding a rifle.

This ideal, splashed across the pages of *The Stars and Stripes* and in the mouths of many enlisted men, was almost always of a white soldier. But if white soldiers found themselves searching the trenches for a masculine identity, then so too did African-American soldiers, who numbered between 300,000 and 400,000 American men in uniform.[33] As recent scholarship (such as Adriane Lentz-Smith's 2009 book *Freedom Struggles*, and Chad Williams in his *Torchbearers of Democracy* from 2013) has indicated, unlike their white comrades, these African American men also faced the double bind of seeking their masculine identity while in service to a military and a nation that often operated under the explicit assumption that blacks could never be fully equal men. W.E.B. Du Bois, in an

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27 Royal A. Christian, *Porter, Steward, Citizen: An African American's Memoir of World War I*, ed. Pellom McDaniels III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 36.
28 Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War*, 98.
29 Ebel, "The Great War, Religious Authority, and the American Fighting Man," 114.
30 Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War*, 98.
31 The Biblical quote in full is "whoever loses his life for my sake will find it," found in Matthew 10:41 (ESV), and is nearly identically rendered in Mark 8:35 (ESV) and Luke 9:24 (ESV); Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War*, 102.
32 Ebel, "The Great War, Religious Authority, and the American Fighting Man," 133.
33 Jonathan Ebel places this figure at 307,000, while Adriane Lentz-Smith estimates it was closer to 400,000, with over half ending up in Europe; Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War*, 107; Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 4.

editorial for the May 1919 edition of *Crisis*, made plain the complexities of the position of the African American soldier:

> For bleeding France...against the threat of German race arrogance we fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals, we fought in far-off hope; for the dominant southern oligarchy entrenched in Washington, we fought in bitter resignation...We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting. Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.[34]

For Du Bois, these men, in the name of God, fought for the rights and freedoms of others, and in the hope that they would soon achieve the same for themselves at home.

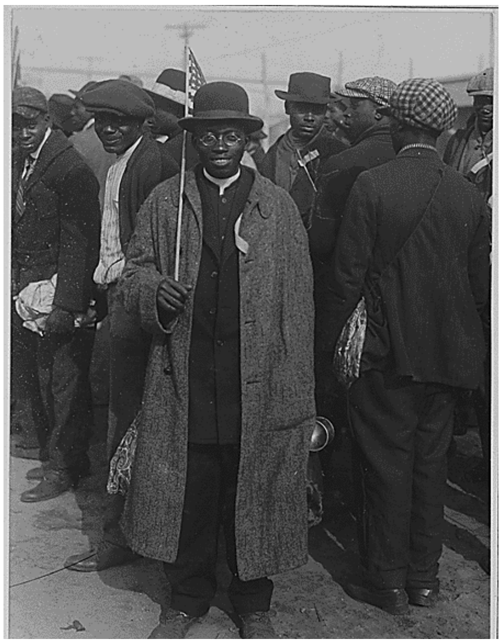

*Figure 2: Chaplain Shelton Smith at Fort Devens, MA, April 1918. That year the Spanish Flu struck Ft. Devens particularly harshly, killing hundreds. Photograph courtesy of the National Archives, College Park, MD.*

Rhetoric like this offers tantalizing insights into the intersection of faith, masculinity, and race, depths only skimmed by contemporary scholarship. Neither Lentz-Smith or Williams in their above-mentioned work emphasized the religious dimension of the identities of African American soldiers. Yet their work offers hints at the complex role played by religion. Lentz-Smith notes that when African American stevedores in St. Nazaire were ordered by their officer to destroy a cache of weapons they hoped to smuggle home for use in defending themselves and their communities against racial violence, they obeyed. But as they went in file to the water to sink the rifles, they sang the hymn "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray," with the line "the dungeon has shaken and the chains fell off" noted for its particular poignancy.[35]

Temporarily foiled in their efforts to use their acquired strength and martial skills, these men relied instead on their faith, trusting to the promise that their identities as men of God were secure, and that their worldly plight was only temporary. In vignettes like this, we can see what Ebel referred to as a "Promised Land...both in and against America."[36] The contrast with white American soldiers is strongest in the sense that whites service to the nation was already enough to grace their action with divine approval. For African Americans, however, the ideal of what America could become, by the will of God and the effort of an army of faithful and warlike men, remained the source of their service's sanctification.

What is even less clear from recent scholarship is the role that African American chaplains played in this process of meaning making. Evidence of how African American soldiers viewed their chaplains is less prevalent, if for no other reason than that their surviving writing and reflections about the war is of a smaller volume than their white brothers-in-arms. While there is little reference

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[34] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Returning Soldiers," in *World War I and America: Told By the Americans Who Lived It*, ed. A. Scott Berg (New York: Library of America, 2017): 36-37.
[35] Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 127.
[36] Ebel, *Faith in the Fight: Religion and the American Soldier in the Great War*, 126.

to chaplains in much of the source material from soldiers, there are some African American chaplains who left behind insightful written work. Reverend William S. Braddan, a captain in the U.S. National Guard and ordained minister of Berean Baptist Church in Chicago, saw himself assigned to the Illinois 8th Infantry, a storied unit of African American soldiers. Reconstituted as the 370th Infantry after America's entry into World War I, the unit had the distinction of being the only one at the time America entered the war to have an officer corps made up entirely of African Americans. Braddan wrote a series of letters home to his congregation during the war, correspondence preserved in a book for circulation amongst his faith community. His letters offer some perspective on the confluence of faith and war for the men of the 370th, and the role of a chaplain among them. On March 28th, 1918, shortly before he and his men would ship out for France, he wrote home with somber news. Two beloved officers had been relieved of command under suspicious circumstances, to be replaced by white men. Braddan praised the dismissed men's comportment, hailing them as Christlike, and giving their stoic and unbent character his blessing, saying that each of them had "done their whole duty and offered their lives upon their nation's altar." For Bradden, "[g]reater love hath no man than this."[37] This anecdote is interesting for the familiar benediction for service. Braddan hails the patriotism of the wronged men, and, in keeping with the dual identities of such soldiers as citizens in general and African Americans in particular, the attention to the racial injustice and plight of these men is of significance.

Yet questions still abound. What of the men who were dismissed? Did they see the issue as a noble sacrifice, as Braddan did? Did they see the hand of God in this? Did they wish that their chaplain would have offered a more strenuous defense in the moment, and not just honored them in his letters? Braddan is silent on these questions, and these silences are joined by others. Lentz-Smith makes mention of the 370th for their raucous train ride from Chicago to Houston for training. She notes how soldiers reported instigating scuffles with southern whites during train stops, openly flirting with white women partially for the purpose of inciting indignant local responses, and ransacking establishments that refused to serve them on racial grounds.[38] In his letters, however, Braddan makes no mention of the train ride. He noted only the fanfare upon their departure from Chicago, and the disappointment of the disarray of their camp quarters upon arrival in Houston.[39] Was his silence reflective of a desire to portray his men, many of whom came from his very congregation, in the best possible light and not to inspire undo fear for their safety among their loved ones back home? Or was it a sign of his disapproval for the behavior of the men in uniform, akin to the moralizing preachers so strenuously condemned in the pages of *The Stars and Stripes*? It is difficult to say, but Braddan seems to have little but effusive praise to give his men. After meeting with them at the front in July, he offered his men encouragement to do their deadly best. U.S.brass, he warned, believed the German army would seek to pass through their part of the allied lines in a desperate attempt at Paris. Any such initiatives, Braddan extolled his men, however, must be met by putting the Germans through hell. Hismen strongly concurred.[40] Perhaps here was a chaplain the editors of *The Stars and Stripes* could praise, if they could see him for more than just the color of his skin.

**Conclusion**

[37] William S. Braddan, *Under Fire with the 370th Infantry: Memoirs of the World War* (Chicago: printed by the author), 46.
[38] Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 91.
[39] Braddan, *Under Fire with the 370th Infantry*, 15-26.
[40] Braddan, *Under Fire with the 370th Infantry*, 15-26.

Recent scholarship pertaining to the faith, spirituality, and masculinity among World War I fighting men has begun to bear significant fruit. The role of chaplains in these developments is potentially enlightening: it reveals the tensions that were present among the men in uniform as well as how those man came to embody masculine, national, and racial identities. As one would expect, a complicated mélange of institutional, military, national, racial, and personal interests amidst an unprecedented number of fighting men in combat certainly led to a diverse array of interactions. Interpretations of these relationships should avoid the error of painting with too broad a brush. Some soldiers would naturally relate more readily to a "virilist" chaplain, while others may find comfort in one who gives voice to grave and sober concerns about the nature of the conflict and its theological implications. For much of the war, however, chaplains in the armies of Britain and America often found their spiritual authority usurped by the laymen of the armed forces, a change presaged by pre-war movements such as muscular Christianity.

Further research into these areas could yield greater insight into questions still unanswered. To the extent that America and Britain have differing relations with organized religion (Britain has its established Church of England, while America deliberately eschews government involvement with religious bodies by Constitutional decree), do these varying histories play a role in the relations between soldiers and clergy in wartime? Considering the vital role that religious institutions in America would play during the long struggle for civil rights throughout the post-World War I period, did the experiences of war on the part of black chaplains who returned to their congregations play any meaningful part in these developments? And if race and spirituality played vital roles for soldiers during the war, what of the groups who fought within this great multitude of men who did not follow the tenets of Christianity? Were their experiences altered in any way by the absence of chaplains for other faiths, and by the often mandatory church parades and sermons for enlisted men on deployment?

It may be that these queries will be met by steely silence. As William Braddan noted in his introduction to his collection of letters, it was the commonplace expectation that all should keep their peace in matters concerning the war. He was struck by the prevalence of signs in France which read "Taisez-vous; L' Allemand Ecoute"—"Shut Up, the German listens!"[41] For him, this necessary but temporary silence, drummed into soldiers and citizens alike, should yield to the calmer reflection of peacetime. He no doubt hoped that his work and his reminiscences would play some part in making meaning and sense of these momentous events. Like his colleagues who enlisted and were commissioned in the thousands to minister to the millions of soldiers in uniform, the war may not have resulted in the achievement of all their hopes, for either the world or for themselves. But at the very least, their silence is no longer taken for granted. Their role in both shaping and revealing the actions and identities of the soldiers under their charge is beginning to shed more light on our understanding of World War I.

[41] Braddan, *Under Fire with the 370$^{th}$ Infantry*, 15.

**Depictions of Femininity as a Tool for Constructing a Hegemonic Feminine Identity: A Visual Analysis of World War One Propaganda**

Mckenna Payton

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*Figure 1: Department of War, "Photograph of Woman Suffragettes", Photograph, c. 1910s, National Archives, College Park. Original Caption: Women suffragettes enrolling their willingness to aid their country when hostilities broke out between Germany and the United States.*

In times of conflict, propaganda is among the most effective ways to amass public support for a cause. This is especially true regarding the use of propaganda during World War I , which rightly earned the nickname "The Poster War."[1] While Americans used female imagery before World War I, an immense wave of propaganda depicting women in various roles and circumstances appeared leading up to and during the War. In wartime posters, women commonly functioned symbolically in a number of roles, primarily to reinforce visual national allegories. The infamous Columbia, for example, allowed for the embodiment of abstract ideals such as liberty, justice, and

[1]Michele J. Shover, "Roles and Images of Women in World War 1 Propaganda," *Politics and Society* 5, no. 4 (1975): 469.

truth. During the war, this feminine image became just one of many new ways of depicting women in propaganda. These new archetypes depicted women as embodied people, individuals who represented themselves and their nation at local, national, and international levels.[2]

Propagandized images of women reflected the ideal American woman, bolstering conceptions of the service women are able to provide to the nation. Specifically, the use of feminine imagery in propaganda campaigns during World War I targeted attitudes relating to women's labor on the home front. As was the case for American women since the founding of the nation, they were "ineligible for military service but not for service to the military."[3] Propaganda capitalized on this perspective; it depicted women as important and valuable contributors to the workforce. The shifting of this perception from a neutral position to a positive one was crucial for the wartime economy, especially as the war progressed towards a "total" state by the end of the decade. Depictions of femininity also served to make both men and women more amenable to the changing status of women in civil society. As images of women further encapsulate ideas about what makes an American woman, they also became the primary method for invoking empathy and consideration for women's suffrage and social contributions. These same depictions additionally become a conduit for venting a "social obsession," which placed identity under a centralized, national context.[4] This fixation infected the cultural core of the United States, especially as immigration increased over the latter part of the nineteenth century. As society became continually more diverse, there was a need to vent social tension. As a result, society began to strive towards conformity. For women, conceptions of femininity grew beyond basic conceptions of womanhood.

If there is a necessity for the formation of a centralized American identity to stabilize the cultural core of the United States during times of social and political change, then there must be key characteristics that are markedly "American." These ideas typically correspond with either values, such as liberty, justice, or freedom, or with accepted social norms, such as a strict racial hierarchy and religious preference. Ideals spawned from these ideas and assigned roles to citizens accordingly.[5] If one wanted to be "American," one must either possess or strive to possess certain mutually agreed upon values and physical attributes. People must also have a way to understand, learn, or interpret these ideals. Women in both their traditional role as the personification of the nation and their "malleable" position in its historical context become the perfect place to assert these key characteristics.[6]

Depictions of femininity were constructed on three strong twentieth century American ideals: whiteness, the Protestant Christian faith, and the emerging middle-class essence. By utilizing these themes and assigning visual markers to them, the American Feminine (capitalized here to differentiate between feminine as a quality or category and Feminine as an identity purposely formed by the United States cultural core for the purpose of stabilizing internal tension) becomes constructed in a way that markedly differentiates who is and is not considered to be under this new identity. This became true both within artistic allegory and within US-American society and politics prior to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

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[2] Holly Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 122.

[3]Holly Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 122.

[4]Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 7.

[5]Banta, *Imaging American Women*, xxxvii. Banta here introduces the language of "idea" and "ideals" which are crucial for understanding the motivations behind the creation and the emulation of depictions of femininity in propaganda and other late nineteenth/early twentieth century visual arts.

[6]Pearl James, "Images of Femininity in American World War I Posters," in *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture*, ed. Pearl James (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009): 274.

Depictions of women in World War I era propaganda served the dual purpose of being an "instrument" of the changing status of women and alienating those who lay outside the markers displayed in the imagery in posters is central to understanding the construction of the American Feminine.[7] To show how depictions of femininity in propaganda sought to make both the American public amenable to the developing place of women in society and to solidly alienate non-white, non-Protestant, and non-elite women from the formation of this identity, 24 posters spanning the United States Poster campaign between 1914 and 1918 will be visually analyzed in this study. This analysis marks specifically the imagery, positions, and allegorical references that speak to the place of women in the public imagination of the United States.

These works of propaganda, sourced from the collections of the Library of Congress (LOC), the Hench Collection at the Indianapolis Public Library (INPL), and the Milner Collection at the Milner Library at Illinois State University (MISU), represent but a portion of the existing posters from the campaign ran between 1914 and 1918. They are, however, the best representations of repeated symbolism, attributes, and messaging, and as such allow for a tracking of the development of depictions of femininity over the course of the War. Not all pieces analyzed are specifically discussed here, but each was considered in the crafting of analytic categories presented in this paper. Each poster reflects a depiction of women as able-bodied and fit for service, whether that on the warfront in auxiliary units or at home as farmers, homemakers, and industry women. The posters also display how women become targets of propaganda messaging that encouraged certain actions, such as the purchasing of war bonds, for example. The efficacy of propaganda as a marketing tool in part relied on "traditional" conceptions of social and cultural propriety.[8] Further, we can understand the efficacy of propaganda in its simplicity. Propaganda is distinctly easy to read. The ease of reading lends itself to the ease of acceptance and application. In *Imaging American Women: Ideal and Ideals in Cultural History*, Martha Banta suggests that "perception of the object and the choice to emulate it happen first." This shows the readiness with which the American public, and especially American women, as the primary audience for consumer marketing, were willing to emulate and acquiesce subconscious messaging about ideas and ideals found in propaganda campaigns.[9]

Banta's work provides the conceptual framework for this analysis. The notion of ideas, which provide the language of "typing" (the categories asserted in depictions for the purpose of conformity); and ideals, which spawn from ideas and assign complementary values to the categories asserted, originate with Banta.[10] Without her vocabulary, it is impossible to perceive the cyclical relationship between ideas, ideals, and application. These ideas are not only an essential contribution towards the historiography of this inquiry, but they also shape the structure of visual analysis and interpretation of features utilized in the construction of propaganda imagery.

**Historiography**

Few historical studies focus solely on depictions of femininity in World War I era. Usually, considerations of women in propaganda are briefly included in larger discussions about women's labor or in broader studies of women in wartime civil society. As such, the pieces which do exist

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7James, "Images of Femininity," 275.
8Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in World War I* (Cambridge: The M.I.T Press, 1971), 192.
9Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 19.
10Banta, *Imaging American Women*, xxvi. The preface of Banta's *Imaging American Women* highlights many key components of her following analysis and introduces readers to vocabulary that allows for a translation of theory (in this case, her conception of ideas and ideals as two separate, but resonate entities) to practical application (the visual analysis she undertakes of women in the visual arts from 1976 through 1918). This same vocabulary became crucial for my inquiry as I continued development and as such, I view it as a necessary feature of my method.

inspire this inquiry greatly. The sources most strongly associated with this research include historian Pearl James' "Images of Femininity in American World War I Posters," which addresses the many "types" of women depicted in World War One propaganda runs. Additionally, Martha Banta's above mentioned *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* provides the conceptual framework for this study. Both narratives explore the "types" into which women were cast, while also speaking to the various goals these type castings sought to achieve.

James centralizes her argument on how "selective and idealized images of American womanhood," contradictory as they are, speak to the changing role of women and help solidify a modern American Feminine identity.[11] Her position supports the conclusions offered below, which posit that Americans interpreted images in posters in league with pre-existing ideas and ideals concerning gender, race, and class. Therefore their messaging became internalized and applied through personal, subjective lenses. This process altered the construction of the American Feminine allowing it to function as a tool of cultural hegemony and purposefully exclude non-white, non-Protestant, and lower-class individuals.

Banta's narrative additionally supports both my and James' arguments. She posits the existence of

"The New Woman," a visual typing which combined pre-existing archetypes and allegorical depictions of women for an "explicit political purpose."[12] By imbuing "The New Woman" with this purpose, her essence (and effectively all other feminine essences which find themselves cast in her image) could be manipulated and used for various purposes by all sides. James' argument places women at the helm, where they both contributed to and benefitted from depictions of femininity in propaganda posters. Historian Michelle Shover suggests that the United States government was responsible for the manipulation of depictions of femininity in its attempt to "preserve the traditionally passive feminine role" while still exploiting the various forms of labor women could give to the nation during the War.[13] This study posits that propaganda had a distinct and desirable end: cultural hegemony and alienation of the "other" from the ideal American.

Of the primary works relating to depictions of femininity, only two speaks substantially to the experiences of non-white, non-Protestant, and lower-class women. William J. Breen and Adriene Lentz-Smith offer complementary perspectives on black Americans and their emerging social identities during the war. Breen asserts that black women responded to the war effort with equal passion as their white counterparts, although their engagement in wartime civil society is often forgotten[14] Lentz-Smith builds on this position, suggesting the opportunity for social reform that emerged from the war effort created a zest for active displays of patriotism from black Americans. The Black American identity, she asserts, emerged from increasing participation in the war effort, because "fighting a 'true war for democracy'" both overseas and at home promoted initiatives for securing social and civic equality and autonomy.[15]

These works emphasize the commitment of black Americans to securing their rights as active citizens as well as a direct correlation between the growth of their social identities in terms of a war fought domestically and internationally. Yet, the absence of their presence in existing historical narratives on depictions of femininity in propaganda captures how black Americans were systematically removed from traditional concepts of American identity due to their race. These same

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[11]James, "Images of Femininity," 274-275.
[12]Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 48.
[13]Shover, "Roles and Images," 269.
[14]William J. Breen, "Black Women and the Great War: Mobilization and Reform in the South," *The Journal of Southern History* 44, no. 3 (1978): 422-423.
[15]Adriene Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War 1* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 44.

factors kept non-white women from being depicted in propaganda campaigns, as their perceived "otherness" threatened the cultural hegemony the American Feminine strove to create.

**Nurses as Civic, Nurses as Passive**

The earliest female images to emerge in WWI propaganda posters were those of women as nurse volunteers for the Red Cross. Nursing was, as Susan Grayzel identifies, both a culturally suitable way for women to contribute to the war effort and a way for women to supplement their medical education without the interference of pre-existing social barriers towards women in healthcare.[16] Nursing was also a way for women in the United States to become involved in the war effort prior to the 1917 entry of the United States into the War. The earliest pieces of propaganda depicting women as nurses begin running as early as 1914, when war first broke out. This visual propaganda suggested a moral duty by the women of the world to contribute to the success of the fight. Pre-April 1917 propaganda also reveals that despite its isolationist stance, the United States had interest in the war. This interest was not only to support the war effort but to protect holdings and maintain relationships between allied nations as agreed upon by the terms of their alliances.

Returning to Grayzel's argument regarding the cultural propriety of nursing, it is also key to note the form of the depictions. While most depictions of women in propaganda towards the later years of the war were more dynamic and attention grabbing, earlier depictions of women as nurses in the war were not. There are two primary reasons for this. One, as Grayzel suggests, depicting women outside of their role as passive citizens undermined the established gender hierarchy [17] Two, as Banta suggests, the visual standard in cultural material did not yet have developments that would allow the images to be both read and accepted if women were depicted as vibrant as they are during the latter years of the war.[18] These standards come from the then-popular pseudoscience of physiognomy, which proposed that physical traits, often specific to women, represented "the public values and private virtues to which society as a whole was supposed to give its allegiance."[19] Several of these traits, first broadly identified by the American public through popular print in 1904, suggest that the most ideal forms of beauty affirm the virtue of a nation.[20]

As Banta writes, to possess "laughing eyes, the perfect bow of arched lips, [and] the gracious brows," represents the most 'civil' of all types.[21] Banta further elaborates on the significance of facial features such as the shape and slope of one's nose (with the preference being towards slight and slenderness), and "the full yet controlled line of the lips."[22] These features, in conjugation with whiteness and cleanliness, established the standard for idealized images of women.

Clearly propaganda producers typecast women as nurses. The women depicted in C.W. Anderson's 1914 "The Red Cross Serves Humanity, Join Now!" series are perfect case studies of not only the physiognomic standards accepted by the United States' visual culture, but the series also show how these depictions contributed to establishing an American Feminine identity over the latter half of the 1910s.

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16Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2002), 37.
17Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 37.
18Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 500. Precedent was key for visual depictions across all sectors of American society prior to the outbreak of the War. This is because precedent reaffirms ideas about American ideals and values. In contrast, the constant switch of imagery and allegory would destabilize and add to cultural anxiety about the "American" identity.
19Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 7.
20Gertrude Lynch, "Racial and Ideal Types of Beauty," *The Cosmopolitan* 38 (1904): 223.
21Lynch, "Racial and Ideal Types," 230-231.
22Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 116.

The woman depicted in figure 1 is the secondary figure in the work, regardless of her status as the "living subject" of the work. Both the symbol for the Red Cross and the plea written on the scroll in front of her are placed visually before her own form, with the Cross being above her physical form and the scroll placed first in the layers of visual hierarchy. This reads as the nurse serving the role of the foundation of the poster, despite being last in the order of layers. Her role is superseded by the other needs of the poster. Although she places last in the visual hierarchy, we can see that her features match the physiognomic standards previously established. Her eyes are large, and while not laughing, indicative of high emotion. Her brows, cheeks, and jaw are soft, yet clearly defined, leading readers to type her as young, but still a woman. Respectable, yet still naive and passive.

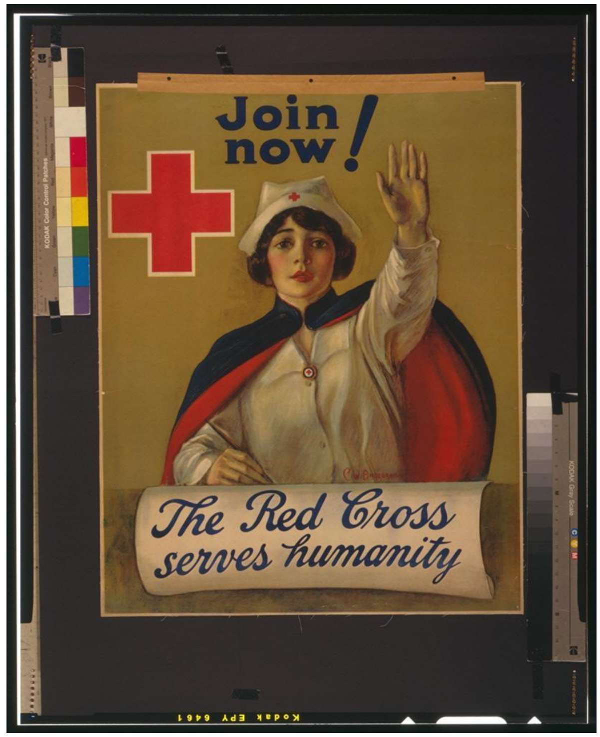


*Figure 2: C.W. Anderson, "The Red Cross Serves Humanity, Join Now!" Print, photomechanical, colored, 1914.*

Her proportions are unlike those we would see in a national allegory, suggesting that she is scaled down to be relatable to the average American woman. The positioning of her form implies openness, with her chest squared and expanded to the viewer, allowing for a closer view of her garb. Her left arm is raised, calling for attention (or perhaps assistance, depending on the reading) and her skin is pale and clear. Finally, she is bathed in shades of red, white, and blue, another subliminal messaging tactic of propaganda. This coloring would suggest to readers that she is not only an American, but that she makes constant strides to further accept and emulate that portion of her identity.

Many of the depictions of women as nurses examined in this study possess these same traits, with slight variations. Some posters done in black ink, for example, lack the potential for color analysis. As rationing increased, supplies were increasingly allocated to military and political efforts. These posters are often more expressive and depict their subjects' entire bodies. Depicting the womens' entire figures draws continued attention to the poster, making up for the lack of color. Other posters which feature female nurses also have the figures sitting. Visually, this hints towards a more passive role, with even the physical body lacking the movement of action.

Each of these combined details implied and perpetuated understanding of how the ideal American woman looked and behaved. Aspects of the imagery communicate values such as physical beauty and social passivity. The continued use of scaling, visual hierarchy, and carefully chosen color schemes indicate that within a more gentle, civic minded faction of the population, the precedence of both social behavior and visual culture was above all necessary to maintain during conflict. The overall goals perhaps was to maintain American cultural stability amidst the instability and anxiety of war and its threatened upheaval to civil order.

**Women on the War Front: Images as Conveying Readiness and Ableness**

While many propaganda pieces encouraged women to participate in the war effort in ways that maintained societal norms, many women took the war as an opportunity to challenge traditional gender roles. Much like black Americans, women saw the war as a chance to advocate for equality by proving their ability to fight. [23]

Inspired by the Russian Women's Battalion of Death, American women began to vocally oppose their relegated social and political positions [24] Kimberly Jensen claims that women, hyper aware of their "social class, reputation, and physical appearance," weaponized these characteristics, both in support of domestic self-defense and in defense of female soldiers globally.[25] Challenges to gender roles during the war were made through protests and calls to action, as well as through propaganda.


*Figure 3: Hazel L. Roberts, "Women Awake! Your Country Needs You." Poster, lithograph, colored. 1916.*

The typecasting of women as soldiers is the second most popular of the depictions of women in propaganda, and the second largest typing to readily appear in the propaganda poster campaigns. While not appearing immediately after the depiction of women as nurses, it became the preferred typing for women activists fighting for citizenship on the homefront as well as for women attempting to assert their political agency in relation to the defense of the nation. This intersection between political and social aspects of women's increased labor output conveys a sense of the power of women across all sectors of American society, a message that propaganda posters reflect as the war intensifies.

Despite this, idealized depictions of women remained rooted in socially acceptable images of femininity. There is not, as has been suggested by Anne Classen Knutson and Pearl James, a separation of visual depictions of femininity from depictions and conceptions of women within the United States between 1914-1918.[26] The suggestion that there is a lack of traditionally feminine markers in depictions of women's work is certainly true in photographs and other components of visual culture from the time, but that was not true of the depiction of women's work in propaganda. Propaganda requires the pushing of social boundaries by utilizing socially accepted images. Women, even when they are idealized in the standard neoclassical form (which lends itself to a masculine build because of existing sexual hierarchy in the visual arts at the time) are still definitively women. These depictions purposely exclude transgender and genderqueer individuals both within propaganda poster runs and women's place in society because most at the time considered their

[23]Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles*, 44.
[24]Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 62-63.
[25]Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva*, 66.
[26]James, "Images of Femininity," 302. Knutson makes the claim in her 1997 dissertation titled, "Breasts, Brawn and Selling a War: American World War 1 Propaganda Posters 1917-1918," and James adopts the argument to suggest that there is a lack of traditionally feminine markers in women's public facing work towards the end of the War.

existence as considered deviant.[27] Any form of deviance, be it racial, gendered, religious, or relating to class, was absent from propaganda messaging which aimed to manipulate and solidify public opinion. Deviance not only went against the new, idealized vision of femininity celebrated by World War I, but it possibly threatened the efficacy of the posters.


*Figure 4: Howard Chandler Christy, "If You Want to Fight! (Join the Marines)." Poster, photomechanical, colored. 1915.*

American women then found themselves in an interesting intersection between affirming and utilizing visual ideas while trying to foster revolutionary ideas about the role and place of women in society. There were few female propaganda artists during World War I, but some work by female artists remains preserved through the Library of Congress. The most popular of these pieces is "Women Awake! Your Country Needs You," drawn by artist Hazel Lavina Roberts in 1916. "Women Awake!" displays the challenges artists faced in attempting to reshape the roles of women in American society. Paradoxically, the best way for female artists to contradict tradition was by utilizing traditional imagery, coloring, and motifs.

Unlike Anderson's "The Red Cross Serves Humanity," the woman depicted in this sample, is the primary and sole figure. By focusing primarily on the woman, Roberts spotlights women and their ability to rouse support. The figure is also foregrounded, with the use of shadow suggesting that she is more present in the artwork, a more embodied "living subject" than that of women seen as typecast nurses. She takes an active pose here, with the horn lifted to her mouth, her lips parted as if to begin a call. She is also leaning forward which further suggests movement and action within the depiction.

The figure, however, much like those seen in Anderson's Red Cross posters, does conform to physiognomic standards. Her eyes are again large, and tinged blue. Her hair airs on the side of lightness, her skin pale but not sallow. Her nose is proportional and straight, invoking traditional Roman imagery. Her lips are well-shaped and slight; her jaw and cheeks give a youthfulness with their soft shaping. She is less open, conveying a sense of confidence in her call. However, her left shoulder pulls back towards the edge of her shadow, suggesting that she is also willing to hear the repsonse of the observer.

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[27]Genderqueer here relates to any individual who does not fall on the traditional gender binary but still engages with physical or aesthetic markers which are either feminine, masculine or some combination of both. This definition is built by myself and S. Dunn (pronouns they/it) and is not by any means definitive, but is representative of how the term functions in this narrative. For additional information about the role of transgender, genderqueer, and queer individuals more broadly in military combat, see Kimberly Jensen, "The Fighting, Biting, and Scratching Kind: Good Girls, Bad Girls, and Women's Soldiering," in *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 60-76. For further discussions about gender, citizenship, and challenges crafted by counterhegemonic activity, please see Kimberly Jensen, "Gender and Citizenship," in *Gender and the Great War*, edited by Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10-26.

Depictions of women as soldiers were more varied than those of women as nurses. Nevertheless, the large majority tend towards maintaining physiognomic standards. The most popular of the depictions of women soldiers come from Howard Chandler Christy, where female figures were spotlighted as primary figures and often scaled above other figures in the frame, but remain tied to physiognomic standards. Even as American women attempted to promote equality and redefine gender roles, they remained limited by existing cultural ideas about what it meant to act and look like an American woman. Propaganda affirms these ideas and creates models for its female citizenry regardless of the gender of its creator, as evidenced by the Roberts and Christy posters.

**The Immigrant Woman in Propaganda: The Greatest Target of Hegemonic Activity**

There are innate challenges that come with tracking public perception of women in the United States and the public's reactions to depictions of women in propaganda during World War I. The first is lack of research interest, evidenced by the paucity of pre-existing scholarship on the matter. The second is a lack of primary evidence relating to the public's thoughts and emotions about propaganda. As a public facing (and government funded) art form, the only way to understand its reception is to examine whether its messaging was implemented by the public.

In particular, it is difficult to track reactions of non-white populations to female focused propaganda in the United States during the war. Black Americans and first generation immigrants were often excluded from images and narratives about propaganda, despite being targets of propaganda that pushed for cultural hegemony. Non-white groups in the United States historically have been excluded from traditional sources used in studies of history.[28] Systemic barriers, such as disparities in literacy rates, also prohibited non-white groups from access to preservation within the culture of the United States. These barriers became even more pronounced through the end of the nineteenth century, as increased immigration "heaped problems of identification" on a United States struggling to construct a national identity.[29] The rise in anti-immigrant sentiment coupled with a lingering anxiety about the cultural core of the United States further perpetuated an obsession with identity, ideals, and ideas..

Despite the struggle, a series of posters all made by the same artist specifically appealed to immigrant groups. In 1917, the United States Food Administration commissioned illustrator Charles Edward Chambers to create a series of posters that specifically targeted immigrants. Chambers' "Food Will Win the War," series, often is overlooked by historians due to its unassuming nature, but it was printed in at least four languages: English, Yiddish, Italian, and Lithuanian.[30] The English version of this poster is included in this article for analysis, while the latter are included in the back matter before the bibliography.

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[28]There is certainly room for nuance within this statement as the idea of what constitutes "white" is constantly shifting at any point in the nation's history. For the purposes of this work, white is defined as any person who does not originate in the contiguous United States, England, or any of its majority white dominions, including Ireland and Canada. Ireland is a point of contention even within this definition, as anti-Irish sentiments were exceedingly popular in the United States through to the latter part of the nineteenth century and Ireland was not fully out from under imperial rule until after the end of the War.

[29]Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 92.

[30]The Indianapolis Public Library World War 1 Poster Collection, "'Food Will Win the War' Series," C. E. Chambers, 1917. While the archive has linked that one of the four posters it houses is published in Lithuanian, a suitable translation can also be made in Polish. For the sake of traceability, I have listed the metadata as it exists in the digital collection but have included this note to provide an alternative interpretation as to the languages displayed.


*Figure 5: Charles Edward Chambers, "Food Will Win the War' (English version)." Poster, lithograph, colored. 1917.*

Chamber's poster is extremely different from any seen thus far. The tone of the message is incendiary and brusque. Even the phrasing of "Wheat is needed for the allies" implies that immigrants were not and would not be considered American and therefore, not part of the Allies. The depictions of women, in bright tones but lacking swatches of red, white, and blue also imply that these women are unamerican. They are painted in secondary and tertiary colors, marking their secondary place in the United States, and their features are either marred by shadows or obscured by abstraction. Even the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France decades prior, is similarly cast in shadows. In contrast, New York City is illuminated as a land of prosperity and democracy. The rainbow is alight in shades of red, white, and blue.

The only female figure who is fully visible does not conform to physiognomic standards. Her eyes are piercing and sallow, her skin lacking luster. Her nose is the central feature of her face, and her lips below are pursed and drawn tightly together. She appears skeptical of the man in front of her, who urges her to conserve food in support of the war effort. These features separate this woman and the other women seen in this series of posters from other women in posters targeted at women during the War. This demonstrates the distinct marking of "other" in relation to ideas about American identity as a result of the War and its preceding immigration crisis. Banta posits that this was intentionally done to vent the frustrations Americans had with their immigrant communities during the war. It served to to remind them "of what it was (sic.) not and ought to be but could never hope to become."[31]

**Conclusion**

Depictions of women in American propaganda during the Great War played on cultural hegemonic ideas and, as a byproduct of their existence for the war effort, became the largest tool for bolstering culturally hegemonic activity. Women became the favored visual image because they previously functioned as the personification of the nation and provided familiar images with which people were familiar, even at passing glances. Depictions of women in propaganda are used not only by the United States government, but by American women to alter public perceptions about their place and acceptable roles in society. Propaganda makers grounded their depictions on the ideals of whiteness, Protestant Christianity, and the emerging middle-class essence. Images in turn produce visual markers, known as physiognomic standards, which capture these ideals and reproduce them in a method that is easily accessible and that can be emulated without problem.

By depicting women as well-educated nurses and soldiers WWI propaganda posters promoted standards which contributed to a culturally hegemonic feminine identity. Posters purposefully excluded non-white individuals except to mark them as outsiders, rather than citizens.

[31]Banta, *Imaging American Women*, 518.

Those who diverged from the identities these posters promoted were considered less than American.


Figure 6: Charles Edward Chambers, "Food Will Win the War' (Yiddish version)." Poster, lithograph, colored. 1917.


Figure 7: Charles Edward Chambers, "Food Will Win the War' (Italian version)." Poster, lithograph, colored. 1917.


Figure 8: Charles Edward Chambers, "Food Will Win the War' (Lithuanian version)." Poster, lithograph, colored. 1917.

# The Catholic Peace of 1917: The Peace Efforts of Pope Benedict XV and Emperor Charles I in World War I

Connor A. Boray

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The year 1914 marked Europe's descent into the most devastating conflict yet experienced in modern history. As the balance of power shifted between the Allied and Central Powers, both sides periodically proposed peace plans. These proposals, however, became increasingly unworkable as the scale of death and destruction swelled. Every bullet, every battle, and every bombing encouraged the aims and demands of the belligerents. Governments and citizens who had sacrificed so much demanded nothing less than total victory. Efforts by secular governments to bring the war to an end appeared permanently stalled.

In this "war to end all wars," two men rose to power in the Roman Catholic world who would dramatically affect the course of the war and present an alternative path to peace. The first was Pope Benedict XV, elected at the outbreak of the First World War. The Pope strove incessantly to bring all sides to a peace agreement. He famously issued a proposal in 1917 for a "peace without victory," the general concept of which influenced U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in his "14 Points" peace plan.[1] Meanwhile, in 1916, a new monarch rose to the conjoined thrones of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary: Emperor-King Charles I & IV. Succeeding his great-uncle, Franz Joseph, Charles, as a devout Catholic, would immediately work toward the peace that the Holy Father sought, his greatest initiative being the secretly conducted negotiations for a separate peace with the Allied Powers in the much-maligned "Sixtus Affair." These two men, the Roman Catholic Pontiff, and the last ruling Catholic Habsburg emperor (and successor to the Holy Roman emperors), the two greatest forces in the Catholic world, launched a determined and realistic effort to conclude the devastating First World War well before 1918.

*Figure 2: Pope Benedict XV, 1915; portrait by Agence Rol*

Historian Erez Manela highlights two competing postwar visions of a new world order: liberal democracy and communism. Manela describes how Wilson formulated his vision to "make the world safe for democracy," as, almost simultaneously, the communist Bolsheviks in Russia under Vladimir Lenin labored to foment international revolution.[2] The Cold War later cemented impressions that only two options—democracy or communism—existed as the world emerged from war. This study suggests other possibilities. Alongside liberal and revolutionary visions of postwar order, contemporaries also considered a more diplomatic alternative grounded in Catholic

[1] Thomas Fleming, "The Significance of Pope Benedict XV," *History News Network*; John L. Snell, "Benedict XV, Wilson, Michaelis, and German Socialism," *The Catholic Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (1951): 151.

[2] Erez Manela, "Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1919," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1330.

internationalism and dynastic stability. Such as settlement would abide by the traditional standards of authority for over a thousand years, led by the Church (specifically the Roman Catholic Church) and the monarchical system of governance. Pope Benedict XV and Emperor Charles I, at the pinnacle of the Catholic world, sought to make the world safe for tradition, Catholicism, and monarchy by conducting their own initiatives for peace, ones that could have left Europe (and the world) better in several substantial ways.

This study will answer two questions. First, how did contemporaries view the two Catholic leaders? Second, why did this peace effort only occur in 1917, and why did it ultimately fail? This analysis proceeds chronologically, considering several critical milestones. It begins by analyzing contemporary impressions of Pope Benedict XV, followed by contemporary accounts of Emperor Charles and his efforts to cooperate with the Holy Father's wishes to achieve peace via the Sixtus Affair. Furthermore, this study examines why 1917 emerged an amenable year to make peace, why initiatives failed, and the aftermath of failure. It will demonstrate that, rather than peripheral figures, the Pope and the emperor advanced serious peace proposals. Had circumstances gone differently, 1917 may well have been the end of the First World War under a traditionalist Catholic and monarchical peace.

*Figure 3: Emperor Charles I and IV, 1919, photographer unknown.*

**Historiography & Methodology**

Scholarship and popular accounts have acknowledged the sincerity of Pope Benedict XV and of Charles I & IV, while portraying their peace efforts as diplomatically marginal or ineffective. Often scholars labeled their initiatives as weak desultory or downright failures because they did not bring an immediate end to the war. Frequently these studies besmirch Benedict XV and Charles I & IV, respectively. Historian Guiliana Chamedes writes that "the Holy See appeared a marginal player, hardly well poised to exercise influence in the continent's political life," as war wrought destruction across the world.[3] Several scholars depict Benedict XV as purposely excluded from peace talks. Benedict issued several calls for peace throughout the war; his most famous came in 1917, when he issued a seven-point plan for peace. Yet recent studies, such as that by Patrick Houlihan, brand the Pope's efforts toward peace as an abject failure.[4] Emperor Charles took this call to peace seriously, however, and initiated contact with his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma (which sided with the Allies), to secure a separate peace between Austria-Hungary and the Allied Powers. When revealed, the plot damaged Austria-Hungary's relationship with Germany and rendered it a virtual prisoner of Germany for the remainder of the war.

While not traditional academic works, it would be remiss not to mention modern Catholic magazines, articles, and journals, which have often been the only ones to paint Charles' and Benedict's efforts in a more positive and fruitful light. Publications such as *The Jesuit Review*, *U.S. Catholic Historian*, *The Catholic Historical Review*, *National Catholic Register*, *National Catholic Reporter*, and *La Civiltà Cattolica* have provided significant treatment of Benedict XV's and Charles' efforts and outcomes at promoting peace. Indeed, some writers have concluded that their peace would have

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[3] Giuliana Chamedes, "The Vatican and the Reshaping of the European International Order After the First World War," *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 4 (2013): 955.

[4] Patrick Houlihan, "Pope Benedict XV and the Forgotten Campaign to End World War I," *America Magazine: The Jesuit Review*, 2017.

been better for the world than what occurred under the various peace treaties. Several treatments also discuss how Catholics, particularly in Italy, were angered at Benedict's proposal to end the war. Still, exemplified by figures like Emperor-King Charles, there were Catholics who strove to end the war at the plea of His Holiness.[5] However, more recent publications have begun to change the narrative about both men. In 2016, Agnes de Dreuzy wrote *The Holy See and the Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, which offers a positive depiction of Benedict XV as a leader "dubbed the 'Pope of Peace,' a pope with idealistic views and unrealistic expectations. The harsh judgment his person and his reign patiently endured… compels a rereading of his pontificate… Benedict XV eventually emerges as a gifted statesman pursuing his own brand of realpolitik."[6] In 2020, a biography of Emperor Charles, titled *Blessed Charles of Austria: A Holy Emperor and His Legacy* by Charles Coulombe, went into greater depth on the events of the Sixtus Affair and Charles' efforts for peace and provided a vastly different perspective from previous historians.[7]

In terms of methodology, this project examines multiple primary sources to assess the validity of its thesis and historical questions. One major source is papal writings and encyclicals, such as Pope Benedict XV's early encyclical *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* and his 1917 peace proposal, both of which were major motivators for Charles to attempt peace negotiations. Charles also issued statements in support of the Pope push for peace– a peace with serious chances to succeed. Additionally, newspapers written during the war shed light on how the wider world saw the efforts of Benedict and Charles. Despite recent negative appraisals of both men, these records reveal positives views of both leaders and their peace efforts during the war years. Lastly, firsthand accounts of Emperor Charles' peace initiatives add depth to the story.

## Benedict XV

As the Great Powers of Europe began war, Giacomo della Chiesa assumed the papacy, on September 3, 1914.[8] His predecessor, the now-canonized Pope St. Pius X, acutely understood the horrors descending upon Europe and the wider world. Pius called on Catholics "to implore God that he may have mercy on His people by putting a speedy end to this catastrophe and by inspiring the leaders of the peoples to peaceful thoughts and actions." He would, added the Pope, have been glad "to offer my miserable life to God, if thereby [he] could have prevented the slaughter of so many of my young sons."[9] The responsibility of fostering peace fell on his successor, the newly enthroned Benedict XV. On November 1st, 1914, not long after his ascension to the papal throne, Benedict issued the encyclical *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, which exhorted the clergy in communion with the See of Rome, as well as the "Kings and rulers… to hasten to restore to the nations the blessings of peace."[10] He deplored how the loss of Christian principles amongst rulers led to war, encouraging all to "combine to… [bring] again Christian principles into honor if We have any real desire for the peace and harmony of human society." He also reminded rulers that any "power then is exercised amongst men, whether that of the King of that of an inferior authority, it has its origin from God," and he called on rulers to reflect if it is "a prudent and safe idea for governments or for

[5] Terry Philpot, "World War I's Pope Benedict XV and the Pursuit of Peace," *National Catholic Reporter*, July 19, 2014.
[6] Agnes de Dreuzy, *The Holy See and the Emergence of the Modern Middle East: Benedict XV's Diplomacy in Greater Syria (1914–1922)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 15-16.
[7] Charles A. Coulombe, *Blessed Charles of Austria: A Holy Emperor and His Legacy* (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 2020), 1-264.
[8] William A. Renzi, "The Entente and the Vatican during the Period of Italian Neutrality, August 1914-May 1915," *The Historical Journal* 13, no. 3 (1970): 491–508.
[9] George J. Marlin, "World War I and the Papacy," *The Catholic Thing*, August 2, 2014.
[10] Benedict XV, "Ad Bravissimo Apostolorum," November 1, 1914, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

states to separate themselves from the holy religion of Jesus Christ, from which their authority receives such strength and support."[11] From the start of Benedict's pontificate, the Pope emphasized maintaining and reinforcing links between God and government. The Pope was responding as historian Maggie Brennan wrote, to the tensions of modernity: "secularism and an increase in dissension between national governments and the Church."[12] A year later, on July 28, 1915, Benedict issued an apostolic exhortation titled "To the Peoples Now at War and to Their Rulers." The document sought to "reach unto the peoples who are now at war, and unto their Rulers, inclining both to milder and more serene views… to put an end at last to this horrible slaughter."[13] Apparent in Benedict's declarations was his emphasis on maintaining God in government, but he also pushed for a peace that would be reasonable for all sides, in contrast to previous peace offers from either side in the war that were one-sided and set out unreasonable terms; Benedict's peace asked equally from both sides.

Contrary to historiographical portrayals of the Pope, which suggest contemporaries disregarded the papal peace initiatives, numerous sources at the time viewed Benedict XV with great seriousness. Upon his 1914 election, *The Catholic Telegraph* described him as an earnest, quick-acting leader well-versed in critical issues. By January 1915, *The New York Times* suggested the Pope might be the primary peacemaker, noting that many heads of state considered him a vital force. A "Veteran Diplomat" quoted in that publication claimed that nations like Great Britain and Japan were dispatching special embassies to the Pope. On his election in 1914, *The Catholic Telegraph* offered this description of the pontiff: "his movements are quick, and he has an engaging personality. He convinces one at once of his earnestness. He is familiar with critical issues. He is quick to grasp and quick to act. He is courteous and at the same time guarded in his response."[14] On January 31, 1915, *The New York Times* pondered, "Will the Pope Be Peacemaker? Significant Events Have Directed Attention to the Efforts Being Made by Benedict XV to End the War." Multiple heads of state and government, the article claimed, saw the pope as a critical force. Both Great Britain and Japan, according to the source, were sending special embassies to Pope Benedict XV. Even the president of the United States began setting up a special embassy "for the purpose of co-operating with the Pope in his efforts to prepare the ground for the restoration of a just and lasting peace."[15] The article lauded Benedict, who, unlike his predecessor Pius X, "is not only a statesman of the type of [Pope] Leo XIII… but also a diplomat of exceptional brilliancy and experience."[16] The "Veteran Diplomat" who authored the piece, predicted wholly positive outcomes for Benedict, stating that, "all of the belligerent powers… have shown so great a readiness to accept his intervention as to create the conviction at Rome and in other foreign capitals that he is destined to become the principal intermediary in all the negotiations among the warring nations looking towards peace." He concluded that "there is every reason to believe that in the case of this…dissension of nations… success will attend the… gifted… Benedict XV."[17] Two major reasons had buttressed Benedict's

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[11] Benedict XV, "Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum."
[12] Maggie Brennan, "A Light in the Darkness: The Interaction between Catholicism and World War I," *The Purdue Historian* 6 (2013).
[13] Benedict XV, "To the Peoples Now at War and to Their Rulers," July 28, 1915, Libreria Editrice Vaticana; Benedict XV, *His Holiness Pope Benedict XV on the Great War : A Collection of the Holy Father's Utterances in the Cause of Peace*, ed. Gabriel Martyn (London: Burns & Oates Limited, 1916), 14-16.
[14] "The Catholic Telegraph, Volume LXXXIII, Number 37, 10 September 1914: The Catholic Telegraph" (Archdiocese of Cincinnati, September 10, 1914).
[15] Veteran Diplomat, "Will the Pope be Peacemaker?: Significant Events Have Directed Attention to the Efforts Being Made by Benedict XV to End the War," *New York Times*, January 31, 1915.
[16] Veteran Diplomat, "Will the Pope be Peacemaker?"
[17] Veteran Diplomat, "Will the Pope be Peacemaker?"

appeal. One being his position and the large Catholic population in the warring countries. The *New York Times'* "Veteran Diplomat" noted the Pope's singularity among the major powers of Europe and the West. Neither the United States, Italy, nor Spain (the first two still being neutral at this time) mounted effective interventions from the perspectives of the varying warring powers for differing reasons. Second, the massive numbers of Catholics who lived in and fought for these countries, whether Catholic states or not, meant Benedict would "observe the most strict neutrality… [causing] him to observe the most extreme discretion, worthy of a great statesman and of a great priest."[18] In late September 1915, a special cable to the *New York Times* reported that Pope Benedict had received new requests to "use his influence to bring about preliminary discussions regarding the re-establishment of peace in Europe."[19] Indeed, claimed the newspaper, "many persons… continue to attach great importance to the possible cooperation of the Vatican and the United States in a proposal to cause a cessation of hostilities."[20]

This last statement is especially shocking, given that the United States and the Allied Powers took steps under the 1915 Treaty of London to prevent Benedict's diplomatic interventions. This eventually sidelined Benedict and the Vatican when America entered the war in 1917.[21] Yet, Benedict remained a potent force in peace discussions. In 1918, in *The Sewanee Review*, an author wrote that "the sovereign Pontiff is dependent upon civil power" and "sought to revive… the time-honored 'Roman Question,'" namely, the "reestablishment of temporal power [the Papal States] and, in a subordinate way, the internationalization of the Law of Guarantees."[22] While the author wrote that it could be unlikely the Papal States could be reestablished, the war did inspire some hope. What could be more likely is that the Law of Guarantees, an Italian law that provided access for various states to the Holy See, would be made part of the new international order, albeit at the likely renunciation of papal temporal power.[23] Echoing this, George F. La Piana stated Benedict discounted any chance for the restoration of the Papal States. Still the prospect remained alive among many, and Benedict could hope to achieve other compensations to answer the "Roman Question."[24] Regardless of the outcome, Benedict XV quite possibly hoped to reorganize Europe towards a more traditional order. This meant returning to the Pope his position as both spiritual and temporal ruler, a role that had been commonplace for over a thousand years before 1870 and one that continued in living memory for many.

On August 1st, 1917, Benedict issued his most significant wartime peace proposal, commonly known as the Peace Note, also known as the "Note to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples," containing his ideas for peace. In it, he admonished the warring nations for not following his identified path "to achieve a peace which was lasting and dignified for all."[25] This failure, the pontiff explained, caused two more years of war, but now Benedict offered concrete proposals for the warring governments to agree upon: reduction of armaments and disarmament, international arbitration over issues through laws, freedom of communication, travel, the seas, and the return of

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[18] Veteran Diplomat, "Will the Pope be Peacemaker?"
[19] "Pope is Again Asked to Start Peace Move: Benedict XV. Hears from High Quarters That Intransigeant Talk Is Only for Effect," *New York Times*, September 24, 1915.
[20] "Pope is Again Asked to Start Peace Move."
[21] Giovanni Sale, SJ, "Benedict XV, 100 Years After His Death," *La Civiltà Cattolica*, October 14, 2022; James F. Garneau, "Presidents and Popes, Face to Face: From Benedict XV to John Paul II," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 26, no. 4 (2008): 91
[22] A. M., "The Pope and the Peace Congress," *The Sewanee Review* 26, no. 2 (1918): 130.
[23] A. M., "The Pope and the Peace Congress," 130-131.
[24] George F. La Piana, "From Leo XIII to Benedict XV," *The American Journal of Theology* 21, no. 2 (1917): 190.
[25] Benedict XV, "Note to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples," August 1, 1917, The Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

occupied territories on either side.[26] He further promoted self-determination by considering "the aspirations of peoples and co-ordinating…their own interests with those shared by the great human community" such as that between France and Germany, Italy and Austria, Armenia, the Balkan peoples, "and the countries which make up the ancient Kingdom of Poland, whose noble historical traditions and the sufferings it has undergone in particular during the present war ought rightly to enlist the sympathies of the nations."[27] Published several months before Woodrow Wilson released his Fourteen Points, Benedict's peace proposal, some claim, was "stolen" by the U.S. president for his own idealistic, peace-driven proposal.[28] Historian Dragan Zivojinovic, addressing Secretary of State Robert Lansing's view of Benedict's peace proposal, writes that "[Benedict] considered circumstances in the summer of 1917 to be favorable for initiating peace negotiations. Moreover, for many, the Vatican seemed generally the greatest hope for mutual conciliation… [and was] inherently an institution of conservation and conservatism; and [Benedict], afraid that his position and the positions of other Catholic powers might become untenable, endeavored to avoid great political and social upheavals… [he] sought to protect Catholic interests all over the world."[29]

Indeed, the Habsburg state had been the major backer of papal interests for decades, including the quest to regain temporal power. Historian Charles J. Herber echoes this conclusion. "The pope also sought to ward off dangers that a further prolongation of the conflict could bring to the Church. In particular, the Vatican feared the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the secular power closest to the papacy," wrote Herber.[30] Lansing saw that Benedict desired to protect Austria-Hungary and preserve monarchy, particularly from socialism but also from democracy, ideologies that "both…[were] more or less antagonistic to hierarchical government and to the temporal power of the church."[31] As Lansing pointed out, Benedict did not demand the Dual Empire withdraw from any of its occupied territories in the same way demanded of other powers on either side; this would seem to indicate Benedict, as argued previously, pushed for Catholic interests. What better way to achieve those goals than through the survival and strengthening of the sole remaining Catholic empire against the modernism that threatened to engulf Europe and the world?[32]

By 1918, however, peace at all costs appeared to be Benedict's main aim. As portrayed in *The Sewanee Review*, most viewed Benedict as a secondary figure once the war had more fully gone in the direction of the Allies as United States troops poured into Europe.[33] Especially striking, is the *Sewanee Review* author's description of Benedict's goals: "the Vatican has already intimated in unmistakable terms that the question of temporal power, the revision of the Law of Guarantees, the rescue of dynasties, including the Catholic crown of Austria, are all matters of passing import as compared with the tremendous duty of the Church to save the world from utter annihilation."[34] Although Benedict did see the Church's first job as achieving peace for the world, these other objectives, while comparatively less important than world peace, stilled remained on the Pope's mind.

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[26] Benedict XV, "Note to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples."
[27] Benedict XV, "Note to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples."
[28] John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope: Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (New York and London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000), 136.
[29] Dragan Živojinović, "Robert Lansing's Comments on the Pontifical Peace Note of August 1, 1917," *The Journal of American History* 56, no. 3 (1969): 558-559.
[30] Živojinović, "Robert Lansing's Comments on the Pontifical Peace Note of August 1, 1917," 559; Charles J. Herber, "Eugenio Pacelli's Mission to Germany and the Papal Peace Proposals of 1917," *The Catholic Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (1979): 20.
[31] Živojinović, "Robert Lansing's Comments on the Pontifical Peace Note of August 1, 1917," 563.
[32] Živojinović, "Robert Lansing's Comments on the Pontifical Peace Note of August 1, 1917," 565-568.
[33] A. M., "The Pope and the Peace Congress," 141.
[34] A. M., "The Pope and the Peace Congress," 141.

Since the start of his pontificate, Benedict had urged the rulers of Europe to seek peace. While it has been shown that many political leaders expressed sincere interest and a desire to see him serve as the arbiter of peace, none stepped up to answer seriously his call out of fear of appearing weak and due to the war's fluctuating fortunes. It would take a distinct set of circumstances—exhaustion on both sides that could not be ignored, as well as a ruler willing to take up the call—to create movement. As Benedict exhorted at the end of his 1915 address, "We invite all who are the friends of peace in the world to help Us in hastening the end of the war… for the reconciliation of the States… may they resolve… to reasons of equity and justice… this will be their finest and most glorious conquest."[35] The ruler who would seek to achieve this conquest would be Archduke Charles of Austria, the new ruler of Austria-Hungary.

**Charles I & IV**

"There is no reason to suppose whatsoever that the young ruler will rise in character or in statecraft above the somewhat low average of Habsburg rulers," concluded *The Times*, Britain's leading newspaper, in assessing the new Austro-Hungarian monarch, Charles I. This viewpoint remain commonplace in mainstream historiography for the succeeding century.[36] Charles, by pure tragic fate, became heir apparent after the assassination of his uncle Franz Ferdinand in 1914, and he became Emperor-King of the Dual Monarchy upon the death of his great-uncle Franz Joseph in 1916. Although often dismissed as unimportant, unassuming, and uninspiring in much of the historiography (following *The Times*' depiction), others held a vastly different view of Charles as he assumed the throne. Across the Atlantic, the *New York Times* published several articles expressing optimism and excitement at the new monarch's qualities and his potential to be the peacemaker of Europe. "People abroad have been accustomed to look upon [Charles] as an insignificant and immature youth… [yet he is] far better fitted by training and by experience for the cares and duties of sovereignty than were [other] rulers… at the time of their succession," opined journalist Frederick Cunliffe-Owen.[37] "Austria can have peace now if [Charles is] able to put into execution what are known to be [his] views… none of the Allies desires the obliteration of Austria-Hungary as a European power. Her existence is indispensable to the international equilibrium of the Old World. It is all a mistake to regard the Habsburg monarchy as a sort of mediaeval political fiction," added Cunliffe-Owen.[38] *New York Times* foreign correspondent Cyril Brown added to the hopes surrounding Charles, commenting that "seldom has more importance for a nation's future attached to the personality and character of a new ruler, and the Emperor is consequently the object of most solicitous study… his fundamental characteristics are justice and devotion to duty… an excellent memory and keen observing eye…[and] a keen sense for facts."[39] Another article by the *New York Times*, written by Cunliffe-Owen and published on January 7, 1917, only days after Charles' coronation as Apostolic King of Hungary, reflects considerable optimism for the new monarch. The articles sub-headline declared "Developments in Dual Empire Under Emperor Charles Show…

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[35] Benedict XV, *His Holiness Pope Benedict XV on the Great War*, ed. Gabriel Martyn, 16; Benedict XV, "The Pope's Appeal for Peace," *The Advocate of Peace (1894-1920)* 77, no. 11 (1915): 262.
[36] James Bogle and Joanna Bogle, *A Heart for Europe: The Lives of Emperor Charles and Empress Zita of Austria-Hungary* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), 64-65.
[37] Frederick Cunliffe-Owen, "What Will New Emperor Do: Charles Francis of Austria-Hungary Thought by Some to Be Likely to Listen to Separate Peace Overtures," *New York Times*, November 26, 1916.
[38] Frederick Cunliffe-Owen, "What Will New Emperor Do?"
[39] Cyril Brown, "Emperor Charles Studied by Nation: Favorable Impression Caused by His First Acts as Ruler of Austria-Hungary. To Call the Parliament Ambassador Penfield Says Young Monarch Speaks Perfect English and Knows America. Emperor Charles Studied by Nation," *New York Times*, November 26, 1916.

That the Prospects for Peace Are Brighter.": "in spite of intimations [by Germany, its government, and its press] that the young Emperor Charles… was a nonentity, found himself compelled… to proclaim his readiness and desire to conclude peace."[40] Cunliffe-Owen wrote at length about the transformations of government– hirings, sackings, and release of political prisoners– and the young emperor's goals of achieving peace and ending the domination of his country by Germany.[41] Brown and Cunliffe-Owen make two things immediately obvious: Charles, far from being a weak and incompetent monarch, had the abilities and traits to lead and be a major player in peace talks. He also insisted that Austria-Hungary would maintain European stability against new, radical forces that could engulf the continent and as serve as a sizeable counterweight to Germany, if it could wrench free from the entanglements of an increasingly-constricting alliance.

Charles would see his duty as assisting the Pope in his goal of achieving a Catholic peace in 1917. Not long after Charles' coronation Benedict sent the emperor a "peace" letter that "strongly urged upon the young sovereign the duty of the Roman Catholic world to restore peace to Europe… hints regarding the solemn admonitions addressed by the Pope to the pious potentate… agree that the mind of the Emperor Charles was profoundly influenced by the words of His Holiness."[42] Charles publicly replied to Benedict's 1917 Peace Note. "During this cruel war we have always looked up to your Holiness as the highest personage who… reaches beyond earthly things… stands above belligerent peoples… [and] was able to find a way which may lead to the realization of our own desire for peace, lasting and honorable for all parties… a peace such as your Holiness has in mind," he vowed.[43] He became the only ruler who did so. Charles wasted no time in pursuing the peace proposed by Benedict. Leading one of the major powers of the war, not to mention the dominant Catholic monarchy (and spiritual successor of the Holy Roman Empire), the emperor saw it as his duty to carry out the pope's proposal and achieve peace at all costs. This commitment culminated in the Sixtus Affair of 1917.[44]

The Sixtus Affair, negotiations conducted between the new Habsburg emperor and his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma (today a region of Italy), played out between March to May of 1917. It continued for several weeks in complete secrecy between the Allies and the Austrians. These talks came extremely close to achieving a separate peace. To historian Arthur J May, it represented a "bizarre chapter in wartime Hapsburg diplomacy."[45] Pro-peace French delegates spurred Sixtus and his brother Xavier to meet with the Austrians to reach an agreement that would involve the return of Alsace-Lorraine, the restoration of Belgium, and other conditions. Talks went back and forth over many weeks. Finally, Charles agreed to the conditions, and he penned a letter ostensibly to Sixtus, but in reality, he meant the letter to encourage the Allies to pursue peace.[46] "I beg you to convey privately and unofficially to President Poincaré that I will support by every means, and by exerting all my personal influence with my allies, France's just claims regarding Alsace-Lorraine. Belgium should be entirely reestablished… Serbia should be

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40 F. Cunliffe-Owen, "Austria's New Chancellor May Aid Peace: Recent Developments in Dual Empire Under Emperor Charles Show, Writer Says, That the Prospects for Peace Are Brighter," *New York Times*, January 7, 1917.
41 Cunliffe-Owen, "Austria's New Chancellor May Aid Peace" *New York Times*, January 7, 1917.
42 "Benedict XV. Takes the Catholic Powers in Hand," *Current Opinion (1913-1925)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, February 1917).
43 Charles I, "Reply of the Austrian Emperor to Pope Benedict XV," CatholicCulture.org, September 21, 1917.
44 Tibor Frank, "'C'est La Paix!' – The Sixtus Letters and the Peace Initiative of Emperor Karl I," trans. Zsuzsanna Walko, *Hungarian Review* 6, no. 5 (September 8, 2015).
45 Coulombe, *Blessed Charles of Austria*, 173-181; Robert A. Kann, *Die Sixtusaffäre Und Die Geheimen Friedensverhandlungen Österreich-Ungarns Im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1966), 8-9; Leo Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 177, 257-258; Arthur J. May, "War and Diplomacy," in *The Passing of the Hapsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918,* vol. 1 (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), 448–96.
46 Coulombe, *Blessed Charles of Austria,* 173-175.

reestablished… I would ask you in turn… to lay before me the opinion… of France and England… to [prepare] the ground for an understanding… and reach a result satisfactory to all," he wrote.[47]

Unfortunately, by this time, several major factors undermined negotiations. The French government, which had supported the Catholic peace efforts, fell in favor of one that became less enthusiastic about the negotiations. Strengthened by America's entry into the war in April and by Italian demands for Austro-Hungarian territory, French generals sent Austrian envoys an incredible offer. If Austria-Hungary ceded Trieste and Trentino to Italy, Austria would get Bavaria, Silesia, and Poland according to its 1772 borders. Yet this proposal also crumbled.[48] The negotiations failed, closing what may have been a significant opportunity for a negotiated settlement. Despite this, both the pope and the emperor remained committed to pursuing peace, regardless of challenges.

**After the Failure of the "Catholic Peace"**

Even after the disappointing conclusion of the Peace Note of 1917 and the Sixtus Affair, both Pope Benedict and Emperor Charles persisted in their efforts to achieve peace. By May 1918, evidence suggests that Benedict, far from giving up efforts to achieve peace as some claimed, moved "to encourage, if not actually to initiate, informal peace talks by unofficial representatives of the belligerents in neutral countries." According to a contemporary report, "[he] is affronted by the agreement of the Entente to exclude him from the peace conference."[49] Benedict was "said to feel that there has been too much inefficiency in the conduct of all peace negotiations [as again] and again something in the way of an approach to the terms laid down by President Wilson has been effected by the Central Powers [and always] at the last moment there has been a deadlock, a break off of negotiations."[50] As was his consistent policy, the Pope strove to preserve Catholicism, monarchies, and tradition wherever he could. Reports had Benedict also upset with the German Empire for failing to "make specific pledges regarding the independence of Belgium… the Pope will not consent to the extinction of a Roman Catholic power."[51] This view is supported by historians John Pollard and Friedrich Engel-Janosi, who wrote that Benedict's efforts "were limited by diplomatic restrictions yet followed several Catholic-papal objectives, especially the strengthening of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as a bulwark." Benedict, they add, admitted explicitly that "the interests of the Holy See and the Habsburg Monarchy were identical at that moment."[52] A *New York Times* article reported that Benedict continued to push for peace despite being sidelined by the warring powers. He intended to press plans for ending the war on May 19th, which was Whitsuntide (also known as Pentecost Sunday, celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the start of the Church). Additionally, the Pope "will contain concrete offers of mediation by the Holy See, with the possible co-operation of the neutral sovereigns of Europe." However, according to the newspaper article, President Wilson upended the Pope's work when the president announced, "the

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[47] Charles, "Emperor Charles's Peace Letter," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts (1848-1921)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series II, April 27, 1918).

[48] Coulombe, *Blessed Charles of Austria,* 177-181; "The Austrian Peace Negotiations," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts (1848-1921)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series II, June 29, 1918); Valiani, *The End of Austria-Hungary*, 261.

[49] "The Vatican and the Next Peace Talk: Benedict XV. Contemplates Peace as a Development of the Near Future," *Current Opinion (1913-1925)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, May 1918).

[50] "The Vatican and the Next Peace Talk (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, May 1918).

[51] "The Vatican and the Next Peace Talk (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series III, May 1918).

[52] John Pollard, "'Useless Slaughter' Benedict XV and World War .," *Concilium (00105236)*, no. 3 (July 1, 2014): 123; Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "The Roman Question in the First Years of Benedict XV," *The Catholic Historical Review* 40, no. 3 (1954): 276.

American and Entente Governments refused the proposals on the ground that they would not lead to the goal which the Pope desired."[53]

Charles, like Benedict, came to be cast aside. Subsequent efforts to tarnish his reputation ensued, such as the French publishing his letters written to Sixtus. The press, which once saw Charles as a potential peacemaker, now portrayed him with scorn and ridicule. For instance, during 1918, correspondent Charles H. Grasty of the *New York Times* wrote that "well-informed view in France of Charles's letter is not that it was a deliberate attempt to divide the Allies, but a sincere expression of the Austrian Emperor's state of mind at the time," indicating that the French interpreted his peace attempts as a sign of his own weakness.[54] Several other articles in quick succession in 1918 show an escalating political drama in response to the release of the Sixtus Letters, one that ultimately benefited the Allies and harmed Austria-Hungary and the Central Powers alliance. This began when French Premier Georges Clemenceau claimed that, despite the Austrian Prime Minister, Count Czernin, saying there had never been any agreement reached over France's claims, there existed tangible proof which Emperor Charles "put on record in his own writing" that "[Charles] favored France's Alsace claim," and that the French never opened negotiations with the Austrians; it turned out to be the other way around.[55] This resulted in further articles humiliating him (including demands from Austrian and German journalists calling for his abdication). Charges also emerged in print that Emperor Charles had told "insane lies… [and] had the audacity to declare [the Sixtus Letters] a pure invention. The confusion produced in the camps of the Central Empires must be as great as their impudence was yesterday."[56]

Further, two articles, one from the *New York Times* and *The Independent* discussed a shocking development regarding the close connection between Benedict and Charles. The American publication pronounced it "now evident that the Pope relied on Emperor Charles's opinion regarding 'the just claims regarding Alsace-Lorraine [to issue] his peace note, which was practically a repetition of the conditions contained in Emperor Charles's letter to Prince Sixtus." Meanwhile, *The Independent* reported "it is now said that it was at the instigation of Emperor Charles that the Pope made his peace proposals.[57] The public now understood the extent to which the Pope and the emperor had worked together in secret toward a unified goal: their highly desired "Catholic Peace." Indeed, they relied upon each other to achieve this goal, which came incredibly close to fruition.

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[53] "New German Peace Drive is Foreseen: German Papers Announce Papal Mediation Offer at Whitsuntide--Berlin Welcomes It. Washington is Skeptical Allies Predict Teuton Concessions--Kaisers Soon to Meet --Sixtus Confers in Spain.," *New York Times*, May 2, 1918.

[54] Charles H. Grasty, "Think Charles Sincere.: French Believe Emperor's Proposals Were Seriously Meant," *New York Times*, May 18, 1918.

[55] "'Diluted Lie,' Replies Premier Clemenceau: Tells Czernin That Emperor Charles Supported Francis Claim to Alsace.," *New York Times*, April 9, 1918; "Says Clemenceau Reopened Parleys: They Had Been 'Broken Off' Before He Became Premier, Vienna Asserts. Insists France Made Offer Basis for a General Peace Was Sought, According to Austrian Statement. French Premier Rejoins Contradicts Czernin and Says Emperor Charles Favored France's Alsace Claim. Text of Vienan Statement. Parleys Resumed Last January. Admits Other Peace Manoeuvres," *New York Times*, April 9, 1918; Robert Pick, *The Last Days of Imperial Vienna* (New York: The Dial Press, 1975), 49.

[56] "Emperor Blames Mother-in-Law: Semi-Official Report Says the Duchess of Parma Wrote 'Sixtus' Letter. Charles Signed the 'P.S.' Variety of Explanations Offered by the Vienna Press, Including Garbling and Falsification. Kaiser Wires Confidence Assures His Ally He Never Doubted the Latter's Fidelity to the Common Cause. Austrian Emperor's Latest Explanation of His Letter Never Doubted Him, Kaiser Says," *New York Times*, April 14, 1918.

[57] "Emperor Charles Rebuffed by Italy: Attempted to Induce Peace Negotiations There Through Relatives of Empress.Also Sought Pope's Help Papal Note of Aug. 1 Is Said to Have Been Influenced by His Attitude.," *New York Times*, April 15, 1918; "Austrian Peace Overtures," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts (1848-1921)* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series II, April 27, 1918).

Despite the fallout of the Sixtus Affair, Charles, like Benedict, remained committed to peace. In another surprising revelation, a former aide-de-camp for the emperor, Major William de Hevesy, revealed there had been a second attempt by Charles to end the war after the Sixtus Affair. "[T]he Archduke Otto of Habsburg, writing in Foreign Affairs for January 1942, has stated that his father, the Emperor Charles, would have accepted a separate peace if Germany had refused to negotiate. I can confirm that statement, as the emperor charged me with negotiating such a peace," wrote de Hevesy.[58] He continued recounting his work for the emperor to achieve this second peace which Charles "strongly" favored. The emperor's aide described him as the epitome of chivalry, a man driven to see this goal through. Upon the collapse of this second peace attempt, de Hevesy found the emperor, "at least as strongly imbued with the wish to have peace restored as when I left him… this shows that he was not only well intentioned and humane but that he was courageous also. He wanted the best, and tried honestly to obtain it."[59] Even at the end of the war, Charles still offered the Italians, who played a critical part in the failure of the "Catholic Peace," the land they desired if they would make a separate peace with Austria-Hungary in 1918, but to no avail.[60] No matter what initiatives Charles took, no one felt willing to take him up on his offers. An article published the following year in *The Living Times* appropriately titled "Could Peace Have Been Made Last Year?" reflects on the sad outcome of the Sixtus Affair: "whether or not M. Clemenceau's publication of the Emperor Charles's letter could be justified, it has given rise to some very interesting discussions in France… showing a great opportunity was missed for concluding a satisfactory peace."[61] A chance for a satisfactory peace, indeed, but one that had been ultimately rejected.

The failure of the Sixtus Affair, though, as the evidence shows, was neither of Benedict's nor Charles' making. The Allied Powers, now more confident after the entry and growing influence of the United States, sought to harm the opposing side. Thus the Allies saw compromise with the forces of traditional Europe as unnecessary. With that, the war would continue for another year, causing much more blood, much more damage, and leading to the destruction of traditional Europe.

**Conclusion**

Most historians and the public tend to remember only two options for ending World War I: the Wilsonian solution or the Bolshevik vision. Yet, there existed a third possibility. The war could quite possibly have ended a year earlier and on much more equitable terms than those imposed by the Treaty of Versailles and its complementary treaties. Pope Benedict XV and Emperor-King Charles I & IV of Austria-Hungary, far from being minor and ineffectual figures in the First World War, worked tirelessly to bring about a peace that would maintain Tradition, specifically the prominent place of the Roman Catholic Church and the monarchical system of government in Europe.

This alternative deserves recognition alongside the liberal democracy championed by Woodrow Wilson, the international communism of Vladimir Lenin, and the authoritarian and militaristic domination of the Prussian-German elite. The primary sources indicate that multitudes hoped the Pope and emperor would bring peace to the horrific "War to End All Wars." Yet by 1917, the scales of the war began tipping heavily in favor of the Allies with America's involvement.

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58 William de Hevesy, "Postscript to the Sixtus Affair," *Foreign Affairs* 21, no. 3 (1943): 566.
59 Hevesy, "Postscript to the Sixtus Affair," 570, as the evidence shows, it was not of either Benedict's or Charles' making, the Allied Powers, now more confident after the entry and growing influence of the United States, sought to harm the opposing side, seeing compromise with the .
60 "Reports New Peace Offer.: Emperor Charles Said to Be Making an Appeal to Italy," *New York Times*, May 1, 1918.
61 "Could Peace Have Been Made Last Year?" *The Living Age (1897-1941)* (Boston, United States: American Periodicals Series II, June 22, 1918).

Peace along traditional, monarchical, and Catholic lines no longer appeared acceptable as an academic-turned-president looked to "make the world safe for democracy." At that point, the Great Powers began ignoring all efforts by the traditional rulers of Europe to bring about a just peace.

Would such a settlement have been so bad? If the Pope's and emperor's peace efforts had been successful– if the Sixtus Affair had gone the way both sides originally intended– would the world have not been better off ending the war a year sooner, with millions kept alive, damage significantly lessened, and the stabilizing effects of the traditional pillars of Europe– the Crown and the Cross– remaining prominent in continental affairs? Consider a Vatican that held incredible moral, diplomatic, and even temporal weight, alongside an enlarged and invigorated Austria-Hungary in the heart of Europe. The repercussions of such an alternative history are staggering: a lasting peace without harsh punishment. Although broader counterfactual outcomes remain speculative, the collapse of the Catholic initiatives may well have contributed to the harsher postwar settlements that followed. Imagine a world with no World War II, no Cold War either. Monarchy and religion, far from being considered relics, could have remained as important as ever.

Living in the aftermath of a world that experienced the failures of liberalism, fascism, Nazism, and communism, it is time to seriously reevaluate the efforts these traditional political actors made towards ending the madness. We must ask why, for so long, Pope Benedict and Emperor Charles have been maligned, when they bore purer and nobler motives compared to leaders on either side. Given all of this, one should at least entertain the possibility that Tradition, Catholicism, and monarchy, with the Pope and the emperor at the helm, might have done a better job of making the Great War a "War to End All Wars" in 1917 with their Catholic Peace.

## Reconstructing Morality from the Rubble: Memory, Materiality, and Narrative in Helmut Käutner's *In Jenen Tagen*

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After military defeat in 1945, German cinema became a dominant cultural space in which postwar Germans labored to reconstruct national identity and comprehend the recent past. Helmut Käutner's *In Jenen Tagen* (*In Those Days*; 1947) occupies a distinctive place in the immediate post-World War II cinematic landscape. Not only was the production one of the first feature films produced in Allied-occupied Germany, but also it managed to narrate the moral and emotional terrain of the Third Reich from an unexpected angle. Created during the severe winter of 1946 to 1947—when extreme cold, fuel shortages, and food scarcity amplified Germany's urban ruin—the film emerged from a landscape defined by material and social collapse. *In Jenen Tagen* belongs to *Trümmerfilme* ("rubble films"): a series of early postwar German films defined by bombed-out urban landscapes and often indirect, ambivalent engagement with the legacy of National


*Figure 4: Cover of a four-page program published in 1947 by Camera-Filmproduktion, a German production company. Information on the program comes courtesy of Jenns Kaufmann, librarian for the DFF - Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum in Frankfort.*

Scholars such as Sabine Hake and Heide Fehrenbach demonstrate how these rubble films framed ordinary Germans within narratives of suffering, dislocation, and moral uncertainty rather than explicitly confronting guilt. Käutner's film stands apart from other rubble films not only in its episodic structure but also its unlikely narrator: a car. Voiced by the director himself, the vehicle recounts the stories of various owners during Nazi occupation—as it is slowly dismantled in a Berlin scrapyard.[1] The car's role as the narrator allows the film to reconstruct the recent past on a small, nearly intimate scale. The narrative approaches questions of guilt, suffering, and renewal through fragmented memories of ordinary life under the Nazi Regime.

Such tensions become clearer when situated within the director's career and history. Born in 1908 in Düsseldorf, Germany, Helmut Käutner began in cabaret and stage performance, which placed him within a cultural environment shaped by artistic experimentation and increasing political restrictions.[2] Käutner's background places him within a tradition of indirect critique, one that conveys meaning through implication rather than explicit political statements. German film scholar Sabine Mueller notes that Käutner became one of the few directors able to continue working with

[1] *In Jenen Tagen,* directed by Helmut Käutner, aired June 13, 1947 (Hamburg, GER: Camera-Filmproduktion GmbH, 1947). DVD, 111 minutes.
[2] The Museum of Modern Art, MoMa press release Archives, no. 116, "Biographical Notes on Helmut Käutner," October 23, 1957. https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/2275/releases/MOMA_1957_0133_116.pdf

relatively little interruption after 1945 because his films had not been closely associated with Nazi propaganda.[3] However, that does not mean that the director maintained strict politically neutrality. The Nazi Party withdrew Käutner's debut film, *Kitty and the World Conference* (1939), due to concerns about the film's "pro-English tendencies."[4] Still, in the main, Käutner adapted to the artistic and political constraints of filmmaking under the Nazi regime, complicating any strict division between wartime and postwar cultural productions. At the same time, German cinema scholar Robert R. Shandley demonstrates how postwar filmmakers operated under pressure from occupying authorities and audience expectations.[5] The multi-perspective positions encouraged narratives void of overt political confrontations. Käutner thus occupied a middle position. Shaped by the restrictions of the Nazi-era film production systems and the Allied-control regulatory structures of the postwar period, the director pursued a form of indirect moral reflection. *In jenen Tagen*'s emphasis on private life, emotional constraint, and ethical ambiguity reflects such a filmmaker navigating continuity and constraint rather than a clean break between regimes.

Although *In Jenen Tagen* often operates through evasion, it also provides a tentative cinematic effort to restore moral intelligibility after political and ethical collapse. Rather than offering explicit indictments or tracing the roots of fascism, Käutner's film works through fragmentation, indirection, and everyday encounters. Through the car's seven episodic recollections, the narrative follows ordinary Germans as they navigate conformity, fear, and compromise under a wartime dictatorship.[6] The restraint appears evasive, but it also reflects the film's early postwar context when public debates over guilt and responsibility remained unsettled amongst the German populace.

Understanding how *In Jenen Tagen* follows the previous debates requires situating the production within the material and intellectual conditions of early postwar cinema. Postwar German filmmaking became bound with broader efforts to reconstruct cultural meaning and national identity. Postwar German historian Heide Fehrenbach demonstrates how film functioned as a key arena for negotiating questions of democratization, cultural reconstruction, and interpreting the Nazi past, especially when political liberalization remained imposed on Germany by Allied forces.[7] Similarly, film and cultural historian Sabine Hake underscores how film operates as a site where collective memory forms not through definitive historical judgments, but through affect, narrative, and visual experience.[8] Käutner's use of the car as an object-narrator draws on precisely this capacity, opening a space for memory-making that preserves contradiction rather than resolving the matter at hand. *In Jenen Tagen* functions as an early, provisional attempt to reckon with the recent past, revealing both the possibilities and limits of moral reflection in a society still defined by material devastation, ethical uncertainty, and unresolved questions of guilt.

**Ruins, Reconstruction, and the Postwar Cinematic Context**

The production of *In Jenen Tagen* occurred when German society faced not only physical devastation but the collapse of cultural authority near the end of the war. Fehrenbach emphasizes

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[3] Sabine Mueller, "Narration, Rubble Film, and Narratability: Helmut Käutner's *In jenen Tagen, Modern Language Review* 107 no. 4 (October 2012): 1177

[4] "The Lives of Others: Selected Films of Helmut Käutner," *Harvard Film Archive,* Harvard Library, accessed May 4, 2026. https://harvardfilmarchive.org/programs/the-lives-of-others-selected-films-of-helmut-kautner

[5] Robert R. Shandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 114-115.

[6] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.

[7] Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 4-6.

[8] Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1-4

that "organized cultural life had been suspended" as cinemas closed and film stock became destroyed by bombs or taken by occupying authorities dismantling Nazi propaganda apparatus.[9] In the aftermath of the Second World War, German film production entered a *Filmpause*. The phenomenon came when Allied powers halted domestic production to restructure and denazify the film industry.[10] At the same time, organized cultural life had been suspended in the last weeks of the war: theaters and cinemas closed down, film collections scattered or seized, and public screenings only gradually resumed two months later.[11] The Allies recognized the political significance of renewed public interest in cinema attendance and film culture. In the early postwar period, film occupied a uniquely sensitive position within German public life. The medium's prior use as a tool of Nazi propaganda made it subject to heightened scrutiny. The industry reopened but operated under strict licensing and censorship regimes administered separately by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union.[12]

*Figure 5: In Jenen Tagen director Helmut Käutner1960, in Holland. Courtesy of the Nationaal Archief, The Hague.*

This cinematic reconstruction unfolded within the broader Allied and German effort to rebuild civic life after the collapse of National Socialism. German historian Konrad H. Jarausch argues that the 1945 defeat accelerated Germans' distancing from the Third Reich but did not necessarily acknowledge responsibility for Nazi crimes.[13] The Allied project of denazification and reeducation, therefore, sought to remove Nazi institutions and reshape German political culture after the failure of earlier democratic traditions. Yet this process depended on both pressure from occupied forces and the willingness of Germans themselves to participate in moral and civic reconstruction.[14] In this context, cinema became one arena where the attempt to "re-civilize" German society became staged, negotiated, and partially evaded.

Therefore, the film industry's reopening carried significant symbolic weight, shaping not only what German screens showed but how individuals framed, remembered, and emotionally processed the past. Film historian Anton Kaes argues that film and television function as one of the most powerful modern institutions of historical memory, capable of making history come alive and disseminating shared images to mass audiences more effectively than schools or universities.[15] The reopening of German cinemas thus represented not merely a cultural event but a decisive intervention in the formation of collective memory when interpretive frameworks remained unstable in German society.

Germany's postwar environment, marked by material devastation, political censorship by Allied forces, and widespread moral uncertainty, shaped the emergence of the *Trümmerfilm*. With film studios damaged or destroyed, minimal budgets, and public distrust in the media, filmmakers turned

[9] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 1- 2.
[10] Eric Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" *New German Critique* no. 110 (Summer 2010): 10.
[11] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 2
[12] Shandley, *Rubble Films,* 1-3.
[13] Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995,* trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6.
[14] Jarausch, *After Hitler,* 19-20.
[15] Anton Kaes, "History and Film: Public Memory in the Age of Electronic Dissemination," *History and Memory* 2, no.1 (Fall 1900): 112-114.

to the rubble. The filmmakers shot amongst the ruins that served as documentary evidence and emotionally charged symbols of destruction and moral collapse. In comparison, Nazi cinema rarely relied on overt propaganda alone. Instead, it sought to shape perception and behavior through entertainment, embedded ideological control within popular genres, familiar narratives, and the pleasures of mass culture.[16] Postwar filmmakers thus confronted not only political censorship but a cinematic legacy that normalized conformity and emotional identification without critical reflection. The rubble film's austere visual language, characterized by stark lighting, minimal set design, and on-location shooting of bombed-out urban landscapes, consciously rejected the aesthetic continuities of Nazi-era cinema. Rubble films "registered a state of physical and psychological ruin" and attempted a form of "moral rearmament," often emphasizing ordinary Germans as victims or rescuers rather than perpetrators.[17] The ruined city provides a visual vocabulary for a nation grappling with collapse, allowing filmmakers to gesture toward suffering, disorientation, and loss without directly confronting questions of responsibility.

Postwar journalism and broadcasting likewise treated rubble films as a defining visual language of Germany's reconstruction. Newspaper columnist John Crosby's "Berlin Story," written about Edward R. Murrow's 1952 televised report about Berlin, emphasized images of "a German woman picking bricks out of rubble" and noted that "the biggest business in Berlin is still rubble."[18] Such descriptions show that rubble offered more than physical debris. The strew bricks operated as a shorthand for labor, division, reconstruction, and unresolved historical burden. The broader media context helps explain why *Trümmerfilme* productions such as *In Jenen Tagen* relied on ruined urban space as both documentary evidence and moral atmosphere.

Additionally, cinema in postwar Germany implements a democratizing function. Paul Steege, an historian of twentieth-century Germany, notes how the Cold War shaped the groundwork for divergent political and historical narratives in Allied-occupied zones.[19] Within the fragmented context, film became one of the few spaces where different segments of the population encounter shared representations of the past. Hake argues that film operates as a new kind of public sphere which convenes diverse audiences, such as working-class families, returning soldiers, and refugees, into a shared space of reflection.[20] This formulation suggests that cinema did not simply mirror postwar society but actively structured how audiences encountered and interpreted the recent past. Feature films provide "unique insights into everyday life," revealing how social imaginaries rebuilt themselves during scarcity and uncertainty.[21] The process became significant as Germans forcibly reconstructed social meaning in the absence of stable institutions and shared political frameworks. Käutner's film participates in the broader cultural project of reconstructing moral meaning and historical understanding through its framing narrative in the scrapyard. Protagonists Karl (played by Erich Schellow) and Willi (played by Gert Schäfer) dismantle the car that transforms into the film's narrator.[22] The film provides no details about the characters' personal histories, yet their age difference and shared labor amid the ruins subtly signal a generational and social disorientation of the immediate postwar period. Karl and Willi's silent labor in the scrapyard reflects a liminal moment, situated between defeat and reconstruction before competing memory cultures of East and West Germany. While the Federal Republic (West Germany) emphasized German suffering and the

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[16] Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 217.
[17] Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" 10.
[18] John Crosby, "Radio-Television," *Pittsburg Post-Gazette,* September 22, 1953.
[19] Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.
[20] Hake, *German National Cinema,* 4.
[21] Hake, *German National Cinema,* 3.
[22] *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.

need for reintegration, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) framed fascism as a product of capitalism and positioned itself as fundamentally anti-fascist.[23]

Yet *In Jenen Tagen* also departs from *Trümmerfilm's* emphasis on victimization, shifting instead toward a fragmented moral landscape that foregrounds constrained choice, ambiguity, and moments of limited ethical agency rather than clear innocence. German director Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (*The Murderers Are Among Us*) constructs a psychological drama centered on a traumatized veteran and a concentration camp survivor.[24] Käutner, by contrast, disperses narrative agency across seven episodes featuring ordinary individuals, such as artists and civilians, who navigate the pressures of life under the Nazi regime. Mueller acknowledges how the director's approach reframes the viewer's engagement by emphasizing a limited perspective with fragmented memories rather than overt political commentary.[25] The film neither universalizes German innocence nor fully exculpates its characters. Instead, it presents the past as a mosaic of constrained choices and emotional burdens, refracted through the memories of an object that outlives its previous owners. This structure demonstrates Käutner's attempt to navigate moral and emotional reconstruction without reducing the past to simple victimhood.

## Narrative Structure and the Car as a Witness

*In Jenen Tagen* opens not with a spectacle or an exposition but with labor. Karl and Willi work methodically in a Berlin scrapyard, disassembling a battered automobile amid the city's ruins. As they continue their labor, Karl mutters that "there are no human beings anymore," a remark the car quietly echoes to the audience in its first act of narration.[26] The line establishes one of the film's central concerns: the perception that dictatorship and war eroded society's moral fabric. The moral unraveling leaves individuals uncertain of how to define their own humanity in the aftermath of widespread collapse. The car's voice does not provide any political commentary or historical explanation. Instead, each episodic venture follows the remembered encounters in which ordinary lives were bent, constrained, or redirected by Nazi influences. The film's reflective, melancholy narration situates the past at a slight remove, emphasizing memory rather than judgment of the events before and after the Second World War.

Contemporary American reception also recognized the importance of the film's unusual structure. A 1951 *New York Times* review of the film published when the film opened at the Midtown Theatre, described the film as following the "shifting ownership" of a battered car through the "twelve fateful years of Nazi Germany."[27] The review's attention to the automobile's movement from owner to owner reinforces the film's central narrative logic: history no longer becomes presented through a single protagonist, but through fragments of ordinary lives connected by a surviving object.

Bill Brown, an English professor and writer, offers the "Thing Theory" as a useful framework for understanding the car's narrative role within the film's structure. Brown argues that objects become visible as "things" when their ordinary circulation through use, exchange, or

[23] For more information on postwar Germany reconstruction, denazification, and the divergent political development of East and West Germany after 1945, see Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995,* trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[24] Fred Childress, "At The Theaters: "Murderers Among Us" Scheduled For Service Group's Film Series," *Youngstown Vindicator,* March 30, 1949.
[25] Mueller, "Narration, Rubble Film, and Narratability," 1170-1177.
[26] *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
[27] "German Import Opens at Midtown," *New York Times,* March 12, 1951.

function breaks down.[28] In such moments, objects exceed their instrumental roles and emerge as sites of latent meaning, exposing subject-object relations that commonly remain invisible.[29] The car in *In Jenen Tagen* fits the description precisely as it becomes removed from its original function, dismantled in a scrapyard, and transformed into a narrative witness. Removed from use, stripped down in a landscape of rubble, and mediated through the memories of previous owners, the automobile becomes a witness to twelve years of dictatorship. By granting narrative agency to an object stripped of its practical function, the film invites historians to engage in material culture as a bearer of historical memory. Brown describes material objects as elements that help constitute subjects by shaping movement, perception, and social relations.[30] In the film, the car functions as the material item connecting disparate individuals while structuring their lived experiences and retrospective narration which creates meaningful experiences for both the owner and the automobile. Far from serving as a distancing device, the object-narrator enables an oblique approach to the Nazi past grounded in the remnants that survived under Nazi control. The car links diverse lives without privileging any single perspective, allowing the film to register continuity across rupture while avoiding the authority of omniscient narration.

The first episode begins on January 30, 1933, the day Adolf Hitler became chancellor. Seen through the windshield of Sybille (played by Winnie Markus), the car's first owner, the streets appear chaotic and confusing. Onlookers attribute nearby fires to "Spartacist thugs," only for the scene to resolve into a torchlight procession celebrating the new regime.[31] The car's observation, "How little we understand by looking," draws attention to the limits of perception experienced by those living through the moment.[32] The emphasis on misrecognition underscores the gap between lived experiences and historical understanding, suggesting that individuals act without full awareness of the broader forces shaping events. As Mueller argues, the film exploits the temporal disjunction to generate an active, cognitive engagement: characters make decisions without acknowledging what lies ahead while viewers evaluate the characters' decisions through historical hindsight.[33] Following a similar direction, Käutner constructs a narrative in which contingency and inevitability coexist, allowing the film to acknowledge both the opacity of lived experience and the catastrophic trajectory revealed later on.

The subsequent episodes develop between personal experience and political transformation without resolving any of the previous postwar tensions or applying a moral framework. The dynamic becomes especially visible in the part of the film when observing the story of a shopkeeper. Wilhelm Bienert (played by Willy Maertens) participates in the violence of Kristallnacht–a series of coordinated attacks on Jewish businesses, homes, and synagogues across Nazi Germany in November 1938–only to immediately flee its consequences.[34] The sequence highlights the uneasy coexistence of complicity and self-preservation, showing how individuals participated in acts of violence while simultaneously attempting to evade responsibility. Similarly, the mechanic, Erna (played by Isa Vermehre), who risks her life to save an elderly woman, becomes condemned as a "traitor" and represents a moment of limited ethical agency within an oppressive system[35] These vignettes neither absolve their protagonists nor emphasize ideological conviction. Instead, they trace a spectrum of fear, secrecy, shame, and hesitant solidarity. Such moments in the film show how

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28 Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28 no. 1 (Autumn 2001): 4.
29 Brown, "Thing Theory," 5-7
30 Brown, "Thing Theory," 6-7.
31 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
32 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
33 Mueller, "Narration, Rubble Film, and Narratability," 1170-1177.
34 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
35 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.

individuals navigated the tightening constraints of the Nazi state through partial knowledge and compromised choices.

The final episode shifts to the collapse of the Third Reich in May 1945. A soldier named Josef (played by Carl Raddatz) assists a mother and child as they attempt to escape to safety[36] Before returning to the front, he reflects that "human beings can't do anything about all this," articulating a late-war resignation shared by many of the film's characters.[37] The closing lines complicate this sense of historical fatalism; the idea that individuals were inevitably swept along by forces beyond their control. Historical fatalists suggest that even within constrained circumstances or moments of hesitation, moments of reflection and limited choice remained as possible options even in dire situations. The car asserts that, although "history proved stronger than them," the humanity of its former owners became "stronger than history."[38] The sentiment appears cautiously hopeful, resonating with early postwar desires to locate moral continuity when German society feared that such continuity shattered after the Nazi's defeat. Rather than resolving questions regarding guilt or responsibility, the film concludes by affirming the fragile persistence of ethical possibility; an affirmation shaped less by political reckoning than by memory, endurance, and survival.

**Between Victimhood and Responsibility: The Mitläufer Problem**

Early postwar German cinema occupies an uneasy position between acknowledging the moral catastrophe of Nazism and recasting Germans as disoriented victims of Hitler's brutal forces. Scholarship from film historians such as Rentschler, Shandley, Robert Moeller, and Ulrike Weckel illuminates such tensions by showing how rubble films repeatedly gesture towards responsibility while retreating into narratives of German suffering, dislocation, and moral recovery.

Postwar memory did not form neutrally; it developed through selective stories that helped Germans explain defeat, suffering, and responsibility. As a historian of postwar Germany, Robert G. Moeller argues that the memory culture that emerged in the Federal Republic during the late 1940s and 1950s oriented towards the construction of a "usable past," one that privileged stories of German victimhood, expellees, prisoners of war, bombed-out civilians, and an over-sustained engagement with German guilt.[39] Although West Germans acknowledged that soldiers committed "unspeakable crimes" in their name as a nation, public discourse increasingly framed Germans themselves as victims of wartime devastation and postwar brutality, particularly at the hands of Communist regimes.[40] Such emphasis on constructing a usable past shaped the symbolic language of early postwar cinema by encouraging filmmakers to emphasize themes of suffering, moral ambiguity, and personal hardship while downplaying direct representations of German responsibility. The rubble of 1945 came to signify German loss and endurance rather than the consequence of German aggression, aligning films with an audience eager to mourn its own suffering.

In a similar fashion, Rentschler's analysis of the *Trümmerfilm* demonstrates how cinematic productions reinforced the interpretive shift from viewing Germany as a perpetrator of wartime destruction to emphasizing postwar German suffering, psychological trauma, and moral recovery. Visions of societal ruin dominate rubble films, which frequently frame wide, almost monumental shots that aestheticize destruction and render the images analogous to the natural landscape.[41] Rather

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36 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
37 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
38 *In Jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
39 Robert G. Moeller, "War Stories: The Search for a usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany," *American Historical Review* 101 no.4 (Oct. 1996): 1010-1013.
40 Moeller, "War Stories," 1013, 1019.
41 Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" 9-11.

than functioning as material evidence of a German-initiated conflict, the destroyed city becomes a metaphor for psychological collapse. In *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, the rubble externalizes Dr. Hans Mertens's (played by Wilhelm Borchert) inner turmoil as a traumatized veteran of the Second World War, especially when confronting his former commanding officer, whose wartime execution of civilians drives Mertens's desire for revenge.[42] Yet this framing also softens Mertens's own implication in wartime violence, positioning him primarily as a wounded witness rather than a morally compromised participant. Although the film stages a massacre in occupied Poland, responsibility becomes ultimately individualized and displaced onto Captain Ferdinand Brückner (played by Arno Paulsen), the exceptional war criminal. Hans's own culpability appears mitigated by his trauma as a returning soldier from the Second World War. This distinguishes him sharply from the "true" murderer and preserves his status as a figure of moral recovery rather than collective implication.[43]

Compared with Moeller and Rentschler, Shandley provides the most systematic account of how such displacement operated across *Trümmerfilme* productions in postwar Germany. He argues that these films took shape by a shared set of narrative tendencies known as the "Seven Rs": redemption, redefinition, reconciliation, re-stabilization, reintegration, reconstruction, and reprivatization.[44] Together, these tendencies allow characters to change attitudes without fully atoning for their actions (redemption), recast Germans as passive spectators or victims of history (redefinition), and restore interpersonal harmony among gentile Germans while rarely, if ever, staging reconciliation between perpetrators and victims (reconciliation). Strikingly, neither reflection nor remorse appears among the organizing principles of the "Seven Rs." Instead, rubble films prioritize rapid re-stabilization of social order and the reintegration of men and women into familiar gender roles, shifting attention away from moral reckoning and toward reconstruction and private life.[45] As such, these films implicitly endorse the broader societal desire for a *Schlußstrich*, a line drawn beneath the Nazi past.[46]

Subsequently, German historian Ulrike Weckel's work on reception history demonstrates that such narrative displacement appeared reinforced by contemporary audiences. Viewers frequently interpreted *Mitläufer* figures, those who went along with Nazism without becoming extremists or leaders, not as morally compromised participants but as helpless victims of circumstance.[47] The Mitläufer's interpretive pattern transformed ambiguity into exculpation. Contemporary reviews of films like *Die Mörder sind unter uns* often made reassuring figures out of characters such as Mertens and Behnke, whose perceived inability to stop the Nazi regime allowed audiences to imagine the ordinary German as powerless rather than complicit. As Weckel suggests, the reluctance to criticize such characters reveals an unspoken need for apologies among postwar viewers who harbored anxieties about their own participation in or accommodation of Nazism.[48] Following such mindsets, rubble films did not merely mirror a culture of victimhood; they actively enabled spectators to recognize themselves within their environment.

Taken together, these scholarly perspectives reveal that rubble films operate within persistent societal and psychological tension in postwar Germany. The filmmakers raise questions about guilt and responsibility but resolve them through narrative and aesthetic structures that privilege German suffering. The Nazi past appears in deflected forms either as an abstract force ("those times"), the

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[42] Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" 24-26.
[43] Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" 27-29.
[44] Shandley, *Rubble Films,* 182-188.
[45] Shandley, *Rubble Films,* 184-186
[46] Shandley, *Rubble Films,* 189
[47] Ulrike Weckel, "The Mitläufer in Two German Postwar Films," *History & Memory* 15 no.2 (Fall/Winter 2003): 75-78.
[48] Weckel, "The Mitläufer in Two German Postwar Film," 83-86.

crime of a small group of villains, or as the backdrop for private moral dilemmas rather than collective accountability. Postwar cinema thus occupies a liminal space between victimhood and responsibility: it acknowledges trauma while relocating its origins away from the German population. This dynamic allows viewers to identify with protagonists who appear bewildered, wounded, or morally compromised primarily through omission rather than direct action.

Synthesizing each historian's approach, what emerges is a body of films that reflect both an early attempt to engage the *Schuldfrage* (the question of guilt or who to blame) and the sharp limits of that engagement. Rubble films initiated a cinematic confrontation with the Nazi past, yet they also demonstrate how quickly that confrontation softened, redirected, or became submerged beneath narratives of suffering and reconstruction. In this way, early postwar cinema reveals the ambivalent ways Germans remembered the recent past: torn between acknowledging the enormity of Nazi crimes and seeking emotional refuge in images of a ruined yet morally recoverable nation.

**Cinema, Memory, and National Reconstruction**

From the moment cinemas reopened, film became a crucial cultural space in which Germans attempted to regain a sense of coherence after the collapse of the Third Reich. Films play a central role in shaping national identity by articulating an "imagined community." Hake suggests the phenomenon functions not merely as entertainment, but as a public forum in which cultural values, social norms, and political meanings become negotiated amongst the populace.[49] In the immediate postwar years, cinema emerged a key site in "the public sphere," a space where national self-understanding became tentatively reconstructed amid physical devastation and moral disorientation.[50] In this sense, film did not simply entertain; it provided a shared framework through which audiences began to process the collapse of the Nazi regime. The rapid return of audiences to movie theaters, often before the restoration of electricity, housing, or basic services, underscored the medium's importance.[51] The early resurgence suggests that cinema fulfilled needs that extended beyond material survival, offering both psychological refuge and a space for collective reflection. Fehrenbach observes how cinema quickly became one of the few refuges where Germans could escape material deprivation while also, indirectly or otherwise, grappling with the question of identity after Nazism.[52]

*Figure 6 Nuremberg in rubble, 1945. Image courtesy of the National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD.*

This process of cultural reconstruction was part of a broader struggle over Germany's post-1945 moral and political reorientation. Jarausch argues that the postwar project of reeducation depended not only on pressure from the occupation powers, but also on the willingness of Germans themselves to participate in civic and moral reconstruction.[53] The point helps clarify why cinema

[49] Hake, *German National Cinema,* 1
[50] Hake, *German National Cinema,* 4
[51] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 2
[52] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 2
[53] Jarausch, *After Hitler,* 19-20

mattered so deeply in the immediate postwar period: film became one of the spaces where Germans could encounter new narratives of responsibility, victimhood, and national belonging.

As a result, the broader cultural process of reconstructing a shared national identity profoundly shaped the production and reception of *In Jenen Tagen*. The end of the war reactivated long-standing anxieties about the social power of cinema, ones amplified by Allied debates over censorship, democratization, and reeducation.[54] Fehrenbach notes that national identity reemerged after 1945 as a central concern for both Allied occupiers and German elites who viewed cultural reconstruction as a prerequisite for political legitimacy and eventual sovereignty.[55] Emphasis on identity made cultural production, particularly film, a contested space in which visions of Germany's future competed. At the same time, Hollywood imports flooded German screens, competing with the small number of licensed domestic productions and provoking fears that foreign images and values would overwhelm fragile efforts to define a post-Nazi identity.[56] Within this volatile climate, films like *In Jenen Tagen* functioned as preliminary attempts to orient viewers morally within a shattered cultural landscape. Rather than confronting the Nazi past through overt political critique, the film approaches the subject obliquely through personal stories that reflect a society struggling to articulate new ethical coordinates without reviving the ideological language of the Third Reich. The perspective became especially visible in the section of the film involving the composer whose work appeared "degenerate," where political repression emerges through its impact on family life rather than explicit ideological confrontation.[57] The indirect approach not only shapes the film's narrative structure but also reveals the broader tensions inherent in postwar attempts to reconcile guilt, responsibility, and moral recovery.

Yet the project of cultural reconstruction inevitably involved confronting, and often displacing, uncomfortable memories. Rubble films, however somber or melancholic in tone, frequently portrayed ordinary Germans as "victims of anonymous forces."[58] The narrative strategy redirects attention away from historical perpetrators and toward a generalized experience of collective suffering. The films' emotional register, oscillating between resignation, sentimentality, and cautious optimism, mirrored the ambivalence of attempting to rebuild a nation while sidestepping a full reckoning with the recent past's moral enormity.[59] This dynamic is especially visible in the film's closing memory, where a soldier and a mother express quiet resignation toward the war even as the concluding narration cautiously reaffirms the persistence of human decency.[60] How the scene engages a discussion of moral enormity stems from how historians study memory. As a professor of German eighteenth and twentieth-century literature and culture, Andreas Huyssen argues that memory is not a stable transmission of the past, but a form of "re-presentation" shaped by the needs and anxieties of the present.[61] The perspective helps clarify how postwar cinema selectively frames suffering and responsibility in ways that respond to contemporary concerns. Understood through memory, rubble films appear as cultural palimpsests that layer narratives of decency, endurance, and everyday dignity over traumatic histories that remain only partially visible. The result neither outright denied nor sustained confrontation, but a selective remembering that allows Germans to imagine a

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[54] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 5
[55] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 5-6.
[56] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 6-7.
[57] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
[58] Hake, *German National Cinema,* 98-99
[59] Hake, *German National Cinema,* 99.
[60] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
[61] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 3-4.

morally viable identity without fully acknowledging the structures and actions that produced their devastation.

Contemporary commentary on postwar German-set films reveals the close ties between physical destruction and moral crisis in public discourse. In her article "The Theatre and Its People," Annie Oakley described postwar Germany as a landscape of "spiritual as well as stone and steel rubble."[62] The phrase collapses material devastation and ethical disorientation into a single image. Read alongside *In Jenen Tagen*, such language suggests that rubble in postwar film culture functioned not merely as scenery, but as a way of visualizing that damaged moral world left by Nazism and war.

The aesthetic framework of early postwar cinema further shaped how filmmakers approached the challenge of representing guilt, responsibility, and moral ambiguity after the Third Reich. As Kaes notes in relation to *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, early postwar films rejected the intoxicating style of National Socialist propaganda by turning instead toward Weimar expressionism and elements of Italian neorealism.[63] Expressionist devices such as distorted angles, heavy shadows, and stark silhouettes symbolized inner distress, while neorealist elements emphasized location shooting, material conditions, and human solidarity. Rentschler similarly argues that commentators linked Trümmerfilme to both Expressionism and Neorealism, reading these styles as part of the rubble films' search for new means of representing a changed world.[64] *In Jenen Tagen* participates in this broader aesthetic shift less through dramatic visual distortion than through its use of ruins, restrained staging, and episodic encounters with ordinary people. These choices allow Käutner to distance the film from Nazi-era spectacle while presenting the postwar landscape as both physical evidence and moral atmosphere. The cinematic shift signaled more than an artistic preference; the medium represented a symbolic rejection of the visual grammar associated with fascist spectacle and ideological certainty. At the same time, this rejection did not necessarily produce direct political confrontation. In *In Jenen Tagen*, the use of authentic ruins, restrained camera work, and morally charged dialogue contributes to an "ideology of self-purification," an effort to redeem both characters and spectators through intimate ethical reflection rather than political analysis.[65] This framework helps explain why the film repeatedly asks, "what it means to remain human under inhuman conditions."[66] Rather than investigating the structures that enabled Nazism, the film turns toward private moments of ethical testing, in which individual decency appears as a fragile yet recoverable moral resource. Erna's decision to risk her life to protect a woman condemned as a traitor illustrates such patterns.[67] Her action suggests that moral responsibility persists even under conditions of extreme political repression. Yet the scene also reveals the film's limits. By privileging inner conflict and private virtue, *In Jenen Tagen* risks substituting metaphysical reflection for historical accountability, largely avoiding the structural causes of Nazism and broader mechanism of complicity that extend beyond its carefully circumscribed protagonists.

Nevertheless, *In Jenen Tagen* occupies a revealing position within early West German memory culture. The episodes in the film neither fully embrace the sentimental exculpation characteristic of later *Heimatfilme* (Homeland films). Neither do they offer explicit confrontation with perpetrators seen in more politically forceful works such as *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, which directly engages questions of guilt and accountability in postwar Germany. Instead, the production exemplifies the past in fragments, partially obscured and mediated by present needs. The car's episodic narration

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[62] Annie Oakley, "The Theatre and Its People," *The Windsor Daily Star,* February 29, 1951.
[63] Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 12.
[64] Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" 11.
[65] Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat,* 12.
[66] Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat,* 12
[67] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.

reflects this instability, moving from one owner and historical moment to the next while denying any single, unified perspective on the Nazi past.[68] Käutner's film thus stands as a cultural artifact, reflecting the shift from wartime conditions under National Socialism to the uncertain moral and political landscape of the early postwar period. The film reflects the broader dynamics identified by Hake and Fehrenbach, such as anxieties over national identity, pressures of occupation, and desires for cultural continuity, while also revealing the tentative moral aspirations of a society searching for an ethical framework in the wake of catastrophe. The director's narratives of decency, ambivalent guilt, and fragile optimism illuminate both the possibilities and the limits of cinematic *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (processing or coming to terms with past crimes) in the late 1940s. This limitation is evident in Wilhelm's segment of the film. Although he participates in the violence of Kristallnacht, the film quickly shifts its attention to his escape rather than sustained moral reckoning.[69] Significantly, the film offers little indication of sustained remorse, instead emphasizing his rapid withdrawal from the scene, which shifts attention away from moral reckoning and toward personal survival.

## Conclusion

*In Jenen Tagen* illustrates both the ambition and the limits of early postwar attempts to make sense of the recent German past. Through its episodic structure and the car's reflective narration, the film reconstructs the years of Nazi rule not through ideological exposition or retrospective judgment, but through constrained perspectives of ordinary individuals moving through a partially understood world. The use of the car as a narrative strategy aligns with what scholars such as Fehrenbach and Hake describe as the postwar search for new cultural foundations. In this process, cinema played a central role in reimagining community and restoring a fragile sense of moral orientation after the collapse of political and cultural authority.[70]

At the same time, the film shares many of the evasion characteristics of the rubble-film cycle. As Shandley, Rentschler, and Moeller examine, early postwar cinema frequently recast Germans as victims of circumstance, emphasizing suffering and dislocation while deflecting sustained engagement with perpetration or complicity.[71] Käutner's film participates in a similar tendency, but its emphasis on limited agency, emotional strain, and fractured perception complicates any simple narrative of innocence. Mueller observes how the film's careful use of perspective foregrounds the difficulty of moral judgment within a fragmented historical landscape, where decisions assembled under pressure, without the benefit of hindsight.[72]

Seen in this light, the film's closing reassurance–that "their humanity was stronger than history"–functions less as an absolution and more as a reflection of postwar Germany's need to recover a sense of moral coherence.[73] Rather than confronting the structural origins of violence or assigning responsibility, the ending recenters attention on the persistence of individual decency under extreme conditions. Kaes and Huyssen remind historians that memory in the immediate postwar period shaped present needs as much as historical understanding.[74] *In Jenen Tagen* does not resolve the tension between victimhood and responsibility that Germans faced in the aftermath of

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[68] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
[69] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
[70] Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany,* 2-6*;* Hake, *German National Cinema,* 92-100.
[71] Shandley, *Rubble Films,* 4-5, 47-59; Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the 'Trümmerfilm,'" 9-14, 24-29; Moeller, "War Stories," 1010-1019, 1023-1032.
[72] Mueller, "Narration," 1174-1179.
[73] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min.
[74] Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat,* 12; Huyssen, *Present Pasts,* 3-4.

the Nazi regime. Instead, it registers an early, tentative effort to articulate ethical meaning amid national ruins. The film thus stands as a record of transition: not a final reckoning with the Nazi past, but an uncertain step in the long and uneven process of coming to terms with what happened, and with what it meant to remain human "in those days."[75] In doing so, the film preserves a historical moment defined not by resolution, but by ambiguity, fragmentation, and the ongoing struggle to assign moral meaning after catastrophe.

[75] *In jenen Tagen,* 111 min

## Review of ***Rethinking U.S World Power – Domestic Histories of U.S Foreign Relations***, edited by Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.

Garrett D. Young

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*Rethinking U.S World Power* is a focused collection of essays composed by a group of twelve authors. Each individually address a common idea: that the domestic politics of the United States played a much larger role in shaping its foreign policies than the current historiography acknowledges. Each chapter (from chapter three on) focuses on an historical topic in chronological order, linking the event or issue to its effect in shaping foreign policy decisions.

Briefly, I will review the book's organization. Following an introductory first chapter, a second chapter, co-written by historians Daniel Bessner and Frederik Logevall, further develops the argument for why historians should place a portion of their attention on domestic policy regarding foreign policy. The authors allege that historians went "too far" in defocusing attention from domestic causes. The United States was extremely powerful after World War II, and this ascent drew more Americans to focus on international relations. Americans believed that "Communist success in a strategically important area like Vietnam would have grievously harmed U.S. interests by emboldening the Soviets and Chinese to be more aggressive elsewhere." Yet the authors dismiss the "historical revisionism" that focuses too much on the military aspect of the conflicts or views US leaders as above domestic influences.

Chapter 3, written by Stephen Wetheim, a senior fellow in the American Statecraft Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, develops the pre-Pearl Harbor debate regarding isolationism vs internationalism, a crucial battle that played out in domestic politics.

The book's co-editor, Besser authored chapter 4, on U.S. science policies. Specifically, he develops how science was made to be in a state of "permanent mobilization" when "Army Air Forces General Curtis E. LeMay, MIT engineer and War Department official Edward L. Bowles, and physicist Louis N. Ridenour, Jr., promoted and legitimated peacetime scientific-military collaboration. The effect of such was higher degrees of outright collaborationism elsewhere with U.S. allies which greatly shaped the Cold War.

The influence of agricultural surplus is the topic of chapter five, written by Kate O'Connell. This problem has plagued American farmers for a long time. The farming business boomed during and immediately after World War I when American farmers essentially fed Europe, but the business crashed when the continent retuned to peace. All parties feared this happening again after World War II, so the department of agriculture moved to create the "soldiers of the soil" for the Cold War, so that Americans could keep exporting their grain to warfronts and places that needed food, which forever tied agriculture to foreign policy (12).

The location of the American embassy in Israel—specifically the prospect of relocating the embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem to recognize the city as the official capital of Israel in a symbolic gesture—also stirred deep domestic passions. It became a domestic issue as well as foreign issue because so many interests seized upon the opportunity to promise to relocate the embassy to Jerusalem in a move to obtain support for their election campaigns. The Jerusalem Embassy, argues Daniel Hummel, an historian of American religion, in chapter six, remained an election campaign issue that was not acted upon until President Donald Trump finally made it so in 2018.

Chapter seven, by historian Vivien Chang returns to agriculture. It reviews how the United States vehemently resisted the G-77 campaign by cocoa producing countries which promised to grant them sovereignty over their own business. Americans resisted the stabilization of cocoa prices due to the opposition of domestic candy store businesses. To Chang, this aggressive posturing against the global south in the interest of domestic business appears one example of many other forms of exploitation of continuing to this day.

Domestic political organizing and the Vietnam moratorium of 1969 is taken up in Chapter eight, written by political historian Michael Koncewicz. Specifically, the chapter reviews how the moratorium movement of 1969 managed to gain media attention, but still flamed out due to its inability to sustain itself due to internal tensions and infighting.

Other homefront movements are considered by Amanda C. Demmer in the nineth chapter, which focuses inn particular on the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees (CCIR) and the problem of the Indochinese refugees. When human rights groups concerned with the exodus from Southeast Asia could not effectively appeal to U.S. lawmakers by themselves, they formulated the CCIR to shape refugee policy by engaging in two fact-finding missions to Southeast Asia and publishing policy recommendations. As a result they finally drew the attention of people in power in Washington, and finally gained favorable refugee policies as a result of their actions.

Sarah Miller-Davenport provides the next chapter which examines New York City's transition into a globalist city. The U.S. government reportedly had an anti-urban bias, which forced New York City to take policies of trade into its own hands and invest heavily into global finance and foreign investment to redirect the future of the city's economy. As such, it became one of the very first modern global hubs as we know that term today, all driven by domestic decision making.

A final chapter, written by Michael Brenes, focuses on American efforts to cut costs on military spending to make way for social spending in the 1990s. This initiatives was hobbled by the failure of the Clinton Administration to plan for an effective conversion of military assets to civilian assets. Cut-backs led domestic defense companies to engage in a series of mergers, so that they could consolidate their grip over national military spending and prioritized their own influence over the security in their foreign policy.

Taken together these articles show how the domestic climate in America can and does directly lead to the formation of the U.S. foreign policy. The book aims to persuade the next generation of historians to finally shift at least some of their attention away from the foreign actions alone. It proves that the domestic front is not the entire story, but a seriously neglected part of it.

## Review of ***Cold War Country: How Nashville's Music Row and the Pentagon Created the Sound of American Patriotism*** by Joseph M. Thompson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2024.

Charley G. Lackey

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If a citizen of the United States were to associate one particular thing with the concept of American patriotism, country music might be a valid answer. Songs such as Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" and Toby Keith's "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American)" become synonymous with patriotic unity and pride across the nation-state. The presence of country music at national events like presidential inaugurations affirms its patriotic presence, but we might wonder how and why the genre became integral to asserting American patriotism. Historian Joseph M. Thompson seeks to answer the question in *Cold War Country: How Nashville's Music Row and the Pentagon Created the Sound of American Patriotism.* Spanning nine chapters, the author reveals and analyzes the hidden relationship between the fledgling country music industry and U.S. military forces from the 1940s to early 1990s.

An associate professor at Mississippi State University, Thompson focuses his research primarily in twentieth-century American and Southern U.S. histories. Although the book is his first, the author has written articles and book chapters and made media appearances in correlation with his research. What makes the timing of the study perfect is how it relates to current socio-political trends regarding country music's association with conservative politics. During Super Bowl LIX, conservative organization Turning Point USA , a conservative group aimed at recruiting young people, presented the "All-American Halftime Show" which featured artists like Kid Rock who promoted political messages while playing country music. Although the show, which was essentially counterprogramming for official Super Bowl halftime performance, took place after the book's initial publication, events such as the halftime show prompt individuals to question country music's patriotic lineage.

*Cold War Country* follows three arguments: that country music latched onto the Cold War military to grow its business, that it helped white Southerners accept militarization as part of American culture, and that this relationship established the genre as a political force ( 4-5). Thompson backs each argument with a plethora of evidence ranging from U.S. military records, personal testimonies, and live performances to demonstrate the rise and fall of the symbiotic relationship. What makes the narrative unique is how Thompson presents a new perspective on the Cold War. The author begins his narrative with radio announcer turned Country Music Association (CMA) President Connie B. Gay who, upon using his previous military connections, booked artists Grandpa Jones and His Grandchildren to play for Korean War soldiers in 1951 (29-30). The tour not only prompted the catalyst for both music and military associations to aid in each other's popularity but helped country stars such as Roy Acuff to rise to stardom. Through a use of musical and historical analysis, Thompson provides a comprehensible narrative that follows country's militaristic presentation through events such as the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Following the introduction, *Cold War Country* focuses on both the social and economic changes in the musical-military relationship across the multi-decade ideological Cold War. Although the musicians encountered commentators dismissing the genre as mere "hillbilly music," soldiers-turned-musicians such as Faron Young found their start in the military services. The author additionally seeks to present the country-military dynamic as a means of promoting American patriotism to international audiences. The Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) helped organizations such as the CMA to establish an international market in the 1960s for thirty million listeners to partake in the "All-American commodity"(160). This provide the genre international appeal and revenue. The author provides a unique narrative that blends social and economic histories to generate a newfound narrative based on the sounds of American patriotism.

Despite the study's unique twist, Thompson's attempt to build multiple arguments at times falters, especially his initiative to present a narrative outside the white male perspective. Thompson does highlight black individuals such as O. B. McClinton, who was among the artists struggling to get into country music due. Due to his color, however, McClinton found himself categorized soul music in the 1960s. The author includes such figures as McClinton largely to reflect the attitudes of white Southern men since the 1940s. The author's discussion of gender, likewise, is limited largely to a focus on the "bombshell" entertainer. Thompson does mention the 2002 Dixie Chicks denouncement of President George W. Bush, (201-202 and Loretta Lynn's 1975 song "The Pill" which almost got her ejected from the Grand Ole Opry due country music's conservative values on birth control. Still a closer inspection of country music women as political actors would have allowed for a more wholistic view.

Overall, *Cold War History* provides an innovative account regarding the partnership between Nashville's Music Row and the U.S. Military Service. The author's examination of economic and social factors enriches a historian's perception of country music playing a vital role in establishing American patriotism and politics. Prominent musicians such as Faron Young entice readers with familiar faces in a brand-new light. Thompson accomplishes his goal of presenting a new history for country music, but to stretch the argument in multiple directions hinders rather than accomplishes the book's intent.

## Review of *Inventing Charlotte Brontë* by Graham Watson. New York: Pegasus Books, 2024.

Haley A. Strempel

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Historians have long debated the accuracy of Elizabeth Gaskell's 1857 biography of Charlotte Brontë, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë.* This debate actually started following the book's publication. In *Inventing Charlotte Brontë,* Graham Watson tells the captivating story of how Brontë's public image was shaped. Watson divides his study into three parts, each following different stages in the creation of Gaskell's biography. Through his masterful storytelling, Watson manages not only to paint his own picture of Brontë in life, but also to argue that Gaskell's biography was well researched and accurate, though sometimes influenced by her own desire to depict Brontë with justice.

Starting with the final five years of Brontë's life, Watson creates his own depiction of Brontë's character through her relationships. At the same time, he explores the beginning of Gaskell's biography. Watson formulates his own portrayal of Brontë using letters and firsthand accounts. Well-chosen excerpts provide support for his interpretation, and his prose adds an immersive element to the storytelling. The language and descriptions are figurative and poetic enough to echo Brontë 's own writing while still maintaining an accurate historical narrative. Watson notes that to most people, Brontë was an extremely shy woman. In her private life, she struggled with grief, insecurity, loneliness, and troubled personal relationships. However, she also possessed a rich imagination, intelligence, and a strong love for those around her. To those who got to know her well, Brontë was remembered as brilliant, ingenious, and unique. Despite sometimes facing turmoil in her relationships, Watson characterizes Brontë as having "her own buried fire, her resilience continually tested by tragedy" (75). It was during the last five years of her life that Brontë met Elizabeth Gaskell, who found her to be one of the most unique and fascinating people she had ever met. The two quickly developed a close friendship, and Gaskell would go on to write Brontë's biography.

Brontë's own letters written while she was alive played a great impact on her biographers. Stories Brontë told friends about her life, however, became subjects of controversy following the publishing of her biography. In particular, stories about her family, which she shared with Gaskell and Ellen Nussey became especially controversial. Patrick Brontë, Charlotte's father, cast doubt on many events documented by Gaskell, including sawing up chairs, destroying letters, and burning books. However, those who had known and worked for the family vouched for the authenticity of the stories, which also were often supported by letters and stories.. These personal upheavals caused Gaskell and others to question Brontë's own characterization of herself. Watson notes that in doing her research for the biography, Gaskell discovered new facets of Brontë's personality in almost every collection of letters she read. These immense discrepancies led to many disputes later on, even causing Nussey to believe she might have "been a pathological liar" (222). While Brontë may not have actually been "a pathological liar," Nussey's sentiment, and the discourse surrounding Gaskell's biography, reflect the difficulties of capturing historical truth.

Part two of Watson's book begins with Brontë's death in 1855, and details the events that lead to Gaskell's decision to write a biography of Brontë. Watson argues that despite facing opposition from those with personal interests in Brontë's story about what should and should not have been included in the biography, Gaskell did her best to portray her subject accurately. Gaskell put a tremendous amount of effort into researching the biography. She interviewed Brontë's closest friends and family, and even tracked down everyone whom she believed had inspired characters in Brontë's novels. In the process, she traveled to important places and compiled an extensive collection of documents, letters, and stories from Brontë's life to use as evidence.

The final sections of *Inventing Charlotte Brontë* detail the controversies surrounding Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Those involved in Brontë's life faced differing opinions on whether the Gaskell's work was accurate, and each opinion only changed with time. Brontë's father Patrick, for example, first claimed that the biography was "full of truth and life" and thanked Gaskell for memorializing her in such a beautiful way (204). However, after the book had been out for some time, his opinion began to shift. As he realized that his portrayal would affect his own public image, he began to condemn the book as inaccurate. Gaskell also included stories and events of a number of people Brontë had based her novels on, who often had similar protests due to concerns about their own public images.

Watson does acknowledge that Gaskell's biography showed bias. Gaskell wanted to do her best to preserve Brontë's memory by depicting her true character as well as possible. Many of Brontë's friends felt that her father and husband had limited her success and happiness in life. Gaskell also held this opinion. Alongside her publisher, George Murray Smith, she lied to Brontë's father and husband to obtain permission to use certain documents and stories. Nevertheless, Gaskell's efforts resulted in a biography that was commended by those who knew Brontë, who felt it brought her character to life, regardless of if they were critical of the book for personal reasons or not.

As a result of the controversy surrounding Gaskell's work, the public debated the accuracy of the biography for many years. By simultaneously writing a partial biography of Brontë and narrating the past struggles to document her life, Watson's twenty-first century treatment tackles themes of memory, duality, truth, and the difficulties of constructing an accurate representation of the past. Gaskell's struggles capture the challenges that many historians face in their own attempts to find historical truth. While history can seem simple, the complex processes involved in studies of the past are often difficult to navigate. Overall, *Inventing Charlotte Bront*ë is a captivating read, perfect for historians, fans of the Brontë sisters, or anyone interested in literary history.

## Review of ***The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*** by Ned Blackhawk. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024.

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Historians, argues Ned Blackhawak, often have been deficient in their treatment of indigenous history and the colonization of the Americas. These topics are often avoided or not given the same level of care that the topic deserves. This is where Blackhawk tries to fill in the gaps. He tells the story of America from the first encounters with Spanish almost to the present day. His arguments are backed up by secondary and primary sources In all, the book offers an important look into a history that is not often talked about.

The first half of the book looks at the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and focuses on the impact of colonization by the Dutch, French, and the British. It gives each episode that occurred the attention they deserve. From the discussion of Pontiac's War to the impacts of the Seven Years' War, Blackhawk explores events and the aftermath of the events in an engaging manner. In the last half of the chapter, the book goes into the time when the Constitution was being written and how the new, emerging government would treat indigenous people. All in all, the first half does an exceptional job at backing up what the author is arguing: how important it is not just to include the treatment of Indigenous people when talking about American history—but to put them at the center of developments.

Blackhawk argues, for instance, that it is not possible to separate the building of the U.S. Constitution outside of indigenous history. He investigates how treaties were used to get Indigenous lands under the control of white. Blackhawk further talks about how the removal of Indigenous people would become central to the formation of the United States. The author backs up this assertion with secondary and primary sources, which help to further contextualize how and why Indigenous history is tied to American history. The second half looks at things like the impact of Jay's Treaty and the Louisiana Purchase and how they impacted native tribes.. In all, the second half of the book does well in both telling the story of the building of the United States. and how this impacted Native Americans.

The last half of the book does an amazing job as well as discussing the fight for sovereignty following the end of the Civil War. It provides a detailed look at how the events that took place, from the removal of Indigenous children from their families to residential schools in the United States, to how the law would continue to deny them the right to sovereignty. Struggle ensued, and the government would continue to push back and deny Native peoples their rights. In all, the last half of the book does just as well as the other two, making sure to give a complete story of Native history and American history as well.

To conclude, Blackhawk's book provides a detailed and important look at Native history. It delivers a real and honest story about the events that would follow the creation of America and how it impacted Native people. It backs up every claim and keeps everything engaging, making sure to tell the full story of what happened. As promised, Blackhawk writes Native Americans back into American History

**Review of *The Inner Life of Catholic Reform: From the Council of Trent to the Enlightenment,* by Ulrich L. Lehner. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.**

Katie J. Douglas

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While there has been much scholarship on the materialistic efforts of the Roman Catholic Church during the Counter-Reformation, few attempts have been made to understand its spiritual transformation. Consequently, some scholars have imposed a modernistic lens on their interpretation of this period, resulting in incorrect assumptions. Ulrich L. Lehner's work, *The Inner Life of Catholic Reform,* does an excellent job of correcting these scholarly misunderstandings and presenting a fresh perspective.

One of Lehner's main arguments is that secular historians have often failed to consider a key element in their study of the Catholic Reformation: "the spiritual motives for their actions– namely, the inner transformation of the believer" (1). Additionally, Lehner also challenges the notion that the Council of Trent was the exclusive catalyst for change during this era. While he acknowledges the existence of the conciliar decrees, he also explains that their actualization was incremental. Lehner contends that it is the "inspirational saints" who "provided the driving ideas for leading believers to personal transformation" (3). Lehner illustrates throughout several chapters that the inner transformation of the Church was more responsible for ecclesiastical reformation than the Tridentine decrees on their own.

Addressing the issues from multiple angles, the author maintains that spiritual motivations undergirded the reforms of the postconciliar times. One of the strongest examples of these motivations came from the training and formation of priests within the Church. Lehner argues that, with scandalous behavior of some clergy, both bishops and parishioners demanded that pastors of parishes not simply be celebrants of the Mass, but models of Christ who were tangibly inimitable (Lehner, 12). One way that priests could imitate the life of Christ was through sharing His zeal for souls, or *Zelus anima rum*. Bishops visited parishes to ensure that priests were exercising this loving zeal in their ministry. Academics often see this as a way for the Church leaders to establish control. However, as Lehner reminds readers, scholars overlooked the spiritual dimension of this practice. An Episcopal visit extended spiritual care to parishioners in even the most rural areas and thus encouraged them to voice their needs to the priest (13). Lehner's premise, in short, is that actions dismissed by some as power grabs by greedy clergymen, in reality, proved spiritually beneficial for people within the Church.

Another vivid example of this overlooked spiritual motivation comes alive through Lehner's discussion on affective prayer. He states that there are historians who claim that mystical experiences and doctrines were simply illusions validated by emotion. However, for the early modern Christian, even the emotions of oneself had to be reformed. To become a renewed creation in Christ, a good Christian had to steward their emotions rather than blindly obey them (117). Lehner emphasizes that instead of being motivated by emotion, the Church had deep spiritual roots that motivated beliefs. The author covers the action of the clergy, religious, and laity in the reformation of the Church extensively throughout the book. Chapter two discusses the contributions of powerful reformer priests such as St. Carlo Borromeo, Cardinal Berulle, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Chapter six defines and explains Confraternities, Marian Sodalities, and Third Orders. These were all outlets for the laity to contribute to the Church's spiritual well-being. Through extensive analysis of lay and religious/cleric action, Lehner supports his argument that the Council of Trent required human action to become fruitful.

The above-mentioned examples reflect the large number of insights Lehner offers in his work. The author conveys his main theses proficiently and tastefully. By covering some of the most well-known topics in Catholicism such as the Sacraments, the Priesthood, and the Laity, Lehner not only defines them but explains their theological underpinning. This aids readers in understanding the spiritual significance of changes to these areas of Catholicism. One thing that may confuse the reader is the incredible variety of topics that are covered in the chapters. Although it can be argued that these are necessary to provide multiple sources of evidence to support the author's argument, the author risks overwhelming readers. All in all, despite the extensive breadth and detail of the content that demands the focus of its reader, this book is nonetheless invaluable to the field of Catholic history.