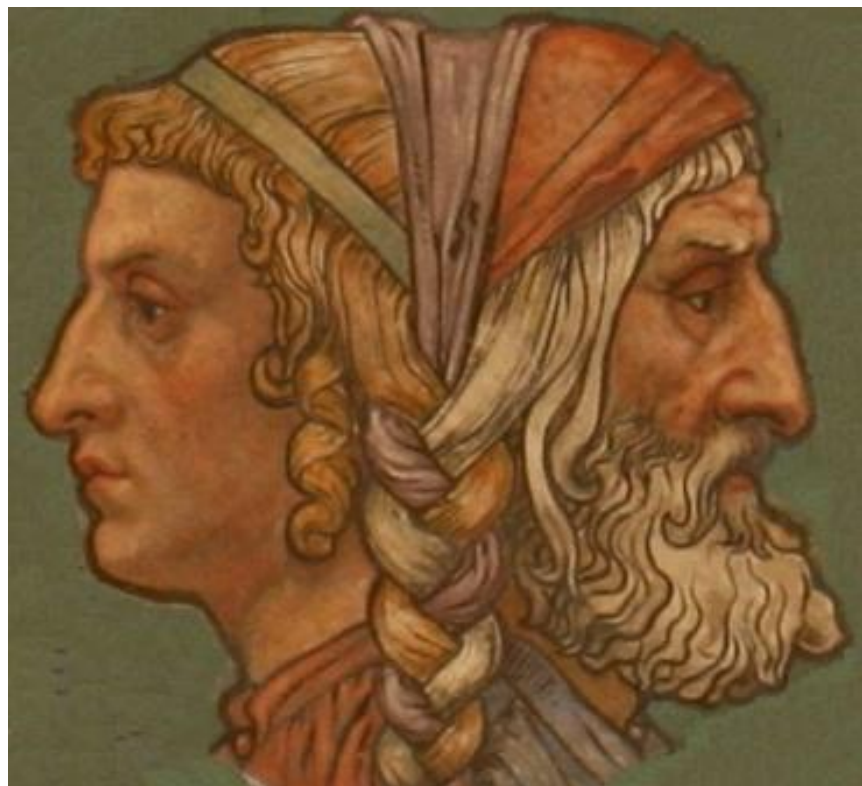


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Charles I, Parliament, and the Road to the English Civil War

By Nick Blanda

On the 22nd of August 1642, the English king Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham Castle and the English Civil War began. Fewer than seven years later, on the 30th of January 1649, he would be executed in front of the Banqueting House in Whitehall. The causes of the English Civil War remain open to debate among historians. At different times it has been labeled a revolution, a class war, a religious war, and a baronial revolt. The thesis of this paper is that the need for money to fight the European wars of the 1620s brought about a deep ideological divide between Charles I and Parliament regarding the king's relationship to the rule of law. There were three Parliaments that met in the first half of the decade: 1621, 1624, and 1625. For different reasons none of these Parliaments supplied the full amount of revenue that the king demanded. As a result, Charles I, who succeeded his father, James I, in 1625, chose to exercise his prerogative power to collect revenue, most notably with the Forced Loan in 1626. Parliament, possessing a different conception of prerogative power, felt this was illegal under common law. Prerogative power remained a divisive issue in 1627 with the Five Knights' Case and led to the Petition of Right in 1628. After eleven years without Parliament from 1629 to 1640, Charles I was forced to call two Parliaments in a few months' time to raise revenue to combat the Scottish Covenanters. However, the distrust built up from the 1620s had not disappeared. As a result of decisions that left Charles I politically isolated, Parliament was emboldened to demand radical concessions from the king. Ultimately, civil war began in 1642. This paper will examine these events and the two sides' competing ideologies.

Since the Magna Carta in 1215, English politics possessed a venue for the king and his subjects to meet and resolve problems. Parliament was where the public business of the kingdom was conducted. Parliament consisted of two houses. There was the hereditary House of Lords and the House of Commons, whose members were elected. At the time Parliament had two functions: legislation and revenue. Only Parliament could amend the common law and all money bills had to originate in the House of Commons. In addition, Parliament approved the ordinary crown revenues (import and export duties) and some extraordinary revenues (subsidies).

Parliament performed their role as a legislative body inconsistently during the first half of the 1620s. According to Conrad Russell, members of Parliament at that time were more likely to be concerned with bills affecting their counties than with trying to improve Parliament's standing as an institution. The purpose of a successful Parliament was to do business, not to fight about constitutional matters.¹ In 1621 there was a lot of business. In the first session of that Parliament, which lasted from February until June, nearly one hundred bills were tabled in the House of Commons. However, only nineteen of those bills made it out of the Commons.² As a result of a dispute between James I and Parliament in a later session over the selection of a bride for the king's son, Charles, James I dissolved the Parliament and the entire legislative program, except for one subsidy bill from the first session, was lost. In contrast to 1621, the 1624 Parliament passed a number of pieces of legislation. By one account, thirty-five public Acts and thirty-eight private Acts were passed.³ But the legislative output of the Parliament of 1625, the first of

¹ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621-1629*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 35.

² Russell, *Parliaments*, 41-2.

³ Russell, *Parliaments*, 190.

Charles I's reign was more like 1621. A total of fifty-three bills were tabled in the Commons. Only nine became law.⁴

More important than legislation was revenue. The king would call a Parliament when he needed a grant of extraordinary supply (parliamentary subsidies). Customarily, Parliament would grant supply in exchange for a redress of grievances.⁵ However, parliamentary grants were insufficient to meet all the king's needs in the early seventeenth century. This is because Tudor England in the sixteenth century had experienced dramatic inflation. To illustrate, if prices in 1510 are the baseline at one hundred, by 1588 prices were three hundred and forty-six, and by 1597 prices were six hundred and eighty-five. The figure remained above five hundred into the seventeenth century.⁶ According to Conrad Russell, the cost of war was deeply affected by this inflation. In the sixteenth century war costs inflated faster than other costs and the Spanish and French kings who could raise taxes on their own were able to adapt more easily than the English kings who could not.⁷ Additionally, the English Crown's primary source of revenue when inflation began, land revenue, was particularly ill-suited to adjust to inflation because it was collected locally. Local collectors tended to not raise rents.⁸

In the 1620s the primary reason English kings sought revenue was to wage war. This need for revenue led to tension between the king and Parliament. For instance, in the first session of the 1621 Parliament, the House of Commons voted two subsidies to support James I's son-in-law Frederick, the elector Palatine, in the Thirty Years' War. However, because England was in a trade depression Parliament had reservations about meeting James I's demand for another round of subsidies when he reassembled Parliament in November 1621. As a result of these reservations and the dispute over selecting a bride for the king's son, no further subsidies were granted in 1621.⁹ Later, when James I was forced to call a Parliament in 1624 due to worsening relations with Spain over the Palatinate, the king insisted on six subsidies and twelve fifteenths. He had to settle for three subsidies and three fifteenths along with a promise that more money would be made available.¹⁰ When Charles I succeeded his father in 1625, he called his first Parliament in June assuming Parliament would honor their commitment from 1624. However, Parliament felt that money had been squandered and as a result voted Charles I just two subsidies.¹¹ Additionally, while it was customary for a new king to be granted the right to collect tonnage and poundage for life at his first Parliament, in 1625 Charles I was granted the right for one year. He dissolved Parliament in August 1625.

However, Parliament was not able to have their grievances redressed regularly in the 1620s even though they voted for subsidies each time. This fact has led Conrad Russell to conclude that Parliament was not a powerful institution before 1640.¹² For example, he does not believe that Parliament's refusal to consider further subsidies after the grant of two in 1625 was a

⁴ Andrew Thrush, ed., *The House of Commons 1604-1629* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1:330.

⁵ Russell, *Parliaments*, 35.

⁶ Conrad Russell, ed., *Origins of the English Civil War* (United Kingdom: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), 95.

⁷ Russell, *Origins*, 95.

⁸ Russell, *Origins*, 95-6.

⁹ Thrush, *The House of Commons*, 1:xlvi.

¹⁰ Thrush, *The House of Commons*, 1:xlvii.

¹¹ Thrush, *The House of Commons*, 1:xliv.

¹² Conrad Russell, "Parliamentary History in Perspective, 1604-1629," *History* (1976), 3.

sign of Parliament using the power of the purse against Charles I. Rather, he finds it surprising that Parliament even considered it. Russell says the only recent precedent for considering making multiple grants of subsidies in one year was 1621, but James I lost that subsidy when he dissolved Parliament.¹³

If Parliament was not a powerful institution and the subsidies voted were insufficient, why were Parliaments still called? At that time the king was under no legal obligation to call regular Parliaments. The reason, according to Conrad Russell, is that respect for the rule of law carried a lot of weight with the English at that time. Therefore, if there were no Parliaments, then the rule of law was uncertain.¹⁴ Despite this, Russell says that Parliament's prominence in English legal thought gave it a strength that it could not justify either in terms of legislation passed or money given.¹⁵

However, Theodore K. Rabb disagrees with Russell's assessment of Parliament. Rabb says the key to understanding English politics in the seventeenth century is that Parliament was viewed as prestigious and vital by the English.¹⁶ To illustrate how MPs viewed their role, Rabb quotes Sir John Eliot, a member of Parliament from Newport and one of the most prominent members of the House of Commons during the 1620s, in 1624: "This is the place where the corruptions of judges are punished, and where such sponges of the state are squeezed."¹⁷ Therefore, Rabb says it is less important to say that Parliament did not get its way than it is to remember "that contemporaries assumed they could make themselves felt."¹⁸ Consequently, Russell's claim that Parliament was not powerful before 1640 is unpersuasive. In none of the three Parliaments between 1621 and 1625 did the king get everything he wanted. In 1621 and 1625, Parliament had concerns about granting further subsidies and as a result withheld them. Regardless of how much thought Parliament gave to granting another subsidy in 1625, the result was that it was not granted.

Additionally, Russell's minimization of the role of principle in Parliament's actions is also unpersuasive. It is his contention that Parliament's belief that some of Charles I's actions represented arbitrary government reflected increasing anxiety over their continued existence.¹⁹ However, given the relationship between Parliament and the rule of law in the English mind, anxiety over Parliament's continued existence surely qualifies as a matter of high principle. Derek Hirst would agree. For example, he describes an MP in the Parliament of 1610 who delivered a speech labeling common law and property as integral to the definition of the country. A pre-existing worldview shaped reactions to demands for money, not the other way around.²⁰ Additionally, Hirst says the fact that anxiety waxed and waned does not mean Parliament's concerns were insincere. They were willing to accept some insults as the price of doing business,

¹³ Russell, "Parliamentary History," 8.

¹⁴ Russell, *Parliaments*, 54.

¹⁵ Russell, *Parliaments*, 54.

¹⁶ Theodore K. Rabb, "The Role of the Commons," *Past & Present* (1981), 63.

¹⁷ Rabb, "The Role of the Commons," 63.

¹⁸ Rabb, "The Role of the Commons," 63.

¹⁹ Russell, *Parliaments*, 54-5.

²⁰ Derek Hirst, "The Place of Principle," *Past & Present* (1981), 87.

but direct challenges to their ability to do business were met with strikes.²¹ It does a disservice to Parliament to minimize matters of principle.

Perhaps the most important matter of principle was where the king stood in relation to the law. Each of the first two Stuart kings, James I and Charles I, subscribed to divine right theory, which stated that the king received his authority from God alone and that he was above human laws.²² As the highest source of authority, everyone was bound to follow God's law. In fact, if the king ruled in a way that violates God's law, then the subject was obligated to follow God and not the king. But this obligation to obey God did not mean that the subject was free to resist the king. The subject could only wait and hope that God would punish the king whose rule was offensive to Him. This point was made explicitly by James I in his 1598 treatise *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*.²³

Despite not being obligated to obey human laws, divine right proponents argued that the king should obey them in order to show himself to be a just ruler. Johann P. Sommerville, who believes both James I and Charles I were absolutist monarchs, writes that absolutists were willing to allow the courts to decide on the legality of royal proclamations under normal circumstances, but he says that was much different than allowing all royal power to be defined under the law.²⁴ Related to this point, absolutists believed they possessed certain powers outside the law, even against human law, they could use if the public good demanded they do so.²⁵ This belief in prerogative power would become a major source of tension between Charles I and Parliament after 1625, both with the Forced Loan in 1626 and the Five Knights' Case in 1627.

However, Glenn Burgess contests Sommerville's connection of divine right theory and absolutism. For Burgess, divine right theory was less a theory of sovereignty and more a theory of obligation. It was a way for both the subject and the king to demonstrate their duties before God.²⁶ While Burgess does concede that absolutist theories may have included divine right elements, he says the reverse did not necessarily hold true. Contrary to Sommerville, he says that English divine right theorists were not absolutists.²⁷ To illustrate, Burgess says that James I's writings do not proclaim an absolutist theory because they make no commitment to any specific view of the king's authority to make laws, or how that authority should be used.²⁸

Given Burgess' analysis, it is an overstatement to say that Charles I was an absolutist. Despite his frustrations with Parliament over money he called three of them between 1625 and 1629. He did not embark on his Personal Rule until 1629 and even then, he was not violating the law. The most that can be said is that Charles I held absolutist sympathies. For example, in 1626-7 at the time of the Forced Loan several sermons were preached in support of the Loan. Two of these sermons were preached by Robert Sibthorp, the rector of Brackley, and Roger Manwaring,

²¹ Hirst, "The Place of Principle," 90.

²² Johann P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1640* (New York: Longman, 1986), 10.

²³ Johann P. Sommerville, ed., *King James VI and I Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 68.

²⁴ Sommerville, *Politics*, 36.

²⁵ Sommerville, *Politics*, 36.

²⁶ Glenn Burgess, "The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered," *The English Historical Review* (1992), 838.

²⁷ Burgess, "The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered," 842-3.

²⁸ Burgess, "The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered," 843.

chaplain-in-ordinary to the king. Burgess concedes that the ideas in these sermons meet Sommerville's conception of absolutism, even if Sommerville misses how atypical they were.²⁹ But most importantly, Charles I had read and enjoyed Sibthorp's sermon. In fact, Charles I wanted George Abbot, the archbishop of Canterbury, to license it. However, Abbot refused because he felt the absolutist tone of Sibthorp's sermon was too strong.³⁰ Following this refusal Charles I stripped Abbot of his power as archbishop while allowing him to retain his office. However, it must be noted that Charles I had been looking for a reason to dismiss Abbot.

In opposition to divine right theory was contract theory. In contract theory the people were the source of a ruler's authority, not God. In fact, contract theory stated that sovereignty originally belonged to the entire community. But, Sommerville says, there was no reason it had to remain that way. The community could, if it chose to do so, transfer that authority to one or multiple rulers. At the time, either monarchy or aristocracy was seen as preferable to democracy.³¹ Additionally, if the community delegated its sovereignty to the ruler, they could choose to limit the ruler's power. Sommerville says proponents supported this claim by looking to the varying powers of European kings. For example, some kings could levy taxes without consent. In contrast, English kings could not.³²

By its name, contract theory implies the existence of a document between the people and their chosen ruler. What was to be done if after several centuries no one could find the physical copy of the original contract? In reality, there was nothing requiring that this contract be written down. For example, in the Bible God's contract with Abraham was unwritten. However, Sommerville says there were ways people could find evidence of this original contract. The first source of evidence was the existence of later contracts that were also binding between ruler and subject. Two examples of these later contracts were statutes and coronation oaths. The second source of evidence was the customs of the nation. If these customs were so old that no one could remember when they were instituted, they were seen as original.³³

Presumably, a society that freely transferred its authority to a ruler could take that authority back. Borrowing from natural law, contract theory stated that people had a right to be ruled in a way that best serves the common good.³⁴ According to Sommerville, the introduction of the common good allowed for even more drastic actions than simply resisting a monarch who appeared to be ruling in a manner not conducive to the public interest. For example, this type of ruler could be deposed or even executed.³⁵ However, Sommerville says that these more drastic views did not represent the consensus opinion regarding Charles I even as late as 1642.³⁶

In England, those who would resist the king could say they were upholding the law. For the law of England was the common law, based on customs that existed for longer than anyone could remember. But who had the power to interpret the common law was contested. One school

²⁹ Burgess, "The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered," 855-6.

³⁰ Sommerville, *Politics*, 128.

³¹ Sommerville, *Politics*, 63.

³² Sommerville, *Politics*, 63.

³³ Sommerville, *Politics*, 64.

³⁴ Sommerville, *Politics*, 71.

³⁵ Sommerville, *Politics*, 74.

³⁶ Sommerville, *Politics*, 74.

of thought held that the judges should possess this power. However, opponents had two reasons to reject this point of view. First, under common law, legislation could not be passed without the subject's consent. Judicial interpretation might lead to changes in the law which could be seen as legislating without consent.³⁷ The second reason to oppose giving judges this power was that they were appointed by the king. Opponents feared that royal pressure could distort judicial interpretation. As a result, Sommerville says that the leading legal assumption was that Parliament should interpret the law.³⁸

This assumption set Parliament at odds with the king. In the minds of many in Parliament, the common law limited the power of the king. In contrast, both James I and Charles I believed they should abide by the law but that they were not bound by it. But as mentioned above, both Stuarts also believed they possessed certain powers, such as the power to imprison people without bail for reasons of state, that were reserved to them and that they were free to exercise should the need arise. These prerogative powers might even allow the king to act against the laws of the nation in special circumstances.³⁹ In contrast, the common lawyers believed that prerogative power was nothing more than the power the king possessed under the law.⁴⁰ Specifically, Sommerville says the common lawyers worried about prerogative power and war. For example, if the king could define a seemingly peaceful situation as war and he was allowed to act as he wished in times of war, then this power was ripe for abuse.⁴¹

These differences of opinion regarding the king's relationship to the law moved from the realm of theory to the realm of practice in 1626-7. At the time, Charles I was committed to fighting a war against both Spain and France that was costing approximately £1,000,000 per year. Seeking additional revenue, Charles I called a Parliament that met in February 1626. In response to this request, Parliament voted four subsidies but then proceeded to impeach the royal favorite, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham. As a result, Charles I dissolved the Parliament to spare Buckingham, thus depriving himself of the desperately needed revenue.⁴² Subsequently, Charles I attempted to collect a benevolence in the summer of 1626. This was an attempt to collect money directly from the taxpayers without parliamentary approval. It did not help that the sum Charles I was seeking from the benevolence was equal to the four subsidies the Parliament of 1626 had voted before impeaching Buckingham and was based on the same assessments that were used to collect a subsidy.⁴³ Richard Cust and Derek Hirst agree that a major reason the benevolence failed was that it was seen as an attempt to bypass Parliament's authority to consent to taxation.⁴⁴

Charles I should have known that a benevolence would face strong opposition. In 1614 his father had attempted to raise a benevolence. As a form of taxation, benevolences had not been used by the Crown since 1546. Although it is true that benevolences had been successfully

³⁷ Sommerville, *Politics*, 96.

³⁸ Sommerville, *Politics*, 97.

³⁹ Sommerville, *Politics*, 101.

⁴⁰ Sommerville, *Politics*, 101.

⁴¹ Sommerville, *Politics*, 102.

⁴² Richard Cust, *The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626-1628* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 1-2.

⁴³ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 2.

⁴⁴ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 2; Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict 1603-1660 Kingdom, Community, Commonwealth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 119.

collected in the past, they had also brought significant opposition. In fact, it was said in 1614 that the benevolence was illegal because it violated Magna Carta and it was against reason because it questioned the 1614 Parliament's decision not to provide supply.⁴⁵ Additionally, the 1614 benevolence came at a time when Parliament feared for its continued existence. Although the exact cause of these fears is debatable, Richard Cust says there was evidence of them as far back as 1604.⁴⁶ Resistance to the benevolence in 1614 highlights the fact that opposition to the benevolence in 1626 did not appear *ex nihilo* as an excuse to avoid payment.

Regardless of the reason for opposing the benevolence in 1626, the fact remained that Charles I needed revenue to fund his war. Consequently, his next move was the Forced Loan. This was adopted in September 1626. Unlike the benevolence, there was strong historical justification for the Forced Loan. For example, there was a medieval precedent that in an emergency, the king could request aid from his subjects. Forced loans had also been used by Henry VII. In 1626 Charles I could rightly claim such an emergency existed. His uncle, Christian of Denmark, had recently been defeated in the Thirty Years' War. The precedent allowed the king to fall back on his prerogative power if the public refused to comply.⁴⁷ As mentioned, this intersection of prerogative power, war, and Parliament, was always likely to cause tension.

Despite this precedent, those who opposed the Forced Loan did so because they believed it was illegal. This opposition came from multiple places. For example, in October 1626 several judges refused to say the Loan was legal. Two weeks later fifteen peers refused to pay, expressing open opposition to the loan. As a result, the fate of the Loan was still uncertain in November 1626.⁴⁸ Two further examples of opposition to the Loan are Sir John Eliot, and William Coryton, a close ally of Eliot and an MP from Cornwall. Eliot's "Petition from the Gatehouse," written in 1627 when he was in prison for refusing to pay the Loan, culminated in a defense of the rights of the subject against arbitrary imprisonment which had existed since the time of Magna Carta.⁴⁹ Coryton's "A Relation of Soe Much as Passed Between the Lordes of the Counsell and Mr. Corinton at the Counsell Table" also focused on the law. According to Richard Cust, Coryton's goal was to confirm that if one accepted the common view of law and its relation to the constitution then it was almost impossible to justify the Loan.⁵⁰

This opposition to the Forced Loan exposed two of Charles I's flaws that would plague his relationship with Parliament until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. These were his belief that Parliament existed to meet his demands and his insistence on turning political debates into referendums on his personal honor. The first of these flaws is summarized nicely in a statement he made to Parliament in May of 1626: "Remember that Parliaments are altogether in my power for their calling, sitting, and dissolution; therefore, as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be."⁵¹ Later, Charles I took several actions in attempting to secure the Loan that placed his personal honor front and center. First, on October 7, 1626, Charles I issued a proclamation stating that he had no intention of making extraparliamentary

⁴⁵ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 155.

⁴⁶ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 152.

⁴⁷ Richard Cust, "Charles I, the Privy Council, and the Forced Loan," *Journal of British Studies* (1985), 217-8.

⁴⁸ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 3.

⁴⁹ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 168.

⁵⁰ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 168-9.

⁵¹ L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 12.

taxation a precedent. He believed his word should be enough to allay any doubts. Second, he wrote individual letters to members of the nobility urging them to pay quickly, thereby setting a proper example for the country.⁵² Finally, he let it be known around the court that he considered payment of the loan a test of loyalty to him.⁵³

Those who opposed the Forced Loan, as well as Charles I made a compelling case that the law was on their side. According to his opponents, the king was attempting to collect taxes without calling a Parliament. As a result, they said the Loan was illegal. However, medieval precedent allowed the king to resort to his prerogative power if his subjects refused to comply with a request for aid in a time of emergency. For Charles I, the defeat of his uncle and the simultaneous wars with France and Spain represented just such an emergency. Richard Cust summarizes the extent of the Forced Loan episode well. He says, "It raised issues which had been widely publicized and discussed since at least 1614; its implications for the future of Parliament appear to have been common knowledge right down to the lowlier subsidymen; it was something on which each taxpayer was called to make a personal decision; and it involved the issue of trust and faith in the King himself."⁵⁴

Debates over prerogative power intensified in November of 1627 with the Five Knights' Case. The Five Knights were among the seventy-six men who Charles I had imprisoned without bail for refusing to pay the Forced Loan. According to L. J. Reeve, their aim was to create a test case for the legality of the Forced Loan by obtaining writs of habeas corpus. This episode focused attention not only on the legality of the Forced Loan but also on the wider issue of arbitrary imprisonment.⁵⁵ At the same time, Charles I was hoping for a ruling that would give him a precedent for the use of prerogative power to imprison people.⁵⁶ Neither side achieved a clean victory. Although the judges accepted Attorney General Robert Heath's argument that the king must possess some emergency powers, their decision did not grant the king a binding precedent.⁵⁷ However, this decision must be viewed as a win for Charles I because the decision appeared to allow him to keep these men imprisoned until he decided to let them go.⁵⁸

Failure to deal with the substantive issue of arbitrary imprisonment in 1627 ensured it would remain a live topic when the Parliament of 1628 assembled in March. Charles I had called the Parliament because he was determined to lift the siege of La Rochelle in France but he required money to do so. With the House of Commons focused on securing the liberties of the English subject that they believed were under threat, Derek Hirst says that Charles I acted quickly to avoid trading any royal power in return for supply. To do so, the king demanded quick supply, assured Parliament that he would govern by established law and invited Parliament to reconfirm Magna Carta and related laws.⁵⁹ But trust was no longer enough. For that reason, the Commons sought legislative protection against arbitrary imprisonment.⁶⁰

⁵² Cust, "Charles I, the Privy Council, and the Forced Loan," 225.

⁵³ Cust, "Charles I, the Privy Council, and the Forced Loan," 225.

⁵⁴ Cust, *The Forced Loan*, 185.

⁵⁵ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 14.

⁵⁶ Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 121.

⁵⁷ Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 121.

⁵⁸ J. A. Guy, "The Origins of the Petition of Right Reconsidered," *The Historical Journal* (1982), 293.

⁵⁹ Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 123.

⁶⁰ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 19.

Given the lack of trust and Charles I's unwillingness to accept any statutory limitations on his prerogative power, Sir Edward Coke, member of Parliament for Buckinghamshire and Suffolk and arguably the finest common lawyer of the time, opted to present a petition to the king.⁶¹ Petitions were traditionally used when appealing to existing rights, but they were also a very old form of legislation.⁶² According to L. J. Reeve, the Commons wished to tie the liberties of the subject to a grant of supply. Therefore, the Commons agreed to vote five subsidies in principle but they held onto the supply bill until Charles I gave them what they wanted.⁶³

The Petition of Right, as it came to be known, confirmed the traditional liberties of the English subject in several areas. First, the Petition stated that English subjects since the time of Edward III in the 1300s, when Magna Carta was made a statute, should not be compelled to make loans to the king without their consent.⁶⁴ Second, the Petition stated that since the time of Edward III, it had been declared that no man could be imprisoned, put out of his lands, or put to death without due process but that Charles I had recently violated these rights.⁶⁵ Finally, the Petition requested that no one be compelled to make any gift, loan, or tax without common consent by act of Parliament.⁶⁶ As a result of his desperation for the subsidies, Charles I accepted the Petition in June 1628 and agreed to let it be printed, thus giving it the force of legislation.⁶⁷

The passage of the Petition signaled a shifting legal, political, and financial relationship between Parliament and Charles I. Parliament believed they had successfully limited Charles I's prerogative power. This suggested that the role of the rule of law might be changing. The law was once viewed as a vehicle for harmony and social cohesion, whereas now it could be seen as a vehicle for dissent.⁶⁸ Politically, the Petition seemed to indicate that Parliament had more power over Charles I than they previously thought. It signaled both a desire for reform and a willingness to withhold supply to achieve that reform.⁶⁹ Financially, it signaled that Parliament might be able to influence Charles I and even shape the nature of his rule.⁷⁰ As L. J. Reeve writes, Parliaments would continue to exist so long as the king required the money they could provide.⁷¹

However, this parliamentary victory did little to improve relations with the king. In fact, he felt insulted. For example, he felt that the five subsidies he had received in return for accepting the Petition were insufficient compensation for what he had given up.⁷² As a result, he attempted to avoid the legal implications of the Petition in early June by giving Parliament an

⁶¹ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 19.

⁶² Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 20.

⁶³ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 20.

⁶⁴ Bruce Frohnen, ed., *The American Republic Primary Sources* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc., 2002), 98.

⁶⁵ Frohnen, *The American Republic*, 98-9.

⁶⁶ Frohnen, *The American Republic*, 99.

⁶⁷ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 20.

⁶⁸ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 21.

⁶⁹ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 21.

⁷⁰ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 22.

⁷¹ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 22.

⁷² Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 21.

evasive answer. When that did not work, he attempted to destroy the printed Petition.⁷³ In fact, Richard Cust says the events of 1628 did much to sour Charles I on Parliament. Summarizing the effect this Parliament had on the king, Cust writes, “However, as a result of their actions in 1628, it became harder to convince him of their fundamental loyalty; and his doubts on this score were amply confirmed by their conduct in 1629. Prolonged exposure to the Commons in 1628 then, helped to impress upon Charles just how dangerous for royal power regular meetings with parliament could be.”⁷⁴

As a result of these doubts Charles I spent the time between the prorogation of Parliament in June 1628 and the meeting of the new session in January 1629 wondering what function Parliament served. The need for supply was not as desperate in 1629 as it had been the previous year because a failed attempt at relieving La Rochelle had led to peace talks with France. With no need for supply the one thing that a Parliament could potentially give him was a legal grant of tonnage and poundage. Consequently, that legal grant that he had failed to receive in 1625 was the only thing Charles I wanted from the 1629 session.⁷⁵ However, it was not necessary for him to have it because he was already collecting tonnage and poundage on the basis of custom, precedent, and tradition. In fact, the number of merchants refusing to pay because Parliament had not granted the right to him was small. To refuse to pay customs was to refuse to trade.⁷⁶

Given that he did not need the legal grant, the question must be asked why Charles I called the 1629 session. Conrad Russell believes that Charles I called it because he had respect for tradition and the legal way of doing things. Additionally, a successful Parliament was a sign of both love for the king and allegiance to him.⁷⁷ Although this may be true, Derek Hirst believes other concerns led Charles I to call the session. For example, he was still obligated to support his uncle’s forces in Denmark and the difficulties in collecting tonnage and poundage made a legal grant more attractive.⁷⁸

At the same time, the House of Commons had two main concerns when the 1629 session met in January. First, they discovered that members of the Church of England who they had censured in 1628 had been promoted by Charles I. For example, Richard Neile, bishop of Winchester, and William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, had been appointed to the Privy Council, Roger Manwaring had been made a royal chaplain, and Richard Montagu had been made bishop of Chichester.⁷⁹ Second, it was during the 1629 session that the House of Commons learned of the events surrounding the printing of the Petition of Right. According to Conrad Russell, both Houses of Parliament had agreed at the time to print the Petition with Charles I’s answer of June 7, 1628. However, Charles I had then ordered his Attorney General to recall and “make waste paper” of printed copies of the Petition. Then, he ordered the Petition printed with his answer of June 2 that had been deemed insufficient along with the speech he had given on June 7 stating that his second answer conceded no more than the first, and his speech on June 26

⁷³ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 21.

⁷⁴ Richard Cust, “Charles I, the Privy Council and the Parliament of 1628,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1992), 49-50.

⁷⁵ Russell, *Parliaments*, 400.

⁷⁶ Russell, *Parliaments*, 400.

⁷⁷ Russell, *Parliaments*, 395.

⁷⁸ Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 127.

⁷⁹ Russell, *Parliaments*, 396.

where he stated that the Petition did not prohibit his collection of tonnage and poundage.⁸⁰ As a result, it appeared English liberties still depended upon Charles I's willingness to execute the law.⁸¹

On the evidence provided it is not surprising that the session of 1629 was dissolved in March. On the one hand, Charles I did not have the same urgency for supply as in previous Parliaments. On the other hand, The House of Commons were alarmed and embittered by the realization that their actions in 1628 had not produced the expected protections against prerogative power. Of the House of Commons in 1629, Russell writes, "They met, in fact, in the characteristic mood of men facing redundancy."⁸² When on March 2 Charles I ordered an adjournment until March 10 there was the scene in the House of Commons of MPs holding the Speaker in his chair to prevent the adjournment until their concerns were read out. Nevertheless, the session was formally dissolved eight days later.⁸³ In the aftermath of the events of March 2, several MPs were arrested and imprisoned without bail. Among them were Sir John Eliot, who subsequently died in the Tower of London, and two other MPs who remained imprisoned there under those terms until November 1640. For the next eleven years Charles I would rule without a Parliament in a period known as the Personal Rule.

However, The Personal Rule came to an end in April 1640. Charles I was defeated by the Scottish Covenanters in the first Bishops' War, which was the result of Charles I and Archbishop Laud attempting to force the episcopal Book of Common Prayer on the presbyterian Scottish kirk. Charles I wanted a grant of supply from Parliament so that he could re-launch the campaign against the Scots. However, he remained convinced that Parliament existed to meet his needs and only after he had gotten what he wanted would he consider grievances. This was reflected in his opening speech on April 13. He offered no explanation of the war and simply demanded money. Additionally, he promised that if the Commons would grant him supply, then he would grant them their "favours."⁸⁴ In contrast, John Pym, member of Parliament from Tavistock and the man who would be the king's chief opponent in the House of Commons over the next few years, believed that redress of grievances should come first. He had a list of thirty grievances including parliamentary liberties, religion, and property, that he wanted redressed before any consideration of supply for the king.⁸⁵

While the possibility was small, Esther Cope believes that the Short Parliament could have reached a compromise if the experiences of the 1620s had not bred such mutual distrust between Charles I and Parliament.⁸⁶ Cope says there were rumors almost from the start that dissolution could come at any moment. At the same time, Charles I could interpret the House of Commons' push for grievances to be redressed as a sign that his request for supply was not being given the proper urgency. Additionally, it appeared that the MPs were preparing an exhaustive

⁸⁰ Russell, *Parliaments*, 401.

⁸¹ Russell, *Parliaments*, 402.

⁸² Russell, *Parliaments*, 397.

⁸³ Reeve, *The Road to Personal Rule*, 88.

⁸⁴ Hirst, *England in Conflict*, 160.

⁸⁵ Esther S. Cope, "Compromise in Early Stuart Parliaments: The Case of the Short Parliament of 1640," *Albion* (1977), 137.

⁸⁶ Cope, "Compromise in Early Stuart Parliaments," 143.

investigation of previous royal government.⁸⁷ As a result, Charles I dissolved the Short Parliament on May 5, 1640. No legislation was passed, and Charles I received no money from Parliament to fight the Scots. In summarizing the failure of the Short Parliament Cope writes, “The king desired to protect his interests, distrusted the Commons, and had only a limited appreciation of their concerns. The Commons wanted to protect their own interests, which were those of their countrymen. They were afraid to trust his Majesty and were inadequately informed about his affairs.”⁸⁸

One effect of the dissolution of the Short Parliament was that Charles I fought the Scots again in the Second Bishops’ War without further supply. Consequently, he was defeated and according to Conrad Russell, it became necessary to call another Parliament to meet the expenses of the Scottish army occupying the north of England. After the defeat at Newburn, the Privy Council in London told Charles I that they did not have the power to force any further supplies of money or men.⁸⁹ Additionally, Charles I learned he would have to call a Parliament if he wanted to negotiate with the Scots. The Scots told him they would not consider any peace treaty unless an English Parliament confirmed it.⁹⁰

Forced to call another Parliament, Charles I made a series of errors that reduced the chances of the Parliament succeeding. First, he did not tell any of his advisors that he desired to keep fighting the Scots and that he was calling this Parliament as a public appeal to his honor.⁹¹ Second, he still believed that Parliament would grant him supply before any redress of grievances.⁹² According to Russell, had he consulted with his advisors, Charles I would have learned that he was mistaken. For example, in late October 1640, Algernon Percy, the tenth earl of Northumberland wrote to his brother-in-law that until the grievances from the Short Parliament were dealt with, there would be no parliamentary support to deal with the Scots.⁹³

One effect of these errors, according to Conrad Russell, was that Charles I found himself politically isolated. He was slow to understand that many of the advisors he would hope to count on were convinced that his Scottish policy had failed and needed to end.⁹⁴ It was not until this second Parliament of 1640, known as the Long Parliament since it remained in session until 1653, was more than a month old that Charles I realized he needed to abandon his plan to continue fighting the Scots and redress grievances at home.⁹⁵ For Russell, this delay allowed the Long Parliament to function as an alternative government. They paid both the English and Scottish armies and negotiated with the Scots.⁹⁶

Relations between Charles I and the Long Parliament further deteriorated in 1641 when a plot was uncovered to break the king’s close advisor Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, out

⁸⁷ Cope, “Compromise in Early Stuart Parliaments,” 143.

⁸⁸ Cope, “Compromise in Early Stuart Parliaments,” 144.

⁸⁹ Conrad Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” *History* (1984), 375.

⁹⁰ Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 375.

⁹¹ Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 380.

⁹² Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 380.

⁹³ Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 380-1.

⁹⁴ Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 382.

⁹⁵ Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 382.

⁹⁶ Russell, “Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?,” 382.

of the Tower of London. After the defeat at Newburn, Charles I had called a Great Council of Peers, a predecessor of Parliament that had not been called since before 1215, to meet in York in September. During a debate in the Council on October 17, Strafford had offered to bring over the Irish army to assist the king against the Scots. According to the Conrad Russell, it was this debate that sealed Strafford's fate as the scapegoat for the war with Scotland.⁹⁷ As a result, Strafford was arrested by the Long Parliament on November 25, 1640. However, during his trial Strafford defended himself brilliantly and as a result it appeared by early 1641 that he might be acquitted. But this hope ended on February 24, 1641, when the Scottish Covenanters, occupying northern England after their victory in the second Bishops' War, demanded that Strafford be executed and Parliament did not condemn the Scots' demand during a debate three days later.⁹⁸ At that time Charles I would not accept any deal that called for Strafford's death.

It is an irony of this failed attempt to free Strafford, known as the First Army Plot, that it contributed significantly to his death. In fact, Strafford's final letter, written on May 4, advised Charles I to abandon the Plot.⁹⁹ According to Russell, news broke of the failed attempt on the Tower of London the day the Attainder Bill received its third reading in Parliament. The timing did not do Strafford any favors.¹⁰⁰ The Attainder Bill was the result of Strafford's brilliant defense. Following his performance, a majority of the House of Commons abandoned proper legal proceedings and opted for an Attainder Bill that would simply declare Strafford guilty. As a result of the news of the failed attempt, Charles I was forced to sign the Bill, thus condemning a man who was his close advisor to death. Strafford was executed May 12, 1641.

While the First Army Plot was personally damaging to Charles I, the political fallout was worse. If Charles I did not direct the Army Plot, he certainly had knowledge of it and rewarded some of those involved in the plans. For example, when the Army Plot was in development, Charles I granted annuities to several men involved in the planning, including Henry Percy, member of Parliament from Northumberland and brother of Algernon Percy, the earl of Northumberland. The week that Henry Percy fled the country, facing a charge of treason, Charles I altered the terms of his grant to Percy so that he could not lose it if he was convicted of treason.¹⁰¹ Additionally, during the English Civil War several of the key members of the Army Plot remained in Charles I's favor.¹⁰²

However, the First Army Plot had a more immediate effect on the king's relationship with Parliament. According to Conrad Russell, it is possible that the biggest contribution the Plot made to the English Civil War is it convinced respectable members of the House of Lords that true loyalty might mean removing authority, particularly military authority, from Charles I.¹⁰³ For example, on May 8, the committee for the defense of the kingdom told the Lord Admiral to assign command of ships to men who could be trusted and three days later the House of Lords told Charles I they believed England was on the verge of immediate civil war.¹⁰⁴ Summarizing

⁹⁷ Russell, "Why Did Charles I Call The Long Parliament?," 379.

⁹⁸ Conrad Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1988), 87.

⁹⁹ Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," 103.

¹⁰⁰ Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," 103.

¹⁰¹ Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," 98.

¹⁰² Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," 99.

¹⁰³ Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," 105.

¹⁰⁴ Russell, "The First Army Plot of 1641," 106.

the fallout from the Army Plot, Russell writes, “Above all, the army plot left many responsible politicians with a feeling that politics were too important to be left to kings. Since this was an assumption Charles could not share, it ultimately became one against which he had to fight.”¹⁰⁵

As a result of Charles I’s increasing political isolation, Parliament grew more confident in pressing for reforms. The most radical of these reform bills, the Grand Remonstrance, was introduced into the House of Commons on November 8, 1641. One of the two major reforms it proposed was parliamentary control over Charles I’s ministers. However, recognition of how radical this was came slowly. For example, Willson Coates says when Parliament were trying to dispense with the earl of Strafford, the idea that they should employ a kind of veto over unacceptable ministers was seen as entirely legitimate.¹⁰⁶ But, as Coates writes, with Strafford dead a more conservative spirit re-entered the Long Parliament at the time of the Grand Remonstrance. Therefore, there was a group within Parliament that recognized that demanding this level of control represented an unprecedented departure from traditional English practice.¹⁰⁷ As a result of this division within Parliament, the Grand Remonstrance passed by only eleven votes on November 23, 1641.

With their passage of the Grand Remonstrance, Parliament could no longer say they were defending the traditional order from Charles I’s “innovation.” Willson Coates says the weakness of the Grand Remonstrance was that there was no legal justification for its main clauses. As a result, the case for the Grand Remonstrance rested on claims that present circumstances made it necessary.¹⁰⁸ For example, Coates says that Charles I’s blunder of attempting to arrest five members of the House of Commons on January 4, 1642, allowed the radicals to say the law was on their side, even though the king’s actions did not make their claims any less revolutionary.¹⁰⁹

In the end, the king’s equally unprecedented move of entering the House of Commons with his guards failed because they had been alerted ahead of time. Charles I and his guards left the House surrounded by a crowd chanting “Privilege!” Charles I left London six days later. He would not enter the city again until late 1648 when he was brought back to stand trial.

In conclusion, the need for money to fight the wars of the 1620s brought about a constitutional crisis in England. Unlike in other European countries at the time, the English king could not raise money on his own. For Charles I, a king with absolutist sympathies and a tendency to turn political matters into referendums on his personal honor, negotiating with Parliament was deeply frustrating. This frustration led him to use his prerogative power to raise money in 1626 through the Forced Loan; a move bound to upset members of Parliament who were wary of that power. By 1627 the narrow issue of the Forced Loan had widened into a debate about the king’s prerogative power to imprison people without bail for reasons of state. As a result, the priority for the House of Commons in 1628 was securing the liberties of the English subject. While they were able to get Charles I to accept the Petition of Right, its failure to constrain him left them frustrated by 1629. Neither side would be quick to forget what

¹⁰⁵ Russell, “The First Army Plot of 1641,” 106.

¹⁰⁶ Willson H. Coates, “Some Observations on ‘The Grand Remonstrance,’” *The Journal of Modern History* (1932), 9.

¹⁰⁷ Coates, “Observations,” 11.

¹⁰⁸ Coates, “Observations,” 15-16.

¹⁰⁹ Coates, “Observations,” 16.

happened during this decade.

For that reason, the events of the 1640s cannot be viewed in isolation. The mutual distrust that built up during the 1620s influenced proceedings in the 1640s. Grievances had not been regularly redressed during the 1620s and no forum had existed to redress them during the Personal Rule. Additionally, the Commons could remember that in 1628 Charles I had altered the printing of the Petition of Right. However, Charles I could remember that Parliament had not granted him sufficient supply in 1625 and that he felt he had conceded too much in return for subsidies in 1628. As a result, when the Short Parliament met in 1640 neither side possessed the patience to compromise.

Finally, the 1640s did see one major change that made war much more likely. Between 1640 and 1642 Charles I lost the support of a number of his advisors and reasonable members of the House of Lords. As a result, he became politically isolated in a way that he had not been in the 1620s. This isolation emboldened the House of Commons to push for truly radical reforms that were diametrically opposed to Charles I's view of the monarchy. With no reserve of trust to fall back on, combat replaced compromise.

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Queer United States Citizenship in the 1950s and 1960s

By Cecelia Hough

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, United States citizenship for both queer Americans and queer immigrants was debated through various homophobic acts and policies. The rights and citizenship of the LGBTQ+ Americans were disrupted due to the Lavender Scare and sodomy laws, which were two homophobic, government sanctioned policies. These obstructions negatively affected the ability of LGBTQ+, or queer, Americans to capitalize on all the rights they should have been afforded as citizens of the United States. Despite being citizens, LGBTQ+ Americans, were still forced to fight for their rights under citizenship. The Lavender Scare and sodomy laws impacted not only LGBTQ+ American citizens, but also LGBTQ+ immigrants seeking citizenship in the U.S. These two parts of history worked to produce an act that affected LGBTQ+ immigrants who wanted to gain citizenship in America: the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965. For LGBTQ+ immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s, they were not only fighting for their rights under citizenship, but citizenship itself.

The political climate of the United States in the mid-20th century prompted debates about the U.S. citizenship of LGBTQ+ Americans, demonstrating that homophobia had tangible effects on American society. Additionally, the internal homophobic U.S. policies were a precursor to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965, which affected LGBTQ+ immigrants' ability to gain American citizenship. In this paper, the terms LGBTQ+ and queer are used interchangeably to talk about gay men and lesbians specifically. I will be arguing that during the 1950s and 1960s, the Lavender Scare and sodomy laws threatened LGBTQ+ Americans' citizenship by challenging their American identity, which resulted in the threat to LGBTQ+ immigrants' citizenship through the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965.

Various historians have discussed different aspects of citizenship, which includes homophobic policies that inadvertently impacted citizenship, for LGBTQ+ Americans and immigrants in the mid-20th century. In Shane Phelan's book, *Sexual Strangers*, she outlines what citizenship means for LGBTQ+ people. Phelan argues that citizenship is simply a name, but true citizenship also involves acknowledgment and ability to participate in a system. For LGBTQ+ Americans, who had the label of "citizen" in the 1950s and 1960s, they were still not fully recognized as citizens under the framework Phelan outlined. She further argues that being deprived of the protection of laws, refused participation, and denied recognition of an identity all contribute to someone's lack of full citizenship. She says, "although they are subject to the laws, they are not afforded their protection,"¹¹⁰ which speaks to the way queer people were vilified in the 1950s and 1960s, while not being fully protected by the Constitution. On another level, LGBTQ+ immigrants were denied citizenship throughout these two decades.¹¹¹

Sodomy laws, present throughout the 1950s and 1960s and many years after that, were laws that pertained to homosexuals, usually gay men, to control their sexual activity. Michael E. Brewer explains in "Sodomy Laws and Privacy," that sodomy laws were not always applied solely to queer people, but by the 1940s, they were taken to regulate "all sexual activities other

¹¹⁰ Shane Phelan, *Sexual Strangers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 1-36.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

than procreative activities between husbands and wives.”¹¹² Brewer further asserts that sodomy laws were usually associated with homosexuality because they “confirm the subordination of gay people” and make them a class of criminals. These laws regulated the private sex lives of queer people during this time, and they existed because of the homophobia that the government held towards the LGBTQ+ community. If the government did not believe that being queer was criminal and immoral, these laws would not have been in place.¹¹³

The Lavender Scare ran concurrently with the Red Scare of the Cold War period and was the process of purging queer employees from the government. Naoko Shibusawa stated in their piece, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” that the U.S. government argued that queer people were and would cause the falling of many great nations, including the United States. The U.S. government argued that queer people were susceptible to blackmailers, who would threaten to expose their sexuality if they did not comply with their requests. Therefore, the government claimed it was dangerous for queer people to work in the government since their likelihood of betraying the nation was higher. Americans, Shibusawa argued, thought that they had the responsibility of leading “Western civilization,” making them worried that homosexuality could cause their downfall as it was claimed it did to other empires.¹¹⁴

Marc Stein writes in his piece, “All the Immigrants Are Straight, All the Homosexuals Are Citizens, But Some of Us Are Queer Aliens: Genealogies of Legal Strategy in *Boutilier v. INS*,” that the Immigration and Naturalization Act, passed in 1952, denied LGBTQ+ immigrants the ability to enter the United States. Amended in 1965, the language of the act became even more targeted towards queer people. In his piece, Stein explicitly links queerness to immigration, a connection rarely made. He argues that these two issues are intricately intertwined and need to be discussed together.¹¹⁵

Much of the current research on the topic of queer citizenship focuses on one struggle the LGBTQ+ community faced during this time. For example, Shane Phelan discusses how citizenship applies to LGBTQ+ people, but does not connect that to the 1950s and 1960s specifically.¹¹⁶ Michael E. Brewer argues that sodomy laws affect the right of LGBTQ+ to privacy but does not go as far as to say that this affects their citizenship, as defined by Phelan.¹¹⁷ Naoko Shibusawa follows the same principle of discussing the Lavender Scare separately from citizenship.¹¹⁸ Marc Stein discusses in his article, however, how LGBTQ+ citizenship was affected in concurrence with the specific Immigration and Nationality Act and connected the LGBTQ+ community to citizenship.¹¹⁹ What each of these sources is missing is a discussion on

¹¹² Michael E. Brewer, “Sodomy Laws and Privacy,” *Denver University Law Review* 79, no. 4 (July 2002): 547.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 546-549.

¹¹⁴ Naoko Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (2012): 723-752.

¹¹⁵ Marc Stein, “All the Immigrants Are Straight, All the Homosexuals Are Citizens, But Some of Us Are Queer Aliens: Genealogies of Legal Strategy in *Boutilier v. INS*,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29, no. 4 (2010): 45-77.

¹¹⁶ Phelan, *Sexual Strangers*.

¹¹⁷ Brewer, “Sodomy Laws and Privacy.”

¹¹⁸ Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire.”

¹¹⁹ Stein, “All Immigrants Are Straight.”

the entirety of the 1950s and 1960s and how the citizenship of both LGBTQ+ Americans and immigrants was connected.

This paper will be arguing that the citizenship of LGBTQ+ Americans was debated through the homophobic policies, such as sodomy laws and the Lavender Scare, in the 1950s and 1960s. Their citizenship was not taken from them, but it was rather lessened in comparison to heterosexual Americans, making them “second-class citizens.” Additionally, I will be arguing that the negative implications on LGBTQ+ Americans’ citizenship in turn affected the ability of LGBTQ+ immigrants to get and keep citizenship in the U.S., which is largely not discussed in the scholarship available. The importance of this topic is to highlight that homophobia was not just an issue present in the streets; it was carried out systematically by the U.S. government to suppress the citizenship of LGBTQ+ people. It is also crucial to connect how policies within the United States, such as sodomy laws and the Lavender Scare, can affect people outside of the country, like LGBTQ+ immigrants.

Sodomy laws diminished LGBTQ+ people in the eyes of the law, negatively impacting their ability to access their rights under citizenship. These laws not only discriminated against LGBTQ+ people due to the homophobic idea that sex between queer people, specifically gay men, was immoral, but they also affected the citizenship of LGBTQ+ people. Because these laws subordinated homosexuality under heterosexuality, the LGBTQ+ community was subjected to discrimination due to their rights guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and Constitution being violated. The Declaration of Independence promotes the idea of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,”¹²⁰ a right that was advocated for when the U.S. was established as a nation. The Declaration of Independence, which represents the conception of the United States, is used to outline some of the rights guaranteed to citizens. Since LGBTQ+ Americans were citizens, the rights in the Declaration of Independence should have applied to them too, but because of sodomy laws present during the 1950s and 1960s, the rights did not.

The Constitution also guarantees rights for all citizens, including LGBTQ+ people, such as the right to privacy. The First Amendment is a key argument for the protection of LGBTQ+ citizenship. Arguably, a person’s relationship is an act of free speech and expression, as guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution in the First Amendment.¹²¹ When sodomy laws were put in place, they effectively eliminated the right to freedom of speech and expression for LGBTQ+ people because they were not able to be out, meaning openly queer, without fearing that they were violating the laws. Additionally, the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution “protects citizens from unreasonable search and seizure.”¹²² During this time, sodomy laws gave a basis to search through the lives of queer people to find indicting evidence against them. Although at the time, queer people were breaking the law for being gay under sodomy laws, that still does not absolve the fact that that was unreasonable and arbitrary.

¹²⁰ "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed October 31, 2020, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>.

¹²¹ “The Constitution,” The White House, The United States Government, accessed October 31, 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-constitution/>.

¹²² “The Constitution.”

In a 1968 article by John L. Hollis, several reasons were given as to why sodomy laws were arbitrary. One of these reasons is that the laws regulated consenting adults' sex lives, arguably an invasion of privacy, which is unconstitutional.¹²³ Hollis explains that although there is not a specific clause that protects privacy, it is "within the penumbra of specific guarantees of the Bill of Rights,"¹²⁴ as stated earlier. Additionally, Hollis argues that the prohibition of "sodomy" violates freedom of religion in the First Amendment. Homosexuality was (and still is) often viewed as sacrilegious, a major reason it was criminalized. However, many LGBTQ+ people are religious (or not religious), which would also be protected under the freedom of religion in the First Amendment. LGBTQ+ people's religious freedom, including their right to be queer, should have been guaranteed. Religion was used to defend sodomy laws, but it was also a reason sodomy laws should not be constitutional in the first place.¹²⁵ The arguable unconstitutionality of sodomy laws also placed unfair restrictions on queer people.

An issue that Michael E. Brewer brings up in his article is the undue burden placed onto queer people, gay men specifically, with the existence of sodomy laws. These burdens include mental illness, suicide, and many financial troubles due to court cases.¹²⁶ These issues are not faced by heterosexual Americans because of their sexuality. Due to this, sodomy laws support Shane Phelan's argument as previously outlined. Not only were queer people seen as inferior to heterosexual people because their sex lives were considered "immoral," but they also experienced concrete effects on their lives.¹²⁷ Because of this, they were subordinated and forced into lesser citizenship. According to Phelan, if a minority group does not have the same rights as the majority group, then they do not really have full citizenship.¹²⁸ This idea is clearly demonstrated through sodomy laws.

These laws, which inflicted a burden onto homosexual people in the 1950s and 1960s, did not explicitly contribute to the denial of citizenship of LGBTQ+ people. However, they still oppressed them to the point that they were "second-class citizens," not on equal standing or protection under the Declaration of Independence and Constitution with heterosexual people since they could not access the same rights. As with the the Lavender Scare, the citizenship of LGBTQ+ people was negatively affected because the laws violated rights under the constitution and demeaned LGBTQ+ Americans.

The Lavender Scare of the 1950s and 1960s denied the LGBTQ+ community the right to privacy and eliminated their right to work in the U.S. government, further cementing their lack of citizenship. During the Lavender Scare, mass amounts of queer people, both gay men and lesbians, were purged, or fired, from their jobs in the federal government.¹²⁹ A 1953 newspaper article written by Martha Kearney states that 531 people were fired from the government since 1950. The article then breaks down the numbers for the years 1950 to 1953: in 1950, 54 queer people were fired, in 1951, 119, in 1952 there were 134, and in 1953 from January to July there

¹²³ John L. Hollis, "Criminal Law—Sexual Offenses—Sodomy—Cunnilingus," *Natural Resources Journal* 8, no. 4 (July 1968): 537-538.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 538.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Brewer, "Sodomy Laws and Privacy," 549.

¹²⁷ Phelan, *Sexual Strangers*, 1-36.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire."

were 74 queer people fired.¹³⁰ This government mandated removal of queer people represented the homophobic views held by the government. A 1950 confidential (at the time) government memo written by Carlisle Humelsine, the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration to James E. Webb, the Under Secretary of State, outlines these views clearly and just how they violate the privacy and citizenship of many LGBTQ+ Americans.¹³¹

Humelsine outlines the reasons that queer people were “undesirable as employees”¹³² which included morale, such as heterosexual employees not wanting to work with queer people, emotional instability, isolation because they allegedly only associated with other queer people, perversion, and immorality. Notably, many of these issues are of private matter to the queer person. Who an employee hangs out with outside of work, who they are in a relationship with, and what their emotional state is are all issues normally not of concern in the workplace. However, for queer people during this time, these were all topics of interest.¹³³

Furthermore, the U.S. violated the privacy of queer people by taking several measures to investigate a person’s sexuality. When an investigation was being carried out to see if someone if queer, their private lives were searched extensively. The investigators looked into the past jobs and residences, who the person spent time with outside of work, especially if those people were queer, and their school, credit, and police records. They also got character references from those who knew the person they were examining, placed the person under surveillance to find out whether they went to “gay” places or associated with other queer people. All these things required an extreme invasion of privacy for the queer person.¹³⁴

The Lavender Scare negatively impacted the citizenship of LGBTQ+ Americans because it further violated rights outlined in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. Like sodomy laws, the Lavender Scare infringed upon LGBTQ+ Americans’ right to privacy. The Fourth Amendment which “protects citizens from unreasonable search and seizure,”¹³⁵ was violated under the Lavender Scare because of the excessive investigation that was conducted to find out if someone was queer. In the memo by Humelsine, he says that there is “no evidence...that these designs of others have caused a breach of security of the Department.”¹³⁶ He admitted that they had no real reason to investigate queer people other than due to speculation, therefore adding to the idea that the searches were “unreasonable.”¹³⁷ Additionally, the First Amendment was again violated because queer people were not allowed to be open about their sexuality out of fear they would be fired from their jobs. Humelsine stated that if they got any inclination that someone was queer, they would be fired. He even says that the person being investigated had an opportunity for an interview. However, if the person admitted to being gay, they would have been fired immediately. They were not allowed to express their sexuality

¹³⁰ Martha Kearney, “U.S. Senate Department Purge Sweeps Out Homosexuals: 531 Persons Fired since Year 1950 Security Risks and Homosexuals Purged from Federal Payroll,” *New Journal and Guide (1916-2003)*, (July 1953).

¹³¹ National Archives Stonewall LGBTQ Affinity Group, “Discovering LGBTQ History,” *Discovering LGBTQ History*, (November 2016).

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ National Archives Stonewall LGBTQ Affinity Group, “Discovering LGBTQ History.”

¹³⁵ “The Constitution.”

¹³⁶ National Archives Stonewall LGBTQ Affinity Group, “Discovering LGBTQ History.”

¹³⁷ Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire.”

during this time out of fear of serious backlash, a clear infringement on the First Amendment and their full citizenship, as described by Phelan.¹³⁸

In Shane Phelan's argument regarding LGBTQ+ citizenship, she argues that LGBTQ+ people were not considered equal to heterosexuals and were therefore not afforded full citizenship.¹³⁹ As an effect of the Lavender Scare, many queer people were not able to hold jobs like heterosexual people were and they were not allowed to have private sex lives like heterosexual people were. The Lavender Scare was based entirely on the subordination of LGBTQ+ Americans, supporting Phelan's argument. If LGBTQ+ people are not considered equal, they cannot be considered full citizens, especially in relation to heterosexual people.

In the same way sodomy laws did, the Lavender Scare did not affect the official citizenship status of LGBTQ+ Americans, but rather it demeaned them in the eyes of the law and socially. LGBTQ+ people's constitutional rights, rights supposed to be afforded to all citizens, were infringed upon during the Lavender Scare and contributed to the lesser citizenship. Both government actions served as a basis for the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965, which affected the ability of LGBTQ+ immigrants to gain and keep citizenship in the U.S.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965 acted concurrently with sodomy laws and the Lavender Scare to deny LGBTQ+ immigrants the right to citizenship. This act was originally ambiguous in its target. The wording of the 1952 version of the act specifically states that people with "psychopathic personality"¹⁴⁰ would not be allowed to immigrate into the United States. In 1965, the act was amended to say that anyone with "sexual deviations"¹⁴¹ would not be allowed to come to or stay in America as an immigrant. Although the 1952 version does not specifically cite sexuality as a factor, the understanding was that this included homosexuality, supporting the idea that the United States viewed the LGBTQ+ community negatively.¹⁴²

A specific case in which the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 was used against a queer person is in the *Boutilier v. Immigration and Naturalization Service* (INS) 1967 court case in which Clive Michael Boutilier was deported after admitting that he was gay. In this case, the INS used the interpretation that "psychopathic personality"¹⁴³ included homosexuality.¹⁴⁴ Boutilier moved to the United States in 1955 and was arrested on sodomy charges in 1959. When he applied for citizenship in 1963, he revealed his previous charge of violating sodomy laws and was therefore deported for doing so.¹⁴⁵ Because of Boutilier's sexuality and therefore his sodomy charge, he was denied citizenship. The fact that sodomy laws assisted in the implementation of the Immigration and Nationality Act shows that these laws affected both LGBTQ+ Americans and LGBTQ+ immigrants. LGBTQ+ immigrants had little to no chance of citizenship, even the second-class citizenship held by LGBTQ+ Americans, highlighting a contrast in the ways that LGBTQ+ Americans and LGBTQ+ immigrants experienced U.S. citizenship, although they were

¹³⁸ "The Constitution."

¹³⁹ Phelan, *Sexual Strangers*, 1-36.

¹⁴⁰ *Immigration and Nationality Act*, Public Law 414, U.S. Statutes at Large 66 (1952): 182.

¹⁴¹ *An Act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act*, Public Law 89-236, U.S. Statutes at Large 79 (1965): 919.

¹⁴² Stein, "All the Immigrants Are Straight," 45.

¹⁴³ *Immigration and Nationality Act*, Public Law 414, U.S. Statutes at Large 66 (1952): 182.

¹⁴⁴ Stein, Marc, "All Immigrants Are Straight," 45.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

both held to standards of sodomy laws.¹⁴⁶ This court case demonstrates how sodomy laws served to uphold the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The Immigration and Nationality Act, affecting LGBTQ+ immigrants, was also based on ideals of the Lavender Scare. In a 1986 *New York Times* letter to the editor written by Thomas Stoddard, he says that this Act is an “antiquated remnant of the McCarthy era,”¹⁴⁷ the era in which the Lavender Scare took place. He argues that this act violated the ideals of the Constitution and specifically the First Amendment, just as the Lavender Scare did. Furthermore, he argues that since this act targets a “personal identity,”¹⁴⁸ it goes against the ideals of the United States which include “freedom and equality.”¹⁴⁹ Essentially, Stoddard was arguing that the same principles that were upheld during the Lavender Scare against the LGBTQ+ community were still being held with the Immigration and Nationality Act.¹⁵⁰ Both the *Boutilier v. INS* court case and this letter to the editor support the idea that sodomy laws and the Lavender Scare served as a basis for the introduction and continuation of the oppressive Immigration and Nationality Act against LGBTQ+ immigrants. This is significant because it shows how policies that discriminated against people within the United States, LGBTQ+ Americans, also impacted people outside the U.S., LGBTQ+ immigrants. Both groups shared many experiences because of this.

This historical debate of citizenship for LGBTQ+ people is not unique to the past. LGBTQ+ immigrants still face troubles when attempting to gain U.S. citizenship. Being an LGBTQ+ American with citizenship still brings discrimination that results in a second-class citizenship status, like 1950s and 1960s. Today, LGBTQ+ immigrants still face many issues in the process of gaining citizenship that often prevents them from being able to do so. They often must “prove” their sexuality, endure homophobia, and experience unsafe or discriminatory conditions in U.S. detention facilities, like sexual and physical assault and denial of medical care.¹⁵¹ It is important that the debates over citizenship from the 1950s and 1960s are discussed because issues with LGBTQ+ citizenship are still happening today. Acknowledging the past is an important step in fixing the present and future. Additionally, recognizing the concrete homophobia that the U.S. government held is a crucial aspect of LGBTQ+ history and is essential in thinking about the struggles the LGBTQ+ community continues to face. The subject of LGBTQ+ citizenship in the 1950s and 1960s involving sodomy laws, the Lavender Scare, and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965 is also significant because it illustrates the connection between policies against Americans and against immigrants.

LGBTQ+ Americans and immigrants often had to hide their identities during the 1950s and 1960s to access certain rights, such as being able to keep their jobs, freely express their sexuality, or gain citizenship in general. This resulted in LGBTQ+ Americans’ rights, guaranteed

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas B. Stoddard, “An Immigration Act that Shames Us all,” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, (October 1986), A30.

¹⁴⁸ Stoddard, “An Immigration Act that Shames Us all,” A30.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Linda Piwowarczyk, Pedro Fernandez, and Anita Sharma, “Seeking Asylum: Challenges Faced by the LGB Community,” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 19 (2016): 726.; Christina Fialho, “A Model Immigration Detention Facility for LGBTI?” *Forced Migration Review* 1, no. 42 (2013): 50.

to them as citizens of the U.S., being infringed upon, such as freedom of speech and the right to privacy and therefore making them second-class citizens. LGBTQ+ immigrants could not gain citizenship at all if openly queer. For LGBTQ+ immigrants, there was an extra struggle placed upon them because not only could they be denied citizenship completely because of their sexuality, but if they did gain citizenship in the U.S. (through hiding their identities), they would still experience the second-class citizenship LGBTQ+ Americans already were facing. Each group had to hide an integral part of their identity, their sexuality, to have some access to citizenship or to avoid denial of it.

Not only were the sodomy laws, the Lavender Scare, and the Immigration and Nationality Act based on the same ideals as Stoddard asserts and as shown through the *Boutlier v. INS* court case, but they all work together to demonstrate the homophobic ideals that the U.S. government held. If openly queer people were already not allowed to work in the government and were fearful of being openly queer due to sodomy laws, there was less representation within the government. Therefore, oppressive policies against the LGBTQ+ community would have been easier to implement. Additionally, the same people making the policies against LGBTQ+ Americans were making policies against LGBTQ+ immigrants. There was not an opportunity for LGBTQ+ positive legislation to be created or for LGBTQ+ oppressive policies to be ended because being LGBTQ+ was criminalized through sodomy laws and LGBTQ+ people were unable to represent their community in the U.S. government.¹⁵² Furthermore, the Immigration and Nationality Act reinforced the idea that LGBTQ+ Americans were not full citizens. Since the act denied citizenship to LGBTQ+ immigrants because of their queerness, LGBTQ+ Americans were even more inferior to heterosexual Americans. Because the U.S. government viewed homosexuality as an offense that should result in denial of citizenship, LGBTQ+ Americans with full citizenship would have been seen as unfit to be citizens.

United States citizenship for LGBTQ+ Americans and LGBTQ+ immigrants was debated in the 1960s because of sodomy laws, the Lavender Scare, and the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Lavender Scare and sodomy laws were U.S. policies that oppressed LGBTQ+ Americans and caused them to have second-class citizenship. These two policies, in turn, oppressed LGBTQ+ immigrants as they enabled the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and 1965 to deny citizenship completely for LGBTQ+ immigrants. The Immigration and Nationality Act, since it was based on ideals of the Lavender Scare and sodomy laws, then further subordinated LGBTQ+ Americans. Additionally, experiences of LGBTQ+ Americans and immigrants were often similar because of the common suppression from homophobic policies. Each of these policies sanctioned homophobia against LGBTQ+ people that negatively affected their citizenship.

¹⁵² Shibusawa, "The Lavender Scare and Empire," 723-752.

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Nikola Tesla: An Idealist Among Entrepreneurs

By Matthew Tyler Migliozi

The inspiration for this academic paper about Nikola Tesla is one that is very personal and dear to me. Recently this summer in 2021, my grandfather passed away at the age of 89. Luis Gonzales, a first-generation immigrant from Spain, a Korean War veteran, an electrical engineer for Goodyear and NASA, a loving grandfather, and a god-fearing man. All but being a war veteran and a grandfather, Nikola Tesla shared many of his career titles, characteristics, and values. In the wake of his death, I had the privilege of going through his life in documents and images that I had never seen before. In my adolescent years, my grandfather did not speak about the specifics of his work. He told of short but proud moments as a member of an organization, NASA, that achieved great feats. His humbleness was the most remarkable I have ever experienced. His humbleness perhaps may have been too much because I did not understand how much of an impact on the world he had truly made with his accomplishments, titles, and, as an aspiring historian, what saddens me the most, his story. Inspired by what I have uncovered thus far, I am continuing the gathering of research on my grandfather and reaching out for testimony from his former NASA co-workers. My grandfather was not only an electrical engineer during the NASA Apollo era, but he was the Project Manager for several LANDSAT missions, which mapped the earth in satellite images for agricultural use and what is the beginning of what Google Maps is today. My grandfather's achievements and story, which have inspired a grandson, shall remain in the background until I can properly document his life in full. I will say, however, that my grandfather's story is not too different from Nikola Tesla's. Tesla is a long-standing inspiration to others who wish to change the world. He pushed the boundaries of science and engineering despite facing much adversity. Both Tesla and my grandfather, Luis Gonzales, shared an idealistic vision. I am proud to say my grandfather continued the legacy of a first-generation immigrant idealist who used his intellect to change the world. Tesla was far from perfect, but he achieved feats beyond his time and played a significant role in the foundations of electrical engineering.

This biography about Nikola Tesla is as much a biography about electricity, currents, and all of the competitors involved in the war for the currents. This battle for currents was filled with foul play, idealism, and entrepreneurship. Nikola Tesla was a Serbian-American immigrant electrical engineer who made his most pivotal impacts in the final decade of the 19th century. Tesla in his own right and holds significant historical relevance to the advances made in technology and engineering. His most notable achievement is the alternating current (AC) power, which revolutionized the way electricity powered the world. He described himself as having a mind that does not think like the rest of humanity. He thought out his experiments in his head for months, even years before applying them into practice.¹⁵³ As much as his mind is of interest, his achievements are all the more important. He mastered systems to efficiently light up Chicago, created machines that struck artificial electricity into the sky, harnessed the power of Niagara Falls, and stood toe-to-toe with Edison in a race for the electrical age.

The story of Tesla cannot be told without Edison's. Their two names are etched in history together. Tesla was an idealist in nature. Edison thought the same, but he had a greater sense of the economics needed to pull off his desires. As the title of this paper suggests, Tesla and Edison

¹⁵³ B. Johnston, & N. Tesla, *My Inventions: The Autobiography of Nikola Tesla*, Audible (2019).

are on opposites of the same spectrum of idealism and entrepreneurship. Idealism is the philosophical thought process by an individual that their achievements, intellect, inventions, and/or discoveries are to be shared with the world. The pursuit of ideals shall not be bound to the shackles of society. Often, idealism can lead to goals that seem unrealistic or even seemingly impossible. Tesla had chatter about this around him for much of his career. Edison saw Tesla's idea of alternating current power as an unrealistic and unsafe expedition. Though Edison had idealistic characteristics as a tinkerer and inventor, he was a true entrepreneur in his economics. Much of Edison's inventions were in fact perfections of an imperfect creation. Edison did, however, with his team of engineers, design the first sustaining incandescent light bulb.¹⁵⁴ Edison and his team of engineers were going through design after design in the same tedious process expecting each and everyone not to work. Their hope was gone. Then within one moment, the electrical current rushed through the metal filament wire. The small glass cylinder structure heated up to high temperatures, and then...light! Practical, incandescent electric light.¹⁵⁵ This was a new beginning for Edison. That single moment changed the world. Edison's desire to be first was his drive to pursue entrepreneurship. Edison understood the economics that was necessary to pursue his dreams. Edison had a single motive in mind, his legacy. He stamped his name on his products, his company, and his achievements. He made sure that anything he created was directly tied to him because his goal was always to be the first. He wanted his name echoed through the history books, spoken by both intellectuals and commoners alike, and the world lit up with his own Edison incandescent lights. The question that arises from this statement: how did it affect his moral compass? Through research, although unable to be validated, Edison in on the eve of his career prime was apparently approached about weaponizing the military. Edison supposedly refused because it went against his moral code. Edison believed that war and taking another man's life were wrong. He did not desire consciously to have an individual die by his creation. His ideas against war are "to make war impossible was for the nations to go on experimenting, and to keep up with inventions, so that war will be unthinkable, and therefore impossible."¹⁵⁶ However, Edison would later be tested on this code in his fight against Tesla and Westinghouse Electric Company. Tesla was an antithesis to Edison in many ways. They both had their morals, but Tesla resided in the future of the human race and how his work would achieve that. Edison as an antithesis to Tesla was focused on his present foundation to be remembered by future generations.

In 1882, Nikola Tesla left Eastern Europe to pursue a profession in electrical engineering and manufacturing under Edison's Continental Electric Light and Manufacturing Company in Paris, France. By 1884, he decided to take a new opportunity in the United States under Edison himself. Edison, who at the time was evolving his lamp technology and creating a current system to power it, brought Tesla on. As an electrical engineer, his salary was \$25 per week and if Tesla were to fix and improve Edison's direct current system and fill other pending extracurricular needs, Edison said he would pay him an additional \$50,000 bonus. Tesla conquered this task to Edison's dismay. To Tesla's surprise, Edison admitted that he was not serious about the bonus and shrugged it off as just a joke. With this dispute along with Tesla and Edison's different visions for the distribution of power, Tesla left the company after just six months.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Edison, Thomas. 1880. *Electric Lamp*. United States.

¹⁵⁵ "Edison's Lightbulb" *The Franklin Institute*.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Edison. *The Diary and Sundry Observations*, Philosophical Library (1948), 91.

¹⁵⁷ "Thomas A. Edison Papers," Edison & Tesla - The Edison Papers (Rutgers University, Oct. 28, 2016).

Tesla over the next two years began his process to levy a set of his own patents and start his own company, Tesla Electric Light and Manufacturing Company. To gain the resources needed, he acquired investing from Robert Lane and Benjamin Vail. As for investment, Tesla gave up control of his patents and certain powers of company ownership. Tesla set up his headquarters just 16 miles from Edison's laboratory in Rahway, New Jersey. Although Tesla was sure of the superiorities that alternating current had to offer, he opted for the more accepted direct current in his electric application of Rahway. With the finance of his investors, Tesla created several new patents for an improved direct current motor that could have rivaled Edison's. This new arch light system was Tesla's first proclamation to the world as a true electrical engineer. Tesla designed and accumulated seven total patents under his company all around this system. The Dynamo-Electric Machine was the first and main patent.¹⁵⁸ Each of his other patents dealt with the lamp, an automatic fail switch, a regulator, and adjustable current levels for the Dynamo-Electric Machine. Tesla wanted to expand into new methods of electric distribution just as he did at Edison Electric Light and Manufacturing Company. In 1886, only two years after the company was founded, his investors Vail and Lane were not interested in Tesla's imagination. They decided to rebrand the company and break ties with Tesla. To these investors, the engineer had played his role and was no longer needed. Just as Edison, they did not see the potential that alternating current had to offer. Tesla, who lost the rights to his patents to the company, was broke and left to his own devices. He only had his mind, the place where he went over all those experiments and worked out each problem. His mind did not need finance to continue his work. He had been taken advantage of not because he was not smart, but because he was so caught up in what he could offer the future he could not see what had happened in the present. Tesla was known for having a lack of normal social skills. He had his quirks and methods that others could not understand. Perhaps Tesla also could not understand when he was being betrayed. Tesla did not live in the same world as the entrepreneurs did but instead in a world where he only saw visions of his gifts to the world. The only money he desired were the funds to support his projects and experimentations.

While Tesla recovered from his defeats, Thomas Edison and a fellow entrepreneur, George Westinghouse, were preparing the stage for the war of the currents. George Westinghouse was an American engineer and industrialist who had made his own progress in the electrical industry. He received his first patent when he was only 19 years old and founded Westinghouse Electric Corporation in 1886, the same year Tesla was ousted from his own company.¹⁵⁹ The idea of alternating currents began to circulate through the engineering community to find a rival method of electric power distribution to Edison's direct current. Westinghouse also started in the direct current system with physicist William Stanley. However, Westinghouse was infatuated by this idea of a more efficient method of electricity. He saw revolution and profit, the latter of which Edison's system lacked. Westinghouse took a risk and committed to the idea of alternating current being implemented on a mass scale. Westinghouse ignited the war of currents with his first multi-voltage alternating current system.¹⁶⁰

To offer a brief and simple explanation of the two currents, direct current is linear in nature. This means that it moves power through a straight line. Tesla saw the future was in his own invention, alternating currents. Alternating current is when power is the flow of electrical

¹⁵⁸ Tesla, Nikola. 1886. *Dynamo-Electric Machine*. United States.

¹⁵⁹ Bernard W. Carlson. *Inventor of the Electrical Age*. Princeton University Press (2013), 75.

¹⁶⁰ Gilbert King, "Edison vs. Westinghouse: A Shocking Rivalry" in *Smithsonian Magazine*, (2011).

power by the change in direction in a periodic manner so that the flow of electrons can move in both positive and negative directions. This power is created by a magnetic field that a looping coil resides in. The magnetic polarity allows power to travel farther than direct current power.¹⁶¹

Edison had always had competition in his respected inventions, but now he began to see the competition catch up to him running in a different lane. Edison saw his legacy in jeopardy and decided to make his concerns about the alternating current system public. Edison, in his laboratory full of newspaper reporters, was asked questions about how an alternating current stands against a direct current. The public had to decide which was better with the impending electrification of America. Edison declared on record that alternating was unsafe and unstable. He cited a few effects and dangers presented by the implementation of this new method.¹⁶² In reality, an alternating system was more efficient because of its use of less copper with more electrical output.¹⁶³

Tesla began his infatuation with electromagnetics. He witnessed experiments in Paris at the 1889 Exposition Universelle and decided to apply the methods to his arch lighting system with a coil system called the Ruhmkorff coil.¹⁶⁴ His findings proved some of Edison's worries to be true with the demonstration of overheating. However, Tesla conducted his methods and found a solution through experimentation. Tesla created and patented what is known as a Tesla Coil. The method of the Tesla Coil produces an output of high voltages but at low currents.¹⁶⁵ This current system that Tesla created pushed the boundaries of electrical movement and was applied to transformers, an essential part of the electric system.

The 1893 Chicago World Fair was Tesla's most remarkable performance of his professional life. To put into perspective how big this fair was, the Library of Congress possesses over 14,000 pages of newspapers from 1893 directly regarding the World Fair.¹⁶⁶ After Tesla's previous encounters with entrepreneurship, Tesla entrusted Westinghouse with his new designs for alternating current systems. Westinghouse and Tesla were equally reliant on one another because they both needed each other if they were going to beat Edison's contract to the World Fair. However, due to the number of patent lawsuits that had accumulated, Westinghouse was forced by his fellow investors to revoke the loyalties to Tesla. Westinghouse gave him the choice out of respect but Tesla agreed for the sake of getting his inventions on the world stage. Tesla told the press that "Westinghouse was in [his] opinion, the only man on the globe who could take [his] alternating-current system under the circumstances then existing and win the battle against prejudice and money power."¹⁶⁷ If Tesla had not canceled his royalties on his contract, his profit from his endeavors would have reached several million dollars.¹⁶⁸ In the build-up to the World Fair, an all-out war was struck between the duos Edison and J.P. Morgan versus Tesla and

¹⁶¹ Harold Pender, "Handbook For Electrical Engineers" (John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1922), 11-12.

¹⁶² Stephanie McPherson, *War of the Currents: Thomas Edison vs Nikola Tesla*, Twenty-First Century Books (2013), 22.

¹⁶³ Harold, "Handbook," 11-12.

¹⁶⁴ Marilyn Ibach, "Paris Exposition of 1889," *Library of Congress*, Sep. 1, 2001.

¹⁶⁵ W.C. Peake, "Tesla's Coil" (Mechanic & World of Science, 1896), 153.

¹⁶⁶ "14476 results containing 'Chicago World Fair'," *Library of Congress*, 1893.

¹⁶⁷ Mar Jeffrey Seifer. *Nikola Tesla: Psychohistory of a Forgotten Inventor*, Saybrook Institute (1987), 184.

¹⁶⁸ Brian Warner. "How Nikola Tesla Threw Away a Billion Dollar Fortune Then Died Penniless," *Celebrity Net Worth* (2017).

Westinghouse. Edison continued his attacks against alternating currents and even executed a horse using a Westinghouse motor to demonstrate its dangers.¹⁶⁹

The fair was a critical moment for the United States. The economy was in dismay, businesses were going under, but the city of Chicago was going to light up new hope for the world's future. In the lead-up to the fair, it wasn't clear if Edison would win the bid with his proven but obsolete direct current system or if the Westinghouse/Tesla duo would unveil their new alternating current system. Edison Electric Light & Manufacturing Company, now General Electric Company, placed their first bid at \$1.8 million to light the fair which was promptly denied. For their second bid, they countered \$544,000. The Westinghouse and Tesla alliance placed their alternating current bid at \$399,000.¹⁷⁰ Although Edison had a higher bid (for profit) than Westinghouse, the alternating currents proved to reach longer distances for a fraction of the cost. The deciding factor was, at no surprise, money. A more efficient, more profitable, and cost-effective system was introduced and capitalist America was ready for the opportunity. The efficiency of alternating currents outweighed the risks that it potentially posed and Tesla had earned his opportunity to illuminate the city. Another potential deciding factor was the outing of Edison from his company shortly before each company presented what they could offer to the fair. The fair was an astounding success with its massive scale and complete illumination.¹⁷¹ Over the next ten years, the inventors of both systems were sidelined to a degree and the investors took over. Edison went on to focus on his telegraphy and cinematic inventions since he lost any control within the company. J.P Morgan, Edison's investor, with his new General Electric (formerly Edison Electric) joined together with Westinghouse Electric in a bid to share the large scale of projects such as the construction of the first hydro-electric power plant located at Niagara Falls (with Tesla).

The fair not only proved that alternating current is safe and effective, but it also awarded Tesla's system to be implemented at Niagara Falls. Tesla had always had the dream of harnessing the power of waterfalls, and as the lead engineer, he achieved his dream. The hydroelectric dam was the first step towards renewable energy, something Tesla really threw himself into with wind and wireless energy. Tesla had some out-of-the-box ideas that have not really stuck. He believed that we have enough power in our bodies to power anything without side effects.¹⁷²

Tesla's wireless power in 1899 at the Tesla Experimentation Center was one of, if not the most ambitious of Tesla's projects. He sought to power the world through the electricity provided by the world around it.¹⁷³ His coil was described to reach heights of 30 feet of static thunderbolts lighting up the air. Tesla's station was located in Colorado Springs in a harsh environment filled with the just type of weather that he needed to provide the necessary chaos for his pursuit of wireless electricity. Tesla needed open space away from the city and an environment filled with thin air.¹⁷⁴ Unlike his alternating current inventions, this experiment dealt with high voltage and high-frequency electricity. Tesla's experiments had the goal of telegraphy, a new process in the distribution of transmissions. Tesla's experiment was similar to a telegraph, but his methods were

¹⁶⁹ Stephanie McPherson, *War of the Currents: Thomas Edison vs Nikola Tesla*, Twenty-First Century Books (2013).

¹⁷⁰ Johnson, Todd. "Lighting the 1893 World's Fair: The Race to Light the World" *The History Rat* (2013).

¹⁷¹ Stephanie McPherson, *War of the Currents: Thomas Edison vs Nikola Tesla*, Twenty-First Century Books (2013).

¹⁷² "Nikola Tesla and George Westing House built the first hydro-electric power plant in 1895" *Tesla Memorial Society of New York*.

¹⁷³ Roff Smith, "Nikola Tesla's Struggle to Remain Relevant," *Smithsonian Magazine* (2016).

¹⁷⁴ Bernard W. Carlson, *Tesla: Inventor of the Electrical Age*, Princeton University Press (2013), 264.

wireless. He wanted to send these signals across the Atlantic to Paris to prove his experimentation effective. He visualized that “it will soon be possible to transmit wireless messages around the world so simply that any individual can carry and operate his own apparatus.”¹⁷⁵ Tesla became a sort of wizard in his Colorado experimentation when he artificially created and distributed electricity through the surrounding areas that sent rising sparks from the ground to people’s feet.¹⁷⁶ He generated his power through the earth that leaked into residential areas and caused power outages over six miles away. Tesla’s fault came in his radical claims of messages from an alien society when he conducted one of his telegraphy experiments.¹⁷⁷ Instead, he most likely witnessed the Marconi experiments in 1899 which sent out the letter “s”. This was a similar formatted message to what Tesla described. Tesla closed the laboratory in 1900, was sued for the failure of payment of his bills, and had his work torn down and dismembered.

His wireless experiments may have only reached a fraction of their potential. In 1895, Tesla had gone a few years without any major financial losses. On March 14th, the work of decades was gone with the rise of a flame. Tesla’s laboratory in New York City was wiped out by a fire. Tesla was emotionally destroyed by his loss and was at a loss for words when he spoke to reporters. It isn’t clear what futures died in that laboratory, but it is certain that there was a portion that pertained to the pursuit of practical wireless electricity.¹⁷⁸

Although Colorado was a financial failure, it did have success in transmitting electricity without wires. This drew the interest of financial titans like John Jacob Astor, J.P. Morgan, and Thomas Fortune Ryan. Tesla presented his desires to each of them and what he wished to do with the technology. He spoke as if he was a profit with verbal language that rivaled a fictional novelist. He asserted that he could command power through the earth and direct the electricity to his own bidding. Most of the financiers declined his proposal because they saw how unprofitable this would be outside a fixed wired system, where electricity could be controlled and measured. However, J.P. Morgan maintained a level of interest and was captured by the possibility of Tesla’s vision. “I could build you a tower”...“with systems that could produce a world broadcasting system that could earn millions for inventors” said Tesla in a letter to J.P. Morgan.¹⁷⁹ The financial tycoon backed Tesla on his proposed project with a \$150,000 check. This check was not a no-strings-attached grant. It came with a 51% stake held by Morgan in all current and future Tesla patents related to wireless electricity. Tesla agreed to these terms without falter.¹⁸⁰

The Wandercluffe Station began construction in 1901 in Long Island, New York only just five months after the contract was signed between the two ambitious men. This station’s most notable visual draw was its 187-foot giant tower. One characteristic of Tesla was his weakness in architecture and planning. This was evident at the experimentation center in Colorado Springs just two years prior. In Long Island, the overall equipment estimated cost tallied around \$200,000, well over Morgan’s investment.¹⁸¹ It is important to note that Morgan delayed and broke up his payments to Tesla into multiple \$50,000 payments. This, according to Tesla,

¹⁷⁵ Tesla, *Popular Mechanics* (1909).

¹⁷⁶ Garrett P. Serviss, “Tesla’s Station is Ready”, in *Colorado Springs Evening Telegraph* (1899).

¹⁷⁷ *FBI Records: The Vault Nikola Tesla*, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2018).

¹⁷⁸ Walter T. Stephenson, “Mr. Tesla’s Great Loss” in *New York Times* (1895).

¹⁷⁹ Hunt, Inez. “Lightning in His Hand” *Sage Books* (1964), p. 147.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 149.

¹⁸¹ Hunt, “Lightning,” p. 150.

breached the contract.¹⁸² Tesla's initial enthusiasm for the project was met with a halt. Over the next three years, Tesla scrambled to fund the rest of his station. To cope with the financial struggle, he acquired bank loans and sold personal belongings to fund the difference. Unfortunately, this was not enough. Tesla was left with limited options. He wrote out a manifesto published in the *Electrical World and Engineer* to assist and service his peers in the electrical engineering field. In this manifesto, he spoke elegantly and portrayed a wise figure offering his expertise.¹⁸³ The reality of the situation was that Tesla was again broke and needed cash to fund his projects.

Tesla's friends from various points in his life told him to find a focus in the electrical engineering field and stick with it if Tesla was ever going to gain any sort of financial freedom.¹⁸⁴ Tesla he had so many ideas that had different uses and benefits for society. The problem was that he could not focus on one single range of applications for his inventions. Nonetheless, Tesla throughout his career continuously displayed changes in focus and direction with undertakings in alternate current, hydroelectric power, wireless transmission, and wireless electricity. Though some of his applications were successful in the lab, he made promises he did not keep.

In 1904, Tesla had reached his breaking point. He was out of money and desperate to get the additional capital needed for his Wardenclyffe Staton. In his efforts, he began one of his many letters to J.P. Morgan with the promise that his invention had the potential for application of interaction of the stock market, the transmission of written letters, navigation of the oceans without a compass, and reproduction of photography. Like many of his other replies to Tesla, Morgan promptly replied promptly with a firm no. Tesla wrote several other letters showing signs of sorrow.¹⁸⁵ This sorrow quickly turned into anger with zero sign of any remorse from Morgan. Morgan was a businessman and entrepreneur and he had to make his business dealings void of emotion. Tesla failed to recognize this approach and lashed out. Among his letters, Tesla characterized Morgan as a "fanatic"¹⁸⁶ and "the biggest Wall Street monster".¹⁸⁷ Tesla also described the business and work of J.P. Morgan as a "passing form" and described his own as "immortal."¹⁸⁸ These are strong statements and claims by a man who has nothing in his pockets to the man who has the keys to Tesla's future.

In a broad analysis of Tesla's career, it is certain that the turn of the 20th century led Tesla down a repeated failure of economic stability and lack of successful experiments.¹⁸⁹ However, Tesla's actions and words were clear. The goal of wireless electricity throughout the world was now also a vendetta against "'evil' patent pirates"¹⁹⁰ and "Wall street monster[s]"¹⁹¹ of the world. These, according to Tesla's words, are the forces that stood in the way of his gifts to the world. His arguments had validity towards them. The world was run by a few with monopoly control over industries. Tesla had to deal with entrepreneurs who sought such status of power and

¹⁸² Microfilm letters, Tesla to J.P. Morgan. *Library of Congress* (1904).

¹⁸³ Tesla, "A Striking Tesla Manifesto", *Electrical World and Engineer* (Feb 6, 1904), p. 256.

¹⁸⁴ Hunt, "Lightning," p. 155.

¹⁸⁵ Microfilm letters, Nikola Tesla to J.P. Morgan. *Library of Congress* (Dec. 16, 1903).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* (Oct. 17, 1904).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* (Dec. 18, 1904).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* (Dec. 19, 1904).

¹⁸⁹ Seifer. *Nikola Tesla*, p 669.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 523.

¹⁹¹ Microfilm letters, Nikola Tesla to J.P. Morgan. *Library of Congress* (Dec. 18, 1904).

control. In American capitalist society, money equals such power. Tesla did not see the world as these entrepreneurs did. He did not seek how he could have profited, but sought how the world could have profited. This could have led him down some psychological disarray and frustrations in his failed attempts to enact his visions.

Tesla's work failed to provide a practical use that boded well for his economic investors, regardless of the revolutionary potentials. In philosophical and religious respects, Tesla saw the world as good and evil before God. Edison had a similar worldview but he saw warfare being that evil. Edison's biggest and most important view was that he refused to make a machine used to kill another human being. Edison broke this self-proclaimed moral of his when he secretly aided the execution of a man guilty of murder using Westinghouse machines so that his direct current system could win the current war. Both an intellectual and a man before God, Tesla sought his political views often through his own inventions. His idealistic nature reflects through his desires for what the world could become. He described his inventions as both holding the power to help the world or ultimately destroy it. Tesla had been outed from the involvement of his creations in the past and could have feared the ramifications if he was successful in an invention that could be easily manipulated to harm others.

Nikola Tesla found his name in the spotlight throughout the 1890s. In regards to his career achievements, it was his prime. In total, there were 559 articles written about or by Tesla, 470 by science articles and newspapers, 24 by the popular press, and 65 by newspapers. Tesla's innovations on alternating current energy were on an industrial and city-wide scale. He was even referred to as "The New Edison" by the press. Even after beating Edison in the race to electrify America, Edison was still tied to Tesla because of the legacy he built. Other members of the press sent praise towards Tesla and portrayed Edison as his lesser counterpart.¹⁹²

Tesla received positive press even after many of his seemingly lost promises to the world. In 1931, on Tesla's 75th birthday, *Time Magazine* did a front-page story on Nikola Tesla. They spoke in extreme detail on his physical stature at the time, his intellectual abilities, but above all spoke in a very positive light on his public image. Even in 1931, he was seen as a mind from the past that powered the future. Tesla rose in a time when many intellectuals, inventors, and innovators came to the world stage, but *Time* led readers to believe that Tesla was the name to be remembered by everyone due to his inventions used by Americans in everyday life.¹⁹³

Not all press was good for Tesla. In 1897, *The New York Times* wrote an article about a recent Tesla lecture. They portrayed him as an immigrant who spoke a broken foreign language of English that had made up words to coincide conveniently with his investigations. Of the 200 electricians who went to Tesla's lecture, many were disappointed in the inability of Tesla to convey his points. As a complete contrast to many of the other articles by Tesla, author B.P. Remy was very unimpressed. It is unclear what Remy's background was or if he had any technological experience, but it is probable that Tesla's awkward nature and unorthodox thought process hindered Remy's ability to understand. Tesla had a mind that was not on the same plain as the everyday press reporter which was why he was so prevalent in scientific publishing. He was a niche topic that innovated technologies that were new for the time.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Seifer. *Nikola Tesla*, p.269.

¹⁹³ "Science: Tesla at 75," *Time Magazine* (1931).

¹⁹⁴ B.P. Remy, "Tesla Keeps His Secrets," *New York Times* (1897).

Today, Tesla's name has reemerged in the form of an electric car company. Elon Musk has put his name back on the forefront as an electrical engineering legend. Musk has made advances and captivated the public that is parallel to the late 1800s electrical innovations. Musk shares the characteristics of both Edison and Tesla. Like Tesla, he is awkward in his speech and is an immigrant. He has a desire to pursue renewable energies, like Tesla's pursuit to harness the energy of Niagara Falls. However, he is arguably more like Edison due to his entrepreneurial nature. Edison in his prime was involved in several innovations through telegraphy, electricity, and cinema. Musk is no different with his three companies dealing with electric cars, solar panels, and rocket ships. Musk is also a master marketer and takes advantage of modern-day communications such as Twitter to display his new and coming innovations to multiple industries.

Tesla in the prime of his engineering career had remarkable successes and crippling failures. He continuously repeated his financial mistakes and ran into some great misfortunes. To his defense, Tesla's dream for free energy for the world would have completely upended the growing business of electricity. Investors would not fund unless they could have achieved their desires. Some desire financial gain, others a legacy beyond their lifetime, and others to gain more power. Tesla's idealism was enchanting and inspiring but it often led him into troubled situations. Through what was the prime of Tesla's career, he experienced trials and tribulations that are not for the faint of heart. He emigrated across the world, became an engineer, duked out with Edison, lost almost every financial battle, but revolutionized how we electrify the world today. Tesla's work was all about the future and what it could bring rather than what it could do in the now. But to him, "It is not a dream, it is a simple feat of scientific electrical engineering."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Johnston, Tesla, *My Inventions*, Ch. 5.

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Indigeneity Performed and Practiced: The Ideology of African Socialism (*Ujamaa*) in Tanzania

By Alicia Perkovich

Introduction

Tanzania gained independence in 1961 and transitioned from a colonial state to a developmental state, struggling with not only how to move forward as a sovereign entity, but how to do so without remaining as a colony in all forms but name. Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the first president of independent Tanzania, responded to these challenges with *Ujamaa*, his own ideology of African socialism, published in 1964. *Ujamaa* became the means for development, namely improving the Tanzanian economy and standard of living.

Discussed in detail throughout this paper, *Ujamaa* applied a seemingly simple, romantic notion of pre-colonial Tanzanian villages— characterized by equality and communal operations— to the contemporary nation, using the connections between the past and present to show how *Ujamaa* was an indigenous form of socialism. In naming the ideology “*Ujamaa*,”— Swahili for “familyhood”— the program aimed to expand local tradition and connect the entire nation through African socialism, asserting that all of Tanzania was family.

This paper explicates the intent of *Ujamaa* to be an indigenous model of development distinct from both poles of development the Cold War presented to Tanzania. It will do so by analyzing the historical backdrop within which Nyerere proposed *Ujamaa*, a close reading of its ideology, and assessing the ideology’s historical credibility. This paper will also understand the bounds of indigeneity by evaluating Tanzanians’ reception of *Ujamaa*. While Nyerere had a genuine interest in promoting an indigenous model of development to benefit his entire nation, the populus could or would not accept the proposal. Through these stages of analysis, alongside the recent historiography of African socialism in Tanzania, this paper will conclude with an understanding that the indigeneity *Ujamaa* espoused functioned better as an outward declaration of sovereignty than as a consensus for Tanzania’s internal sovereignty.

Methodology

This paper interprets African socialism to be Nyerere’s synthesis of the values of socialism with Tanzania’s distinct African history. While he defined his ideology of African socialism with the Swahili term *Ujamaa* to emphasize its indigenous existence, this paper uses “*Ujamaa*” and “African socialism” interchangeably as they had the same meaning to Nyerere. In contrast to common discussions of Tanzanian African socialism, this paper puts more emphasis on the writings of *Ujamaa* than the policies of the Arusha Declaration, because the Arusha Declaration implemented *Ujamaa*’s ideology into policy, and this paper’s focus is not on policy. Beyond the primary sources of Nyerere’s writings and speeches of *Ujamaa*, this paper will also use contemporaneous interviews of Tanzanian villagers to understand the challenges of *Ujamaa*’s acceptance. Lastly, this paper draws from the scholarly work of primary and secondary source historians to understand how *Ujamaa* functioned better as a declaration of outward sovereignty than a promotion of internal sovereignty.

Before presenting the research and findings of *Ujamaa* as an indigenous mode of development, it is also important to identify the exigence for this topic and its sources. The bulk of the Tanzanian canon pertains to the failures and abandonment of African socialism a decade after its introduction, therefore inferring *Ujamaa* invalid as an ideology. While it is one-sided to focus only on Nyerere's ideals and not their effects in practice, characterizing *Ujamaa* through the failure of programs such as villagization ignores conversations of indigeneity, condenses discussion of ideology into merely contextualizing and introductory paragraphs, and forces historical analysis into a modernization theory that was separate from the goals of *Ujamaa*. The movement away from a modernization perspective to a more empathetic approach has begun with scholars such as Paul Bjerck, who was a key source for this paper. However, historiography that moves beyond a modernization perspective oftens serves the field of economic theory, discusses African socialism across many nations, or is still chronologically focused on the abandonment of *Ujamaa*. An example of this is Emmanuel Akyeampong's article "African socialism; or, the Search for an Indigenous Model of Economic Development?" which is cited sporadically as it focuses on African socialism in four nations, and defends *Ujamaa* as an indigenous form of development through economic theory. For all of these reasons, there remains a lack of scholarship on the ideology of African socialism specific to Tanzania. Analyzing the historiography of *Ujamaa* proves it to be at best a barrier to entry for those interested in understanding the ideology of *Ujamaa*, and at worst an unfairly biased tradition against the ideology itself. The thesis and structure of this paper therefore hope to combat these trends.

Colonial Legacies in Independent Tanzania

Over the near century of Tanzanian colonization, a common thread appears in the fight for independence: a prioritization of the indigenous customs of landholding and agriculture. Germany first colonized Tanzania in 1885 with the intent of exploiting the land for cash crops. Although only limited numbers of German settlers attempted to turn Tanzania into a "white man's colony,"¹⁹⁶ their disruption of the region's local agriculture led to unrest that culminated in the Maji Maji rebellion. Still, the impact of German colonialism was minimal in shaping independent Tanzania compared to what followed.

After Germany's defeat in World War I, Tanzania's ownership shifted to that of the League of Nations, ultimately becoming a United Nations Mandated Territory under the administration of Great Britain.¹⁹⁷ Because Tanzania was a UN Mandated territory, the region was open to all members of the international community, therefore preventing a concentration of British settlers from controlling the region.¹⁹⁸ Yet Great Britain still tried to transform Tanzania through indirect rule and calls for economic change. Indirect rule was a means of governance where British administrators of Tanzania enlisted existing political leaders, such as tribe Elders, with concentrated power and the burden of enacting colonial measures in exchange for protection of their power as well as a dependable income.¹⁹⁹ This freed the colonizers from permanent residence in colonies, and ideally helped gain popular support for colonial measures. However, indirect rule created a favored group in the colonized regions, and coupled with the

¹⁹⁶ Ahmed Mohiddin, *African socialism in Two Countries* (London, United Kingdom: Croom Helm, 1981), 41-42.

¹⁹⁷ Mohiddin, 44-45.

¹⁹⁸ Mohiddin, 51.

¹⁹⁹ Paul Bjerck, *Julius Nyerere*, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017), 26.

content of colonial measures, led to calls for freedom from the masses. The most prominent example of the consequences of indirect rule in Tanzania was the colonial attempts to create private land ownership.

Out of a shortage of agricultural products in the aftermath of World War II, and a British desire to improve the profitability and efficiency of Tanzanian farmers, the British government created the *Local Development Loan Fund*. This scheme would provide loans to improve the resources of African farmers, ideally to break up communal land systems and put in place a profitable system of individual land ownership.²⁰⁰ As in the 19th century, foreign entities were again attempting to disrupt the Tanzanian tradition of land holding, and this time with the effect of creating a land-holding African class with capitalist values, stratified from other peasants and workers. As the British tried to push this plan on the native population, the general response was that of opposition. While some of this opposition was a fear of foreign entities eventually taking over the land, as was happening in Kenya at the time, Julius Nyerere and Tanzania African National Union (TANU) led the most vocal and organized opposition on the grounds of its reorganization of Tanzanian economic and social structures, culminating in the successful fight for independence.

Julius Nyerere helped to charter TANU in 1954 to both organize British opposition, but also prepare for the UN Trusteeship Council's visit to Tanzania. That visit resulted in the Trusteeship Council recommending independence for Tanzania in 1980 or earlier, and because Tanzania was technically under the ownership of the UN, not Great Britain, UN approval for Tanzanian independence allowed for TANU's prioritization to become securing independence for its nation.²⁰¹ Nyerere became the face of TANU, touring the region to give speeches and mobilize local TANU branches for independence.²⁰²

Central to Nyerere's vision of independence was his belief in nonviolence, as he thought a militarized or otherwise violent push towards independence would only delay the process and hurt the freedoms of post-independence Tanzania. Nyerere and TANU instead focused on securing democratic elections that would allow for the nation to write its own constitution, declaring independence. In 1958 and 1960—two cycles of increasingly open and democratic elections—TANU increased its presence in the Tanzanian legislature, leading to Nyerere becoming the Council's Chief Minister in 1960, the drafting of a new constitution, and Tanzania becoming an independent member of the British Commonwealth on December 6th, 1961. The next year, the nation left the Commonwealth, transitioning to a republic, with Nyerere as the first President.²⁰³

In his collection of essays, William Tordoff concisely stated the challenges that faced a nation-builder such as Nyerere, for “though a new state had been born, the nation of Tanganyika [Tanzania] had still to be created”; essentially, it is one thing for a state to reach independence, but another to build a state that is treated as sovereign by the international communities, and accepted as sovereign by the populus.²⁰⁴ It is clear that Nyerere recognized this challenge and

²⁰⁰ Mohiddin, 48-49.

²⁰¹ Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 39-40.

²⁰² Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 46.

²⁰³ Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 50-51.

²⁰⁴ William Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Tanzania: A Collection of Essays Covering the Period from September 1960 to July 1966* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House, 1967), 98.

was ready to confront it. In a speech weeks before independence, Nyerere spoke to an audience of Tanzanians and said that “we have cried for independence without difficulty. Now that this animal called Independence has fallen, conflicts begin.”²⁰⁵ Beyond the development of Tanzania, Nyerere had to solve two conflicts—the international pressures of the Cold War, and his domestic challenge of ideologically unifying Tanzania through nationalism—which most informed *Ujamaa*, and are the final contexts necessary to explain before a close reading of the ideology itself.

After independence, Nyerere had to grapple with pressures from both sides of the Cold War while formulating Tanzania’s future. Tanzania had a dire need for development, which entailed increasing the standard of living, economic growth, and social institutions of the nation. Both the West and East hoped to coalesce Africa under their own modernization theories that would “develop” these independent nations, although both theories were based upon industrialization, infrastructure projects, and changes in agriculture.²⁰⁶ The potential for foreign investment and influence to control independent Tanzania’s development resembled what Ghana’s first president and contemporary of Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, described as “neo-colonialism.”²⁰⁷ The widespread ideas of neocolonialism and how they influenced Nyerere’s concerns of sovereignty led to his decision upon a third way approach to his nation’s future that would not require the direct partnership with either side of the Cold War. As will be discussed in detail, *Ujamaa* was a non-aligned approach to development, which focused on self-reliance in order to prevent neocolonialism and indebtedness to one side of the Cold War.

The second challenge Nyerere and TANU saw for Tanzania’s future was the building of a national consciousness. Nyerere believed this goal was incompatible with any type of racialized politics due to contemporary conflicts in newly-independent African nations, and that loyalty to the government and the nation itself was necessary of the populus in order for the government to lead development.²⁰⁸ While this led to a level of authoritarianism from Nyerere, such as in policies like the Preventive Detention Act, his belief in nationalism also led him to temporarily resigning from his office over his disapproval of any race-based citizenship laws.²⁰⁹ This leave from the government benefited Nyerere by allowing him to travel the country to garner support for TANU, and to write the ideology of *Ujamaa*. On this respite Nyerere read a book by Tanzanian Petro Itosi Marealle that presented a theory of rural African society referred to as *ujamaa*, which Nyerere clearly took inspiration in as he wrote his essays on African socialism. In November 1962, Nyerere won the election to become the first President of Tanzania, and was able to put forth his political philosophy that rejected divisions and embraced a romantic, unifying view of pre-colonial Tanzania.

Ujamaa: Two Types of Indigeneity

In order to argue that Nyerere’s proposal of African socialism was indigenous to Tanzania, he drew upon the pre-colonial history of the nation to make connections between

²⁰⁵ Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 53.

²⁰⁶ Emmanuel Akyeampong, “African socialism; or, the Search for an Indigenous Model of Economic Development?” *Economic History of Developing Regions* 33, no. 1 (2018): 6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20780389.2018.1434411>.

²⁰⁷ Kwame Nkrumah. “Introduction.” In *Neo-Colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism*, translated by Dominic Tweedie, (London, United Kingdom: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1965), 3.

²⁰⁸ Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 54-56.

²⁰⁹ Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 58.

traditional customs and the central tenets of socialism. By drawing upon the socialist aspects of Tanzania's history, Nyerere was showing how African socialism was an indigenous structure to organize an economy and society. The fundamental elements of this indigeneity were the equal ownership of resources, specifically land, the obligation to work, and then the communal security individuals felt with one another.²¹⁰

“The Africans’ right to land was simply the right to use it; he had no other right to it, nor did it occur to him to try and claim one.”²¹¹

Given the abundance of land in Tanzania, and Nyerere's recognition of land-use as a means to Tanzania's development, it is no surprise that land distribution was a focus of his argument for African socialism. Nyerere emphasized how pre-colonial Tanzania did not believe in individual land ownership, a capitalist tradition, but that land belonged to the community. The right to land was only a right *“on the condition that he uses it,”* such as the means of work and means of maintaining life for the community. There was no right to individually own land, to speculate or leave it idle, or manipulate its use to gain profits from the exploitation of other's needs. This argument was familiar with Tanzanians given the opposition to Great Britain's attempt at individual land ownership in the last years of colonization.

“In traditional African society everybody was a worker. There was no other way of earning a living for the community.”²¹²

The second example of a shared connection was that everyone able to work did so, but not in the capitalist sense that there were employers and employees, but rather each member of a community actively labored for their community. Nyerere noted that there was no loiterer nor idler in Tanzanian society, “who accepts the hospitality of society as his ‘right’ but gives nothing in return.”²¹³ Everyone, therefore, contributed their fair share to the wealth and operation of their community. This did not mean that every person was expected to perform identical duties, as Nyerere wrote about village Elders, who “appeared to be enjoying himself without doing any work... had, in fact, worked hard all his younger days” and now took on a new duty of being the guardian of his people.²¹⁴ Through each member of society being a *worker*, traditional Tanzania also lacked landed exploiters—the capitalists. This was because no Tanzanian aspired to acquire personal wealth so that they may dominate over others in their community.²¹⁵

“In our traditional African society we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us”²¹⁶

With every member of pre-colonial Tanzanian communities holding an equally dignified status as a worker, and doing so on shared land, there appears a third shared principle: communal

²¹⁰ While I drew these elements from my own research, it's important to note that the historiography of *Ujamaa*, such as work done by Viktoria Stöger-Eising, have come to similar conclusions.

²¹¹ Julius K Nyerere. *Ujamaa - Essays on Socialism*, (London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1981), 7.

²¹² Nyerere, 3.

²¹³ Nyerere, 4.

²¹⁴ Nyerere, 4.

²¹⁵ Nyerere, 6.

²¹⁶ Nyerere, 6.

support. This shared principle is a philosophical state of mind of the lacking desire or need to exploit others as the benefit of security was greater. Nyerere depicted this security in a striking quote: “both the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’ individual were completely secure in African society. Natural catastrophe brought famine, but it brought famine to everybody... he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. That is socialism.”²¹⁷ Through the distribution of wealth, land, and labor in pre-colonial Tanzania, socialist values of distribution and equality were indigenous to Tanzania, and even intrinsic to their society before the arrival of foreign capitalists. The ending of the former quote— “That was socialism. That is socialism”— is especially striking as it asserts, almost poetically, how Tanzania was socialist prior to colonization, and reflects contemporary forms of socialism in its own African contexts. This balance of similarities and distinctions to the common understanding of socialism then leads *Ujamaa* into its second form of indigeneity.

As stated in the thesis of this paper, *Ujamaa* was indigenous not only for its historical backing, but because it was distinct from both poles of development Cold War powers proposed to newly independent nations. By looking inward at Tanzania for inspiration of the future, and rejecting the modernization theory of the United States and Soviet Union through self-reliance— discussed in detail later on— *Ujamaa* asserted itself as part of a growing non-alignment movement in the mid 20th century. A necessary part of this non-alignment was for Nyerere to articulate how *Ujamaa* was distinct from the socialism Eastern European and Asian nations contemporaneously encouraged. Nyerere called this form of socialism “doctrarian socialism,” and understanding its difference from *Ujamaa* is integral to understanding why Nyerere’s proposal for African socialism was not just importing a “better” economic system for Tanzania, but reviving an indigenous one.²¹⁸

The first difference is historical, as Nyerere argued Tanzanians never had an Agrarian or Industrial revolution, which are key stages to doctrinaire socialism. These revolutions, Nyerere noted, led to the “landed” and “landless” class, essentially bourgeois and proletariat classes. This did not occur in Tanzania for two reasons. Firstly, Tanzania had such an abundance of land, that there was no need for any to be without. More importantly, though, colonization in Tanzania prevented landed and landless indigenous classes. This is not to say Tanzania was a classless society, but because of both colonization’s oppressive history, and TANU’s opposition to individual land-ownership, such distinctions were weak and not in conflict with one another.²¹⁹ Tanzania therefore didn’t have the class struggle and conflict that was a precondition for doctrarian socialism. Furthermore, Nyerere believed it was fallacious to abide by the doctrarian idea that class struggle against a capitalist society was necessary and inevitable for the formation of socialism. Nyerere wrote that socialists believing Civil War was a good thing to be encouraged was not only a more contradiction, but

Gives capitalism a philosophical status which capitalism neither claims nor deserves. For it virtually says, ‘Without capitalism, and the conflict which capitalism creates within society, there can be

²¹⁷ Nyerere, 3.

²¹⁸ Nyerere, 12.

²¹⁹ Nyerere, 11.

no socialism’! This glorification of capitalism by the doctrinaire European socialists, I repeat, I find intolerable.²²⁰

In essence, doctrarian socialism required an epic, violent struggle to topple capitalism, whereas African socialism was socialism without conflict, since African socialism was the natural state of being. Tanzania did not need to be taught or forced into socialism, as it was the values of the society’s past which produced the population. As historian Viktoria Stöger-Eising noted, *Ujamaa* “was an ethos into which one is socialised rather than an ideological perspective that comes with the radicalisation of the proletariat.”²²¹

Nyerere concluded his essay on *Ujamaa* with two quotes that summarize how *Ujamaa* was an indigenous model in both an inward and outward sense. The assertion that “modern African socialism can draw from its traditional heritage the recognition of ‘society’ as an extension of the basic family unity” explains how socialism fits naturally with indigenous Tanzanian values, as well as how *Ujamaa* would extend the traditional value of familyhood to structure the entire nation.²²² But *Ujamaa* was indigenous not just because the values of socialism aligned with Tanzania’s needs, but because African socialism was distinct from its foreign forms. He wrote that *Ujamaa* “is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.”²²³

Ujamaa as an affirmation of socialist values and rejection of the doctrarian model shows it to be an indigenous path for development due to its domestic inspiration and its extension out of Tanzania’s independence movement’s anti-colonialism. Nyerere viewed African socialism as the answer to Tanzania’s future because it was vernacular to his people, and a system that would not force the conversion of Tanzanian livelihood, as it merely extended how the nation had historically operated. While this paper goes on to discuss challenges Nyerere’s ideological optimism faced, it is clear that Nyerere was attempting to minimize foreign influence on the ideology guiding Tanzania, for it is one thing to break the chains of colonialism, but another to replace it with something “Tanzanian,” rather than merely importing a “better” version of foreign ideology and practice.

Inward Indigeneity: “On the Ground” Limitations of *Ujamaa*

In his preface to *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, Nyerere noted how his ideology of *Ujamaa* was originally published in English. This meant that most of the population, especially groups necessary to its implementation— workers, teachers, civil servants, and farmers— were unable to read and understand the ideology.²²⁴ Nyerere republished *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* in July 1968 so that it would be more accessible, and while this represents a persevered limitation, it serves as an entrypoint to understanding the limits of *Ujamaa* in its implementation. Analyzing Tanzanians’ reception of *Ujamaa* reveals a limit to Nyerere’s perspective of

²²⁰ Nyerere, 11.

²²¹ Viktoria Stöger-Eising, “‘Ujamaa’ Revisited: Indigenous and European Influences in Nyerere’s Social and Political Thought.” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 70, no. 1 (2000), doi:10.2307/1161404, 13.

²²² Nyerere, 12.

²²³ Nyerere, 12.

²²⁴ Nyerere, vii.

indigeneity, and that limit is the principle of internal sovereignty—the relationship between the sovereign power (Nyerere) and the people (Tanzanians).

The key to enacting *Ujamaa* was a program of villagization, where Tanzania transitioned from a period of nation-building to one of implementing African socialism. The exigence of villagization was that Nyerere believed agriculture was the key to Tanzania's development, as the nation was rich in agriculture for food crops, cash crops, and livestock; furthermore, it was lacking in industrial development and urbanization. Without industrial development, Tanzania would have to increase its agricultural output to raise money and take care of the population.²²⁵ To focus on rural development, Nyerere returned to the “traditional African family,” where families lived and worked together on communal land.²²⁶ He applied this tradition to *Ujamaa* on a national level, by expanding villages into large communities of people living, farming, selling, and governing together, all on communal land.²²⁷ Again, this shows a uniquely Tanzanian version of socialism, where it is rural farmers, not urban wage-workers, who become the vanguards of socialism. While this shows how *Ujamaa* was indigenous in respect to the tradition of socialism, the impacts of a villagization program reveal the limitations of *Ujamaa* as indigenous to all Tanzanians.

Due to the multi-ethnic makeup of Tanzania, and therefore its variety in organization and custom, the “on the ground” interpretation of African socialism varied greatly, often deviating from Nyerere's own ideology. For example, in Mtwara, a south eastern village in Tanzania where the government heavily implemented villagization, villagers defined *Ujamaa* as highly literal. Specifically, villagers saw *Ujamaa* as a policy of “depending on yourself, for agriculture ... along with your children,” and “having enough food to feed yourself, and doing your own work,” which implied almost complete detachment from the rest of the nation, and even non-biological members of the village.²²⁸ This was a polar interpretation from Nyerere's intent of familyhood extrened to an entire nation; paradoxically, the manifestation of Nyerere's ideology in rural communities reinforced a strictly nuclear system as familhood, not seeing one another as kin to those outside the extended family.²²⁹

By the 1970s the Tanzanian government was forcing the villagization of Tanzania, and consequently led communities to view *Ujamaa* not as a revival of indigenous operations, but as a new form of colonialism. Individuals who had lived through colonial and post-colonial Tanzania saw merely a continuity of state invasion and unwanted change, with villagization viewed as forced relocation and “destruction” of Tanzanians' plans, farms, and personal way of life.²³⁰

To understand why these difficulties existed it is necessary to reexamine the language and politics of *Ujamaa*, which reveals simplifications in language, such as referring to historical “Africans” as operating in a singular way of socialism. To quote Stöger-Eising,

²²⁵ Nyerere, 29.

²²⁶ Nyerere, 106-108.

²²⁷ Nyerere, 124.

²²⁸ Priya Lal, “Self-Reliance and the State: The Multiple Meanings of Development in Early Post-Colonial Tanzania,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 82, no. 2 (2012), 220. doi:10.2307/41485040.

²²⁹ Lal, 221.

²³⁰ Lal, 225.

In claiming that 'the' African is predisposed to a socialist attitude of mind because of 'the' traditional African society Nyerere presents an indefensible generalisation. This is surely a romanticised portrait that does not square with the multiplicity of African traditions. There is no such reality as 'the' African traditional society. Africa's cultural diversity resists such sweeping contentions. Even within the boundaries of Tanzania there is too much heterogeneity to justify speaking of African traditional society.²³¹

So what part of pre-colonial Africa— rather, Tanzania— if any, does *Ujamaa* truly recall? While there is alarmingly sparse literature on pre-colonial Tanzania, the answer is likely Nyerere's own Zanaki tribe in Butami, a remote village on the east shores of Lake Victoria.²³² Central to his community was *erisaga*, where adjacent homesteads would form "clans" to work and socialize together, and Elders would allocate their combined land for one another to use.²³³ This environment clearly reflected the "African tradition" Nyerere wrote of, and his immediacy to *erisaga* explains the clarity and passion by which he envisioned *Ujamaa*.

Lastly, what was the point of Nyerere's generalization? Finishing Stöger-Eising's quotation alludes to an answer:

Nyerere was, of course, aware of the diverse spectrum of socio-political structures within Tanzania and Africa. It is likely that he uses the term 'the African traditional society' in a polemically heuristic sense with the purpose of conveying his message in a simplified and easily understandable form both to an African and to a Western audience.²³⁴

Not only did monolithic language clarify Nyerere's ideology, but did so in service of delineating such an ideology to various stakeholders. By using this language, Nyerere was betting on nationalism and even pan-Africanism to provide internal sovereignty to *Ujamaa*, which makes sense after understanding his use of nationalism surrounding Tanzanian independence, and the influence of other African nation-builders on his actions. The next section of this paper will dive deeper into the need for and success of these same factors in imploring Tanzanian sovereignty to an international audience.

Outward Indigeneity: Self-Reliance and Foreign Support

In his article "Sovereignty and Socialism: The Historiography of an African State," Paul Bjerk wrote that "while 'flag' sovereignty followed logically from independence, it was only with varying success that African countries laid claim to the exercise of internal and external sovereign authority."²³⁵ In Tanzania, Nyerere's ideology of *Ujamaa* followed "flag" sovereignty.

²³¹ Stöger-Eising, 131.

²³² Bjerk, *Julius Nyerere*, 27-28.

²³³ Stöger-Eising, 120-121.

²³⁴ Stöger-Eising, 131.

²³⁵ Paul K Bjerk, "Sovereignty and Socialism in Tanzania: The Historiography of an African State," *History in Africa* 37 (2010), 277. doi:10.1353/hia.2010.0033.

By promoting an indigenous model of development, Nyerere was arguing the government was exercising internal sovereignty, as their governance was a promotion of what the populus had naturally practiced. This paper's "Inward Indigeneity" section shows this was not necessarily the case, likely because the nationalism that underpinned *Ujamaa* required generalizing what indigenous entailed, and therefore came into conflict with local practices. Seeing how *Ujamaa* fell short in its exercise of internal sovereignty, a reexamination of the ideology reveals how it was better suited as a form of external sovereignty—a nation's right to autonomy from control of foreign entities.

This paper has already implicitly discussed external sovereignty, specifically in Nyerere's clear distinctions between African and doctrarian socialism, and how *Ujamaa's* argument of indigeneity was also one of non-alignment in the Cold War. By promoting an indigenous model of development, instead of relying on foreign structuring, Tanzania was asserting its external sovereignty in an ideological sense. In its ideological reception, professionals respected the self-reliance of Tanzania out of admiration, as "diplomatic officers and activist scholars saw in Nyerere's socialism a dynamic alternative to the heavy-handed communist regimes of the Soviet Union and China... Tanzania came to be seen as a path-breaking effort in rural development and African ideological initiative that found strong international enthusiasm from both socialists and development experts."²³⁶

However, analysis of an additional essay on *Ujamaa, Self Reliance*, explains how *Ujamaa* promoted external sovereignty in an economic, and perhaps more sustainable, way. By making domestic agriculture the basis of development, *Ujamaa* also rejected the need for external aid to Tanzania; together, this was the basis for self-reliance. In his essay on self-reliance, Nyerere wrote that external aid came in gifts from other nations, loans from foreign nations or entities, and private investment from foreign companies and individuals. Nyerere believed it was "stupid for [Tanzania] to imagine that we shall rid ourselves of our poverty through foreign financial assistance rather than our own financial resources," as foreign governments wouldn't have enough funds to solve their own issues, those of other needing nations, and to sufficiently aid in Tanzania's development.²³⁷ Furthermore, all forms of external aid would threaten the independence— i.e. external sovereignty— of Tanzania, as "how can we depend upon foreign governments and companies for the major part of our development without giving to those governments and countries a great part of our freedom to act as we please?"²³⁸ Tanzania could not follow an indigenous model of development with the funding, and then influence, of non-indigenous actors. "Flag" independence allowed for Tanzania to create a sovereign structure, which would only be possible by enforcing external sovereignty throughout its development.

United States politicians accepted the external sovereignty of Tanzania, as shown in both the correspondence of American ambassadors with the Executive Office, and in the developing "acceptance of African non-alignment" in John F. Kennedy and Lydon B Johnson's foreign policies.²³⁹ Furthermore, when Nyerere required the villagization of all Tanzanians, the

²³⁶ Bjerk, "Sovereignty and Socialism in Tanzania," 296.

²³⁷ Nyerere, 22.

²³⁸ Nyerere, 25.

²³⁹ Bjerk, "Sovereignty and Socialism in Tanzania," 291.; Akyeampong, 6.

international donor community still attempted to support the program, which Emmanuel Akyeampong believed represented how they “respected the sincerity of his endeavour and his integrity.”²⁴⁰ A reason for this positive reception was that many Western powers did not view Nyerere as radical, despite the prominence of socialism in *Ujamaa*, since *Ujamaa* still shared values with the West and the United Nations. These values included Nyerere’s belief in non-violence and the egalitarianism of African socialism. Ahmed Mohiddin goes beyond this and also noted that Tanzania did not pose any special assets to the international community during the Cold War, compared to nations such as Kenya or the Congo, and as such faced less international attention, and therefore the West did not antagonize Nyerere as a radical, or have vested interests in subverting Tanzanian non-reliance.²⁴¹

While this doesn’t resolve the issues of *Ujamaa*’s “indigeneity,” an understanding of external sovereignty explains them. By envisioning a unified, although monolithic, state, Nyerere was asserting to the international community that his nation was not malleable to the politics of the Cold War. Furthermore, understanding the internal and external stakeholders of *Ujamaa* shows that Nyerere was not disingenuous in his argument of African socialism being indigenous to Tanzania, but rather he had to conglomerate trends of pre-colonial Tanzania so his ideology could apply to both an internal and external audience.

Conclusion

From the perspectives of Nyerere, Tanzanians, and scholars, the ideology of *Ujamaa* appears a genuine attempt at reviving indigenous operations in an African form of socialism. But it was an attempt that had limitations in reality. On one hand, Nyerere had historical credence in the correlations he made between pre-colonial Tanzania and the proposal of *Ujamaa* as an African form of socialism. On the other, those connections required romanticization so that *Ujamaa* could also serve the politics surrounding Tanzania; consequently, in practice the ideology did not evenly mobilize and unite the independent nation. While this may have undermined internal sovereignty, it did so to present Tanzania as a sovereign nation in the face of foreign nations in the volatile Cold War period.

In understanding the ideology of *Ujamaa*, seemingly clear terminology becomes complicated. Not only can socialism take on forms larger than the doctrarian beliefs of Marxism-Leninism, but indigeneity and sovereignty take on inward and outward inflection, with indigeneity also serving political roles for nationalism and sovereignty. These discrepancies should not be taken as failures of the research process, or even *Ujamaa*, but kernels of understanding the complexities in the creation of ideology, and in contextualizing a singular ideology within world history. By understanding the inception and reception of an ideology such as *Ujamaa*, and voicing ideological history, overlooked topics receive a platform of visibility, and historians receive new lenses to work with and apply to their research.

²⁴⁰ Akyeampong, 15.

²⁴¹ Mohiddin, 51.

There is no discussion in this paper on the Soviet Union’s respect of Tanzania’s external sovereignty due to a lack of sourcing. From that dearth we can assume relatively the same pattern as the West’s.

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The Student as Magnet: The Chinese Communist Party’s Evolving Response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests

By: Alicia Perkovich

Introduction to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests

With rhetoric from top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders such as “this movement, analyzed at its most fundamental level, is a consequence of the long-term spread of bourgeois liberalism in China. It aims at the West’s so-called democracy, freedom, and human rights. We have no room for any retreat,” and “these students are nuts if they think this handful of people can overthrow our Party and our government! These kids don’t know how good they’ve got it!... Give them peace and they don’t want it; they want to go starve themselves instead. No appreciation!” it is tempting to paint the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests as a battle between student and government over liberal reforms and Chinese ideology.²⁴² However both assumptions prove to be too simplistic after analysis of the multitude of protesting groups and the CCP’s evolving response to the protests. This paper reconciles the diverse protesters— not just including students, but also workers and intellectuals— with the CCP’s suppressive focus on the students through my argument that the CCP viewed the students as magnets in the center of the protests. Initially, this meant the students were malleable recipients of political influence, but as the protests continued the CCP developed an increasingly antagonistic view of the students as not only recipients of political influence, but the source of it for the masses. Due to the students’ potential to become the future CCP leaderships, their exposure to foreign and senior influences, and that the nature of their demands could unite civil society against the Chinese State, the CCP grew to view the students as the most threatening of the protest groups. These students were a risk as they were the only ones, amidst the turmoil of the Tiananmen protests, that could carry out a counterrevolution.

This paper draws its evidence from the multitude of CCP documents during the Tiananmen protests, compiled in *The Tiananmen Papers*. Additionally, the paper uses documentation of the protests, both in primary and secondary sources, to contextualize the dynamics of the protesting groups. From these sources emerge three stages of the CCP’s increasingly antagonistic response to the students: the April 26th *People’s Daily* editorial, martial law on May 20th, and the decision to clear Tiananmen Square on June 3rd and 4th. These three stages reinforce how over the time of the protests the CCP grew increasingly antagonistic against the students to prevent unification of civil society and counterrevolution against the state.

Background: 1989 China and Key Players in the Tiananmen Square Protests

In the decade before the 1989 protests, then CCP Chairman Deng Xiaoping enacted economic reforms to open up the Chinese economy and increase its productivity, which had limited success in the eyes of the people. Workers struggled with the lack of security in the workplace, as the new focus on profit and competition led to job loss. This forced workers to

²⁴² Zhang Liang, comp., *The Tiananmen Papers*, ed. Andrew J Nathan and Perry Lin (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 188, 208.

protect their own interests as they felt the government was no longer doing so.²⁴³ Students felt similarly spurned, believing less and less in Marxism-Leninism ideology, and pessimistic about the possibilities of securing jobs.²⁴⁴ Connecting these two limitations was the rampant corruption in the government, as children of party officials reaped workplace and monetary benefits unavailable to the masses, thus worsening the odds of students and workers to participate in the benefits of economic reforms.²⁴⁵ The aforementioned limitations of economic reforms, introduced without accompanying political reforms, therefore created the exigence for the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

Protesters at Tiananmen Square came from various groups. First were the students, who desired political reforms such as increased dialogue with the government, legal recognition of their autonomous student federations, freedom of the press, and democratic elections within the single party system.²⁴⁶ Viewed by themselves and Chinese society as the incoming class of politicians and elites in the Party, the students believed they deserved dignity from the CCP and influence of its future. Under the impetus of the dismissal and death of pro-reform member General Secretary Hu Yaobong, as well as the limitations in practice of Deng's prior economic reforms, the students began to protest in mid April of 1989 for the aforementioned political reforms, but became increasingly radical in their tactics and demands as the CCP failed to recognize their original requests.

The second group were the intellectuals, who also wanted political reforms. However, due to fear of losing their jobs and the political power they had in the new era of Deng's reforms, the intellectuals believed the student demands could occur gradually within the existing system²⁴⁷. Rather than using radical methods for immediate change, many intellectuals believed political liberalization should occur over the coming decades, out of the necessity economic reforms would create. As such, while the intellectuals grew to support the student movement, they still maintained hesitancy over the radicalization of student protests, believing the key to political reforms would be in the top leadership's approval and authorization of such demands.²⁴⁸

The third prominent group were workers, who largely protested under the name of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation (BWAf). BWAf members believed that Deng Xiaoping's reforms had been unsuccessful, citing as evidence the growing inflation and the "steady decline of people's living standards", and incompetence due to CCP corruption as the blame.²⁴⁹ The workers did not want to work with reformists or within the existing structure, but

²⁴³ *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, directed by Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon (1995; Boston, MA: Long Bow Group, 1995), University of Maryland Library Streaming Services, 0:32:00.

²⁴⁴ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 64.

²⁴⁵ Saich, Tony, "When Worlds Collide: The Beijing People's Movement of 1989," in *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989*, ed. Tony Saich (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1990), 32.

²⁴⁶ Dimitrov, Martin K, "European Lessons in China," in *The Long 1989: Decades of Global Revolution*, eds. Piotr H. Kosicki and Kyrill Kunakhovich (New York: Central European University Press, 2019), 67.

²⁴⁷ Niming, Frank, "Learning How to Protest," in *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989*, ed. Tony Saich, (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1990), 94.

²⁴⁸ Chong, Woei Lien, "Petitioners, Popperians, and Hunger Strikers: The Uncoordinated Efforts of the 1989 Chinese Democratic Movement," in *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989*, ed. Tony Saich (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1990), 114.

²⁴⁹ Walder, Andrew G., and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 29 (1993): 5.

targeted the existing system itself for suppressing and exploiting workers, despite calling itself a dictatorship of the people. Their tactics largely called upon workers to strike and come to the Square in protest, organizing daily demonstrations to denounce inflation and corruption.²⁵⁰

Within this paper, the CCP refers to members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo and the Elders. The Standing Committee was the top five policy makers of the CCP, and during the Tiananmen protests was split between conservative members, led by Li Peng, and reform members, led by Zhao Ziyang. The Elders consisted of eight men, led by Deng, who had retired from political office but still collaborated with the Standing Committee. Although they had no formal political power, the Elders were in charge of the Chinese military. Concerned with maintaining the stability they had created in China, the eight men aligned themselves with the conservative members of the Standing Committee. Throughout the Tiananmen protests, the CCP was most concerned with preventing turmoil, and as such didn't view the protest groups by the nature of their demands, but rather the social and political capital of each demographic. For example, while workers may have called for more radical changes, their ability to carry out such changes paled to the ability students could have in enacting political reforms, so protesting workers posed a lesser threat in the eyes of the CCP.

April 26th, 1989 *People's Daily* Editorial: The Misinformed Students

At the start of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, the protesters were almost entirely students, grieving the death of pro-reform official Hu Yaobang, who had been purged from the party two years earlier. At this time, the demands of students were broad calls to both honor Hu's legacy, such as his posthumous rehabilitation, as well as political reforms such as dialogue with the government and freedom of speech—their demands had not directly antagonized the government or specific members of the CCP.²⁵¹ As such, the CCP response to the protests was that the students were recipients of malicious political influence from reform-minded intellectuals who wanted to send China into political turmoil. Understanding that the students represented the group likely to enter future CCP leadership, the CCP wanted to dissuade protests and preserve the Party's current ideology on its future successors. This manifested in an editorial titled "It is Necessary to Take a Clear-cut Stand Against Disturbances" in the government controlled newspaper *People's Daily*; on Peng's suggestion, and based on the ideas Deng outlined earlier in the day, Deputy Chief of Propaganda Zeng Jianhui published this editorial to the public.²⁵²

The editorial's goal, as noted in its title, was to take a "clear cut stance against turmoil."²⁵³ At this point the CCP recognized the dynamic elements of the student protests, how they could spread among students, and even to other groups of society, for "in breadth, size, and intensity, this student movement is unprecedented in the reform era... the student movement in the capital has already evolved from its origins as spontaneous expression of grief for Hu Yaobang into agitation and turmoil."²⁵⁴ While the students had not made appeals outside of academic circles, the CCP was worried about reports that the students were using their broad

²⁵⁰ Walder, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation," 9.

²⁵¹ Dimitrov, 67.

²⁵² Zhang Liang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 73-75.

²⁵³ "It is Necessary to Take a Clear-cut Stand Against Disturbances," *Renmin Ribao (People's Daily)*, April 26, 1989, <http://www.tsquare.tv/chronology/April26ed.html> (accessed November 4, 2020).

²⁵⁴ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 59.

demands on hesitant students and faculty members, and had even begun asking high school students to boycott classes.²⁵⁵

Furthermore, the editorial continually blamed a “tiny minority” for influencing the patriotic students.²⁵⁶ The CCP believed the tiny minority was a group attempting to “create turmoil, attack the Party, and attack socialism.”²⁵⁷ Based on the Party’s discussion of the students’ influence from reform-minded intellectuals, this tiny minority included professors and writers on university campuses, such as Fang Lizhi and his wife Li Shuxian— both professors at Peking University who had a history of democratic activism.²⁵⁸ Minutes from an April 28th Politburo Standing Committee enlarged meeting showed how the CCP believed it was the intellectuals who helped the students make plans, organized meetings with foreigners and journalists, and above all encouraged protesting. Additionally, the CCP blamed foreigners themselves for influencing the students, as “every day foreigners of unclear status go in and out of the college campuses in Beijing, making appointments with the leaders of the illegal student organizations to plot strategy.”²⁵⁹ Taken together, the CCP believed foreigners and intellectuals had begun to exploit students in a plot to overthrow the party and socialist system of China.

The CCP saw the students as a magnet in that they were easily attracted to groups of political influence, with Standing Committee member Qiao Shi saying that “many just follow the crowd and don’t use their own heads.”²⁶⁰ So alongside intimidating intellectuals from collaborating with students, the CCP used this first stage of response to replace the students’ intellectual influence with party influence. Additionally, the CCP pursued dialogue to educate students and professors on party ideology to reestablish confidence in the state which would lessen the need for protests. State Education Commissioner Li Tieying required all educational institutions and offices to “propagandize broadly and deeply” the *People’s Daily* editorial, and enact dialogue between party officials and professors/students to instill confidence in party ideology— hopefully dissuading the student protests and their encouragement which had the potential to weaken state stability.²⁶¹ Another facet of this propaganda was to “do everything possible to win over the people in the middle,” which required state officials to engage in theoretical debate and use reason to persuade confidence in state ideology.²⁶² The CCP’s goal of this first phase was not to antagonize the students, but rather to “guide and shape” them, as the CCP still looked favorably upon the students as future leaders, and wanted to ensure that when they entered into party leadership, it would not come with a disruption of the socialist ideology.²⁶³

Martial Law: The Encouraged Students

The April 26th editorial didn’t quell the students, but instead inflamed their desire for the government to recognize their demands, as what the CCP viewed as a restrained response the

²⁵⁵ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 72, 75.

²⁵⁶ “It is Necessary to Take a Clear-cut Stand Against Disturbances.”

²⁵⁷ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 59.

²⁵⁸ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 59.

²⁵⁹ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 88-89.

²⁶⁰ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 87.

²⁶¹ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 84.

²⁶² Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 85.

²⁶³ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 87.

students saw as an antagonizing characterization of the protests. As dialogues with the government also became futile in appeasing the students, the students radicalized their tactics by the following month, beginning a hunger strike on May 13th. With the strike coming days before Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Beijing, and the moral themes of a hunger strike, the students believed they would force the CCP into enacting political reforms.

The hunger strike oriented the students as magnets in the middle of the protests, with the CCP viewing them as encouraged by reform members of the Party such as Zhao Ziyang, as well as encouraging other groups of civil society to unite under their cause. While the students had now developed direct attacks against party members, such as portraying Deng as another emperor and Li Peng as Hitler, they largely rejected to tailor their movement to the wishes of sympathetic CCP members, believing that “democracy is not given but must be fought for by the people from below.”²⁶⁴ This reinforces that the CCP guided their actions not by *what* the demands were, but the threats attached to *who* was protesting. A “soft response” of compromise would therefore risk increasing both avenues of encouragement, so on the morning of May 20th, Li Peng signed martial law into order, to “curb the turmoil with a firm hand.”²⁶⁵ Alongside the purging of Zhao Ziyang, martial law showed that the CCP understood the students as a threat to the state due to their continued political stimulation and dynamic potential to unite with a combination of players above and below them in Chinese society.

The first role of martial law was to force unity amongst the leading members of the CCP and prevent government encouragement of the students. Deng led the argument that the Party's split between reform and conservative members created ideological confusion that paved the way for the student movement, believing that the “Central Committee is speaking with two voices” — that of the conservatives, such as Li, who upheld the *People's Daily* editorial and wanted to suppress the student movement and their calls for reform, and then the reform members, specifically Zhao, who believed that the students were patriotic and harsh measures against them would be a “policy blunder.”²⁶⁶ Top conservatives of the party echoed Deng's sentiments, believing, as Li said, that the students were “trying to force the Party and government [through the reform members] to recognize them so that they can establish an opposition group and lay the foundation for opposition to the Party.”²⁶⁷

These sentiments developed into the Standing Committee and Elders seeing Zhao as the source of student encouragement, leading to his removal from office. On May 17th, the Standing Committee met with the Elders at Deng's home, where Li Peng expressed Zhao's guilt. Li cited Zhao's public contradictions against the April 26th editorial, specifically his May 4th speech at the Asian Development Bank meeting, disagreeing with the editorial's labeling of “turmoil”. But Li's strongest attack was connecting this contradiction to the rise in the student movements, believing that Zhao “stiffened their [the students'] spines, added to their bile, and puffed them up.”²⁶⁸ The Elders agreed that Zhao's dubious public remarks on the April 26th editorial encouraged the students to continue demands for the editorial's repeal, and recognition of their

²⁶⁴ Sullivan, Lawrence L, “The Emergence of Civil Society in China, Spring 1989,” in *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989*, ed. Tony Saich (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1990), 131-132.

²⁶⁵ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 233.

²⁶⁶ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 142, 192.

²⁶⁷ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 178.

²⁶⁸ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 185.

autonomous federations. Zhao's removal was sealed that evening, when the Standing Committee reached no conclusion on martial law; Li Peng and Yao Yilin voted for it, Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili voted against it, and Qiao Shi abstained. This forced the Elders to make the decision to authorize martial law, subsequently blaming Zhao for his lack of action, once again placing "undeniable responsibility" on him for the magnitude and continuation of the Tiananmen protests.²⁶⁹ After Zhao's removal, the CCP emphasized the importance of party unity in upholding past government actions and responding to the protests, and on May 22nd, talks began amongst the Elders to replace Zhao with Jiang Zemin, a conservative thinker and top Shanghai party member. Without Zhao, the CCP believed they'd cut off a major source of hope for the students, hopefully leading to their retreat from the Square.

While the hunger strike showed the continuation of the students' influence from groups above them, it also signified their own influence onto other members of civil society. Not only did the moral symbolism of the hunger strike, of those willing to suffer and die for their cause in the face of an unresponsive government, attract the sympathy of intellectuals and workers, but it allowed for different groups to work together in different ways. Two days after the students began their hunger strike, intellectuals enacted large demonstrations in Tiananmen to support the speed up of reforms.²⁷⁰ Along with workers and bystanders in Tiananmen, civil society supported the hunger strikers by running errands, clearing paths for ambulances, and marched on the streets of Beijing in the hundreds of thousands, peaking at a million.²⁷¹

Martial law had to prevent this diffusion, and so its second role was to isolate the protesting groups, specifically to prevent the unification of the students with the workers which had begun. By May 9th, the Beijing Mining Bureau noted ten petitions, comprising one third of mining families, demanding protections such as "higher wages, a resolution of their status as urban residents, and insurance programs for retirees."²⁷² Furthermore, workers were participating directly in the Square for reform, with BWAF allying with the students, demanding the state accept the students' demands, or else the workers of the federation would go on strike, evening blocking the entrance to their workplaces to force the strike onto others.²⁷³ Put simply by Elder Yang Shangkun, the hunger strike showed that "if the workers rise up, we're in big trouble."²⁷⁴

Therefore, martial law's stipulation that "demonstrations, student strikes, work stoppages, and all other activities that impede public order are banned" attempted to end the student protests and prevent worker attraction and unification to the student protests.²⁷⁵ The next day, the Beijing Government and Martial Law Headquarters expanded the suppression, ordering workers outside of Beijing to return home, and that "workers of every kind were to remain on duty and concentrate on their work" in order to further isolate the protesting groups from one another and revive productivity to the Chinese economy.²⁷⁶

Clearing of the Square: The Riotous Students

²⁶⁹ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 192, 205.

²⁷⁰ Niming, "Learning How to Protest," 94-95.

²⁷¹ *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, dirs. Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon, 1:27:41 - 1:28:48.

²⁷² Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 133.

²⁷³ Walder, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation.," 8-9.

²⁷⁴ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 133.

²⁷⁵ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 233.

²⁷⁶ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 267.

Just like the *People's Daily* in the prior month, the CCP decision to enact martial law failed to pacify the students and bring Beijing back to the stability that top members desired. Although the Beijing Students' Autonomous Federation struggled with factional infighting and tensions, the Square maintained its diverse population as workers increased, and students from outside of Beijing came to the Square to join in on the protests. Driven by the signs of civil unification from the growth of autonomous federations, and perceiving a continued influence of foreign forces' over the students, the CCP responded, in their final and most antagonistic action, to clear the Square on the evening of June 3rd.

Since April, the CCP's continued concern with the Tiananmen Square protests had been the potential of the students to unite civil society against the state. By June, this appeared imminent. On May 30th, student leader Wang Dan broadcasted for "society to organize itself in intellectuals' associations, trade unions, and farmers' associations, and he called for the emergence of a Walesa-like personality to lead civil society," and soon after the students had formed an "All China" student federation.²⁷⁷ Besides calls from students, worker federations had made public moves of their own accord, such as the BWA and the Flying Tiger Groups staging a sit-in at the Beijing Public Security Bureau for the release of arrested workers.²⁷⁸ The prominence of autonomous federations undermined the credibility of the CCP as a dictatorship of the people, but what the CCP found most threatening of the unification of civil society was that "the sacred and solemn Tiananmen Square has been reduced to a frontline command center for the turmoil, the center for nationwide transmission of counterrevolutionary opinion."²⁷⁹ Through the proliferation of autonomous federations, a precedent the students set in April, the CCP saw the members of autonomous student federations as the "tiny minority [which] intends to turn the Square into a center of the student movement and eventually of the entire nation... prepared to use the Square to 'form an anti government united front.'"²⁸⁰

The report, titled "On ideological and political infiltration into our country from the United States and other international political forces" became the CCP's favored justification for immediate military action. The report portrayed the students as recipients and imitators of foreign influences, with the political stakes that this group could unite civil society against the state. The report viewed China as a target for counterrevolution by foreign political forces that uses ideological and cultural infiltration in China to create pro-American forces, specifically among "young people who are in power or who are soon likely to move into power," in order to extend western-sympathetic "feelers into the top Chinese leadership"²⁸¹. Besides the context of the Fulbright program and evangelical missionary presence on college campuses, the report went on to discuss the application of this influence during the Tiananmen protests, specifically citing the presence of foreign journalists in the Square, the collaboration of the Chinese Alliance for Democracy with student federations, the Voices of America radio broadcast played in the Square, and the support Hong Kong and Taiwan provided for the students, specifically during their hunger strike.²⁸² This report was ingenious for the CCP justification of martial law because it

²⁷⁷ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 319-320.

²⁷⁸ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 320.

²⁷⁹ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 330.

²⁸⁰ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 330-1.

²⁸¹ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 338-41.

²⁸² Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 339, 342-48.

combined all the factors which made the students magnets for a counterrevolutionary effort, and so the CCP believed they had a complete exigence to clear the Square and suppress the protests.

The CCP saw the students as riotous, anti-socialist, bourgeoisie actors— the height of hostility— and came to a harsh commitment to use their military power to clear the Square. It's important to note that by June, the CCP referred to the protests as not just turmoil, but riots, implying the heightened battle the state had to wage against the students, and antagonizing the students as trying to start a counterrevolution. The CCP's discussion leading up to the decision showed the absence of sympathy for the students, especially among the Elders, with Wang Zhen proclaiming of the students:

Those goddamn bastards! Who do they think they are, trampling on sacred ground like Tiananmen so long? They're really asking for it! We should send the troops right now to grab those counterrevolutionaries, Comrade Xiaoping! What's the PLA for, anyways? ... They're supposed to grab counterrevolutionaries! We've got to do it or we'll never forgive ourselves! We've got to do it or the common people will rebel!²⁸³

Additionally, Li Xiannian believed, "Tiananmen Square is now the root of our turmoil-disease... We can't breathe free until the Square is returned to the hands of the people," and Deng Xiaoping, the top voice of the military, said of the students, "If they will refuse to leave, they will be responsible for the consequences".²⁸⁴

In the aftermath, both immediate arrests and political actions upheld the CCP belief of the students as prime antagonists, with simultaneous amends to workers in an attempt to restore the CCP's credibility. While the CCP's censorship of June 3rd and 4th has prevented reliable records of the massacre and arrests, arrests largely targeted leaders of various federations, showing the state's harsh stance against actions of civil unification against the government.²⁸⁵ This happened to be the harshest action against workers, and occurred as early as May 30th with the arrest of three leaders of the BWAf. While workers were punished for leading autonomous federations, the CCP viewed their general participation in the protests as victimization by the magnet that was the counterrevolutionary students. So in long term policy, the CCP acted favorably to protect the economic livelihood of workers, with Deng telling the CCP that in order to please the workers and masses, the CCP must "do reform and opening even more audaciously, and... fight corruption" in order to create economic growth that will restore the credibility and favor of the state by the workers.²⁸⁶ But the Standing Committee, both on its own volition and the advising of Deng, offered no concessions to student and intellectual demands, with Deng telling the policy makers, "we should be extra careful about laws, especially the laws and regulations on assembly, association, marches, demonstrations, journalism, and publishing. Activities that break the law must be suppressed. We can't just allow people to demonstrate whenever they want to."²⁸⁷ Taken together, these long term choices showed the CCP antagonized the students by ignoring their

²⁸³ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 357.

²⁸⁴ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 360, 362.

²⁸⁵ "Secretary's Morning Summary for June 9, 1989," in *Tiananmen Square, 1989: The Declassified History*, eds. Jeffrey T. Richelson and Michael L. Evans (Washington, D.C.: The National Security Archives, 1999), 1.

²⁸⁶ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 429.

²⁸⁷ Zhang, *The Tiananmen Papers*, 423.

demands, and furthermore attempted to isolate the students from attracting civil society to them in the future by consciously attempting to win over workers.

Conclusion

Under the rhetorical framework of the student protesters as magnets, the CCP had an evolving and increasingly antagonistic view of the students' role within the Tiananmen Square protests, influencing the government responses to the turmoil. With the April 26th *People's Daily* editorial, the students were recipients of political influence, and had to be pacified in favor of the state in order to prevent the spread of protests, but also to safeguard the coming generation of political leaders. Almost a month later, the students' hunger strike prompted martial law, which the CCP viewed as necessary because civil society had begun to sympathize with and rally around the students. Furthermore, martial law was an attempt to stomp out government encouragement of liberal-minded students. But by June 3rd, the clearing of Tiananmen Square, the CCP saw the students as imminently successful in uniting civil society against the state. Fully antagonizing the students, the glass ceiling was not a point of concern since the CCP viewed the students just as hostile as foreign, western forces, attempting to send their entire nation into turmoil through a counterrevolution.

The government discussions throughout the protests point to foreign influences and unification of civil society being the prime threats of the students, the reason their dynamic nature was dangerous. But underneath all of this was the CCP's understanding that the students had a level of credibility and magnetism due to their current and future social standing, as successors of the CCP. From these threats, it becomes clear that the danger of the Tiananmen Square protests weren't necessarily the liberal demands themselves, but those espousing the demands. While historical memory and retelling of the Tiananmen protests posits the movement as ideology versus ideology, the government sources reveal it to be a battle between state and civil power.

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“Out of Their Time”: How Bonnie and Clyde Were Reinvented For a 1960s Audience

By Megan Severns

You will be hard-pressed to find a book or essay concerning 1960s America that does not characterize the decade by its eruptive changes in cultural values, its dabbling in sexual and social taboos, its penchant for unwelcomed violence, both at home and abroad, and its disillusionment with the rule-mongering “Establishment.” It was an era seemingly out of time and at the crux of all modernity since then. A cultural bomb, lingering from the remnants of a World War II era, exploded in every conceivable facet of American life. Women and African Americans demanded their equality, the LGBT movement became a more prominent, organized community, John F. Kennedy was publicly assassinated, America raced against the Soviet Union to get a man on the moon, and at the heart of it all was the most polarizing war of the entire century, fought in Vietnam by reluctant young Americans.²⁸⁸ As historian John C. McWilliams puts it, the Sixties were “history in motion. At warp speed.”²⁸⁹ These rapidly changing attitudes and events catalyzed the film that helped revolutionize Hollywood and give a voice to the disparaging youth of the Sixties: Arthur Penn’s *Bonnie and Clyde* (1969). In this paper I will argue that *Bonnie and Clyde* is a film about the social evolutions happening in the 1960s as portrayed through the lens of the 1930s Great Depression. These evolutions include acknowledgement of the burgeoning feminist theory, the strong anti-Establishment rhetoric popular in the late 1960s, and the cultural diaspora experienced by the generational gap. It is a film at the precipice of cultural awareness and seeks to give refuge and understanding to the disillusioned youth of the 1960s while making bold claims about the end of what its creators call “the Old Sentimentality.”

Present-day historians have the luxury of looking back on history with perfect clarity and a sense of omniscient spectatorship that could never be afforded to someone living in the time periods they study. In this way, it becomes more obvious why a shockingly violent, but modern reflective film like *Bonnie and Clyde* was not initially championed as anything more than a sordid release of the Hollywood machine that would act as an awkward cousin to the pantheon of “great” (i.e., classical) films that were produced at the time. Unlike the rest of the country, the cultural ingenuity of Hollywood had stagnated; each film felt like only a slight, inoffensive variation of its predecessors. This was completely by design, as the films produced between the late 1930s and the early 1960s had to be created within the confines of the Production Code, a set of self-imposed guidelines that Hollywood studios followed in order to promote decent, sanitized morals.²⁹⁰ The Production Code, also known as the Hays Code, came about during the Great Depression, when studios (particularly Warner Bros., *Bonnie and Clyde*’s distributor) turned to creating “headline films” that focused on current events to cut down on production

²⁸⁸ For a broad look at the rapidly evolving 1960s, see David R. Farber and Beth L. Bailey, *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001. For a closer look at the political and social revolutions see Maruice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, New York, Oxford University Press 2012.

²⁸⁹ John C. McWilliams, Preface in *The 1960s Cultural Revolution*. (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000).

²⁹⁰ For more information on the Production Code, see Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood’s Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration*, New York, Columbia University, 2007.

costs.²⁹¹ The headlines of the day tended to focus on the violent, and often vile, lives of silver-tongued gangsters and overly macho racketeers. The outcry from influential groups, like the Catholic Legion of Decency, and threats of government intervention caused the studios to reign in their creatives and bar anything found too indecent from being shown on screen.²⁹² This greatly impacted what kind of violence or sexual content could be put in front of the camera.

Once the Production Code was in place and the Great Depression started to come to an end, studios retreated from gritty, ‘headline’ stories and went on to produce the classical, musical, and epic films that we recognize today as the Golden Age of Hollywood. These watered-down, committee-approved spectacle films upheld decent standards (based on whatever the Hays office deemed decent). The Code, at its core, kept troublesome subjects off the screen and set the tone for filmmaking up to the early 1960s. At that time, films like *Psycho* (1960) and *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) began to slowly cut away at the Code’s red tape. Furthermore, influences from the French New Wave gave bold ideas about making personal, creative-driven films.²⁹³ Considering the heavy curation of American films at the time, it becomes clear why *Bonnie and Clyde* would shock audiences and repulse older critics who were used to Golden Age films like *Casablanca* (1942), *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952), and *Ben-Hur* (1959). Even in comparison to *Psycho*, a film that debuted just seven years earlier, *Bonnie and Clyde* feels like a film at the beginning of a brand new era.²⁹⁴

Released in 1967, *Bonnie and Clyde* was a film that had the unique opportunity to feel both historically accurate in its depiction of the downtrodden Great Plains of the Great Depression era and still feel authentically modern for the young, disillusioned audiences of the 1960s. The film follows the brief, but prolific crime spree of young Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, a pair of poor, Texan lovers who took the United States by storm between 1932 and 1934. The inspiration for a film adaptation came to writers David Newman and Robert Benton from the near-mythological tale of the real-life desperado couple, the exposure of French New Wave *auteur* directors like François Truffaut, and the culturally volatile socio-political landscape of 1960s America. It takes what could have easily been a drab, violent callback to Hollywood’s gangster era and reinvents the genre thanks to the absence of the Production Code, which historically stunted the genre’s creativity.²⁹⁵ Unlike the early pre-Code gangster films, *Bonnie and Clyde* is not a cautionary tale about bravado-wielding, devil-may-cares falling down the path of crime. It also does not follow the pattern of the Code-approved “G-Men” films from the later 1930s that forced the audience on the side of law enforcement (usually the FBI), aiming to give the “villains” their comeuppance in the end. In fact, by the end of the movie we are hoping for

²⁹¹ Ron Wilson, *The Gangster Film: Fatal Success in American Cinema*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 40-41.

²⁹² Ron Wilson, *The Gangster Film: Fatal Success in American Cinema*, 50.

²⁹³ The Code was eventually dismantled entirely and replaced with the MPAA rating system we are familiar with today. Instead of instructing studios about what could be shown on screen, the MPAA rating system focuses on informing audiences of the possible inappropriate content a film might have.

²⁹⁴ *Bonnie and Clyde* is often cited, along with *The Graduate* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969) as the beginning of the New Hollywood Era. At this time, *auteurist* theory, inherited from the French New Wave, would be popularized and creative teams would be given far more control over their productions than they had under the Production Code. See Alexander Horwath, Noel King, and Thomas Elsaesser, *The Last Great American Picture Show : New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004) for a more comprehensive look at this era and its effects on later cinema.

²⁹⁵ Ron Wilson. *The Gangster Film: Fatal Success in American Cinema*, 52.

anything *but* the inevitable ambush to come to pass. We want Bonnie and Clyde to succeed. They do not represent what was *wrong* with society, as the characters in *Public Enemy* (1931) or *Scarface* (1932) do; they are instead cast as victims in an unforgiving world that has slung them aside. So, when the hail of bullets rips through our heroes, violently and beautifully, in a master crafted scene from editor Dede Allen, it is not a triumphant act of justice, but an unfortunate massacre. It dares to tell its audience what the creators are seeing in the world but gives no reprieve and instead lingers somberly over the bloodied, lifeless bodies of our heroes. We are treated to a somber look at what this rebellion costs them, and it speaks to the uncertainty that people were experiencing during the 1960s.

As one of the first American films to push such daring boundaries, with its depictions of hyper-violence and its choices in editing, tone, and cinematography, it seems inevitable that *Bonnie and Clyde* would be so controversial in its time and that the more conservative old guard would try to dismiss it entirely while the new, savvy-minded generation would latch onto it with gusto.²⁹⁶ This idea, both by fate of its source material and by divination of its excellent writers, frames one of the main themes of the film itself. *Bonnie and Clyde* is not just the daring, tragic tale of two outlaw lovers; it is a story about two people refusing to be dismissed by a government that let them down. It rejects the old-world status quo and makes bold claims about what it thinks it deserves.

The script for the film, written by Robert Benton and David Newman, comes from two distinct places: tireless research conducted by Benton and Newman into the world and lives of Bonnie and Clyde, and a desire to talk about what the two called “The New Sentimentality.” To get a sense of the people and times they wanted to write about, Benton and Newman entrenched themselves in Texan culture. They explain this desire in their essay “Lightning in a Bottle”: “Our reasons for going were many: first, to scout locations for the film; second, to find people who actually knew the real Bonnie and Clyde; third, to listen to the language patterns the speech cadences, the colloquialisms, so as to insure [sic] absolute accuracy in the dialogue.”²⁹⁷ With this knowledge in hand, they formulated a semi-factual account of the duo’s crime spree between 1932 and 1934. This whirlwind adventure of crime as social rebellion acts as the vehicle for a much more meditative story Benton and Newman wanted to talk about the shift in cultural perspectives they were experiencing at the time. Benton and Newman framed this hypothesis in a 1964 *Esquire* article entitled “The New Sentimentality.” It describes a realization that the American values that were so carefully cultivated and lauded in a post-World War II environment were now antiquated and out of touch with the modern generation. The old sentimentality was described as a “Norman Rockwell painting” and had stalwart, traditional (and largely Christian) values about “Patriotism, Love, Religion, Mom, The Girl.”²⁹⁸ It was based on a collectivist attitude that would be “in some way beneficent to all.”²⁹⁹ This definition brings to mind innocent

²⁹⁶ For a detailed understanding of the relationship of *Bonnie and Clyde* with violence, see Stephen Prince, “The Hemorrhaging of American Cinema: *Bonnie and Clyde*’s Legacy of Cinematic Violence” in *Arthur Penn’s Bonnie and Clyde*, ed. Lester D. Friedman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000. For a comprehensive breakdown of the film’s cinematic language, see Matthew Bernstein, “Model Criminals: Visual Style in *Bonnie and Clyde*”, in *Arthur Penn’s Bonnie and Clyde*, ed. Lester D. Friedman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

²⁹⁷ David Newman and Robert Benton, “Lightning in a Bottle”, *Bonnie and Clyde*, eds. Sandra Wake and Nicola Hayden (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 21-22.

²⁹⁸ Robert Benton and David Newman, “The New Sentimentality” *Esquire*, July 1964, 25.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

girls in fluffy poodle skirts, perfect lawns with white picket fences, and a “Leave it to Beaver”-type superficial optimism. The New Sentimentality on the other hand, was much more personal and grounded in cynical self-awareness. It can “differ slightly from man to man, because one of the definitions of New Sentimentality is that it has to do with you . . . not what you were told or taught, but what goes on in your head, really, and your heart, really.”³⁰⁰ In its deepest essence, The New Sentimentality was the desire to act as, and be seen as, an individual. Purveyors of this New Sentimentality were savvy, smart, and stylish. Traditional roles and expectations were considered old-fashioned and it was now acceptable to be a bit selfish and skeptical of the world. This included accepted institutions like the government (the Establishment) and marriage.

The New Sentimentality was a philosophy that could impact any part of an American’s life. A strong example of the Old vs. New mentality would be the Rat Pack vs. the Beatles.³⁰¹ Even though the two were technically contemporaries of each other, there exists an ocean of cultural dissonance between the two. The Rat Pack was cool and suave, but not in the vibrant, lackadaisical way The Beatles were. You imagine a low-lit, velvet bar out of a Dashiell Hammett novel when you hear about Sinatra or Martin. On the other hand, you think of the boyish charms and flavorful sounds of the Beatles against the backdrop of screaming young women as they premiered on the Ed Sullivan show. The difference was not purely aesthetic either, it was also projective of the sensibilities and culture of two distinct time periods and their obverse cultural values. The Rat Pack played loose with their own rules, but ultimately remained part of the system. The Beatles, on the other hand, taunted, tackled, and tried to dismantle it through their provocative sound and their commitment to the timely issues of the 1960s. This was just one example from an entertainment standpoint, but these contrasting mindsets can be viewed from many other directions. Politically we can compare Eisenhower with JFK, in the visual arts we can compare the impressionist movement versus the pop art style of Roy Lichtenstein, or even socially with the transitional attitudes about casual sex versus early marriage and abstinence.

Benton and Newman understood this brave new world and had the compulsion to tell other people about it through film. After reading John Toland’s *The Dillinger Days*, Bonnie and Clyde seemed like the perfect frame to hang their canvas in: “There was something about these people . . . the time and the place – all of it made us think, ‘It’s a movie.’ A New Sentimentality movie.”³⁰² *Bonnie and Clyde* was a feature-length thesis about the ideas originally presented in “The New Sentimentality” as well as a snapshot of the frustrations experienced by those living, but silenced or ignored, during those times.

When talking about *Bonnie and Clyde* as a seminal American film, it is important to understand its roots in French New Wave cinema as well. The films of François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, characterized by their bare honesty and forward-thinking filmmaking, directly influenced the way *Bonnie and Clyde* was written and developed. Both directors would even personally have a hand in guiding the two writers after being given treatments of the original story.³⁰³ Their influence and contributions are arguably some of the reasons *Bonnie and Clyde*

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² David Newman and Robert Benton, “Lightning in a Bottle,” 14.

³⁰³ David Newman and Robert Benton, “Lightning in a Bottle,” 15-24.

feels like such a dissimilar film to its contemporaries and why it feels so aggressively modern despite being a period piece. The kind of emotional honesty and fragility seen in a film like *Breathless* (Godard, 1960) and the complicated relationships of alternative families in *Jules and Jim* (Truffaut, 1962) were obvious influences and makes *Bonnie and Clyde* feel more genuine and lived-in than other Hollywood films produced at the time. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow are in some ways more human in this film than they are ever characterized as in historical documents, often only understood peripherally from sensationalized newspaper articles.³⁰⁴ Even though the characters are unique and fleshed-out in personal ways, they also act as stand-ins for the young, hapless outcasts of 1960s youth. As described by Newman and Benton, “It is about style and people who have style. It is about people whose style set them apart from their time and place so that they seemed odd and aberrant to the general run of society . . . it isn’t the robbing of banks or even the killing of peace officers that made Bonnie and Clyde pariahs . . . it was the aberrations of social style . . . to us, it is *really* about those facets of American sensibility we mentioned in ‘The New Sentimentality’ . . .”³⁰⁵ Our heroes perfectly embody the values and mindsets Newman and Benton had discovered in 1964 and evoke the conscious desires of their young, individualistic audience.

The cost for creating these faithful audience surrogates was in its historical veracity. The film holds onto the bones of the historical facts, while also manipulating and restructuring other features to appeal to a modern audience. For instance, the division in personality between Bonnie and Blanche represents the same butting of cultural mindsets described in “The New Sentimentality.” There was also the controversial decision to make Frank Hamer the villain of the story, which shows a bitter frustration with the Establishment, especially as the story is framed by the poor, outcast Barrow Gang. Finally, the character of Malcolm Moss was portrayed as a caricature of the Old Sentimentality and helps orchestrate the tragic ending of the main couple. There is a sinister symbology in his involvement in Bonnie and Clyde’s downfall that differs from his historical counterpart. Each of these beats was based in historical fact, but ultimately were manipulated in ways that modern audiences, those a part of the New Sentimentality, could connect and sympathize with.

The film goes to great lengths to establish an alternative family structure and pulls in colorful characters with unique quirks and attitudes. It was a motif that David Newman found deeply interesting and continued to refine in his later works.³⁰⁶ Being part of a family, conventional or not, creates the inevitability of disagreements and culture clash. This frames nearly the entirety of Bonnie and Blanche Barrow’s relationship throughout the film. Bonnie is a narcissist; she is independent, fierce, and most of all, stylish. She gets aroused seeing Clyde’s

³⁰⁴ "2 Officers Slain; Barrow Sought: Motorcycle Patrolmen are Shot As They Approach Car in Texas Road." New York Times, Apr 02, 1934;"5 Convicts Freed by Clyde Barrow: Texas Killer And Woman Use Machine Gun And Autos To Aid Ex-Partner. Two Guards Are Wounded Raymond Hamilton, Under Sentence Of 263 Years, Leads Bandit in Flight." New York Times, Jan 17, 1934. The book, *Fugitives*, by Emma Krause Parker (Bonnie’s mother) and Nellie Barrow Cowan (Clyde’s sister), seeks to paint a more intimate and understanding portrait of the two just months after their deaths, but historians are skeptical about the document’s accuracy. Parker, Emma Krause, Nellie (Barrow) Cowan, and Jan Isabelle Fortune. 1934. *Fugitives; the True Story of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker*. Dallas: Ranger Press.

³⁰⁵ David Newman and Robert Benton, “Lightning in a Bottle,” 16-17.

³⁰⁶ David Newman, “What It’s Really All About?: Pictures at an Execution” in *Arthur Penn’s Bonnie and Clyde*, ed. Lester D. Friedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 32.

gun and helps sweet talk C.W. Moss into joining their gang while slung over a window of a stolen car. We open the film to her carelessly walking nude in her home and longing for a future too far out of the realm of possibilities for a poor Texas waitress. Blanche, on the other hand, is depicted as the model of propriety and gentility. She is framed very one-dimensionally as the nervous wife of Buck Barrow, Clyde's brother. She is described simply in the script as a "hausfrau, no more no less, inclined to panic."³⁰⁷ The first time we meet her, she is dressed head to toe in a drab, gray ensemble that hides any sign of femininity, even keeping her hands gloved. She does not speak, but *shrieks* her thoughts and comes comically close to fainting upon seeing C.W. in nothing but his undergarments. In this key scene, she acts as a foil to Bonnie, who poses with masculine bravado as she wields a tommy gun and cigar for photos, while Blanche shouts at her husband for taking her picture at all. Accounts about the real Bonnie and Blanche vary depending on sources and their degrees of separation from the historical figures. Some newspapers, who often only used Clyde's names in the headlines, painted Bonnie to be a manly murderess who smoked cigars and wielded a machine gun.³⁰⁸ Others claimed she never even held a gun.³⁰⁹ The real Blanche Barrow decried her portrayal in the film, saying "that movie made me look like a screaming horse's ass," although her memoir tries to paint her as the same unwilling bystander she is in the film.³¹⁰ This contradicting duality was not lost on editor and Bonnie and Clyde historian John Neal Phillips, who says that the Blanche Barrow he interviewed in 1984 was much less a victim than a willing participant in the events of 1932-34.³¹¹ The decision to change Blanche's character, and combine her with another Barrow Gang member, Mary O' Dare,³¹² was crucial to defining Bonnie in the film. The story needed Blanche's manic hysteria to juxtapose Bonnie's *femme fatale* coolness. Bonnie was the symbol of modern feminism and to make that more apparent, she had to be played off a woman who seemed stuck in tradition. It was also necessary to make Blanche a typical housewife to play off Bonnie's desire for a more interesting existence.³¹³ It is not until the end of the film, when Bonnie knows that there is nothing else for her and Clyde, that she begins to long for what Blanche has. Much like the New Age audience of the film, Bonnie was forced into a life she did not want because other choices were denied to her. The more the Barrow Gang are pulled into their uncertain and perilous lives of crime, the more Bonnie gives into her despair and desperation for normalcy. However, she is aware enough to understand that her choices were scarce even before her descent into crime.

Possibly one of the most controversial decisions was to make famed Texas Ranger Frank Hamer into the menacing, near-inhuman villain of the film. Had *Bonnie and Clyde* been made

³⁰⁷ *Bonnie and Clyde*, eds. Sandra Wake and Nicola Hayden (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 34.

³⁰⁸ "Barrow's Killings Date from Parole: 2 Brothers Were First Accused in 1930 For Auto Theft, But Fled from Prison. Accused of 12 Murders biggest Robbery of Their Career Netted \$3,500 - - Woman Aide Had Been A Waitress." *The New York Times*, May 24, 1934; "Barrow and Woman Are Slain by Police in Louisiana Trap: Bandit Pair Are Riddled with Bullets as Car Speeds at 85 Miles an Hour." *The New York Times*, May 24, 1934.

³⁰⁹ For more information on the conflicting narratives surrounding Bonnie and Clyde, see Diane Carson's essay "It's Never the Way I Knew Them: Searching for Bonnie and Clyde" in *Arthur Penn's Bonnie and Clyde*.

³¹⁰ Blanche Caldwell Barrow, Editor's Preface in *My Life with Bonnie & Clyde*, (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Blanche Caldwell Barrow, *My Life with Bonnie & Clyde*, 181.

³¹³ There is also the interesting decision to cast Estelle Parsons, who was forty at the film's release, opposite Faye Dunaway, who was just twenty-six. Historically, Bonnie and Blanche were both barely twenty at the beginning of the 1930s and Bonnie was in fact a year older. This casting decision adds to the weight to the idea of a cultural gap, this time defined by age.

during the Production Code days, Hamer would have surely been the protagonist.³¹⁴ Based in name only, the historical Hamer was the retired Ranger who led the ambush that killed Bonnie and Clyde in 1934. The decision to make Hamer the antagonist does not come from any grievances of the writers about Hamer himself, but rather their understanding and frustrations with The Establishment as a whole. Fortuitously, these frustrations echoed those carried by Americans who were left to fend for themselves by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Arthur Penn explains his understanding of Bonnie and Clyde's relationship to the people and the law: ". . . these very rural people were suffering the terrors of a depression, which resulted in families being up-rooted, farms being foreclosed, homes being taken away, by the banks the *establishment* of their world, which in part was represented by the police. In the context of our film, Bonnie and Clyde found themselves obliged to fulfil some kind of role which put them in the position of being folk heroes – violators of the status quo. Retaliators for the people."³¹⁵ The public's relationship with the government throughout the 1960s swung the gamut just as much as it had in the 1930s. The police's brutality towards protestors, the uphill battle for social change, and the devastation wrought from the war in Vietnam made them the enemy of many disillusioned Americans growing up at the time. Hamer represents the cruel indifference of the law and the Establishment; the writers purposefully leave him lacking in character. To push their point further, the first time we meet Hamer he is outsmarted by Clyde and humiliated by the gang. This is a thematically crucial scene because it never happened. Frank Hamer never met Bonnie and Clyde, let alone knew what they looked like before he tracked them down in 1934.³¹⁶ The creators allow him to be bested and humiliated by the gang not only to create story tension, but also to turn their noses up at law enforcement itself. Arthur Penn explains in a Montreal press conference of the scene: "when a man is in authority . . . it's twice as funny when he slips on a banana peel than when he isn't . . . it would not be that hidden Freudian impulse in all of us which is to, somehow, bring the forces of authority at least one rung down the ladder."³¹⁷ We enjoy seeing Hamer humiliated because he represents something that the audience cannot stand and does not want to sympathize with. In the end, Bonnie and Clyde are shown to be powerless against their unflappable adversary, but this was a fate they were already resigned to. In death, Bonnie and Clyde, especially the versions created by Penn's film, enjoyed a celebrity of near mythic proportions and would be seen as cultural icons to look up to and idolize for their audience. Hamer makes them martyrs for their cause.

At the climax of the film, the Barrow Gang is surrounded by the law in a heavily wooded thicket after another daring escape. This time, however, only C.W., Bonnie, and Clyde make it out of the firefight. Buck Barrow dies from an earlier gunshot wound and Blanche is incarcerated while the three original members manage to make their escape, though gravely wounded. They manage to find their way to C.W.'s father's farm to recuperate from their injuries. Malcolm Moss is a coy, duplicitous man based on the real Ivan Methvin who, like Malcolm, helped ensnare Bonnie and Clyde to reduce his son's impending prison sentence as a member of the Barrow Gang³¹⁸. Malcolm acts friendly toward Bonnie and Clyde, offering to have them stay as

³¹⁴ Instead, Hamer did not have his character rectified until 2019's *Highwaymen* which follows the Texas Ranger's pursuit of the desperado couple in 1934.

³¹⁵ Arthur Penn, "Bonnie and Clyde: Private Integrity and Public Violence" in *Bonnie and Clyde*, eds. Sandra Wake and Nicola Hayden (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 21-22.

³¹⁶ John Neal Phillips, *My Life With Bonnie and Clyde*, 183.

³¹⁷ Arthur Penn, "Bonnie and Clyde: Private Integrity and Public Violence," 9.

³¹⁸ E.R. Milner, *The Lives and Times of Bonnie and Clyde* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 140.

long as they like, while condemning them as fools to his son the moment they are alone. The film features a number of exaggerated characters, like Blanche and Hamer, but Malcolm stands out due to his embellished disgust of his son's tattoo, which he had gotten during his misadventures as part of the Barrow Gang. Never mind the robbing and the stealing, it is the tattoo on C.W.'s chest that provokes Malcolm into giving up Bonnie and Clyde to Hamer. This is cited explicitly by Newman and Benton in their essay and they purposely use this old-fashioned sensitivity to diminish any opportunity for the audience to sympathize with him³¹⁹. On the one hand we understand Malcolm's frustration; C.W. comes off as much younger and more naïve than the rest of the gang and has been easily sweet-talked into their bidding since the beginning. He *is* a willing participant, but how much of his participation was encouraged by the others or just a pure desire to fit in with them is hard to say. On the other hand, we are pulled violently from the distress over Bonnie and Clyde by Malcolm's backward concerns. Two nearly dead people pull up to his house with his son, but the only thing Malcolm can talk about is his frustration over the ink on his son's skin. It is not exactly a subtle jab at the older, more prim generation and it immediately puts the audience in opposition to him. It is no coincidence that Malcolm, the most culturally archaic of the characters, is the one to betray Bonnie and Clyde to Hamer. He sees a threat to his son's morality in the two and takes the quickest opportunity to snuff them out. Had the movie tried to frame Malcolm's intentions as parental concern, we as the audience might sympathize with him more. By this time, though, we have lived with Bonnie and Clyde, we are part of their gang and believe in them just as C.W. does: "Don't you know, Daddy? Nobody catches Clyde. Never . . . Never." We believe right along with the naive, ever-optimistic C.W. that he might be right, even when we know he is not.

Warner Brothers, *Bonnie and Clyde's* distributor, did not have high hopes for the film. As Arthur Penn explained, Jack Warner had already made plans to tank the film after its brief opening to mitigate the exposure of what they were sure would be a colossal flop.³²⁰ Their fears seemed to be founded when famed *New York Times* critic Bosley Crowther slammed the film over a series of reviews after its Montreal Film Festival premiere. In his initial article, Crowther claimed the film was an example of Hollywood "putting the worst foot forward at international film festivals. Time after time, they have come up with some of their most embarrassing bobbles . . . now they've done it again . . ." ³²¹ He also went on to decry the violence in the film, stating "it seems but another indulgence of a restless and reckless taste, and an embarrassing addition to an excess of violence on screen."³²² The film certainly was one of the most graphically violent big studio releases at its time of release, but Crowther chooses to focus all his energy on this portion of the film and ignore its greater social implications. He cannot fathom the film as anything more than big-budget schlock because he spent most of his career watching and critiquing films that were unable to engage with this type of material. He was the perfect gatekeeper of the Old Sentimentality defined by Newman and Benton in their initial article. Seeing *Bonnie and Clyde* for the first time, the violence *does* feel gratuitous, but that was also the point. Director Arthur Penn wanted that violence to feel real to the audience and to be appalled by it: "The murders get less and less funny, and more and more particular because they begin to be identified with the

³¹⁹ David Newman and Robert Benton, "Lightning in a Bottle," 16.

³²⁰ Arthur Penn, "Making Waves: The Directing of *Bonnie and Clyde*" in *Arthur Penn's Bonnie and Clyde*, ed. Lester D. Friedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 32.

³²¹ Bosley Crowther, "Shoot-Em-Up Film Opens World Fete" *The New York Times*, August 7, 1967.

³²² *Ibid.*

murders and, in that sense, we begin to understand the motivation for the murders. The killing gets less impersonal and, consequently, less funny.”³²³ He goes on to explain that he feels violence “is part of the American character” and it made sense to include it in his movies.³²⁴ What Crowther failed to grasp was that violence could have a purpose and meaning beyond its initial shock value. The film is not violent for its own sake, nor does it inject violence at any given opportunity. Its purpose is disgust and repulse its audience with intent to understand how horrific it really is.

Unlike the early gangster films, *Bonnie and Clyde* use their weapons to survive, not as tools to gain power or influence. They kill only when cornered or when there was no other choice. To anyone outside the law, they are perfectly friendly people. We see this extensively throughout the film but it's most obvious with Eugene and Velma, who became fast friends with the gang even after they had stolen Eugene's car. Crowther, perhaps having been persuaded by his own experiences during the Depression or with the story of the real Bonnie and Clyde, sees them as a “sleazy, moronic pair” and he lacks the ability to see beyond his own cultural understanding of the status quo. He was not the only one, either. Reception for *Bonnie and Clyde* began as a mixed bag, even though Crowther admits the festival audience “received [it] with gales of laughter and given a terminal burst of applause.”³²⁵ It seemed like maybe the critical reception to the film would tank its reputation, but then something interesting happened. The film was popular. Really popular. Audiences were clamoring to get into the theaters to see it. A new type of audience, young adults, were enamored with the glitzy desperados and helped assure its financial success. Pauline Kael, a renowned movie critic who was early in her career at the time, praised the film in a multi-page essay for *The New Yorker* for its contemporary American feel.³²⁶ She perfectly recognizes the intentions of Benton and Newman and recognizes how important it was for a 1960s audience. Her review helped open the floodgates to other critical praises of the film. Just as Benton and Newman's essay reflected a shift in cultural standing, as *Bonnie and Clyde* revolutionized Hollywood filmmaking, Kael's essay reflects a shift in our critical understanding of film as a transformative medium. It was not simply telling a story; this was a story *about* something. *Bonnie and Clyde* was not popular because it was a successful period piece that magically encapsulated a story audiences had not seen before.³²⁷ It was popular because it identified itself so fiercely with its primary audience and continues to speak to people who feel pushed aside by the system.

In 1968, *Bonnie and Clyde* was nominated for ten Academy Awards.³²⁸ In 1992, the film was selected by the Library of Congress to be added to the National Film Registry for being deemed “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant” and part of a series of films that

³²³ Arthur Penn, “Bonnie and Clyde: Private Integrity and Public Violence,” 9.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Bosley Crowther, “Shoot-Em-Up Film Opens World Fete,” *The New York Times*, August 7, 1967.

³²⁶ Pauline Kael, “The Frightening Power of Bonnie and Clyde,” *The New Yorker*, October 13, 1967.

³²⁷ In fact, there are a number of loosely inspired Bonnie and Clyde movies that were made between 1934 and 1967. These include *They Live By Night* (1948), *You Only Live Once* (1937), and *Gun Crazy* (1950). None were nearly as faithful as Penn's films or dealt with the morally gray rebellion presented in *Bonnie and Clyde*.

³²⁸ *Bonnie and Clyde*, Awards, IMDB.com. They would go on to win two, one for cinematography and one for Best Supporting Actress, Estelle Parsons.

have “enduring importance to American culture.”³²⁹ The film Warner Brothers nearly turned its back on became a phenomenon, not due in small part to the extremely poignant screenplay by David Newman and Robert Benton. They saw how the story of Bonnie and Clyde meshed with 1960s culture and framed their themes around them. The writers are very frank about this in their essay “Lightning in a Bottle”: “If Bonnie and Clyde were here today, they would be hip. Their values have become assimilated in much of our culture . . . their style, their sexuality, their bravado, their delicacy, their cultivated arrogance, their narcissistic insecurity, their curious ambition have relevance to the way we live now.”³³⁰ With their fingers on the pulse of America and their love of honest French New Wave films, the duo was uniquely prepared to capture the hearts and minds of audiences in 1967. As Pauline Kael explains, its lack of exact historical accuracy does not push us away from the story; “It is a peculiarity of our times—perhaps it’s one of the few specifically modern characteristics—that we don’t take our stories straight anymore . . . “Bonnie and Clyde” is the first film demonstration that the put-on can be used for purposes of art.”³³¹ The audience feels closer to the story because it was made with them in mind.

If there was one thing Arthur Penn’s version of Bonnie and Clyde got right, it was the heart in their rebelliousness. The real Bonnie and Clyde went against the grain and, despite what the papers condemned them as, were seen as folk heroes throughout the Great Plains. They were a beacon in a time of great strife for the ignored and outcast. Remarkably, even though their story is retold with a distinct creative license, Bonnie and Clyde once again enjoyed that same mythologic heroism in the 1960s. Today we see with bold clarity just how entrenched in Sixties iconography *Bonnie and Clyde* was. In this way, it becomes a transcendent film that continues to reach out to those it was meant for: the outcasts, the misfits, those who feel they are out of their time.

³²⁹ Library of Congress, Frequently Asked Questions, accessed November 11, 2021.

<https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-film-preservation-board/film-registry/frequently-asked-questions/>

³³⁰ David Newman and Robert Benton, “Lightning in a Bottle”, 19.

³³¹ Pauline Kael, “The Frightening Power of Bonnie and Clyde”

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Every Superhero Needs an Origin Story: Stonewall's Attempt to Create a Founding Myth for the Modern Gay Rights Movement

By Marisa Silverman

Introduction

“Well, this is my legend, honey. Okay? My Stonewall legend” La Miranda (Guillermo Diaz) says in her opening monologue to Nigel Finch’s 1995 film *Stonewall*, which depicts a fictionalization of the titular riots and the blossoming of the LGBT+ civil rights movement interspersed with 1960s pop song musical numbers. Based on Martin Duberman’s book of the same name, *Stonewall* follows main characters (and ultimately, couple) Matty Dean (Frederick Weller) and La Miranda in the weeks prior to the June 1969 uprising in New York City. Matty becomes involved with the Homophile Society, a fictional version of the Mattachine Society, led by Burt (Peter Ratray) and has a brief romance with member Ethan (Brendan Corbalis). A subplot follows Vinnie (Bruce MacVittie), the mobster manager of the Stonewall Inn and his struggle to accept his love for drag queen Bostonia (Duane Boutte). Other queens, like Miss Moxie (Matthew Faber), Helen (Dwight Ewell), and the Stonewall’s bartender Princess Ernestine (Micheal McElroy) ensure that the film balances the world of drag queens and the straight-laced Homophile Society.

Through their stories, *Stonewall* focuses on the myth of Stonewall as a symbol of the beginning of the modern gay rights movement rather than historical fact. By utilizing comparisons between the Duberman book and the resulting film, a series of clear differences arises. *Stonewall* attempts to achieve two goals throughout the film one for straight audiences and one for queer audiences. In this paper, I will argue for a model of dueling goals in the film, as supported by film analysis and historical context. For its straight viewers, *Stonewall* seeks to encourage fair treatment of the LGBT+ community through several methods of criticizing the past and lifting up the queer rights movement. For queer viewers, *Stonewall* aims to inspire pride and will to continue fighting for civil rights in the wake of the AIDS crisis by showing the glorious past.

As a disclosure, this paper will occasionally utilize the language used by both the general public against queer people, mainly due to their reclamation by the community in their self-identification. This paper will also use “queer”, “LGBT+” and “gay” interchangeably. Additionally, this paper will use both “riot” and “uprising” to describe the events that took place at the Stonewall in 1969, not that those two words have the same meaning, but rather the differences are not relevant to the central argument of this paper.

Stonewall’s Self-Presentation

The filmmakers present *Stonewall* as a historical myth, which alleviates its responsibility for historical accuracy and positions it as a shared origin story for the queer rights movements. The film is book-ended by two monologues by La Miranda, which place the entire film as her recollection and therefore subject to small inaccuracies due to the nature of human memory. The filmmakers leave viewers with the idea that they have seen one person’s personal experiences, building into an idea of queer personal experience as being an inherently political narrative.

Though this can excuse *Stonewall*'s minor inaccuracies, those inaccuracies remain vital to understanding the messaging of the film, as every inaccuracy was a deliberate choice by the filmmaking team. This presentation as a myth or memory is contradicted by another choice made in the opening moments of the film--- La Miranda's monologue is accompanied by real footage of Stonewall veterans that lends this idea of *Stonewall* being a historical account.³³² *Stonewall* also draws small, memorable details from history into the film.³³³ These help to flesh out a more complete Stonewall myth as the queer rights movement's origin story. Nigel Finch's past as a documentarian only helps to further the feeling of the film as historical fact. Together, this combination of mythologizing and linking to reality helps *Stonewall* to position itself as a historical founding myth, like those so common in American history, which for straight viewers legitimizes the gay rights movement through its patriotism and for queer viewers gives them a point of pride and unity to look back on their shared point of origin.

The Public

Throughout the film, the characters are subject to the negative reactions of the general public that encourages viewers to identify with the viewers of the main characters, rather than the characters themselves. Early in the film, three drag queens, La Miranda, Miss Moxie, and Helen ride the subway together and they are gawked at and judged by an older couple and the audience is not intended to identify with the queens, but rather with the older couple. We, like the couple, are viewers (or voyeurs) of the queens, and the film encourages straight audiences to be tolerant of others in their self-expression, making clear that while *Stonewall* has elements for both audiences, parts are purely for straight audiences. By emphasizing derogatory language over actual violence, *Stonewall* avoids calling the rash of 1990s violent hate crimes into the minds of queer audiences, allowing them to focus on the victory of Stonewall rather than tragedy. For straight audiences, who very few would have ever even considered such a violent act, the film serves to remind them of the power of the words they use.

In the third act of the film, Vinnie practically begs Bostonia to undergo sexual reassignment surgery so that they can run away, get married, and live the respectable life Vinnie desires. After Bostonia refuses, a resigned Vinnie says "they ain't never gonna let us be." Bostonia, though previously upset with Vinnie, responds, "No, they ain't never gonna let us be. Ain't no operation gonna change that."³³⁴ Vinnie and Bostonia both have no dreams or expectations of being truly accepted into wider society. By reflecting a struggle for the right to exist still present in the 1990s, though in an area significant progress had been made, *Stonewall* seeks to inspire pride in queer audiences in the progress that had been made and motivation to fight for even more. For straight audiences, with Vinnie's eventual suicide, they can see the clear, negative consequences that can result from their unacceptance.

At a Homophile Society meeting, the guest speaker endorses the idea that homosexuality is a disease and Matty Dean walks out in protest. Ethan, another member of the Homophile Society, admonishes Matty's reaction, arguing that "at this stage, quite frankly, sympathy would be a huge step for us." The goal of the Homophile Society is to just shift public opinion away

³³² *Stonewall*, directed by Nigel Finch.

³³³ Denny, "Homophile Freedom Song," in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 96-97.; Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Penguin Group, 1993), 83.

³³⁴ *Stonewall*, directed by Nigel Finch.

from outright hatred, not to garner full social acceptance. This scene reminds 1990s viewers just how far the gay rights movement had come since 1969 and helps inspire a sense of pride in their accomplishments among LGBT+ viewers.

The Police

The police fill a key role in the historical violent upholding of oppressive cultural norms, especially in the case of the Stonewall Riots, a direct response to police abuses. Throughout the film, even in scenes where police do not appear, sirens can be heard in the background, which seeks to draw viewers into this time where the threat of police was ever-constant. *Stonewall's* police force repeatedly uses violence, even prior to the final raid. During an earlier raid, Matty is beaten, and La Miranda is forcibly submerged in a bucket of water. When they are arrested, they are put in a cell with a naked man passed out in his own vomit. This indicates to the audience the lack of human dignity provided to queer people by the police. Queer viewers can look at the conditions of the legal system in 1969 and find pride in their community's accomplishments, while also ensuring that straight audiences understand the true breadth of why rioting was a necessary step in the origin of the modern gay rights movement. *Stonewall*, though depicting the physical brutality of the police, does not depict any police killings, as did occur in the 1960s, as to discuss these cases would require the admittance that police can still commit similar acts and be protected by the system.³³⁵ This would lessen the victory of Stonewall for queer viewers, and bring up complicated questions about the legal system as a whole for straight audiences who the film wants to focus on queerphobia. Police themselves were not the only source of harassment and oppression, rather other forms of legal abuses were utilized to unfairly police the LGBT+ community. Organizations like the ABC and the Health Department utilized prejudicial practices against queer people as well.³³⁶ By eliminating this wider oppression, *Stonewall* focuses on one singular issue to increase the sense of victory amongst queer viewers, and to address the abuses of the American government as a whole would be to have to admit that the existing system of the 1990s had the same issue, risking alienating straight viewers.³³⁷

Gay Culture

The core of the film is gay culture of 1969 rather than the actual riots. Throughout the film, terms like “homo,” “drag queen” and other derogatory terms like “fag” are used to refer to queer people by all characters. The first usage of the phrase “gay” happens at the very end of the film as the riot breaks out with a chant of “gay power.” Though the chant of “gay power” is historical fact, *Stonewall* choosing this to be the first instance of that terminology decision links the term “gay” with the gay rights movement. As viewers in the 1990s are more likely to have identified themselves with the term “gay,” this ties the viewers with the gay rights movement as both benefactors and those who must continue the legacy.³³⁸

³³⁵ “Grim Reapings---Coast to Coast,” in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 42-43.

³³⁶ The Council on Religion and the Homosexual, “A Brief of Injustices,” in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 33-34.; “L.A. Cops, Gay Groups Seek Peace,” in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 35-36.

³³⁷ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 122-123

³³⁸ Lucian Truscott IV, “View from Outside: Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square,” in *The Stonewall Reader* ed. Jason Baumann (New York: Penguin Books, 2019), 113-118.

A reference to *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) within *Stonewall* also acts as a way to reflect queer culture to queer audiences and acts as a shorthand for the messages of the *Rocky Horror*. La Miranda delivers the initial part of her opening monologue as just a pair of lips, a visual reference to *Rocky Horror*'s opening sequence. Though *Rocky Horror* did not come out until after *Stonewall*, it had a large and heavily queer cult following by *Stonewall*'s creation. By identifying itself with *Rocky Horror*, *Stonewall* presents itself as another musical that stands against the hegemony.³³⁹ *Stonewall* doubly establishes itself in history as a representation of the queer rights origin story and as part of queer film history itself.

Another key issue for the 1960s gay community that is depicted is the mafia control of gay bars and the difficulty of finding safe gay spaces. The *Stonewall* in *Stonewall* is controlled by the mafia, and patrons are subject to verbal abuse by the mafiosos and their employees. Gay bars were essential because as Clark Polak writes, "the gay bar is the only consistently and readily available homosexual gathering place."³⁴⁰ This helps to show the distinct progress of the queer community between 1969 and the 1990s. *Stonewall* presents the *Stonewall Inn* as a wonderful place for queer people and as the most popular bar of the time when in reality it was neither.³⁴¹ As opposed to the atmosphere created in *Stonewall*, Duberman's book notes that not all those who were dressed in drag were allowed into the bar.³⁴² As Sylvia Rivera recalled in an interview with Eric Marcus, "Stonewall was not a bar for drag queens... If you were a drag queen, you could get into the *Stonewall* if they knew you."³⁴³ A heroic origin requires the perfect setting to be most effective (and acceptable to straight audiences), and one that was explicitly exclusionary simply would not do.

Though there are many joking references to sex work, overall the impact of drugs and sex work on 1969 gay life is downplayed throughout the movie. References to parts of the gay community, like the kink community, are kept brief. At no point does a character do drugs, or appear in any way to be under the influence of them. Duberman's book does not lack references to the prevalence of sex and drugs. One of his interviewees, Sylvia Rivera, on whom La Miranda is based, became addicted to heroin while incarcerated and spends the 1960s as a sex worker.³⁴⁴ At the *Stonewall*, Duberman notes that most of the employees and many of the customers did drugs, and "the bar was also known as a good place to buy acid."³⁴⁵ By eliminating this element of the real *Stonewall*, *Stonewall*'s filmmakers ensured that viewer prejudices against drug users and sex workers could not be used as excuses for queerphobia, playing into ideas of presenting the queer community as respectable as possible to ensure acceptance.

³³⁹ Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2006), 147.

³⁴⁰ Clark P. Polack, "On Gay Bars," in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 29-31.

³⁴¹ Marc Stein, introduction to *Stonewall: A Documentary History*, ed. John Brockman (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 2-3; "New York City Gay Scene Guide: Complete 1969 Edition," in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 117-121.

³⁴² Duberman, *Stonewall*, 188.

³⁴³ Sylvia Rivera, "Interview with Eric Marcus," in *The Stonewall Reader* ed. Jason Baumann (New York: Penguin Books, 2019), 141-147.

³⁴⁴ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 122.

³⁴⁵ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 186.

Identity and Intersectionality

For queer people of 1969, hiding their identity was frequently a necessity for personal safety, and by emphasizing this need, *Stonewall* attempts to inspire appreciation in its audience, and pride in how far the movement has come for queer viewers. When the police arrive for the first raid, La Miranda does not hide her gender expression like many of the others in the bar. Gabriel Mayora praises this scene, writing “a moment that could have easily fetishized the humiliation of La Miranda emerges as a showcase for La Miranda’s radical manifestation of pride.”³⁴⁶ This radical pride could help to inspire queer audiences to have similar attitudes and help straight viewers to admire that bravery. At the recruiting center she marches right up to the two recruiters and says, when asked whether she was a man or a woman, “I ain’t no lady, mister sir, I’m sorry. See that’s why I walked the middle of the room. Story of my damn life.” La Miranda is in no way a mask, she presents fully as she pleases, whenever she pleases, therefore contradicting 1990s stereotypes of trans people as duplicitous. La Miranda also contradicts other transgender stereotypes, as Hogan writes, “La Miranda is neither depicted as the sexless mother hen nor as the flirt who tries to pass off as a ‘real’ girl.”³⁴⁷ La Miranda’s bravery and radical self-expression serve as an encouragement to queer viewers and were uniquely aimed toward their deeper understandings of gender and identity.

While the filmmakers try to address the issues of intersectionality, the overlapping of experiences between people belonging to multiple oppressed identities, they fall short in calling for intersectionality with the same nuance that such a concept requires. Jude Davies and Carol Smith include a quote from Sylvia Rivera to this end in their book *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality In Contemporary American Film*, in which she says “what kills me as a drag queen is that I can go into a gay bar and listen to these so-called macho gay men, ‘Oh, Mary this, and Miss Thing that.’ But as soon as I walk into a bar, they know where I’m coming from, and right away I’m shunted aside.”³⁴⁸ The dress codes for the picket Matty participates in are gender-conforming, showcasing their exclusion of those less amenable to the public and the Homophile Society’s focus on respectability, drawn directly from Mattachine’s rules.³⁴⁹ While *Stonewall* criticizes Mattachine’s ideas of respectability to encourage better from queer audiences and confirm their self-expression as a radical political act in it of itself, it also adheres to this idea in order to still appeal to straight audiences in their elimination of drug usage and sex work.

Stonewall does not fully contradict the white, cisgender, male narrative of the gay rights movement’s origins by eliminating the lesbians, Karla Jay, a Jewish woman, and Yvonne Flowers, a Black woman, from Duberman’s book. *Stonewall*’s struggle to present women besides the drag queens in a meaningful way is likely due to the fact that Duberman, the director Nigel Finch and the writer Rikki Beadle-Blair are all ultimately men. As opposed to Craig Rodwell, who he is based on, Matty has no quarrels with the sexism of the Homophile Society, and never even mentions the issue. Scott Bravmann makes note of the lack of women in his 1996 review, as

³⁴⁶ Gabriel Mayora “Her Stonewall Legend: The Fictionalization of Sylvia River in Nigel Finch’s *Stonewall*,” *Centro Journal* 30, no. 2 (2018):

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=131995294&site=ehost-live>.

³⁴⁷ Christopher J. Hogan, “Review,” *Cineaste* 22, no. 3 (1996): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41688928>.

³⁴⁸ Jude Davies and Carol R. Smith, *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in Contemporary American Film* (Edinburgh, Keele University Press, 1997), 118.

³⁴⁹ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 111-112

does Hogan.³⁵⁰ *Stonewall*'s lack of lesbians garnered criticism from the community at its release, as Belinda Hazleton wrote for *Lesbians on the Loose* in December 1995, "unfortunately, despite the involvement of Christine Vachon (*Go Fish*) as producer, it does not focus on the women who were also a part of the events; its perspective is predominantly male."³⁵¹ Sexism is a perennial issue in the LGBT+ community, as Steven F. Dansky writes, "All men are male supremacists. Gay men are no exception to the maxim."³⁵² *Stonewall* cannot fully explore this issue without alienating some of their gay audience or admitting a key failure of the gay rights movement. By focusing on just one element of oppression, queerphobia, *Stonewall* can make its victories more complete to inspire more pride in viewers, avoid alienating viewers with complicating prejudices and make the future fight it is attempting to inspire one far simpler than reality.

The Riot Itself and The Myth of Stonewall

The riots are not the central part of *Stonewall* and so the most important differences lie outside of those few days. However, *Stonewall*'s attempt to answer the unanswerable, particularly those which Duberman makes abundantly clear are unanswerable, builds into its larger purpose as a history-creating film. A central point in Bravmann's review is that the film "loses the sense of what made this particular raid different from previous ones" when it has the raid proceed just as the earlier one.³⁵³ However, I disagree in this regard; instead, other changes are far more significant. This particular raid is differentiated from others by the personal lives of the characters, with Matty and La Miranda's relationship on the mend and Bostonia reeling from Vinnie's suicide, exemplifying the notion of the personal as inherently political for queer people, effectively telling queer viewers that there is no way for them to exclude themselves from the gay movement and gay politics. Where it is widely accepted that who started the riot is an unanswerable question--- sources vary in who began the uprising--- *Stonewall* answers that question, having Bostonia punch a police officer, beginning the riot. *Stonewall* allows the final catalyst to be a Black queen, showing the attempt of the filmmakers to showcase intersectionality within the origin myth it creates, looping in more queer viewers into the goals of creating pride and motivation. *Stonewall* also directly contradicts its own opening documentary clips, which highlight the trauma of the riots, by having La Miranda and Matty delighted by the unfolding events. As Matty says, "It's the Fourth of fuckin' July!" and La Miranda later yells "It's our rights!" This furthers *Stonewall*'s presentation of the Stonewall Uprising as inherently American. Making *Stonewall* patriotic and celebratory allows *Stonewall* to grant legitimacy to the movement for straight audiences and craft a glorious image of the past for queer viewers. *Stonewall* is a presentation of the symbol of the Stonewall Riots, not the history, as a myth is simple and easy to use to inspire straight and queer audiences alike.

Crafting a Narrative for the American Public

Film viewers love to see an underdog succeed, and to appease this desire, the filmmakers downplayed the number of people involved in the gay rights movement and hastened the pace. *Stonewall* completely obscures the national gay rights movement and movements in other cities.

³⁵⁰ Scott Bravmann, "Review: Stonewall, Silver Screen: Cinematic Representation and the Queer Past," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1996): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30041691>; Christopher J. Hogan, "Review."

³⁵¹ Belinda Hazleton, "Romancing the stone," *Lesbians on the Loose* 6, no. 12 (1995): 33, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/KTGMHL590150562/AHSI?u=umd_um&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=58090219.

³⁵² Steven F. Dansky "Hey Man" in *The Stonewall Reader* ed. Jason Baumann (New York: Penguin Books, 2019), 194-199.

³⁵³ Scott Bravmann, "Review: Stonewall, Silver Screen".

Though the New York Homophile Society of *Stonewall* meets with very few members in a music store basement, in reality, the Mattachine Society of New York was meeting to a full house, and by mid-1966, had five hundred dues-paying members.³⁵⁴ This again shows the progress of the gay community between 1969 and the 1990s and the importance of straight society continuing to give space to the queer community.

As Bravmann criticizes the ordering of events in *Stonewall* for their inaccuracy, I too would like to bring attention to them, rather for their purpose in achieving the goals of the film. In favor of crafting their narrative, the filmmakers abandon the historical accuracy of chronology. The main element of Bravmann's criticism is, rightfully, the Homophile March at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, which occurs in 1969 in the film. The film describes this picket to be the first action of its kind, but in reality, there had been an annual Independence Hall March on July 4th of every year since 1965.³⁵⁵ Sip-ins, also attempted for the "first" time by Matty and the Homophile Society in 1969, were an earlier form of protest, used from at least 1966 in Greenwich Village.³⁵⁶

When the Mattachine Society marched in front of the White House in April of 1965, unlike the fictional Matty, who did not see picketing as far enough, Craig was thrilled.³⁵⁷ As Barbara Gittings said in her speech introducing *Stonewall* at the 1996 International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in Philadelphia, "what we did was scary because we were cracking the cocoon of invisibility. Only a tiny handful of us could take the risk of being so publicly on view."³⁵⁸ *Stonewall* criticizes picketing without fully showcasing the risks of picketing. The film's Independence Hall March is considered to be a failure. *Stonewall* makes Stonewall the beginning and it is intended to create a unifying myth rather than present an account of the political actions prior to 1969. Stonewall, in Armstrong and Cragé's opinion, was not unique due to the actions taken in June 1969, like *Stonewall* posits, but rather that what was done with that narrative afterward is what made it significant. *Stonewall* creates a beginning for its 1990s audiences in 1969. The Stonewall riots can act as an origin for queer audiences while creating a history for the queer community that can legitimize them in the eyes of straight audiences.

Radical Politics

Stonewall crafts a narrative that eliminates the real Stonewall's links to politics considered radical in the 1990s in order to ensure that audiences would have no qualms with the gay rights movement due to who they associate with. In reality, gay rights, both before and after Stonewall, looked to radical social groups, like the Black Panther Party, for inspiration, and many of the issues the queer community faced placed them in a position to call for broad societal reform. This elimination helps to secure respectability and legitimacy in the eyes of the general public for the queer community in the 1990s. As Davies and Smith comment, *Stonewall* succeeds in the key presentation of the fact that "the personal was and always has been political

³⁵⁴ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 107

³⁵⁵ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 113

³⁵⁶ Lucy Komisar, "Three Homosexuals in Search of a Drink," in *Stonewall: A Documentary History* ed. Marc Stein (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 93-94.

³⁵⁷ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 112-113

³⁵⁸ Barbara Gittings, "Introduction to the film *Stonewall*," in *Speaking for Our Lives: Historic Speeches and Rhetoric for Gay and Lesbian Rights* ed. Robert Ridinger (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2004), 681-682.

for gay Americans.”³⁵⁹ *Stonewall*’s radicalism lies not in its politics, but rather in its self-expression, just as queer people are radical simply for existing, rather than necessarily for their beliefs. By eschewing the connections to those more radical, socialist politics, *Stonewall* plays into the same ideas of middle-class respectability that Mattachine utilized despite the film’s criticism of those ideas.³⁶⁰ As Suzanna Walters writes in *All The Rage*, this is a problem in gay representation, as “gays ought not need to put a straight face on homosexuality (another form of the closet) in order to be treated as free and equal citizens...”³⁶¹ *Stonewall* emphasizes personal radicalism over political radicalism, which both makes the movement more successful and inspires more pride in queer viewers, and makes gay politics more approachable to less progressive viewers.

Representation

Many presentations of gay characters relied on the notion of homosexuality as deviance and transness as deception, up through the 1990s with films like *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991).³⁶² By directly contradicting that narrative in the film itself, *Stonewall* achieves a radical goal of going against the popular narrative audiences were used to seeing and includes queer people in its audience.³⁶³ However, *Stonewall* does adhere to a larger phenomenon of using drag to desexualize gay men, as La Miranda and Matty are far less overtly sexual than Matty and Ethan, despite La Miranda’s jokes. While La Miranda escapes the stereotype of being just comedic relief, she still falls into a trap.³⁶⁴ Davies and Smith praise *Stonewall* for showing more of a breadth of gay representation, and its subversion of genre, combining a historical film, a romance film, and a musical to “seperate itself from the hegemonic heterosexual aesthetics of mainstream filmmaking.”³⁶⁵ Walters describes *Stonewall* as a combination of personal narrative, political history, and “postmodern artistry.”³⁶⁶ *Stonewall*’s genre-bending continues the idea of the personal being political for queer people.

Like the bartenders at the attempted sip-ins willing to be allies for gay money, “many attribute the rise of gay-themed films to the power of the pocketbook.”³⁶⁷ Gay film was not just intended for gay audiences, rather they were aimed for straight consumption, and *Stonewall* clearly was too, making sure to keep straight audiences comfortable while telling an undeniably queer story.³⁶⁸ *Stonewall* had to attempt to maintain the difficult balance between straight marketability and gay relatability.³⁶⁹ As Vito Russo said, “mainstream films about homosexuality are not for gays. They address themselves exclusively to the majority.”³⁷⁰ *Stonewall*, uniquely, does both and has different goals for a straight and a gay audience.

³⁵⁹ Davies and Smith, *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality*, 122

³⁶⁰ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 170.

³⁶¹ Suzanna Danuta Walters, *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001), 18.

³⁶² Davies and Smith, *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality*, 106-108.

³⁶³ Davies and Smith, *Gender Ethnicity and Sexuality*, 106-108

³⁶⁴ Walters, *All The Rage*, 142.

³⁶⁵ Davies and Smith, *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality*, 121.

³⁶⁶ Walters, *All The Rage*, 175.

³⁶⁷ Walters, *All The Rage*, 135.

³⁶⁸ Walters, *All The Rage*, 136.

³⁶⁹ Walters, *All The Rage*, 138.

³⁷⁰ Melanie Kohnen, *Queer Representation, Visibility and Race in American Film and Television: Screening the Closet* (New York, Routledge, 2016), 46.

The Gay 90s

Stonewall came out at a critical point for the LGBT+ community. News coverage of AIDS had led to more attention on queer people than ever before, and the coming out boom ensured more people had someone in their lives who was openly queer.³⁷¹ As Walters writes, “now you can hardly open the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* (or local papers) without encountering a story with some gay-related theme.”³⁷² Matty is the only character we know of in *Stonewall* that has come out to his family. With the film’s release amid the 1990s coming out boom, having the radical activist Matty being the one to have come out, *Stonewall* encourages queer viewers to also come out as an activist act like Matty.

Politically, the Democratic Party had begun to secure itself as the more pro-LGBT+ party, and Bill Clinton purposefully used AIDS and gay rights as a “symbolic issue” to win over urban liberals.³⁷³ Clinton was fairly gay-friendly in his demeanor and words, and even in some policies, despite his policy of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell (DADT).³⁷⁴ Bill Clinton secured himself as the most pro-LGBT+ president, and this would likely make criticism of his government unwise for *Stonewall*’s creators. Though 1996 viewers were experiencing setbacks in the realm of marriage with the federal Defense of Marriage Act, they can at least look back with pride about the fact that same-sex marriage was not even imaginable for these characters. Furthermore, the scenes involving the Vietnam draft are arranged to encourage comparisons between 1969 and 1995’s policy of DADT. La Miranda is ultimately rejected for being a “deviant.” *Stonewall* seeks to remind queer viewers that DADT is a policy strikingly similar to the more discriminatory eras of the past and that just like their predecessors fought against discrimination in 1969, they should fight against DADT now.³⁷⁵ Hate crimes against gay people also rose 127% between 1988 and 1993.³⁷⁶ The murders of Brandon Teena, Philip DeVine, and Lisa Lambert in 1993 were still prominent in the public’s consciousness.³⁷⁷ The threat of violence was, just like in 1969, a very real one, and *Stonewall*’s elimination of violence from the general public is a choice made to make sure queer viewers walk away with a sense of pride, rather than feelings of fear or tragedy.³⁷⁸ They do not need a reminder of the violence surrounding them, rather they need the motivation to continue fighting against that violence.

HIV/AIDS cannot be directly addressed in *Stonewall*, but to viewers still in the throes of the worst of the epidemic, and in a film created by a director who was HIV+, references to HIV/AIDS are abundantly clear. La Miranda is in her monologues alone, without Matty. Matty’s absence, more than being a way to focus on La Miranda, is symbolic of the missing generation of sexually active gay men by the 1990s. Additionally, Matty and Ethan are shown having uncautious sex in a shower. An audience in the 1990s would immediately pick up on this distinct

³⁷¹ Jeremiah J. Garretson, *The Path to Gay Rights: How Activism and Coming Out Changed Public Opinion* (New York, New York University Press, 2018), 3.

³⁷² Walters, *All The Rage*, 3.

³⁷³ Garretson, *The Path to Gay Rights*, 111-113.

³⁷⁴ Walters, *All The Rage*, 31.

³⁷⁵ Walters, *All The Rage*, 9.

³⁷⁶ Walters, *All The Rage*, 9.

³⁷⁷ C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 177.

³⁷⁸ Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*, 180.

difference from their world where HIV/AIDS permeates all queer sexual encounters. As 1996 reviewer Steve Warren for *Outlines* writes, “In spite of everything there are those who would trade everything we’ve gained to return to those times just so they could fuck without condoms again.”³⁷⁹ Despite all the progress from 1969 to 1995, there has been unimaginable tragedy, and *Stonewall* seeks to motivate viewers to progress even further in memory of those that have been lost.

A small omission that creates a clear narrative goal in *Stonewall* is the elimination of federal involvement in the Stonewall Riots. Duberman notes the involvement of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) in the raid, and the fact that it was their decision to raid the Stonewall.³⁸⁰ The filmmakers’ exclusion ensures *Stonewall* was not an issue of the American federal government, but rather the oppression of one police force in one area, making *Stonewall* more of a victory and not criticizing the United States of America as a whole, ensuring to not alienate straight viewers. Furthermore, there is a focus on presenting the queer characters as patriotic as a way of legitimizing their fight for equal rights. La Miranda describes drag queens as “American as apple pie,” and Matty claims that queer people are the “real America.” This serves to inspire pride amongst queer viewers, as their legacy of activism was part of an even wider tradition of American activism, and creates allyship amongst straight viewers by appropriating their sense of national pride to encourage support for the gay rights movement.

The Community

Stonewall attempted to be a film that both made straight allies and created pride and activist motivation amongst queer viewers. The reactions of the queer community of 1996 were not unflinchingly positive though. As Matt Rettenmund wrote in *Outlines* in August 1996 alongside his interview with actor Frederick Weller, “his movie [*Stonewall*] has elicited cries of foul from some activists who object to its playing fast-and-loose with history, [and] its romanticization of the old Stonewall Bar’s mob owners.”³⁸¹ *Stonewall* also garnered criticism over straight actors playing gay characters--- though notably not over cisgender actors playing transgender roles.³⁸² Most important in these reviews, however, is when Rettenmund quotes Weller as having said that “we knew he [director Nigel Finch] had HIV, but had no idea how close the end was. He had a talk with us to clarify what the film meant to him. The love of his life had died of AIDS and he was next.”³⁸³ Finch intended to leave *Stonewall* as his legacy, and he intended for his legacy to be one to galvanize and motivate the gay community while encouraging acceptance within broader society. Steve Warren, in the same issue of *Outlines*, writes similarly that “my residual idealism wants to think straight viewers, having learned to love drag queens in *To Wong Foo...* and *The Birdcage*, may be ready to appreciate our history and

³⁷⁹ Steve Warren, “*Stonewall* Review,” *Outlines The Voice of the Gay and Lesbian Community* 10, no. 3 (1996): 27, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C2616730?account_id=14696&usage_group_id=95582.

³⁸⁰ Duberman, *Stonewall*, 194.

³⁸¹ Matt Rettenmund, “*Stonewall’s* Raging Hetero Hero Comes in Peace,” *Outlines The Voice of the Gay and Lesbian Community* 10, no. 3 (1996): 26, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C2616730?account_id=14696&usage_group_id=95582.

³⁸² Rettenmund, “*Stonewall’s* Raging Hetero Hero.”

³⁸³ Rettenmund, “*Stonewall’s* Raging Hetero Hero.”

relationships in *Stonewall*.”³⁸⁴ Perfection for queer viewers of *Stonewall* had to be set aside in favor of Finch’s ultimate goal of motivating the queer viewers to fight for their rights and straight viewers to help them achieve those rights.

Conclusion

As a group that was so long invisible, LGBT+ people have a unique need to craft a collective history from material that does not necessarily accept their existence, much less their validity. As Larry Mitchell writes, “the faggots cultivate the most obscure and outrageous part of the past. They cultivate those past events which the men did not want to happen and which, once they did happen, they wanted to forget.”³⁸⁵ *Stonewall* helps to create a shared history among LGBT+ people, to inspire the viewers with their collective past. It falls short of the same wide queer impact that Duberman’s book had in the book sphere in its exclusion of lesbian experiences, and its sanitization of certain elements, but that goal remains. Like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere” attempted to unify the splintered United States through a historical myth, *Stonewall* was not intended for accuracy, rather to galvanize the gay community and to create sympathy in straight audiences, rather than other films that attempted to do one or the other. Though *Stonewall* falls victim to ideas of respectability perpetuated by early gay movements in its efforts in appealing to straight audiences as well, but unlike *Mattachine* before, that face included faces like La Miranda.

By presenting the abuses of the LGBT+ community as definite negatives, *Stonewall* encourages further activism to finally bring an end to all of these abuses, but eliminates more difficult problems with the system as a whole to increase pride in the victories already achieved. *Stonewall* gives straight audiences a glimpse into the richness of queer culture and identity, helping them to appreciate the other, and gives gay audiences a chance to see their community, but it also eliminates elements like drug usage and sex work to help the gay community seem more acceptable to straight audiences. *Stonewall* attempts, but ultimately fails, to present the wide array of experiences within the queer community in its myth, making the film far more successful in its history-creating mission with those it does represent than those it does not, like lesbians or transgender people interested in medical transition. The myth of *Stonewall* is perpetuated by *Stonewall* because a community with a clear shared founding myth has more of a sense of unity than the reality that Duberman and other sources put forth. By using two separate goals for straight and queer audiences, *Stonewall* can accomplish both, but to lesser degrees. Though these goals frequently overlap, some elements of these dueling goals stop the film from fully completing either, with its queer goals being limited by the respectability needed to continue to appeal to straight audiences.

³⁸⁴ Warren, “*Stonewall* Review.”

³⁸⁵ Larry Mitchell “Excerpt from *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*,” in *The Stonewall Reader* ed. Jason Baumann (New York: Penguin Books, 2019), 281-283.

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The Planters' Response to Haiti: Repression and Counterrevolution in the Antebellum South

By Karandeep Takhtan

In 1791, the slaves of the French colony of St. Domingue revolted, sparking a revolution which would eventually result in their freedom and the establishment of the first free Black republic in the world, known as Haiti. The Haitian Revolution was thus one of the most revolutionary events in history in that it targeted the institution of slavery, by then entrenched in the Atlantic world. As a result, the impact of the revolution extended to the other Atlantic countries, among them the United States, the only other postcolonial republic at the time of the Revolution. In this essay, I argue that to slaveholders in the American Antebellum South, the Haitian Revolution symbolized their fears of Black power, militancy, and freedom. Thus in response to the Revolution, they launched a counterrevolution against the ideals of Black freedom which it represented. I will explore the initial reactions to the Revolution in the U.S. South, followed by a discussion of the influence of St. Domingue on the counterrevolutionary responses to the rebellions of Gabriel, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner.

The Haitian Revolution spanned from 1791-1804, during which time many thousands of refugees from Haiti travelled to the United States, particularly to such places as New Orleans, Norfolk, Charleston, and Baltimore, where either French culture or Catholicism permeated.¹ With them they brought stories of enslaved Black people turning on their masters and the ensuing bloodshed they inflicted on the white population of St. Domingue, terrifying the planter class of the South. Many of these refugees were planters themselves, and became part of the American planter class. One such example was Louis Moreau Gottschalk, a musician whose family had fled Haiti during the Revolution, well before he was born. He recalled stories of his great-grandfather “fighting insurgents at Gros Morne or his grandmother ‘half-naked and dying of hunger’ saving herself by ‘wandering many days in the woods’ before happening upon an English ship.” Such was “the history of all the colonists of Santo Domingo toward the close of³⁸⁶ the last century,” he wrote.³⁸⁷ The memories of this new group of planters from St. Domingue helped shape the consciousness of the planter class of the American South, instilling a deep fear of the Haitian Revolution and what it represented.

The media coverage of the events provided another source of fear. Newspapers across the country covered the Revolution, offering a glimpse into the overthrow of the St. Dominguan planter class to the nation's south. In 1804, for instance, the *Virginia Chronicle* published an excerpt from a speech by Haitian leader Jean-Jaques Dessalines, in which he stated to a crowd of freed Haitians, “Remember you have done nothing if you do not give nations a terrible but just example of that vengeance, which a people, proud of having recovered their liberty and jealous of maintaining it, ought to exercise.”³⁸⁸ Such talk of vengeance for enslavement was likely not very reassuring to the slaveholders of Virginia. They feared the spread of the Revolution north to their own plantations, bringing with it the

³⁸⁶ Hunt, *Slumbering Volcano*, 46.

³⁸⁷ Paulus, *Slaveholding Crisis*.

³⁸⁸ Dessalines, “Proclamation by Dessalines,” 1804.

destruction of their livelihoods, their power, as well as potentially their lives and the lives of their families.

The fear of these slaveholders drove the initial responses of the Southern states to the Haitian Revolution. At the beginning of the Revolution, the South Carolinian governor Charles Pinckney wrote to President George Washington about the situation in St. Domingue: “By these inclosures you will perceive the wretched & distressed situation in which these unhappy people are and I am afraid if not checked in time it is a flame which will extend to all the neighbouring islands, and may eventually prove not a very pleasing or agreeable example to the Southern States.”³⁸⁹ Pinckney, himself a planter, had a negative perception of the revolt and feared that it would spread to the surrounding areas, including to the American South. Similarly, Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Monroe in 1793, “I become daily more and more convinced that all the West India islands will remain in the hands of the people of colour, and a total expulsion of the whites sooner or later take place. It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (South of Patowmac) have to wade through, and try to avert them.”³⁹⁰ Here, Jefferson predicts that events similar to that of the Haitian Revolution may occur in the South in his children’s or his own lifetime. Hence, powerful members of the planter class in the South were quick to connect the situation in Haiti to their own, as we can see from the correspondence of Pinckney to Washington and Jefferson to Monroe. Furthermore, in this excerpt Jefferson connects the Revolution to the “Africanization” of the West Indies, tying the Revolution to the demographics of St. Domingue, a common theme of the Southern conception of the Revolution and its lessons.

For many in the South, the large Black population in St. Domingue was the chief cause of the unfortunate events there. As a result, the South quickly took measures following the Revolution to curb the population of Black people in their states, particularly those from the French West Indian Islands, whom they feared would bring with them troublesome revolutionary ideas. In 1792, South Carolina abolished the slave trade to prevent the importation of more Black people into the state. The following year, Governor William Moultrie ordered all free Black people who had lived in the state for less than one year to leave, providing them with ten days to do so. In 1803, the state barred any Black person, free or enslaved, from entering the state if they had lived in the French West Indies. Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and Louisiana would also restrict the movement of Black people into their states.³⁹¹ These efforts to remove Black people from the South spoke to the fear of slaveholders of not just slaves, but Black people in general. They feared that corrupting influences would drive their slaves to revolt against them, just as had happened in St. Domingue. Andrew Garden Jr., a soldier in the American Revolution and a slaveholder, wrote a series of letters published in a South Carolina newspaper in 1794 detailing his views on the events in St. Domingue. He argued that in admitting so many Black people from St. Domingue, the state had displayed an “excess of humanity” and they should all be expelled from the state immediately. Such Black people might spread revolutionary ideas throughout

³⁸⁹ Pinckney, “To George Washington from Charles Pinckney,” 1791.

³⁹⁰ Monticello, “St. Domingue.”

³⁹¹ Hunt, 108.

southern society, he wrote, and “produce a flame that would only be extinguished in blood.”³⁹² These revolutionary ideas were ideas of Black militant abolitionism. Thus the Haitian Revolution reverberated throughout the South, with slaveholders like Garden fearful that it would be imported along with the Black people from the island.

These themes were similarly evoked in response to the slave uprisings of Gabriel, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner. As we will see, slaveholders tied these events to those of St. Domingue, as they made them fearful of another Haitian Revolution, this time in their own states and on their own plantations. Whether they were directly inspired by the Revolution or not, slaveholders connected these men to St. Domingue and the revolutionary Black militancy it represented.

In 1800, an enslaved blacksmith named Gabriel planned to seize Richmond, the Virginia state capitol, and hold Governor James Monroe hostage in exchange for the freedom of all the slaves of Virginia. His plan was undermined when two slaves involved in the conspiracy informed their masters of the plot, after which the state severely crushed the attempted rebellion. Involving potentially hundreds of slaves, the conspiracy petrified slaveholders in the South, who were reminded of the bloody events of St. Domingue. Following the conspiracy, Governor Monroe concluded that “The scenes which are enacted in St. Domingo must produce an effect on all the people of colour in this and all the states south of us.”³⁹³ Monroe draws a clear connection between St. Domingue and the South, stating that the Revolution is influencing all of the Black people in the South (making no distinction between those who are free and enslaved) with its ideas of insurrection. The prospect of a Haitian Revolution in their own state drove the Virginia Assembly to respond with strict laws to restructure their system of control of Black people.

One area of interest is their treatment of the conspirators. The Assembly freed the two confidants, hung most of the rebels, and sold the remaining few outside of the state. They achieved the final point by granting Governor Monroe the power to manage “the sale and purchase of all those slaves who now are or hereafter may be under sentence of death.”³⁹⁴ Another resolution passed by the Assembly called on the Governor to ask the President to allow the state to purchase land outside of its territory where it could remove enslaved people.³⁹⁵ These two acts display the desire of Southern slaveholders to remove those who exhibited problematic ideas of insurrection and revolution. Their aim was to remove Black people from the state who believed in such atrocities as Black freedom and power. The eventual goal of some was to remove all Black people from the state to some far-off colony through a process of “gradual emancipation.” To slaveholders, free Black people presented too great a threat to be a part of their white society.

However, the majority of the planter class did not have their sights on emancipation, but a more controlling slave system. In a letter to the editor of the *Virginia Herald*, an anonymous Virginian wrote of slavery, “If we continue it, we must restrict it. We must re-enact all those

³⁹² Garden, “Letters from Rusticus.”

³⁹³ Pearson, *Designs Against Charleston*, 93

³⁹⁴ Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion*, 149.

³⁹⁵ Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion* 151.

rigorous laws which experience has proved necessary to keep it within bounds. In a word, if we will keep a ferocious monster in our country, we must keep him in chains.”³⁹⁶ Such was the choice of Virginia legislators: emancipation or chains. They of course chose the latter, implementing counterrevolutionary measures to curb the insurrectionary ideals of Blacks. Among these measures was legislation to strengthen the state militia to enable the state to exert a harsher control over the Black population and provide a defense against possible slave insurrections in the future. The state formed an organized police force in 1802 to serve this purpose, enforcing such new restrictions as a nighttime curfew for enslaved people. The new law permitted the police officers to whip those slaves whom they found out after the 9:00 PM curfew to their heart’s content.

In another act of counterrevolution, the state forbade Black residents from obtaining licenses for sailing in an effort to curb the spread of insurrectionist ideas via port towns. In a similar vein, another law decreed that slaves could no longer hold religious gatherings after their work was completed, while yet another restricted the ability of slaves to learn to read and write.³⁹⁷ Through such legislation, the Virginia Assembly hoped to crush the revolution against slavery which appeared to be lurking beneath the surface of their Southern society. South Carolina would take similar measures when it uncovered Denmark Vesey’s own conspiracy to try to bring that revolution to the surface in 1822.

Vesey had purchased his freedom from slavery after winning a lottery contest and planned to win that freedom for others through rebellion. However, officials discovered his plot before he could take action. After he and his co-conspirators were captured and hung, the city of Charleston published an official report on the attempted uprising, revealing that Vesey was deeply inspired by the example of Haiti. One of the witnesses recalled that Vesey had said “that it was high time for us to seek our rights, and that we were fully able to conquer the whites, if we were only unanimous and courageous, as the St. Domingo people were.”³⁹⁸ Another witness recalled “he thought it was for our safety not to spare one white skin alive, for this was the plan they pursued in St. Domingo.” Vesey had even planned to escape to the island after the rebellion with his co-conspirators and expected military assistance from the free Black republic.³⁹⁹ These statements affirmed the fears of the planter class in the South; Vesey dreamed of another Haitian Revolution, this time to seize their land, wealth, and lives. St. Domingue represented Black freedom and violent resistance. Thus to imagine that Haiti would invade the South to aid in the destruction of the planter class was likely too much for these slaveholders. As a result, they took similar steps to those in Virginia following Gabriel’s rebellion. They desperately tried to quell the revolution brewing in the minds of those like Vesey.

Thomas Pinckney, former Governor of South Carolina and veteran from the American Revolution, provided his thoughts on how to achieve this end. In “Reflections, Occasioned by the Late Disturbances in Charleston,” he argues that among the causes of the attempted insurrection were,

³⁹⁶ Egerton, *Gabriel’s Rebellion*, 163.

³⁹⁷ Egerton, *Gabriel’s Rebellion*, 164.

³⁹⁸ Hamilton, “Negro Plot,” 41.

³⁹⁹ Kennedy and Parker, “Report of the Trials of Sundry Negros.”

“The example of St. Domingo, and (probably) the encouragement received from thence... the indiscreet zeal in favor of universal liberty... The idleness, dissipation, and improper indulgencies permitted among all classes of the Negroes in Charleston... and, as the most dangerous of those indulgencies, their being taught to read and write: the first bringing the powerful operation of the Press to act on their uninformed and easily deluded minds; and the latter furnishing them with an instrument to carry into execution the mischievous suggestions of the former... The disparity of numbers between the white and black inhabitants of the City.”⁴⁰⁰

Pinckney’s analysis is reminiscent of the reaction to Gabriel’s rebellion in Virginia. He points to the influence of St. Domingue as the first cause of Vesey’s plot, demonstrating the clear connection between Haiti and Black insurrection in the minds of Southern planters. He also points to the “indulgences” afforded Blacks in the city. He depicts literacy as a threat, arguing that it acts as an avenue for revolutionary ideas to work their way into Black people. The final point here is once again the demographic threat that Black people presented to slaveholders. Other planters in South Carolina echoed Pinckney’s diagnosis of the causes of Black insurrection, and fearfully pressured the South Carolina Assembly to adopt policies aimed at suppressing what little freedom Black people in the state possessed. Like Virginia following Gabriel’s conspiracy, the City Council of Charleston implemented a police force to patrol the city and protect white lives and white property.⁴⁰¹ Also like Virginia, the police officers were to enforce a curfew for the slaves and severely punish those who remained outside after it passed. Through police, the city could violently control the doings of Blacks and ensure a greater defense in the face of rebellion. To address the issue of literacy, the city began to enforce its laws against enslaved Black literacy to an extreme degree. It also attempted to restrict the literacy of free Black residents, punishing those who attempted to teach free Black people to read and write with heavy fines and whippings.⁴⁰²

The actions of South Carolinian slaveholders and legislators demonstrate once again that their counterrevolution was not simply against enslaved Black abolitionists, but all free Black people. In addition to the restrictions placed on literacy, the state also required all free Black men to have a “white guardian,” register biannually with a local intendant, and pay a significant tax each year. With these actions, the state hoped to push Black people out of the state and assuage the demographic fear Pinckney articulated in his “Reflections.”

Foreign free Black people presented an additional source of fear for slaveholders, culminating in the Negro Seamen Act. The Seamen Act decreed that port authorities were to quarantine any ships with free Black people on board. The authorities would imprison the freemen until the ship departed the port to keep them from conversing with enslaved dock workers. Carolinian lawmakers reasoned that sailors from the Caribbean might carry with them the insurrectionary ideals of St. Domingue and steer the enslaved people of South Carolina towards revolution. Taken further, the state feared all free Black people because their freedom was an example of the ends of slave rebellion realized; their’s was an example the slaves could strive toward.

⁴⁰⁰ Archates, “Reflections,” 7.

⁴⁰¹ Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free*, 212.

⁴⁰² Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free*, 215.

Through such actions as the Seamen Act, South Carolina slaveholders sought to close any avenues for revolution among the slaves after the attempted rebellion of Vesey. The planter class of Virginia would experience a rebellion far more reminiscent of St. Domingue nine years later in the uprising led by Nat Turner.

Unlike Gabriel and Vesey, Nat Turner succeeded in launching his rebellion, though it was short-lived. Leading a small group of only six men, he travelled from farm to farm in Southampton County of Virginia killing any whites they encountered and recruiting slaves to their cause. The rebellion was quickly crushed, and all of the conspirators were brutally killed in punishment.⁴⁰³ However, with close to 55 white people dead, the impact of the rebellion on the South was stark. As Edmund Lee wrote in his *Confessions of Nat Turner*, “It is the first instance in our history of an open rebellion of the slaves, and attended with such atrocious circumstances of cruelty and destruction, as could not fail to leave a deep impression, not only upon the minds of the community where this fearful tragedy was wrought, but throughout every portion of our country, in which this population is to be found.”⁴⁰⁴ Turner’s rebellion was a terrifying example of the violence of Black militancy, which was a possibility, according to Lee, wherever Black people existed. His was the closest example to the events of St. Domingue almost three decades prior, a realization of the fears of the planter class of another Haitian Revolution. There was no clear connection between Turner and St. Domingue, as there was with Vesey, but this did not stop spectators from drawing the link themselves, as did New Yorker Samuel Warner. In his pamphlet released following the rebellion titled “Horrid Massacre,” Warner wrote,

“A more alarming insurrection of Blacks, attended with the destruction of so many innocent lives... has not occurred in any Christian country since the memorable events of 1804 —when in one night more than 1000 white inhabitants of the island of St. Domingo... were butchered by the negroes! ... Such were the horrors that attended the insurrection of the Blacks in St. Domingo, and similar scenes of bloodshed and murder might our brethren at the South expect to witness, were the disaffected slaves of that section of the country but once to gain the ascendancy. In ‘General Nat,’ they might then find a wretch not less disposed to shed innocent blood, than was the perfidious Dessalines.”⁴⁰⁵

Warner argues that had Turner succeeded in his rebellion, he and the slaves of Virginia would have replicated the events of St. Domingue. In comparing Turner to Dessalines, Warner creates the image of the terrifying Black Militant, powerful and merciless, which the Haitian revolutionaries like Toussaint and Dessalines represented. If this militant Blackness were to spread, Warner reasoned, the whites of the South were sure to suffer the same fate as those in St. Domingue. Slaveholders in Virginia and throughout the South thus went further than ever in their counterrevolution to crush this militancy, but not before abolitionist forces nearly won the day.

⁴⁰³ Breen, *Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood*.

⁴⁰⁴ Lee, *Confessions of Nat Turner*, 3.

⁴⁰⁵ Warner, “Horrid Massacre.”

Following Turner's rebellion, white Southerners once again faced the choice of emancipation or chains to assure their safety, and the Virginia Assembly debated this topic in the winter of 1831-1832. The question was whether emancipation or enslavement would better ensure the safety of white people and their property, a question which bitterly divided the pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces of the legislature. Whatever their views on slavery, however, they found common ground on the notion that they would not be safe so long as free Black people existed in their state. Even Virginian abolitionists accepted that free Blacks were too dangerous for the Assembly to allow them to remain in the state. Thus while the debate on slavery continued, the legislators first settled on policies of colonization to remove free Blacks from the state and made efforts to relocate them to Liberia.⁴⁰⁶

Eventually, the Virginian slaveholders succeeded in defeating the abolitionist forces of the legislature, and the state implemented harsh restrictions on Black people to carry out the planters' counterrevolution. The new laws extended the tyrannical restrictions on Black people to include those who were free as well as enslaved. One law outlawed the assembly of Black people for any reason at any time of day. It read, "That no slave, free negro, or mulatto, whether he shall have been ordained or licensed, or otherwise, shall hereafter undertake to preach, exhort or conduct, or hold any assembly, or meeting, for religious or other purposes, either in the day time, or at night." The state Assembly decreed that "any person desiring so to do, shall have authority, without any previous written precept or otherwise, to apprehend any such offender, and carry him before such justice." Thus, the state empowered militias and other non-state white actors to enforce the law through what means they saw fit. The new slew of counterrevolutionary laws also outlawed the distribution of "seditious" literature which authorities believed to be advertising rebellion, with varying degrees of punishment for Black, "mulatto," and white people guilty of this crime. Finally, the laws mandated that "Free negroes and mulattoes shall hereafter be prosecuted, tried, convicted, and punished for any felony, by justices of oyer and terminer, in the same manner as slaves are now prosecuted, tried, convicted and punished," hence blurring the lines between the treatment of enslaved and free Black people in the state.⁴⁰⁷

Other Southern states followed suit. The Alabama legislature mandated that it "shall not be lawful for any free person of color to settle within the limits of this state... and if any such free person of color shall not depart this state within twenty days after the infliction of the punishment last mentioned, he or she shall be liable to be... ordered to be sold as a slave for the term of one year for ready money."⁴⁰⁸ Like those in Virginia, slaveholders in Alabama feared Black freemen and slaves alike and took steps to limit their presence in their state. The latter part of this act would not only deter these freemen from settling in the state, but might render them easier to control if they were to be enslaved for refusing to leave the state. In North Carolina, the state Assembly directed that slaves convicted of crimes would "be entitled to a trial by a jury of good and lawful men, owners of slaves."⁴⁰⁹ The state thus gave slaveholders the power to decide the cases of slaves, empowering them in the judicial process and enabling them to exert greater control over the discipline of enslaved people.

⁴⁰⁶ Hunt, 128.

⁴⁰⁷ Nat Turner Project, "Virginia: Laws Passed."

⁴⁰⁸ Nat Turner Project, "Alabama Laws."

⁴⁰⁹ Nat Turner Project, "North Carolina: General Assembly."

In this way, the planters' reaction to Turner's revolt followed the same pattern as the reaction to the conspiracies of Gabriel and Vesey: suppress the insurrectionist ideals which drove Black militants like them to rebel through the repression of free and enslaved Black people alike. The target of the planters' counterrevolution was not just abolitionists, not just slaves, but the very ideas of Black power, militancy and freedom, all of which the Haitian Revolution came to represent in their minds. Figures such as Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines embodied the powerful Black Militant, who was prepared to exact violent revenge against the planter class for having enslaved them. It is no wonder then that when Black American rebel figures such as Gabriel, Vesey, or Turner emerged they were immediately related to L'Ouverture or Dessalines and placed in the context which St. Domingue had set for Black revolution, for they dared to embody the planters' fears of another Haitian Revolution. As Edwin Holland of the Charleston *Times* argued in 1822, "Let it never be forgotten, that our NEGROES are truly the Jacobins of the country; that they are the anarchists and the domestic enemy; the common enemy of civilized society, and the barbarians who would, IF THEY COULD, become the DESTROYERS of our race."⁴¹⁰ The Haitian Revolution created in the minds of the planter class the image of the Black Militant, or in the words of Holland, the Black "Jacobin." The Revolution proved the capacity of Black people to destroy the lives and livelihoods of people like Holland, and so to him they were inherently revolutionary; they were the "jacobins" of the country, and a threat to the society he and the planter class held so dear.

⁴¹⁰ Holland, *Refutation of Calumnies Against Southern States*.

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