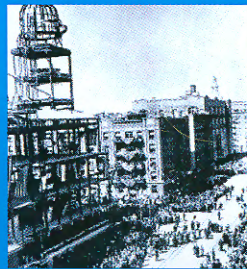


# תְּחִלָּה

The Journal of the Yeshiva University Historical Society  
2004 - 2005



*In this Edition:*

Jacksoniansim

Koyoto: Japan

Art During the French Revolution

Kabbalah and Abarbanel

An American Empire

Reagan '66

American Propaganda During WWII

# CHRONOS

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The study of History is vital for understanding today's current events. It presents the story of the past and allows us to put into perspective the events of the present. As Jewish American university students, we strive to understand the history of our people, country, and homeland. Yet our thirst for knowledge is not limited to those historical realms, as we desire to study all areas of global history.

**CHRONOS** presents the historical works compiled by the students of Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women, under the auspices of Yeshiva University. Most of the articles featured in this journal were written for the various history courses offered at Yeshiva University. We are also privileged to feature a wonderful piece on Jacksonian America by Professor Michael Kaplan, who teaches American History at Yeshiva College. Additionally, we have included articles on various aspects of America history, Jewish history, European history, and Japanese history.

**CHRONOS** would like to thank the following people with their assistance with the journal: Professor Michael Kaplan of the Yeshiva College History Department and Professor Hadassah Kosak of the Yeshiva and Stern College History Departments, Yeshiva College Dean Norman Adler and Assistant Dean Fred Sugarman, Stern College Dean Karen Bacon, and Managing Editor Paul Meir Adam for his work on the journal's cover.

We trust that you will enjoy the content of this journal, and hope that you will find these articles to be thought provoking and intellectually enlightening.

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# Kyoto: The Silent Power

*Michael Brenner*

**K**yoto is the ancient Imperial city that up until the Meiji restoration housed the imperial court and the emperor. For the first 1,600 years of Japan's history, the imperial court and the emperor consolidated power over Japanese lands. During the middle-ages, rival clans such as the Fujiwara and Minamoto clans clashed in a series of battles that concluded with a Minamoto victory, and their installation as the shogunate. This shogunate "established a line of military authority that supplemented, and in time overshadowed, that of the imperial court."<sup>1</sup> From then on, the imperial court was forced to "grant permission" to the shogunate to appoint titles, stewards to tracts of land, and military governors over the provinces. Emperors frequently abdicated early so they could exert more influence from the private sector. Gradually, the local and provincial interests trumped those of the imperial court as the political, economic, and social power of the shogunate grew. The second shogunal line, the Ashikaga, chose to have their capital in the imperial city of Kyoto itself. This shogunal line sealed the imperial court's fate when it engaged in foreign dialogue with the imperial government of Japan. The culmination occurred when the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu called himself the King of Japan.

While the shogunate was gaining in prestige, wealth and power, the imperial court was floundering in debt and poverty. For example, "in 1500 a new emperor...had to wait 20 years for formal enthronement because funds were lacking."<sup>2</sup> During the 1500s, Japan went through two revolutionary events that would forever shape its history. The first was the Sengoku, warring states, period that stimulated the establishment of a rock-solid shogunate that led Japan from the 1570s to the 1860s. This shogunate, the Tokugawa, and its influences on the emperor I will discuss a little later. The second event that occurred was the first Japanese contact with a non-Asian nation when Portuguese traders landed off the

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<sup>1</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.  
<sup>2</sup> Jansen, 5.

coast of Tanegashima in 1543. From that point on, the Japanese were divided into two groups: the xenophobic and the modernists. The xenophobes generally sided with the imperial court and the emperor, and would later on lead the Meiji restoration of 1867-68. The modernists realized that Japan could not survive in the world if it did not modernize and adapt to the European technological advances.

The Sengoku period brought about three revolutionary leaders that would lead Japan to its eventual unification and the degradation and eventual renewal of the emperor and the imperial court. The first was Nobunaga, a modernist. From his base in Azuchi, he would start the unification process by his victory in the 100 years war, the Onin War. He was the first to employ an army equipped with firearms. In keeping with his more modernist approach, Nobunaga did several things to undermine the emperor and the imperial court. He usurped certain powers from the emperor like the appointing of titles and stewardships. His fanatical crusade against religion, especially Buddhism, crushed one of the emperor's main allies: the clergy.

Nobunaga's successor in the unification of Japan was Hideyoshi. Unlike his predecessor, Hideyoshi had a diplomatic approach to the emperor and the imperial court. He used the court and the emperor to receive imperial titles for him and his family. After receiving these titles, he manipulated them in such a way as to give him more power: he ascribed each title with extra responsibility and thus more authority. Hideyoshi's lust for prestige came to a head when he tied himself to the ancient Fujiwara clan through marriage. His example of marrying into the imperial family was followed by many of the future Tokugawa shoguns.

The third unifier of Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu, separated the emperor and the imperial court from the rest of Japanese society including the Shogunate itself. Though he kept up the charade of his predecessors who received court titles and such from the emperor, Ieyasu was the first ruler to act completely independently from the emperor and the imperial court. He took over all foreign and domestic policy, and the emperor did not have a voice in any matters of state until Admiral Perry sailed into Edo Bay in the 1850s and sprung the Unequal Treaties on Japan. The emperor and imperial court became almost like a nostalgic side-show. They "bestowed" military titles on various daimyos, and in this way gave "legitimacy" to the Tokugawa shogunate. In addition, the emperor and imperial court were given minor "powers" through the naming of the eras, the marriage politics, and later on with the Shinto religion. The Shinto religion proclaimed that there were many divine spirits, or kami, in the world. The emperor was the central kami having descended from Amaterasu, the Shinto sun god. However, the most significant role the emperor and imperial court played were as merchants and land owners.

The emperor did not come to the forefront of Japan until the mid-1850s and

1860s. It was during this time that Japan was going through many internal and foreign dilemmas. The growing encroachment by foreign powers on Japanese sovereignty, through economic and religious means, brought about the pro-emperor/xenophobic elements of Japanese society. Again two striking events occurred. The first was the cry of Sonno Joi: 'Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians'. This was the motto of those xenophobes who wanted a return to pre-shogunal rule and the closure of Japan to all foreigners. The 1825 Expulsion Edict was an example of this growing sentiment. This was a response to the many invasions of Japanese waters by foreign ships, namely the 1808 Phaeton Incident with the British. The edict instructed that "all Southern barbarians and Westerners, not only the English, worship Christianity...and Henceforth whenever a foreign ship is sighted...all persons on hand should fire on and drive it off."<sup>3</sup> These fanatical elements eventually paved the way for the Meiji Restoration.

The second major event was actually a growing philosophical movement. This philosophy grew out of the Mito branch house that provided heirs for the Tokugawa shogunate if no male heir from the direct line was available. The Mito School of Philosophy was a derivative of Nativism that placed the emperor at the center of Japan, the Land of The Gods, and even life itself. Since main loyalty was to the emperor, the shogun was actually a retainer of the emperor who acted in the best interests of the emperor. The Unequal Treaties with the United States was contrary to the emperor's best interests, and the shogun resigned as a result. Eventually, there was a period of Meiji Ishin: the renewal of the right way to rule, emperor rule.

The emperor moved from Kyoto to Tokyo, the new name for Edo. He retained all of his lands, but the ensuing oligarchy gained control over shogunal lands. From the 1870s until the 1920s, the emperor and the imperial court were used similarly to the way Hideyoshi used them. The emperor was used to legitimize the oligarch's power. The oligarchs as well had made "promises of participation in government decisions that were particularly important during the first stage of military consolidation."<sup>4</sup> This was solidified by the carrying of the young Meiji emperor into the shogunal castle at Edo. "Intermarriage, adoption, and honorary posts put the little oligarchy at the center of Meiji society."<sup>5</sup>

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, there was a significant push for a more democratic government, and the eventual constitution farther marginalized the emperor's "powers." In practice, however, the emperor held mostly symbolic, rather than actual, authority. In fact, his grandeur and legend grew through government

3 Expulsion Edict of 1825: Issued by the Shogunate.

4 Jansen, 340.

5 Ibid., 372.

propaganda and mindless rumors among the conservative rural peasantry. The Meiji emperor died in 1912 and brought an end to one of the most influential eras in Japanese history. From 1912-1926, the emperor was frail and feeble-minded. When he died in 1926, his son Hirohito ascended the throne. This was the beginning of one of the most famous eras in Japanese history, the Showa era. The Showa era defined the creation of the new-Japan: from the post-war period until the 1989 economic bubble.

Like all "constitutional monarchs," the emperor/Hirohito was advised not to get involved in political decisions. All decisions were made by an inner circle of "advisors" and ministers, and these decisions were adopted in the name of the emperor. The Sino-Japanese, Russo-Japanese, and 15 Years War were all fought based on policies made by ministers and stamped with the emperor's "approval." Since all of these actions were uses of gunboat strategy like the Unequal Treaties, they were seen as the emperor amending Shogunal misdeeds.

At this point, Shinto was now brought to the forefront as a national religion. Therefore, all of Japanese nationalism was a derivative of emperor worship. The 15 Years War served as a "holy-war" fought in the name of the emperor to create a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. When the tide of the war turned against the Japanese, the Americans, in deference to the emperor, purposely did not target the Imperial City in Tokyo. In addition, the Allies dropped their absolute unconditional surrender and allowed the emperor to stay in place after the surrender of Japan. The defeat of Japan was devastating to everyone and everything. The country was in ruins and millions were dead or injured. Furthermore, the Japanese people had failed their emperor. This was most evident when the emperor himself gave an address on April 15, 1945, where he broadcasted "the announcement of surrender, seeming to end the war and the past in a single calendrical stroke."<sup>6</sup> He implored the Japanese "to pave the way...for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is insufferable."<sup>7</sup> The years following the 15 Years War until Hirohito's death in 1989 were characterized by vast change socially, economically, and politically.

From 1952 until 1989, Japan turned from a Yonto Koku into an Itto Koku. In the early 1950s, Japan served as an important staging and rearming base for American troops during the Korean War. By 1967, Japan was at pre-war economic output. Japan was gaining recognition in the global setting as well. Japan became a member of the United Nations, hosted the Olympics, built the Bullet Train, and contributed several Nobel Prize winners in various fields. Individual rights were

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<sup>6</sup> Carol Gluck, *The Idea of Showa* (New York: Columbia University, 1990), 3.

<sup>7</sup> F.C Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia: 1937-45* (England: Oxford University Press, 1954), 474-75.

protected through universal suffrage, the rebuilding of the economy, and the prosecution of war criminals. The Japanese economy became a juggernaut when the United States and Japan agreed to float the yen on the free market, which caused the Japanese economy to balloon. However, by the end of the Showa era, the Japanese economy was in shambles as many could not pay off their debts, and banks started closing.

Modern Japan, though not directly, was greatly influenced by the emperor. His sheer symbolic power marked an era with numerous ups and downs, deaths and rebirths. When Hirohito died, it represented "not a day or a decade, but more than a half-century of unprecedented turbulence and change."<sup>8</sup> Though the roles politically, socially, and economically of the emperor have changed numerous and drastically over the past 2,463 years, he has, is, and always will be a symbol of Japan and its people.

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<sup>8</sup> Gluck, 1.

# Kabbalah and Abarbanel's “Flight from Reason”

*Benzion N. Chinn*

There is a common view with regard to Medieval Jewish History that there is a divide between the rationalists, led by Maimonides, and the anti-rationalists, as exemplified by the Kabbalists. At its base, this paradigm is based upon the assumption that mysticism and metaphysics stem from an anti-rationalist mode of thought and imply a rejection of philosophy. Heinrich Graetz took this view a step further, creating this tragic narrative in which the light of Maimonidean rationalism of 12<sup>th</sup> century Jewry is quenched by the darkness of Kabbalism. This causes the Jewish People to sink into a superstitious stupor for the next several centuries, only to be awakened by the dawn of the Enlightenment. This is a highly problematic view to say the least.<sup>1</sup> One example where such a paradigm like this becomes difficult is in regard to Don Isaac Abarbanel.

Abarbanel becomes very difficult to classify as, within this one person, one finds all the usual stereotypes of both the rationalists and the anti-rationalists. Abarbanel, at various points in his life, was associated with the royal courts of Portugal, Spain and Naples, ending his life in the service of the Venetian government. Yet he died awaiting the apocalyptic destruction of the Western world. He was familiar with both Greek and Christian thought; within the corpus of his writings one finds references to Plato, Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Abarbanel was very willing to go against rabbinic views; he even at times accepted Christian explanations of texts. Yet at times, he comes across as being one of the fiercest defenders of the authority of rabbinic tradition. Much of his work was devoted to attacking Maimonides, yet he viewed him as one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of all time. Abarbanel was among the strongest Jewish critics of Monarchism of the Middle-Ages and yet he was also one of the

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<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention here to deal with the general catalogue of distortions and downright lies by Whigist ideologues, who have for the past several centuries waged a campaign to besmirch the Middle-Ages.

most ardent defenders of the traditional Messianic doctrine. My intention here is to examine one such "paradox" that of Abarbanel's loyalty to Kabbalah and to philosophy.

Following in Graetz's footsteps,<sup>2</sup> Benzion Netanyahu, in his book "Don Isaac Abarbanel: Statesman & Philosopher", presents Abarbanel as one of the key anti-rationalist figures of the Middle-Ages, albeit one who possessed a philosophical education. For Netanyahu one of the main manifestations of Abarbanel's anti-rationalism is his professed admiration for Kabbalistic doctrines, in contrast to his numerous harangues against philosophers. Netanyahu sees this as one of the main themes running through Abarbanel's thought, from Abarbanel's first important work, *Ateret Zeqenim* (AZ), until the end of his life. Netanyahu sees AZ as an expression of Abarbanel's "flight from rationalism."<sup>3</sup> According to Netanyahu: "It is in this work that Abarbanel first expresses his admiration for the Cabalists, the 'bearers of truth,' and his criticism of the philosophers who 'walk in darkness.'"<sup>4</sup> Netanyahu takes this relationship between Abarbanel and Kabbalah a step further arguing that:

Although Abarbanel claimed that he was no cabalist, his admitted acceptance of cabalistic methods and doctrines and his undisguised admiration for the 'ancient' cabalistic masters who, he believed, held the answers to all the baffling mysteries of the world, paved the way for the acceptance of the cabala as the principal 'science' in the field of human knowledge. The very fact that Abarbanel, a renowned philosophical scholar, a man of immense learning and, what is perhaps most important, a man whose general authority among Jews was of the highest, bowed before the depth and greatness of the cabala, removed from that science much of the skepticism regarding its genuineness and importance from which it suffered from the very beginning.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that Abarbanel possessed a philosophical background only makes it worse. For Netanyahu, Abarbanel becomes, so to speak, the key traitor who brought down the medieval rationalist tradition.

Netanyahu does not offer any evidence to support his claim that after Abarbanel Kabbalah became more acceptable within mainstream Judaism.<sup>6</sup> More

<sup>2</sup> Netanyahu though adds a Zionist twist.

<sup>3</sup> Benzion Netanyahu. *Don Isaac Abarbanel: Statesman & Philosopher 5th ed.* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-55.

<sup>6</sup> The one thing that I could think of which Abarbanel did for Kabbalah was to call attention to the Kabbalistic tendencies within Maimonides' writing.

importantly, he does not offer a single example of anyone taking on a more positive attitude toward Kabbalah as a result of Abarbanel's influence. As a contrast to this it should be noted that Abarbanel's son, Judah Abarbanel wrote, what is regarded by many to be, the definitive work of 16<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Platonism, "*Dialoghi D'Amore*". C.S Lewis even lists Judah Abarbanel as being one of the chief influences on John Milton.<sup>7</sup> One would therefore be on far better ground to label Isaac Abarbanel as being one of the founding fathers, not of Kabbalah but, of Renaissance Platonism. Furthermore, Abarbanel's status in the pantheon of traditional Jewish thought<sup>8</sup> is rather problematic.<sup>9</sup> The reason for this is that Abarbanel, unlike what Netanyahu would have you believe, possessed a radical streak. While traditionalists have been able to ignore the radical elements within Maimonides' writing, this has not been the case in regards to Abarbanel's.<sup>10</sup>

The major roadblock to putting a heavy emphasis on Abarbanel's relationship to Kabbalism is that, as even Netanyahu acknowledges, Abarbanel himself would have been the first to deny it. Numerous times in his writings he stated positions which he associated with the Kabbalists, but he declined to endorse them, expressing his unsuitability for judging them. In regards to the notion that there is a heavenly Garden of Eden he wrote: "it is not my intention to explain their words as I have not studied the wisdom of the Kabbalah and do not know their holy wisdom."<sup>11</sup> Similarly when he mentioned the theory that *mazal* is a type of *Sefira*, he stated; "I said to my heart that it is not fit for me to deal with secrets and I have not walked in the ways of the Kabbalah. It is foreign to me."<sup>12</sup>

Most telling is his discussion of Ezekiel's vision of the chariot.<sup>13</sup> Abarbanel stated that he had no intention of following Maimonides in this regards, as his way is a "lie and a falsehood."<sup>14</sup> Abarbanel also gave what he viewed as the Kabbalistic approach, which claimed that the vision explains the nature of the various types of angles and their relationship with G-D and with the world. In the end, Abarbanel though gave a different explanation from that of the Kabbalists despite his stated sympathies for their position. His explanation for this was: "I have not studied the wisdom of the Kabbalah and do not know their holy knowledge and because of this I will explain this chapter of prophecy in a different

<sup>7</sup> See C.S. Lewis, preface to *Paradisé Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 41.

<sup>8</sup> Judah Abarbanel has been almost completely forgotten.

<sup>9</sup> I once heard that Ner-Yisroel put a ban on Abarbanel's books because of what he said about David and Bath-Sheba. I have no idea if there is any truth to this story but the mere fact that this story exists, I think, illustrates my point.

<sup>10</sup> Most probably the reason for this is that Abarbanel never wrote an indispensable *Halachic* work such as Maimonides's "*Mishneh Torah*".

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Abarbanel, *Commentary on the Bible* v.1 (Jerusalem: Bene Arabel, 1964), 115b.

<sup>12</sup> Abarbanel, *Commentary* v.4, 49a.

<sup>13</sup> Abarbanel, *Later Prophets* (Jerusalem: 1979), Ezekiel 1:4-28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Ezekiel 43:9a.



manner which agrees with the simple meaning of the text."<sup>15</sup> As to why he did not simply skip the chapter he explains that he felt he had to give some explanation because he saw the nation "walking in the darkness of the philosophers, going after the opinion of the Rabbi of the Guide."<sup>16</sup>

This does not mean that Abarbanel avoided the topic completely. While Abarbanel may not have viewed himself as adept in Kabbalistic lore, he clearly had familiarized himself with the available literature on the subject. To give a few examples of this, he quotes from the *Zohar* in regards to the existence of higher meanings for each word of the Torah.<sup>17</sup> In his commentary on Leviticus, in regards to the issue of why G-D commanded that blood and fat be brought on the altar while at the same time banning humans from eating it, Abarbanel quoted an opinion, which he listed as being Kabbalistic, that the reason for this command is that fat is associated with the divine attribute of mercy while blood is associated with the divine attribute of judgment.<sup>18</sup>

The great irony of Abarbanel's relationship to Kabbalah is that, for Abarbanel, Kabbalah is not a counter to philosophy, but is something intimately tied to it. This can be seen in how he dealt with the concept of the transmigration of the soul, *gilgul*.<sup>19</sup> In its support he cites R' Shimon Bar Yochai, and Nachmonides, along with Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates, who, according to Abarbanel, had learned this doctrine from the prophets themselves. In Abarbanel's view, the doctrine of *gilgul* was something that had been accepted by almost all the ancients, except for Aristotle and the rest of the kingdom of darkness.<sup>20</sup>

Abarbanel also interpreted the concept of *Sefirot* within the context of Platonic thought. In his letter to Saul Hakohen, Abarbanel declared:

For of necessity things exist as a figuration in the mind of the agent before they come into being. Indubitably this image is the world of the *Sefirot* mentioned by the Kabbalistic sages of true wisdom, [who said] that the *Sefirot* are not created but are emanated, and that all of them unite together in him, blessed be his name, for they are the figurations of his loving kindness and his willing what he created. In truth Plato set down the knowledge of the separate general forms not as Aristotle understood them."<sup>21</sup>

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Abarbanel, *Commentary*, v.1, 88a. Abarbanel assumed that the *Zohar* was in fact written by R' Shimon bar Yochai.

18 Abarbanel, *Commentary*, v.2, 30b.

19 Abarbanel, *Commentary* v.4, 230a-233b.

20 Abarbanel did not have any great love for Aristotle and had utter contempt for his followers be they Jewish or otherwise.

21 Abarbanel, "Responsa of Abravanel to R. Saul ha-Cohen". Trans. Moshe Idel quoted in "Jewish Kabbalah and Platonism" in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 332.

This attempt to harmonize Kabbalah with elements of Platonic thought was not something unique to Abarbanel, but was a common feature of rationalist theologians in both Jewish and Christian circles. There was a particularly close affinity between Abarbanel and his younger contemporary David Messer Leon. As Hava Tirosh-Rothchild points out, both Abarbanel and Messer Leon viewed the *Sefirot* as being a part of G-D, and not simply as vessels of divine influence. They also both point to Plato as being essentially in agreement with such a position.<sup>22</sup>

Abarbanel and other such thinkers did not see Kabbalah as a counter to philosophy or rationalism, but as the logical consequence of it. As Eric Lawee points out the mere fact that Abarbanel explains the *Sefirot* as being part of the divinity and not merely a vessel for divine influence puts Abarbanel within the philosophical camp. Lawee takes this a step further arguing that, for Abarbanel, Kabbalah was not so much a received tradition but a "product of intellectual endeavor by those who have received training in the field - a field, it is implied, in principle accessible to all."<sup>23</sup> Lawee's proof for this is that Abarbanel uses such terms as "scholars of the Kabbalah" and he speaks of them having an understanding of the deity that is "cognized and discerned." While Abarbanel clearly saw Kabbalah as something different from prophecy, it would be a mistake to think that Abarbanel saw Kabbalah as the equivalent to philosophy. As even Lawee points out, the Kabbalist, like the prophet, is different from the philosopher in that while the philosopher is limited in his comprehension to things that are "below the sphere of the moon," the prophet, and by extension the Kabbalist, is capable of having direct positive knowledge of the divine.

It would seem that, for Abarbanel, the knowledge of the Kabbalist consists of his ability to comprehend the esoteric meanings of the prophetic writings. As such, Kabbalah, for Abarbanel, is both a tradition and something to be discerned. The secrets of the Kabbalah are open to anyone if they only understood scripture in its truest sense. Abarbanel's model Kabbalist was clearly Nachmonides;<sup>24</sup> he is the one Kabbalistic figure, who Abarbanel mentioned on any regular basis. Abarbanel continuously called attention to the fact that Nachmonides often intimates that the text contains secret, i.e. Kabbalistic, meanings to it. One example of this is by Genesis 38:8 where Nachmonides refers to the commandment of *yibbum* as being one of the "great secret[s] of the secrets of the *Tbrah*."

One of the reasons why, for Abarbanel, philosophy is so closely intertwined with Kabbalah is that Abarbanel believed that the source of the Greek philosophi-

22 Hava Tirosh-Rothschild, "Sefirot as the Essence of God in the Writings of David Messer Leon." *AJS Review* 7-8 (1982-83): 413-25.

23 Eric Lawee, *Isaac Abarbanel's Stance Toward Tradition: Defense, Dissent, and Dialogue* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 79.

24 Abarbanel refers to Nachmonides as "having plumbed deeply into his secrets regarding this matter." *AZ* (Jerusalem: 1968), 10.

cal tradition was quite literally the prophets.<sup>25</sup> Abarbanel believed that Plato had been a student of Jeremiah's.<sup>26</sup> Abarbanel did not see a divide between "Athens" and "Jerusalem." For Abarbanel all knowledge originally stemmed from "Jerusalem" in one way or another. In finding support for this notion, Abarbanel had a long tradition of both Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers to rely on. Abarbanel actually quotes Averroes<sup>27</sup> as saying, in his book "Destruction of Destruction," that:

The wisdom of the Greeks was stolen from the children of Israel [and that] there is no doubt that the wisdom was found first amongst the children of Israel and the Chaldean learnt it from them for it is amongst them that prophecy is found.<sup>28</sup>

This notion that the philosophers received their knowledge from the prophets was also supported by Al-Ghazali, Roger Bacon,<sup>29</sup> Justin Martyr,<sup>30</sup> Clement of Alexandria<sup>31</sup> and Augustine.

It would be a mistake to dismiss Abarbanel's claim here as an attempt to undermine philosophy. Abarbanel makes no attempt to use this claim in order to attack Plato; Abarbanel never claimed that Plato had stolen his ideas from Jeremiah. On the contrary, Plato is referred to as a student of Jeremiah's. As such, Plato becomes a legitimate source for the tradition of the prophets. Abarbanel's purpose in doing this is to bring Plato within the Jewish tradition. This allows Abarbanel to make a distinction between Plato and Aristotle and as such Abarbanel is able to attack the philosophy of Aristotle as being foreign to the Jewish tradition without abandoning philosophy altogether.

How seriously are we to take Abarbanel's interest in Plato? Seymour Feldman, following in the footsteps of Jakob Guttman, argues against Moshe Idel, claiming that Abarbanel's knowledge of Plato was fairly superficial. Feldman points to the fact that Abarbanel only mentioned the "*Timaeus*"<sup>32</sup>, the "*Phaedo*", and the

25 It is Moshe Idel who really called attention to this. See "Kabbalah V'Philosophia Kadoma Atzel R' Yitzchak V'Yehuda Abarbanel." Kabbalah V'Philosophia Kadoma Atzel R' Yitzchak V'Yehuda Abarbanel" in *Filosofiyat ha-ahava sehl Yehudah Abravanel*, eds. Menahem Dorman and Zevi Levi (Haifa, Israel: Haifa University Press, 1985).

26 Abarbanel, *Mifa lot 'Elohim (ME)*, (Lember: 1863), 55b. See also Netanyahu, *Don Isaac*, 100 and Idel "Kabbalah", 99-102.

27 It would seem that one would find this to be the only instance that Abarbanel spoke positively about Averroes. While I have not researched this fully, considering the role that Averroes traditionally played in the debates over Maimonides, I feel certain that this is the case.

28 Abarbanel, *Commentary*, v.1, 171b.

29 Roger Bacon, "Opus Majus," Part II Chap. 5, 6 and 14.

30 Justin Martyr, "Hortatory Address to the Greeks."

31 Clement of Alexandria, *The Miscellanies* I 21, II 18, V 14.

32 Abarbanel, *ME*, 39b.

"*Republic*", which were well known during the Middle-Ages. Unlike his son Judah, Isaac Abarbanel never mentioned "The Symposium". Also, while Abarbanel quoted "*The Phaedo*" in regards to the issue of the transmigration of souls he overlooked the fact that Plato believed that the soul "is not born and does not die."<sup>33</sup> Furthermore Plato believed that souls were reincarnated into animals.<sup>34</sup> While Abarbanel rejected this concept, he never bothered to mention that this doctrine was held by Plato.

In regards to the issue of Plato's connection to Jeremiah, Feldman wonders whether Abarbanel had read all of Augustine's "City of God", as he failed to note Augustine's refutation of the claim that Plato had studied scripture with Jeremiah. Augustine, in rejecting the notion that Plato could have learned scripture from Jeremiah, pointed out that Plato lived at least a century after Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived during the later part of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. He would have been active as a prophet from c.626 BCE to c.586 BCE. Plato on the other hand lived from 428 BCE to 347.<sup>35</sup>

In truth, Abarbanel was not ignorant of the fact that Plato believed in the eternity of certain elements of the world. Abarbanel, in "*Mifa lot 'Elohim*", commented that Plato believed that *chomar* was eternal, and that the world was created from it and that angels were also uncreated.<sup>36</sup> Abarbanel gave this as a the reason why Maimonides rejected Plato's theory of creation even while he admitted that Plato's doctrine is very close to that of the Torah's.<sup>37</sup> While Plato may have been an improvement over Aristotle and believed in a created world, he still believed that there are things, beside G-D, which are uncreated and eternal. This contradicts the fourth of Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith, which states that only G-D could have existed from eternity.

As to why Abarbanel attacked certain doctrines held by Plato, without mentioning that Plato held them, one needs to keep in mind that Abarbanel had a vested interest in not directly criticizing Plato in that, for Abarbanel, Plato served as a rubric with which he could justify those elements of philosophy that he found to be useful. For Abarbanel there was philosophy, good, as taught by Plato, which he learned from Jeremiah, and philosophy, bad, as taught by Aristotle, who had corrupted Jewish thought, and against whose influence even Maimonides him-

33 Plato, *The Phaedrus* 245c-246a.

34 Plato, *The Phaedo* 81e-82b, *The Republic* 620a-d.

35 Augustine, *City of God*, VIII.12. See also Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* II, XXVIII, 43 where he seems to endorse the possibility that Plato could have learned from Jeremiah.

36 Abarbanel, *ME* 49a. See also Abarbanel in *Nahalot Avot* (New York: 1953), 5:1 where Abarbanel associates Plato's doctrine of the eternal existence of Matter with the opinion of Gersonides.

37 Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed* II.13.

self was at times not sufficiently on guard.

In regards to the problem of the dates for Jeremiah and Plato, one has to remember that Abarbanel did not accept the standard chronology, which dates the destruction of the first Temple to 586 BCE, but was a strong supporter of *Seder Olam* chronology, which dates the destruction of the first Temple to 423 BCE.<sup>38</sup> For Abarbanel's purposes Jeremiah would have been an active prophet from c.462 BCE to c.422 BCE, before spending the rest of his life in Egypt. In order to make this work, Abarbanel goes so far as to suggest that Jeremiah was just a young boy when he started his career as a prophet. This allowed Abarbanel to have Jeremiah living in Egypt for fifty years after the destruction of the Temple, long enough for him to have met Plato when he came to Egypt.<sup>39</sup>

To be sure, Abarbanel was troubled by his own relationship to philosophy. The most famous example of this is his comment in the "Responsa to R. Saul Ha-Cohen" where he confessed that:

"In the days of my labors and my youth, I ran after philosophy ... but after the evil days, [1492] when I grew to be a man, I spoke to my heart why have you made yourself wise with the books of the Greeks ... and I limited myself to dealing with the Book of the Guide and the explanation of holy writ."<sup>40</sup>

Though, in response to those, like Netanyahu, who see this statement as evidence of Abarbanel's anti-philosophical attitude, I would respond that if one were to read this as Abarbanel's rejection of philosophy then by his own words he only had turned against philosophy after 1492. This would exclude such earlier works as AZ from being anti-philosophy.<sup>41</sup> That being said I do not believe that Abarbanel was trying to disassociate himself completely from philosophy. Rather he was simply expressing regret for his continued willingness to engage in these issues outside of the context of scripture. Proof for this can be seen in the fact that Abarbanel, in his later works, continued to quote non-Jewish sources, both Greek and Christian, often in quite positive terms. If Abarbanel had really intended to toss his gloves in regards to philosophy he must have forgotten about it very quickly. Also, it does not make any sense for Abarbanel to have expressed his rejection of philosophy by devoting himself to the Guide, which, of course, has a lot to do with

38 See Abarbanel, *Ma'aynei ha-Yeshu'ah* (Jerusalem: 1960), 375a-379b where he accuses Josephus of having distorted the truth chronology in order to please his Roman patrons.

39 See Abarbanel, *Later Prophets*, Jeremiah, 305b.

40 Abarbanel, *Responsa of Abravanel to R. Saul Ha-Cohen* (Jerusalem: 1967), 7d. Translation mine.

41 Netanyahu in fact claims that Abarbanel was misrepresenting the evolution of his thought and that he had turned against philosophy decades earlier when he wrote AZ.

issues raised by philosophy. If Abarbanel had no longer wished to deal with philosophy then there are a lot of other books which he could have dealt with. The purpose for his continued engagement with the Guide was that the Guide represented, for Abarbanel, the paradigm for engaging philosophy within the context of scripture.

As I see it, it was not that Abarbanel was opposed to rationalism or philosophy per se. The real issue for Abarbanel was the Averroist ethos which sought to interpret religion in philosophical terms; in essence to turn religion into a "handmaiden of philosophy." It is not for nothing that the modern advocate of the Averroistic reading of Maimonides, Leo Strauss, fingered Abarbanel as a contrast to Maimonides. Strauss specifically called attention to Abarbanel's refusal to interpret Judaism in terms of the Greek philosophical tradition. According to Strauss:

"The unphilosophic, to some extent even anti-philosophic, traditionalism of Abarbanel accounts for the fact that for him political philosophy loses the central importance which it had for Maimonides. ... the significance which [Maimonides] actually attaches to political philosophy is in exact proportion to his rationalism: identifying the fundamental beliefs of Judaism with the fundamental tenets of philosophy means at the same time interpreting the beliefs peculiar to Judaism in terms of political philosophy; and it means, in principle, interpreting Judaism as a whole as a perfect laws in the Platonic sense. Accordingly, a follower of Maimonides, who rejected the thoroughgoing rationalism of the latter, as did Abarbanel, deprived by this very fact political philosophy of all its dignity"<sup>42</sup>

Strauss, and other such critics, misses the point; it was not that Abarbanel had abandoned the rationalism of Maimonides. Nor was he trying to eliminate political philosophy. For Abarbanel, philosophy, political or otherwise, was rooted within scripture. As such Abarbanel had no intention of trying to read scripture in terms of the Greek philosophical tradition. His goal was to read the Greek philosophical tradition in terms of scripture.

In conclusion, I believe that it is a mistake to use Abarbanel's well documented respect for Kabbalistic traditions either to classify him as a follower of Kabbalah or as someone who was against philosophy. I would agree with Lawee, who sees Abarbanel's relationship to Kabbalah as "one of formal but qualified allegiance to various teachings embodied in the Kabbalah but one of distance

42 Leo Strauss, "Abravanel's Philosophical Tendency and Political Thinking" in *Isaac Abravanel, Six Lectures*, eds. J.B. Trend and H. Loewe (Cambridge, Eng.: University Press, 1937), 104.

even from their most 'respectable' propagators."<sup>43</sup> He accepted the notion that Kabbalah was a legitimate tradition stemming from the prophets. Though, from his perspective this tradition was by and large contained within Platonic philosophy. Furthermore, Abarbanel made no attempt to associate himself either with Kabbalistic doctrines or with Kabbalists. The only Kabbalistic thinker that Abarbanel attempted to associate himself with was Nachmonides. The reason for this, I think, is that Nachmonides was someone who was primarily a biblical commentator and Talmudic scholar. Kabbalah, for Nachmonides, was something inherently tied to these things. For this reason we do not find Nachmonides dealing with Kabbalah outside the context of either scripture or the Talmud. This is an ethos shared by Abarbanel both in regards to Kabbalah and in regards to philosophy. For Abarbanel it was not a matter of things being pro-philosophy or anti-philosophy, pro-rationalism or anti-rationalism. The real question was if and how such things were related to scripture.

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<sup>43</sup> Lawee, *Stance*, 59.

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# Revolutionary Art: The Three Martyrs of Jacques-Louis David

*Leora Galian*

Besides the manifest economic problems that existed during eighteenth century France, the underlying causes of the French Revolution were in their very nature, instituted by revolutionary ideas and concepts. Elements of a society took on new dimensions. New, unheard of ideas emerged such as those presented by Voltaire whose writings demonstrated against the church, Diderot who spoke against the tradition and most importantly, Rousseau who introduced Frenchman to the idea of popular sovereignty. As these new ideas (later referred to as ideas of the Enlightenment) swept through the French masses, they made their mark in areas beyond the purely intellectual and began to have a strong effect on more tangible areas of France's backbone. French Politics were greatly affected and radically changed through the influence of these new ideas.<sup>1</sup> As an offshoot of revolutionary politics came a need to express these views and bring them down to the minds of those who could not intellectually grasp the power of these revolutionary ideas. Thus, along with the intellectual politics that spread through men of understanding, came a new genre of art to visually express these ideas to the masses. This new art was revolutionary in that it no longer simply expressed ideas or depicted history, but was meant to create new ideas, reshape reality and use the strength of visual imagery to enforce the radical ideas that were the foreground of the revolution.

Jacques-Louis David's "position was unchallenged as the painter of the Revolution."<sup>2</sup> David was the man who successfully accomplished synthesizing politics

<sup>1</sup> "Origins of the Revolution" *Electric Library*, 13 March, 2002 <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

<sup>2</sup> "David, Jacques-Louis" *WebMuseum* 27 February, 2002 <<http://www.ibiblio.org>>.

and art. His success in doing so came from his expertise as an artist and his active involvement in French politics. The fact that David was a sympathizer with the Revolution can be seen in all of his artwork depicting that time in history. The expertise of David in fields of both politics and art led to revolutionary propaganda art.

Almost all of the art that David produced during the revolution is colored with propaganda qualities. Although David painted in many different styles over the course of his career, he chose to paint scenes of the French Revolution in his version of a realistic style. Yet, in his three paintings of 'the martyrs of the Revolution,' it is seen that David's version of realism is very different than the modern day interpretation of this idea.

The first of David's martyr's was Louis Michel Le Pelletier de Saint-Fargeau who was assassinated in 1792, the night before king Louis the sixteenth was executed. Le Pelletier was himself an aristocrat who had turned to the Revolutionary cause and voted for the kings' death. Considered a turncoat by the royalists, a former bodyguard of the king killed Le Pelletier to revenge his masters' sentence. The circumstances and publicly known reasons for Le Pelletier's death turned him into one of the first martyr's of the revolution.<sup>3</sup>

In order to record this occurrence, David requested to have the honor of depicting the death of Le Pelletier.<sup>4</sup> By examining 'Le Pelletier de Saint-Fargeau on his Deathbed', there are many elements that are clearly visible to the viewers' eye and reveal David's genius in depicting the fallen Le Pelletier as a martyred hero to the people. David himself wrote that his purpose in visually displaying the death of this martyr was to show the public "the sublime face of heroism and virtue."<sup>5</sup> Even before the details of this work are examined, the picture as a whole is a tribute to the success of David's goal. Although Le Pelletier is no longer alive, his body position makes him appear to be in a swoon rather than dead. His facial features are relaxed and in many ways along with the rest of his body, idealized. This idealized version of Le Pelletier makes him look more like a fallen Greek hero than a human man. Yet, this is the effect that David intends to produce. When presenting this portrait to the public, David said "see how peaceful his face is-When you die for your country, you die with a clear conscience."<sup>6</sup> This is the idea behind the heroism that David portrays. Through this painting he is saying to the public, look, this man should be your hero as he has sacrificed his life for his country.

The theme of heroism due to sacrificing ones life for ones country in itself is

3 Simon Lee, *David* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), 157.

4 *Ibid.*, 157.

5 *Ibid.*, 157.

6 *Ibid.*, 157.

a mechanism of David that had further implications than standard heroism. Many still felt guilt for the execution of their king. To counter this feeling of the people, David goes out of his way to include many different elements that he hopes will clear the conscious of the people.<sup>7</sup> This is why Le Pelletier is shown as both a hero and a martyr. When Le Pelletier voted for the execution of the king, he knew that he was putting his life in danger yet, for the greater good of the country, Le Pelletier took this risk. The sword, which hangs over his body by a single strand of hair, represents the strength of Le Pelletier to vote for the kings' death. The king held a sword over the people with 'a single strand of hair', which at any moment, could break and kill everyone.<sup>8</sup> Le Pelletier took the chance of that strand of hair breaking and the sword coming down and died by doing so. To heighten the effect of this message, David wrote the words of Le Pelletier that prompted his death on the paper, which is pierced through by the sword. It says, "I vote the death of the tyrant."<sup>9</sup> Once again, this reminds the guilty conscience that there is no need to feel guilty. One should rejoice that the tyrant is dead and look up to he who helped to bring about his death.

To further enhance the idea of Le Pelletier's martyrdom, David includes elements that suggest that Le Pelletier was not only a national martyr, but also a religious martyr. There is much Christian imagery included in this painting that makes Le Pelletier resemble the original Christian martyr, Christ. Le Pelletier's calm face even in death resembles the many depictions of Christ after the crucifixion. This serenity represents the knowledge that like Christ, his suffering had a purpose to redeem others.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Le Pelletier's death was a step towards redemption and the freedom of others from tyrannical rule. Once again, these references to Christian imagery are all aimed at the people to assure them that their revolutionary actions have divine approval.

The message of this painting was so strong that we no longer have the original. The daughter of Le Pelletier who was herself a royalist bought it from David for an exorbitant sum of money and burnt it shortly before her death. All that remains of David's first martyr is one torn engraving and drawing of the original work.<sup>11</sup> Yet, although Miss. Le Pelletier was successful in physically destroying her fathers' portrait, she was not successful in destroying the strong influence it had on strengthening the revolutionary ideas of the French bourgeoisie.

Jean-Paul Marat, a radical journalist who published many revolutionary ar-

7 *Ibid.*, 158.

8 Lorenz Eitner, *Neoclassicism and Romanticism: 1750-1850* v.1 (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 133.

9 Lee, 159.

10 Warren Roberts, *Revolutionary Artists* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 287.

11 Lee, 159.

ticles specifically against the privileged class, was David's second martyr. A 23-year-old girl, Charlotte Corday from Normandy, killed Marat on July 13, 1793. Although Corday was herself a supporter of the revolution, she felt that Marat had taken his radical ideas too far and hoped that by putting an end to Marat, she would redirect the revolution and bring an end to Marat's motto that "liberty must be established by violence."<sup>12</sup> Miss. Corday gained entrance into Marat's home by sending a letter to him with information about anti-revolutionary activity. When she finally gained access to Marat, she found him sitting in his bath doing work. When asked about the letter she wrote regarding traitors, she pulled out a newly bought butcher knife and thrust it into Marat's chest. Marat died shortly afterwards from the wound. Charlotte herself did not try to escape, as she knew that her punishment would be death. Her prediction came true as the next day she was guillotined. In the end, far from putting a stop to violence, Corday's action only created more.<sup>13</sup>

After the death of Marat, he too was proclaimed a martyr for the French people and David was asked to eternalize Marat in a painting. "Where are you David?" he was asked. 'You have transmitted to posterity the picture of Le Pelletier dying for his country and here is another painting for you to do.' David replied 'yes, I will do it.'<sup>14</sup> This second martyr painting had a different theme than the first. David's painting 'Marat Breathing his Last' was more about showing how unlike Charlotte Corday's belief that Marat was a foe of the people and the revolution, he was in truth the people's friend. In order to successfully convince people of this, David includes many elements in this painting that support his stand of Marat's love for the people.

As the title suggests, Marat is dying, but not yet dead. David paints an idealized Marat. His face looks younger and handsomer than Marat really was. Elements of his character are depicted in the portrait. David tries to express Marat's virtue. He shows his frugality in the patched sheet, which lines the tub. In his left hand and visible to the viewer is the letter from Charlotte Corday. Although this letter mostly resembles the original, David took the liberty to change the end of it in order to put Corday in a bad light. By changing the end of the letter, David shows Corday as a woman who applied to the kindness of a man that she intended to kill.<sup>15</sup> The other note that David includes in this painting says, "You are to give this assignat to this mother of five whose husband died for his country."<sup>16</sup> Again, this note whether real or created by David is specifically included in this

12 Ibid., 162.

13 Roberts, 289.

14 Ibid., 290.

15 Ibid., 290.

16 Lee, 172.

painting to stress the kindness of Marat and the care he had for the people of France. David also strategically plans that the letter from Charlotte Corday is in close proximity to Marat's note to the widow. Once again, an uncomplimentary comparison can be drawn between Corday who worked against the country and the widow whose husband died for the country. During the revolution, high birth-rate was promoted. Corday was herself a known spinster. Thus, by putting her letter near the widow's, Corday is being portrayed as an "unnatural woman" and presents another example of her anti-revolutionary sentiments.<sup>17</sup>

As in his portrayal of Le Pelletier, David includes many Christian elements to give credence to the martyrdom of Marat. Although based on factual history, the portrait has more to do with a propaganda image that attempts to give credence to the martyrdom of Marat. David turns a gruesome, messy, bloody murder into a surreal spiritual experience.<sup>18</sup> At Marat's funeral, David made an outright comparison between him and Jesus Christ. In his painting, David puts Marat in a pose similar to that of Jesus Christ and uses a bare background and glistening brushwork, which resemble Caravaggio's 'Entombment of Christ'.<sup>19</sup> Marat's wound looks similar to that of Christ after he was taken off of the cross.<sup>20</sup> The lighting that seems to come from an unknown above gives the painting a spiritual quality.<sup>21</sup>

After the completion of 'Marat Breathing his Last,' David loaned it along with 'Le Pelletier de Saint-Fargeau on his Deathbed' to the Louve in order to honor the two martyrs. The portraits were used as revolution propaganda and displayed for public viewing. People were encouraged to bring their children to stare at these portraits in order to inspire them with proper revolutionary feeling.<sup>22</sup> These portraits were meant to strengthen their revolutionary beliefs and to arouse feelings of revenge for those who were anti-revolution and specifically, those who killed the 'friend of the people.'

The third and last revolution martyr depicted by David was not a politician like Le Pelletier or Marat, but a young boy who up until his death was virtually unknown to the public. Bara was killed on December 7, 1793 on the Atlantic coast in the Vendee at the tender age of 13 after refusing the demands of royalist soldiers for two of his horses.<sup>23</sup> Although Bara in his lifetime did not tangibly benefit the revolution, his death was successful in producing the much-needed inspiration for the people. This led to Bara's being hailed as the young martyr of the revolution.

17 Ibid., 172.

18 Ibid., 171.

19 Ibid., 170.

20 Roberts, 292.

21 Lee, 170.

22 Ibid., 168.

The portrait that David does of this last martyr is in many ways puzzling. In fact, 'The Death of Bara' is almost completely historically inaccurate.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps David eliminates all historical detail in order to successfully create a painting that would be timeless in its qualities and all that it represents. Bara in many ways resembles a Greek youth as he is shown in the nude and has no distinguishing details about his person. This lack of detail can also stem from the fact that David never actually saw Bara, yet still needed to create a boy that would pull on the emotions of the people.

In Bara's hand is a letter and the tri-color cockade of the revolution. Although it is impossible for the viewer to see what is written on the letter, it is conjectured that this is a letter that Bara had written to his mother.<sup>25</sup> If this is so, the detail further raises Bara in our esteem, makes us sympathize with him and makes us angry with his ravishers. The tri-color cockade represents Bara's loyalty to the revolution even in death. Far from looking like a patriotic soldier, Bara lies naked on the ground and in many ways, looks more feminine than masculine. The flag in the corner of the painting represent the royalist soldiers leaving and make it appear as though they have just stripped Bara of his clothing, violated him and then killed him.<sup>26</sup> Thus, presenting Bara as a young boy who was so terribly used by royalist soldiers was another device used by David to pry at the emotions of the people and direct their anger towards the insensitive royalists.

The whole portrait leaves the viewer with a dissatisfied feeling, almost as if the painting was never completed. This may be possible as David was imprisoned towards the end of the revolution, which was about the time that he was working on this painting.<sup>27</sup> Yet, in truth, it can never be known for sure whether David purposely left this painting lacking detail and finish, or if it was just timing that prevented this painting from reaching its completion.

Although the paintings of 'the martyr's of the revolution' have many elements in common, what most strikes the modern day viewer is that they are all misrepresentations of reality. The fact that these portraits are in many ways inaccurate, shows that David was not as concerned about preserving the historical accuracy of the events as he was in giving the public a visual hero who would have the ability to speak to man in a way that breaks through the barrier of the spoken word and by doing so, conjure up feelings of sympathy for their fallen 'martyrs' and anger towards the enemy (the royalists). This misrepresentation of reality, when taken to an extreme, turns into dangerous propaganda. "In common with most propaganda images, David's has less to do with facts than with the

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23 Ibid., 174.

24 Roberts, 307.

25 Lee, 174.

26 Ibid., 174.

creation of an accessible, credible and persuasive image"<sup>28</sup> This is exactly what David's three martyr's turn into, revolutionary propaganda. Even today, David's art continues to be considered revolutionary not only in that its subject matter is in direct relation to the revolution, but greatly because his conceptualization of these martyrs as propaganda images is in itself revolutionary.

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27 Lee, 171.



# The Debate on America's Response to the Holocaust

Ariella Goldstein

Historians are given a difficult task: not only must they retell events that occurred, but they must also evaluate those events. Historians who focus their studies on the Holocaust are of course challenged by the incomprehensible cruelty of the Nazis. However, they are also faced with a formidable task when they attempt to clarify the reactions of the strong democracies, especially the world power, America, that watched the events of the Holocaust unfold. These historians must choose between the moral high ground that forces America to accept responsibility for callously allowing fellow humans to be slaughtered and the analytical assessment that the rescue of millions of Jews was simply not feasible. David Wyman, a Holocaust historian, argues that America turned its back on humanity and intentionally avoided three basic ways of saving Jewish lives: opening the doors to America to create an asylum for the Jews, taking rescue action, and bombing Auschwitz to halt the Nazis' most efficient killing machine. In contrast, William Rubinstein, another Holocaust historian, asserts that accusations of America's passive acceptance of genocide are mere myth; there was nothing America could have done to save the Jews. Possible explanations for the divergence of the historians' opinions rest in their approach to the evaluation of America's response, and in their determination of Hitler's intention and ability to implement the Final Solution. Wyman believes American influence could have outweighed Hitler's plan to liquidate the Jews, whereas Rubinstein claims that nothing could have deterred Hitler from his ultimate goal of exterminating the Jewish race.

In order to fully examine the two opinions on America's response to the Holocaust, it is necessary to establish that information about the Holocaust was available to the American government upon which it could act. In "America and

the Holocaust: Confirming the News of Extermination," David Wyman cites a *New York Times* article entitled "Slaying of Jews in Galicia Depicted," published on October 26, 1941, which started a trail of newspaper articles covering the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis. The article explained that "massacres of thousands of Jews deported from Hungary to Galicia and the machine-gunning of more thousands of Galician Jews by German soldiers and Ukranian bandits are reported".<sup>1</sup> Two days later, the *New York Times* printed an article entitled "Nazis Seek to Rid Europe of All Jews," which informed readers that "complete elimination of Jews from European life now appears to be a fixed German policy"<sup>2</sup>. While the media seemed to publicize the murders committed by the Nazis, in "The Abandonment of the Jews" Wyman clarifies that "throughout the war the regular American newspapers published comparatively few of these disclosures and nearly always relegated them to the inner pages".<sup>3</sup> Despite the lack of importance the newspapers accorded to the mass murder of Jews, it is significant to note that the facts surrounding the genocide were made public.

Furthermore, though the availability of knowledge of the Nazis' crimes is crucial, in order for Wyman to argue that America should have responded to the crimes, the media's information about the Final Solution had to be confirmed by the American government. The corroboration of the Nazis' goals took a rather indirect route: a German industrialist, whose business brought him into contact with important Nazi officials, had the Nazis' plan to liquidate all of Europe's Jews passed to Dr. Gerhart Reigner of the World Jewish Congress, who ensured that the information was conveyed to the State Department.<sup>4</sup> The State Department did not originally credit the information as anything more than "another war rumor".<sup>5</sup> However, Rabbi Stephen Wise, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, eventually sent the information directly to Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, who confirmed the devastating reports on November 24, 1942.<sup>6</sup> On November 25, 1942, the *New York Times* printed an article that explained, "Dr. Stephen S. Wise, (chairman of the World Jewish Congress,) said tonight that he had learned through sources confirmed by the State Department... [about the Nazis] 'extermination campaign'".<sup>7</sup> By the end of November, 1942, America possessed enough reliable knowledge of the crimes being perpetrated by the Nazis, as Wyman argues, to warrant a response.

1 David S. Wyman, *America and the Holocaust: Confirming the News of Extermination* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990), 1.

2 *Ibid.*, 2.

3 David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 19-20.

4 Wyman, *Abandonment*, 42-43.

5 *Ibid.*, 44.

6 *Ibid.*, 44, 51.

7 Wyman, *America*, 256.

Wyman asserts that America should have reacted to the proven information available in 1942 by opening its doors to all victims of Nazi terror. However, few refugees were taken into America during the Holocaust because numerous requirements for entry to the country, unfortunately not dispensed with in spite of the desperate need of the refugees, prevented the quotas from being fulfilled. Indeed, George Warren of the President's Advisory Committee stated that "the immigration process [was] 'one of incredible obstruction to any possible securing of a visa'".<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, America not only made the acquisition of visas infeasible, but also forced refugees to wait nearly nine months for their applications to be approved. The application itself presented further challenges: "more than four feet long, it had to be filled out on both sides by one of the refugee's sponsors (or a refugee-aid agency), sworn under penalty of perjury, and submitted in six copies".<sup>9</sup> Clearly, America's immigration policy contained restrictions that were intended to prevent an influx of refugees.

Although America claimed that these restrictions were necessary to ensure national security, as it was possible that the Nazis would attempt to conceal spies amidst the thousands of refugees seeking asylum, Wyman argues that "the State Department had gone beyond the law in blocking immigration".<sup>10</sup> He asserts that America's concern that a Nazi agent would attempt to hide among the refugees was simply exaggerated, as the agent "would have been found out".<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, America's claim that the Nazis would force refugees to become spies (through threatening to harm the refugees' family members still in Europe) was equally ridiculous; such a conspiracy would require the Nazi agent to give information to the refugees that might hint to his identity, which the anti-Nazi refugees would certainly reveal to the American government.<sup>12</sup> In other words, it is extremely unlikely that either of America's claims were truly valid as anything other than excuses to cover up the fact that 90 percent of the quota places available to European Jews were not used, thereby ignoring the chance to save nearly 190,000 lives.<sup>13</sup> Wyman therefore accuses America of callously refusing to change immigration policy despite a great opportunity to save lives.

Furthermore, Wyman argues that America should have been more involved in three primary rescue operations. One of the suggestions proposed to the Roosevelt administration was to send food to the starving Jews in Nazi-occupied countries.<sup>14</sup> This idea was first proposed in September of 1943 by Nahum Goldmann

8 Wyman, *Abandonment*, 126.

9 *Ibid.*, 127.

10 *Ibid.*, 125-126.

11 *Ibid.*, 131.

12 *Ibid.*, 131.

13 Wyman, *Abandonment*, 136.

14 *Ibid.*, 280.

of the World Jewish Congress. Unfortunately, the State Department insisted (despite Treasury Department claims otherwise) that no funds were available to finance the shipment of food and medicine to surviving Jews in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkans.<sup>15</sup> Wyman explains that this is further evidence of America's intentional avoidance of saving Jews.

The second rescue action that Wyman indicts America for its involvement in establishing safe havens for Jews, which would have functioned as temporary homelands until resettlement at the end of the war.<sup>16</sup> Some places that were suggested as havens include Libya, Fedala, North Africa, Algeria, and Fort Ontario. These strategies unfortunately did not fully come to fruition; merely 1,000 refugees arrived in Fort Ontario and only 630 refugees were transferred to Fedala.<sup>17</sup> These plans, among others, were proposed at a mass meeting at Madison Square Garden in 1943, led by Rabbi Stephen Wise, and sent to President Roosevelt.<sup>18</sup> However, the President and the State Department, although both acknowledged the suggestions, did not respond with any commitment to truly implement the plans.<sup>19</sup>

The third rescue action that Wyman concludes America should have taken is the ransom of Jews. Wyman believes that America should have offered money or other goods to Nazis and their satellite countries in exchange for Jewish lives. One such opportunity arose when C. L. Sulzberger notified the American government that Romania would send 70,000 Transistrian Jewish refugees to any haven set by the Allies in exchange for a financial reward of 130 dollars per refugee, plus the cost of transportation expenses.<sup>20</sup> This rescue plan was sent to the State Department, which rejected the scheme because it allegedly originated from the "German propaganda machine".<sup>21</sup> Wyman claims that the State Department's investigation into the veracity of this proposal was "superficial... [they simply] rejected the proposition out of hand".<sup>22</sup> Other ransom opportunities came from the Nazis themselves. Adolph Eichmann offered one million Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks plus coffee, tea, cocoa, and soap.<sup>23</sup> An additional (diction-another) ransom possibility stemmed from a transaction suggested by Heinrich Himmler through another SS official, Walter Schellenberg, who told Jean-Marie Musy, a member of the Swiss Federal Council, that he would release 600,000 Jews in ex-

15 *Ibid.*, 187-188.

16 *Ibid.*, 332.

17 *Ibid.*, 260-261.

18 Wyman, *Abandonment*, 88.

19 *Ibid.*, 89.

20 *Ibid.*, 82.

21 *Ibid.*, 83.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Wyman, *Abandonment*, 244.

change for trucks or, in a later plan, 300,000 Jews for five million dollars.<sup>24</sup> According to Wyman, these ransom prospects were rejected by America merely due to concerns of indirectly assisting the Nazis and the public reaction to such activity.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the most overt response demanded of America was the request to bomb the crematoria and gas chambers of Auschwitz and the five main railroads used for transporting Jews to the camp.<sup>26</sup> The purpose of bombing Auschwitz was to "slow the slaughter," while the intent in bombing the railroads was to prevent transportation of other Jews to the camp.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Wyman asserts that bombing both the railroads and the crematoria and gas chambers of Auschwitz, tactics which were mostly suggested early in 1944, would have saved countless lives.<sup>28</sup> One claim made by historians in support of America's refusal to bomb the railroads leading to Auschwitz is that by the time the bombing was proposed, mass deportations to the extermination camp were nearly over. Although the final major deportation on the three largest railroads took place on July 8, 1944, 200,000 Jews were left in Budapest, and it was not certain whether or not they would be deported through the other two railroads. Wyman argues that America should have been ready to bomb those railroads if there would be any indication that the remaining Hungarian Jews would be deported.<sup>29</sup> He therefore contends that bombing the railroads leading to Auschwitz would not have been in vain.

Against assertions that America was unable to bomb Auschwitz, Wyman argues that the bombing would certainly have been feasible, as America possessed a precise thirty-page document, supplied by two Jewish escapees in 1944, explaining the "geographical layout, internal conditions, and gassing and cremation techniques".<sup>30</sup> This report was supplemented by "detailed aerial reconnaissance photographs of Auschwitz".<sup>31</sup> However, the War Department steadfastly refused to bomb the death camp. The War Department claimed that the bombing was not possible because "it could be executed only by a diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations"; they argued that this bombing would therefore not even help the Jews, as "the most effective relief to victims of enemy persecution is the early defeat of the Axis, an undertaking to which we must devote every resource at our disposal".<sup>32</sup> Wyman answers this statement by arguing that America would have been

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24 Ibid., 249.

25 Ibid., 251.

26 Ibid., 288, 294.

27 Ibid., 295.

28 Ibid., 301.

29 Ibid., 301.

30 Wyman, *Abandonment*, 289.

31 Ibid., 302.

32 Ibid., 292.

entirely capable of bombing Auschwitz without harming the war effort, as America's Air Force twice flew near some of the railroads to Auschwitz and already bombed the factory section of Auschwitz, which was not even five miles away from the gas chambers.<sup>33</sup> Lastly, Wyman adds that President Roosevelt was told that as "the railroads [to Auschwitz] were also used for military traffic and that an attack on Auschwitz could open the way for the inmates to escape and join the resistance forces," bombing both Auschwitz and the railroads leading to it would "assist, not hamper, the war effort".<sup>34</sup> As America still refused to bomb Auschwitz, Wyman concludes that the War Department in truth rejected the proposal to bomb Auschwitz and its railroads because "to the American military, Europe's Jews represented an extraneous problem and an unwanted burden".<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to Wyman's persistence in criticizing America for abandoning the Jews, in "The Myth of Rescue", William Rubinstein argues that there was absolutely nothing America could have done to rescue the Jews. Through two arguments, he counters Wyman's belief that an open door policy would have saved many Jews. First, Rubinstein suggests that, at least until the onset of Germany's invasion of Russia in 1941, Jews were not particularly interested in immigrating to America. Most Jews believed that the increase in anti-Semitism was a temporary phenomenon, and they were not interested in leaving the countries to which they were so attached, due to both "cultural and economic reasons".<sup>36</sup> Rubinstein adds that there was also a widespread perception of America "as a nation of hucksters, gangsters, and cowboys which had been hard-hit by the Depression and whose national ethos was virtually the exact reverse of [their] tradition[s]" that disinclined Jews to emigrate to America.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, Rubinstein explains that an open door policy would have been useless, as Hitler would not have let any Jews escape. Hitler's "Regulation for the Ban on Jewish Emigration from the Government-Central" of Poland demonstrates his intent to rid Europe of its Jews through liquidation, not emigration.<sup>38</sup> Rubinstein therefore claims that the immigration restrictions that the State Department refused to lift were not at all immoral because once the knowledge of the mass murders was confirmed, it was too late to save the Jews, once the Final Solution commenced, the Nazis would "refuse... emigration".<sup>39</sup> Rubinstein argues that America's immigration policies did not equal complicity in the death of thousand of Jews, as "Hitler was as likely... to agree to

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33 Ibid., 298-299.

34 Ibid., 295.

35 Ibid., 307.

36 William D. Rubenstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London: Routledge, 1997), 37.

37 Ibid., 37.

38 Ibid., 81.

39 Ibid., 43.

'release [his] Jewish victims and permit them to emigrate' as he was to declare *Purim* a legal holiday throughout the whole of the Reich".<sup>40</sup>

Rubinstein next disputes the three primary rescue actions that Wyman suggests should have been taken by America. First, he explains that bringing food to the starving Jews in ghettos and concentration camps would not have been feasible because Hitler would have ensured that the food did not reach his victims. Rubinstein clarifies that the "SS regularly robbed most... donations [of food]".<sup>41</sup> Secondly, he argues that the establishment of safe havens in which the Jews could live for the duration of the war would have been equally fruitless, as Hitler would not have allowed the Jews to travel to those safe havens. Rubinstein asserts that the suggestion of "the creation of 'havens'... shows the greatest confusion of all, for only refugees can flee to havens of safety; prisoners cannot".<sup>42</sup> According to Rubinstein, hundreds of safe havens could have been established, but few more Jews would have lived due to the existence of those havens, as Hitler would not have permitted the Jews to escape to those havens. Lastly, Rubinstein negates Wyman's third rescue suggestion by showing that it would have been impossible for America to ransom Jews for the same reason that safe havens and an open door policy would have been pointless: Hitler would not release his captives. Rubinstein argues that while the ransom negotiations took place, the Nazis were at the height of the mass murders; it is highly unlikely that they were seriously contemplating sparing Jewish lives.<sup>43</sup> Most importantly, however, as most ransom negotiations were instigated by Heinrich Himmler or Adolph Eichmann, without Hitler's consent, it was unlikely that, even if these Nazis actually intended to barter "blood for trucks," the negotiations would have succeeded.<sup>44</sup> Rubinstein explains the futility of the bargaining:

Hitler almost certainly knew nothing whatever about the negotiations tentatively undertaken by Himmler and others for the release of Jews by 'ransom' and it is inconceivable that he would have given his agreement for any such 'deal' to proceed, certainly not for any agreement entailing the release of large numbers of Jews... [due to his] ceaseless hatred of the Jews... and his desire to blot out once and for all the biological bases of Jewry in Europe as his lasting legacy to the Aryan race.<sup>45</sup>

Rubinstein further argues that Hitler could not have known about the ran-

40 Ibid., 96.

41 Ibid., 94.

42 Rubenstein, 92.

43 Ibid., 199.

44 Ibid., 201.

45 Ibid., 200, 201.

som plans because Himmler was "terrified of Hitler's response were he to permit a wholesale release of Jews".<sup>46</sup> Rubinstein cites an example of Hitler's commitment to extermination: when Hitler heard that Himmler allowed 1,200 Jews to leave Theresienstadt for Switzerland, he was so furious that Himmler was compelled to issue a demand that no "concentration camp prisoners... pass into enemy hands alive".<sup>47</sup> As Hitler's "word was... unbreakable law," and he would certainly have discovered and then stopped any "large-scale" ransom negotiations, Rubinstein asserts that any ransom plans would not have succeeded and were therefore fruitless (diction-ineffective).<sup>48</sup>

Finally, Rubinstein argues that it would have been impossible for America to bomb both the railroads leading to Auschwitz and the gas chambers and crematoria in the extermination camp. He claims that bombing the railroads would not have been effective in saving Jews. America officially began to consider such an option on June 24, 1944, and as the deportation of Hungarian Jews ceased on July 9, 1944, America had a mere 15 days to put together an operation, too short a time-span for the army's requirement of at least two weeks to plan an air raid.<sup>49</sup> This reason also explains the futility of bombing the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz: "the last gassings at Auschwitz occurred on November 28, 1944, twenty days after [America] made [its] first proposal to bomb the crematoria".<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the railroad-bombing operation would have been charted merely three weeks after D-Day, during a time in which America was still completely occupied by the consequences of landing in Normandy.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, America was heavily engaged with its own war effort when the bombing of Auschwitz was suggested, reinforcing the futility of attempting to put together an air bombing operation in a short amount of time.

Rubinstein offers two additional reasons to explain why the United States refrained from bombing Auschwitz and the railroads leading to it. First, despite the claims of Wyman and other historians, the information available to America was not sufficient to properly execute such a raid. Most of the aerial photographs so often used as evidence that America could easily have mapped out the exact way to bomb Auschwitz were not developed until 1978.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, as it was not the task of American "photointelligence operatives to search out extermination camps," they did not pay attention to any particular photographs that might have offered information on Auschwitz, they merely looked for whatever they

46 Ibid., 200.

47 Rubenstein, 201.

48 Ibid., 203.

49 Ibid., 162.

50 Ibid., 164.

51 Ibid., 162.

52 Rubenstein, 164-165.

were supposed to find.<sup>53</sup> In addition, photointelligence operatives "averaged 25,000 negatives and 60,000 prints" every day; there were simply too many pictures for them to notice anything beyond what they were assigned to notice.<sup>54</sup> Rubinstein adds that the equipment used by the photointelligence operatives "could only be classified as primitive"; perhaps if they had better equipment, their photos would have been larger, thereby facilitating the discovery of details for which they were not instructed to search.<sup>55</sup> Rubinstein asserts that American operatives were focused on doing their part to end the war; anything else was not in their minds during their review of aerial photographs.<sup>56</sup>

Lastly, Rubinstein explains that America was hesitant to bomb Auschwitz because of the concern that innocent Jews would die in the process, especially since the air bombings were not completely accurate.<sup>57</sup> This concern was reinforced by the fear that if Jews were killed by American bomb raids, "the Allies, rather than the Germans, would be blamed for killing the Jews."<sup>58</sup> America, Rubinstein asserts, had so many reasons to refrain from bombing Auschwitz and its railroads that this response would certainly have not been sensible or feasible.

When comparing the arguments of Wyman and Rubinstein, it seems difficult to understand how two such opposing interpretations of the actions of one country could arise. One explanation is that Wyman and Rubinstein approach the issue of America's response to the Holocaust in two entirely different ways: Wyman analyzes America's actions from a moral perspective, or a moral high ground, while Rubinstein assesses what America could possibly have done practically. This is evident even from the titles of their books. Wyman's work is entitled "The Abandonment of the Jews", which denotes a cruel ignorance of mass murder. In contrast, the title of Rubinstein's book is "The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis", which speaks to a pragmatic evaluation of what rescue actions were feasible during the Holocaust. It therefore seems quite evident that the historians appraise America's actions during the Holocaust in two very different ways.

The two historians come to such vastly distinct opinions also because of a basic difference between their arguments that stems from their distinct positions. Wyman's moral perspective can be said to focus on what America should have done, rather than what America could have done, and thus he neglects to realize, as Rubinstein asserts, that Hitler would not have permitted any Jews to be saved.

The primary difference between Wyman and Rubinstein therefore lies in their assessment of Hitler's intentions and capabilities. Wyman's insistence on the numerous ways America could have saved the Jews stems from an idealistic belief that America's prestige could overpower Hitler's psychosis, hence his arguments that if America merely "pressed Germany to release the Jews," or simply tried to find the Jews a haven, countless lives would have been saved.<sup>59</sup> Rubinstein, in contrast, asserts that Hitler intended to completely annihilate the Jews, and thus any rescue attempts would have been futile. He explains that it is possible to claim that prior to Germany's invasion of Russia in 1941, Hitler considered expelling rather than exterminating the Jews. However, after the turning point of the war in Russia, it is clear that Hitler, through his power as "absolute dictator of Nazi Germany," would not allow anything to prevent the execution of his plans for genocide.<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, in "The Myth of Rescue", Rubinstein contemplates why none of the Allied countries tried to assassinate Hitler.<sup>61</sup> This speculation further illustrates the divergence of Wyman's and Rubinstein's views, as it demonstrates Rubinstein's complete focus on Hitler as the barrier to the rescue of Jews, not American indifference.

Historian David Wyman argues that America should have responded to the Holocaust by removing all immigration requirements that closed its doors to refugees, and by taking such rescue actions as sending food to the starving Jews, establishing safe havens for Jewish refugees, and trying to ransom Jewish lives. He also asserts that America should have bombed the railroads, gas chambers, and crematoria of Auschwitz. In contrast, William Rubinstein argues that an open door policy and any rescue action would have been futile, and further believes that it was not possible for America to bomb any part of Auschwitz. However, it is evident that the divergence of the historians' opinions results from different approaches to the study of America's response to the Holocaust, and from divergent views of Hitler's ability to completely hinder any attempt to save Jewish lives. While a historian can reasonably come to a conclusion that explains the rationale behind such opposing arguments, it is nearly impossible to coolly weigh the strength of each argument. To accomplish such a task, one would have to separate oneself entirely from the addictive, blinding belief that America, the land of the free, must always fight for liberty and justice. Indeed, it may seem evident that mere humanity would demand a concerted effort on behalf of all victims of genocide. Yet, it is the job of philosophers, not historians, to determine the morality of a particular course of action. But can anyone strictly judge the technicalities behind America's reaction, or lack thereof, to the Holocaust? When studying nearly

<sup>59</sup> Wyman, *Abandonment*, 331.

<sup>60</sup> Rubinstein, 70-71.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 214-215.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-168.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>57</sup> Rubenstein, 163, 177.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

any subject that touches on the mass murders committed just a few decades ago, one faces the blurred distinction between "could have" and "should have," a certain muddling of history and morality that can hinder a clear assessment of the facts. However, in spite of this impasse, scholars must continue to study this intersection of history and morality, for the study itself gives us insight into our reactions to the failings of morality which we still witness today.

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## Jacksonian Nationalism and American Empire

Professor Michael Kaplan

#### Review of:

Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005).

It was not the best of times for the United States Army. American soldiers had come overseas to uplift a downtrodden people and bring them the blessings of democracy and good government. Now, much to their surprise, the Americans found themselves struggling to suppress an insurgency among the people they were supposed to liberate. One soldier wrote that despite "frequent drubbings" at the hands of his comrades, the insurgents "bob up serenely" at different points and it seems to be quite a job to subdue them." Many of the soldiers were National Guardsmen without training for a mission they poorly understood and whose morale was undermined by unanticipated terrorist attacks. Army units were hobbled by a lack reliable intelligence and no knowledge of an alien culture and language. The Americans soon found that despite harsh, even savage, counterinsurgency measures-torture and abuse of prisoners, destruction of property and towns, confinement of civilians, leading to the deaths of thousands-the

insurgency would not be suppressed. Iraq 2005? No, the Philippines 1899.<sup>1</sup>

Largely forgotten today as an epilogue to the triumphant Spanish-American War, the Philippine War remains an example of how the best of American intentions can go awry in the quest for empire. The United States took control of the Philippines largely for Hamiltonian motives of projecting America's economic power in east Asia, but also for the Wilsonian ideal of spreading democracy. The war to suppress the Philippine insurgency soon fell into the pattern of Jacksonian wars against the Indians. American generals had spent their early careers fighting the Sioux and the Apache. Theodore Roosevelt and other boosters of empire, insisting that national honor was at stake, urged the use of Jacksonian measures of total war to "subdue the savages."<sup>2</sup>

But this was not a war that Jacksonians wanted to fight. The rank-and-file soldiers, Jacksonian nationalists all, had serious doubts about their mission and wanted nothing more than to go home. They looked with contempt on the Filipinos as "niggers," and did not believe that the United States had any business taking on the burden of responsibility for nonwhite peoples who showed little capacity for self-government. "To use state power to reform and reconstruct societies inhabited by people whose skin colors and religions made white Americans distinctly uncomfortable was to go to the heart of the American dilemma about the appeals of liberty and empire, choice and coercion, freedom and power, whether the location was Alabama, Manhattan, or Luzon."<sup>3</sup> While Jacksonian nationalists were the traditional supporters of America's continental expansion, they had no desire to rule an overseas empire.

Jacksonian nationalism has started to get the attention it deserves as a major force in shaping American culture and foreign policy. In large part this is due to the debate over the meaning of American empire that has taken on great urgency since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The question of whether America is a republic or an empire is an old one. While the Founding Fathers, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, frequently described the new republic as a rising empire, critics of American foreign policy from the opponents of the Mexican War in the 1840s to the opponents of the current war in Iraq have insisted that the United States betrayed its republican ideals and institutions in pursuit of world power. In their recent works, Walter Russell Mead, Anatol Lieven, and Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton examine the historical roots of America's impulse to empire.

Jacksonian populist nationalism is central to understanding American empire in all three of these works. The authors also place Jacksonian nationalism

1 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 333-338.

2 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, p. 337.

3 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 341-342.

alongside other streams of thought in American culture: Mead contrasts Jacksonianism with the Hamiltonian, Wilsonian, and Jeffersonian "schools" of foreign policy; Lieven conceives of the Jacksonian "tradition," which incorporates Frontier, Nativist, White South, and Protestant Fundamentalist traditions, as an antithesis to the American Creed of civic nationalism; Anderson and Cayton look at Jackson's "vision" of a populist empire in light of the imperial visions of William Penn, George Washington, Ulysses Grant, and Douglas MacArthur. Lieven in particular finds the role of Jacksonianism in shaping American culture and foreign policy most problematic and disturbing. But all of these authors trace those aspects of American foreign policy and the American character that confound Europeans these days, to Andrew Jackson and the Scots-Irish frontier settlers he represented.

Andrew Jackson and Jacksonian nationalism have so profoundly shaped the American character that the United States can rightly be called "Old Hickory's Nation." Walter Russell Mead made the conceptual breakthrough of looking at Jacksonianism not just as a political ideology limited to the Age of Jackson in the nineteenth century. Rather, as Mead defines it, Jacksonianism is a community of political feeling emanating from a populist folk culture. Jacksonianism is, in Mead's words, "an expression of the social, cultural, and religious values of a large portion of the American public," and is characterized by "a strong sense of common values and common destiny."<sup>4</sup> Jacksonianism is poorly understood because its members are poorly represented in the cultural elites of Hollywood, the media, and academia. Listening to talk radio, the voice of contemporary Jacksonian populism, you can find that antipathies are mutual. Liberal commentators from H. L. Mencken onwards have dismissed Jacksonians as "Boobus Americanus" mired in ignorance, religious zealotry, jingoism, and racism, while Rush Limbaugh and a host of conservative commentators have raged against the "pointy headed academics in their ivory towers" as self-righteous snobs who are contemptuous of the values and institutions that ordinary Americans hold dear. Anti-intellectualism, the legacy of Scots-Irish resentment of the educated elites in England and New England, has been one of the less attractive sides of Jacksonian culture.<sup>5</sup>

"America is the only country ever founded on a creed."<sup>6</sup> G. K. Chesterton's classic observation expresses the conventional wisdom of many historians and commentators who define American identity in terms of ideology-Lieven's American Creed-and multiculturalism. Mead, followed by Lieven and Anderson and Cayton, while recognizing the importance of the American Creed of civic nation-

4 Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 224-226.

5 Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 226, 228; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 95, 101.

6 G. K. Chesterton, *What I Saw in America* (1922), <http://www.chesterton.org/acs/quotes.htm>.

alism, reject it as the sole basis of American identity. They insist that American national identity also rests on ethnic and cultural foundations-Anglo-Saxon and Scots-Irish-just like the nations of Europe. Samuel Huntington and Michael Lind have written that the original Anglo-Saxon and Scots-Irish settlers of the British colonies created the culture and institutions of the American nation to which all later comers were assimilated. Jacksonians conceive of the American nation as an English-speaking, Christian (in origins if not practice) folk community of European origins. Jacksonian populism, Mead argues, played the key role in assimilating later European, and now non-European, immigrants into the American cultural values of rugged individualism, entrepreneurialism, home ownership, and democracy. Jacksonianism made the American melting pot and the American dream a reality.<sup>7</sup>

The core value of Jacksonian populism, according to Mead, is honor. The Scots-Irish settlers of the American backcountry were a people of great pride despite their poverty. This proved a major "source of irritation to their English neighbors, who could not understand what they had to be proud about." Despite their humble origins, the Scots-Irish did not behave in the spirit of humility and subordination expected of the lower sorts. "This combination of poverty and pride set the North Britons squarely apart from other English-speaking people in the American colonies." The fierce pride of the North British emigrants would give birth to the Jacksonian code of honor. The Jacksonian code of honor is made up of several parts. The first principle of Jacksonian honor is self-reliance and respect for those who embody it. "Border emigrants demanded to be treated with respect even when dressed in rags." The Jacksonian makes his or her own way in the world through hard work without either government handouts or inherited wealth and connections. Economic success or authority based on knowledge, talent, and experience, when achieved through honest work and not through corruption and chicanery is respected. Equality and individualism are the second and third principles of the Jacksonian honor code, but they also require "acceptance of certain social mores and principles." Among these are loyalty to the family, responsibility for proper raising of children, "sexual decency (usually identified with heterosexual monogamy, which can be serial)," and honesty within the community. The Jacksonian code also expects a man to cut a dashing figure in the world and assert his personality with boisterous style, even if he has to borrow on credit to do it. Finally, and most of all, courage, a man's willingness to stand up for what is

<sup>7</sup> Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 226-231; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 95-97, 101, 109; Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), pp. 38-46, 58-80; Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution* (New York: Free Press, 1995), pp. 7-9, 17-54.

right, to defend his family, his honor and liberty, his community and his country, by force of arms and violence when necessary, are the most compelling parts of the Jacksonian code.<sup>8</sup>

Andrew Jackson himself was a true American original who embodied the Jacksonian code to the fullest. He "rewrote the book on American political leaders" and "dominated the American political process more fully than any president before or since." Jackson achieved all this through the force of his personality. "His was a brutish world in which freedom and violence were so inextricably intertwined that those who prospered did so less by virtue of their social connections...than because they were tough enough to strike at potential enemies before they could land the first blow." Jackson was more than willing to use violence to achieve his ends whether through duels or fighting the Indians and the British. "The great lesson of his youth was that survival depended on the expression of passion rather than its restraint." Jackson conceived of liberty as personal autonomy and the freedom of local interests from federal interference. This was the liberty of white male patriarchs to dominate their families and their local worlds. Men were first and foremost the protectors of women, children, and the community. Such a concept of liberty resonates with Jacksonians to this day: the modern populist conservative movement is dedicated to preventing big government from intruding in the ways Americans live their lives, as long as those lives are lived according to the precepts of the Jacksonian code. And in a raw nation struggling to create an identity, "Violent aggression against 'others' allowed the relentlessly competing white men of the United States to become brothers bound together in a common cause, the defense of liberty." Building a North American empire through ethnic cleansing of the Indians, in which Jackson played a central role, shaped a racially exclusive definition of American identity.<sup>9</sup>

While Mead does not ignore the dark side of Jacksonianism-racism, xenophobia, a tendency to violence-he nonetheless emphasizes the positive contributions Jacksonianism has made to America. And Mead insists that Jacksonian America has been changing, overcoming its racist past, at a rapid pace for a folk culture. Anatol Lieven, on the other hand, sees very little to recommend Jacksonian America. Jacksonianism, having been shaped by the violence of the frontier and defeat at the hands of metropolitan modernizing "blue" America-the defeat of the white South in the Civil War was the most devastating of these-is little more than a culture of hatred and paranoia. Lieven seems to confirm all the conservative stereotypes of the liberal internationalist elitist who looks down on the people

<sup>8</sup> Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 231-237; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 613-615.

<sup>9</sup> James Webb, *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* (New York: Broadway Books, 2004), pp. 185-191; Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 210-218.



of "flyover country." His analysis of Jacksonian culture sometimes descends into caricature. In fact Lieven's main concern seems to be that Jacksonian nationalism is preventing the United States from finally fulfilling its destiny as a great civilizational empire, like Rome, that transcends racial and ethnic divisions, assimilates alien peoples to its Creed and culture and projects its cultural influence through space and time.<sup>10</sup> Unlike many critics on the left, Lieven has no problem with the idea of an American empire so long as it is not racially or religiously exclusive and can provide benevolent order and stability for the rest of the world through multilateral cooperation. This means that the United States must never engage in any unilateral assertion of power or take any action in the world without getting the permission of the European Union. All that being said, Lieven does offer some important insights about the Jacksonian tradition.

The mainstream of American history has been a story of repeated triumph and success that produced the most dynamic and powerful nation in history. But this has not been the experience of all Americans. Unlike Mead and Anderson and Cayton who tell a story of Jacksonian success, Lieven believes that Jacksonian nationalism is rooted in the experience of defeat and humiliation by large groups in the United States that puts them out of step with the overall sense of triumph and progress in American history. "In the U.S. this sense of defeat and embattlement resides in four distinct but overlapping elements of the American nationalist tradition: the original, 'core' White Anglo-Saxon and Scots-Irish populations of the British colonies in North America; the specific historical culture and experience of the White South; the cultural world of fundamental Protestantism; and the particular memories, fears and hatreds of some American ethnic groups and lobbies."<sup>11</sup>

If Mead emphasizes the assimilative power of Jacksonian America, Lieven sees this as the assimilation of hatred and racism by newer immigrant groups, especially Irish Catholics, East Europeans, and Jews, whose own histories of defeat led them to compensate by becoming rabidly nationalistic. This has had an unfortunate influence on America's foreign policy in the Middle East. American support for Israel is based in part, Lieven believes, on Jacksonian admiration "for Israel's tough, militarist society and its repeated victories in war," and a strong affinity between right-wing Israeli nationalism and the American pioneer tradition. Jacksonian Americans who still celebrate their own heritage of conquering the land from the "savage" Native American Indians, which they liken to the ancient Israelite occupation of Canaan, can relate to the modern Israeli conquest and expulsion of the "savage" Arab Palestinians.<sup>12</sup>

10 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, p. 41.

11 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 87, 91.

12 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 95-96, 133-137, 180-181, 188-189.

The Jacksonian code of honor, Lieven believes, is nothing more than a means of enforcing and legitimizing a Herrenvolk democracy: an egalitarian white society of small producer farmers and artisans that excludes nonwhites. For Lieven, core elements of Jacksonian nationalism, "nativism, antielitism, anti-intellectualism and dislike of the Northeast," but most especially "a strong sense of White identity, and violent hostility to other races," are in conflict with the American Creed of constitutionalism, the rule of law, liberty, democracy, and equal rights and justice for all—the vision of America as the city on a hill. Mead saw a similar conflict: "Through most of American history and to a large extent even today, equal rights emerge from and depend on this popular culture of equality and honor rather than flow out of abstract principles or written documents." The law has often been unable to protect the equal rights of unpopular minorities "in the teeth of popular feeling and culture."<sup>13</sup> But while Lieven sees no diminishing of Jacksonian bigotry, Mead finds a growing tolerance in Jacksonian popular culture that is merging the Jacksonian code of honor with the American Creed.

Lieven finds disturbing implications in this Jacksonian conception of freedom. Freedom is restricted only to members of the Jacksonian community in good standing as defined in moral, cultural, and until recently, racial and ethnic terms. The old Jacksonian saying was "Free, White, and Twenty-one." And so freedom is defined and circumscribed by the culture and moral values of the community. "The freedom of aliens, who do not share this culture, or deviants therefore can legitimately be circumscribed by authoritarian and even savage means, as long as the aim is to defend the community and reflects the will of the sound members of the community." Historian David Hackett Fisher traced the roots of this attitude to the Scots-Irish idea of "natural liberty," developed in the anarchic and violent conditions of the border culture of North Britain. It was the most radically libertarian concept liberty, the most "strenuously hostile to ordering institutions" to emerge in British America. But such liberty was not reciprocal; it did not tolerate dissent or any deviance from the community's cultural norms.<sup>14</sup> Following Mead, Lieven argues for the absolute distinction Jacksonians make between those who are inside the community and accorded its protections, and those who are outside. As the Patriot Act indicates, the rule of law applies only to a limited extent to suspected terrorists who are not American citizens. "Death to the enemies of the community!" This distinction has led to the sanctioning of torture at Abu Ghraib prison and the deaths of 26 prisoners of war in American custody in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup>

13 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 49, 96; Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 236.

14 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 119-120; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, pp. 777-782.

15 Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 236; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, p. 120; Thomas L. Friedman, "George W. to George W.," *New York Times*, March 24, 2005.

Lieven and Mead do agree that fundamentalist Christianity has added a strain of pessimism to the Jacksonian worldview. Jacksonian culture believes in original sin and rejects the Enlightenment's belief in human perfectibility. This is in sharp contrast to the more optimistic mainline and evangelical Protestantism of the missionaries that is central to Wilsonianism. As a result, Jacksonians reject Wilsonian and Hamiltonian plans to build a peaceful world order. The most likely result will be a corrupt and malevolent world order not accountable to the democratic will of the people and thus hostile to the well being of the people. Jacksonians fear and loathe the United Nations: Kofi Annan's role in the oil for food scandal has done nothing to alleviate this fear. Evangelical Christianity "was built on suspicion and rejection of universal institutions like the Catholic Church," viewing international organizations as nothing more than tools of the Antichrist. A shared distrust of the motives of the international community helped create a new alliance between evangelical Christians and Orthodox and Zionist Jews. Evangelicals and Jews alike have expressed outrage at the U.N.'s indulgence of anti-Semitic attacks on the Jewish state. "Right-wing American Christians have united with many American Jews not only to defend Israel against its enemies but also against what they see as a deeply flawed and even wicked moral basis of most of the world's ruling elites." For Lieven, of course, this is precisely the problem.<sup>16</sup>

Lieven goes further than Mead in arguing that the fundamentalist Protestant religious nationalism of Jacksonian America is ideologically pre-modern, and that the agenda of the contemporary Christian Right is nothing less than the abolition of the Enlightenment. This conflation of religion and nationalism can be traced back to the Scots-Irish homeland in Northern Ireland. Since the collapse of Afrikaner religious nationalism in South Africa, "the Ulster Protestant Loyalists are the only people anywhere else in the developed world whose culture and ideology resembles that of American evangelical Christianity." Calvinist settlers in Ireland, America, and South Africa found in the Old Testament "both a language and a theological framework" to justify ethnic cleansing. "The biblical tones of Jackson's addresses to the Cherokee and Creek demanding their removal across the Mississippi River were prefigured 150 years earlier in Cromwell's addresses to Irish Catholics demanding their removal 'to Hell or Connaught!'"<sup>17</sup>

Condemning Jacksonian influence in foreign affairs, Lieven fails to consider that Jacksonians often oppose American intervention abroad. While Jacksonians have no problem launching preemptive wars and overthrowing dictators, they only support such action when the security of the American people and the honor

16 Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 248-250; Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), pp. 88-93.

17 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 101, 122-126, 144-149.

of the American nation are at stake. Jacksonians oppose idealistic or imperialist missions to spread democracy and remake the world in the American image. Thus the real reason that President Bush emphasized weapons of mass destruction as a reason to go to war in Iraq was to gain the support of the Jacksonian public, which would not have backed a war where there was no threat to American security. The flip side of the Jacksonian division of the world into the American folk community and the dark world outside, is a recognition that other nations have their own folk communities, traditions, and imperatives; they cannot be forced to adopt American values and institutions.<sup>18</sup> Jacksonians are not, to bring up Lieven's *bete noire*, neoconservatives. The neoconservatives are using Jacksonian methods to achieve Wilsonian ends. So what then was the Jacksonian concept of empire?

Jacksonians envisioned an American continental empire of autonomous local communities of white American citizens, write Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton. The Jacksonian vision was of a populist empire led by a white Scots-Irish and Anglo-Saxon band of brothers. Andrew Jackson's own childhood on the frontier, where Scots-Irish families "experienced the American Revolution as an episode in the ongoing defense of family and community against an array of threatening outsiders" including "redcoats, Hessians, Tory irregulars, and Indian warriors," shaped this vision.<sup>19</sup> Even earlier the warlike tendencies of the Scots-Irish were formed in clan warfare on the borders of England and Scotland and through savage frontier warfare with the Catholic Irish in seventeenth-century Ulster. James Webb, who described the Scots-Irish as "born fighting," believes that their central character trait as a people is "the mistrust of authority, the reliance on strong tribal rather than national leaders, and the willingness to take the law into one's own hands rather than waiting for a solution to come down from above." Andrew Jackson, the frontier border captain, certainly fit this description. As one early Jackson biographer wrote, "It appears to be more difficult for a North-of-Irelander than for other men to allow an honest difference of opinion in an opponent, so that he is apt to regard the terms opponent and enemy as synonymous."<sup>20</sup>

Jacksonians rejected "a multicultural world that white Americans saw as both dangerous and anachronistic," discarding the "traditional notion of North American empire as the dynamic product of constantly negotiated relationships among many local communities." George Washington held on to this older notion of relations between whites and Indians, insisting that America should engage in an orderly process of building a republican empire. While Washington was willing to use force against hostile Indians he believed it should only be a last resort. He

18 Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 243-248.

19 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, p. 210.

20 Webb, *Born Fighting*, p. 78; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 96-101.

preferred making treaties with the various Indian nations leading to a peaceful accommodation between the natives and the United States. The idea of ethnic cleansing or extermination of the Indians appalled Washington. His hope was that the Indians could eventually be assimilated peacefully into white American society.<sup>21</sup>

But for Jacksonians, extermination of the Indians was the idea. Jacksonians embraced a "new romantic conception of the United States as an expression of a homogenous national identity [that] required the subjugation of all alternatives, no matter how local or peripheral."<sup>22</sup> Anatol Lieven speculates that had the South succeeded in securing its independence in the Civil War, it would have emphasized Anglo-Saxon and Scots-Irish ethnicity and fundamentalist Protestantism as the main elements of a Southern national identity, in contrast to the increasing ethnic heterogeneity of the North.<sup>23</sup>

This new national identity, though, was not meant to preclude or undermine the autonomy and liberty of local communities of white Americans. The proper role of the federal government was to remove all threats to local liberty while not becoming such a threat itself, and leaving white communities and individual white Americans free to pursue happiness. In their pursuit of empire, Americans have as often resented the intrusion of the federal government as they have relied on it. The Scots-Irish frontier settlers, as Anderson and Cayton point out, demanded two things as the price of loyalty to the United States: cheap land and the ethnic cleansing of the Indians. "The direct exercise of federal power in almost any other form" especially in the forms of direct federal taxation and protection of the lands guaranteed to the Indians by treaty, "was unwelcome and might easily become the occasion for massive resistance." Hatred of the Indians and of intrusive federal authority was even more pronounced south of the Ohio River than north of it. This was a root cause of the Civil War.<sup>24</sup>

It was in the crucible of frontier warfare with the Indians that Americans developed their preferred strategy of fighting total wars until unconditional surrender. Jacksonians, then and now, view war not as politics by other means, but as a good vs. evil struggle to defend the community against its enemies. After his decisive victory over the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend, Alabama on March 27, 1814, Jackson defended his slaughter of the defeated enemy as the only way to convince a savage foe to sue for peace. Because of his victory and the courage of the Tennessee militia, the "Barbarians" would "no longer murder our women & chil-

21 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 191-204, 209.

22 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 236-237.

23 Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, p. 109.

24 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 196-197; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, pp. 96-97, 99-101.

dren, or disturb the quiet of our borders" since "they have disappeared from the face of the Earth." Jackson expressed an even more primal satisfaction at the destruction of the Creeks. "We have seen the ravens & vultures preying upon the carcasses of the unburied slain. Our vengeance has been glutted." Anderson and Cayton comment that the destruction of the Creeks was, for Jackson, "the climax of a life lived intimately with violence, it unleashed his passions and the fury of his men in a dance of death that continued until they had spent the last of their strength."<sup>25</sup>

Such sentiments resonate today in the midst of the life and death struggle with Islamic fascism. Jacksonians respect power: they believe, in Rush Limbaugh's words that "the world is governed by the aggressive use of force." Donald Rumsfeld remarked at one his press conferences that the tactics of the war on terror were to kill as many of the enemy as possible. Dick Cheney likewise, in Leslie Gelb's words, "sees the dark side of the world, a reality that largely eludes Democrats but not most Americans. He understands power and knows how to wield it..."<sup>26</sup> Lieven fears that fighting the war on terror in such stark Jacksonian terms will prevent the United States from developing the multilateral cooperation he believes it needs to win the war.

Elite northeastern Whigs "who shared Washington's vision of a republican empire making an orderly progress across North America," feared that Jackson's unrestrained populism would transform America into a land of lawlessness and chaos. "By the 1820s," Anderson and Cayton conclude, "war in the United States had become an expression of personal interest, territorial conquest, and racial hatred; the impulse to empire reflected the collective power of a brotherhood of English-speaking white men united to protect the United States and all it stood for in their minds." Jackson's political rivals, Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, who initially shared Jackson's vision of a populist empire, had come to see Old Hickory as a real danger to republican institutions. Jackson could well turn himself into a military dictator, an American Bonaparte. "Jackson was a symbol of naked aggression, of personal liberty run rampant into violence, of a new American order in which almost anything was deemed acceptable if it could be construed as a defense of American families, American values, and American freedom."<sup>27</sup>

It is this core idea of Jacksonian nationalism that Lieven believes is being exploited and misused by the Bush administration in the war on terror. Jacksonian bellicosity so applied, in Lieven's view, transformed the war on terror from a

25 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 232-233; Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 251-259.

26 Quoted in Victor Davis Hanson, "Come the Revisionists," *National Review*, April 11, 2005.

27 Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 209, 243, 246.

legitimate defense of American national security by hunting down al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, to a war for empire in Iraq. In a war against inhuman savages, be they Indian warriors in 1814 or Islamic fascists in 2005, all means and methods to destroy the enemy are legitimate to secure the safety of the American people. Of course this does not work well with realist or multilateral diplomacy. But the majority of the American people, then and now, shared Jackson's assumptions and vision "assuming the rightness of an American cause and affirming a romantic vision of national greatness." And again, in terms applicable to nineteenth-century continental expansion and twenty-first-century intervention, "the defense of American values and the propagation of American freedom through increasingly larger spheres offered sufficient justification for war; the United States conquered not to subjugate but to liberate territories and their peoples."<sup>28</sup>

The Jacksonian interpretation of American history contained more than a small hint of denial about their impulse to empire. "American wars were always just wars: they occurred only when citizens had to defend themselves against those who, out of lust for power or devotion to ideology or even a simple affinity for evil, sought to enslave them." And there were certainly times when this was true; World War II is a case in point. Still, the targets of American empire building were understandably skeptical of Jacksonian claims to honor and virtue. "Who is not familiar with that race of migratory adventurers that exist in the United States," wrote the Mexican envoy Manuel Eduardo de Gorostiza in 1840, "who always live in the unpopulated regions, taking land away from Indians and then assassinating them? Far removed from civilization, as they condescendingly call it, they are precursors of immorality and pillage." Jacksonians such as Old Hickory's protégé Sam Houston condemned Mexico's president Santa Anna as a tyrant determined to suppress the liberty of the white male American settlers of Texas. For Mexicans, Jackson's populist empire threatened the very survival of their nation, leading to a "war of race, of religion, of language, and of customs."<sup>29</sup> Gorostiza's words foreshadow current talk of the "war of civilizations" between the West and Islam.

The Mexican War was the high point of Jacksonian empire building. But its true importance, Anderson and Cayton argue, is that just like the French and Indian War of the 1750s it destabilized the very empire it created, setting the stage for the Civil War. While Jacksonian nationalism was a vital part of the culture of both North and South, in the South it became tied up with slavery. Northern Jacksonians were as devoted to the white man's republic as southerners, but like Ulysses Grant they came to see a contradiction in an empire of liberty bolstered by slaves. Northerners wanted to be rid of both slavery and the slaves. Northern

<sup>28</sup> Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, p. 244.

<sup>29</sup> Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 270, 362.

Jacksonianism was moderated by strong Hamiltonian and Wilsonian influences: the rise of industrial capitalism, social reform movements, and a culture of female-driven domesticity. Men like Grant had to earn the respect of others through hard work, education, self-discipline, reliability, and the restraint of passionate emotion. In northern eyes, slavery perverted southern men "into angry, violent brutes-caricatures of Andrew Jackson-who exploited both enslaved Africans and women to satisfy their lust for personal independence." Southern Jacksonians continued to see local autonomy, including the right to own slaves, as central to liberty. Southerners "remained committed to a world fashioned by Andrew Jackson and his peers, a world in which governments refrained from asserting central power and using military force against its [white] citizens," leaving them free to rule their families, assert themselves in the world, and dominate racial "others."<sup>30</sup> The Civil War was fought to resolve the tragic contradictions of Jacksonianism-its tensions between populist liberty and hierarchical domination. It was, as Anatol Lieven argued, the first and most devastating of a series of defeats Jacksonians would suffer until well into the twentieth century.

Much of this review has looked at the problematic and disturbing parts of the Jacksonian heritage. So I would like to conclude, as Mead does, with an acknowledgement of the positive strengths that Jacksonianism brings to America and its role in the world. The years since September 11, 2001 have witnessed a Jacksonian revival: many "blue" Americans have for the first time discovered their Jackson within. It was Jacksonian firemen and policemen who, on 9/11, rushed into the burning buildings to save the lives of their fellow citizens. Jacksonian nationalists are the force that makes American hard power effective in the world. As Mead wryly observes, it is the Jacksonian cultivation of military prowess that enables the American people to stand up for liberty both at home and abroad, and not act like, say, the French in 1940. Images of American military might and the American celebration of violence in the media increase respect for American hard power in the world. And for all of its willingness to use force in world affairs, Jacksonian America imposes valuable restraints on empire building since intervention abroad has to meet its test of being necessary for the honor and security of the American people.

Jacksonian America has proven to be quite liberal and progressive as folk cultures go. While it will never adapt the avant-garde lifestyles of "blue" America, in the past fifty years Jacksonian America has purged itself of much of its legacy of racism and religious bigotry: blacks, Hispanics, Catholics, Jews, and even Muslims, who live by the Jacksonian code of honor are increasingly welcomed as full members of the folk community. And Jacksonian America makes an essential

<sup>30</sup> Anderson and Cayton, *Dominion of War*, pp. 283, 289, 293-294.

contribution to America's soft power by providing "the spectacle of a country that is good for average people to live in, a place where ordinary people can and do express themselves culturally, economically, and spiritually without any inhibition." Anatol Lieven is wrong: Jacksonian populism will prove just as important as the American Creed as the United States develops into a civilizational empire. This image of America as a land of opportunity—a land of homeowners and car owners, of a popular culture far wealthier and more vibrant than the old elite cultures, a place where men and women create their own destinies—more than any abstract concepts of liberty draws millions of people from all over the world who want to become part of Old Hickory's Nation.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 260-261.

# America, Evolution Into Empire

*Shaya Lerner*

*"The United States today is an empire - but a peculiar kind of empire. It is vastly wealthy. It is militarily peerless. It has astonishing cultural reach. Yet by comparison with other empires it often struggles to impose its will beyond its shores, Its success in exporting American institutions to foreign lands have been outnumbered by its failures."*

*- Niall Ferguson, Colossus<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction — America and the Roman Empire**

Americans do not like to acknowledge the fact that their country has the semblance of an empire. Ancient empires, like those of Rome and Greece, ultimately collapsed, whereas more contemporary empires, like those of Britain and France, are often remembered for their brutality towards their colonies. America, however, is a different type of empire. The Founding Fathers of the United States did not intend it to mimic the maritime empires of Western Europe, nor to grant the president the maximum power which the Caesars of Rome possessed. Yet in truth, there does exist some resemblance to the early period of Rome. Like Rome, America grew from its relatively small core of thirteen colonies to fifty states. Like Rome, though not wholly, it conferred citizenship onto its inhabitants. And like Rome, it had, at least for a time, its disenfranchised slaves.<sup>2</sup> In fact, some of the Fathers, like second President John Adams, made frequent comparisons between America and the Roman Empire. "Immortal Rome was at first but an insig-

<sup>1</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

nificant village, inhabited by only a few abandoned ruffians," Adams observed, "but by beginnings it rose to a stupendous height, and excelled in arts and arms all the nations that preceded it. Similarly, America began as a few scattered settlements, but soon might become 'the greatest seat of Empire.'<sup>3</sup> Yet there were those like John Taylor, who viewed Roman militarism as the antimodel for the United States. Taylor argued that the Roman Empire had fallen as a result of the tremendous inequalities of wealth produced by conquest. Should America engage in similar practices, it too, Taylor believed, would see its demise.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, there were also those, like 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial clergyman Jonathan Boucher, who believed that America may become "a great Empire under a monarch like Augustus."<sup>5</sup> While Boucher's notion of a monarchical empire failed to see fruition, America nonetheless, over the course of its 229 year history, has managed to slowly develop itself into an imperialist nation. Beginning with George Washington's Farewell Address, continuing onto the Monroe Doctrine, and reaching its climax with the anti-Communist Truman Doctrine, American Foreign Policy has undergone a variety of makeovers. Even today, while it is still unclear how President George W. Bush plans to proceed with his foreign policy, it is still evident that his administration advocates a strong interventionist policy, similar, although with important differences, to the policies of the Truman Doctrine. The purpose of this work is to explore the evolution of America into an empire, beginning by looking at the implications of Washington's Farewell Address, continuing with the Monroe Doctrine, and concluding with the Truman Doctrine. These three significant documents will be explored in light of their influence on American foreign policy, thus demonstrating the evolution which America has undergone from an 18<sup>th</sup> century Republic, to what, I argue, became a 20<sup>th</sup> century Empire.

### Washington's Farewell Address - Isolationism

In his biography of George Washington, Joseph J. Ellis makes the claim that the most commonly interpreted part of Washington's Farewell Address is the section dealing with foreign policy. The Address, which according to Ellis has been read "as the seminal statement of American isolationism," was printed in newspa-

3 Quoted in Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 77-78. The first quote is taken from an October 12, 1755 letter by Adams to Nathan Webb as found in Richard J. Taylor ed., *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 1, p. 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961). The second is from a July 17, 1774 letter by Adams to James Warren, as found in vol. 2, 109.

4 *Ibid.*, 98.

5 Richard M. Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 164.

pers throughout the country in the fall of 1796.<sup>6</sup> In regard to American foreign policy, Washington wrote that "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation...It must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties to ordinary vicissitudes of her politics..." Admitting that Europe has a different set of interests than those of the United States, Washington here is advocating that America refrain from involving itself in the politics of Europe. But perhaps the most significant statement in this section of the Address alludes not just to Europe, but to the entire world. "It is our true policy," Washington stated, "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."<sup>7</sup> Yet, as Ellis points out, Washington's isolationist message was intended to have a limited life span, until the United States would emerge from its infantile state. In fact, as some historians argue, the Address served as the foundation for American foreign policy, laying out the principles of its conduct. Firstly, by addressing the issue of foreign policy, Washington was acknowledging its significance while at the same time cautioning against premature ambition. Secondly, Washington was noting the importance of maintaining good relations with all foreign states, while refraining from adopting political ties except in emergencies. And thirdly, by advocating the position that European and American interests differed, Washington was postulating a strong homeland defense against enemies, since the United States was still quite weak. If these foreign policy principles were carried out, then one day America might be able to acquire the necessary power to become involved in global affairs.<sup>8</sup> Until that point, however, Washington believed that an isolationist policy would best serve American interests while the country nursed itself out of its infantile state.

Over the course of the next twenty-seven years, until the Monroe Doctrine, Washington's isolationism, despite encountering many obstacles along the way, remained for the most part intact. In his first inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson remained firm on the isolationist position, using the phrase "no entangling alliances" to solidify America's position. During his presidency, Jefferson was twice tempted to violate Washington's principles, once in consideration of a treaty with Britain in 1802 and once in consideration of attacking Spanish troops in Texas, yet held back from his desire. In 1812, when the United States did go to war with a European nation, it did so unilaterally in self-defense of its own territory, and not with intention to entangle itself in European affairs. So strong was America's iso-

6 Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 234-235.

7 George Washington, *The Farewell Address, 1796*, The Avalon Project: 08 Apr. 2005, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washin.htm>.

8 Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 47-48.

lationalist conviction, that when the British government suggested to the American minister in London in 1823 that they establish a joint Anglo-American affirmation of the independence of Latin American republics, then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams persuaded the cabinet to reject the offer on the grounds that it would violate American freedom of action, and entangle itself in global politics.<sup>9</sup> Yet as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, America would grow stronger as a nation and the need for a new foreign policy would arise in the form of the Monroe Doctrine.

### **The Monroe Doctrine - The Hemispherical Empire**

On December 2, 1823, President James Monroe delivered his seventh annual message to Congress, in which he laid out his vision for the American nation. He reiterated the isolationist sentiment found in the Farewell Address, stating that "In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so." He then proceeded to deliver, what was perhaps the most significant portion of his speech, one which would outline a foreign policy doctrine for the decades to come. "But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintain it...we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light, than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."<sup>10</sup> In other words, Monroe was informing the European powers that any attempt to militarily involve themselves in the politics of The Americas, would be viewed as a direct challenge to the United States. Giving particular warning to the Spanish government, Monroe perhaps feared a Franco-Hispanic invasion of Latin America in order to subdue the fledgling independence movements. Yet when Spanish troops did show up in South America later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for the purpose of keeping peace within and among the new states, the United States did not protest. And when the British in 1833 annexed the Falkland Islands and extended the boundaries of British Honduras, no American protest was heard.<sup>11</sup> What lay behind Monroe's speech was the notion that America has staked out its hemisphere for future economic opportunities and the *de facto* political control.<sup>12</sup> How this would work in practice would remain to be seen, yet it was clear that the Doctrine was a major shift from an isolationist foreign policy to a hemispheric interventionist policy.

9 Ibid., 49.

10 James Monroe, *The Monroe Doctrine: December 2, 1823*, The Avalon Project: 08 Apr. 2005, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/monroe.htm>.

11 McDougall, 69, 72.

12 Walter LaFerber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1963), 4.

For the next sixty years, the Doctrine would have little meaning in terms of American foreign activity. While the United States was engaged first in Manifest Destiny and then in the Civil War, it chose to refrain from imposing its authority on territories outside of the mainland. However, by the 1880's the United States began to build up a naval fleet which would allow its influence to expand beyond the mainland. Inspired by Captain A.T. Mahan's *The Influence of Sea and Power on History*, the fleet allowed for secure access to the Caribbean in addition to supplying adequate protection for America's coasts.<sup>13</sup> But most importantly, it granted America the ability to turn its attention to the Pacific Ocean and expand the boundaries of the Monroe Doctrine. The most significant acquisition from this was the conquest and occupation of the Philippine Islands in 1898. Since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the Philippines had been a Spanish colony.<sup>14</sup> After the United States declared war on the Spanish in 1898, an American fleet, which had been strategically positioned to conquer the Philippines, defeated Spanish ships anchored in Manila Bay and occupied the islands.<sup>15</sup> Their purpose was to establish an American foothold there in order to exert economic influence over East Asia.<sup>16</sup> Some 125,000 Americans occupied the Philippines in order to promote civilization, democracy, and the rule of law. But most importantly, they were there to secure the economic and political interests of the United States government and its citizens. However, the American arrival was not welcomed by the natives, who viewed America as a substitute empire for the Spanish. So deep was their hatred for American imperialism and the brutish tactics of the army, that the Philippine natives launched an insurgency against United States forces which resulted in more than 1,000 American deaths and over 200,000 Filipinos killed.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the Philippines would become the last major occupation the United States undertook, that is until the aftermath of the Second World War.

### **The Truman Doctrine - The Global Empire**

Following the failure of the Nazi regime in its conquest of the European continent in World War Two, two nations, who had been allied against Germany during the war, emerged as leading superpowers. The United States and the Soviet Union represented two opposing philosophies of government, namely Democracy and Communism. With the Soviet Union controlling a large chunk of Eastern Europe and threatening to exert Communist influence throughout other parts of the world, United States President Harry Truman realized the need for

13 McDougall, 104.

14 Anderson and Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America* (New York: Viking Penguin Press, 2005), 330.

15 Ibid., 338.

16 Ibid., 330.

17 Ibid., 339.

the reshaping of American foreign policy. Attuned to the dangers of Communism's potential spread, Truman, in a March 12, 1947 statement to Congress, illustrated a plan of "Containment" towards Communism, in what was to be known as the Truman Doctrine.<sup>18</sup> Referring to unwanted Soviet influence on European nations, the Doctrine stated that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures...we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way."<sup>19</sup> This was a drastic shift in American foreign policy. While it is true that the United States had involved itself in global affairs during World Wars One and Two, it did not do so preemptively. However, Truman's Doctrine advocated preemptive assistance to all free peoples of the world, regardless of the political or military situation, specifically those under threat of Communist invasion. In fact, evidence indicates that Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Premier at the time, was not content with just a East European glacis,<sup>20</sup> but was looking farther afield into Greece, Turkey, Iran, China, Korea, and even Japan. Furthermore, the weak British nation, having almost been conquered during WWII, was not up to the job of balancing Soviet power and influence around the rim of Eurasia. Thus the task fell upon the United States.<sup>21</sup> And for the next forty-two years, America and the Soviet Union would engage themselves in a world battle rooted in ideology and influence, which came to be known as the Cold War.

The Truman Doctrine was the focal point in American history when the United States became a full fledged empire. By taking on the Soviet Union, Truman had opened up American foreign policy to any possible scenario. Beginning with the Marshal Plan, the Doctrine essentially set the stage for America's role as the world's global enforcer. The Marshal Plan essentially offered war-ravaged nations in Western Europe and other countries such as Turkey, financial assistance in the form of hundreds of millions of dollars. The return for the United States was the rise of capitalist and democratic societies in those countries, thus staving off the Soviet threat.<sup>22</sup> Yet the Cold War was not only fought economically but also took the form of military conflicts. From Korea to Vietnam to tiny Grenada, America had seen its interventions as dictated by the exigencies of the global containment of the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> According to foreign policy analyst Michael Mandelbaum

18 Ibid., 397.

19 Harry Truman, *The Truman Doctrine: March 12, 1947*, The Avalon Project: 08 Apr. 2005 <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/trudoc.htm>.

20 *An area separating conflicting forces* - <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=glacis>. Stalin wanted as much of Europe as possible not to be aligned with the United States.

21 McDougall, 159.

22 Anderson and Cayton, 398.

23 James Chace, *The Consequences of the Peace: The New International and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5-6.

"the various conflicts of the Cold War were connected. The Greek civil war, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and others were all seen as part of a global struggle against Communism."<sup>24</sup> Containment had become a philosophy of the American government, which exhibited the United States as "An empire on which the sun would never set [and] one in which the rulers never sleep." It was an open ended policy which never promised a timeframe for victory, walked a thin line between appeasement and nuclear war, and dragged the United States into all-out controversial wars in places like Korea and Vietnam.<sup>25</sup> With the British Empire gone, the United States took its place as new western empire, one which grounded itself in principles of democracy and freedom, and was intent on preventing the global community from succumbing to the evils of Communism.

### Conclusion - *The Continuation of Empire*

Throughout this work I have tried to show the evolution of America into a global empire. From Washington's Farewell Address, to Monroe's vision of hemispheric domination, to Truman's global empire, America evolved from thirteen small colonial states into a full-fledged imperial power, just as John Adams had envisioned one day it would. The purpose of this work was not to debate the pros and cons of an imperial America, but rather to show how different circumstances led the fact. And although I do not explore the post-Cold War era, something which requires a work unto itself, it would seem that the fall of Communism did not lead to a cessation of American global imperialism. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger wrote of the need for America in the twenty-first century to express its power and influence as far as possible.<sup>26</sup> Indeed the United States still has a vital interest in preventing the rise of hegemonies in East Asia or the Middle East, in addition to the pertinent threat of terrorism. How to exercise American imperialism is a debate for political scientists, but as a student of history it is interesting to note the origins of the Empire. Just like the Founding Fathers had envisioned, the United States of America has become "the great seat of Empire," the most powerful one in history. In fact, since the events of 9/11, analysts have once again begun making comparisons between America and the Roman Empire, claiming parallels between Imperial Rome and Imperial America have been embraced "By many mainstream voices as something desirable and defensible."<sup>27</sup> Yet, as history has taught and as John Taylor cautioned America against, great empires, like was the case with Rome, are prone to lofty goals and reckless militarism which

24 Ibid., 12.

25 McDougall, 170.

26 Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 63.

27 Michael Lind, "Is America the New Roman Empire?" *The Globalist*, June 19, 2002.



contributes to their downfall. Kissinger warned that "Indiscriminate involvement in all ethnic turmoil and civil wars of the post-Cold War would drain a crusading America...Not every evil can be combated by America, even less by America alone. But some monsters need to be, if not slain, at least resisted. What is most needed are criteria for selectivity."<sup>28</sup> If America wants to survive as a global empire, it cannot be reckless and must be very careful in choosing its battles. If it fails to do so, it will come to experience the same fate as its precursors.

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28 Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 832-833.

## American Propaganda in WWII: *Was it really necessary?*

Reena Mittelman

Propaganda is one-sided communication designed to influence people's thinking and actions.<sup>1</sup> It is a tool used by many governments to improve public opinion of an issue and rally support for a particular political cause or action.<sup>2</sup> The greatest use of propaganda occurs during wartime, and World War II was no exception.<sup>3</sup> During the war, both sides used propaganda to strengthen their people's morale, to win support for the government's actions and policies, and to weaken the enemy's will to fight. Radio broadcasts, motion pictures, posters and cartoons reached large audiences and stirred patriotism. For example, Nazi Germany's Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment, led by Joseph Goebbels, controlled publications, radio programs, motion pictures, and the arts in Germany and German-occupied Europe. The ministry worked to persuade people of the superiority of German culture and of Germany's right to rule the world. Mussolini stirred the Italians with dreams of restoring Italy to the glory of ancient Rome. Italy's propaganda also ridiculed the fighting ability of Allied soldiers. The Japanese, using the slogan "Asia for the Asians," claimed that by taking control over eastern Asia, they were freeing it from European rule. The British Broadcasting Corporation gave nightly newscasts to the European mainland and dropped leaflets over Germany that told of false Nazi defeats.<sup>4</sup> This report will focus on American propaganda in World War II.

American propaganda played an important role in America's war efforts

1 Taylor Stults. "Propaganda." *World Book Encyclopedia*. v.15 (1994), 823.

2 <http://library.thewebstop.com/sls22/>

3 Loc. Cit.

4 James L Stokesbury, "World War II." *World Book Encyclopedia*, v. 21 (1994), 495.

during World War II. The U.S. government established the Office of War Information to encourage American support for the war effort. The agency told Americans that they were fighting for a better world and provided them with opportunities to take part in America's fight.<sup>5</sup> Under pressure of war, however, even America's democratic government limited the rights of its citizens.<sup>6</sup> The government censored the press and used slick propaganda and one-sided arguments to win public support for the war. For example, the government prohibited publication of any photographs showing dead American soldiers.<sup>7</sup> Americans were given a censored, sanitized version of war and death. The American government used photographs of pain and death only as a public relations ploy, that is, when the photographs would do the most good to further the Allies' cause. Eleven days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress established the War Powers Act, and President Roosevelt set up the Office of Censorship. Soon, the military had control over the media. Posters and signs told people what to think, and Americans had very little free choices when it came to America's part in World War II. Yet although American propaganda limited the rights of its citizens to a certain extent, it was necessary to use propaganda in order to win the war. In the end, America's use of propaganda benefited the country and the American people.

The very nature of World War II made it important for America to rally its civilian population at home around the causes of the government.<sup>8</sup> This was because World War II was a total war, in which victory depended on devoting all the resources of the country to the war effort. The most obvious example of devoting resources concerned jobs. Millions of women in the U.S. worked outside the home for the first time during World War II. Both women and men were doing jobs, such as working in factories, that were harder, dirtier, noisier, and often more dangerous than anything they had experienced before. If people believed that their work helped preserve their country's freedom, they would work harder, with fewer complaints, and do a better job.<sup>9</sup> The same was true for all the other hardships and inconveniences that the war brought, such as crowded housing, product shortages, and separation from loved ones in the armed forces. All these things were easier to bear if people believed in the goals of the war. So, propaganda was used to convince the American people that their cause was righteous. Signs and leaflets advertised the war campaign and urged the American people to show their

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5 Stokesbury, 495.

6 Ellis, Elisabeth Gaynor. *World History: Connections to Today* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 384-386.

7 Wright, Mike. *What They Didn't Teach You About WWII* (California: Presidio Press, 1998), 147-153.

8 Feldman, George. *WWII Almanac: Volume II* (Detroit: Gale Group, 2000), 369.

9 *Ibid.*, 370.

patriotism by helping America win the war. Posters encouraged Americans to buy war bonds to help pay for the war, and to enlist in the army. Reassuring messages were frequently sent to the American people through radio and television that said that the war would be over soon.

Because of the propaganda urging Americans to take part in the war, the majority of Americans found themselves caught up in some sort of volunteer war work. Many served without pay on ration, draft, and other boards. Fearing air raids, though none were actually attempted, cities were blacked out at night. Thousands of people walked the streets of cities and towns at night as air raid wardens, telling people to turn off lights or pull down blackout curtains. Many people acted as airplane spotters, reporting planes overhead to a central office. Propaganda even encouraged young children to participate in the war effort, so they helped to collect and recycle bottles, cans, newspapers, scrap metal and rubber. Families dug up their backyards and baseball diamonds to plant Victory Gardens. Schoolchildren made themselves useful to the war effort by hoeing rows of corn and weeding beans. Boy and Girl Scout troops, retired men and women, and Red Cross volunteers spent countless hours working to help America win the war.<sup>10</sup> The war touched everybody's life, and nearly everyone did something for the war effort.

Films and movies were extremely important propaganda tools used by the U.S. government. The film industry formed the Motion Picture Committee Cooperating for National Defense to distribute and show, without charge, national defense films made by the government. These included the so-called 'recruitment films' made by the different branches of the armed services used to persuade people to enlist. The Committee also made films such as *Women in Defense*, written by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and narrated by the movie star Katharine Hepburn, which encouraged women to work in defense factories or to join the armed services.<sup>11</sup> Many films depicted the horrors of Nazism, and early films were aimed at winning support for U.S. entry into the war. Other films were simply meant as entertainment for the American people during this difficult wartime period.

In addition to winning support from the Americans on the home front, propaganda was also necessary to persuade the American soldiers fighting abroad that they were doing the right thing. Soldiers fight better when they believe they are fighting for a good reason.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the government wanted to convince its soldiers that they were risking their lives to protect their country—and their own families—from being conquered by a cruel enemy, that they had been forced

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10 Collier, Christopher. *The U.S. in WWII: 1941-1945* (New York: Benchmark Books, 2002), 56-65.

11 Feldman, 378.

12 *Ibid.*, 369.

to go to war to defend themselves, and that the world would be a much better place after the war than it had been before. American soldiers often listened to Allied radio broadcasting stations that told them to keep up their courage and that praised them for their bravery in the war.

The American government especially used propaganda to target women and to persuade them to help with the war effort. With most of America's men fighting abroad, the women were left behind to take care of their houses and families. The government realized that these women would have to become the home front production soldiers America so badly needed. As more and more men headed into military service, both industry and the U.S. government turned to women, since 'the ones left behind' could do their part by taking over the men's vital jobs.

To achieve its goal of replacing male workers with female workers, therefore, the U.S. government had no choice but "to crank up its propaganda machine."<sup>13</sup> American women had to be persuaded, or coerced, into believing that the good of the country had to come before either their own or their family's convenience. Magazine ads, radio broadcasts, and print advertisements appealed to women's emotions and turned the working woman into a home front heroine. These plans worked, and the government's radio and advertising campaigns helped recruit hundreds of thousands of women workers.

Although they faced extremely difficult tasks, women of all ages answered the government's call. Through the government's propaganda urging women to be active in the war, 5 million women entered the war effort, working in shipyards and aircraft factories, serving as nurses, and working on farms to raise the crops that fed Allied troops. Thousands of women took jobs as riveters in airplane factories. Popular songs, such as "Rosie the Riveter," helped create the image of workers performing men's jobs while still remaining completely feminine.<sup>14</sup> The iconic picture of pretty "Rosie the Riveter," with her strong muscles and iron will, along with the caption "We can do it!" is the most enduring image we have of women on the home front during World War II.<sup>15</sup> America not only reached its own people through propaganda, but people around the world as well. America usually reached the people of occupied countries by radio. The Voice of America was a famous government radio service that broadcast to Axis-occupied countries.<sup>16</sup> When broadcasting to countries under German occupation, radio programs emphasized the importance of getting rid of the Germans and explained that the purpose of the war was to restore their independence. As the occupation became harsher and living conditions grew worse, America's message to these countries

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13 Sinnott, Susan. *Doing Our Part* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1991), 21.

14 *Ibid.*, 23.

15 *Ibid.*, 15.

16 Stokesbury, 495.

was that the war was continuing, that Germany would eventually be defeated, and that people who cooperated with the Germans would later pay for their actions.<sup>17</sup>

Just as America tried to convince its own people that it was necessary to fight, it tried to convince the enemy's people of the opposite. It used radio broadcasts, leaflets dropped from planes, and other methods to try to demoralize enemy troops and civilians, to try to discourage them and weaken their determination to fight. This was often called psychological warfare, and its backers claimed that it would make a major difference in the war.<sup>18</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that propaganda was a necessary tool to be used by the American government during World War II. Unlike Germany and the other Axis powers, U.S. government officials used propaganda posters, leaflets, commercials, newspapers, and movie trailers to keep their citizens informed. Much of this information supported the war effort by encouraging the citizens to take part in patriotic activities. Without the use of propaganda, the American people's morale would have crumbled and life would have been even more difficult than it already was. Propaganda raised the spirits of the American people, and helped gain support for the war and for America's policies. Due to the propaganda urging women to join the workforce, millions of women joined the labor force during World War II. Thanks to these women, American production increased tremendously, and America's victory in World War II was owed to the enormous amount of ships, tanks, aircraft, weapons and war materials that were produced. Financing for the war came mainly from the war bonds, certificates, notes, and stamps that propaganda encouraged civilians to buy. Because of the government's propaganda, more men signed up to enlist in the army than had been expected, and with the advantage of so many troops, America was able to win the war.

So although the American government did place certain limitations and restrictions on the American people, such as imposing censorship of the press, the American propaganda dispersed during World War II was generally beneficial to its citizens. By encouraging women to work outside the home, by reminding people not to share information from the front, and by pushing for support for U.S. involvement in the war, America was able to protect the safety of its citizens, and to be victorious in one of the bloodiest battles against evil that the world has ever seen.

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17 Feldman, 370-371.

18 *Loc. Cit.*

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## Revival on the Right: *Ronald Reagan's Election in 1966 and the Revival of Conservative American Ideals*

Mitchell Rocklin

The election of Ronald Reagan as governor of California marked the revival of a set of American ideals that were buried deep in the fabric of American society ever since the country was founded. They had been challenged by New Deal liberalism, only to find themselves revived in the reactionary persona of Barry Goldwater. This paper will provide an overview of some of these ideas, showing how they were carried through American history, pushed aside, and brought back to the forefront of American politics. It will also examine Reagan's contribution to this process, and how he was able to gain so many followers with ideas had been dormant for over three decades.

The history of political conflict is a very long one in the United States. Ever since the War of Independence, Americans polarized behind radically differing views of how their nation should be governed. Even the Constitution was only ratified after much political infighting, with fiery leaders like Patrick Henry opposing the ratification of the very document that later came to define American principles of government. After the ratification of the Constitution, there would be a divisive split between the Federalists and anti-Federalists. The former worked for a stronger central government to promote capitalism, and the latter for a central government that was as weak as possible, presiding over state governments that would promote a more agrarian and traditional society. The Federalists would soon disappear, with the ideas of the anti-Federalists becoming the mainstream ideology in the Democratic-Republican Party. The ideas of the Federalists were repudiated, and their government projects, such as the Bank of the United States, were eliminated by Jacksonian Democrats. The discarded Federalist ideas would

re-emerge however, as the Democrats would have to make room for the newly formed Whig Party. Led by Henry Clay, and espousing the ideals of his "American System," the Whigs believed in a stronger central government, able to bring the industrial revolution to America by fostering the growth industry and capitalism through incentives such as tariffs and the building of railroads and infrastructure. This was in direct contrast to much of America, especially the South, where not only agriculture by slave labor predominated over a fundamentally racist society that was more concerned with clinging to a traditional agrarian society than it was with ensuring economic progress and growth in the Republic. The Republican Party would adopt the ideas of the Whigs, and in the Civil War they would clash with those of the Southern society in a war that was fought over more than the issue of the expansion of slavery. The war was fought not only between two sections of the country, the North against the South, but also between two ideologies that were deeply embedded in the citizens of each side. The South fought for the preservation of its way of life, a conservative stubbornness to cling to an inefficient, archaic, agrarian, and inherently racist and hierarchical society. The North fought for the ideals that the Federalists had embraced, the Whigs revived, and the Republicans adopted. These included the supremacy of the Federal government's power of the states, a commitment to the development of man with the technology he created, and an egalitarian vision of an America where progress led to opportunities for all. In such an America, anyone could become rich, and not through the acquisition of slave labor, but through the production of goods and the creation of wealth. In such an America, everyone would enjoy the benefits of the rule of law, along with along with a government would act when necessary to protect the "public morals." In the end, the North won due to its very societal outlook – since it had emphasized industry, it was capable of producing more and better weapons, munitions, and supplies than the South could ever produce. Also, since it was willing to cross over racist boundaries by using black troops to accomplish the primary task of winning the war, the North gained 10% in troop strength.

While the intense and overt racism of the South would remain for about a century after the Civil War, Southern society would never be the same again. Southern society would start changing into a capitalist society, with blacks gaining more rights, and the goal of society being the accumulation of wealth through the production of goods and services, rather than the accumulation of slaves. This was greatly accelerated by the industrialization of WWII. Industry and urban centers would become much more important in the South as well, and it began to look more like the North. The Federal government supported industry and business, but did not intervene in the economy to a great degree, aside from building

infrastructure and formulating guidelines that were conducive to the growth of the American economy. This led to tremendous economic growth in America.

The Great Depression brought an end to the traditional American capitalist ideas that had been espoused by the Federalists, Whigs, and Republicans. Both Republicans and Democrats embraced the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt, believing that government intervention in the economy that included the production and redistribution of wealth was the only way to deal with the problem of the Great Depression. This included a network of social programs, Social Security, and high taxes to support them. The pre-depression ideology of free-enterprise capitalism, a forward-looking ideal that helped create a prosperous and productive America was, it seemed, permanently altered.

In the 1960's however, this ideology would begin to make a comeback. Many young activists and businessmen supported Republican candidates who supported the traditional free-enterprise American capitalist system, and supported the downsizing of government and fighting Communism around the world. This effort culminated in the campaign of Arizona senator Barry Goldwater in for the 1964 presidential election. Goldwater and his supporters both consciously and unknowingly supported many of the ideals of traditional pre-New Deal America. The Federalists had passed the torch to the Whigs, and the Whigs had passed it to the Republicans, but it had been dimmed by New Deal liberalism. Now, conservatives who believed in the traditional American ideals of capitalist progress, free enterprise, limited government, and private entrepreneurship, revived American capitalism once again. Many of them were concerned with moral issues, including Supreme Court decisions on school prayer and criminal justice, and student protests. They used the Republican Party for political organization, with the party in their control after they ousted the moderates who had controlled it for three decades.

Lyndon Johnson trounced Goldwater by a 3:2 ratio in the 1964 election, and most believed that whatever chance conservatives had to alter America's political landscape by relying on traditional American ideals died with Goldwater's loss. However, in 1966 Ronald Reagan, a conservative who had campaigned for Goldwater, was able to win the California gubernatorial election against two-term Democrat incumbent Edmund G. "Pat" Brown by one million votes and a percentage margin of 58% to 42%. He did this in one of the most liberal states in America, one that had produced the Earl Warren progressives and had 3 Democrats for every 2 Republicans. On the surface, it seems puzzling that Reagan was able to pull off such a phenomenal victory in such circumstances. Reagan was able to do so for several reasons, most of which tie into one major point – Reagan's ability to present his traditional conservative ideology in

a way that seemed palatable, practical, and positive, to the people of California. In campaigning for and winning the election, Reagan united the Republican Party behind him in California, and espoused views that were almost exactly the same as those of Barry Goldwater. Reagan's election was vital to the revival of past American ideals in the modern conservative movement and to the future of the Republican Party. Barry Goldwater had been rejected as an angry extremist and a throwback to the past. Reagan, however, was able to take the same ideology and ideals held so dearly by the Goldwaterites, and refine them into a view that did not look to take America back to a past era. Rather, it looked to guide the country into the future, on the wings of an ideology that had built up the character of the nation. In doing so, Reagan successfully revived the ideology of the Federalists, Whigs, and Republicans, and fashioned it into a respectable and powerful alternative to the liberalism that had controlled America for thirty years. Antebellum America had seen a clash between the American free-enterprise ideology of the North and the despotic and backward ideology of the South. The latter part of the twentieth century would see the victorious ideologies in the Civil War face off against a new ideology, liberalism, introduced in America by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Reagan successfully exposed the flaws of liberalism, and contrasted them with the values and traditions of America, and was successful in persuading others that America should embrace those values, rather than those of liberalism, in order to thrive.

Reagan was able to do this at an opportune time, when important and pressing issues were on the minds of California voters. These included freedom of property sales, crime, student unrest, and welfare. Reagan was able to provide solutions using conservative values in a way that made them practical and forward-looking. He made liberalism seem not like only backwards and archaic, but like a threatening ideology that had arisen as an aberration in American history, and had to be supplanted by traditional forward-looking American ideals of capitalism, morals, and the rule of law.<sup>1</sup>

Central to Reagan's beliefs prior to his election as governor was the idea that the Federal government had grown too big, was running too many programs, and was negatively interfering with the lives of its citizens, stifling their creativity and making them dependent on government for their livelihood and welfare. Reagan formulated his ideas on government while he was working as a spokesman for General Electric in the 1950's. He became convinced that some of America's fundamental freedoms were in jeopardy because of the emergence of a government that the framers of the constitution had never envisioned. This included a federal

1 Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time For Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 213.

bureaucracy that became so powerful that it could establish policies and thwart the desires of citizens and their elected officials.<sup>2</sup> Working for GE, Reagan developed an ideology that he articulated in a speech that gave in many different forms to GE workers, in which he warned of the growth of government and Communism. This became known as "The Speech," the famous speech that Reagan gave on national television on behalf of Barry Goldwater, at the Republican National Convention. It captured the attention of thousands of conservatives and raised a tremendous amount of money for Goldwater, and it also launched Reagan's political career.<sup>3</sup> In "The Speech," Reagan articulated his belief that government could work nearly as efficiently or effectively as the private sector. He cited the ideas of the founding fathers, saying that "This idea that government was beholden to the people, that it had not other source of power except the sovereign people, is still the newest, most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man." He told many stories that people could relate to, and used ironic humor to get across his points. He addressed the skyrocketing cost of government in his home state of California, and explained how it was a threat to individual freedom. He attacked big government and spoke about the American Dream, emphasizing the importance of free enterprise. Reagan effectively used common examples of problems, and spoke in a crystal clear way, so people could easily relate to what he was saying. Finally, he closed on a positive note, saying:

You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We can preserve for our children this the last best hope of man on earth, or we can sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children and our children's children say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done.<sup>4</sup>

Reagan espoused the same ideas as Barry Goldwater, the old Republicans, the Whigs, and the Federalists. However, he successfully modified these ideas in order to be able to articulate them in a way that was positive, forward-looking, and modern, whereas Goldwater could only articulate them in the opposite manner. Reagan's positive rhetoric and genial nature made him appear very different from Goldwater, who had an angry and defiant appearance. Even when Reagan attacked the same things Goldwater had, he did so in a lighthearted and even sometimes humorous way. For example, he once said that student radicals "act like Tarzan,

2 Reagan, Ronald. *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, c1990), 129.

3 Evans, Rowland and Novak, Robert. *The Reagan Revolution* (New York: Dutton, c1984), 26.

4 Reagan, Ronald. *A Time For Choosing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 203, 213-214.

look like Jane, and smell like Cheetah."<sup>5</sup> Also, whereas Goldwater had come across as an extremist, Reagan's ideas came across as quite feasible and mainstream. Reagan drew liberal and moderate Republicans together around his campaign. He spoke of the need to unite the party in order to win, and he writes in his autobiography that he believed it was necessary to do so in order to win the election and accomplish goals in government.<sup>6</sup> Reagan did this successfully, and as a result he received endorsements from Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon, a liberal and a moderate Republican.<sup>7</sup> Reagan took his idea of smaller government to California. While he was not very successful in shrinking government there, he was successful in minimizing unnecessary spending, and he gave money back to the people in the form of rebates or tax relief four times in his eight years as governor.<sup>8</sup> This had been unprecedented in California until his governorship. He was successful enough that his philosophy was able to carry him to the presidency six years after his second term.

While Reagan believed strongly in small government, he was, just like his ideological predecessors, concerned with upholding the rule of law. It was the issue of crime that allowed him to most effectively apply this traditional principle to solve a modern and pressing problem in California. For several days beginning on August 11, 1965, extremely violent and destructive riots rocked the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts, an impoverished black ghetto. A minor incident – the arrest of a drunk driver – started the riot, with local black youths attacking police and white passersby, and looting and destroying buildings, cars, and just about anything else they could get their hands on. Governor Brown was on vacation in Greece, and immediately flew back to California when he was notified that there were serious riots occurring in Watts. Due both to confusion and an unwillingness to further inflame the black community by sending in troops without first meeting with black leaders, liberal Acting Governor Glenn Anderson did not immediately call out the National Guard when police Chief William Parker had requested they be sent to aid his out-manned police force. When the chief was told that Anderson was flying to Los Angeles and wanted to meet with Parker to obtain more information about the riots, Parker was furious. He first refused to meet with Anderson, and then went on television to charge the politicians with failing to deploy the National Guard and restore order. He implied that all city residents

5 Steven F. Hayward, *The Age of Reagan: the Fall of the Old Liberal Order* (Roseville: Forum/Prima, c2001), 100.

6 Schoenwald, 203, 213-214. Reagan, *American Life*, 129.

7 Hayward, 101.

8 See California. Governor (1967-1975 : Reagan.) *Reorganization Message of Ronald Reagan, Governor of California [microform]: transmitted to the California Legislature Wednesday, March 5, 1969.* (Sacramento: California Office of State Printing, 1969), for a good example of Reagan's ideas in action.

were in danger, and told viewers that he was considering asking the President to send in the Army. When Anderson arrived in Los Angeles he was informed of the full extent of the riots by an aide waiting at the airport, and after being informed that Governor Brown wanted the troops deployed immediately, Anderson ordered the National Guard into Watts.<sup>9</sup>

Governor Brown believed in and made a tremendous effort at fighting poverty and improving the condition of blacks in the cities through government programs, and he believed that the blacks in Watts were much better off than blacks in other ghettos around the country. He was out of touch with reality however, unwilling or unable to realize that his efforts had proven insufficient. Unemployment in some pockets of Watts stood at 31% in 1965, 90% of the homes had been built before 1949, and slumlords rarely conducted repairs. To add to this, the population density was 27.3 per acre, compared with 7.4 per acre for the rest of Los Angeles.<sup>10</sup> While Brown did believe that riots and disturbances needed to be quelled quickly and law and order reestablished, instead of changing his stance towards the ghettos, Brown decided that the riots had been caused by poverty, and the solution was more government spending on the ghetto. The McCone Commission, made up largely of his own appointees, had investigated the riots and come to the same conclusion. Brown used the findings of this commission and its recommendations to justify his response to the riots. Even before the commission's report, administration Democrats in California had increased welfare, worked to convert "gang energies to constructive purposes," assisted rioters in hiring defense attorneys, provided additional medical assistance, found jobs for a few hundred young people, and urged greater federal attention to "areas of extreme need." With the McCone Commission recommending massive social spending as the solution to poverty and riots, Brown pressed ahead with his agenda, pouring more money into Watts in the form of public works projects, job training programs, service centers, and other government assistance. However, by early 1966 these antipoverty efforts had done little to alter the conditions of poverty in Watts. In 1966, a prominent black lawyer in Los Angeles told White House aide Marvin Watson the obvious. He said that "the basic condition of the Negro in that part of Los Angeles...is fundamentally unchanged since the riots."<sup>11</sup>

Before he embarked on this new wave of social spending, Brown had changed his rhetoric from emphasizing the need to preserve law and order, to talking about what he believed were the causes of the riots. (Poverty, poor living conditions, racial tensions, Chief Parker's aggressive rhetoric, the blistering August heat, the

9 Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (New York: Free Press, c2000), 131-134.

10 Ibid., 136-137.

11 Ibid., 146-149.

legacy of slavery, poor police work in the ghettos, etc.)<sup>12</sup> This rhetoric was totally different from the rhetoric of police chief Parker and Los Angeles mayor Sam Yorty. Parker was all over the place after the riots, making incendiary and to-the-point remarks to the media and other groups. He divided people into the categories upstanding citizens and fomenters of violence, called Brown and other state liberals misguided, attacked social programs, and defended policemen as G-d-fearing patriots who stood tall during the vicious violence. Perhaps most importantly, he attacked and had no sympathy for the rioters, dubbing them thugs and saying: "One person threw a rock and then, like monkeys in a zoo, others started throwing rocks." Some of Parker's remarks had racist undertones as well. He predicted that by 1970, 45% of Los Angeles would be black, and added that if Californians wanted to "live with that without law enforcement, G-d help you." Chief Parker's rhetoric following the riots was the most popular, and Mayor Yorty supported him to the fullest extent possible, and tried to be as closely associated with the popular police chief as much as possible. Parker suddenly died in July 1966, and at his funeral Yorty echoed the feelings of many Los Angeles residents when he said: "G-d may not be dead, but his finest representative on earth has just passed away."<sup>13</sup> From then until Reagan's campaign for governor, Yorty became California's chief champion of law and order. He spoke straight, blaming "irresponsible" liberals for helping to cause the riots, faulted the governor for being on vacation in Greece during the worst of the riots, criticized him for his verbal attacks against Chief Parker's tough stance, and chastised Lieutenant Governor Anderson for wanting "to confer with the black ministers before he called out the National Guard."<sup>14</sup> He also fought over the distribution of federal funds, dismissed talk about the rehabilitation of criminals, and criticized judges for expanding the rights of criminals. He saw Governor Brown as soft on crime, riots, "welfare cheats" and protesters, and he decided to run for governor against Brown in the Democratic primary of 1966.<sup>15</sup> Though he was unsuccessful, he gave Brown a run for his money, losing the primary 1.3 million to 1 million votes.<sup>16</sup>

Yorty espoused ideas that Ronald Reagan would adopt and run on – the importance of law and order and a tough stance on crime. Reagan would fare much better than Brown in the general election, able to relate to the fears of Californians and assure them that he would do everything in his power to take a hard-nosed approach to crime and the law, and ensure that criminals were brought to justice. Basically, he adopted the ideas in former police chief Parker's rhetoric,

12 Ibid., 144-145.

13 Ibid., 142.

14 Ibid., 158.

15 Ibid., 163.

16 Ibid., 170.

while adopting a calmer tone and making more reasonable appeals for law and order. During his campaign, Reagan attacked Brown on his handling of Watts. He tried to identify with Yorty on the law and order issue, and tried to get his endorsement after the Democratic primary. In October 1966, the San Francisco neighborhood of Hunter's Point erupted in violence after a police officer shot a sixteen-year-old boy who allegedly was trying to steal a car. Though the riot was controlled with police and National Guardsmen, Reagan said that the riots revealed "how little leadership has been exerted in Sacramento to head off such violence," and he urged the governor not to "reward" the rioters. (Presumably, this was referring to Brown's social programs.) Reagan would address the crime issue often, as the murder rate rose 14.4% from 1965 to 1966, along with a 9% rise in robbery, and a 5% rise in rape.

Reagan would continue to use this strong anti-crime rhetoric as governor, and would take an official anti-crime posture in his submission of a report on controlling crime in California to the state legislature in August 1973. The report urged an emphasis on high-tech tools in fighting crime, including the establishment of a criminal justice information system. It also attacked the judicial system in California and urged that it be brought back into line in searching for the truth, not delaying the punishment of criminals. Perhaps most important was the emphasis on traditional American ideas of crime and punishment. The report stated that "To provide a meaningful impact on crime, our society must reassert its emphasis in *individual responsibility* for human conduct.... Where there is refusal to obey the law, *swift and certain punishment* must be the consistent consequence." The report then relates to people's legitimate fears regarding the soaring crime rate in California, stating:

As we consider our system of justice, with its numerous safeguards for the rights of the accused, we must not forget that the law abiding public has rights, too, and among these is the right of each persona to live and work safely, without the threat of criminal acts against his person or property.... Effective law enforcement guarantees *individual freedom*; it does not restrict it.... This report...provides an opportunity to expand the freedom of all Californians – to free them from the fear of crime...we renew our efforts to keep the people of California safe and free.<sup>17</sup>

This issue of law and order proved to be Reagan's most valuable weapon. The issue ran so deep in California that Sam Yorty had used it to come close to

17 California. Governor's Select Committee on Law Enforcement Problems. *Controlling Crime in California; Report. Submitted to the California Legislature by Governor Ronald Reagan, August 1973.* Sacramento, 1973, p. 3. (Italics added).



beating a two-term governor in a primary. After Watts, riots became the top *national* issue, ahead of even the Vietnam War. Reagan was able to take a strong and aggressive stance against crime that had roots in his conservative ideology. Whereas liberals had tried to prevent riots by implementing social spending, Reagan's report stated that separate from the issue of helping the poor was the issue of attacking the problem of crime by cracking down on criminals. This hard-nosed approach was rooted in his conservative values, which included the desire to fight those who violated the laws of the United States. In the nineteenth century, the Republican Party had campaigned on law and order in big cities, in part because the Democrats had their hands tied on the crime issue because of their greater dependence on big city political machines and the organized crime that made them possible.<sup>18</sup> Reagan's revival of a tough stance on crime served his popularity well.<sup>19</sup> Even Governor Brown admitted that Californians wanted a strong and unconditional cry of law and order from their leader, something that he did not provide as governor, especially when compared to Reagan.<sup>20</sup>

Another issue that would help Reagan enormously was the issue of student unrest on University of California campuses, particularly on the Berkeley campus. This issue was also one of law and order, tying into the broader ideological issues raised by Watts. At first, when faced with a large number of students occupying Sproul Hall, Brown's inclination was to uphold the law and remove the students. After some hesitation, he had the police go in and arrest all of the demonstrators inside who did not leave. This decision was very popular, with the public giving overwhelming support to Brown's actions. Then, however, Brown made a critical mistake. Just as he had tried to understand the causes of the Watts riots and prevent future ones by addressing the needs of the neighborhood, Brown decided to take a more conciliatory approach towards the students, he identified with their quest for social justice and free speech. Brown changed his tone, and tried to appease the students by listening to their concerns and attempting to address their problems.<sup>21</sup> Just as with Watts, he would pay for his wobbling stance. Reagan came across much better than Brown did in handling this issue. When reporters asked Brown who was right in the Berkeley dispute, the students or the administrators, Brown said that "as to who's right in the last analysis I can't say.... Emotions rise in situations like this and each side thinks they are absolutely right. But one side can't unilaterally set themselves up as sole custodians what's right and wrong."<sup>22</sup> This moral cloudiness would hurt Brown, especially when faced

18 See Thomas Repetto, *American Mafia*, for a detailed discussion of this issue.

19 Dallek, 149.

20 Edmund G. Brown and Bill Brown, *Reagan, the Political Chameleon* (New York: Praeger, 1976), 14.

21 Dallek, 94-100.

22 *Ibid.*, 98.

against Reagan's moral clarity.<sup>23</sup> Reagan would talk about "so-called free-speech advocates...[whose] ringleaders should have been taken by the scruff of the neck and thrown out of the university once and for all."<sup>24</sup>

When he was governor, Reagan responded to the People's Park incident, where students seized a university parking lot and made it into a park. He ordered the police to take back the lot and evict the students, whereupon construction teams fenced off the area and proceeded to destroy the park to make room for other facilities. A riot ensued, with many policemen injured and one protestor killed. Reagan immediately called in the National Guard. The Guard chased the students around, and when they gathered in one area, ordered a helicopter to release tear gas over them. After the episode, Reagan spoke to the public about his actions and the actions of the police and National Guard, and evoked traditional conservative values in his appeals to the importance of private property and the rule of law. In upholding the principle of private property, he stated:

We all continue to use the term "park" but the issue had never been one of whether there should be a park or even whether a park was needed.... By their own statements, the leaders of the property take-over have made it plain their purpose was political. They were challenging the right of private ownership of land in this country. They referred to the University's deed as a piece of paper that did not give the University the right to use the land.

Reagan cited the 13-point Manifesto that the People's Park negotiating committee had written up, including a point that stated: "Through rent strikes, direct seizures of property and other resistance campaigns, large landlords, banks and developers who are gouging higher rents and spreading ugliness will be driven out." He also noted the extremely high incidence of crime at Berkeley, and implied that all necessary force would be used against those who violated the law.<sup>25</sup> In the 1973 crime report that he submitted to the legislature, a section recommended that marijuana violations, rampant throughout Berkeley, be punished severely, saying that "The general rule should be imprisonment, not the avoidance of it.... The pattern of no penalties is not justified; some penalty for marijuana should always be imposed." This attitude would earn him a great deal of support from many adults tired of seeing "those damned kids" rioting and wrecking the universities that they supported with their tax dollars.

23 F. Clifton White and William J. Gill, *Why Reagan Won* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, c1981), 73.

24 Dallek, 102.

25 Ronald Reagan, *Actor, Ideologue, Politician: The Public Speeches of Ronald Reagan*, Ed. by Davis W. Houck and Amos Kiewe (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 76-77, 79-80.

In the end, Ronald Reagan was a man who took the revived American conservatism of Barry Goldwater, and made it more palatable to more people. He did so by making it seem more mainstream, simple, clear, and practical enough to solve real problems. As gubernatorial candidate and governor of California he dealt most directly with the issues of government spending and law and order, and this set the ground for his march to the White House. In doing so, he re-lit the torch of ideals that had been carried by the Federalists, Whigs, and Republicans, but had been dimmed for thirty years by the New Deal. He would lead a conservative revolution to reclaim many of these historic ideals and values that continues to this very day.

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