

History Matters Undergraduate Journal



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The History of HISTORY MATTERS
Appalachian State University
Department of History

Have you ever spent so much time and effort on something that you wanted share it with other people? Have you ever felt unfulfilled receiving only a grade and your own satisfaction as rewards for your hard work? Have you ever wanted to get your work published?

HISTORY MATTERS was founded to meet these needs. In the spring of 2003, Eric Burnette, a freshman, was looking for an outlet—a venue for his research paper. He figured that other students probably felt the same way. Dr. Michael Moore, who edited ALBION, a professional journal of British history, for over twenty-five years, began advising Eric on how to start an academic journal for students. Another student, Matthew Manes, was asked to join the interesting experiment, and together the three laid the groundwork for HISTORY MATTERS.

The journal's first deadline was in late January 2004. For the editorial staff, it was an extensive and time-consuming process of reading, revising, and communicating with both the authors and the Faculty Editorial Board. In the end, the team accepted one research paper, one research essay, and three editorial book reviews. The first issue of *HISTORY MATTERS: An Undergraduate Journal of Historical Research* was published on April 28, 2004 at www.historymatters.appstate.edu.

From the beginning, Eric and Matt wanted to expand the journal and provide more students with the opportunity to be published. The 2004-2005 school year saw the participation of the University of North Carolina at Asheville and Western Carolina University, as well as submissions from half a dozen schools nationwide. The 2005 issue was published with two research papers, one from Appalachian State University and one from a student at Villanova University, and five editorial book reviews from all three participating departments.

Since 2004, HISTORY MATTERS has grown drastically. Over the years, the submission base has increased from 11 papers in 2004-05 to more than 110 submissions in 2012-13. The staff now receives submissions from distinguished universities across the United States, including Yale, Harvard, and Stanford. HISTORY MATTERS has also expanded internationally. The journal receives submissions from Canada, South America, and Australia, while also employing international staff members as contributing editors.

HISTORY MATTERS continues to grow and prosper thanks to a supportive faculty, department, university, and most importantly, to the students who have worked hard on their papers and who work diligently with the staff to get them published.

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We would like to dedicate this year's edition of the History Matters Undergraduate Journal to Dr. Lucinda McCray for her many years of dedicated service. We wish her the best and thank her for her years as advisor to the journal.

Finally, we would like to thank the numerous authors that submitted papers to the journal this year, and graciously accepted editorial advising; also, for their patience and excellent work throughout the process.

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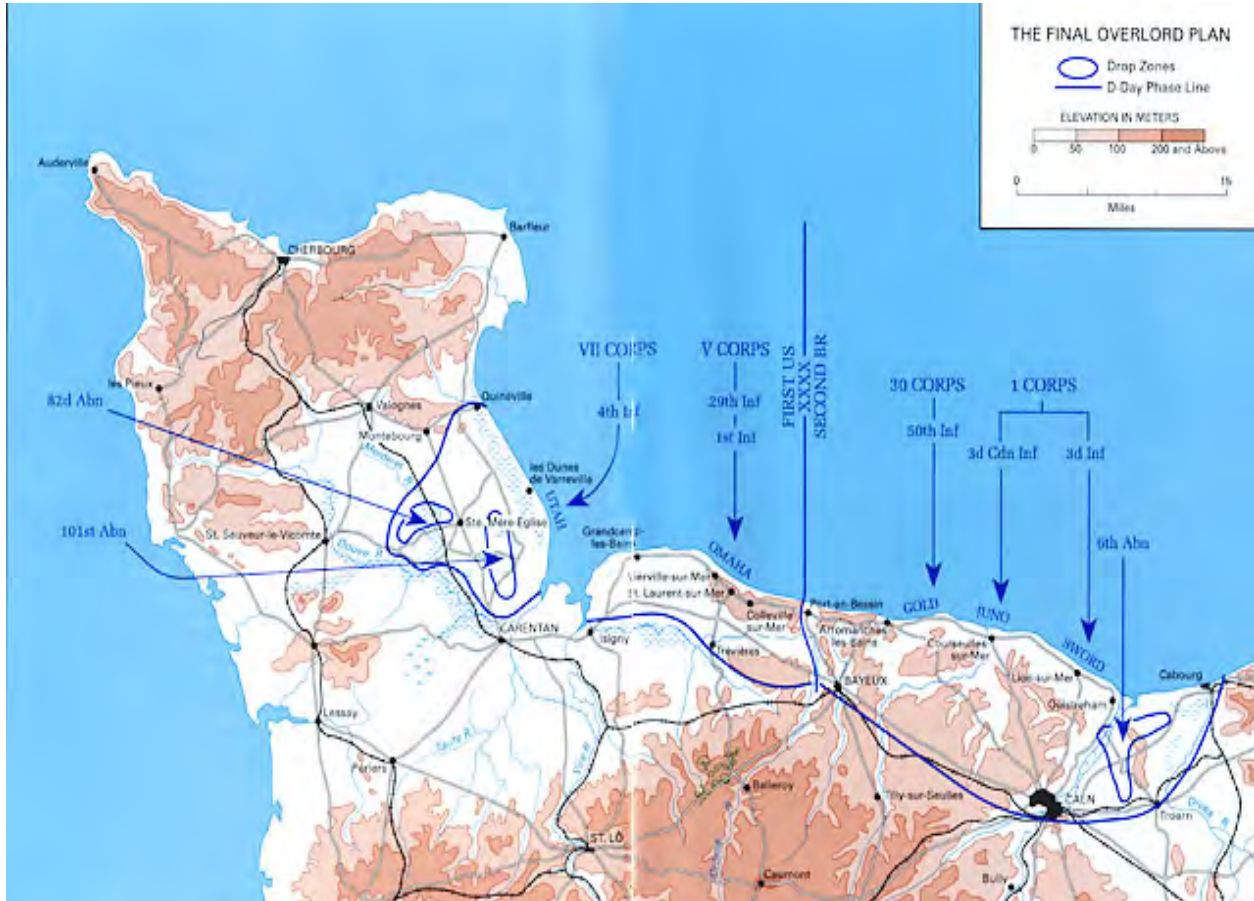
Send in the Dummies!

Operation TITANIC's Role during D-Day

Zachary Thompson

The United States Military Academy at West Point

Map of Allied Airborne Operations in Normandy, France.¹



The airborne element of the D-Day invasion was one of the largest airborne operations of World War II. More than 2,500 paratroopers jumped into Normandy on the morning of June 6th, 1944. The Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) ordered the American 82nd and 101st and British 6th Airborne Divisions to land several hours prior to the main assault to draw German units away from the beaches. After landing, these divisions established a beachhead to ensure that German reinforcements did not interfere with the amphibious assault. SHAEF tasked the American airborne units to secure a beachhead beyond Utah Beach and to block German reinforcements coming from the German garrison at Cherbourg. SHAEF also tasked the

¹ The Final Overlord Plan, available at <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-C-Normandy/maps/USA-C-Normandy-2.jpg>, (accessed February 1, 2014).

British 6th Airborne to secure several key bridges traversing the Orne River. Developing bridgeheads across the Orne would shield the invasion from a counterattack from northeastern France.

These airborne divisions faced some of Germany's most elite, prepared units along the Atlantic Wall, to include several *Fallschirmjäger* (Airborne) and *Luftlande-Infanterie* divisions.² To undermine the enemy response to the invasion, the Allies relied upon deception operations aimed at the Wehrmacht units stationed in Normandy and the Pas de Calais. One deception operation, codenamed Operation TITANIC, occurred merely hours before the airborne landings. TITANIC was vital to the success of the airborne landings because it delayed the German high command from committing reserves to the Cotentin Peninsula, the site of the American drop zones, which gave the Allied Airborne units precious time to secure a foothold in Normandy.

Essentially, TITANIC was one major factor that enabled the Allied airborne units to complete their respective missions. SHAEF deemed the missions of the American airborne units imperative for securing a beachhead for Utah Beach. If the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions failed to do so, then subsequent seaborne forces landing at Utah could be disconnected from the other landing zones. Additionally, if the British 6th Airborne Division failed to seize the bridges traversing the Orne River, the German 15th Army could easily reinforce the 7th Army at the Atlantic Wall. Therefore, a massive influx of German troops from northeastern France would quickly reach Normandy.³ The bridgehead across the Orne would anchor the Allied left flank. Moreover, both the beachhead and the bridgehead would establish space for follow on units to land.

²Thomas E. Griess, ed., *Atlas for the Second World War: Europe and the Mediterranean*, (Garden City Park: Square One Publishers), 55; James Lucas, *Storming Eagles: German Airborne Forces in World War Two*, (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1988), 135.

³ Williamson Murray, and Allan R. Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 418.

Furthermore, the German 7th and 15th Armies fully expected an airborne assault. Their intelligence units kept a watchful eye over England throughout 1944. These intelligence units were experienced too, having listened to the 82nd Airborne Division's radio traffic for over a year during the Italian Campaign. In February, four months before D-Day, they identified radio traffic which suggested the 82nd was in southern England and promptly alerted the German Army Command of the West (OB West).⁴ Responsively, OB West moved the 3rd and 5th *Fallschirmjäger* Divisions into Brittany that very month to prepare for a possible invasion. OB West also exempted them from building defenses so they could train on repelling airborne invasions.⁵

OB West placed Field Marshall Rommel in charge of building the defenses along the Atlantic Wall. One obstacle, aptly named "Rommel asparagus," comprised of large poles rigged with explosives designed to stop paratroopers and gliders as they landed. The Germans erected them in practically every open field in Normandy that could serve as a suitable drop zone.⁶ To defend the Cotentin Peninsula, they opened the La Barquette lock, one of several locks throughout the region. The opening of the lock flooded the Merderet River Valley and the surrounding lowlands, making the plains unsuitable drop zones.⁷ Finally, Rommel peppered Normandy with fortified concrete bunkers, artillery emplacements, and minefields. Therefore, any action which facilitated the airborne operations against this prepared, well-defended enemy would be critical to ensure mission success. The presence of German combat divisions in Normandy could have undermined the landings and doomed the entire invasion before it began.

⁴ Anthony Cave Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 495.

⁵ Lucas, *Storming Eagles: German Airborne Forces in World War Two*, 135.

⁶ Murray and Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, 412.

⁷ Robert M. Murphy, *No Better Place to Die: The Battle for La Fièvre Bridge*, (Havertown: Casemate Publishers, 2009) 28-29; When planning the airborne operations, SHAEF designated portions of the Merderet River Valley near the town of Sainte Mère-Église as drop zones for the 82nd. Although the Valley had been flooded for quite some time, tall reeds and grasses around the area made it difficult for the strategists to understand the full extent of the damage. Many paratroopers lost their lives drowning in these flood zones under the weight of their equipment.

The London Controlling Section (LCS), under the supervision of British War Secretary Oliver Stanley, planned Operation TITANIC. TITANIC was one of several auxiliary deception operations under the umbrella of Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH. Allied strategists designed FORTITUDE SOUTH to deceive the German high-command into thinking the invasion of Europe would occur at the Pas de Calais, the narrowest point of the English Channel.⁸ Both sides deemed control of the Pas de Calais crucial to a successful invasion since its short distance from England would be easier to support logistically. Likewise, it was the quickest route to the Ruhr Valley, the industrial heart of the German war-machine.

Unlike much of western France, the Pas de Calais was not lightly defended. Adolf Hitler, acting as Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, intended Calais to be “the mightiest of fortresses” in France.⁹ Supported by several reserve divisions in Belgium, the German 15th Army occupied Calais and the surrounding area.¹⁰ General Dwight Eisenhower and his staff, after deciding that Normandy would be the preferred location for the invasion, intended for FORTITUDE SOUTH to occupy the 15th Army at Calais by suggesting that an invasion was to occur there. This would prevent them from reinforcing the thinly spread divisions stationed along the Normandy coast.¹¹

FORTITUDE SOUTH contained several smaller operations, the most important of which were Operations QUICKSILVER and TITANIC. Operation QUICKSILVER was the main effort, staging a predominantly false invasion force in southeast England to fix the 15th German Army and the German armored reserves at Calais. If the Allies could keep the 15th Army and its reserves

⁸ Jock Haswell, *D-Day: Intelligence and Deception*, (New York: Times Books, 1979), 106.

⁹ Hans Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, trans. Ian Colvin (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1951), 66.

¹⁰ Griess, *Atlas for the Second World War: Europe and the Mediterranean*, 54.

¹¹ Field Marshal Rommel, in charge of reinforcing the entire French coast and overseeing the Atlantic Wall's construction, realized his units were spread thin. However, he was severely constrained by time, resources, and personnel.

stationary, they could solely focus on breaking through the 7th Army in Normandy. General Eisenhower ordered two army groups, General Montgomery's 21st British Army Group, an actual army, and General Patton's 1st U.S. Army Group (FUSAG), a fictitious army, to southeast England a couple of months prior to D-Day.¹²

Patton's Army, complete with inflatable tanks, jeeps, and aircraft conducted "training exercises" and shared sensitive information such as their order of battle and combat strength over the radio.¹³ Lights and campfires, constantly kept bright and blazing, suggested the presence of a large force.¹⁴ They docked landing craft, constructed of wood and fabric, in southeast England's ports. In doing so, the 1st Army Group drew Germany's eye away from the real landing craft secretly harbored in the marshes of southern England. As testimony to QUICKSILVER's success, by May 1944 German intelligence suspected there to be seventy-nine divisions in southeast England, yet there was only forty-seven.¹⁵ However, QUICKSILVER was not the final solution to the Allies' problems.

Even though QUICKSILVER kept the 15th Army occupied at Calais, the LCS still had to consider the 7th German Army defending the Atlantic Wall. Hence the conception of Operation TITANIC, an operation designed to move units of the 7th German Army defending the Normandy coast away from the tentative landing zones of the Allied airborne units. The LCS split Operation TITANIC into a four phase operation designed to attract the enemy's attention, manpower, and resources to the landing of dummy paratroopers while the real Allied airborne landings took place on the Cotentin Peninsula and north of Caen.¹⁶

¹² Mary Kathryn Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007), 67-68.

¹³ Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, 67-68

¹⁴ Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 151.

¹⁵ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 152.

¹⁶ Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies*, 526.

The LCS fittingly named the four phases TITANIC I, II, III, and IV. TITANIC I ordered an airborne drop, simulating the landing of a division, north of the Seine River. Allied aircraft dropped two hundred dummies into the into the Yerville-Doudeville-Fauville-Yvetot area to entice German reserves south of the Seine to head north, away from the British drop zones. TITANIC II, cancelled for unknown reasons before June 6th, would have dropped 50 dummies “to prevent German reserves from traveling west of the Dives River.”¹⁷ Perhaps the Allied Forces were too overwhelmed with the Combined Bomber Offensive and other D-Day preparations to task enough aircraft in support of TITANIC II. TITANIC III discarded another 50 dummies around Maltot and the woods north of Baron to inspire a counterattack southwest of Caen. Finally, TITANIC IV dropped another two hundred dummies near Marigny, drawing enemy forces away from St. Lô, a vital road junction.¹⁸

According to these orders, fake paratrooper dummies were a critical component of TITANIC I-IV. Simple on the exterior, the cloth-bound dummies stood approximately three feet tall, were stuffed with cotton, given a small parachute, and sewn shut into a rough, human-like form. Named paratrooper dummies, the term “dummy” is a misnomer in this instance. Internally they carried rifle and machine gun simulators designed to explode and simulate the sounds of small arms fire.¹⁹ After landing, a few “unleashed a chemical preparation which, in the form of light smoke, created the smell of battle.”²⁰ To add to the confusion, once the dummies fired their simulators and released their chemical compounds, they would self-destruct, leaving behind only the charred remains of a parachute indicating a paratrooper tried to burn his chute in order to destroy evidence of his landing.²¹

¹⁷ Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, 72.

¹⁸ Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, 72.

¹⁹ Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, 72.

²⁰ Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies*, 526.

²¹ Anthony Beevor, *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 54.



A reproduction dummy without the small arms simulator or chemical agent. Photo taken by the author at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, Colleville-sur-Mer, France.

On the day of the operation twenty-nine Halifax, and Stirling aircraft, drawn from four Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons, simultaneously dropped their cargo of dummies around 0200.²² Aircraft in support of TITANIC I dropped two hundred dummies in the Yerville-Doudeville-Fauville-Yvetot area, approximately forty kilometers north of Rouen. Other aircraft dropped two hundred dummies near Marigny, a small village west of Saint-Lô, in support of TITANIC IV. The aircraft assigned to TITANIC III dropped one hundred dummies southwest of Caen in order to draw its German defenders out of the city and, more importantly, away from the Orne River. The dummies were also accompanied by *window*, small strips of metal designed to amplify the radar signals of the Germans making the small groups of dummies appear as a larger invasion force.

To further emphasize the dummies' effect, two British Special Air Service (SAS) teams, supported the operation. Approximately three weeks prior to D-Day, M.R.D. Foot, an SAS intelligence officer and liaison to the LCS, received orders "to mount four small operations...to be

²² "D-Day Revisited: Royal Air Force Operations," <http://d-dayrevisited.co.uk/d-day/operation-overlord.html> (accessed October 21, 2013); The RAF squadrons included the 90th, 138th, 149th, and the 161st.

done by British troops and not by others” to aid the deception. Foot proceeded to request four small parties from Colonel Main, the commander of one of the SAS regiments, for the night of the invasion. However, Main, believing it was too late to make alterations, refused to assist the TITANIC landings. Foot appealed to Colonel Franks, the commander of another SAS regiments, asking him to support the operation instead. Reluctantly, Franks agreed to support the operation “provided it was cut down from four parties to two, which [they] did.”²³

One team dropped with TITANIC I and the other one dropped with TITANIC IV.²⁴ These SAS teams, some of the first Allied troops in Normandy on June 6th, landed approximately one to two hours before the Allied airborne divisions. The teams, trained in sabotage operations, wrought havoc by puncturing tires, cutting telephone wires, and generally creating the image that an airborne invasion was taking place. They also toted gramophones with records of soldiers conversing and gunfire.²⁵ More importantly, the SAS teams encouraged the psychological impact of the dummies. It did not take long for the Germans to discover that the paratroopers were phony, but the teams’ presence kept them from assuming that all of the airborne landings were false. Consequently, the German leadership had to determine which landings were real and which were fake, the axis of advance of the real paratroopers, and where should it commit its valuable reserves to combat them.

Operation TITANIC undeniably caused the German High Command to delay sending reinforcements to Caen and the Cotentin Peninsula. Numerous reports of *Explosivpuppen* and enemy paratroopers came in from areas where the dummies and SAS teams made an appearance.²⁶ Units in the vicinity of the drop zones spent their morning sweeping their areas, collecting what little evidence remained, and repairing the damage the SAS teams had inflicted. OB West, under the

²³ M.R.D. Foot, interview by Stephen Ambrose, *Voices of D-Day: The Story of the Allied Invasion Told by Those Who Were There*, ed. Ronald J. Drez, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 58.

²⁴ Barbier, *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, 72.

²⁵ Foot, *Voices of D-Day: The Story of the Allied Invasion Told by Those Who Were There*, 59

²⁶ Beevor, *D-Day: The Battle for Normandy*, 54.

command of Field Marshal Rundstedt, was convinced that the airborne landings were indicative of a larger invasion to come. At approximately 0215, Rundstedt's staff received a call from Army Group B reporting "strong parachute landings in several places in Normandy, and of continuing heavy flights including both towed and free gliders."²⁷

Yet, Army Group B's quick response does not indicate their control over the situation. Although the telephone call accurately reported parachute and glider landings, and the fighting occurring on the Cotentin Peninsula, there must have been confusion since the report indicated that the dummies were constructed of wood and booby-trapped.²⁸ Moreover, Army Group B failed to report an estimate of how many paratroopers had landed. Without this information, OB West could only guess the number of reserves it should send to the sector. It is evident that chaos reigned in OB West's sector.

The pinnacle of TITANIC's success occurred shortly thereafter. Around 0230, OB West sounded *Alarmstufe* (Alarm stage) I and ordered the *12th SS Panzer Division*, a reserve unit located near Alençon, to proceed towards Lisieux. OB West believed the air landings indicated the opening phase of a main attack in their sector. However, Lisieux is located over fifty kilometers from where the British forces landed near Caen and one hundred and fifty kilometers from where the American forces landed on the Cotentin Peninsula.²⁹ As OB West's muddled actions indicate, TITANIC was so deceptive they ordered the *12th SS Panzer Division* away from the fight.

Simultaneously, OB West ordered the *Panzer Lehr Division* to stage at its assembly area for movement. It would appear, though, that Germany's Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) underestimated the extent of the landings. Between 0630 and 0700, OKW called OB West,

²⁷Bodo Zimmerman, *OB West, Atlantic Wall to Siegfried Line: A Study in Command*, (Allendorf: Historical Division of the Army, 1946), 72.

²⁸Zimmerman, *OB West, Atlantic Wall to Siegfried Line: A Study in Command*, 72.

²⁹Griess, *Atlas for the Second World War: Europe and the Mediterranean*, 54.

violently objecting “to OB West’s arbitrary employment of OKW reserves, 12 SS Pz Div and Pz Lehr Div.” OKW allowed the 12th to continue to Lisieux, but halted any potential movement for the *Panzer Lehr*. Additionally, OB West had to await Adolf Hitler’s decision, who was asleep at the time of the landings. Although OB West tried to object, OKW retorted that they “were in no position to judge, that the main landing was to come at an entirely different place.”³⁰

Generalleutnant Speidel, Field Marshal Rommel’s Chief of Staff, noted that Generaloberst Jodl, the commander of OKW, gave the order to stop the reinforcements himself.³¹ Jodl, like many other OKW officers, was hesitant to commit reserves to what they believed was a diversionary attack.³² Generaloberst Heinz Guderian, the Chief of Germany’s Mobile Forces, remarked, “Jodl...could not make up his mind to free the OKW reserve at once - a reserve, after all, of three panzer divisions - since he was by no means certain that the landings in Normandy constituted the main operation and were not merely a faint.”³³ Partially due to QUICKSILVER, the German High Command was so convinced the invasion was to occur at Calais that Hitler did not release his reserve divisions to Normandy until 1500.³⁴ Thus, fooled tactically by the airborne landings, OB West failed to intervene strategically for fear of future landings.

With the absence of the 12th SS Panzer and Panzer Lehr Divisions, the Allied airborne divisions focused on fighting the German units in their vicinity instead of concerning themselves with counterattacks from reinforcing divisions. Therefore, TITANIC caused multiple second and third order effects. To the east, TITANIC I and III aided the British 6th Airborne Division in securing several key bridges traversing the Orne River. Colonel Hans von Luck, commanding the

³⁰ Zimmerman, *OB West, Atlantic Wall to Siegfried Line: A Study in Command*, 75.

³¹ Zimmerman, *OB West, Atlantic Wall to Siegfried Line: A Study in Command*, 75.

³² Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 94.

³³ Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, trans. Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1952), 332.

³⁴ Zimmerman, *OB West, Atlantic Wall to Siegfried Line: A Study in Command*, 75; Hans Speidel, *Invasion 1944: Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, trans. Theo R. Crevenna (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), 82.

German regiment guarding Pegasus Bridge, remarked, “Army Group B merely informed us that it was a matter of a diversionary maneuver: the British had thrown out straw dummies on parachutes.”³⁵ Denying the use of the bridges to the Germans anchored the left flank of the British beaches. Any German reinforcements approaching Normandy were forced to travel south of Caen.³⁶ Rerouting German reinforcements, once again, wasted time and resources.

These were not just any reinforcements either. These were *Panzer* divisions, armor units strengthened by artillery and infantry components. Armor is an airborne unit’s greatest enemy since airborne units, for the sake of weight, cannot carry many anti-armor weapons. Additionally, the German Army could hardly spare the fuel it burnt sending the *12th SS Panzer Division* to the wrong place. With their oil refineries ravaged by the Combined Bomber Offensive, petroleum was a precious commodity for Germany’s military.³⁷ Allied air superiority complicated the problem since German units could only move at night to avoid Allied bombers, another reason why the reinforcements were slow to reach Normandy.

Thanks to TITANIC IV, the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions eventually secured the towns of Sainte Mère-Église and Carentan respectively. The beachhead these units established protected the flanks of the 4th Infantry Division landing amphibiously at Utah Beach, ensuring no German units separated Utah and Omaha Beach. The *Fallschirmjäger* and *Luftlande-Infanterie* divisions near Sainte Mère-Église and Carentan could have easily punched through their light defenses. Fortunately for the 82nd and 101st, these German divisions were drawn southwest to defend against the *Explosivpuppen* landing in Marigny, though in disarray. Brigadier General James Gavin, commander of the 82nd, noted “[German] unit commanders apparently lost control of everything

³⁵ Hans von Luck, *Panzer Commander*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989), 138.

³⁶ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), 182-183.

³⁷ Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 115.

except the troops right around their headquarters.”³⁸ Eventually, the beachhead the airborne units created served as the staging point for an American First Army maneuver that severed the Cotentin Peninsula, allowing it to capture Cherbourg.

However, TITANIC was not an unqualified success. The 6th, 82nd, and 101st Airborne Divisions still took heavy, though one might argue acceptable, casualties. Although TITANIC withdrew the majority of German forces away from the drop zones, these divisions still faced whatever enemy forces that were left behind. When Alexandre Renaud, the mayor of Sainte Mère-Église, walked through the town that morning he noticed,

In the trees of the park, bodies were hanging beneath their parachutes. Other men who had got rid of their bonds were lying on the ground, stayed in their flight by Flak. The poor fellow who had fallen into the furnace [of the burning building] had rolled some distance from the house during his struggles, and his charred body was still smoking. One parachute had come down on top of a giant cedar, and the man had contrived to clamber to the bottom of the tree.³⁹

Without the support of TITANIC, imagine the bloodier scene Renaud would have stumbled upon, had German reinforcements arrived.

Concerning other units in support of TITANIC, the RAF fared well, only losing two Stirlings from 149 Squadron due to anti-aircraft fire.⁴⁰ The same cannot be said for the SAS teams who absorbed serious casualties. One team, commanded by Captain Harry “Chicken” Fowles and Lieutenant Noel Poole, lost eight of their twelve men.⁴¹ Nonetheless, eight men pale in comparison to the immense casualties of D-Day. Undeniably, their sacrifice in support of TITANIC spared the lives of many paratroopers, most of whom had no idea the operation occurred prior to their landing.

Were it not for Operation TITANIC, the airborne units would have faced stiff resistance from nearby German reinforcements. TITANIC, in conjunction with QUICKSILVER, delayed the

³⁸Joseph Balkoski, *Utah Beach: The Amphibious Landing and Airborne Operations on D-Day* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2005), 117.

³⁹Alexandre Renaud, "The Light of Day: June 6, 1944," *No Better Place to Die: The Battle for La Fièvre Bridge*, ed. Robert M. Murphy (Havertown: Casemate Publishers, 2009), 211.

⁴⁰RAF WWII 38 Group Squadrons Reunited, "Operation "TITANIC"," <http://www.raf38group.org/TITANIC> (accessed October 21, 2013).

⁴¹Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies*, 647.

12th SS Panzer and Panzer Lehr Divisions' commitment, whose absence facilitated much of the Allied success. In fact, despite it being so close, the *12th SS Panzer* did not arrive at Caen until the final hours of June 6th.⁴² Time is a crucial resource in warfare, and Germany could not afford any hesitation that day. As dusk settled on June 6th, 1944, the charred remains of dummies, bundles of aluminum strips, and the corpses of SAS soldiers littered several small villages of Normandy, evidence of a small, forgotten operation in the largest airborne invasion of the century.

⁴² Murray and Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, 423.

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“A Barbarous Practice”

Hook-Swinging in Colonial Bengal

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On 12 June 1908, The *Amador Ledger*, a local newspaper in the small Californian county of Amador, reported on a distant Bengali village.

The people of Gangutia in Bengal have or used to have a barbarous practice called hook swinging. They deck themselves out with garlands and then assemble together to undergo the most horrible torture. A wire about a quarter of an inch in diameter and seven feet long is pierced through the tongue, and then the wretched being will dance for over half an hour ... Some of them form themselves into a row and are then sewed together by a wire needle threaded with cord. They are sewed by the arms and look like herrings on a wire when ready for the hook.¹

This lurid description of the ritual, probably drawn from accounts by missionaries and administrators, was meant to incite reactions of horror and aversion among readers. Categorizing hook-swinging as a “barbarous practice” of “horrible torture” practiced upon a “wretched being” not only negated any possible religious meanings of the ritual, but in fact presented it instead as something like an act of insanity. The public mutilation of bodies did not lie in the realm of Enlightenment visions of rationality or spirituality, and colonial administrators in India found it difficult to accept the ritual.

The practice of hook-swinging, linked to rituals of Hindu gods in Bengal and South India, was a source of both interest and horror to British authorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was finally banned by the British in the 1860s. During the festival, hooks were planted through the fleshy parts of a devotee’s back. The hooks were then tied to an upright pole, from which the participant was suspended². In Bengal, the ability to swing from hooks was seen as a result of acquiring magical abilities after the *Gājan*, a rite of spring involving temporary ascetic vows for the Hindu god Śiva³. Since the earliest arrivals of Europeans in India, the image of naked men hanging from hooks had become a recognized icon of the Orient in Europe.⁴ Even four decades

¹ “Hook Swinging in Bengal”, *Amador Ledger*, 12 June 1908, 6.

² Alexander Duff, *India and India Missions* (Edinburgh: 1840), 268-9; Cited in Geoffrey Oddie, *Popular Religion, Elites and Reform: Hook-Swinging and its Prohibition in Colonial India, 1800-1894* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995), 13.

³ Ralph W. Nicholas, *Rites of Spring: Gājan in Village Bengal* (New Delhi: Chronicle Books, 2008), 120-1.

⁴ Paintings by British as well as other Europeans are replete with representations of hook-swinging. A few paintings describing the practice in Bengal are: A view from 'Voyage aux Indes orientales et a la Chine, fait depuis 1774 jusqu'a

after hook-swinging was officially banned, the *Amador Ledger* found the practice revolting and intriguing enough to be published for its local readership, a population far removed both in space and time from rural Bengal.

Reaction to the festival, as expressed in the article's rhetoric, was born out of a horror experienced by the British upon encountering such an "irrational" practice of self-mutilation. The idea of an irrational, backward and "primitive" society has been, to borrow Adam Kuper's phrase, a "persistent illusion" for officials and academics since the early nineteenth century. As Kuper says, the primitive society was a mirror for their own Western societies, but a mirror that reflected reality in a distorted and troubling manner.⁵ Responses to hook-swinging in the nineteenth-century, like the newspaper report, largely reflected the panic inspired by the 'savage'⁶. Such panic was a major factor shaping the eventual categorization of certain religious practices in places like India as "folk" practices. The force of the word "folk" was to dissociate such practices from the "civilized" life of western elites.

The British and Americans were not the only ones responsible for categorizing certain practices as "primitive" or "folk". During the nineteenth century, Indians themselves, specifically members of the Bengali *bhadralok* class, actively created a deep line of difference between "elite" and "popular" cultures. The term *bhadralok* literally translates to 'gentleman', but is used to refer to the Bengali educated middle class that emerged in the nineteenth century. *Bhadraloks* were mainly urban government officials, intellectuals and professionals who came to create a dominant ideological terrain, and became, in Tithi Bhattacharya's words, the "sentinels of culture"⁷. The

1781' by Pierre Sonnerat, Paris, 1782 (Columbia University Image Database on Hook-swinging); Fanny Parkes' depiction of hook-swinging in 'Wanderings of a Pilgrim in search of the picturesque...', London, 1850 (British Library).

⁵ Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 7.

⁶ See Satadru Sen, *Savagery and Colonialism in the Indian Ocean. Power, Pleasure and the Andaman Islanders* (Routledge: London, 2010) for the creation of the category of 'savage' in the Andamans in this period.

⁷ Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (1848–85)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

bhadralok dissociated themselves from popular festivals under the sway of the hegemonic discourse of colonialism, as they had so efficiently internalized the colonial critique of the “folk”⁸.

The mid-nineteenth century in Bengal was a critical moment when hook-swinging was formally categorized as a “folk” practice unsanctioned by textual authority. Since then, hook-swinging as well as the ritual associated with it tended to be relegated to a lower status, and the *bhadralok* purposefully and shyly moved away from it. The formal attestation of difference by native scholars and curators officially demarcated the practice as an “unauthorized” one. The support of the *bhadralok* would serve to embolden the British to ban the practice a few decades later⁹. The creation of “folk” as a category complements the parallel construction of Hinduism as a great textual tradition which occurs in the same time period: a dichotomy understood and questioned by anthropologists as “great traditions” and “little traditions”¹⁰. Finally, in the late nineteenth century, hook-swinging perhaps even started being a part of the non-elite selfhood, as it was revived in South India even after the British ban. Reactions to hook-swinging in the nineteenth century can thus serve as a lens through which to understand the role of *bhadralok* discourses in creating great and little traditions, and in deepening the divide between them.

The mid-nineteenth century saw momentous changes in Indian economy, society and politics. By 1830, the British Empire had emerged as the greatest colonial power, creating an “imperial meridian” throughout Asia¹¹. Such a political sway entailed significant changes in government and bureaucracy. The rise of the *bhadralok* was an effect of the extension of the British Empire. The urban bourgeoisie collaborated with the British in various processes of Empire-

⁸ There is room for exploring if such criticism for non-elite practices existed before the advent of the British, especially relating to questions of caste and Brahmanical hegemony. I hope to address this in later works.

⁹ Oddie, *Popular Religion*, 88-9.

¹⁰ Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 72; A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 22.

¹¹ C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989).

building, including keeping records and producing knowledge on populations. The same period witnesses castes being redefined in new contours due to colonial travel and administrative accounts¹². A section of the elite played a pivotal role in redefining Hindu practices, often by getting rid of practices that did not suit the elite, “civil” sensibility. The extension of the British rule and the rise of the urban bourgeois fashioned many non-elite lower castes as ‘savage’ and ‘barbarous’, and defined civil sensibilities in opposition to them.

Sumanta Banerjee has outlined that by the end of the nineteenth century, elite and popular culture in colonial Calcutta had “travelled to two opposite directions” from an uncomfortable coexistence in the beginning of the century. While the Bengali *bhadraloks* represented a unified cultural milieu, “the city’s lower orders, whose beliefs and behaviour were considered by the elite as annoying, wasteful, immoral and even dangerous at times...remained by and large fragmented”¹³. The difference between elite and popular culture in late nineteenth century was characterized by unification versus fragmentation. The two cultures “travelled” in different directions as people like scholars and museum curators actively focussed on the differences between “popular culture” and “elite culture”, in spite of there being an active intervention and involvement of the elites in popular cultures like hook-swinging¹⁴. The process of identifying and cataloguing folk traditions started as early as the eighteenth century, with the advent of Baptist missionaries in Bengal.

For the Protestant missionaries coming to India in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, hook-swinging was one of the most puzzling and disturbing sights. They left written

¹² See Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹³ Sumanta Banerjee, *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1989), 199.

¹⁴ Such divergence was intricately linked to domination by high castes over low castes. See Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste, Culture and Hegemony: Social Dominance in Colonial Bengal* (New Delhi and London: Sage Publications, 2004), 45.

accounts in journals, letters and diaries that were widely circulated by the Baptist Missionary Society. The missionaries also brought the printing press to Bengal, thereby opening a new sphere for public expression for both the British and the Bengalis¹⁵. The missionaries were not a single monolithic entity that registered a unanimous reaction against hook-swinging. The backgrounds of missionaries varied widely, and their subsequent reactions to the practice were different¹⁶.

Missionaries travelled to different places, meaning that their experiences of hook-swinging tended to be unique. Periodization is also a factor in this case: writings of the missionaries who wrote in the 1790s are markedly different from later viewpoints¹⁷.

William Carey, the Baptist missionary famous for the Serampore mission and its printing press, lived in North Bengal, during his first years in India (c.1793-95). Geoffrey Oddie cites the words of Carey to describe hook-swinging in both north Bengal and in the southern delta region of Bengal.¹⁸ Carey wrote about a ceremony he witnessed in 1795: “I saw the hooks put in. He swang [sic] off gently at first; but afterwards was whirled around very fast...I have never heard of an instance in which any mischief followed”¹⁹. Carey was apparently fascinated by the practice. His narrative, at least in the 1790s, was frank and seemingly not interested in passing judgement. Notice that he confesses he has not heard any case in which mischief has followed. His description also avoided derogatory terms like “barbarian” or “savage”. He tolerated the practice to a certain extent, instead of denouncing it completely; he was tolerant in this initial encounter with a different culture. Compared to the report published by the *Amador Ledger* about 100 years later, Carey’s writing looks almost accommodating. But this one record is somewhat anomalous. Missionary perspectives

¹⁵ Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19-20.

¹⁶ See Brian Stanley, *History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1993) for a survey.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism 1793-1900* (New Delhi: Sage, 2006), 139.

¹⁸ Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism*, 139-42.

¹⁹ *Answers to various Questions put to Mr Carey*, in Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism*, 143.

were not always, however, as sympathetic as that of Carey's early writings; even Carey's later writings adopted a less detached perspective on Hindu practices²⁰.

Such change in attitude was visibly present by the mid-nineteenth century, especially in South India where hook-swinging was also prevalent. By 1858, missionary perspectives had changed so drastically that Reverend G.E. Morris wrote to the local magistrate unequivocally pleading for the abolishment of hook-swinging for four reasons. First, because hook-swinging was not a part of the Hindu religious system; secondly, it involved unnecessary cruelty and violence; thirdly, it militated "against public order and decency" and that it was "an infringement of the common laws of humanity"; finally, hook-swinging had disturbed Christian residents "in the quiet and orderly observance of the Lord's Day".²¹ Just a year before this letter, in 1857, the Indian soldiers of the British Indian Army had rebelled, and for the first time the British Empire in India had faced an existential threat. Moreover, by this time, there existed a European imagination of Hinduism in the British psyche with a number of accounts on Hinduism written by the British²².

The reification of understanding Brahmanical culture as found in the texts of Vedas, epics and Puranas had been so powerful that Morris was able to reject hook-swinging as forming "no part" of the Hindu religion system. In light of the historical trends of the time, the differences between Carey and Morris are illustrative of the increasing hegemony of the high colonial categories. British approaches to orientalism underwent significant changes in the first half of the nineteenth century, from scholarly and respectful outlooks of the likes of William Jones, to Anglicans like Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose 1835 book *Minutes on Education* paved the

²⁰ Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism*, 142-3.

²¹ Letter dated September 27, 1858, cited in Dirks, "The Policing of Tradition", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39.1 (1997), 190. See also Ulrike Schröder, "Hook-Swinging in South India: Negotiating the Subaltern Space within a Colonial Society" In *Negotiating Rites*, Ed. Ute Hüsken and Frank Neubert (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 216.

²² William Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos* (1811); Henry T. Colebrooke, *The Philosophy of the Hindus: On the Nyāya and Vaisesika Systems* (1824).

way for institutionalizing Western education in India²³. The Oriental-Anglican debate was a significant moment in nineteenth-century India, as it vastly changed later British attitudes towards Indian culture. This transformation and solidification of missionary attitudes became the “curriculum” for subsequent generations of *bhadralok* elites²⁴. A section of the elite essentially agreed with the ideas of Morris and did not object to the banning of the practice.

The *bhadralok* denied his agency in hook-swinging, claiming that it is a festival for the lower castes only and that the elites should not be blamed for it. In 1829, Ram Comul Sen, the Native Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, read before the society an account of the hook-swinging practices in Gangetic Bengal. Sen was a Hindu *bhadralok*, and had staunchly opposed the liberal attitude of Henri Louis Vivian Derozio, a professor in the Hindu College known for his liberal ideas among students²⁵. His account was published four years later in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (1833). Sen’s speech represented a curator’s perspective. It is concerned with describing and annotating the artefacts of the festival to be preserved in the society’s museum. The most revealing section, however, is his introduction to the festival, where he made clear his opinion on the festival.

Being a *bhadralok* scholar, Sen’s principal agenda in his introductory comments was to establish that hook-swinging practice was one performed only by lower castes, and was not attested by rules of Hindu worship (which was always the central missionary argument against the practice). In the opening paragraph, he clarified why the practice is not an example of a religious worship.

²³ Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 61-2; Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1989).

²⁴ See Parna Sengupta, *Pedagogy for Religion: Missionary Education and the Fashioning of Hindus and Muslims in Bengal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Brian Hatcher, *Idioms of Improvement: Vidyasagar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²⁵ Ironically, Sen’s grandson Keshub would grow up to join and reform the Brahmo Samaj, the Hindu reformist movement in Bengal. Śivanātha Śāstrī. *Rāmatanu Lāhirī o Tatakālin Bangasamaja*. (Kolkata : New Age, 2009 [1904]). See David Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the making of the Indian Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) for a seminal study of the organization and Keshub Sen’s life. See also Brian Hatcher’s *Bourgeois Hinduism, Or Faith of the Modern Vedantists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

The festival was “improperly termed by many as *Charak Puja* [Charak-worship],” he said, “perhaps from the notion that every ceremony observed by the Hindus of Bengal is a puja-or religious worship”. He then added that even if the rite was performed by *muchi* [cobbler] or a *chandala* [another low caste], the ritual “is considered as Hinduism, and the whole body of Hindus are charged with the absurdity of the act.”²⁶ In popular culture, hook-swinging was known as Charak “puja”. “Puja” in Bengali refers to the worship of gods; the term in Sen’s usage denotes the observation of textually certified practices of devotion. For Sen, the term “puja” was a misnomer for hook-swinging, as hook-swinging was performed solely by the lower castes, while for Sen Puja was properly the prerogative of the upper castes, who embody the textualized Brahmanical tradition. He expressed disdain on the idea that any practice by anyone regardless of caste is “Hinduism”, and regretted that the “whole body of Hindus” were “charged” with the “absurd” act.

Sen acknowledged the British viewpoint that the practice is “absurd”, but tried to get rid of the blame on the middle and upper classes. He argued that the urban elite had nothing to do with the practice of the lower castes, and it was unjust to blame the intelligentsia for it²⁷. He further showed how the festival opposed the fundamental social values of an emergent *bhadralok* elite, as the “original” rules had been rejected, and new ones invented as per convenience of the lower castes, “the ceremony which was called an act of piety, is converted into an occasion of dissipation, drinking, gambling and acts of immorality”.²⁸ The festival was therefore for Sen a rustic practice that threatened to undermine the value of “true” piety in Hinduism. Furthermore, it was generated solely from the uninformed fancy of people who did not have any idea about the textual rules of Hinduism. Categorizing hook-swinging as a digression presumed the presence of an ur-text of a

²⁶ Ram Comul Sen, “The Charak Puja and Hook-Swinging in Lower Bengal”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, No.24 (December 1833): 609-13.

²⁷ Showing such new religious affiliations (or non-affiliations) was also a prominent method of social mobility in colonial Bengal. Hitesranjan Sanyal, *Social Mobility in Bengal* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1981), 82-3.

²⁸ Sen, “Charak Puja”, 620.

Brahmanical Hinduism, while “little” traditions were shown as unauthorized and not worthy of worship.

Scholars like Ram Comul Sen had an especially important role in informing the British perspective on popular festivals, for the actual fieldwork for the Asiatic Society was often done by natives and then presented to British officials. Sen, in particular, was a conservative Hindu who had famously opposed the monotheistic reformist moves of Ram Mohan Roy, the reformer who in the same time period was challenging idolatry and other rituals of Hinduism²⁹. In 1829, the same year that this paper was read, the custom of *sati* was outlawed in British India after tireless pleadings by Ram Mohan Roy and the Governor General William Bentinck³⁰. *Sati* was the practice of widow immolation, when a recently widowed woman was burnt alive on her husband’s funeral pyre. Although never a very common practice, the practice horrified both the British and the Western elite, and its ban was one of the first controversial moves to “reform” Hinduism³¹.

The agenda of people like Sen was to present Hinduism in a different light to the British, arguing that the “actual” religion was devoid of any “absurd” practice like hook-swinging. In the opening lines, Sen indirectly referred to “many” people who projected low-caste practices to define the whole of Hinduism. His target in this case was certainly Roy and his followers who argued for the necessity of “reforming” Hinduism. In relation to the outlawing of *sati*, which was certainly the most controversial and contentious issue in the day, Sen’s argument looks crucial. Hook-swinging was another such practice that would be a potential target of reformers, and by excluding the practice as “not Hindu”, Sen strives to define Hinduism in a new bourgeois ideological terrain: the religion in itself is pristine and faultless, but lower classes had brought in absurd practices that have

²⁹ Śāstrī, *Rāmatanu Lāhirī o Tatakālin Bangasamaja*, 126. See also Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 25-28.

³⁰ Bose and Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 65.

³¹ See Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

defiled Hinduism³². Sen's claim can be challenged by literature from the period, where elites and lower classes work with each other in organizing the festival.

In spite of publicly asserting that he had nothing to do with hook-swinging, the Bengali *bhadralok* was actively involved in organizing and participating in the festival. In 1862, the renowned Bengali author Kaliprasanna Simha published an account of Calcutta's elite society titled *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha* ("Sketches by Hutom, the Barn Owl"), under the pseudonym *Hutom Pyanchar* ("Barn Owl"). One of the milestones of Bengali literature, it shows a bird's-eye view of various facets of Calcutta society. The book begins with a long description of hook-swinging that was organized by a wealthy landlord in Calcutta. Vivid descriptions of the process are given, along with reactions of people to the practices of ascetics. *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha* is another *bhadralok* account of hook-swinging which acknowledges the participation of the elite, but represents the festival in almost a comical manner.

A strong sarcastic tone characterizes the barn owl's narration of the practice of hook-swinging. Like Sen, Sinha was a *bhadralok*, and a product of the Macaulayan project of creating an educated Indian class. Although his account shows us the direct participation of the elite, he nevertheless speaks of the festival with mockery. The owl writes:

Our master's four generation-old ascetic tugs a *bel* leaf over his ear, and arrives, breathing rapidly, in the living room with a handful of sacred *bel* leaves. Although he is of a lower caste, he has been elevated by virtue of following ascetic practices over the past few days: our master had to fall at his feet and show him respect. The ascetic put his dirty, muddy feet on the spotless carpet of the living room, terrifying our master, and placed the sacred flower on his head.³³

The festival described in this passage was being held almost two decades after Sen's speech, attesting to the persistence of the popular even in the emerging bourgeois Calcutta city. The text

³² The contours of the "middle class" were also changing in this period by appropriation of upper-class values. Such a change took place in both Hindu and Muslim populations. See Margrit Perneau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-century Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), xii-xiii.

³³ Kaliprasanna Simha, *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha* (Kolkata: Ananda Publishers, 2008 [1862]), 12. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Bengali are my own.

makes it clear that the “master” (*babu*) has the right to organize these festivals, and he aims to gain favours of the gods by gaining blessings from hook-swingers. The master accepts the authority of a lower caste just by virtue of his ascetic practice. He looks forward to the ascetic’s blessings, and even ignores the vandalism of his precious carpet. The master-ascetic relationship helps us to view the mutual construction and sustenance of caste in an urban environment. Like in many rites of passage, the ascetic practices during the *Charak* elevated the lower castes to a higher status, inverting existing structures and hierarchies of power³⁴.

The use of sarcastic and comical imagery, like that of the terrified master seeing his carpet being dirtied, points to the author’s feelings on the practice. The owl, after all, is not Sinha himself. Presenting hook-swinging as a funny practice in fact points to a questioning of the festival’s validity much like Sen’s. At the end of the hook-swinging ceremony, a flower is supposed to fall magically from the god’s body to the ground. When no such thing happened after the ceremony in the master’s house, people got concerned, and decided to call the master to pray in person before the god, so that Siva is pleased and lets the flower fall magically. The master’s reaction is noteworthy:

When he was summoned, the master was dressed up, his silk handkerchief fragrant with expensive perfumes and his phaeton carriage ready. He almost fainted hearing the call; he had no desire to go, but did not dare to halt the sacred ritual that had been going on for generations. He advanced towards the place where the ceremony was taking place in spite of being dressed...he lay prostrate in front of Siva and paid his respects.³⁵

Thereafter the flower fell and everyone praised the master’s power. The master, however, directly participated in the ritual. He was not swung from the hook himself, but was involved in the practice and the ritual that surrounded it. The fact that he agrees to attend the worship in spite of being ready for a party shows that the ritual mattered to him socially and economically. Once again, the imagery for this apparently serious religious act is rather comical: the master having no desire to attend the festival and him lying prostrate with the fine silk handkerchief do incite not spirituality but laughter.

³⁴ See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick: Aldine, 2008 [1969]), 96-7.

³⁵ Sinha, *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha*, 12.

Sen and Sinha together provide three important insights into elite attitudes towards hook-swinging. First, both texts were written by *bhadralok* scholars, and although Sinha shows the participation of the elite, his sarcasm questions the religious validity of the festival much like Sen. Secondly, audiences played a role in determining the way hook-swinging was written about. For Sen, the audience was the British and he needed to foreground a certain aspect of Hinduism to them. For Sinha, the audience was the *bhadralok* reader who was quite aware of the reality. Hence, no argument on the position of the elite was needed, but hook-swinging was made fun of subtly. Thirdly, by the 1860s caste divisions continued to spread and deepen, a process reflected in Sen but one that had started much earlier. Therefore, even if the *bhadralok* participated in the ritual, he saw the festival as rather comical.

Paintings produced by travellers provide supporting evidence for the participation of elites in hook-swinging. A prominent example is James Moffat's (1775-1815) c. 1806 painting "View on the banks of the Ganges with representation of the Churruck Poojah, a Hindoo holiday" (see Figure 1). The painting depicts two people swinging from the hooks of a wooden frame by the Ganges, and a number of people watching the audience. It is in fact the depiction of the audience which deserves attention. There are many people crowding the area, signifying that the festival was a popular and well-attended one. Moreover, there are over five wooden palanquins along with palanquin bearers. Palanquins (*palki* in Bengali) were used by the *bhadralok*; they provided a private means of communication in which



Figure 1: 'View on the banks of the Ganges with representation of the Churruck Poojah, a Hindoo holiday'. Aquatint with etching by and after James Moffat, published Calcutta c.1806 (British Library Asia Pacific and Africa Collections). Accessed 10 November 2013. The diversity of crowd assembled shows not only lower castes, but also elite women in palanquins, merchants in turban and shawls and the elite having umbrellas held on top of them by servants.

women could travel without being seen by people other than family members, as the colonial civil society brought with it new values and norms for the family³⁶. Palanquins, however, were used by both men and women. The painting shows an elderly lady sitting in a palanquin watching the hook-swingers. Moreover, there are a number of wealthy officials wearing red and white turbans, standing under umbrellas held on by their servants. The visual evidence makes it clear that both men and women from the *bhadralok* class actively participated in the festival and, as Sinha's

³⁶ Rochona Majumdar, *Marriage and Modernity: Family Values in Colonial Bengal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 93-100.

description shows, had stakes in it³⁷. People like Sen, having positions like Native Secretaries of the Asiatic Society, had power to produce and categorize anthropological knowledge³⁸. Museum curators have always played a pivotal role in creating discourses on culture, and it will be unwise to ignore their agency in determining the definition of “folk”³⁹. This period is important as a historical moment, as the ritual started becoming essentially a “folk” tradition for lower classes, not meant for elites to participate in. The idea of the “folk” was born along with another hegemonic culture to dominate it.

In the early twentieth century, social theorist Antonio Gramsci wrote about an “ethico-political” hegemony developing a “new ideological terrain” with new modes of leadership not only in the realm of the political but also in the moral and cultural spheres⁴⁰. The locus of power is a “civil society” and dominance operates more by voluntary consent and direction than by coercion or dominance. The idea of what is “civil” and what is not depended on the colonial idea of the body and the order of the public space and charak as a ritual questioned both. Mutilation of the body was, for the European, the epitome of savagery; and the fact that this was done publicly also jeopardized public order.

Gramsci’s notion of the ideological terrain being the basis of cultural hegemony sheds some light on the response of the middle class. The colonial authorities and the bourgeoisie controlled the political economy of the period, and therefore the culture of the middle class became the dominant culture that marginalized the practices that did not suit middle-class ethics. Ulrike Schröder has cited a government document from the mid-1800s from the India Office Collections: “The efforts of

³⁷ Oddie, *Popular Religion*, 73.

³⁸ See O.P. Kejriwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past, 1784-1838* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988) for the importance of such Societies in creating a space for Indian scholars.

³⁹ See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “World Heritage and Cultural Economics” in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham and London, Duke UP, 2006).

⁴⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks VI.5* in *The Gramsci Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 423.

the magistracy [to ban hook-swinging] will be willingly supported by the influence of the great mass of the community, and, more particularly, of the wealthy and intelligent classes who do not seem, even now, to countenance or support the swinging ceremony.”⁴¹ The bureaucratic idea of “the great mass of the community” or Sen’s notion of the “whole body of Hindus” actually refers to the small yet critical mass that Gramsci calls civil society, described aptly in the document as the “wealthy and intelligent” classes. Political decisions were being taken keeping in mind the interests of this civil society, and projecting it as a “great mass” which in effect it was not. The use of the word “intelligent” is significant too; it speaks of the rising meritocracy that the colonial rule nurtured, and which was soon to be the paradigm of the citizen. The quest to become an “imperial citizen” would remain a basic agenda for the burgeoning civil society in colonial India⁴². The folk became the other, against whom the elite Bengali *bhadralok* created his self-image.

Hook-swinging as a folk tradition later came to form a part of the non-elite selfhood. The ritual was revived in many places even after the 1860 ban by the government, and scholars have seen the revival as an expression of subalternity. Ulrike Schröder has envisioned the revival of hook-swinging in Colonial south India as a subversive ritual that “contested the normative and coercive power of the colonial rule”⁴³. For her, the ritual resisted colonial hegemony by challenging the bourgeois morality and ethics of public space, opposing ideas of ritual within Hindu society, and contesting colonial orders against ritual revival⁴⁴. Her argument is a new look at the agency of the hook-swingers, and how they may have been influential in challenging power in a broader context. While Schröder does the important task of viewing the ritual in light of power

⁴¹ Government of Madras Direction, 1854; Quoted in Ulrike Schröder, “Hook-Swinging in South India: Negotiating the Subaltern Space within a Colonial Society” In *Negotiating Rites*, Ed. Ute Hüsken and Frank Neubert (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 224.

⁴² Sukanya Banerjee, *Being Imperial Citizens* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 20-22.

⁴³ Schröder, “Hook-swinging”, 216.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 227.

relationships, a better understanding of the participants in the festival is necessary to argue the degree to which the revival was an expression of subalternity or whether a compliance with existing religious orders⁴⁵. Keeping in mind that in Bengal the festival was not practically restricted to the lower castes, a similar situation could have been possible in South India.

Which social class participated in the rituals in South India? “Participation” means all forms of participation, including sponsors, spectators and priests. It seems highly possible that the village elite, as opposed to the urban bourgeoisie, had a direct involvement in the ritual, something akin to the description in *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha*. Just like the *babu* patronized ascetics, the rural elites and upper castes might have recruited low castes for the festival. Some local elites resisted the prohibition, and many Brahmins and other patrons opposed the abolition⁴⁶. What was the relationship between patrons and performers, given that most farmers who performed the ritual may have been labourers under the landlord or his agent? Schröder’s citation of the report of T.E. Thomas, Superintendent of Police in Tanjore, which says that the lower caste pariahs in charge of swinging wanted to stop the ritual, but did not do so fearing the upper “Kullar” caste shows how crucial the role of intermediary social classes was in the festival⁴⁷. Schröder notes that the prior conflict may have split the villagers into two opposing factions, and therefore caused the conflict. It may be possible, however, that there were divided opinions on the rite within the village even before the colonial intervention⁴⁸. In South India, hook-swinging is ideologically related to practices of blood-sacrifice to the goddess, different from the context of asceticism in Bengal⁴⁹. In any case,

⁴⁵ Gananath Obeyesekere, *Medusa’s Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 145-6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 225.

⁴⁷ IOR P/4409 66-7 cited in Schröder, “Hook-swinging”, 226.

⁴⁸ Oddie, *Popular Religion*, 151-8.

⁴⁹ Obeyesekere, *Medusa’s Hair*, 147.

the example from South India is an interesting situation to think in terms of the practice being a part of the low-caste selfhood.

Why is it important to study the history of an obscure, nineteenth century ritual that was a practice confined to only a few regions? The history of hook-swinging acts as a useful lens to view various agents and actors in the religious history of colonial India. First, the agency of creating the discourse of “folk” lies largely with certain social locations, like librarians and museum curators. Identifying the critical role of social positions in creating categories of cultures can further corroborate how elite and popular culture “travelled” away from each other⁵⁰. Arguments on class conflicts need to focus on positions with agencies specific to the issue, while histories of great men need to see the social context from which those men came. Ram Comul Sen’s perspective as a curator was the one that mattered most, and had a role in shaping the British perspective⁵¹. His rendering of hook-swinging was not accurate; neither was he a perfect spokesperson for all Bengalis. Yet, he had the position to create discourses and did so effectively. *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha* too remains a widely read classic and his rather comical view of the festival live on in popular memory in some inchoate way as a similar questioning of its validity to Sen's. Putting Sen and Sinha chronologically points out the success of the Macaulayan project, as by the late nineteenth century colonial critiques were internalized and further reproduced by the *bhadralok*. Secondly, “great traditions” and “little traditions” do not exist timelessly; the difference is created in moments like the mid-nineteenth century, when an ideology establishes itself as superior to others due to political and economic reasons. Hook-swinging is constructed as essentially a folk practice during mid- nineteenth century. Its metamorphosis from a “sacred ritual” to a “barbarous practice” provides insights into the workings of a colonial metropolis like Calcutta in the nineteenth century.

⁵⁰ Banerjee, *Parlour and the Streets*, 199.

⁵¹ Oddie, *Popular Religion*, 151-3.

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Changing Opinions: *Cumann na mBan* and the Easter Rebellion

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From the time of the Norman invasion in the Twelfth Century until Independence in 1922, Ireland had been more or less under British rule. Irish nationalists had attempted a number of rebellions over the years, but none had successfully established an independent Ireland. In the early years of the Twentieth Century, much of Ireland was calling for more autonomy from their British overlords. Following the potato famine of 1845 and the failure of the subsequent rebellions of the Young Irelanders and the Fenians in 1848 and 1867, respectively, many of the Irish held a dismal opinion of the British government.¹ Indeed, many thought that nothing but full independence would “compensate for the enormity of England’s crime against Ireland.”²

It is within this context that on Easter Monday (April 24 of 1916), rebel nationalist groups took control of strategic buildings around Dublin in the hope of freeing Ireland from British rule and establishing their own Irish government.³ The Rebellion was planned by a secret organization named the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) who relied mainly on the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizens Army to bolster their forces in the rebellion.⁴ Numerous other political organizations were involved in the Rising, including the all-women auxiliary organization to the Volunteers, *Cumann na mBan*. Following Monday’s initial siege of key buildings in Dublin, rebel leaders issued a Manifesto declaring a “sovereign independent Irish state” and announcing the start of a provisional government led by President P.H. Pearse.⁵ Fighting between the Irish and British forces lasted throughout the week as British forces worked to regain control of the buildings occupied by the rebels. There were very few major battles between the two sides, and it was ultimately a fire starting Thursday

¹ Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Collins Press, 2007), 6.

² Alan Ward, *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2003), 30.

³ For an in-depth discussion of the Easter Rebellion see Alan Ward, *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism*, Michael Foy and Brian Barton, *The Easter Rising* (Phoenix Mill, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999), and Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴ Brian Barton, *From Behind a Closed Door: Secret Court Martial Records of the 1916 Easter Rising* (Belfast, UK: The Blackstaff Press, 2002), 2.

⁵ P.H. Pearse, *The Letters of P.H. Pearse*, ed. Seamas O Buachalla (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1980), 368.

morning that drove the rebel leaders out of their key stronghold at the General Post Office on Friday.⁶ On Saturday, Pearse and his colleagues decided to work out a surrender to the British “to prevent ‘further slaughter of the civilian population and to save the lives of as many as possible of our followers.’”⁷ Around noon on Saturday, Elizabeth O’Farrell, carrying a white handkerchief, met with the British forces to discuss the terms of surrender.⁸ At 3:45 Pearse, accompanied by O’Farrell, met General Maxwell and signed the general surrender, which was later signed by the rest of the rebel leaders.⁹ The surrender was publicized to all the occupied buildings, and the rebel leaders and many of the Volunteers were taken into British custody and placed in prison at the Richmond Barracks.¹⁰ In less than a week the Rising was over, leaving about 450 people dead and around 2,500 wounded.¹¹

In the annals of Irish history, historians and scholars have given much attention to the political organizations involved in the Easter Rebellion. Historians have undertaken numerous and comprehensive histories and examinations of the IRB, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), *Sinn Féin*, the Gaelic League, and the Irish Volunteers. However, compared to the amount of work concerning their male counterparts, the all-women’s nationalist organization *Cumann na mBan* (or Irishwomen’s Council) is vastly under-researched.¹²

⁶ Alan Ward, 11.

⁷ Foy and Barton, 153.

⁸ McGarry, 209.

⁹ Alan Ward, 12.

¹⁰ Foy and Barton, 158.

¹¹ Alan Ward, 12.

¹² Currently, the main body of work concerning *Cumann na mBan* in detail is limited to Cal McCarthy’s recently published general history and Lil Conlon’s memoir-like chronicle (Lil Conlon, *Cumann na mBan and the Women of Ireland: 1913-25* (Kilkenny: Kilkenny People Limited, 1969)). Works that deal with the Revolution and/or Easter Rising often mention the organization, but fail to discuss their involvement in detail. Furthermore, works that deal with the subject of women in the revolution tend to either look more broadly at women’s involvement in general and not at *Cumann na mBan* itself (see Margaret Ward, *Unimaginable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1983) and Ruth Tallion, *When History Was Made: The Women of 1916* (Belfast, UK: Beyond the Pale Publications, 1996)), or at individual women involved in the Rising (see Jacqueline Van Vorris, *Constance Markievicz: In the Cause of Ireland* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967)). There is also a paucity of work of compiled primary sources regarding the organization, making an appropriately well-researched study difficult to create without in-depth research in Dublin’s archives. Fortunately, McCarthy’s study includes a great deal of primary source excerpts, as does Conlon’s chronicle. For this reason, this study relies more heavily on these two sources than it would were the opportunity to study the primary sources themselves available. What primary sources can be found in the US

Cumann na mBan was established in April, 1914 as an auxiliary to the all-male Irish Volunteers organization. Membership was limited to women “of Irish birth or descent” and the women were mostly members of the working class, though the leaders had a tendency to be more prosperous.¹³ It is unclear how many of these women joined to support their male relations in the Volunteers, and how many joined seeking an outlet for their nationalist goals. The group’s inaugural constitution claims that the only goal of *Cumann na mBan* was to support the Irish Volunteers by raising money to provide them with arms.¹⁴ Prior to the Easter Rebellion (also known as the Easter Rising), the actions of *Cumann na mBan* align with the statements of this constitution. In contrast, during the Easter Rebellion, *Cumann na mBan* members participated as nurses, couriers, cooks, gun loaders, and performed many other jobs.¹⁵ Indeed, Elizabeth O’Farrell, the nurse who delivered the rebel’s surrender was a *Cumann na mBan* member.¹⁶ This study will demonstrate that *Cumann na mBan*’s involvement and role in the Easter Rising resulted in the women of the organization, the male revolutionaries, and the government to see the group with more pride, respect, and fear, respectively.

Throughout Easter Week, members of *Cumann na mBan* participated in the rebellion in numerous ways. While some of the garrisons did have a unit of *Cumann na mBan* attached to them, *Cumann na mBan* suffered from organizational failures which prevented many of their members from organized involvement.¹⁷ Instead, after “finding themselves left out of a fight in which they wished to be involved,” the *Cumann na mBan* women gathered in small groups and participated in

(primarily published memoirs and collections of remembrances) have been studied through the Library of Congress, with the intention of verifying and bolstering the sources provided by McCarthy and Conlon.

¹³ Conlon, 13

¹⁴ Conlon, 8.

¹⁵ McCarthy discusses the roles of *Cumann na mBan* during Easter Week throughout his chapter on the Rising. See also Frank Henderson, *Frank Henderson’s Easter Rising: Recollections of a Dublin Volunteer*, ed. Michael Hopkinson (Cork, IR: Cork University Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Barton, 105.

¹⁷ Barton, 174.

whatever ways they could.¹⁸ The fact that they found ways to participate in the face of such confusion demonstrates their determination to be a part of the Rebellion.¹⁹ Due to the lack of organization, most of the information that exists detailing the organization's actions is limited to remembrances of those involved in the rebellion, be it from the members of *Cumann na mBan* or the members of the IRB and Irish Volunteers.

Cal McCarthy, Lil Conlon, and Margaret Ward provide the most inclusive descriptions and examples of the roles that the *Cumann na mBan* members played in the Rebellion. According to them, the majority of *Cumann na mBan* members did not participate in the actual fighting, but were heavily involved in nursing, cooking, dispatch carrying, and supplying munitions.²⁰ Ward even declares that communication between the rebel leaders was “maintained largely through the efforts of these women” and that the women also snuck through “the British cordons to bring supplies of food and ammunition (hidden in their clothes).”²¹ While the rebellion was somewhat of a failure for *Cumann na mBan* in terms of military organization, the actions of these women were so notable and impressive to themselves and to their contemporaries that it elevated the image and view of *Cumann na mBan*.

Their active participation in the rebellion changed *Cumann na mBan*'s self-perception in two major ways: the organization re-conceptualized itself as more reputable, established, and popular, and the women began to envision themselves as more than mere fundraisers for the Volunteers and instead as active participants in the nationalist movement. Founding member Kathleen Clarke later

¹⁸ McCarthy, 59.

¹⁹ Margaret Ward, 109.

²⁰ McCarthy, Conlon, and Margaret Ward, 111.

²¹ Margaret Ward, 111.

wrote that “They were *Cumann na mBan* and they were afraid of nothing. They were women any country would be proud of, and their courage and steadfastness were marvelous.”²²

Prior to the Rising, *Cumann na mBan* did not rank as a national organization or boast numerous followers.²³ Clarke wrote that in 1914 their membership totaled a mere two hundred women.²⁴ Likewise, McCarthy provides us with the example of a senior member who, in later years, “wrote that ‘before 1916 there were only a few branches of the organization here and there throughout the country.’”²⁵ *Cumann na mBan* was also so disorganized that Clarke, who ran the Central Branch, claimed to have had no knowledge of other branch’s actions, not only throughout the country, but even of those of the other branches located within Dublin.²⁶ Its low membership and lack of organization illustrate that before Easter Week “*Cumann na mBan* was a fledgling organization” that was “characterized by partly active branches” and which had limited knowledge of the actions of their fellow branches.²⁷

Membership swelled following the Rising: women began to join the organization in larger numbers, and new branches were established. Compared to two hundred members in 1914, by 1921, *Cumann na mBan* had over 800 branches and around 3,000 members throughout Ireland.²⁸ Eithne Coyle, a *Cumann na mBan* member in Donegal, recalled that news of the Rebellion came to those outside of Dublin “like a flash [which] drove us into the organizations.”²⁹ McCarthy, too, sees the women’s participation in the Rising as having had a “huge propaganda value” which encouraged

²² Kathleen Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman: Kathleen Clarke 1878-1972: An Autobiography*, ed. Helen Litton (Dublin: O’Brien Press, 1991), 128.

²³ McCarthy, 40.

²⁴ Clarke, 45.

²⁵ McCarthy, 40.

²⁶ Clarke, 68.

²⁷ McCarthy, 33.

²⁸ Louise Ryan, “In the Line of Fire: Representations of Women and War (1919-1923) Through the Writings of Men,” in *Irish Women and Nationalism: Soldiers, New Women, and Wicked Hags*, ed. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2004), 47.

²⁹ Uinseann MacEoin, ed., *Survivors: The Story of Ireland’s Struggle* (Dublin: Argenta Publications, 1980), 151

women to join *Cumann na mBan*.³⁰ Before and after 1916 there existed two very different versions of *Cumann na mBan*: one that was composed of a handful of branches, was fairly unorganized, and had low membership, and one which boasted numerous branches throughout the country, became reorganized, and claimed a much larger number of members.

Not only did the women of *Cumann na mBan* see a change in the worth, size, and organization of their group, they also began to see their organization as more than a fundraising body for the Volunteers. Prior to the events of Easter Week, it is clear that *Cumann na mBan* did not think of itself as much more than a force to hold drives, host dances, or do “anything which would make money [to] equip the Irish Volunteers.”³¹ Indeed, at the first meeting of *Cumann na mBan*, it was agreed that the group “would not take a direct part in the defense of Ireland, except as a ‘last extremity.’”³² Also, while gun loading and cleaning lessons were available, the *Cumann na mBan* ladies preferred to attend the lessons on how to set up field kitchens.³³ It was not until the women were involved in the Easter Rising and they had a chance to see themselves in different roles that they began to see *Cumann na mBan* as an active participant in the nationalist movement.

There are many examples of *Cumann na mBan* members’ participation throughout Easter Week, and even before the end of the fighting one can observe the ladies’ change in attitude. When members of *Cumann na mBan* were ordered by the Volunteers to leave one of the occupied buildings due to imminent danger, rebel Frank Henderson remembers they did so “very regretfully.”³⁴ Similarly, *Cumann na mBan* member Louise Gavan Duffy claimed to have been under the impression that she and her fellow members would “stay in the building until we died.”³⁵ These

³⁰ McCarthy, 74.

³¹ Clarke, 50.

³² McCarthy, 17.

³³ Van Vorris, *Constance Markievicz*, 132.

³⁴ Henderson, 61.

³⁵ Annie Ryan, *Witnesses: Inside the Easter Rising* (Dublin: Liberties Press, 2005), 160.

women began to abandon the idea that the group would “tak[e] a direct part in the defense of Ireland” only as a “last extremity,” and started to see themselves and their fellow members as fighters willing to sacrifice their lives for Irish Independence.

The changed attitudes of the women of *Cumann na mBan* who participated in the Rising are also evident in the first meeting of *Cumann na mBan*’s central branch after the Rising. In the meeting, “a motion was proposed that those who were not out in the Rising should be expelled.”³⁶ This demonstrates that the women not only viewed themselves as more active members of the nationalist cause, but also thought *Cumann na mBan* should only welcome women who were willing to participate in this way. Furthermore, the women began to see themselves as peers of the Volunteers. In one instance following the Rising, *Cumann na mBan* members in the gallery of the prison holding the arrested members of the Volunteers and IRB “saluted the men” as they were led away.³⁷ This action, which prompted a “severe reprimand from the prison authorities,” demonstrates that these women regarded the arrested men as fellow comrades of the cause.³⁸ Evidence like this proves that following the Rebellion the women of *Cumann na mBan* viewed themselves as more than was outlined in their original constitution.

It was not only the women of *Cumann na mBan* whose opinions towards their organization changed after Easter Week; the events of the Rising changed how the men of the nationalist movement saw *Cumann na mBan* as well. In his autobiography, Irish Volunteer Dan Breen wrote that *Cumann na mBan* members “carried out our dispatches and even helped in the removal of munitions.”³⁹ Likewise, Frank Henderson later remembered that the *Cumann na mBan* members

³⁶ Clarke, 133.

³⁷ Barton, 274.

³⁸ Barton, 274.

³⁹ Dan Breen, *My Fight for Irish Freedom* (Dublin, IR: Anvil Books Limited, 1981), 96.

attached to his garrison, among other things, “remained on the alert for any eventuality.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the bravery and competence the women showed during the battle caused the men to view *Cumann na mBan* and its members with more respect, as evidenced by the opinions of the men prior to, during, and after the Rebellion.

Prior to the events of 1916, the men of the nationalist movement did not see *Cumann na mBan* as anything more than a useful fundraising group. In the years leading up to the Rebellion, the actions of the Volunteers made it clear that while the men of the nationalist movement valued *Cumann na mBan*'s support, they did not particularly respect *Cumann na mBan*. This is illustrated in a *Cumann na mBan* meeting on May 2, 1914, when the men of the Volunteers explained that “the only question of interest... was the buying of rifles for men, and that nothing else was of the slightest importance to the truly womanly.”⁴¹ Similarly, McCarthy asserts that the Irish Republican Brotherhood viewed *Cumann na mBan* “as another organisation they could manipulate and control in pursuit of an Irish Republic.”⁴²

This pattern of thinking persisted in the period right before the Rebellion. In a series of lectures Michael O’Hanrahan gave just weeks prior to the Rebellion, he told *Cumann na mBan* members to “strive to be heroines in your daily lives, to be mothers, sisters, lovers of heroes.”⁴³ He envisioned *Cumann na mBan* as a group of women whose use was entirely bound to their relationships with male rebels. Similarly, the men of the IRB did not trust *Cumann na mBan* enough to tell the women about their plans for a rebellion, whereas many of the men knew about

⁴⁰ Henderson, 58.

⁴¹ McCarthy, 24.

⁴² McCarthy, 9.

⁴³ Barton, 172.

it.⁴⁴ Kathleen Clarke recalled that most of the members of *Cumann na mBan* only knew that there were to be maneuvers on Easter Sunday, and not that this was actually going to be a rebellion.⁴⁵

Even when the Easter Rebellion began, there was still evidence of this mindset amongst the male revolutionaries. In P.H. Pearse's Manifesto to the Citizens of Dublin on April 25th, he called for participation from everyone, claiming "there is work for everyone; for the men in the fighting line, and for women in the provision of food and first aid."⁴⁶ Pearse apparently believed that the women's role in the fight would be restricted to supplying food and caring for the injured. It was after the women demonstrated their valuable abilities in the Rebellion that this idea changed in the minds of the nationalist men.

The shift in the male rebels' mindset is particularly evident in their writings and remembrances. As historian Louise Ryan proves, these accounts "emphasize brotherhood, camaraderie, discipline, and chivalry towards women."⁴⁷ Just as Dan Breen and Frank Henderson recalled women acting in valiant and unexpected ways, so did IRB member Robert Holland. Holland described a time in the rebellion when he needed help loading his guns and *Cumann na mBan* member Josie O'Keefe came to his aid: "I told her to go down and if there were any spare rifles to bring them along and I would teach her how to load them... I showed her how to load the two rifles... she learned the job of loading them very quickly."⁴⁸ This memory evidenced his respect for O'Keefe; he praised her quickness of study in a stressful situation.

The men's reconceptualization of the women of *Cumann na mBan* can be spotted before the end of the Rebellion in other ways as well. In one of the occupied buildings, Jacob's factory, "the women stayed in the bottom of the factory and were ordered not to go upstairs unescorted," however,

⁴⁴ McCarthy, 53.

⁴⁵ Clarke, 71.

⁴⁶ Pearse, 368.

⁴⁷ Louise Ryan, 52.

⁴⁸ Annie Ryan, 129.

as the week went on, both the women and men chose to disregard this order.⁴⁹ Likewise, after conveying the surrender of the rebellion to the British forces for Pearse, O'Farrell was then asked by Pearse if she would agree to take the surrender orders to the "other rebel garrisons" after which "he then shook hands with [her]."⁵⁰ This gesture of respect from the same man who had claimed earlier in the week that women should devote themselves to the work of providing food and first aid proves the change in thinking of the nationalist men. Eilis Bean Uí Chonaill, a *Cumann na mBan* nurse, likewise remembered that Irish Volunteer member "Sir Thomas Myles... patted me on the shoulder, saying we girls had done a Trojan work..."⁵¹

These changes in the men's opinions regarding *Cumann na mBan* continued after the Rebellion. Before his execution, Colbert, a prominent rebel who was sentenced to death for his involvement in the Rising, "asked [a member of *Cumann na mBan*] to give his prayer book to one of his sisters and to say, along with the other *Cumann na mBan* members, a Hail Mary when they heard the volleys" of his execution.⁵² This proves that prominent rebels were aware of *Cumann na mBan*'s contributions and saw the group as a significant player in the movement. The funeral of Constance Markievicz is another example of the respect the male rebels developed for the women. Known largely for her service in the Irish government in later years, Markievicz was also well known for being president of the organization in 1917 and her participation in the Rising. At her funeral in 1927, years after the Rebellion, Eamon de Valera (a prominent leader of the Rising) participated in her funeral procession whilst "republican soldiers of 1916 mingled with each other and *Cumann na mBan* veterans."⁵³

⁴⁹ Taillon, 64.

⁵⁰ Barton, 105.

⁵¹ Annie Ryan, 169.

⁵² Barton, 249.

⁵³ R.M. Fox, *Rebel Irishwomen* (Dublin: Talbot Press Limited, 1935), 36.

Lil Conlon remarked that “very many instances could be quoted, illustrating the high regard which these gallant men held for their womenfolk.”⁵⁴ After examining the facts and looking at the sources that provide information about how the nationalist men viewed *Cumann na mBan*, Conlon’s statement appears very true. The men of the nationalist movement envisioned their female counterparts in *Cumann na mBan* differently after Easter Week, 1916. Due to its members’ acts of courage and determination during the Rising, the men of the Rising began to see *Cumann na mBan* as an organization whose women deserved more respect as fellow members of the nationalist cause.

It was not just the revolutionaries (both male and female) whose opinions about *Cumann na mBan* changed; the dedication of this group of women also attracted the attention of the British government. The British Government in Ireland did not initially take much interest in the organization. While they knew of *Cumann na mBan*’s formation and watched the group’s activities, the government did not see the group as a threat to their rule, as evidenced by the dearth of government reports exist regarding the organization prior to 1916.⁵⁵ Similarly, there were no arrests of *Cumann na mBan* members before the Rising. It is clear that the government did not view the organization as an active threat prior to the Easter Rebellion. However, after Easter Week 1916, the British quickly changed their opinions.

In one of the few police reports on pre-1916 *Cumann na mBan* activity, the County Inspector for Kerry reported that in March 1915: “Miss McCarthy of Dungarvan visited the county... [and] formed branches of *Cumann na mBan*.”⁵⁶ This report shows a vague interest in keeping watch on *Cumann na mBan* and its members, but does not imply any real concern with the organization’s activities as a potential threat to British rule. The fact that the government only conducted occasional surveillance indicates that the government did not see them as a threat.

⁵⁴ Conlon, 28.

⁵⁵ McCarthy, 28.

⁵⁶ McCarthy, 28.

Following the Rising, however, the government changed its stance and became more actively involved in keeping *Cumann na mBan* under control. Seventy-seven women were imprisoned following the Easter Rebellion, and while not all of them were members of *Cumann na mBan*, many were.⁵⁷ There were a few *Cumann na mBan* members who were even incarcerated for a few months, such as Constance Markievicz and Winifred Carney, but most women were released about a week following their arrest.⁵⁸ Constance Markievicz was even held in solitary confinement for a time.⁵⁹ These women were likely held for a longer sentence because they were two of the members who took part in the actual fighting. A number of *Cumann na mBan* members were among those arrested and soon released, such as Mary McSwiney who was “was kept under arrest for a day” after the Rising, even though she had not been an active participant in the rebellion.⁶⁰ The British government saw the organization as so threatening that they were interested in arresting members who had not even participated in the Rebellion. General J.G. Maxwell, in charge of overseeing the transfer of prisoners, wrote a letter to the British War Office on June 15, 1916, saying “in continuation of [his] letter of 30 May referring to the case of twelve women prisoners,” two of which are now known to have been *Cumann na mBan* members.⁶¹ One, Madeleine Ffrench Mullen, was scheduled to be released, while Winifred Carney was ordered to be “interned at Aylesbury” prison.⁶² While many of the arrested members were released relatively promptly, at least a few were held for months. Less than a year later, the British arrested founding member Kathleen Clarke as well.⁶³

⁵⁷ McCarthy, 72. McCarthy does not indicate exactly how many of the incarcerated women were members of *Cumann na mBan*.

⁵⁸ Maria Luddy, *WomMen in Ireland: 1800-1918 a Documentary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 318.

⁵⁹ Sinead McCoolle, *Guns and Chiffon: Women Revolutionaries and Kilmainhan Gaol* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1997), 30.

⁶⁰ Fox, 61.

⁶¹ Luddy, 318.

⁶² Luddy, 318.

⁶³ Clarke, 150.

The change in the government's approach towards *Cumann na mBan* was not limited to arrests. Following 1916, the British government began to raid offices and houses of the organization and its members. The organization almost fell apart after the Easter Rebellion because "the British military had closed down [its] offices and confiscated all [its] records, leaving [it] to start again from scratch."⁶⁴ Likewise, Conlon describes many examples of *Cumann na mBan* members' homes being raided, including her own sister's, which was raided "on many occasions."⁶⁵ In the wake of the 1916 Rebellion the British government even went so far as to include *Cumann na mBan* on a list of organizations considered to be dangerous, alongside the Volunteers.⁶⁶ The government's actions against *Cumann na mBan* clearly show that their view of the group had changed. Before the Rebellion, the government seemed unthreatened by the group, but after 1916 the British actively prosecuted *Cumann na mBan* and its members, seeing them as an active threat to British rule.

The Easter Rebellion set the stage for the Irish Revolution and Civil War to come. Nationalist men and women joined together in an effort to throw off what they saw as the shackles of British government, and despite being ultimately unsuccessful in doing so, the Rising did change many things. For *Cumann na mBan*, the Rising meant a change in opinion toward their organization. The women's bravery, competence, and determination in the Rising led themselves, the male nationalists, and the British government to see the women and the organization with new respect. *Cumann na mBan* members were inspired by the roles they played in the Rebellion, and as a result became more organized, more devoted to the nationalist cause, and more ambitious. Meanwhile, the revolutionary men were so impressed by what *Cumann na mBan* had done during the Rebellion that they also began to see the organization with more respect. The Rebellion caused the British to alter

⁶⁴ McCarthy, 102.

⁶⁵ Conlon, 3.

⁶⁶ Arthur Mitchell, and Pdraig O Snodaigh, eds., *Irish Political Documents, 1916-1949* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1985), 46.

their classification of *Cumann na mBan* as unthreatening, to categorizing the group as dangerous and conducting raids and arrests on its offices and members.

While this evidence provides a greater understanding of *Cumann na mBan* and the Easter Rebellion, there are more aspects of this group which deserve attention. Most notably, an exploration into the effects that this change of opinion had throughout the Twentieth Century would be beneficial. Similarly, an examination of their role in the subsequent Irish Revolution and Civil War, particularly in comparison to their participation in the Easter Rebellion would help broaden our understanding of the group as an agent of political change. While *Cumann na mBan* has garnered more attention in the recent years, this organization deserves a still more comprehensive and established place in Irish and revolutionary scholarship. Hopefully, such studies will broaden our understanding not only of *Cumann na mBan*, but also the Irish Revolution and other the other nationalist groups that were involved. *Cumann na mBan* and its brave and determined members deserve a place in scholarship alongside that of the revolutionary men, just as they stood by these men throughout the Easter Rebellion.

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The Bourbon Awakening:
Spanish colonial reform in the face of British expansionism

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Henry Laurens, representative to the Continental Congress, said, in the midst of revolution, "...the British forces are already kept in check by the combined efforts of France and America...the accession of Spain only can give to the alliance a decided superiority...and free us from this fatal chance that a single unlucky event may overthrow the balance."¹ Spain entered into the American Revolution in 1779, giving the enlightened monarch, Carlos III (1716-1788), his long anticipated opportunity through which he asserted Spanish imperial hegemony in the New World. The success of the revolution in North America, which led to an Allied Bourbon (Spain and France) victory in 1783, was the result of key Spanish military reforms established for defense against British expansion. The rise of Spanish imperial strength overseas was directly linked with the actions of the American rebels in what Europeans called the American War. Ultimately, colonial reforms strengthened Spanish influence allowing for substantial intervention in the American Revolution satisfying the American rebels and its own interests.

The Spanish Empire's reorganization from 1763 to 1779 achieved a number of things, all of which prepared a revived monarchy for the impending conflict involving an anti-British axis of American, French, and Spanish resources. These changes included a radically altered colonial administrative infrastructure, an extreme retranslation of the American mercantilist system, and a considerable investment in military and naval priority.² After 16 years of colonial reform, Spain ultimately diverted British attention and resources, causing it to abandon its war with the American colonies in favor of protecting its interests in the West Indies and the Orient.³ Thus, the narrative of

¹ Martha Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, *Spain: The Forgotten Alliance: Independence of the United States*, (North Charleston, 2013), 1.

² Vera Lee Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America in the Closing Years of the Colonial Era," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 5, no. 3 (1922), 335.

³ Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States: An Intrinsic Gift*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 12.

the American rebels is inextricably tied to the newly revived Spanish Empire. The end product is a Spanish revival of its own, brief yet powerful, with implications for succeeding generations.⁴

Spain's long-established sovereignty over its American peripheries was threatened by its involvement in the Seven Year's War (1756-1763).⁵ Incapacitated by the Euro-centric wars of its Habsburg predecessors (1516-1700), the Spanish Bourbons (1700-1808) inherited money-sapping metropolitan struggles which subverted a strong colonial strategy.⁶ British military victories in the mid-18th century exposed the weaknesses of a struggling Spanish Empire whose political realities vastly differed from the days of Philip II's unequivocal mastery over imperial affairs.⁷ These affairs were governed by uniquely authoritarian and medieval structures whereby military supremacy and dynastic legitimacy were coupled to fight political and religious wars extending Spanish rule throughout Europe. A national nostalgia recalled Philip's Great Armada, triumphant *tercio* armies, and romantic defense of the Catholic faith against infidels. Yet, two centuries later, the Empire was relegated as a second-rate power on the continent, whose once famous Atlantic possessions now suffered from contraband smuggling and expansionist efforts in the Gulf Rim and Central America. A debilitating pattern took seed whereby the monarch fixed on the "multiplicity of his European interests, tended to overlook the importance of his colonial dominions."⁸ This policy exhausted the Crown's resources to fight back against incursions made at more than two centuries of Spanish Imperialism. The neglect of the early to mid-18th century, a facet in the decline of the Spanish Bourbon narrative, paused, however, as the dynasty awakened to the realization that its colonial legacy was in danger.

⁴ Roger H. Soltau, *The Duke de Choiseul*, (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1908), 176.

⁵ Brown, 475

³ Brown, 335.

⁷ Brown, 334.

⁸ Brown, 334.

Spain's vast holdings, at the time of Carlos III's accession, stretched from the deserts of the North American Borderlands to the Argentinean pampas. Fleets of treasure and raw materials sailed through the Pacific and Atlantic emptying into Madrid's coffers. Revenues collected from this "empire of goods" in the Caribbean, New Spain, Peru, and the Philippines funded Spain's imperial designs. It was for this reason that Spain took drastic measures in colonial policy to confront a renewal of hostilities. The period in between the Peace of Paris and Spanish entry into the American conflict (1763-1779) consisted of wide-ranging political and administrative preparations, which Spain's capable general-governors and intendants managed. The primary objective, in the grand scheme of the Imperial power play of the 18th century, was to preserve colonial integrity and strengthen economic bonds with its American colonies. These goals are best captured by the royal prerogative of *equilibrio Americano*, a sort of balance of power in the Americas that lay at the heart of the Spanish reformist enterprise; in essence, to take back what had been lost and reassert supremacy at whatever cost.⁹

Spanish policies, foreign and domestic, were altered dramatically as a result of the Seven Years' War which left Britain and Spain as sole contenders for dominance in the New World.¹⁰ Entire national treasuries, armed forces, and natural resources were plunged into wars across the globe requiring the energies of the state to defend European and colonial lands. It provided a new enlightenment among the absolute monarchies of how important their overseas colonies were. Whereas Old World conflicts dictated political struggles in the past, the reverse was the case with the Spanish Empire during this period.¹¹ To Spain, the war disseminated a sort of caution, bordering on fear, of the capacity of a growing Empire to wrest away long-held Imperial domains. Whereas

⁹ Chavez, 5.

¹⁰ Chavez, 19.

¹¹ Buchanan Parker Thomson, *Spain: Forgotten Ally of the American Revolution*. (North Quincy, MA: The Christopher Publishing House, 1976), 13.

European-incurred conflict had raged across the British colonies since King William's War (1688-1697), it was this contest, unique in its originating in the colonies rather than on European soil, that prioritized overseas possessions and ended any sort of salutary neglect enjoyed by colonists.¹²

The Great War for Empire epitomized the Anglo-French rivalry and served as a showdown for both powers in the North American theatre. Consequently, France was handed the most significant military defeat of the 18th century. Quebec, the long held capital of French Canada was finally taken on the Plains of Abraham, a British military feat forever after romantically idealized in the English chronicles. The young and audacious James Wolfe stormed the heights that many in the past had even failed to climb and took the seemingly impregnable city from the French General Louis-Joseph de Montcalm. Both died on the battlefield, one having lost a country, the other having conquered one. Voltaire sarcastically wrote in his masterpiece, *Candide*, "...these two nations [Britain and France] are at war about a few acres of snow...and that they have expended much greater sums in the contest than all Canada is worth."¹³ These "few acres of snow" nonetheless comprised all of France's claims in North America. As a result, Spain's aging Empire stood as the only Imperial power blocking British domination.¹⁴ Powerful implications accompanied Britain's acquisition of everything East of the Mississippi. A confrontation was inevitable between the two colonial powers whose borders, now touching, were only nominally defined.¹⁵

The Spanish response to the Anglo-French conflict was due to its own interests in maintaining political equilibrium. Spain introspectively observed France's lost American empire and then considered its own imperial position. Spanish political connections to France cemented by the Third

¹² Light Townsend Cummins, *Spanish Observers and the American Revolution, 1775-1783*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 10.

¹³ Voltaire, and Peter Constantine. 2005. *Candide, or, Optimism*. New York: Modern Library.

¹⁴ Brown, 337.

¹⁵ James W. Raab, *Spain, Britain and the American Revolution in Florida, 1763-1783*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008), 15.

Family Compact of 1761, the *Pacte de Famille*, brought Spain into the war belatedly with Britain whose victory over France demonstrated its sheer unrivaled power.¹⁶ Spain saw firsthand the monumental threat that British military and naval superiority posed to the colonial balance of power. Several years into his reign, Carlos III entered into a French alliance with his Bourbon cousin. In 1762, he engaged in a war with Britain, Spain's main colonial rival, whose power and confidence had increased due to military victories in both hemispheres.¹⁷ Fighting on a worldwide scale awoke a deluded Spain and revealed the unmistakable reality of Britain's military and naval supremacy.

Spain suffered military defeats and territorial losses in the West and East Indies that further contributed to a fervent reformist national agenda. Despite defeat, the Bourbon allies worked to strengthen internal military and economic structures in order to build an interdependent system between the two.¹⁸ This would theoretically harness both powers' resources come the next round of hostilities. When peace came, Spain received a generous treaty, which still gave it a firm hold on the Gulf Rim.¹⁹ Lord Egremont said of King George's treaty, "No prince has ever begun his reign by so glorious a war and so generous a peace."²⁰ Results of the treaty aside, Spain witnessed its greatest and longest-held possession conquered. The British Royal Navy and Army landed at Havana, Cuba in 1762, one of the finest harbors in the Caribbean, and hoisted high the Union Jack.²¹ All commercial operations and political legislation were directed from Cuba where the seat of government had resided since the time of Philip II (1527-1598).²² During the war, an attack on the Spanish Main seemed imminent because British forces possessed Jamaica, the trade hub of Havana, and a navy that ruled the seas unopposed.

¹⁶ Raab, 15.

¹⁷ Brown, 335.

¹⁸ John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain: 1700-1808*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), 318.

¹⁹ Thomson, 16.

²⁰ Lord Egremont to King George III of Great Britain, quoted in Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 10.

²¹ Chavez, 28.

²² Chavez, 35.

William Pitt, the mastermind behind British military expansion, “made it appear that Spain might expect to be deprived of her colonies whenever the opportunity to secure them should seem ripe to England.”²³ Temporary loss of Manila and other East Indies possessions threatened the immensely rich Oriental trade and thus the financial state of Spain. The great British polemic, Robert Wallace, observed, “The sudden emerging of Britain from the contemptible figure she made, to its present astonishing power fills all Europe with amazement and jealousy.”²⁴ The unanticipated rise to preeminence of the British war machine threatened to replace the stable transatlantic relationships which had in the imperial memory provided a static permanence to Spanish colonial rule. The center of gravity now shifted away from the Old World to the colonial institutions themselves.²⁵

Spain came back from the peace table in 1763 with most of its colonies restored. Britain kept only the Mediterranean island of Minorca and the Caribbean gateway of Florida, a land sparsely colonized and overwhelmingly Indian.²⁶ Spain forfeited to Britain’s ally, Portugal, the band of territory consisting of present-day Uruguay further expanding its Brazilian dominion. France ceded to its Spanish ally New Orleans and the unexplored wilderness known as Louisiana as compensation for its losses and in appreciation of their alliance. The Paris peace treaty also dictated “that Spain was not to participate in the cod fisheries [in Newfoundland]; it must permit British logging rights in Honduras; and all issues of Spanish ships seized by Great Britain before the declaration of war were to be decided in British admiralty courts.”²⁷ These losses, though not devastating, were politically

²³ Charles E. Chapman, *A History of Spain: Founded on the Historia de España y de la Civilizacion Española of Rafael Altamira*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), 385.

²⁴ Robert Wallace, *A View of the Internal Policy of Great Britain* (London: A. Millar, 1764), 159.

²⁵ Thomson, 13.

²⁶ Raab, 16.

²⁷ Walter R. Borneman, *The French and Indian War: Deciding the Fate of North America*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 277.

humiliating.²⁸ They wounded the national psyche and demonstrated the need for dynamic reform and a complete reshaping of colonial policy.²⁹

The Spanish goals after the war were to maintain its vast empire and reconstruct its economy in a way that Spain would be fully prepared when war came. Foreign policy was thus a balance between small-scale intervention and cautious observation, directed by a non-retaliatory attitude, which prevented any provocation for war.³⁰ However patient and heedful the Madrid government was, it anticipated a point of vulnerability within its rival's domains which would spark the necessary pretext for war. Britain possessed colonial frictions, financial debt, and territorial overextension, issues with potential political costs. These problems encouraged hopes of future British expulsion from Florida, Honduras, and other infiltrations made under the duplicitous veil of peace. With full-fledged rebellion materializing at Lexington and Concord and the brave defense of Bunker Hill (1775) by the Bostonian militia, Spain would have to make certain decisions regarding the political status of the American rebels. Exploitation of such domestic tremors would benefit Spain greatly.³¹ Thus, Britain by 1776, fully preoccupied with the revolt, suspended activities southward giving Spain an opportunity to fulfill its goals.³²

Spain began to harness all of its resources to build up colonial strength and effect an economic and military regeneration throughout the empire.³³ The British minister, the 4th Earl of Rochford, noted that upon his arrival in Madrid the Spanish ministers had been focused on overseas issues such as the West Indian trade and colonial regulations.³⁴ Secret discussions, spawned by the French-Spanish intermediary and perhaps one of the greatest French politicians of his age, the Duc de

²⁸ Cummins, 9.

²⁹ Chavez, 7.

³⁰ Chavez, 60.

³¹ Cummins, 10.

³² Thomson, 14.

³³ Cummins, 8.

³⁴ Brown, 343.

Choiseul, were taking place in Madrid in anticipation of renewed conflict. According to the Marquis d'Ossun, a Spanish court representative, they discussed matters with concern to the protection of colonial trade, revenues, and naval revitalization.³⁵ Carlos III's most trusted minister, José Moñino, established the primary objective of expelling Britain from the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi, and the Central American settlements. The committee saw to strengthening defensive fortifications and creating an improved militia especially in the vital colonies of Cuba and New Spain (Mexico).³⁶ The duc de Choiseul, envisioning a continuation of conflict as early as 1769, considered the meeting's deliberations only as important as the physical reforms it produced.³⁷

To stem British encroachment, the Bourbons issued their famous Reforms. These reforms were applied early on within the domestic state heavily decreasing Church influence. A tremendous requisition of authority on the part of the absolute monarch was also a primary characteristic. Even the financial damage Spain found itself in following the Seven Years' War was considerably healed with an influx of revenues as a result of this bureaucratic reorganization and financial stabilization. Treasure ships loaded with gold and silver from Mexico and Peru were crucial to grand designs of revitalization.³⁸ The natural wealth of the Caribbean trade and essential intracolonial commerce of the mainland were also important assets worth protecting.³⁹ It is important not to underestimate the value of these resources in that Spanish bullion in the mid-18th century was as much as one-quarter of royal revenues.⁴⁰

The end of warring instability allowed Carlos III to modernize Spanish America into "a modern state apparatus" from which to "extract more revenues from, and defend it effectively from

³⁵ A.S. Aiton, "Spanish Colonial Reorganization under the Family Compact," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 12, no. 3 (1932): 274.

³⁶ Aiton, 274.

³⁷ Aiton, 274.

³⁸ Raab, 3.

³⁹ Chavez, 37.

⁴⁰ Lynch, 326.

foreign interlopers.”⁴¹ Finally, an overarching reform of colonial administration acting upon pre-existing regional institutions influenced economic and military networks despite colonial diversity.⁴² Thus, foreign strategy centered on the assertion that encroachment must by all means be curbed without a renewal of hostilities.

Through the bureaucratic instruments of the state, including intendants, viceroys, and governor-generals, local and regional inefficiencies were eliminated. Where once the *corregidores* ruled with their local ties and self-enrichment, now royal intendants replaced them at the Crown’s behest. The monarchy in 1777 established the Commandancy-General of the Internal Provinces in all Mexican districts. This legislative body possessed semi-autonomous power and supraregional authority which supplanted both the regional governors and the state viceroy.⁴³ Its royally directed obligation was the collection of the alcabala, a sales tax, which had been the duty of regional authorities since 1728.⁴⁴ In the town of Saltillo, the tax was first set at a rate of 2 percent and subsequent increases followed the state’s growing expenses as a result of royal reform.⁴⁵ The same year the Intendancy system was erected, a subcommittee was installed by the Intendant of San Luis Potosí replacing Saltillo’s alcalde (mayor).⁴⁶ Henceforth, all local legislative proceedings were to be approved by the intendant, especially concerning finances. Subsequently, the sales tax rate quadrupled and, in addition, the town was instructed to make a “gift” of 12,000 pesos to the King.⁴⁷ A royal census was then set up recording the town’s demographic composition.⁴⁸ A sudden surge in taxes followed, demonstrating the degree of imperial involvement in regions previously ignored.

⁴¹ José Cuello, "The Economic Impact of the Bourbon Reforms and the Late Colonial Crisis of Empire at the Local Level: The Case of Saltillo, 1777-1817," *The Americas*, 4, no. 3 (1988): 301.

⁴² Chavez, 40.

⁴³ Cuello, 306.

⁴⁴ Cuello, 305.

⁴⁵ Cuello, 306.

⁴⁶ Cuello, 307.

⁴⁷ Cuello, 308.

⁴⁸ Cuello, 307.

The case of Saltillo can be traced to a larger pattern of Bourbon intervention whereby royal decree and appointees transcended and even at times did away with local power structures. The trend of appointing peninsular intendants corresponded to increasing Spanish administrative power in that “by 1808 no American, much less a local candidate, had obtained a permanent appointment as intendante in the Rio de la Plata or Peru, and there were a few in Mexico.”⁴⁹ Spanish peninsulares (elites born in Spain) replaced criollos (elites born in the colonies) in the political appointments and offices of new colonial posts. Other sectors such as the Church and the army were “recolonized” by Spaniards in order to ensure bureaucratic modernization and Imperial consolidation. The conscious effort of reducing American political control in the church and state allowed Carlos III to enforce foreign policy with regard to the necessities of the empire, rather than the skewed and prejudiced interests of local government.⁵⁰

Passed down from the French political reforms under its absolutist proponent, Louis XIV, the intendancy system answered directly to the Crown. This privilege did not eliminate the importance of the viceroy, but provided another avenue by which executive and military decisions were relayed to the state. This robust bureaucratic tool gave Mexico for the most part an economically prosperous period with an efficient government run by remarkably talented men.⁵¹ Although insurrections in Havana, Quito, and Panama reflected lower class opposition, radical improvements in defense infrastructure quickly silenced each rebellion.⁵²

The aristocratic Gálvez family epitomized the new breed of “talented men” who directed the Imperial reforms. Holding military and administrative positions in the colonies, the Gálvezes

⁴⁹ Lynch, 339

⁵⁰ Chavez, 37.

⁵¹ Vera Lee Brown, "Chapter I. Spain in America, 1763-1770," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 5, no. 3 (1922): 337-350.

⁵² Brown, 340.

embodied the rise of the peninsulares as a result of the Bourbon revival.⁵³ One of these members played a vital role in Mexico's military reorganization illustrating peninsular involvement on a large scale. Jose de Gálvez was the main instrument of the king's reforms in which he was given extraordinary powers exceeding those of the disapproving viceroy.⁵⁴ Gálvez came to Mexico in July of 1765 with the granted titles of Visitor-General and Intendant of the Army. His instructions were to inspect the praesidios (military settlements) of New Spain.⁵⁵ His primary goal was to strengthen the provincial militia forces and, as royal instructions dictated, to appeal to the local population as much as possible so they would understand the need for political changes.⁵⁶ Galvez made peace with the border Indians and settled Alta California in an effort to advance territories to the West Coast.

Military weakness in New Spain could be identified from a numerical standpoint. In all of Mexico, there was a total of 2,600 men, comprising an army of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Spread out in small garrisons, throughout New Spain, these men could not assemble a concentrated field army.⁵⁷ As Galvez came to realize, the forces in New Spain were assigned to occupy and defend strategic outposts rather than suppress indigenous incursions and mob riots which were usually met with by a quick gathering of armed merchants, miners, and ranch hands.⁵⁸ Such weaknesses could be especially exploited in the case of a European military expedition witnessed at Havana. A remedy was found in the institutional expansion of military service in the form of a nation-wide draft where the *sorteo*, a ballot drawing, determined those who would actually serve. Most draftees were single men

⁵³ Chavez, 9.

⁵⁴ Brown, 341.

⁵⁵ Brown, 340

⁵⁶ Lyle N. McAlister, "The Reorganization of the Army of New Spain, 1763-1766," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 33, no. 1 (1953): 13.

⁵⁷ McAlister, 7.

⁵⁸ Christian I. Archer, "The Role of the Military in Colonial America," *The History Teacher*, 14, no. 3 (1981): 413.

from eighteen to forty years old.⁵⁹ Of course, clergy, doctors, *caballeros*, servants of the state, and nobility could claim exemption.

The multitude of decrees, bypassing local precedent and the *ayuntamientos* (town councils), caused great unrest in a populace which naturally abhorred military service. Privileges and exemptions were granted in order to appease provincial dissent. Yet, all levels of society experienced the reforms in one way or another. The aristocrats made up the officer corps, lower classes gave their sons and husbands, and merchants covered military expenses.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, hostility towards state-mandated military service grew as soldiers in Mexico, Veracruz, and Puebla became idle and unruly.⁶¹ In the eyes of local Indians, the mixed-castes, and the criollos, royal disruption served as a bitter remembrance for years to come. British Secretary of the Embassy in Madrid, Lewis De Visme, reported, “The discontent caused by the new system...is very general throughout the country. By all I can find the new system will not be laid aside but only undergo several changes.”⁶² Thus, the reforms were not static, but rather ongoing and adaptable endeavors responsive to different defensive needs.

Military preparation and economic rejuvenation were achieved in order to counter increased British activity and the threat it posed from the North American coastline to the river settlements of the Río de la Plata. Increasing numbers of British colonists migrated southwards causing alarm. Smuggling operations intensified endangering economic productivity, the very source Spain depended on to ensure financial recovery.⁶³ These areas included the lower Mississippi Valley and the Honduran and Nicaraguan Mosquito Coast. Spain’s chief minister, the Count of Aranda, warned that British influence could spread to “Mexico, Havana, Yucatan, Honduras, Cartagena, and Caracas, and none more exposed to them than the stretch of Panama so they can separate [*corte*] the two

⁵⁹ McAlister, 23.

⁶⁰ McAlister, 31.

⁶¹ McAlister, 27.

⁶² Brown, 339.

⁶³ Chavez, 21.

Americas.”⁶⁴ Thus, the Madrid government saw that every colony faced a degree of contact with the enemy, whether direct or under disguise. Warnings went out to all colonies indicating the fear of widespread geopolitical exposure. The king ordered the Lieutenant General of Mexico, Juan de Villalba y Angulo, to remain vigilant and strengthen troops and fortifications around Mexico City in the case that Veracruz’s defenses failed.⁶⁵

Defense was a large-scale strategy spearheaded by the “key men” of the reforms such as Alejandro O’ Reilly who like Jose de Gálvez wielded administrative authority in the colonies. The Marquis D’Ossun, a Spanish official, was confident that O’ Reilly possessed the expertise to impede future English attacks in the Caribbean.⁶⁶ Appointed military inspector and lieutenant general in the army, O’Reilly toured Cuba and Puerto Rico where he began a refortification project of the Castle of Old San Juan in addition to numerous other reforms regarding militias. He also did away with corrupt officer-delegated compensation instructing royal offices to pay soldiers directly. O’Reilly played a significant role as governor of Louisiana in the early reform period, subjugating a French civilian revolt in 1769 which gave him the name “Bloody O’Reilly.”⁶⁷ He laid the groundwork for his successor, Bernardo de Gálvez, by solidifying Spanish political and military rule in a region which swore no allegiance to Spain. The French diplomat, Choiseul, praised him on “his intelligence, his worthiness, and his activity,” prime qualities of a loyal Peninsular.⁶⁸ O’Reilly fit the job description and went beyond his duties in preparing the Caribbean Rim for war.

Anglo-Spanish tensions in the colonies grew as contact increased due to mounting economic activity on both sides. It was not uncommon for Spanish settlers to deal with British tradesmen who

⁶⁴ Chavez, 39.

⁶⁵ Chavez, 40.

⁶⁶ Aiton, 277.

⁶⁷ Albert Phelps, *Louisiana: A Record of Expansion*, (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1905), 125.

⁶⁸ Aiton, 277.

constructed “floating stores” along the Mississippi.⁶⁹ Illegally constructed settlements were built to foster the growth of woodcutting activities of British settlers in Honduras as well as the pervasive smuggling along the Mosquito Coast of Central America. Illicit activities cost Spain as much as half the trade export value in Guatemala annually.⁷⁰ The governor of Costa Rica, Juan Fernández de Bobadilla, wrote to the Viceroy of New Granada, Manuel Flores, that British plantations, slaves, and materials for permanent settlements had been discovered.⁷¹ The entire Mosquito Coast operation, directed in London, was one of many expansionist activities created to subvert trade, take away possible Indian allies, and ultimately undermine Spanish sovereignty.⁷² Spanish Navy Lieutenant Don Antonio de Gastelu reported the relative ease of finding British settlers along the Panamanian coast and even stumbled upon supplies from Jamaica and London on the Río Tinto bound for the Mosquito natives.⁷³

These observations reinforced the need for a stringent mercantilist program so that commercial isolationism became the norm. Mercantilism served as the main European economic system from the 16th to the 18th centuries whereby trade was regulated by the mother country in the goal of promoting the state’s power to the exclusion of other empires. This policy reflected the absolutist political traditions at the time. Two key characteristics include the prevention of colonies from trading with other nations and European-planned domestic economies restricting what could and could not be imported/exported in the colonies. Thus, Spain’s fears of illicit trade activities were best addressed by this monarchically domineering system. Enforced was “the strictness with which Spain

⁶⁹ Chavez, 21.

⁷⁰ Chavez, 21.

⁷¹ Chavez, 41

⁷² Brown, 357.

⁷³ Chavez, 41.

excluded all the other nations from any share in the trade of her American possessions.”⁷⁴ Spain’s message for foreign interlopers was total exclusion from all of its economic markets and activities.

Bernardo de Gálvez (1746-1786), the governor of New Orleans, enforced Imperial reforms that served to defend the Spanish coastline along North America and the Caribbean islands from British interference. Gálvez emulated his uncle’s aggressive reform policies which had transformed Mexico.⁷⁵ As a member of the famous political family, he was given a prime position within the Empire turning out to be the governorship of Spain’s most troubling province, Louisiana. He took charge of the mostly French inhabited city of New Orleans in 1777 at the age of twenty-one.⁷⁶ Brilliant, determined, and energetic, he was given “something of the admiration and confidence of the people.”⁷⁷ This popularity enabled him to dictate military operations and economic suppression against the British across the Mississippi. His primary objective was the conquest of British Florida by way of its capital, Pensacola. London had also made New Orleans its top military priority authorizing the construction of Natchez and Baton Rouge as centers for spying and smuggling. Thus, it was an amalgamation of factors, fostered by Gálvez that led to Pensacola’s capture in 1781. These included alliances with the Indians, a buildup of military and naval forces, investment in espionage, and autonomous economic growth. His victories in Florida diverted British resources dedicated to the colonial war effort and ensured maximum British concessions in the West come 1783.

Gálvez, throughout the Spanish neutrality acted as Carlos III’s personal agent communicating copious reports on American financial aid, supplies, and commerce.⁷⁸ He played the most prominent role in ensuring Spain’s partiality for the American cause believing that Spanish intervention combined with French and American cooperation would tip the balance in the Empire’s favor. His

⁷⁴ Brown, 347.

⁷⁵ Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 116.

⁷⁶ Thomson, 135.

⁷⁷ Phelps, 137.

⁷⁸ Cummins, 62.

uncle shared his own sympathies for the Americans saying, “Let us establish indirect and secret intelligence with the American colonies, inspiring them to vigorous resistance.”⁷⁹ Bernardo approved of American borrowing through a loyal American representative of the Continental Congress, Oliver Pollock.⁸⁰ The relationship between these two men ensured the success of George Rogers Clark’s trans-Allegheny campaign and a constant flow of supplies into George Washington’s Continental Army.

By the eve of Spanish intervention, Gálvez had effectively bamboozled the British authorities along the Gulf by covertly funding American armies. Albert Phelps, a colonial historian of Louisiana, said, “The highly important part which Spaniards of Louisiana played in the American Revolution” allowed “the new country [the United States] to hold its territory intact from Canada to Florida, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.”⁸¹ Had Galvez not secured the Mississippi frontier, Great Britain could have laid claims to land in the peace negotiations. It would be hard to imagine how the future United States could have grown let alone survived sealed off from the Mississippi with two European powers practically holding it captive between the Alleghenies and the Atlantic.⁸²

The newly vested individual powers accompanied by the colonial reforms allowed governors to strengthen militias, fortify defenses, counteract against British attempts to win over natives, and by 1775, prepare for surprise attacks. Spain officially prohibited trade with the English and Dutch in 1776.⁸³ Thus, as the powers came closer to war, so too did the relations between Spain, France, and the rebelling colonies who all chose to unite.

While Spain aided the American colonies, a façade of neutrality was preserved giving it precious time to build up its war machine. From the moment the colonies declared independence,

⁷⁹ Chavez, 32.

⁸⁰ Raab, 134.

⁸¹ Phelps, 148.

⁸² Phelps, 148.

⁸³ Chavez, 42.

secret correspondence began between France's foreign minister, the comte de Vergennes (1717-1787), the Spanish foreign minister the Duke of Grimaldi (1720-1789), and a long list of American patriots. These included notables such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, Eldridge Gerry, and John Adams. Thus, a common thread was woven between the major anti-British players pitted against what Vergennes called the English monster.⁸⁴ As conflict in the colonies intensified and tensions between the European polities grew, promises were made, financial aid increased, and covert discussions were held concerning foreign intervention. Spanish policy during the early days of the revolution was to incrementally fund the rebels though in 1776 Spain and France, together, loaned a significant sum of 1,000,000 francs.⁸⁵

Spanish generosity in the budding days of American resistance did not equate to Spanish military cooperation whatsoever. Spain had not always been inclined towards the thought of a young North American republic and the implications of its subversive ideas moving south into its own colonies. British writer and statesman Sir George Trevelyan commented that "Spaniards looked upon the people of New England as a particularly dangerous form of heretics" whose revolution brought wide-ranging implications into their own colonies already seething under discontent.⁸⁶ Also, there was the threat that such a nation would threaten Spanish possessions in the hemisphere and would be no less a danger than Britain was. Yet men such as Grimaldi, the conde de Aranda, and Bernardo de Gálvez became devoted to the American cause seeing the new nation as a potential economic partner, future common ally, and buffer to future British intentions on the continent.⁸⁷

As the king's official minister, Floridablanca displayed a cautious and calculating diplomatic shrewdness contrasting with Grimaldi who was directly financing the Americans by supporting one

⁸⁴ Aiton, 279.

⁸⁵ Charles H. McCarthy, "The Attitude of Spain during the American Revolution," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 2, no. 1 (1916): 50.

⁸⁶ McCarthy, 51.

⁸⁷ Cummins, 62.

influential businessman. Persuaded to leave his successful firm, Gardoqui e Hijos (Gardoqui and Sons), a wealthy Basque banker named Diego María de Gardoqui, agreed to serve as an intermediary between Spain and American agents. During the pre-war period, he was America's most important asset, contributing military supplies shipped by his own trade vessels.⁸⁸ The transatlantic commerce that Gardoqui's family company had cultivated for years provided cover for arms and supplies. His unique position allowed him to raise a total of one million *reales* from his own family and other collaborators.⁸⁹ Highlighting Franco-Spanish cooperation, Vergennes constructed a phony Spanish trading corporation located in Paris known as Roderique Hortalez et Cie. It was successful in not arousing British suspicions due to legitimate business operations on the island of St. Eustatius. From there, moneys, supplies, and arms were hidden as cargo and transported to New Orleans. They were then sent up the Mississippi or the frontier where under-supplied, ragtag American armies received them. An optimistic Benjamin Franklin acknowledged Spain's generous financial contributions and the constant flow of supplies encouraging hopes of it entering the war.⁹⁰

Gálvez oversaw Spanish loans during this time as well as communicating with many American patriots. Loans sent through his jurisdiction from across the sea were so substantial that Spanish coins could be found in every colony boosting the value of Continental currency.⁹¹ John Jay wrote of how important the Gálvez family was in its efforts to support the revolutionaries adding that cultivating a friendship with the Louisiana governor was crucial.⁹² Yet, aid, in whatever form, was not a precursor to military intervention but one of many strategies used to slowly eliminate British resources across the Atlantic.

⁸⁸ Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 70.

⁸⁹ Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 71.

⁹⁰ McCarthy, 55.

⁹¹ Chavez, 108.

⁹² McCarthy, 57.

Spain in late 1778 devised a feigning of diplomatic deliberations offering Britain continued neutrality. It asked for Gibraltar in exchange for peace, knowing that George III would not accept. All of this was to buy time for additional recruitment, training, and last minute naval preparations.⁹³ While the half-hearted dialogues between Madrid and London were taking place, Floridablanca offered Vergennes a Spanish declaration of war under the explicit terms that France help in capturing Gibraltar, Florida, and Minorca.⁹⁴ According to one historian, Vergennes knew that France and the struggling Americans could not defeat the British Empire without Spain.⁹⁵ France, it could be argued, had jumped the ship entering into the war a year before agreeing to a military alliance with the Americans whilst banking on a Spanish alliance. Floridablanca, unlike his French counterpart, was not yet ready to recognize American sovereignty due to potential fallout in the colonies. He also feared the rise of an American power with even more reason to expand than its British oppressor. Both of which the count of Aranda predicted famously saying, "...it [America] needed the aid of two powerful states like Spain and France to accomplish its independence...it will grow up, become a giant and be greatly feared in the Americas."⁹⁶ Yet, the present reality of a new global war supplanted impertinent fears and groundless conjecture over future events.

The Allies observed a noticeable juncture in the conflict whereby British vulnerability through logistical inferiority and overextension was fully realized. By 1779, the Spanish had assembled their war machine. French ships and soldiers were streaming across the Atlantic. With Spain's enemy "believed to be in a condition of stress...this extremity marked the hour for avenging former defeats."⁹⁷ Thus, Carlos III could now enter the war at a time of his own choosing unlike in 1762.⁹⁸

⁹³ Lynch, 320

⁹⁴ Cummins, 166.

⁹⁵ Chavez, 132.

⁹⁶ Chavez, 212.

⁹⁷ McCarthy, 51.

⁹⁸ Chavez, 198.

Spain declared war on 12 April 1779 alongside its Bourbon partner, their navies and armies prepared to cooperate and fulfill the terms set out in the Treaty of Aranjuez (1779). The document secured concessions on the part of France in exchange for Spanish intervention effecting an all out global front against British influence. Thus, “reformist Spain, a revengeful France, and the rebelling English colonies,” joined into a cooperative tripartite union and struck the momentous blow building since the Seven Years’ War.⁹⁹ Interestingly, colonial historian Alfred A. Cave considered the French intervention revenge for Montcalm’s defeat twenty years earlier.

Joint Spanish and French naval planning led to military successes in Florida, Central America, and the Caribbean and contributed to bottling up General Cornwallis in the American South. Thus, Britain was simply outfought and made the decision to give up its American campaign and salvage its other global possessions. Spain’s naval reconstruction program in part created this problem. Through the reform period, the king spent millions of pesos building over two hundred ships and frigates so that state spending comprised 70% of the monarchy’s expenses.¹⁰⁰ The Spanish navy was gradually expanded and modified from the British system by Francois Gautier, a naval constructor, who rose through the ranks to become superintendent of warship construction overseeing a robust naval program.¹⁰¹ Spain and France, by 1779, together numbered 121 total ships of the line compared to 90 British ships.¹⁰² Such a staggering feat of naval engineering required a complete rearmament of Spain’s many shipyards. England, fearing the return of the “Invincible Armada,” posted ships along its coast in case of a Franco-Spanish invasion.¹⁰³ This withdrawal of ships and troops from the American theatre enabled the French Navy under the comte de Grasse to successfully blockade

⁹⁹ Chavez, 47.

¹⁰⁰ Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 40.

¹⁰¹ Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 42.

¹⁰² Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 41.

¹⁰³ Gutiérrez-Steinkamp, 43.

Yorktown. General Washington and the comte de Rochambeau joined forces to besiege Lord Cornwallis who surrendered in 1781.¹⁰⁴

Carlos III gave Bernardo de Gálvez overall command of both French and Spanish operations in the Caribbean after his swift conquest of Pensacola.¹⁰⁵ He commanded 7,000 soldiers and an armed fleet which swept the British garrisons in the South so that by 1781 he held East and West Florida for his king.¹⁰⁶ He then secured the Mississippi River ensuring the success of Clark's Long Knives' Campaign (1778-1779) which closed off the entire Ohio River Valley from redcoat activity. Indian and British attacks in the Midwest notably at the Battle of St. Louis were defeated due to early Spanish military settlements constructed along the Mississippi as per orders of Gálvez.¹⁰⁷ Spanish garrisons held off a British offensive into Nicaragua known as the San Juan Expedition (1780) and an invasion of Honduras at San Fernando de Omoa. Juan Manuel de Cagigal, Governor of Cuba, conquered the Bahamas in 1782 definitively securing the Gulf. A French-Spanish contingent in 1782 took Minorca after a five-month siege. Gibraltar was never taken even after a grueling campaign of 3½ years. As a side note, it is important to remember that the Portuguese did not side with the British as had always been the case. Portuguese King Jose I died in 1777, his pro-British and expansion-minded minister, the marquês de Pombal ousted from power. Carlos III's niece, María Francisca, became queen and because of familial obligation was not inclined to side with the British. The Treaty of San Ildefonso between Spain and Portugal ended British hopes of a Portuguese alliance.

Spain ultimately impeded British aggression in the Western Hemisphere and gained back most of the possessions lost in the Seven Years' War. By 1781, Britain had too few resources to sufficiently engage its rivals in the other theaters. It found itself among too many enemies with too

¹⁰⁴ Raab, 141.

¹⁰⁵ Thomson, 103.

¹⁰⁶ McCarthy, 63.

¹⁰⁷ Raab, 137.

few friends. The utter lack of resources, consumed by the engrossing fight for the American colonies, made any attempt to capture Spanish possessions impractical.¹⁰⁸ Also, Britain's influential merchant class clamored for the end of hostilities in order to restore war losses and the damage to trade it had suffered. Thus, the colonial reforms had given Spain the resources with which to defend its possessions and take back lands formerly held. Assistance to the United States and eventual intervention proved beneficial for both the republic and the Empire for the time being.

Spain enjoyed a brief period of peace and economic prosperity ending roughly around the time Carlos III died, five years after the war ended. The implications of Spanish intervention served as an irony in that the misfortunes it sought to avoid came true by helping the American rebels.¹⁰⁹ Francisco Saavedra detected the deep implications that accompanied the revolution's success. An officer who led operations in Cuba and the American coast, he warned that, "What is not being thought about at present, what ought to occupy the whole attention of politics, is the great upheaval that in time the North American revolution is going to produce in the human race."¹¹⁰ Though the seeds of revolution had been sown, Spain in 1783 was content. It came out of the war the biggest winner having reached new heights of imperial prestige. Carlos III in reflecting on his reign took pride in his reforms and administrative talents leaving Spain far better off than he had found it.¹¹¹ He was the last Spanish monarch to possess the resolve of his empire-building ancestors and with his death came the end of the heroic age of the Spanish Empire.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Brown, 475.

¹⁰⁹ Chavez, 221.

¹¹⁰ Francisco Morales Padrón, *Journal of Don Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis, 1780-1783*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1988), 54

¹¹¹ Vera Lee Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America in the Closing Years of the Colonial Era," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 5, no. 3 (1922): 333.

¹¹² McCarthy, 49.

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Argentina's Flirtation with the International Monetary Fund:
The 40-Year Affair that Contributed to the 2002 Economic Crisis

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The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Argentina are frequently labeled a dangerous duo, the former contributing in the late 1990s and early 2000s to the latter's economic instability and the ultimate economic catastrophe. Those looking to the global community for the blame of the Argentine 2002 economic crisis should, however, dive deeper and examine IMF involvement that eroded Argentine stability long before the dawn of the millennium. Initial standby agreements, started in 1958 and followed by renewals in the mid-1980s, are a convincing reason behind the 2001 "default on its \$132 billion public debt" and the subsequent economic crisis, indicating that the country's instability was a project exacerbated by the Fund for decades.¹

The relationship between the IMF and Argentina can be analyzed through its social, political, and economic factors and outcomes after 1958. Since austerity measures required by the IMF for continued loans arguably resulted in high civilian costs very early on in the relationship, the first interactions between the Fund and the country were especially pivotal. Although the IMF is a frequented scapegoat for repeated Argentine economic failures, ensuing social and political consequences, it is important to clarify that the Fund cannot shoulder complete blame for a legacy of economic shortcomings; but even if just exacerbating the already volatile situation from 1958 onward, the Fund's austerity measures worsened social and economic conditions, failed to address specific Argentine problems through its "one size fits all" approach, and weakened the state politically and economically, irreversibly contributing to the country's vulnerability in the following millennium. By examining relations between the Fund and Argentina before the most recent years of tumult began, it may be easier to paint a more holistic narrative of the Argentine case as it relates to the International Monetary Fund, the organization's austerity measures, and the results of economic intervention.

IMF Entanglement in Argentina: A Historical Account

¹ Jan Joost Tenussen and Age Akkerman, *The Crisis That Was Not Prevented: Lessons for Argentina, the IMF and Globalization* (The Hague, Netherlands: Forum on Debt and Development, 2003) 15.

Political economists and scholars have criticized the Fund for failing to implement policies that were capable of achieving its own objectives: restoring the balance of payments deficit, reducing inflation, and increasing economic growth while protecting social services and citizens' rights. Instead, scholars have equated the Fund's role in Argentina to its previous East Asian failure, blaming the Fund for applying in Argentina strategies identical to those applied in other countries with current account deficits.² Although many cite this so-called "one-size-fits all" as the International Monetary Fund's only downfall in Argentina, attention should have been given to the years preceding the 2001 crisis.

Long before Argentine instability made international headlines, the IMF intervened during the elected presidency of lawyer, journalist, and politician Arturo Frondizi in 1958. Argentina had long struggled with legacies of labor unrest, trade deficits, and inflation that seemed impossible to defeat. Early in his presidency, Frondizi attempted to appease the masses with a 60% increase in labor wages and "embarked on an industrial development program to attract foreign investment, which called for a sharp rise in public spending."³ As was prevalent in most Latin American industrialization programs, Argentina's investment in industry required the government to borrow from abroad heavy machinery and technologies that could not be manufactured on domestic soil. This meant that legacies of dependency, escape from which was a major goal of import substitution industrialization (ISI), continued as the country relied heavily on foreign markets for technology that Argentina simply did not have the resources to produce domestically.⁴

As expected, the costs outweighed the benefits, and the Argentine economy found itself struggling to stay afloat with its production of low-quality goods at high-quality prices. This meant

² Jonathan Fiechter et al., "Subsidiaries or Branches: Does One Size Fit All?," *IMF Staff Discussion Note, the International Monetary Fund* (2011): 5-15. Accessed May 5, 2014.

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2011/sdn1104.pdf>

³ Margaret Conklin and Daphne Davidson, "The IMF and Economic and Social Human Rights: A Case Study of Argentina, 1958-1985," *Human Rights Quarterly* 8, 2 (1986): 230. Accessed December 1, 2013.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/762284>.

⁴ Galenson, Walter. *Labor in Developing Economics*. Literary Licensing, LLC, 2012: 167

that Argentina was producing the same types of goods as other export countries but had to sell them for much higher prices due to technological stagnation and the newness to Argentine production. Domestic and international consumers alike had little interest in buying cheaply made goods at prices that surpassed the competitors'; thus, investment in industry fell short of its own expectations. After Frondizi ran Argentine monetary stock dry through incessant borrowing from abroad, his administration had nowhere to turn but the IMF, thus initiating a cycle of IMF dependence to pull the country from the throes of economic despair. In December 1958, Frondizi reluctantly agreed to the IMF's ten loan conditions, including harsh wage controls, devaluation of the peso, and increases in taxes, duties and rates, and accepted the then largest IMF program on the continent.⁵

The first results of this stabilization packet were far from reassuring to a country in dire need of rapid and sustainable economic turnaround. Although the Fund claimed initial success, publicizing optimistic figures to prove that the Argentine balance of payment crisis was a Fund-supported success story, the Argentine civilians suffering from the shrinking of the economic pie had a remarkably different vantage point. Less than a year after the implementation of the first IMF austerity measures, "real wages decreased by 26 percent...inflation rose to 111 percent, and GDP declined by 8 percent."⁶ Subsequent labor unrest was severe and aimed at an international organization that had fallen severely short on its promises; those employed and those still struggling to find employment lashed out against the government for selling out to the United States at the expense of the nation. At the request of the IMF, Frondizi attempted to quell simmering labor unrest by threatening repressive labor policies. In 1962, following 26 military coup attempts, the Frondizi administration was overthrown, marking an end to an era of sharp ideological shifts toward this harsh developmentalism, prompted by increasing global pressures to

⁵ Conklin and Davidson, "The IMF," 229-240.

⁶ Conklin and Davidson, "The IMF," 232.

internationalize politics and economics. As future administrators learned, the Argentine citizenry was neither ignored nor repressed, existing as an ever-present reminder that strikes of public employees and opposition of workers and unions carried regime-threatening political capital.⁷

Despite unrest and forced regime-change, Argentina remained loyal to the IMF through 1963, signing austerity measures that encapsulated noble goals but actualized few successes. In 1960, the Fund required the government to increase the costs of public services, including necessities like urban transport and water upon which the majority, if not the entirety, of Argentina relied on during urban migration to industrial hotspots. In 1962, Argentina's economy stagnated due to unpredictable prices and meager harvests in the agricultural sector. Just years after commencing its role as a global lender and policy advisor to Argentina, the Fund faced criticism for its "one-size-fits-all" approach and its inflexibility and inability to adjust policies to fit the demands of a suffering agricultural sector. And just as critics in the 2000s denounced the Fund's uniform approach to Argentina, the citizens began to question the validity of a global actor that lacked peripheral vision and local insight. The continued decline in GDP at the end of 1962 suggested to skeptics that conditions would only worsen unless the Fund tailored its approach.⁸

By the mid-1970s, economic conditions in Argentina had yet to take a permanent turn for the better, and legacies of debt and instability from the 1950s still lingered from the crop-fields to the factories. Holding fast to IMF policies and austerity measures, the government fell victim to what some analysts call "chronic ailments": increased dependence on unstable international commodity markets; excessive dependence on foreign capital and investment; outdated industry and the technological inferiority of agriculture; a "bloated" public sector with alarming levels of

⁷ Conklin and Davidson, "The IMF," 235.

⁸ Conklin and Davidson, "The IMF," 234.

deficit spending; and a “highly mobilized labor movement.”⁹ Counter to IMF initiatives, 1970-1974 revealed consistent declines in real GDP. In addition, 1975-1976 saw inflation rates well above 300 percent, a much different number than the goal of the Fund outlined in the trajectory of the plan. In 1976, Argentina experience short-term relief in inflation, a brief moment of recovery arguably attributed to a 40 percent reduction in wages earlier that year, but long-term prospects for the Argentine economy were still vulnerable to the backlash of such shaky and circumstantial alleviation.¹⁰ Although it was unfair to claim that these economic shortcomings were directly caused by the IMF, it seems realistic to conclude that the failure of the Fund to achieve key stabilization goals contributed to Argentina’s “dubious distinction of being named, along with Mexico and Brazil, as one of the most imperiled debtor countries in the world” especially considering that prior to Fund involvement the country “had been numbered among the globe’s leading economic endeavors with an apparently promising future.”¹¹

During this period, the Fund was especially problematic when dealing with the Argentine labor force, even attempting to compel nationalists like President Isabel Martinez de Perón to eventually cede to terms of conditionality despite her reluctance to follow the IMF’s wage demands and instead increased wages to appease labor.¹² Peron, the nation’s first female president, stepped into the presidency after the natural death of her husband, President Juan Domingo Peron, in 1974. As his Vice President, Isabel Martinez de Perón worked as Acting President on several occasions before taking official office in 1974; yet even this prior experience did not prepare her for the contention she faced as the country’s economics spiraled downward in 1975.

⁹ Stiles, Kendall W, “Argentina’s Bargaining with the IMF,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 29, 3 (1987). Accessed December 2, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/165844>. 58.

¹⁰ Stiles, “Argentina’s Bargaining,” 59.

¹¹ Stiles, “Argentina’s Bargaining,” 57.

¹² Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 236.

After taking office, Perón was spurred by both the passive and active leverage of the IMF. Passive leverage is simply the benefits the IMF promises by nature of its existence, and active leverage is the tangible economic conditions the IMF requires of its loan recipients (i.e. freezing wages, ending unionization, and cutting inflation). Thus, Perón was forced to respond to the allure of the IMF, the apparent benefits of compliance, and specific short-term requirements.¹³

Although understanding the significance of deflecting from IMF requirements, Peron attempted to negotiate her way to a middle ground, unwilling to blindly adopt those Fund conditions that would continue to strangle the country's labor sector but still willing to follow small recommendations that might show she was still a team player. In 1975, however, her ambivalent economic policies resulted in record budget and trade deficits and complete economic shock therapy promoted by the IMF. Consumer prices skyrocketed, wages increased steadily, and workers' protests were once again ignited throughout the country. Peron hastily turned to the IMF for support, now willing to adopt Fund policies that could reverse economic downturn; yet before Perón could "complete her negotiations with the IMF, she was overthrown," deposed and arrested under the command of the Argentine Army Commander, Jorge Rafael Videla.¹⁴

Following the coup of Perón, President Videla, determined to permanently turn the Argentine economy around, looked once more to the IMF for support. The IMF desperately wanted to end the era of skepticism promulgated by Perón and sought to prove its legitimacy by achieving its own goals; thus, the Fund offered "very flexible, 'realistic' terms to Argentina" including: reducing the annual inflation rate from roughly 500 percent to 150 percent, to conduct monthly evaluations of compliance and performance, and to increase the time frame of the standby agreement to 15 months "in anticipation of the transfer of power to a new civilian government in

¹³ Vachudova, Milanda, *Europe Undivided* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 136-138

¹⁴ Conklin and Davidson, "The IMF," 237

early 1984.”¹⁵ But when inflation rates in 1978 were still the highest in the world, citizens were unconvinced of the Fund’s validity, believing it acted “as if it ha[d] a rule of thumb for the budget deficit and inflation [in] a typical Latin American country: “measure its size and cut it in half.”¹⁶ Citizen disapproval escalated when, following the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s, Argentina reeled from increased conditionality as the Fund implemented loans that had, on average, three times as many conditions as in 1970.¹⁷

Matters took a turn for the worse when Videla, with IMF approval, placed every labor union under military control and banned labor strikes for the indefinite future. Despite the prohibition, workers who had just received a 53 percent decrease in wages took to the streets, culminating in over 5,000 civilian arrests during the first four months of Videla’s presidential tenure. According to Amnesty International reports, more than 15,000 people “disappeared” from Argentina during this period, of which over 30 percent were workers.¹⁸ Thus, frightened of the media massacre that would ensue if the government agreed to further subjugation of workers, the regime resisted a renewal of the Argentine standby agreement.¹⁹ In response, the Fund removed wage decreases from its conditionality and persuaded the 1983 government to adopt a fifteen-month standby loan, after which “Fund officials reported that the Argentine adjustment program was ‘working well.’”²⁰ In the short-term, these claims proved accurate and, for the first time in nearly three decades, Fund intervention seemingly improved. A sharp reduction in the balance of payments deficit and impressive decrease in inflation gave the Fund a sense of long-lost legitimacy, decreasing the

¹⁵ Stiles, “Argentina’s Bargaining,” 57.

¹⁶ Edmar L. Bacha. “IMF Conditionality: Conceptual Problems and Policy Alternatives,” *World Development* 15, 12 (1987): 1457-1467. Accessed on December 3, 2013.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0305750X87902300>.

¹⁷ Randall Stone. “The Scope of IMF Conditionality,” *International Organization Foundation* (2008) Accessed on December 3, 2013.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/40071891.pdf?acceptTC=true&acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>.

¹⁸ Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 237-239

¹⁹ Edward Schumacher. “Argentina’s Deepening Slump,” *New York Times*, August 25, 1982

²⁰ Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 240

burden of bad economics on government and civilian alike. By 1984, however, inflation in Argentina was back at 400 percent, the highest in the world by some calculations. Desperate to placate citizens who had caught but a glimpse of economic recovery, Argentina's Finance Minister stated that the country would not make future agreements with the IMF if conditionality would continue to limit the growth of the nation's economy.²¹

Following the declaration of noncompliance from the Argentine government, the Fund struggled to stay alive in Argentina, revising and revisiting policy issues again and again over the next decades. To some, the constant cycles of optimistic IMF promises and dismal economic results took their toll on Argentina, subjecting the country to tumultuous periods of reform and discrediting the "legitimacy of any single program enacted by the Fund."²² To others, the inability of the IMF to establish continuity within its policy objectives, not the continued whiplash from unrealized goals, was a main reason that government noncompliance increased in the last decades of the 20st century; the Argentine/IMF tug-of-war may have been caused by the Fund's lack of permanent, successful and self-reinforcing policies.²³ To others still, lack of permanent Fund success and consistency may have been attributed to civilians' initial skepticisms and doubts that, once ignited, never abated. The suffering population bore the brunt of economic hardship resulting from repressive austerity measures, and abrasive mobilization against the Fund's unsuccessful recommendations may have contributed to its inability to maintain legitimate authority in the region. Combined with already-present civil unrest – a byproduct of decades of political suppression and the unpopular squeezing of labor and working sectors – Fund involvement, in the eyes of many citizens, exacerbated already declining conditions in an impoverished and politically corrupt society. In any case, the Fund's tendency to resort to continuous revision in the latter half of the century – offering up alterations

²¹ *Marlise Simons. "Argentine Plan Raising Doubts on Aid by Banks." New York Times. March 24, 1984.*

²² Bacha, "IMF Conditionality," 1458.

²³ Bacha, "IMF Conditionality," 1466.

and remedies for problems caused by former recommendations— “taught that the presence of great uncertainty and lack of confidence [in the IMF] by national authorities [and citizens]...can dismantle credibility” permanently.²⁴

The Civilian Cost

In the early 1980s, simmering civilian unrest eventually boiled over as social movements and mass mobilization continued to destabilize the nation. Whether caused by the unreliable agreements set forth by the IMF, unbearable economic conditions, highly repressive labor policies, or social and economic conditions completely separate from the IMF (or perhaps a combination of the four), citizens and critics alike began to point to the Charter of the United Nations to justify their disapproval of Fund intervention.

According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all citizens are given, among others, rights to the following basic needs: the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to social services, the right to medical care, the right to education, the right to work and to favorably work conditions, the right to form and join unions, and the right to strike.²⁵ However, the frequent use of “violence to quell labor unrest” was linked to the stabilization policies “favored by authoritarian regimes in Argentina and approved by the IMF.”²⁶

Through constant use of force to implement reductions in wages at the demand of Western actors, governments following orders failed to provide adequate rights protection to the majority of their population. According to one *New York Times* report written in the early 1980s, thousands of workers worked fewer than 44 hours per week, allowing only “10 percent of the total workforce [to] afford the government’s shopping basket of basic goods and services.”²⁷ By 1985, economists

²⁴ Teunissen and Akkerman, *The Crisis*, 27

²⁵ United Nations. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Adopted 10 December, 1948.” Accessed December 1, 2013. www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.

²⁶ Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 255

²⁷ Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 249

estimated that one-third of the Argentine population could not even feed the average family of four.²⁸

Although the Fund “maintained that the costs [to citizens] ultimately [were] outweighed by the benefits of renewed economic growth,” citizens and critics found few patterns of sustainable growth to justify the severe humanitarian costs.²⁹ In addition, a 1982 analysis provided evidence that devaluation of the peso – a longstanding goal and policy objective of the IMF – had “historically benefited the landed elite and hurt urban workers who had to pay more for foodstuffs.”³⁰ Only in 1984 did an IMF standby agreement include measures through which the government could protect the poor and grant them access to basic necessities like food, healthcare, housing, sanitation, water or education.³¹ Legacies of suppression by regimes which were forced to violate the rights of workers to receive continued IMF funding were carried through into the 1990s, leaving the country extremely volatile. Paired with increasingly poor economic performance – inflation was still at 850 percent in 1985 – Argentina entered the new millennium lacking both economic stability and political support for its continually globalized efforts.³²

Questioning the Fund as the Sole Source of Injury

Given Argentina’s repeated poor economic performance from the 1950s onward, only marked by short spurts in growth or reduction in inflation, and the country’s increasingly unsettled population, it seems evident that IMF intervention did not accomplish the objectives it aimed to achieve. Year after year, the country witnessed the renewal of IMF loans to correct the problems created by previous ones, a phenomenon called the “returning customer effect” by author James Vreeland. He writes that “IMF policies hurt economic growth [and] may set the stage for continued

²⁸ Chavez, Lydia. “Costs of International Debt Hit Home for the Argentines,” *The New York Times*, June 16, 1985.

²⁹ Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 246.

³⁰ Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 248.

³¹ J. Omno de Beaufort Wijnholds, “The Argentine Drama: A View from the IMF Board,” *The Crisis that Was Not Prevented: Argentina, the IMF, and Globalization*, FONDAD (2003). Accessed May 5, 2014.

<http://www.fondad.org/uploaded/Argentina/Fondad-Argentina-Chapter7.pdf>. 101-119

³² Conklin and Davidson, “The IMF,” 256.

reliance on loans...comparable to an addictive and harmful drug.³³ Vreeland also lays out another important claim: “selection effects” – or economic and social conditions that exist prior to IMF involvement – often misguide and sway interpretations of Fund success after loan implementation. To Vreeland, “evaluating the effects of the IMF programs is analogous to evaluating the effects of medical treatment.”³⁴ Health experts might conclude that medical treatment is detrimental solely because those receiving treatment are more likely to die; but this ignores the very real fact that healthy people don’t get medical treatment. Therefore, it may be the original ailment, not the effectiveness of the treatment, which determines a person’s fate. Similarly, it is unfair to assert that economic and social conditions in Argentina from 1958 onward were *solely* caused by IMF intervention. Although Argentina fared much worse than many countries prior to 2000, those shortcomings may have been inherently caused by selection effects, not Fund involvement.

It is wrong to imply that each Argentine shortcoming, each economic setback and political malfeasance, was caused by the IMF. Rather, performance evidence posits that, despite the origin of the problem, the IMF did little to find a suitable solution, ultimately failing to achieve the objectives on which the institution was founded. It is this continued failure to improve the country’s economic performance that set Argentina on an economic, political, and social path of no return, continuing the mistakes of previous decades. Instead of realistically approaching the economic situation, the Fund seemingly clung to an idealized world “in which Fund fiscal policy actively can cushion the effects of exogenous shock.”³⁵ Unrealistic policy marked Argentina by decades of poor economic performance, excessive borrowing from and dependency on global markets exacerbated already repressive and abusive politics, and high levels of political unrest continued. After such

³³ Vreeland, James Raymond. *The International Monetary Fund: Politics of Conditional Lending*. (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Books, 2007). 57.

³⁴ Vreeland, *The International Monetary Fund*, 94.

³⁵ Andrés Velasco. "Argentina and the Fund: From Triumph to Tragedy," *American Economic Association*. (2003). Accessed December 3, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3217477.pdf?&acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>. 1292.

history, Argentina hopefully clung to the Washington Consensus policies of the 1990s, following a sort of “economic Ten Commandments prescribed by the IMF” to finally reverse decades of low performance and poor standing in the international community due to bad economics.³⁶ The country’s faith in the global community and neoliberalism was blighted when Argentina was incapable of absorbing the effects of exogenous shocks, like the peso sink and IMF withdrawal in the early 2000s. Although some argue that “lowering [Argentina’s] barriers to the flow of goods and services...offer[ed] the most promising way forward,” neoliberalist policies adopted in the late 1990s and early 2000s were extremely risky in a country already facing extreme fragility.³⁷

Furthermore, in order to live up to its mission of “helping member nations to carry out stabilization programs” and “facilitating the return to normalcy of countries experiencing natural shocks,” the IMF should have experienced greater success in restoring economic shortcomings which could have quelled social upheaval, securing both the economic and social rights of citizens to truly stabilize Argentina.³⁸³⁹ Instead, the IMF may have destabilized the country, propagating a cycle of economic mistakes by encouraging policies that were economically irrational, like pegging the currency to the dollar.⁴⁰ Instead of encouraging the exchange rate system that many analysts deemed a “system doomed to failure,” Argentina should have been encouraged to “move to a more flexible exchange-rate system.”⁴¹ Especially considering that most of Argentine trade has been with Europe and Brazil, pegging the peso to an American currency made little sense and created a

³⁶ Paul Blustein, *And the Money Kept Rolling in (and Out)* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), 5.

³⁷ Blustein, *And the Money*, 12.

³⁸ Karen L. Remmer. “The Politics of Economic Stabilization: IMF Standby Programs in Latin America, 1954-1984,” *Comparative Politics* 19,1 (1986): 1-24. Accessed December 1, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/421778>.

³⁹ Paul Blustein, *And the Money*, 107.

⁴⁰ Joseph Stiglitz. “Argentina, Short-changed: Why the Nation That Followed the Rules Fell to Pieces.” (2002). Accessed December 3, 2013. http://www.yorku.ca/drache/talks/2002/stiglitz_argentina.pdf.

⁴¹ Teunissen and Akkerman, *The Crisis*, 30

financial system that Argentina could not weather.⁴² Thus, the “misalignment, coupled with adverse economic conditions, wreaked havoc on the economy.”⁴³

Proponents of the Fund argue that the blame should be directed toward Argentina, connecting failed initiatives to the refusal of “Argentina to follow the advice of the IMF religiously, especially by cutting back on expenditures more ruthlessly.”⁴⁴ Although it is true that Latin America did deviate from Fund recommendations throughout the latter half of the century, supporters of this argument ignore the very real fact that Argentine leaders were forced to delicately straddle the fine line between international adherence and civilian support. Furthermore, a convincing argument can be made that “simply cutting expenditures makes things worse” because such drastic and sudden change is difficult to absorb steadily in a country accustomed to a certain amount of government spending. Thus, requiring Argentina to abruptly reverse decades of spending patterns exacerbated social and political consequences in a country where blind recommendations failed to make political sense.⁴⁵

It is true that “no one doubts that the Argentine authorities made serious mistakes.”⁴⁶ Yet, unlike political leaders entrenched in myriad social, political and economic entanglements, the Fund’s objectives are deficit balances economic stability and its experience correcting economic misgivings should have, by 2001, prepared it for the difficulties of Argentine stabilization. Instead, the Fund repeatedly continued misguided policy long before the US directly entered the Argentinian scene during the two Bush administrations; thus, before the most recent and most obvious IMF-Argentine interventions took place, much of the damage was done, indirectly leading

⁴² Stiglitz, “Argentina.”

⁴³ Velasco, “Argentina,” 1292.

⁴⁴ Stiglitz, “Argentina.”

⁴⁵ Stiglitz, “Argentina.”

⁴⁶ Teunissen and Akkerman, *The Crisis*, xiii.

in December 2001 to a government “with an employment rate of 20 percent, with real joblessness substantially higher, and with workers [who] had had enough.”⁴⁷⁴⁸

Conclusion

The IMF failed to provide policy recommendations, austerity measures and conditions that would best suit the needs of an agricultural society with a fitful labor force. Tailoring its approach by eliminating patterns of wage reductions, ending the era of union repression, and considering agricultural output and restrictions when setting fiscal goals could have stabilized the Argentinian economy in the period between 1958 and 1984. Such stabilization, if permanent, may have made the country less likely to desperately adopt neoliberalism and less likely to face crisis when exogenous shock and IMF withdrawal came at the turn of the millennium. Indeed alternative explanations – the profligacy of the government, the recession that began in 1998, a weak banking sector - exist to rule out IMF blame entirely.⁴⁹ Insufficient economic conditions in this period may not have been entirely caused by the Fund, but the creation of a vicious cycle of IMF-induced setbacks, coupled with its tendency to blame the victim of bad advice, left the institution unable to restart the engine and accountably craft a new economic policy. Trapping itself in its own recommendations and austerity measures, the IMF systematically drowned Argentina in policy recommendations that made the nation a likely bedfellow to neoliberalist antics, leaving Argentina divided, weak and unprepared for the exogenous crises that would dawn decades after its flirtation with the IMF began.

⁴⁷ Cavallo , Domingo, “Argentina and the IMF During the Two Bush Administrations.” *International Finance*, (2004). Accessed December 3, 2013. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1367-0271.2004.00133.x/pdf>.

⁴⁸ Stiglitz, “Argentina.”

⁴⁹ Teunissen and Akkerman, *The Crisis*, 1-20.

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<http://www.fondad.org/uploaded/Argentina/Fondad-Argentina-Chapter7.pdf>. 101-119.