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## About Archive

In 1997, the UW-Madison chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, with the support of the UW-Madison History Department, created Archive: A Journal of Undergraduate History. Thus far, Phi Alpha Theta has sponsored the publication of ten volumes of the journal. Students wishing to work on Archive's staff are not required to be a history major or a member of Phi Alpha Theta. Members of the staff work together to select papers, publicize the journal, and edit the chosen submissions.

Archive will accept papers for next year's volume until **February 18, 2011**.

Requirements and submission forms can be found at

<http://uwho.rso.wisc.edu/archive.shtml#online>.

## About Phi Alpha Theta and the Undergraduate History Association (UW-Madison)

The UW-Madison chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and the Undergraduate History Association function as one group. Together, they provide student representatives to the History Department's Undergraduate Council, hold regular meetings on historical topics, and publish Archive. Information about the group can be found at

<http://uwho.rso.wisc.edu/index.shtml>.

Cover photo: Outside of the former Commerce Hall in Madison, Wisconsin. Police subduing violent student riots in 1970 against the Dow Chemical Company's recruitment on the UW-Madison campus. Reprinted with generous permission from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Library Digital Archives.

### **A Note from the Editor-in-Chief**

In the midst of an accelerated, forward-thinking society, the challenge of all historians remains to produce historical research which sparks genuine curiosity among other people. By choosing a wide variety of topics – from Depression-era baseball, to warfare in Laos, to Iranian propaganda – the authors of this year’s ARCHIVE have demonstrated the relevance and vitality of historical research through an undergraduate perspective. An entirely student-run endeavor, the publication of ARCHIVE represents the highest degree of undergraduate scholarship, conscientiousness, and creativity.

As a result of a concentrated publicity campaign by the Editorial Board, ARCHIVE experienced an amazing 300% increase in submissions from last year. Each member of the Editorial Board worked closely with an author to edit and improve their paper, and I am profoundly impressed by the collective final product – a provocative, innovative, and high-quality collection of research.

I consider myself humbled and honored to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of such a remarkable journal. For their enthusiasm, expertise, and patience with my all-too-often visits to the History Department Office, I am deeply indebted to Scott Burkhardt and Amy Phillips, the Undergraduate History Advisors. For her insight and support, I wholeheartedly thank ARCHIVE’s Faculty Advisor, Professor Camille Guérin-Gonzales. For their generous financial support, I sincerely thank the Undergraduate History Department. For his support and invaluable assistance obtaining future funding for ARCHIVE, I thank UHA President Andrew Huenink. For the amazing cover, I am indebted to the incredibly talented graphic designer Lucas Altschwager. Another artistic genius, Ashley Jensen cannot be thanked enough for her expertise and dedication to the beautiful layout of ARCHIVE. For his unending wealth of knowledge, I thank John Jafferis and his team at DoIt Printing Services. Finally, the ARCHIVE Editorial Board deserves endless recognition for their creativity and deep commitment to historical accuracy and scholarship. Building upon the foundation of previous Editors, I am confident that this year’s ARCHIVE has set a remarkable precedent for the direction of future ARCHIVE editions published at UW-Madison – ones which will be steeped in historical curiosity, invigorated by dedicated student Editors, and shaped by the passion of undergraduate authors.

Teague Briana Harvey  
Madison, Wisconsin  
April 14, 2010

## About the Editors

**James Doing** is a junior majoring history, with a concentration in 20th-century Europe. He also studies German and ESL, and hopes to spend a few years abroad teaching English before coming back to Madison for graduate school. In his free time James enjoys analyzing language and costume errors in historical films (especially atrocious hairstyles from the sixties).

**Claire Elizabeth Huntley** is a senior majoring in history with a focus on the late 18th-century North America and mid 20th-century Germany. In the fall of 2010 she will attend Western Washington University's History, Archives and Records Management Masters program. When Claire is not playing Scrabble, she is working at the Wisconsin Historical Society where she trains for her dream job at the Grateful Dead Archive.

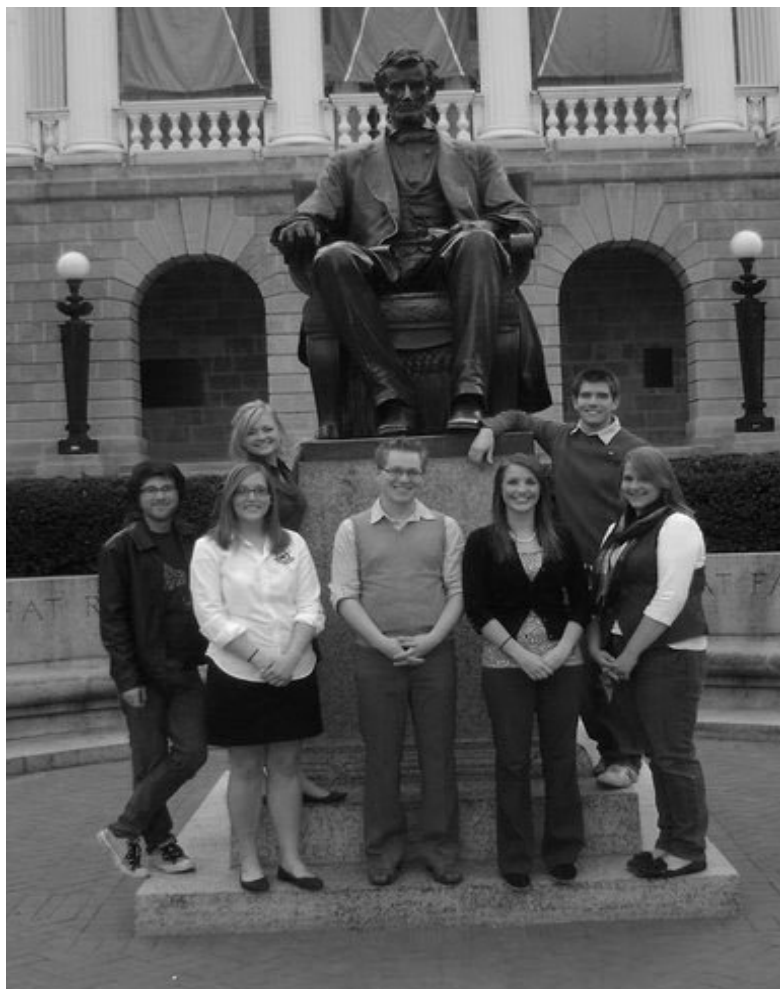
**Ashley Jensen** is a junior majoring in History with a concentration in agrarian reform and collective memory in Latin America. Ashley is also a member of the Undergraduate History Association, Phi Alpha Theta, and the Wisconsin Historical Society and is also a National and Regional History Day volunteer. She also enjoys the smell of old books and naming her beta fish after Pat Conroy characters.

**Samuel Frederick Jonas** is a Junior majoring in History and English, and plans on teaching in some capacity after college. His concentration is in general American History, but his true passion lies in the history of Antebellum and Reconstruction America. He also recently announced his candidacy for school elections as a member of the Whig party.

**Andrew O'Connor** is a fifth year senior majoring in History along with certificates in Middle Eastern Studies, Religious Studies, and Medieval Studies. He is currently writing a senior thesis on Medieval Egypt and will be traveling to Cairo this summer for an Arabic immersion program. He is a member of the Undergraduate History Association, Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society, and the Lubar Institute for Study of the Abrahamic Religions Undergraduate Forum. He enjoys studying languages and traveling in the Middle East.

**Kristen Schumacher** is a sophomore majoring in American and social history. She is an education volunteer at the Wisconsin Historical Museum, a member of the Undergraduate History Association, and a card-carrying member the Wisconsin Historical Society. In the summer of 2010, Kristen will be working with the Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson, Mississippi, compiling original research on Jewish communities throughout the American South. While Kristen hangs a picture of Robert M. La Follette, Sr. in her bedroom and occasionally sports a 1904 Theodore Roosevelt campaign button, she also prides herself on being surprisingly socially adept.

## 2010 ARCHIVE Editorial Board



“No harm’s done to history by making it something someone would want to read.”  
- David McCullough



Above (L-R): Sam Frederick Jonas, Claire Elizabeth Huntley, Kristen Schumacher, James Doing, Teague Briana Harvey, Andrew O’Connor, Ashley Jensen

## About the Authors

**Brett Bernstein** is a sophomore majoring in United States History and Spanish. He is the author of “Citing Thanatology: An Ethical Response to the Medical Data of Nazi Doctors,” originally composed for Laura Weinstein’s fall 2009 History 515 seminar on the Holocaust. Following graduation, he hopes to pursue a career in law.

**Amanda Detry** is a sophomore majoring in English and History, with a focus on the British Romantics and Early Modern Europe. She wrote “The Spectacle of Rebellion: British Minor Theatres and the Pre-Revolution in France” for Professor Suzanne Desan’s Fall 2009 course on the French Revolution. She will be spending her junior year abroad at the University of Warwick in Coventry, UK.

**Alec Luhn** is a graduating senior majoring in history, journalism and Russian Language and Civilization. He wrote “The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Extermination of the Southern Black Farmer” for Professor Brenda Plummer’s Fall 2009 course “History of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.” Next fall, Luhn plans to travel to Tajikistan study post-Soviet nationalism and write freelance news and feature articles.

**Kazu Matsushima** is a graduating senior majoring in Mathematics and American History. In the fall of 2009 he wrote “The Secret War in Laos: A Revolutionary Way of War” for Professor Alfred McCoy’s seminar on the CIA’s Covert Wars and U.S. Foreign Policy. After graduation he is going to help teach English in Spain for an academic year then going on to pursue a Master’s degree in Public Policy.

**Ryan Panzer** is a junior majoring in history and psychology. He wrote “How Night Baseball Brightened America During the Great Depression” for Professor John Cooper’s course on American History, 1914-1945 during the spring of 2009.

**Arthur Zarate** is a graduating senior double majoring in Languages and Cultures of Asia and History. He wrote “Waging a Propaganda War Against Iran: The American Effort to Oust Mohammad Mosaddeq” for Professor Alfred W. McCoy’s Fall 2009 seminar on CIA covert warfare and the conduct of US foreign policy. After graduating, he plans on pursuing PhD in modern Middle Eastern history.

## The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Extermination of the Southern Black Farmer

Alec Luhn

The pamphlets and films of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's pest-extermination campaigns in the 1950s are filled with exaggerated images of benign pests. The most infamous example is the Argentine fire ant, a harmless pest that was portrayed in much the same horrifying light as the creatures of sci-fi horror films like *Attack of the Crab Monsters*. Missing from the USDA propaganda, however, are images of another inhabitant of the South that the department regarded as no less undesirable: the black farmer. Whereas the USDA proved unable to eradicate the Argentine fire ant after a lengthy, expensive campaign, it virtually exterminated the southern black farmer in the quarter-century starting with World War II.<sup>1</sup> In an era of agricultural transformation during which farmers depended on federal aid programs to survive, the USDA discriminated against southern black farmers by allowing white elites to cheat them out of loans, among other underhanded tactics. Such red-tape racism effectively drove the vast majority of black farmers off the land over the ensuing decades.

In the twentieth century, the USDA helped facilitate a sea change in southern U.S. agriculture. Small-scale labor-intensive agriculture, which was reliant upon the labor of sharecroppers and tenant farmers, was replaced by large-scale capital-intensive agriculture dependent on chemicals and machines. The first signs of this conversion appeared in the years leading up to the Great Depression, and a few years later the New Deal agricultural reform programs laid the foundations for massive change. Starting in World War II, the implementation of capital-intensive agriculture accelerated and expanded to a truly significant scale.<sup>2</sup> As USDA agriculture programs transformed the southern landscape, they drove the small-scale farmer off the land. This transformation took a disproportionate toll on southern black farmers, who comprised a larger share of small farmers in the South.<sup>3</sup> Of greater import, however, was the direct, deliberate discrimination that southern white USDA administrators engaged in with the tacit support of superiors at the state and federal level.

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1 Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 84-85.

2 Anthony Badger, *New Deal/New South: An Anthony Badger Reader* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2007), 33-34.

3 Ibid., 38.

Thus, even as the establishment of agribusiness—in essence, the replacement of labor-intensive with capital-intensive agriculture—discriminated against poor farmers who could not survive in the new system without government assistance, the corresponding *agrigovernment* bureaucracy deliberately and directly discriminated against black farmers, denying them such government assistance.

This direct discrimination occurred primarily through policy implementation at the local level.<sup>4</sup> For instance, land-owning white elites retained control of the popularly elected county committees that carried out USDA reform policies through electoral abuses and voter intimidation. Additionally, in a phenomenon that might be called “red-tape racism,” USDA bureaucrats withheld information to discourage black farmers from applying to assistance and cited vague regulations to disqualify those who did. Such local discrimination, however, was aided and abetted by USDA officials at the state and federal level. For example, secretaries of agriculture up until the administration of Ronald Reagan practiced a two-faced policy of advocating anti-discriminatory action but failing to implement the necessary measures to achieve their stated goals.

This paper is intended to contribute to the body of historical work on the transformation of southern agriculture in the twentieth century and to raise questions about the long-term effects of USDA discrimination against black farmers. The historiography of southern agricultural transformation has sometimes been guilty of underestimating the role played by USDA programs in the disappearance of the southern black farmer, focusing on the eradication of the southern small farmer in general without acknowledging the added challenges for black farmers and the deliberate, institutionalized discrimination directed against them.<sup>5</sup> Articles by historians of the South Pete Daniel and Jeannie Whayne have begun to address this lacuna in the historiography by exploring the institutionalized discrimination perpetrated by agricultural reform programs. Nonetheless, we must exercise caution, lest we allow an emphasis on USDA discrimination in the mid-twentieth century to distract from the longevity of systemic discriminatory practices in the South since emancipation.

4 Pete Daniel, “African American Farmers and Civil Rights,” *The Journal of Southern History* 73, 1 (2007): 4.

5 Examples include earlier works by Daniel and Whayne: Jeannie M. Whayne, *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth-Century Arkansas* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1996) and Daniel, *Lost Revolutions*.

6 Daniel, “African American Farmers and Civil Rights.”

Finally, questions remain about whether the extermination of the black farmer was inevitable and whether its consequences could have been different.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Decline of the Black Farmer**

The questionable and incomplete nature of data on black land ownership presents a major obstacle to detailed study of the southern black farmer's decline.<sup>8</sup> Even periodic census data, not being uniform throughout the years in question, poses difficulties for comparative studies. Nevertheless, census data does indicate that the number of farm operators in the South (defined in the census as the 16 contiguous states stretching from Texas to Maryland, plus the District of Columbia) declined from a peak of 3.4 million in 1935 to under 2.7 million in 1950, a number that continued to decline. This decrease comprised primarily tenant farmers, as both full owners and part owners of farms actually increased. Nonwhite farm operators, 95 percent of whom were located in the South, decreased from a highpoint of 949,889 in 1920 to 580,919 in 1950.<sup>9</sup> Land owned by black farmers in the South dropped astronomically from a high of an estimated 15 to 16 million acres in 1910 to six million acres in 1969, while the total number of black farms decreased from 925,000 in 1920 to 96,000 in 1969.<sup>10</sup> Black sharecroppers and tenant farmers were the first casualties of this shift and formed the majority of southern blacks to leave the land during the New Deal. The decrease in black farm owners accelerated greatly in the second half of the twentieth century. According to census data, between 1950 and 1974, the number of black farm owners in the South dropped from 186,540 to 38,182.<sup>11</sup> Data from the 1965 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report and the 1969 Census of Agriculture also show that white farmers were able to consolidate and intensify their agricultural operations to a much greater degree than blacks. Average annual sales per farm were over \$12,000 for white operators but less than \$3,400 for minority operators. Furthermore, the disparity

7 Badger, 49.

8 William E. Nelson, Jr., "Black Rural Land Decline and Political Power," in *The Black Rural Landowner—Endangered Species: Social, Political, and Economic Implications*, ed. L. McGee and R. Boone, 1st ed. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), 86.

9 *United States Census of Agriculture*, 1950, Vol. V, Part VI, 72-3. A truly critical treatment of source material must also acknowledge that the Census of Agriculture is a product of the USDA.

10 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 3, Nelson, 86,

11 Loren Schweninger, "A Vanishing Breed: Black Farm Owners in the South, 1651-1982," *Agricultural History* 63, 3 (1989): 52.

between the sizes of white and black farms on average increased between 1935 and 1959. In his analysis of this data, James Lewis notes that minority operators in the South “held less in absolute terms, regardless of the resource measure used,” and also held proportionately less resources than whites.<sup>12</sup>

The causes for the disappearance of the black farmer are problematic and certainly cannot be attributed to USDA discrimination alone. In a pioneering study of black attitudes toward and knowledge of land ownership, professors of education Leo McGee and Robert Boone identify three main reasons for the departure of black farmers from the land: 1) the increasing allure of employment opportunities in large urban centers as farm mechanization reduced the need for tenant labor; 2) general illiteracy and legal ignorance among black farmers; and 3) “chicanery perpetrated under unscrupulous lawyers, land speculators, and county officials.”<sup>13</sup> The spike in employment opportunities for blacks offered by the defense industry in World War II and the Second Great Migration have been well documented by historians, although these opportunities were not “unlimited,” as McGee and Boone suggest.<sup>14</sup> A less historiographically visible but equally salient issue is that of literacy. Legal literacy, or the ability to comprehend legal documents pertaining to land ownership, is particularly important in understanding this phenomenon. On the basis of their survey of 147 randomly selected landowners in three of the counties in Tennessee most heavily populated with black farmers, McGee and Boone argue that a high incidence of illiteracy contributed to black land loss. Although their designation of “widespread illiteracy” and assumption of its prevalence may gloss over variations of partial illiteracy, there seems to be little doubt that, at the very least, black legal illiteracy hindered land transfer. For instance, over 90 percent of survey participants agreed that much land was lost because of the failure of black landowners to write wills. McGee and Boone also found that illiteracy and ignorance of real estate procedures led to land loss by undercutting blacks’ ability to negotiate transactions. Finally, 96 percent of respondents ascribed black land loss primarily to illegal means, and

12 James A. Lewis, “Ownership and Control of Resources by Minorities and Small Farmers in the South,” in McGee and Boone, 46, 49, *Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs: An Appraisal of Services Rendered by Agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture*, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1965, 67.

13 Leo McGee and Robert Boone, “A Study of Rural Landownership, Control Problems, and Attitudes of Blacks Toward Rural Land,” in McGee and Boone, 55.

14 See discussions of job discrimination during WWII in Mark Newman, *The Civil Rights Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 33-68.

88 percent blamed two major factors: the refusal of mortgage companies to loan to blacks and a conspiracy of public officials to take black-owned land.<sup>15</sup>

Although a perceived conspiracy of people in official capacities suggests the culpability of government officials in black land loss, it is supremely difficult to determine how much of an effect USDA discrimination had on the black farmer's disappearance vis-à-vis other causes. Nonetheless, the sundry discriminatory practices of USDA entities were on the whole quantifiable, overwhelming, and inescapable. Whereas white and black farm owners alike lost land due to economic pressures in the rapidly changing agricultural system, black farmers bore the additional burden of racial discrimination. For example, a 1965 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that the USDA's Farmers Home Administration—a program ostensibly designed to provide loans and technical assistance to help small farmers—made smaller loans on average to blacks than to whites of equal economic status between May 1963 and July 1964. Similarly, loans to white farmers were on average four times the size of those to blacks at the lower end of the economic spectrum.<sup>16</sup> Even prosperous black farmers faced extinction if they did not take advantage of USDA subsidies to adapt to the sea change in southern agriculture, but seeking such subsidies meant subjecting themselves to USDA discrimination.<sup>17</sup>

### **USDA Discrimination in Practice**

Although the USDA had grown steadily since its founding during the Civil War, the New Deal was like a steroid injection, rapidly swelling the agency's muscles and expanding its reach to theretofore unseen proportions. However, the New Deal planners failed in their two main goals for southern agriculture. First, they were not able to effect a switch from high-cost cotton production to a more diversified, internationally competitive system of agriculture. Second, they failed to relocate farmers working on small plots on poor land to credit- and cooperative-based farm communities. Instead, they strengthened the clout of large planters and reinforced conservative attitudes toward economic strategy and race relations. As World War II brought the New Deal era to a close, the USDA bureaucracy and land-grant university scientists began devising a utopian vision of a modernized southern agricultural system based on pesticides and machines.

15 McGee and Boone, 62-64.

16 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 77-78.

17 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 33.

This vision became possible with the advent of the first commercially marketed mechanized cotton picker.<sup>18</sup> After the war, when the USDA-led charge to modernize agriculture began amid the fallout of the New Deal's failure to transform southern farming, the fate of the region "was not in the hands of New Deal-style reformers but of the familiar local elites who were determined that economic growth should not undermine traditional patterns of dependency and deference and of white supremacy."<sup>19</sup> In what has become a trope of civil rights history, local officials frustrated attempts—professed or genuine—by USDA leaders at the federal level to enforce nondiscriminatory policy and follow newly expanded civil rights legislation.

During this period, three preeminent programs carried out the USDA's sweeping agricultural reform policies. The Farmers Home Administration (FHA) provided credit to farmers. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) awarded acreage allotments and heard appeals when farmers disagreed with its distribution, oversaw conservation programs, and approved certain loans. The Federal Extension Service (FES) provided farmers with technical assistance, organized youth 4-H clubs, and taught farming and household management techniques to farm families. The directives of all three programs were administered by county committees that set acreage allotments, disbursed loans, hired extension agents, distributed information, and mediated disputes.<sup>20</sup> From the beginning, these county committees were essentially the exclusive domain of local white elites. Prior to 1964, no black served on a county committee.<sup>21</sup> Even amidst increased concern for civil rights five years later, black participation remained minimal, with the ASCS counting just two blacks among its 4,100 committeemen.<sup>22</sup> Through "old boy" style networking, county committee members looked out for family and friends and enforced a culture of white supremacy, driving black activist farmers off the land by denying them agricultural and home loans and reducing their acreage allotments.<sup>23</sup>

The dearth of black county committee members is hardly surprising given that USDA committeemen were elected to their positions in sham elections that gave rise to electoral abuses and kept whites in power. ASCS county committee elections in

18 Badger, 33, Jeannie M. Wayne, "Black Farmers and the Agricultural Cooperative Extension Service: The Alabama Experience, 1945-1965," *Agricultural History* 72, 3 (1998): 531-532.

19 Daniel, *Lost Revolutions*, 61, Badger, 44.

20 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 5.

21 Ibid.

22 "Federal Agency Is Called Biased," *New York Times*, 30 November 1969, p. 39.

23 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 9.

particular were often marred by corruption, lack of information and intimidation of black voters and candidates. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a national civil rights group that waged voter awareness campaigns to educate blacks about the workings of complicated USDA programs in several Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi counties before the 1965 ASCS elections, acknowledged the “tremendous personal risks involved in running.”<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, ASCS county committees and employees withheld information about the upcoming elections, failed to distribute ballots to black sharecroppers and tenant farmers, placed additional black candidates on the ballot to divide the black vote, and deliberately misplaced and invalidated black votes. U.S. Congressman Joseph Resnick, who was observing the Mississippi elections, allegedly witnessed so many instances of racial discrimination that he recommended voiding the elections altogether.<sup>25</sup> The balloting proceeded along similar lines in Alabama, where SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael observed that ASCS committeemen gave black voters ballots for the wrong county and placed additional black candidates on the ballot to split the vote. In Greene County, five black sharecropper families were evicted after it was discovered they had voted.<sup>26</sup>

Their power thus couched in a virtually unassailable network of county committees, white elites sapped the besieged resources of poor southern black farmers with a mixture of blatantly discriminatory policy and more surreptitious racist practices. In the Mississippi ASCS, for example, office jobs were open to black candidates only when white employees retired and there was a space to be filled.<sup>27</sup> A lack of black farm-program employees translated directly into a lack of attention for black farmers. In USDA programs, agents almost always worked with farmers of their own skin color, so in counties where black agents were not employed, black farmers received virtually no services.<sup>28</sup> Programs likewise had no qualms funding segregated projects; the FHA, for instance, was still making loans for the construction of segregated buildings three years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>29</sup> More insidious than the FHA’s segregated building loans, however, was a system of predatory lending intended to ruin black farmers.

24 Ibid., 18.

25 Ibid., 20, 22

26 Ibid., 20-21.

27 Ibid., 19.

28 “Racial Pattern Noted in U.S. Farm Service,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 March 1965, p. 2.

29 Daniel, “African American Farmers and Civil Rights,” 15.

FHA officials would pressure a black farmer to assume larger loans in order to draw him into debt, a process which culminated in “cleaning him out,” just as white landowners had previously done to black sharecroppers. White officials like Alabama state FHA director Robert Bamberg would even work against program policy when it conflicted with their own interests. Bamberg charged the 25 black tenant farmer families on his personal plantation six percent interest on loans when similar loans from the FHA carried only five percent interest, seeing no need to help his own workers out of poverty.<sup>30</sup> Such conflicts of interests were no doubt frequent, given that virtually all USDA committeemen and many state officials were land-owning white elites.

Local bureaucrats had many underhand tactics of discrimination at their disposal, which have come to light largely with the recent uncovering of unofficial documents. They displayed a mastery of red-tape racism, citing vague regulations, making up problems on applications and withholding forms and information to place black farmers at a distinct disadvantage.<sup>31</sup> This included changing or even inventing numbers. For instance, in 1966, the ASCS altered records of one black farmer’s yield figures and acreage allotments to set him up for financial failure. On a broader scale, the FES made up false numbers in 1965 to bolster its claims of service to black farmers, asserting that it had contacted 312,000 non-white farm residents when in fact only 200,000 non-white farm residents remained in the South.<sup>32</sup>

The USDA bureaucracy discriminated not only against black farmers, but also against black farm agents and employees in its service, who were underemployed and demeaned in the workplace. For one, black employees were almost always paid less. A 1951 investigation of discrimination in FES 4-H programs by the Pittsburgh Courier revealed that the average salary for black county agents was \$3,138, whereas white county agents received an average salary of \$4,904. In some states in both the Deep and Upper South, the disparity was egregious, such as in Alabama, where white agents received an average \$5,331 to the black agent’s \$2,872. In addition, black home demonstration agents also received lower salaries, and salaries for all black agents continued to lag behind those for whites until at least the early 1960s, if not longer.<sup>33</sup>

30 Ibid., 11.

31 Ibid., 9.

32 Ibid., 14-15, 29.

33 Bevell Clay, “Courier Investigation Discloses National 4-H Clubs Reek with Discrimination from Top to Bottom,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 December 1951, p. 25, Wayne, “Black Farmers and the Agricultural Cooperative Extension Service,” 541

The Civil Rights Commission's 1965 investigation discovered that all USDA programs gave blacks inferior training, except in North Carolina, and often provided black employees with inferior office space.<sup>34</sup> It also noted that black agents were virtually excluded from policy-making positions in USDA programs, an inveterate problem that was cited again in a 1976 report by the commission.<sup>35</sup> Informational stonewalling occurred at white land-grant universities, which hosted FES offices, but refused to give out important information to black agents.<sup>36</sup>

Racist modes of communication and the assignment of tedious, pointless duties and inferior segregated facilities by the FES humiliated blacks in the workplace. For example, black agents were given demeaning job titles and forced to spend the majority of their time on 4-H and home demonstration projects to the neglect of black farmers.<sup>37</sup> As late as July 1965, the FES offices for black agents in 33 of the 35 Alabama counties in which blacks were employed were kept in separate buildings, which were often dilapidated and without proper equipment or even office supplies.<sup>38</sup> Finally, black agents were actively persecuted for civil rights activism, real or assumed. In Alabama, two respected black county agents were fired from the FES in 1949 and 1953 for demanding wage parity and requesting a lunchroom be built in a black school, respectively.<sup>39</sup>

### **Moving On to a Better Future?**

In response to the scathing Commission on Civil Rights report of 1965, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman appointed William Seabron, a black man, as assistant to the secretary for civil rights.<sup>40</sup> Seabron's long, lonely struggle for civil rights at the USDA was from the beginning stymied by the recalcitrance of local, state, and federal USDA officials. One of the first of Seabron's many Sisyphean tasks was establishing equal employment regulations at the FES, regulations that were essentially delayed to death by the stubbornness of state FES officials.<sup>41</sup> However, the intractability of officials in state USDA programs was rivaled by that of federal officials, including secretaries of agriculture themselves.

34 Los Angeles Times, 1 March 1965.

35 "Calls U.S. Unfair to Negroes," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1965, p. 5, "Butz Helped Circumvent Rights Laws, Critics Say," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 October 1976, p. B1.

36 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 26.

37 Ibid., 9, 28.

38 Whayne, "Black Farmers and the Agricultural Cooperative Extension Service," 525, 536.

39 Ibid., 539-540.

40 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 6.

41 Ibid., 33-34.

When it came to civil rights, these officials practiced a two-faced political strategy that combined rousing civil rights rhetoric in public with deliberate inaction on these same professed ideals once the press's flash bulbs had retreated. Seabron's appointee Orville Freeman loquaciously pledged to root out discrimination in the USDA after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but did not enforce these verbal directives.<sup>42</sup> For instance, Freeman neglected to properly regulate the notoriously corrupt 1965 ASCS elections despite repeated requests for federal oversight. Pete Daniel, who studied Freeman's private correspondence of the time, charges that the secretary "abetted white discrimination."<sup>43</sup> To whom could black farmers turn for help if even the highest authority in government agricultural reform callously ignored their plight?

It was with this two-faced policy—ostensibly championing civil rights while allowing discrimination to continue unabated in the invisible layers of its bureaucracy—that the USDA entered the modern era. Richard Nixon's Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin dissolved Seabron's civil rights staff in a purported attempt to restructure the agency. In reality, this move completely de-fanged civil rights efforts at the USDA; Hardin filled his civil rights advisory committee with appointments hand-picked for their lack of interest in civil rights enforcement.<sup>44</sup> Hardin's successor Earl Butz secretly helped to change regulations so that seven state programs found to be in violation of antidiscrimination laws would not lose USDA funding. Butz was later forced to resign for uttering racial slurs.<sup>45</sup> Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Agriculture John Block stopped investigating black farmers' complaints altogether, despite court cases and congressional hearings on USDA discrimination, and closed the USDA Civil Rights Office in 1983.<sup>46</sup>

In 1999, the USDA settled for \$400 million in *Pigford v. Glickman*, the largest-ever civil rights lawsuit, which alleged discrimination toward thousands of black farmers between 1983 and 1996.<sup>47</sup>

42 *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1965.

43 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 22-23.

44 *Ibid.*, 35-36, "Agriculture Department Forms New Rights Unit," *The New York Times* 7 August 1971, p. 33.

45 Grayson Mitchell, "Butz Helped Circumvent Rights Laws, Critics Say," *Los Angeles Times* 5 October 1976, p. B1, Don Irwin, "Butz Resigns, Admits 'a Gross Indiscretion,'" *Los Angeles Times* 5 October 1976, p. B1.

46 Daniel, "African American Farmers and Civil Rights," 36, *The Pigford Case: USDA Settlement of a Discrimination Suit by Black Farmers, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, 2005, 2.

47 *Congressional Research Service Report*, 1, 3, Steven Holmes, "Black Farmers Are Divided on Settlement Over Racism," *The New York Times*, 3 March 1999, p. 10.

This year, the U.S. government reached a \$1.25 billion settlement to compensate an estimated 70,000 black farmers who were left out of the Pigford settlement because they missed deadlines to file claims. Meanwhile, outstanding suits brought by Hispanic and Native American farmers since the Pigford case allege similar discrimination in the awarding of agriculture loans and subsidies.<sup>48</sup> At a hearing after the initial Pigford settlement, hundreds of black farmers, including the eponymous Timothy Pigford, voiced their discontent over the settlement's failure to end discriminatory policies at the USDA. In addition, District Court Judge Paul Friedman noted persistent problems with the USDA loan program, including an over-reliance on county committees.<sup>49</sup> Such statements echo past complaints, leaving us with the unsettling notion that the USDA's discrimination against black farmers persists in our era.

### Conclusion

The extermination of the southern black farmer is essentially complete. According to one estimate, less than 20,000 black farmers remain, down from 925,710 in 1920.<sup>50</sup> The transformation of the South from labor-intensive to capital-intensive agriculture in the mid-twentieth century forced many small farmers off the land, but it took a disproportionate toll on black farmers due largely to institutionalized discrimination by the USDA. The agency's actions resulted in a catastrophic decline in black farmers that is documented by census data. Although we should not discount the constancy, persistence and injuriousness of racial discrimination in the South throughout the twentieth century, the historiography should also acknowledge the particularly devastating impact of post-war USDA discrimination.

Such discrimination took place at the local, state, and federal level. The local elites who ran the USDA's agriculture reform programs, aided and abetted by callous state and federal officials who failed to act on civil rights rhetoric, waged a campaign of extermination against black farmers. Sham elections protected white dominance of county committees, predatory lending and red-tape racism "cleaned out" black farmers, and demeaning employment practices constrained black county agents and employees. Meanwhile, a string of secretaries of agriculture practiced a two-faced approach to discrimination, publicly championing civil rights measures but neglecting to implement.

48 Carrie Johnson, "U.S. approves settlement for black farmers," *The Washington Post*, 19 February 2010.

49 *The New York Times*, 3 March 1999.

50 Ibid.

In 1999, the USDA settled for \$400 million in a class-action lawsuit over long-term discrimination, but black farmers were disappointed with the lawsuit's failure to induce change at the agency, raising the ugly specter of USDA racism over 50 years after the discrimination against black farmers began to drive them off the land en masse.

The long-term effects of USDA discrimination demand further study. Some scholars argue that land loss translated into less political power, as the lack of land holdings deprived many blacks of the *sine qua non* for economic and political independence.<sup>51</sup> When we consider this argument in light of the disintegration of the civil rights movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, by which time USDA discrimination had driven the vast majority of black farmers from the land, we cannot but wonder at the wider ramifications of their exodus. Did the extermination of the black farmer play a role—alongside the Vietnam War and the rise of black power—in undercutting the civil rights movement and ending a string of political achievements?

51 Nelson, 83-84, McGee and Boone, 55.

## The Secret War in Laos: A Revolutionary Way of War

Kazu Matsushima

The Secret War in Laos from 1955 to 1975 was one of the darkest CIA operations in the government agency's history. The operations ravaged the small nation with a pristine countryside and made it the most bombed nation on the planet.<sup>1</sup> After subverting its own policies, causing massive casualties, and diminishing the United States' moral standing in the world, Laos is to this day still a Communist nation. It seems almost impossible that a series of operations as large as the one in Laos was able to be kept a secret from Congress and the American people until 1969.<sup>2</sup> Laos, a former French colony, gained its independence in 1954 when it "appeared to lack all of the economic and political criteria for nationhood".<sup>3</sup> The fledgling nation had economic problems from the beginning; the government could not function alone by collecting corporate, mineral, or personal taxes, and therefore had to tolerate the smuggling of gold, guns, and opium.<sup>4</sup> France set up Laos with its ideological and ethnic divisions so that the nation would be easier to manipulate and because of this, foreign power were able to pit factions against each other in a three-way civil war.<sup>5</sup> One of the groups that were drawn into this war was the Hmong, a decentralized society that lived in different countries throughout Southeast Asia with local leaders in towns spread out across the mountains. When they controlled Southeast Asia, the French worked with the Hmong people and transported their opium, but the CIA's relationship with the Hmong in the worked with the Hmong people and transported their opium, but the CIA's relationship with the Hmong in the drug trade was far more extensive.<sup>6</sup>

1 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 291. Description and analysis of the secret war in Laos.

2 Halloran, Richard. "Fulbright Assails Operation in Laos." *New York Times* 29 Oct. 1969: 1-2. Chairman of Senate Foreign relations committee, Senator Fulbright, says that the operations in Laos is a clandestine war and is unconstitutional upon hearing the extent of the operation.

3 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 292. Description and analysis of the CIA's involvement in the international drug trade since the Cold War

4 Ibid

5 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 292

6 Ibid 289

When the CIA took over the drug trade from the French, there was a shift of areas of transport from the airfields in the Plain of Jars to the mountain villages of the Hmong.<sup>7</sup> The Plain of Jars was a strategic location; it was at a crossroads in Laos and during certain times it was the location in the middle of the Communist forces in Sam Neua and the administrative capital of Vientiane.<sup>8</sup> Different villages would compete with one another and occasionally ally themselves with an outside power in order to gain the upper hand in these confrontations. The CIA joined the ranks of former patrons of certain Hmong tribes including China, Laos, Vietnam and France. The Hmong villages were mostly made up of farmers whose main crops were rice for food and opium as a cash crop.<sup>9</sup> Though they were the principal anti-communist ground force, the Hmong did not have a real stake in the war. Before the Vietnam War, the CIA was called upon by the President to quietly prevent a communist takeover in Laos and they came up with a short term solution. This short term solution compromised the integrity of United States, arguably weakened its national security, caused mass casualties, and ultimately failed its objective. The CIA helped the Hmong tribes with opium transportation and cultivation, in exchange for the Hmong signing up to fight against the Pathet Lao.<sup>10</sup> This arrangement led to the devastation of the Hmong population and played an integral role in the destruction of their homelands.

The reason why the United States had a major interest in the kingdom of Laos is because of its geographical location. The U.S. government considered Laos one of four “roads” in which communism could spread from China in Southeast Asia.<sup>11</sup> Laos remaining anti-communist had a greater significance once the Vietnam War started. Laos joined the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in late 1954 so that, like South Vietnam, Laos would be protected from any communist aggression by Thailand and the

7 Nevard, Jacque. “Embattled Plaine des Jarres in Key to Laos.” *New York Times* 26 Apr. 1963: 1,5. This article is a description of how the Plain of Jars gets its name and a briefly describes some activity there.

8 America’s secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 291-292 ]

9 Ibid 289

10 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 289, 308

11 America’s secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg.289

United States. The U.S. and Laos made a diplomatic agreement in July of 1955 stipulating that the U.S. would fund a 25,000-person Royal Laotian Army.<sup>12</sup> President Eisenhower took these measures to show that he was serious about stopping the spread of Communism, which was a popular political rallying point. This consequently increased the importance of the region for both sides on the Cold War.

The political divisions in Laos stemmed from the Lao nationalist movement called the Lao Issara. The Lao Issara split three ways during the First Indochina War: the communist Pathet Lao, the neutralists, and the rightists. The Pathet Lao, led by Prince Souphanouvong, broke away from the Lao Issara in 1950. They allied themselves with the North Vietnamese and took the province of Sam Neua. As a leader of the neutralist wing, Prince Souvanna Phouma became prime minister in 1951 when the French were still in control of the country. When Laos gained independence there were no official land concessions made for the Pathet Lao.<sup>13</sup> It is understandable that neutralists would not want to divide their power, but in retrospect, the situation for the rightists and neutralists might have been more favorable if initial concessions had been made. After several months of talks, the Pathet Lao and Prime Minister Phouma formed a coalition government in November 1957 without consulting the U.S. government. This action caused the CIA to support the rightists for fear of communist influence in the Lao government. Under this agreement the Prince Souphanouvong became Phouma's finance minister and the Pathet Lao guerrilla forces were integrated into the Royal Laotian Army, both of which greatly worried the rightists and the CIA. The rightists took control of Parliament in 1958 because of the CIA funded conservative coalition and in 1960 Col. Phoumi Nosavan, a CIA ally, took power.<sup>14</sup> During the 1960s the CIA gave money to politicians who would follow the Agency's orders and eventually fifty-four out of fifty-seven seats in the National Assembly in Laos were filled by CIA-chosen leaders.<sup>15</sup> The CIA thus contributed to strengthening the political divisions that existed in Laos.

The CIA's actions supporting the rightists were not as covert as they would have liked. Captain Kong Le was angered by foreign intervention and led a neutralist coup in 1960 and managed to drive out Phoumi Nosavan from the administrative capital in

12 Ibid 285

13 Ibid 285-286

14 Ibid

15 Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* New York: Doubleday, 2008. pg. 292 This book describes the history of the CIA.

Vientiane. Phoumi Nosavan traveled to Savannakhet and allied himself with Hmong Leader Touby Lyfoung. Kong Le was aided by the Soviets and the North Vietnamese. The principle fighting took place over Vientiane and the Plain of Jars. The situation in Laos intensified and the country soon became a flashpoint for the Cold War. It escalated to the point where the Pentagon recommended President Kennedy send 10,000 marines to the Plain of Jars in 1961 and the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended using nuclear weapons.<sup>16</sup> Faced with this advice, President Kennedy and Premier Nikita Khrushchev started negotiating for a peaceful, neutral resolution.<sup>17</sup> Both Kennedy and Khrushchev managed to come to an agreement.

The Geneva Accords were signed in 1962 which exempted Laos from the Cold War, but this minor success was only temporary for President Kennedy. The Geneva Accords were soon ignored, though not officially repudiated, by the Communist forces and America could only overtly operate in Laos for humanitarian missions. At the same time, the counterinsurgency efforts in South Vietnam were not working and the United States could not contain the Communists. American interference in Laos was necessary in order to win the Vietnam War, but the Geneva Accords prohibited it. Kennedy's efforts at peace ended up being a strategic error which only left the option to use covert warfare; instead of a conventional large ground force, Kennedy was forced to use massive air power and Hmong guerrilla fighters with a small group of CIA overseeing the operation.<sup>18</sup> By 1965 there were tens of thousands of troops in Vietnam, in comparison, there were about thirty CIA agents in Laos.<sup>19</sup> When Congress finally found out about the Secret War in Laos in 1969, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee called it unconstitutional.<sup>20</sup> The White House kept the war in Laos a secret from the public, Congress, and the international community so it could maintain plausible deniability and

16 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 286

17 Baldwin, Hanson. "The Realities of Laos." *New York Times* 7 Mar. 1961: 1,9. Baldwin writes how there are only three options in Laos: escalate, negotiate, or pull out, and Kennedy will need to decide soon.

18 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 287

19 Weiner 291.

20 Halloran, Richard. "Fulbright Assails Operation in Laos." *New York Times* 29 Oct. 1969: 1-2.

not face harsh opposition.<sup>21</sup> Because of a diplomatic move away from escalation of conventional warfare in Laos, the United States cornered itself into a policy that resulted in Laos becoming a Communist state and the Hmong population suffering numerous casualties and becoming refugees.

The CIA saw the renewed guerrilla action in South Vietnam and Laos as the Communists trying to take over Southeast Asia and the subsequently sprang into action by finding a leader to mobilize the Hmong. By 1959 the CIA started working with Hmong guerillas in Laos for a regional intelligence-gathering program against the Communists.<sup>22</sup> The CIA picked Vang Pao to lead the Hmong because he was more willing to fight and let his troops die in battle. Touby Lyfoung, who had previously worked with the French as a Hmong leader, earned a reputation of being too cautious and willing to retreat too easily.<sup>23</sup> The CIA gave Vang Pao the resources he needed, including food, munitions, and air transportation, so that he could be a patron to the Hmong villages and maintain political control over them.<sup>24</sup> Because the Hmong lived in a decentralized society and there were only a few CIA operatives to keep control, the CIA would pick one leader from every tribe to become part of the hierarchy. These leaders were responsible for using CIA funds and resources to recruit and lead guerillas into battle. By putting military and economic control with the local leaders, the CIA made them autocrats under Agency control, thus solidifying the power structure.<sup>25</sup> The CIA was very effective at organizing the Hmong into a fighting force. The CIA put Vang Pao in control of the rice drops and opium shipments through the CIA-owned charter airline, Air America.<sup>26</sup> By 1965, Air America became the only form of air transport available in northern Laos, which made the Hmong economy more dependent than ever on the CIA. In the early 1960s Air America started to fly opium out of the Hmong mountain villages to Vang Pao's headquarters at Long Tieng which makes the CIA complicit in the opium and heroin trade.<sup>27</sup>

21 The White House kept the war in Laos a secret from the public, Congress, and the international community so it could maintain plausible deniability and not face harsh opposition.

22 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 305

23 Ibid 308

24 Ibid 209

25 Ibid 308

26 Ibid 290

27 Ibid 304

Vang Pao was initially chosen to aid rightist Nosavan Phoumi, but when his defenses failed in the Plain of Jars, Vang Pao became the CIA's main native resource.<sup>28</sup> With the CIA's help, Vang Pao was able to transform the Hmong from being separate isolated tribes into a united people.<sup>29</sup> The CIA had their leader, a native who could exercise control over the Hmong and was willing to sacrifice their lives for his gain.

During the 1960s, Vang Pao flew courtesy of Air America's helicopters and Helio-courier aircraft to mountain villages throughout Laos to recruit guerrilla fighters. He traveled from village to village offering food, guns, ammunition, and money in exchange for enlistment.<sup>30</sup> According to Vang Pao, if Hmong men did not want to fight against Pathet Lao, then they were Pathet Lao, and their village would have to be attacked. While a possibly effective way of recruiting, this was not the best way to maintain a high morale. At the same time, Green Berets, Thai police, and CIA operatives were training the growing Hmong Secret Army. Their strategy was to build up Hmong forces in the mountains surrounding the Plain of Jars so they could keep the Pathet Lao from moving from it. Crude landing strips were constructed so that each village could be connected with the CIA base at Padoung, just south of the Plain of Jars.<sup>31</sup> The CIA was very successful at organizing and recruiting the Hmong into a Secret Army.

The Secret Army did not waste time in attacking the neutralist and Pathet Lao soldiers in the Plain of Jars. . In retaliation, Kong Le shelled the CIA base in Padoung in May of 1961 and after two weeks Vang Pao was forced to move his base to Phao Khao. CIA operative Edgar Buell helped evacuate about 9,000 Hmong civilians from Padoung to Phao Khao. Many died on the march through the jungle.<sup>32</sup> While the men were fighting, their families back home needed food so Buell, who officially was a humanitarian relief worker for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), arranged for humanitarian missions to drop food to compensate for the loss of of man power back in the villages.<sup>33</sup>

28 Ibid 311-312

29 Ibid 291

30 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 290

31 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 312

32 Ibid 312-313

33 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. Pg. 293

The relief put the Hmong in a cycle of increased dependence on the CIA.

In June 1961, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev met to negotiate the end of the superpower conflict in Laos. They urged the factions to make a ceasefire agreement, and for fourteen months they searched for an internal settlement.<sup>34</sup> Kennedy told Phoumi to merge his right-wing government into a tripartite coalition, but in February 1962 Phoumi refused to do so and the U.S. cut off the \$3 million per month it had been supplying to his government. Phoumi had to look for another source of income and he decided to produce heroin. Laotian opium was already being used in local markets so he imported Burmese opium. This led to Laos becoming one of the biggest heroin producing centers in the world.<sup>35</sup>

During the ceasefire agreement, Nosavan Phoumi felt the strain of the lack of U.S. support and in March 1962 he claimed that, during a battle with the Pathet Lao in the northwestern Nam Tha province, Chinese forces had crossed the border.<sup>36</sup> Korea-like situation, prepared for battle. He issued deployment orders for 1,000 Marines at the Laos border and 4,000 more troops in Thailand. He had the Navy take up battle stations off the coast of Thailand and there were nuclear attack plans drawn up against China. "Crisis demonstrated the dangers when superpowers attached global significance to the volatile internal politics of a fragile nation."<sup>37</sup> This escalation is what led to the 1962 Geneva Accords, which supposedly ended military operations in the area. The Green Berets and the military advisers had to leave, but the CIA stayed in the area. The CIA stayed in Thailand and agents flew back and forth from Thailand into Laos every day.<sup>38</sup> Civilian workers, including Edgar Buell, could stay and operate in Laos, though frequently his humanitarian missions included opium drops.<sup>39</sup> The peace agreements were not as benign as would normally be expected.

34 Ibid 286

35 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 301

36 "Laos Sees Red Drive." *New York Times* 19 Mar. 1962: 7. Communist Chinese and North Vietnamese troops reportedly assaulted the provincial capital of Nam Tha in northwestern Laos.

37 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg.287

38 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 313

39 Salisbury, Harrison E. "War Signs Mark a Laos at 'Peace'" *New York Times* 13 June 1966: 1,2.

A CIA operative named Anthony Poshepny, better known as Tony Poe, became Vang Pao's chief adviser at his headquarters in Long Tieng, from where Tony Poe led the 1963-1964 offensive. Instead of attacking villages in the valleys, Tony Poe flew Hmong guerillas to mountain after mountain all the way into the center of the Sam Neua province, capturing the remote villages located at each stop. When the Pathet Lao were taken care of, an airstrip was built so that Edgar Buell could distribute supplies among the people. It was very successful in expanding Vang Pao's domain and making the conquered villages and Long Tieng more connected.<sup>40</sup> Long Tieng became a secret city of 20,000 people.<sup>41</sup> After the Pathet Lao captured the Plain of Jars in 1964 the U.S. greatly increased its bombing campaigns.<sup>42</sup>

President Johnson appointed William Sullivan as the ambassador to Vientiane in 1964 and as ambassador he created a command structure with the U.S. embassy at the center of the war. As the air campaigns became more expensive, the White House kept it a secret by shifting money around from acceptable projects with large budgets. The White divided the operations in Laos; Sullivan controlled the tactical bombing around the Plain of Jars and the U.S. Air Force was put in charge of bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail.<sup>43</sup> Sullivan was able to get permission from Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma for the covert bombings and Sullivan expanded the air war from a few clandestine bombings to one of the largest aerial bombardments in history. As the Vietnam War was escalating, one of the reasons why President Johnson ordered the clandestine bombing of Laos is to disrupt the communication lines between North and South Vietnam.<sup>44</sup> Using all of the 50,000 airmen located in bases in South Vietnam, Guam, and Thailand, the air operations in Laos cost an estimated \$2 billion a year. In 1964 the air campaign's goals were to strike enemy supply routes, troop concentrations and to aid Laotian soldiers.<sup>45</sup>

40 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg 316

41 Ibid 318

42 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg.291

43 Ibid 292

44 Ibid 290

45 Branfman, Fred. "Presidential War in Laos," in Nina S. Adams & Alfred W. McCoy, eds., *Laos: War and Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pg. 231 A history of the Secret War in Laos highlighting the fact that it was conducted for the most part without congressional oversight or knowledge.

This approach became impractical for two important reasons. First, the area is very mountainous and has an abundance of trees which made it harder for aircraft to find and shoot the target. Second, the Communist forces usually moved in small mobile groups at night so they would be even harder to spot. This led to the tactic of bombing towns and villages because they were clear targets and the bombing raids were covert missions anyway, so there would not be any public uproar. This signified the switch from tactical, which targeted bombing on a smaller location, to saturation bombing, which is “saturating” an entire area with bombs. Its objectives were to demoralize the civilian population, deprive the Pathet Lao of food, kill potential Pathet Lao fighters or sympathizers, eliminate their commerce and trade, and to deprive them of safe havens to regroup or store supplies.<sup>46</sup> These were the objectives of the U.S. Embassy’s side of the Secret War.

The other side of the Secret War was coordinated by the U.S. Air Force. Operation Steel Tiger, which started in 1965, had the objective to slow down enemy infiltration as much as possible along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos.<sup>47</sup> By 1966 communist trucks stopped attempting to move during daylight. The realistic goal of Operation Steel Tiger was never to stop movement along the Ho Chi Minh Trail completely, as that would have been an unreasonably ambitious goal to achieve; instead its goal was just to slow down traffic past the point of being effective.<sup>48</sup> Another mission, Operation Barrel Roll, had the objective of supporting Hmong guerillas in northern Laos by dropping bombs.<sup>49</sup> At first, Operation Barrel Roll had a lower priority out of the bombing campaigns in Southeast Asia; from 1965 to 1968 Operation Barrel Roll had an average of ten to twenty sorties, or missions, each day. The Tet Offensive in Vietnam in

46 Ibid 232

47 America’s secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 290

48 Correll, John T. “The Ho Chi Minh Trail.” Airforce-magazine.com. United States Air Force, Nov. 2005. Web. 3 Nov. 2009. A brief history of the different military operations along the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the War in Vietnam.

49 America’s secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 290

1968 raised the intensity.<sup>50</sup> When U.S. forces stopped bombing North Vietnam in 1968, more planes became available for bombing campaigns in Laos.<sup>51</sup> At the height of Operation Barrel Roll in 1969 it averaged 300 sorties a day.<sup>52</sup> The U.S. Air Force flew out of bases from Thailand to saturate the Plain of Jars with explosives, but even with their help, whether the Hmong gained or lost land to the Pathet Lao varied on the season.<sup>53</sup>

CIA's Deputy Chief in Saigon, Vietnam, William Colby came to Long Tieng for an inspection in October of 1965. At this time the Vietnam War was in full tilt and the key to defeating the North Vietnamese was in slowing them down drastically on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The Communists were transporting men and supplies through the Trail and the United States could not slow them down enough. Colby appointed Ted Shackley, who had never worked with Asians before, as the new station chief. Shackley wanted to strike the Ho Chi Minh trail hard and he increased the number of CIA men working in Laos from 30 to 250.<sup>54</sup> The CIA managed to raise the Hmong Secret Army to 30,000 guerilla fighters in the same year.<sup>55</sup> The main locations where the Hmong fought were the Plain of Jars and the Ho Chi Minh Trail.<sup>56</sup> If the Pathet Lao took control of Vientiane they could force themselves into power and out the American intervention which would have meant failure and shame for U.S. Shackley wanted to avoid this scenario at all costs.

By April 1966, there were twenty-nine road watch teams that reported enemy movements back to headquarters so that American bombers could destroy them. With the combination of Hmong guerillas and relying on air power, Shackley thought he had "revolutionized irregular warfare" because there were so many suspected Communists dead, an incredibly high number of Hmong had been recruited, and the Ho Chi Minh

50 Correll, John T. "Barrel Roll." Airforce-magazine.com. United States Air Force, Aug. 2006. Web. 3 Nov. 2009. A history and background of Operation Barrel Roll.

51 "Operations Increasing." *New York Times* 23 Sept. 1969: 9. Operations Barrel Roll and Steel Tiger are increasing sorties because of the end of the North Vietnamese bombing campaigns.

52 Correll, John T. "Barrel Roll." Airforce-magazine.com. United States Air Force, Aug. 2006. Web. 3 Nov. 2009.

53 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: *Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 290

54 Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* New York: Doubleday, 2008. pg 294-296 55 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg 304.

55 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg 304

Trail was torn up.<sup>57</sup> He thought he was winning the war, but the Communists kept coming.<sup>58</sup> “The road was never cut for more than a few days. The Vietnamese did an incredible job of repairing and rerouting to keep supplies flowing southward.”<sup>59</sup> American efforts could not slow down traffic on the Ho Chi Minh Trail enough.

The CIA wanted to use state-of-art technology to develop new fighting tactics against the Pathet Lao which came to be known as Operation Igloo White, but while in the laboratory the technology might have been successful, in the field it was not. The three components to Operation Igloo White were sensors to detect the enemy, aircraft to relay the signal, and the Infiltration Surveillance Center at Nakhon Phanom Air Base in Thailand. The network of 20,000 sensors was mostly dropped by planes every couple of weeks since the sensors were battery powered. The sensors could either hear, smell, or feel, enemies approach. But there were several false alarms.<sup>60</sup> The computers of Igloo White claimed to have destroyed 25,000 trucks from October 1970 to May 1971, but there was never any evidence found the next day.<sup>61</sup> This failure to terminate a costly and ineffective program may illustrate incompetence, but more likely stubbornness on the part of the CIA. Igloo White was impressive in theory and in presentation and the CIA was probably too dedicated to the idea of victory that it managed to convince itself that an elaborate program would always be successful, even when faced with contradictory evidence. Operation Igloo White was a sophisticated program with extensive resources committed to it, but it had too many weaknesses to be successful.

On January 12th, 1968, the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces regained control of the Sam Neua province and in the process captured Phou Pha Thi.

56 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 291-292

57 Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* New York: Doubleday, 2008 pg. 296

58 Ibid

59 Holm, Richard L. “Recollections of a Case Officer in Laos, 1962-1964.” *Studies in Intelligence* 47.1 (2007). Central Intelligence Agency. Central Intelligence Agency, 14 Apr. 2007. Web. 3 Nov. 2009. <<http://www.cia.gov>>.

60 Correll, John T. “Igloo White.” *Airforce-magazine.com*. United States Air Force, Nov. 2004. Web. 3 Nov. 2009. This article provides the in depth history and background of operation Igloo White.

61 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 291

On the mountain of Phou Pha Thi, the U.S. air force built a radar guidance center to provide accurate information for bombing operations in North Vietnam.<sup>62</sup> President Johnson called off a partial bombing campaign soon after the radar guidance center was destroyed. Vang Pao tried to take back the base at Phou Pha Thi in late 1968, but left after suffering many casualties in January 1969. There was a massive migration from the Sam Neua province led by Edgar Buell, wherein over 9,000 people were evacuated from the province by Air America. From 1968 to 1970 the Pathet Lao offensives drove Vang Pao back and tens of thousands of Hmong became refugees.<sup>63</sup> In several regions of Laos there were huge Hmong casualties and the surviving refugees could not all be flown out, so they had to endure forced marches with 10-30% dying along the way.<sup>64</sup> The Hmong people suffered as a result of Vang Pao's military failings through his reckless ways.

The CIA and Vang Pao's strategy continued to deteriorate. In 1964, the Pathet Lao and the neutralists took the Plain of Jars in three days and after six years of saturation bombing and the "revolutionized irregular warfare" to keep them out of the area, communist forces took the Plain of Jars in five days in February, 1970.<sup>65</sup> The rapid reclamation of the Plain of Jars by the Communists calls into question the effectiveness of the American strategy. As a result of the Communist takeover of the Plain of Jars in February, about 17,000 civilians were evacuated from the region.<sup>66</sup> Vang Pao was forced to abandon several outposts because of the Pathet Lao offensives.<sup>67</sup> The Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese attacked Long Tieng in 1971, and the Hmong guerilla dependents were evacuated to Ban Son, located in between the then Communist-held Long Tieng and administrative capital, Vientiane.

62 Woodcock, Keith. "An Air Combat First." *Studies in Intelligence* 52.2 (2008). Central Intelligence Agency. Central Intelligence Agency, 20 June 2008. Web. 3 Nov. 2009. <<http://www.cia.gov>>. This article gives a brief summary of the attack on Phou Pha Thi and a description of what it was used for.

63 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg 319

64 Ibid

65 Branfman, Fred. "Presidential War in Laos," in Nina S. Adams & Alfred W. McCoy, eds., *Laos: War and Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pg. 242

66 Kamm, Henry. "Laos Will Evacuate Civilians From Plaines des Jarres." *New York Times* 5 Feb. 1970: 4. Due to approaching Communist forces, Laos is evacuating an estimated number of 17,000 from the Plain of Jars.

67 "Fighting is Reported." *New York Times* 24 Jan. 1970. The Pathet Lao forces are gaining ground and are expected to attack the Plain of Jars.

By the middle of the year USAID estimated that 150,000 refugees, mostly Hmong, had relocated to the Ban Son area. The refugees were confined in a smaller area with very hot temperatures. Malaria and other diseases were spreading, and the refugees were completely dependent on the rice drops made from USAID.<sup>68</sup> Some refugees fled because it was safer in the mountains, but the rice was only dropped by USAID in the middle of the Ban Son area where it was exposed, forcing the Hmong to choose between food and physical safety.<sup>69</sup> Ban Son was a buffer zone and USAID refused to move the refugees because the CIA thought that the refugees would fight more effectively if their families were threatened.<sup>70</sup> Edgar Buell said that there was corruption throughout the workers at USAID and that most of the organization's money went to the employees or high ranking officials in the area and not to the civilians in need. He also claimed that USAID employees were not concerned at all with the well being of the Hmong.<sup>71</sup> Some workers were only concerned about the mission and themselves; working for an organization called USAID was a complete façade for them. By this point, most Hmong resented Vang Pao for his lack of concern for his soldier's lives, but since USAID controlled where the rice was dropped, they have no other option to stay and fight.<sup>72</sup>

The Battle for Skyline Ridge, which connected the Vang Pao's base camp at Long Tieng to a major refugee camp at Sam Thong, which took place from December 1971 to May 1972, was initially heralded as a CIA victory, but its long term success is questionable. The communist forces and the Hmong fought back and forth over the ridge and it was actually friendly fire which destroyed most of the CIA base in Long Tieng in February 1972.<sup>73</sup>

68 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 320

69 "Laotian Center Attacked." *New York Times* 7 Mar. 1971: 14. This article describes the attack of the refugee camp in Ban Son and how some refugees flee.

70 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 320

71 "An Un-Ugly American Helps Tribesman." *New York Times* 11 Oct. 1972: 12. The article is a profile of Edgar Buell's humanitarian efforts in Laos.

72 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 321

73 Leary, William M. "The CIA and the 'Secret War' in Laos: The Battle for Skyline Ridge, 1971-1972." *Journal of Military History* 59 No. 3 (July 1995)

Thai forces were brought in because the Hmong were weary from a decade of fighting.<sup>74</sup> The Hmong were outnumbered and too old or too young for military service. Edgar Buell reported in 1968 that most Hmong recruits were ten to sixteen years old or over forty-five years old, because anyone older than seventeen and younger than forty-four was either already fighting or dead.<sup>75</sup> Eventually they fought to a standstill and deeming the battle not worth the time or resources North Vietnamese backed off and went to South Vietnam.<sup>76</sup> It was considered a success that contributed to the ceasefire agreement and a coalition government.<sup>77</sup> In a matter of months the coalition government fell to the Pathet Lao.<sup>78</sup>

A covert war is inherently removed from the public consciousness so there is no sense of moral responsibility for the actions that the United States makes. Constructively, it never happened. There is no sense of restraint either, because it is not happening anyway, so it can brutally not be happening. The understanding that the CIA had with the Hmong people was not a fair give-and-take relationship; when the Hmong first entered the relationship it was not as bad as the obvious exploitation it eventually became. The Hmong had to fight. They became dependent on USAID for food, so they had to cooperate with their partner, the CIA.<sup>79</sup> If the Hmong elected not to fight they were threatened with losing their village or death.<sup>80</sup> As a result of the Secret War in Laos tens of thousands of Hmong became refugees.<sup>81</sup> About 30,000 fled to Thailand, but they were starving and the Nam Province Governor said, “if they have no rice and die,

74 Butterfield, Fox. “Siege Reported Broken.” *New York Times* 16 Jan. 1972: 2. This article documents the ongoing fighting for Skyline ridge that is above the Long Tieng base.

75 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 321

76 Leary, William M. “The CIA and the ‘Secret War’ in Laos: The Battle for Skyline Ridge, 1971-1972.” *Journal of Military History* 59 No. 3 (July 1995)

77 Browne, Malcolm W. “Pact to End War in Laos, Including Political Plan, Is Signed by 2 Sides.” *New York Times* 21 Feb. 1973: 1. This article describes the set up of an interim coalition government.

78 Kamm, Henry. “End of Laos War Has Brought No Peace to Thousands in Meo Clans.” *New York Times* 13 July 1975: 2. This article describes how the Hmong are trapped in Laos and they face the threat of the Pathet Lao

79 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 320

80 Ibid 312

81 Kamm, Henry. “Laos Will Evacuate Civilians From Plaines des Jarres.” *New York Times* 5 Feb. 1970:4.

that is their problem.”<sup>82</sup> The United States took a similar position. Edgar Buell called the understanding between the Hmong tribes and the CIA a “marriage of convenience” and that “there was no deal” between the two groups, “The [Hmong] wanted to fight and needed arms, we wanted to stop the Communists.”<sup>83</sup> It was Buell’s official position that America did not have any obligation to these people. That cold statement may not correctly illustrate how he truly felt, but when operations are covert and operatives deny reality, then the United States can turn their back on those they once depended on.

As a result of this conflict the Communists took over the government and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic is still a communist state. When the United States first intervened with Lao’s elections in the late 1950s there was a coalition government.<sup>84</sup> The CIA’s “revolutionized warfare” techniques achieved the short term goals of not having many American lives lost and preventing the Pathet Lao from taking any major cities.<sup>85</sup> But the air war might have been harmful overall to the U.S. because it increased recruitment for the enemy. Massive bombing gave villagers the choice to die hiding from a bomb or to die fighting against the people who drop the bombs. Many villagers understandably chose the latter. The air war might have helped the Pathet Lao also because American involvement meant that the North Vietnamese had a greater stake in the war in Laos.<sup>86</sup> Escalation invites further escalation. In the very short term, the CIA managed to fight the Communists to a standstill and form a coalition government, ultimately considering it a success despite the fact that there was a coalition government in place before the agency became so deeply involved in Laos. Shortly after this success, the Communists took over and held on to power tightly instead of sharing it in a coalition government.

82 Franjola, Matt. “Meo Tribesman From Laos Facing Death in Thailand.” *New York Times* 15 Aug. 1975: 3. This article describes how 30,000 refugees fled from Laos to Thailand and starvation is a problem.

83 Butterfield, Fox. “Battered Laotian Tribe Fear U.S. Will Abandon It.” *New York Times* 11 Oct. 1972: 89. This article outlines the devastation that the Hmong have faced and that they may suffer more without U.S. help.

84 America’s secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg.285-286

85 Branfman, Fred. “Presidential War in Laos,” in Nina S. Adams & Alfred W. McCoy, eds., *Laos: War and Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pg. 242

86 Ibid 241

The War on Drugs was sacrificed for the Cold War. The CIA's aid of opium transportation and cultivation meant that heroin went to the American troops in Vietnam and created addicts in America when they returned.<sup>87</sup> This is an example of how the CIA's approach was reactive. The Agency can be very effective at creating short term solutions; they were able to fight the Secret War without conventional ground troops. The operations in Laos showed how the CIA does not plan for the long term overall stability of regions around the world. This problem is inherent in the Central Intelligence Agency; their task is to solve the problems presented to them, not extensively to plan foreign policy. The CIA is the option for the Executive Branch when there are no other options, so the Agency can use any means necessary, whether it means cultivating a country's economy around narcotics, torture, or putting innocent people's lives at risk. This leads to another consequence; the moral standing of the United States being diminished. The U.S. could probably be found guilty of war crimes under the 1949 Geneva Convention for not protecting non-combatants.<sup>88</sup> If boundaries are not set for the CIA, then the United States will continue to subvert itself.

Heavy airpower with a minimal ground force was also considered a revolutionary way of fighting.<sup>89</sup> Creating the highest mortality rate in modern warfare for a people who were our allies should not be considered a success that should be put into practice again. This has been used again however because it is a method of fighting a war without risking too many American lives.<sup>90</sup> Since the Secret War in Laos was kept that way, secret, there was no chance for public opposition to it. So this "revolutionary" strategy was used as a model for Cambodia in 1969.<sup>91</sup> These tactics have become standard. Ronald Reagan considered the War in Laos a success and used veterans from it to train guerillas in Nicaragua. President Clinton used a massive air power campaign without a substantial ground force in Iraq, Kosovo, and Bosnia.<sup>92</sup>

87 McCoy, Alfred W. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003. Pg. 291

88 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 284

89 Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* New York: Doubleday, 2008 pg. 296

90 America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buz-zanco (eds.), *A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 284

91 Ibid 296

92 Ibid 311

Within two weeks of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, the United States had already contacted the Northern Alliance, an anti-Taliban military-political organization, to fight on the ground in Afghanistan while the United States would run an air campaign.<sup>93</sup> This strategy might have saved American lives, but it does not save lives, instead, it exposes civilians to being homeless, injured, or killed. Creating animosity towards the United States on such a scale could at best cultivate anti-American sentiment around the world and at worst be the rationale behind a terrorist attack. Because it saves American lives, this strategy makes the commander-in-chief or Congress more flexible; it gives them more power because the general public can remove themselves from the idea of bombs going off in other countries. The United States lost the war in Laos in the short term, but in the long term it gained a new, though ineffective, tool to wage war and kill people without Americans getting upset.

90        America's secret war in Laos, 1955-75, Alfred McCoy. *IN: Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (eds.), A companion to the Vietnam War*, (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2002). McCoy, Alfred W. Pg. 284

91        Ibid 296

92        Ibid 311

93        Rhode, David. "Afghan Rebels Courtied by U.S. and Russia to Defy Taliban; Hoping to bolster a weak opposition that could step in if the U.S. strikes. THE OPPOSITION Long-Ignored Afghan Rebels Courtied by U.S. and Russia Ex-Rebel to Join Fray." *New York Times* 25 Sept. 2001. B1. This article documents the United States contacting the Northern Alliance to fight on the side of the United States against the Taliban in the upcoming War in Afghanistan while the United States will launch an air bombing campaign.

## The Spectacle of Rebellion: British Minor Theatres and the Pre-Revolution in France

Amanda Detry

In 1789, Britain's eyes were fixed on France's turbulent political arena. In just a few decades, France's once-formidable divine-right monarchy had been reduced to a state of relative powerlessness by frequent warfare, burgeoning social unrest, and a pressing financial crisis from the nation's incessant militarism and the court's lavish expenditures. The country's somewhat surreal transformation from superpower to victim<sup>1</sup> under Louis XV and his successor Louis XVI captivated Britain, France's longtime enemy. As France's sociopolitical scene intensified, noteworthy events quickly found their way onto London stages with a flourish of historicity, drama, and hyperbole. These plays, consequently, provide a revealing lens for examining Britain's response to and interpretation of the initial events of the French Revolution. In particular, John Dent's *The Triumph of Liberty*, performed in 1790, and *The Royal Fugitives*, staged in 1791, offer intriguing samples of British sentiment surrounding the Storming of the Bastille and Louis XVI's flight to Varennes. Despite their decidedly French subject matter, the plays' intense professions of British nationalism and their inclusion of Englishmen in leading roles suggest that Britain celebrated the rise of liberty and democracy in France, but refused to honor the role of French citizens in promoting these virtues. Instead, the plays seem to interpret French radicalism as the product of an undercurrent of democratic sentiment initiated by Britain, thereby allowing Britain to take credit for such favorable circumstances as the fall of the Bastille and Louis XVI's recapture.

Before examining the two plays, it is useful to briefly consider how British theatrical legislation, rather than French politics, may have impacted the works' content. After all, both pieces were staged in minor or non-patented theatre houses, where performances were legally restricted to "illegitimate" theatrical forms in order to encourage patronage of the patented theatres. Such forms prohibited dramatic prose and, in its stead, prompted a rhyming, burlesque style, often comically riddled with brief songs. This format manifests itself in both *The Triumph of Liberty* and *The Royal Fugitives*;<sup>2</sup>

1 Philip Anthony Brown, *The French Revolution in English History* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1965), 28-29.

2 Phyllis T. Dircks, *The Eighteenth-Century English Burletta* (Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 1999), 14-17.

hence, based on legislation alone, it appears as though censorship and patent restricts granted limited agency to the playwrights and largely defined the style and content of their works. Researchers have noted, however, that playwrights grew more creative over time as they wrote for minor theatres. Not only did playwrights sneak prose rhetoric into their performances, but they circumvented theatrical legislation by directing their actors to hold signs and designing elaborate scenery and special effects to convey particular messages.<sup>3</sup> Because of these techniques, considerable expressive and thematic variation existed among minor house performances, allowing the plays to be examined as reliable indicators of public opinion. The popularity of these plays suggests that artisans, the upper-reaches of the working class, and the wealthier public – the typical patrons of minor theatres<sup>4</sup> – may have aligned themselves with the performances’ political rhetoric.

One of the era’s most well-received political plays was John Dent’s *The Triumph of Liberty, or The Destruction of the Bastille*. The play staged approximately ninety showings and seemed to be “laid aside” rather unwillingly.<sup>5</sup> According to one vague newspaper account, it was abandoned only “at the particular request of several foreigners of distinction,” suggesting the reluctance of the Royal Circus theatre to halt the performance’s run.<sup>6</sup> Such popularity affirms British interest in and engagement with the events unfolding in France; thus, the play’s profound patriotic rhetoric can serve as a promising indicator of public sentiment, particularly that of minor theatre audiences. The play’s very title, *The Triumph of Liberty*, coupled with the opening lines, “May gracious Heav’n aid great Freedom’s cause, / And make us happy in our country’s laws” not only sets a democratic tone for the play, but implies that Dent’s audience would have understood such patriotic fervor instantly, without introduction or justification.<sup>7</sup>

3 Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25-28.

4 Marc Brodie, “Free trade and cheap theatre: sources of politics for the nineteenth-century London poor,” *Social History* 28, no. 3 (October 2003): 349. [http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/681977\\_731567687\\_714042817.pdf](http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/681977_731567687_714042817.pdf) (accessed March 21, 2010).

5 “Royal Circus,” *World* (1787), April 23, 1790, under “Classified ads,” <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

6 “Royal Circus,” *World* (1787), July 3, 1790, under “Classified ads,” <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).<sup>7</sup> John Dent, *The Bastille: a musical entertainment of one act*, (London, 1790), 1. <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

7 John Dent, *The Bastille: a musical entertainment of one act*, (London, 1790), 1. <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

This sense of preliminary understanding can be explained by Britain's role in the Enlightenment, the rhetoric of which resonates strongly throughout the play and identifies the Bastille's fall not as a distinctly French movement, but as a consequence of the decades-old spirit of British Enlightenment in action.

"Reason" – a key element of Enlightenment discourse – is mentioned three times in *The Triumph of Liberty* as a principal characteristic of an ideal nation, implying an association between French political sentiment and the British Enlightenment. "The patriotism of France is no longer prejudice, it is now founded in reason, it is now fixed on truth", Dent's protagonist, Henry, asserts in his dramatic final speech<sup>8</sup> — a translation of the actual words of Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French revolutionary leader, to his troops.<sup>9</sup> Reason is also called upon to "rule each part" of France and to "spread around the Gallic [French] name", as though Enlightenment principles, not citizens, are the nation's lifeblood.<sup>10</sup> In Henry's oration, Enlightenment reason asserts itself as an independent force, rising up in France to overthrow a symbol of despotism – the Bastille – while promising reform to the rest of Europe. The fact that Henry's words are based on the actual words of a French revolutionary only adds support to the British perspective that the French did not storm the Bastille per se, but that the prison fell to men infused with Enlightenment fervor. In all likelihood, the play's audience would not have heard Saint-Méry's speech prior to seeing *The Triumph of Liberty*. The play, therefore, delivers authentic history to its audience, yet places French rhetoric in an Englishman's mouth. In this manner, Britain was able to downplay French citizens' roles in revolutionary activity and assert itself as the true leader of the attack on the Bastille due to its self-proclaimed leadership in the advancement of Enlightenment ideals.

Britain's specific claim to the Enlightenment springs from Englishmen like Horace Walpole, who according to historian Philip Anthony Brown, viewed the Bastille incident as something close to a century-late imitation of Britain's own Glorious Revolution, which was thought to be a precursor to the European Enlightenment.<sup>11</sup> In the words of John Locke, the Revolution of 1688 saw "the people of England, [with] love of their just and natural rights, [and] their resolution to preserve them, [save] the nation when it was on the very

8 Ibid., 21.

9 Jeffrey N. Cox, "The French Revolution in the English Theater," in *History & Myth: Essays on English Romantic Literature*, ed. Stephen C. Behrendt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 35.

10 Dent, 23.

11 Brown, 37.

brink of slavery and ruin.”<sup>12</sup> Based on this Enlightenment evocation of “just and natural rights,” Britain could very well perceive itself as a forerunner of the Enlightenment and, consequently, the nation responsible for France’s victory. Moreover, William Pitt himself identified France’s political fervor as “an approximation ... to those sentiments which are the characteristic features of every British subject,” thus affirming the revolution’s roots in English history.<sup>13</sup>

The title of Dent’s play also lends support to Britain’s interpretation of the revolution as an extension of English values. The title appearing on the printed version of the work is historic rather than celebratory: *The Bastille*. For marketing purposes, however, newspapers removed titular references to France, naming the play *The Triumph of Liberty* in an attempt to attract theatre-goers. This switch suggests that the play had a conscious agenda of celebrating a transcendent concept of Liberty rather than a specifically French political and social movement.

With respect to the performance itself, this trend is most evident in the prominence of British citizens in the play. Both Matilda (Henry’s love interest) and her father identify England as the land of their birth, and both characters play a critical role in Henry’s decision to lead the attack on the Bastille. Once Matilda informs Henry of the “ten thousand volunteers ... resolv’d to raze the Bastille to the ground.”<sup>14</sup> Henry decides to join them and rescue Matilda’s father, imprisoned in the prison’s dungeons. The Englishman’s incarceration in the Bastille can be read as an affirmation of British supremacy: Henry must fight French despotism, embodied by the Bastille, which endangers Britain’s efforts to spread purity and Enlightenment across Europe. Britain, therefore, becomes an embodiment of virtue in the play, a damsel-in-distress threatened by the corrupt morals of France. Henry’s cry upon seeing the Bastille’s ruins promotes this theme as he champions the glory of Britain in light of French tyranny:

O! Happy England, be thy courts rever’d,  
Where no man’s punish’d till he first is heard:  
Where *Magna Charta* checks despotic fury,

12 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (London, 1772), 1. <http://books.google.com/books/> (accessed March 22, 2010).

13 Brown, 38.

14 Dent, 3.

And every crime's determin'd by a jury.  
 Such were the laws which God first taught to men,  
 And such the laws which France shall have again.

...

Down let us trample on these Hell-born laws,  
 And rise like England in great Freedom's cause.<sup>15</sup>

This soliloquy declares that French despotism threatens liberty across Europe and that Britain's example ought to lead France's transformation; thus, it seems to offer an adequate explanation for Britain's celebration of the Bastille's fall, despite the nation's longtime rivalry with France. The play's final scene, however, offers the most compelling evidence for Britain's interpretation of the Bastille incident as France's first baby steps towards English glory.

The scene begins with Henry's rallying speech to French citizens, which adopts a prose structure strikingly uncharacteristic of – and illegal in – minor theatres. Consequently, it begs to be taken seriously: “Electors of Paris, Citizens, Frenchmen! The glorious event is now arrived, when France quits her chains, emerges from her darkness, and is warmed to animation, by the bright beams of the *Sun of Liberty*.”<sup>16</sup> This glorification of France, though referential to the spirit of the event, seems out-of-place in a British play, and it is hard to imagine its rallying quality affecting English citizens. However, as the speech unfolds, it becomes evident that its nationalistic language prepares British theatergoers for a lavish rhetorical and visual display of English, rather than French, patriotic frenzy, beginning with a rapid – indeed, unexpected – dissolution of French loyalty into British glory at the conclusion of Henry's speech: “We [the French] shall hence-forth share the palm of glory, and the blessings of liberty with the immortal sons of freedom—Englishmen!”<sup>17</sup> This remarkable rhetorical shift precedes the descent of Britannia, the female personification of Britain, onto the stage, clutching the “transparent portraits of the King and Queen of Britain.” Her speech, moreover, effectively overshadows Henry's prose celebration of France:

Amidst the thousand joys that inward glow,  
 Your freedom to yourselves and me you owe.  
 From Britannia you caught the Patriot flame,

15 Ibid., 16.

16 Ibid., 20.

17 Ibid., 22.

On Britain's plan then build your future fame.  
 Let liberty and reason rule each part,  
 And form the Magna Charta of the heart.  
 Nor had your city e'er with blood been stain'd,  
 Had virtues like our George and Charlotte's reign'd.<sup>18</sup>

The scene culminates with French citizens hailing Britannia, to whom they “owe [their] liberty,” asking her to “ever hold control, / And bless us from pole to pole.”<sup>19</sup> This hyperbolic rhetorical and visual display clearly emphasizes Britain's superiority. Although it has been explained as an overeager cover for the anti-monarchical, and therefore seditious, mindset the play's action may have evoked in the public conscience, the passage could also be read without reference to the monarchy as a heartfelt affirmation of Britain as a global superpower.<sup>20</sup> In either case, the Bastille seems almost forgotten in light of the newfound nationalistic fervor, indicating that Britain's fascination with the Bastille has little to do with the prison itself, or even with France. Rather, the revolutionary spectacle is rooted in a spirit of liberty and Enlightenment thought to be uniquely promoted and cultivated by the British.

In *The Triumph of Liberty*, the Bastille becomes a metaphor for despotism and the halt of democracy, and the play's language suggests that its fall did not prove the valor of the French people, but represented the dissolution of tyranny and the rise of liberty and honest, fervent patriotism throughout Europe. These values, in turn, were claimed by Britain, who saw itself as an embodiment of Enlightenment ideals and a worthy role-model for still-developing nations, including France. Thus, British citizens could celebrate the Bastille as their as their victory: a spreading of the Enlightenment values the English had embodied and perhaps initiated in the Glorious Revolution.

The same trends of British nationalism, leadership, and Enlightenment dissemination continue, though to a lesser degree, in *The Royal Fugitives*, a somewhat less-popular, yet still well-received performance. The anonymous play, based on Louis XVI's flight to Varennes, differs strikingly from the grandeur of *The Triumph of Liberty* by adhering firmly to the whimsical, and highly exaggerated, burletta format. Such

18 Ibid., 22-23

19 Ibid., 24.

20 George Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage, 1789-1805* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 45

orthodoxy provides an intriguingly different, albeit increasingly complex view of British attitudes towards France in the beginnings of the Revolution.

Newspaper advertisements for *The Royal Fugitives* emphasize the play's historicity, as though an honest reenactment of the event was itself sufficient to draw British theatergoers. Newspapers published a list of thirteen topics related to the king's flight that patrons could expect to witness in the play, ranging from "Preparations for the Escape" to minute details regarding "The Passport demanded by the Governor."<sup>21</sup> These details illustrate British fascination with the wholly unexpected flight of the royal family, yet the play is far more intricate than a simple word-for-word translation of "facts" from British newspaper reports into the rhymed recitative of burletta. Marked by ceaseless ridicule of Louis XVI's actions, a giddy English narrator, and an arguably valiant portrayal of French citizens and the National Assembly, the performance offers a complex view of late eighteenth-century France which ultimately asserts Britain's political and moral supremacy while casting doubt on France's competency as a nation.

Like *The Triumph of Liberty*, *The Royal Fugitives* begins with an English citizen taking the stage, this time as a narrator-like figure who witnesses the spectacle of the king's flight in his travels to France. He opens the play with his reasons for visiting the country, arranging them to the tune of a popular tavern song for comic effect:

I'm Master Smart, an Englishman,  
Who teach the folks to dance;  
To learn what fashions here I can,  
Am I come o'er to France:  
For now to caper all begin,  
As prov'd here ev'ry day;  
The difference is, we figure in  
While others *hop away*.<sup>22</sup>

Although seemingly irrelevant to the king's flight, this song in fact forms the framework for the play. "We *figure in*" refers to the success and effectiveness of the British monarchy compared to that of France under Louis XVI, who "hop[ped] away" or fled the country. This language manifests itself even more explicitly later in the play:

21 "France in an Uproar," World (1787), July 18, 1791, under "Classified ads" <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

22 *The Royal Fugitives*, or *France in an Uproar*, Third ed. (London, 1791), 3. <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).2

“The royal folks who jig’d away you know, / Are now obliged to figure in.”<sup>23</sup> Smart’s direct response to the news of the monarch’s escape also extends the comparison: “Poo, [the king’s flight,] ‘tis a *Country dance*.—In Summer weather, / Great folks dance to the country all together.”<sup>24</sup> The reduction of the king’s flight to a dance step, coupled with its original description in the context of a drinking song, grossly trivializes the event, as though a dumbfounded Britain cannot fathom such irresponsible royal behavior—especially in light of their own, functional monarchy. Indeed, the play’s characterization of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette is downright childish and strips any hint of monarchical dignity from their persons:

*King.* Now while they change our Horses—let us, pray,  
Have some refreshments.

*Queen.* But this delay  
May baffle all our hopes—

*King.* Cost what it will!  
I’ll stop four hours at least—

*Queen.* Oh stubborn still—  
Had it not been for you—five days ago  
We’d have eloped—but you were faint and slow.<sup>25</sup>

This less-than-gracious bickering of the king and queen unabashedly indicates Britain’s disapproval of the monarchs; however, it cannot be automatically extended to a full-fledged criticism of France as a nation due to the play’s slightly more ambiguous depiction of the National Assembly. Hence, this text alone cannot support the notion that Britain laid claim to the roots of the French Revolution and marked itself as morally superior to France, as Dent’s *Triumph of Liberty* suggests.

In light of Louis XVI’s unsympathetic portrayal, the portraits of the National Assembly and the people of France are fairly positive. Monsieur Drouet, a key historical player in the recapture of Louis XVI, speaks for the French people as he declares, “We’re

23 Ibid., 17.

24 Ibid., 5.

25 Ibid., 10.

friends to liberty as you shall see, / And are resolv'd *to die or to live free*.”<sup>26</sup> One scene later, the Assembly supports this fervent patriotism by thanking “those brave men, who by the aid of heaven, / The Royal Fugitives have stop'd.” Furthermore, the performance ends with a rallying song in the Assembly, calling on “Parisians [to] rejoice, / With unanimous voice” at the end of “terror” in the country.<sup>27</sup> The National Assembly’s democratic voice, however, is complicated by Smart’s one-line melodic commentary, occurring immediately prior to the aforementioned incident. Parodying a comic opera tune, Smart sings, “Then let’s with the Assembly unite, &c. / For I hear their new steps will delight, &c. / But if, do you see, there’s a rout, &c. / Why, *as we danc’d in, we’ll dance out*. &c.”<sup>28</sup> His lyrics seem to question the stability of the Assembly, as though Britain, having watched French politics undergo sensational transformation, would be unsurprised by the institution’s failure.

Not only are the performance’s musical numbers explicitly critical of the French regime, but they serve a more subtle satirical purpose by parodying period songs, none of which (with one exception) are appropriate to the play’s subject matter. The song prior to the king’s capture, for example, already humorous due to its childlike treatment of a climactic situation, becomes far more inappropriate when examined against its original lyrics. As a mob gathers around the king’s carriage, Dupont, a defender of the king, reacts to the revolutionary crowd with a plebian ditty: “They’re here, sir,--they’re here, sir, / All full of grief and fear, sir, / Come let us see / What it can be, / They’re here, sir—here!”<sup>29</sup> However, once this song is juxtaposed with its original version – a version which the audience would have known – all credibility is stripped from Dupont and his beloved monarch: “’Twas you sir, ’twas you sir, / I tell you nothing new, sir, / ’Twas you that kiss’d the pretty girl, / ’Twas you, sir, you.”<sup>30</sup> In light of this seemingly inappropriate association between dedication to the monarchy and the playful kissing of a young woman, it appears the playwright must have favored the Assembly over the monarch and his supporters. Furthermore, the only “appropriate” song in the performance – a call-to-arms tune that is slightly adapted to better describe the peoples’ pursuit of the king – operates in favor of the National Assembly

26 Ibid., 16.

27 Ibid., 19.

28 Ibid., 18.

29 Ibid., 9.

30 Lord Mornington, “’Twas You, Sir,” in *Grigg’s Southern and Western Songster: Being a Choice Collection of the Most Fashionable Songs Many of Which are Original* (Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliot, 1836), 180. <http://books.google.com/books/> (accessed March 21, 2010).

by linking the revolutionaries' cause with a traditional militaristic melody.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the playwright and his audience appear to be celebrating the Assembly's democratic principles, yet simultaneously questioning the institution's legitimacy and, in turn, France's competency as a nation.

From this analysis, it appears that *The Royal Fugitives* and *The Triumph of Liberty* have similar agendas: namely, that both plays maintain Britain's moral superiority to France. The Royal Fugitives' unflattering portrayal of Louis XVI can be likened to The Triumph of Liberty's lavish finale in that both bring glory to the British monarchy. Moreover, both performances explicitly praise England's king and queen. In *The Royal Fugitives*, a minor character compares England's monarchs to their runaway French counterparts, thereby asserting the British crown's honorable character: "Long life say I, to our King and Queen / And family! – they're always to be seen."<sup>32</sup> In similar fashion, Henry's concluding speech in Dent's play speaks of Britain's "virtue" as the "flame" France must catch.<sup>33</sup> In each case, the events of the French Revolution are used to champion British values as supreme and celebrate the appearance of these values on French soil.

While the plays are similar in many respects, *The Royal Fugitives*' ambiguous portrayal of the National Assembly lends itself to a more complicated picture of Britain's perception of France. Because the Assembly is responsible for halting the activities of the grossly negligent French monarch, it admits applause: a final, patriotic hymn rings through the Assembly at the play's conclusion, championing liberty and valor, peace and tranquility.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the performance's overall mocking tone – and, more specifically, Smart's one-line stab at the Assembly – does not allow the French institution to escape ridicule. The fact that an Englishman delivers the only suggestive line against the Assembly is especially telling, as Smart's dialogue seems to scorn the institution simply because it is French. Based on Britain's longstanding militaristic rivalry with France, it only seems appropriate for the British to favor the democratic qualities arising in France, yet condemn French institutions themselves.

This highly political reading of the play finds additional support when read against newspaper accounts of the king's flight. Because *The Royal Fugitives* markets itself as historically accurate and contains an impressive scope of details found in the

31 *The Royal Fugitives*, 15.

32 *Ibid.*, 6.

33 *Ibid.*, 23.

34 *Ibid.*, 19.

the press, it is important to note significant differences between newspaper accounts of the spectacle and its reenactment on stage. According to historian Ann Dean, newspapers like the *London Chronicle* were highly conscious of England's active public sphere; as a result, stories often assumed a gossipy tone by publishing information obtained from both the British court and circles of political conversation and conjecture.<sup>35</sup> In light of the newspapers' encouragement of and contribution to political discussion, the burlettas can be seen as direct and calculated responses to late eighteenth-century periodicals. This, in turn, lends credence to the idea that playwrights and their audiences were conscious that their writings and patronage endorsed a particular form of political rhetoric. In this light, it follows that the plays' propagation of Britannic nationalism was not incidental, but a conscious political act.

*The Royal Fugitives*' unapologetic ridicule of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, for example, departs strikingly from the *London Chronicle*'s favorable interpretation of the monarchs. The newspaper account reads, "In the history of events and causes, there never has happened . . . so wonderful and well planned an escape, as the silent and unperceived departure of their Christian majesties and their family, from those vigilant vigilant guards placed around them."<sup>36</sup> Such language portrays the king and queen as spectacular, heroic figures escaping the "threat" of the National Assembly—not as bickering, incompetent runaways. Similarly, *Lloyd's Evening Post* remarked that:

The King, Queen, and Dauphin of France, who had had the good Fortune to escape from the Castle of the Tuileries on Tuesday last, and to reach *St. Menouil in Champagne* without being discovered, were suspected however by the Post-Master there, who furnished them with horses to proceed farther on their journey; but the instant after their departure, the recollection of the King's figure, and an ill-timed scruple of conscience, struck his restless imagination.<sup>37</sup>

Once again, this excerpt paints a highly favorable image of the king that is grossly contradicted in *The Royal Fugitives*. The play's inconsistency with the press, however,

35 Ann C. Dean, "Court Culture and Political News in London's Eighteenth-Century Newspapers," *ELH* 73, no. 3 (Fall 2006). <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/elh/summary/v073/73.3dean.html> (accessed March 22, 2010).

36 "Postscript," *London Chronicle*, June 25, 1791. <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

37 "Retaking of the Royal Family of France," *Lloyd's Evening Post*, June 24, 1791, under "News." <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/> (accessed November 28, 2009).

illustrates the consciousness with which it was produced. Though *The Royal Fugitives* asserts itself as historically accurate, it does not hesitate to adopt a radically different tone in its presentation of the newspaper's facts and omit noteworthy details, such as the King's letter justifying his departure, which might have given credibility to the French crown. These inconsistencies suggest that the play consciously entered the sphere of public discourse that periodicals encouraged, and in doing so, both popularized and dramatized political discussion. Moreover, its nationalistic rhetoric defined Britain's culture of socialization, and particularly its theatre-goers, as innately patriotic; thus, it lavished additional praise upon the public discussion of newspapers in coffeehouses, theatres, and similar social circles throughout London.

The *Triumph of Liberty* and *The Royal Fugitives* both reveal Britain's fascination with France's suspenseful, spectacular politics in the late eighteenth century. More interestingly, they indicate that a segment of Britain's population – particularly working and upper-class minor theatre patrons – saw such events as manifestations of British morality abroad rather than representations of French achievement. In portraying Britain, the mother of Enlightenment, as the leader of France's ideological movement, the works identified themselves as propaganda that had consciously adapted newspaper reports for their own purposes and could therefore enter the discourse of the public sphere with a distinct political and patriotic message. The plays are also useful in an apolitical sense in that they reveal the great fascination and curiosity the French Revolution provoked in Britain's public sphere. While English patriotism and mockery of France were certainly noteworthy elements of the performances, eighteenth-century audiences were first drawn to theatres by newspapers that claimed the plays would reenact historical truths. The British stage, then, became a means of deciphering what had become a wholly unpredictable state of affairs in France. English theatres had no answer to the looming questions posed by the revolution; nevertheless, they used their performances to keep the present state of France – and the glorious state of Britain – alive and vivid for their audiences.

## Citing Thanatology: An Ethical Response to the Medical Data of Nazi Doctors

Brett Bernstein

Case I of the Nuremburg Trials, which prosecuted members of the Nazi medical community involved in unethical experimentation during the Third Reich, demonstrated to the world the inhumane exploitation of concentration camp prisoners in the name of science. However, data acquired from these experiments continues to be published in medical journals over half a century after the end of World War II. The modern use of Nazi experimental data is both unethical and socially irresponsible; as Dr. Leonard J. Hoenig, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Southern Florida, argues, “To do so would, in my opinion, lend a measure of dignity to these wicked studies and at the same time insult the memory of the victims by seeming to justify their murder.”<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that inhumane experiments are not unique to Nazi Germany; among the earliest known human tests was Richard P. Strong’s injection of Filipino prisoners with cholera in 1906; Strong was Professor of Tropical Medicine at Harvard Medical School.<sup>2</sup> Scientists in Tuskegee, Alabama, directed a long-term study of syphilis starting in 1932, infamously injecting 400 black patients with the disease and studying the effects of the untreated infection until 1972.<sup>3</sup> The United States thus has a history of inhumane experimentation targeting the same groups as the Nazis – that is, prisoners and racial minorities.

At the outbreak of World War II, eugenics and racial hygiene were academic subjects at elite institutions like Cambridge, Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Virginia, which have before and since then trail blazed the path to modern medicine.<sup>4</sup> German racial science gained an outspoken advocate in Adolf Hitler,

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1 Freedman, Monroe H., Leonard J. Hoenig, F. Barbara Orlans, and Howard M. Shapiro. “Nazi Research: Too Evil to Cite.” *Hastings Center Report*. 15.4 (1985): 31

2 “They Were Cheap and Available: Prisoners as Research Subjects in Twentieth Century America.” *British Medical Journal* 315:1437

3 Lombardo, Paul. “Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Virginia, Eugenics, and Buck v. Bell.” Claude Moore Health Sciences Library. University of Virginia.

4 Seidelman, William E. “Nuremburg Lamentation: For the Forgotten Victims of Medical Science.” *BMJ*:

*British Medical Journal*. 313.7070 (1996): 1463.

whose sweeping declarations in *Mein Kampf* justified exactly what the Nuremburg defendants would be on trial for years later: “Without this possibility of using lower human beings, the Aryan would never have been able to take his first steps toward his future culture... he would not have arrived at a technology which is now gradually permitting him to do without these beasts.”<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Ernst Rudin, a German physician internationally recognized in the fields of psychiatric genetics and schizophrenia and the author of *The Law of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring*, designed the Nazi sterilization programs, a first step towards the controlled reproduction of undesirable races.<sup>6</sup> Acting as “selectors”, Nazi doctors annually targeted and sterilized approximately 50,000 Jews, Poles, and Sinti and Roma gypsies in order to ensure the racial health of the nation.<sup>7</sup> Other “asocials” like communists and homosexuals experienced the same kind of persecution. Through this kind of work, Rudin and other leaders of the medical profession legitimized the devaluation of human life and helped establish the legal and operational framework of the Holocaust. Concentration camps, filled with thousands of potential test subjects, provided the doctors with unique laboratories for their research.<sup>8</sup> Although the vast majority of prisoners died during the experiments and most of the records were destroyed during the last days of the war, enough evidence survived to eventually bring several defendants to court at Nuremburg.<sup>9</sup> Who were the criminals?

At the center of the experiments in Auschwitz was Josef Mengele, a renowned specialist in oral embryology, cleft palate, and harelip. Known to victims as the “Angel of Death”, he stood at the entrance to Auschwitz and hand-selected each victim, usually Sinti and Roma twins. Under the supervision of eugenicist Dr. Otmar von Verschuer, Mengele analyzed the twins’ response to injected pathogens; one twin was infected, the other kept as a control.<sup>10</sup>

5 Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943: 294.

6 Seidelman, William E. “Mengele Medicus: Medicine’s Nazi Heritage.” *Milbank Quarterly*. 66.2 (1988): 222.

7 Seidelman, “Nuremburg Lamentation” 1463

8 Seidelman, “Mengele Medicus” 226

9 Mellanby, Kenneth. “Medical Experiments on Human Beings in Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany.”

BMJ: *British Medical Journal*. 1.4490 (1947): 149.

10 Koenig, Robert. “Reopening the Darkest Chapter in German Science.” *Science*. 288.5471 (2000): 1576.

Mengele's further experiments included dyes intended to change eye color (often causing blindness) and, perhaps most diabolical of all, the creation of artificial Siamese twins by sewing children together. Immediately following a procedure, Mengele executed his child subjects with a lethal injection and compared their autopsies to examine post-mortem differences in the internal organs.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Sigmund Rascher supervised further experiments at Dachau, where researchers explored the physiological trauma of marine and air warfare.<sup>12</sup> Prisoners, often coerced under the false pretense of release, were stripped and exposed to freezing temperatures, locked in low-pressure chambers and deprived of oxygen (recreating atmospheric conditions of up to 68,000 feet), and forced into water basins that lowered their body temperature to as little as 25° Celsius. Most victims were killed as a result of the experiments, and the few who did survive never knew what exactly they had been exposed to, making the diagnosis of future ailments extremely difficult.

The experiments at Auschwitz and Dachau only scratch the surface of the atrocities committed by Nazi doctors in concentration camps throughout Europe. Further studies exposed prisoners to malaria, mustard gas, sulfanilamide, seawater, typhus, bombs, and countless toxic chemicals. As early as 1942, the Nazis presented their findings in a seminar entitled "Medical Questions on Marine and Winter Emergencies", attended by close to 100 leading scientists and physicians.<sup>13</sup> Experiments continued up until the last days of the war, the doctors firmly believing in the value of their research to the Nazi cause.

The world's first international criminal trials were held at Nuremburg between November 1945 and April 1949; Case I of the trials persecuted Nazi crimes in the medical field. An American military tribunal charged twenty doctors and three administrators with the following crimes: Common Design or Conspiracy, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and, in ten cases, Membership of a Criminal Organization.<sup>14</sup> Prosecutors used the term thanatology to describe the science of producing death, and argued that "a profound humanity had presaged" by the Nazi doctors.

11 Goliszek, Andrew. *In the Name of Science: A History of Secret Programs, Medical Research, and Human Experimentation*. 1st ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003: 97.

12 Spitz, Vivien. *Doctors From Hell: The Horrific Account of Nazi Experiments on Humans*. 1st ed. Boulder: Sentient Publications, 2005: 65, 85

13 Seidelman, "Mengele Medicus" 229

14 Mellanby 149

They warned against “the alchemy of the modern age, the transmogrification of subject into object, of man into a thing against which the destructive urge may wreak its fury without constraint”.<sup>15</sup> The Nuremburg Trials succeeded in establishing preventative regulations against medical crimes; in their defense, the doctors had pointed to the lack of explicit rules governing medical research in Nazi Europe. The Nuremburg Code of 1947 introduced ethical standards in the field of human experimentation, including a ban on minors and “incompetent” subjects.<sup>16</sup> Most importantly, the Code stipulated that any experimental procedure required the informed consent of the patient.<sup>17</sup>

Justice for the victims, however, was hardly served. Of the 23 defendants in Case I, only fifteen were convicted and seven hanged.<sup>18</sup> Many of the doctors claimed to have been mere pawns of the Nazi regime and thus escaped punishment. The American tribunal accepted this excuse in far too many cases, explaining, “The fact that a person commits a crime pursuant to the order of his government or of a superior, while not freeing him from responsibility for the crime, may be considered mitigation”.<sup>19</sup> This policy provided a loophole for the Nazi doctors to jump through, whereas later Nuremburg defendants were not afforded this luxury.

The tribunal also failed to prosecute the rest of the German medical community involved in the experiments; the only renowned scientists brought to trial were Gerhard Rose (sentenced to life in prison) and Paul Rostock (acquitted).<sup>20</sup> The vast majority of culpable academics evaded conviction and recognition of their crimes, and have since been honored with bronze busts and eponymous lecture halls on college campuses throughout Germany.<sup>21</sup> Dr. Otto von Verschuer, who provided Mengele with a grant from the German Research Council and directly supervised his experiments at Auschwitz, was appointed Chair of Genetics at the University of Münster in 1951.<sup>22</sup>

15 Boozer, Jack S. “Children of Hippocrates: Doctors in Nazi Germany.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 450. (1980): 94.

16 Vollmann, Jochen, and Rolf Winau. “Informed Consent in Human Experimentation Before the Nuremburg Code.” *BMJ: British Medical Journal*. 313.7070 (1996): 1446.

17 Vollmann and Winau 1445

18 Koenig 1577

19 Boozer 85

20 Seidelman, “Nuremburg Lamentation” 1463

21 Ibid., 1464

22 Seidelman, “Mengele Medicus” 228

Mengele himself evaded prosecution, fleeing to South America while his legacy as a pioneer in the field of embryology survived for several decades. The United States played a controversial role in the escape of Nazi doctors from punishment; through a program called “Project Paperclip” political amnesty was given to more than 800 doctors and scientists whose medical expertise was considered crucial to Western defense against the Soviet Union in the early days of the Cold War. The United States was determined to “take full advantage of those significant developments which are deemed vital to our national security”.<sup>23</sup>

The failure of the Nuremburg Trials to prosecute these criminals was underlined by the failure of the Nuremburg Code; doctors across the world rejected the new regulations, and some at Harvard Medical School “found, and still find, the stringency of the NC’s first principle all too odious”.<sup>24</sup> The World Medical Association, known for its high number of members with direct ties to the Nazi party,<sup>25</sup> issued a revision to the Code called the Declaration of Helsinki in 1964.<sup>26</sup> Doctors were no longer required to obtain consent, but rather asked to do so “if at all possible”. This meant to imply that mentally handicapped patients could not give consent, but the ambiguous phrasing made it significantly easier for doctors to avoid obtaining consent in future experiments.

Furthermore, the judges at Nuremburg never addressed the issue of surviving Nazi data. Despite the unethical way in which it was obtained, there are no established restrictions on the publication and distribution of medical information accumulated by doctors in concentration camps. More than 45 medical articles published since 1945 have been based on this questionable data, especially research concerning hypothermia, malaria, and typhus.<sup>27</sup> None so much as mention the inhumane nature of the experiments upon which they are founded:<sup>28</sup> “I’m chagrined that someone would refer to those experiments without mentioning something about the way the information was gained,” laments Ronald Banner of the Jewish Medical Study Group. “It shows a lack of conscience. There are times that something, morally, stinks so bad that you have to hold

23 Goliszek 99

24 Goliszek 121

25 Seidelman, “Nuremburg Lamentation” 1466

26 Goliszek 326

27 Moe, Kristin. “Should Nazi Research Data Be Cited?” *Hastings Center Report*. 14.6 (1984): 5.

28 Post, Stephen G. “Nazi Data and the Rights of Jews.” *Journal of Law and Religion*. 6.2 (1988): 431.

your nose even while you refer to it.”<sup>29</sup> The continued publication of Nazi medical data also compromises the integrity of science itself; cruel experiments on sick, emaciated prisoners hardly apply to a healthy population, and tests performed in Dachau by Hans Eppiger yielded the same results as his own previous experiments on animals.<sup>30</sup>

So the question remains, what should be done with this corrupt information? A popular suggestion has been the practice of non-use as a method of memorializing the victims of Nazi doctors. Howard M. Shapiro of Yale University believes we need to “express our revulsion at some activities, even if that revulsion means the loss of something irreplaceable.”<sup>31</sup> Others have argued that the data belongs solely to the victims of the experiments; in 2000 there were over one hundred members of Children of Auschwitz: Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments (CANDLES).<sup>32</sup> Eva Mozes Kor, a survivor of Mengele’s twin experiments, has suggested that the Nazi lab books be shred and put on display at the camps, for all to see but not to use.<sup>33</sup> This form of memorial prevents the exploitation of unethical information but ensures that evidence of the Nazi atrocities will be preserved. A further step in rectifying this tragedy is a formal apology from the German medical community, which survivors believe to be “building on top of Auschwitz.”<sup>34</sup> However, the Max Planck Society, Germany’s most renowned research institution, has refused to issue what it calls a “hollow gesture”, claiming, “You need to know what you are apologizing for.”<sup>35</sup> Survivors hope for a sincere apology issued within their lifetimes, although the chance of this occurring seems bleak at the present time.

29 Moe 7.

30 Freedman, Hoenig, Orlans, & Shapiro 32.

31 Ibid., 31.

32 Koenig 1577

33 Mastow 415

34 Ibid., 404.

35 Koenig 1577

## How Night Baseball Brightened America During the Great Depression

Ryan Panzer

Throughout the Great Depression, Americans struggled with unemployment, a failing stock market, and an absence of hope. The crisis affected individuals as well as the most ingrained American institutions. Professional baseball, both at the minor and Major League levels, faced severe financial troubles during the Depression. With a fan base largely unable to sacrifice the prospect of a day's wages for nine innings and a hot dog, baseball was succumbing in popularity to sports more aware of their fan bases' needs. Feeding one's family and staving off unemployment became the new "pastimes" for many. Baseball, like many American institutions, faced an abrupt ending. In desperation, National League club owners unanimously agreed to introduce night baseball on an exploratory basis, hoping to bring fans back to the park and raise revenues. Modeled after the widespread use of floodlights in many of America's minor leagues, the novelty of night baseball saved the game from the Depression. By adapting to the needs of the American people, attendance at every Major League game increased by the thousands, providing a daily escape for people in desperate times.

The crisis confronting professional baseball in the early 1930s stemmed from two significant problems: an inability to draw fans to the ballpark, and a decline in the game's popularity. The lack of fans was simply a result of afternoon game times. In the midst of a desperate search for a day's wages, few Americans could afford to get to the ballpark in the middle of the day. In 1930, as the Depression was still in its infancy, the average attendance at Major League games was 8,211 fans.<sup>1</sup> From 1931 until 1933, total attendance fell from 8.4 million to only 6 million in 1933, the lowest attendance in 16 years.<sup>2</sup> By 1935, the average attendance just before Major League Baseball's first night game, was a mere 5,982 attendees.<sup>3</sup> This problem affected both elite and struggling ball clubs. The New York Yankees, champions of the 1932 World Series and perennial pennant

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1 Historical Attendance Figures for Major League Baseball. Sports Reference LLC. 7 Apr. 2009 <[www.baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com)>.

2 Voigt, David Q. "Counting, Courting, and Controlling Ball Park Fans." *Baseball History*. Vol. 2. Westport: Meckler Books, 1989. 98-99.

3 Ibid.

contenders, saw their average attendance drop from 12,337 in 1932 to only 8,826 during 1935.<sup>4</sup> saw their average attendance drop from 12,337 in 1932 to only 8,826 during 1935.<sup>5</sup> Even the home-run heroics of Babe Ruth were not enough to lure fans to Yankee Stadium in the middle of the afternoon.

The crisis was also caused by a steady decline in the sport's popularity. As Americans reexamined discretionary expenditures, many completely eliminated baseball from both family and institutional budgets. Other sports, including rowing and boxing, were more affordable to watch, play, and finance. At the collegiate level, many colleges cut their baseball teams to increase budget room for other sports.<sup>6</sup> The funding allotted for baseball was then redistributed to sports that were becoming more popular among college students.<sup>7</sup> sports were not the only sports to surpass baseball in popularity. As attendance at baseball games waned, Dale Gear, president of the Des Moines Baseball Club, expressed frustration over golf's growing popularity, especially among the upper class.<sup>8</sup> Gear also mentioned that "mediocre college football games" consistently drew thousands, but only for contests under the lights. With these observations, Gear would be instrumental in bringing night baseball to the minor leagues and making baseball in Iowa popular once again.

The teams with the most losses had the lowest attendances during the Depression. The Washington Senators, despite making the World Series and drawing 437,533 fans in the 1933 season, finished in 7th place in 1934.<sup>9</sup> In the same year, Washington posted one of the league's worst attendances, drawing a total of only 330,074 fans to the park.<sup>10</sup>

4 New York Yankees Attendance Data. Baseball Almanac. 8 April 2009. <[www.baseball-almanac.com/teams/yankatte.shtml](http://www.baseball-almanac.com/teams/yankatte.shtml)>

5 Ibid.

6 "Colleges in East To Push Programs: Will Fight to Retain Remaining Sports..." 14 January 1933. New York Times, 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

7 Ibid

8 "Night Ball May Provide Better Days for Minors." The Sporting News [St. Louis, MO] 22 May, 1930.

9 1933 Washington Senators... Statistics. Sports Reference LLC. 10 Apr. 2009 <[www.baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com)>.

10 Ibid.

This pattern did not apply to minor league baseball. Unlike in the Majors, the minor leagues had already figured out how to keep fans coming to support their teams throughout losing seasons. The Buffalo Bison were among the first franchises to play exclusively under the lights.<sup>11</sup>

Despite their losing record of 74-91 in 1933, the Buffalo Bison drew 13,500 fans to the first night game in New York history.<sup>12</sup> Similar crowds would pack the stands throughout the rest of the season, drawing 249,439 fans the following season, rivaling many Major League teams in total attendance.<sup>13</sup> Fans did not come to watch the Bison win, because clearly the Bison were a struggling team. Rather, fans came for the novelty and accessibility of the night game.<sup>14</sup> The discrepancy in attendance patterns between the Major and minor leagues cannot be explained by ticket prices alone. The Bison charged \$1.10 for every ticket, which was more than most Major League teams, who charged an average of \$1 per seat.<sup>15</sup> Fans in minor league stadiums were paying more money to see inferior baseball. Clearly, an overall decrease in popularity was not completely responsible for the lack of attendance at games. Nor were fans uninterested in inferior play. Simply, fans were more likely to pay to see games that were accessible and novel. The casual fan prioritized during the Depression. Making money during the day was the top priority, yet fans still clamored for America's pastime once the labor was finished.

Despite falling revenues around the league, some ball clubs prospered in the early 1930s. Among the fortunate were the Montreal Royals. The Canadian based team turned a profit of over \$40,000 in the 1929 season, placing their net worth at approximately \$1,500,000.<sup>16</sup> The profits, revealed at the annual shareholders meeting, were the envy of Major League Baseball, and would serve as the basis for league-wide changes throughout the Depression. The Royals were able to turn record profits by offering fans some new luxuries at the ballpark.

11 "Bison Triumph, 3 to 1." 26 July 1933. New York Times, 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

12 Bison History: The 1930s. Buffalo Bison Baseball. 10 April 2009. <<http://buffalo.bisons.milb.com>>

13 Ibid.

14 "Bison Triumph, 3 to 1." 26 July 1933. New York Times, 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

15 "EH.Net Encyclopedia: The Economic History of Major League Baseball." EH.Net | Economic History Services. 05 May 2009 <<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/haupert.mlb>>.

16 "Montreal Club Makes Money, Even in Winter." The Sporting News [St. Louis, MO] 20 Mar. 1930: 3.

One of these was the sale of soft drinks, which became very popular among the fans. Another innovation was the sale of team scorecards at the gate. Finally, a newly renovated stadium attracted thousands of casual fans to Montreal to root for the Royals.<sup>17</sup> No major changes were made in the way the game was played, in team management or roster structure, or even in contracts. By making small changes that introduced an element of novelty to baseball, the game became more appealing to the average fan. Montreal reduced the effects of the Depression and became the standard of marketability and profit in the early 1930s. The Royals showed the rest of Major League Baseball that simple adaptability and slight game innovations could bring fans to the stadium despite an overall shortage of discretionary income. This model of innovation demonstrated the need to explore all possible solutions to the economic crisis. The success of these ballpark gimmicks encouraged owners to explore other ways to enhance the novelty of baseball, including the possibility of the night game.

That night baseball did not begin in the Majors until 1935 was not because of a league wide policy. Though previously banned by league rules, night baseball was available in the 1930s to any interested clubs. In April of 1931, five National League owners: Stoneham, Breadon, Nugent, Wrigley, and Weil lifted the ban at an annual rules meeting.<sup>18</sup> Baseball was clearly seeking innovative ideas in response to attendance problems. Among the rejected ideas at the 1931 owners' meeting was a revenue-generating tax on ticket sales.<sup>19</sup> The debate on the tax lasted a day, the debate on night baseball would last four more years.

Beyond the minor league ballparks of rural Iowa, night baseball was promoted at a national level through persistent advertising. These advertisements would have been the casual fan's first exposure to the prospect of night baseball. In *The Sporting News*, the nation's most popular baseball periodical, advertisements for field lighting systems were featured on a weekly basis. Companies like Giant Manufacturing and Fasnacht Inc. attempted to sway public opinion towards night baseball with slogans like "90% of the minors will play baseball with a GIANT lighting system this season!"<sup>20</sup>

17 Ibid.

18 "Revised Rules Lift Major's Ban on Night Games." *The Sporting News* [St. Louis, MO] 15 April 1931.

19 Ibid.

20 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

Since The Sporting News featured these ads, they put a de facto seal of approval on night baseball. By running these ads on a weekly basis, the newspaper teamed up with light manufacturers to enmeshed night baseball in to the mindset of the American fan. Undoubtedly, club owners eventually noticed an increase in public interest in night games.

Countless arguments against the night game were offered up throughout the 1930s from players, managers, and owners. Many of these arguments involved the quality of play, and stemmed from players' concerns

seeing and hitting the ball. This argument was the result of a disastrous game widely covered by the national media. In a nighttime exhibition game staged by the New York Baseball Giants, a 13,500-watt system failed to light New York's Polo Grounds.<sup>21</sup> According to the New York Times, only 3,000 fans turned out for the 9 pm start, and two-thirds were gone by the end.<sup>22</sup> The Times went on to report that "the outfield was in semidarkness and the players as well as the spectators had difficulty seeing the ball."<sup>23</sup> "Shanty" Hogan, a catcher, griped that the lights prohibited him from catching pop-fly foul balls through squinting eyes.<sup>24</sup> This particular exhibition was a fiasco for night baseball. However, minor league clubs in cities like Des Moines and Independence found no problems playing under proven, high quality lighting systems like those advertised in The Sporting News. Reporters like Clifford Bloodgood of Baseball Magazine, remarked: "Once baseball has been permanently established in the smaller cities under the glaring lights will the major leagues still voice their displeasure? Undoubtedly, but just as surely, in time, they will install artificial lighting systems in their own major league parks."<sup>25</sup>

Though night baseball was effective with quality lighting systems, many argued that cost prohibited night baseball in the Majors. To install high quality lighting systems would have cost between \$14,000 and \$25,000. At first, these figures appeared prohibitive, given the Depression's negative effects on club revenues.<sup>26</sup> Proponents of night baseball noted this concern but were quick to point out that minor league clubs

21 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Bloodgood, Clifford. "The Shape of Things to Come: Night Baseball." *The Baseball Anthology*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994. 167-68.

26 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

playing under the lights routinely made profits upwards of \$9,273 per game while selling tickets priced around one dollar.<sup>27</sup> Night baseball, at least in the minors, had paid for itself in a matter of weeks. A final practical criticism was from promoters of the game, who worried that night games would only encourage fans to sit at home with their families and listen to radio broadcasts<sup>28</sup>. Promoters would later rescind these complaints after signing revenue-sharing deals with major radio stations.<sup>29</sup> Though there were indeed many practical concerns about night baseball, the example of the minor leagues showed that lights were a solid investment from both a financial and athletic vantage point.

Throughout the early 1930s, the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox leveled another charge against night baseball. These clubs argued that night baseball would compromise the game's dignity by masking the natural beauty of ballpark architecture and landscaping.<sup>30</sup> Philip K. Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs, was adamant that Wrigley Field, with its ivy walls and lush grass, was designed and landscaped for daytime baseball.<sup>31</sup> As he saw the situation, it would be "sinful" to deprive fans of Wrigley Field's daytime essence. Chicago would become the last team to ever install lights at their ballpark, clinging to this argument for nearly a half-century.<sup>32</sup> Joe McCarthy, manager of the Yankees, and Joe Cronin of the Red Sox, were also critics of night baseball, but for different reasons than Wrigley.<sup>33</sup> New York and Boston were two of the largest markets in the league. Both of these perennial pennant contenders boasted well-paid, star-studded line-ups that were capable of competing for the World Series in any given season.<sup>34</sup> Though their attendances were indeed suffering in the 1930s, they were still faring far better than clubs like Washington and Cincinnati. Their opposition to night baseball thus may have been caused by a desire to ensure that their competition wouldn't make enough money to compete for the big-salary players like Babe Ruth.

27 Ibid.

28 Voigt, David Q. "Counting, Courting, and Controlling Ball Park Fans." *Baseball History*. Vol. 2. Westport: Meckler Books, 1989. 112-113

29 Ibid.

30 "McCarthy Opposed to Night Baseball..." 17 February 1935. *New York Times*, 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

31 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 "McCarthy Opposed to Night Baseball..." 17 February 1935. *New York Times*, 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

Cronin and McCarthy would bolster the opposition to night baseball for over four years.

Finally, some opponents of night baseball lacked a rational reason for their stance altogether. These holdouts disguised their opposition as benevolence to non-traditional fan bases. Though unconcerned with the amusement of the homeless, Will Wedge of The New York Sun expressed that transients would lose their ability to sneak in to afternoon games.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, by prohibiting kids from sneaking in to the ballpark, Wedge proclaimed that baseball would “lose its youngest fan base”.<sup>36</sup> Though these arguments were for comic purposes, they reflect the perhaps unfounded hesitance that many longtime baseball fans had to such a substantial change in tradition.

Though there were many practical arguments that came from owners and managers, players made many impractical, jocular arguments that reflected a broader curiosity about playing ball under the lights. Accompanying all these statements were expressed desires to at least watch a night contest.<sup>37</sup> These statements were often made in dug-outs and clubhouses through a rather jocular manner. Dazzy Vance of the minor league Brooklyn Robins remarked that baseball would throw off the sleep cycles of players, who would be forced to play all night and sleep all day, especially in the event of double headers.<sup>38</sup> It would thus be necessary, according to Vance, to open up an all night steak house across from the stadium just for the players. Rube Bressler jokingly exclaimed that he would bring a flashlight to the outfield during all night games, while Babe Herman was excited to employ a new excuse for dropping fly balls in the outfield.<sup>39</sup> All joking aside, the players were generally curious about night baseball and the prospect of increasing both profits and payouts.

While the Major League owners debated, night baseball in the minor leagues was successful from its inception. In May of 1930, Des Moines, Iowa was among the first towns to install floodlights at their stadium. They soon became one of the only ball clubs in America to consistently play at night.<sup>40</sup> While rain and cold kept most fans away, 2,309 fans witnessed this first night game. However, in other Iowa cities, such as Decatur, single-game attendance had reached 4,430 and continued climbing as night baseball grew

35 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 “Average Night Crowd at Des Moines is 2,309...” *The Sporting News* [St. Louis, MO] 22 May, 1930

increasingly popular.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, players and managers at these games were responding enthusiastically to playing conditions at night, casting aside doubts players would be unable to see the ball well enough to bat and play defense.<sup>42</sup> Dale Gear, the leading advocate of night baseball in Iowa summarized the initial success of the innovation: “There is a period from eight o’clock and ten o’clock at night that the average man has nothing to do, and I believe that the baseball parks will be the place to find him this summer!”<sup>43</sup> According to the owners of minor league clubs, night baseball provided an adequate solution and a way to bring the workingman back to the ballpark, and by 1931, the minor leagues held over 80% of their contests under the lights.<sup>44</sup> As Ed O’Malley, president of a Phoenix, Arizona ball club remarked: “I am safe in saying that where we took in a dollar in the day time last year, we are taking four at night this year.”<sup>45</sup> Rising attendance bolstered the confidence of struggling owners who came to see night baseball as a practical solution to a deep financial struggle.

With all of these concerns, a man from Cincinnati finally broke the “night barrier.” Larry MacPhail, the owner of the Cincinnati Reds, watched throughout the early 1930s as the Reds lost more than any other team. MacPhail, a World War I veteran, entered in to baseball administration upon his return to the United States.<sup>46</sup> A very successful owner and administrator, MacPhail promoted night baseball for the minor league Columbus Red Birds. In 1931, he helped bring 310,000 fans to Neil Park, a larger attendance than their major league affiliate St. Louis Cardinals, who averaged only 279,219 fans in 1931.<sup>47</sup> When MacPhail bought the Cincinnati Reds, he inherited a team that had emphatically supported the National League’s night baseball resolution of 1931.<sup>48</sup> The reason for this support was simple: Cincinnati was desperate.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 “Night Ball May Provide Better Days for Minors.” *The Sporting News* [St. Louis, MO] 22 May, 1930

44 “Manufacturers Anticipate that Over 80% of Minors Will Play at Night this Year.” *The Sporting News* [St. Louis, MO] 15 April 1931

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Drebing, John. “Night Baseball on Limited Scale Adopted Unanimously by National League.” 13 Dec. 1934. *New York Times*: 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

Having finished in last place every year since 1931, when they finished 66-88, until 1934, when they finished 52-99, the Reds watched their attendance dip to only 206,773 fans.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, 70% of this attendance came from just 15 home games, including the home opener.<sup>50</sup> MacPhail clearly saw the connection between attendance and his team's success. If Cincinnati was to sign some Major League caliber talent, they needed to generate more revenue.

An enthusiastic MacPhail ordered lights for Crosley Field, the home of the Reds. At a cost of \$62,000, the 1 million watt field would be the most advanced floodlight system in baseball, operating at a cost of nearly \$300 a game.<sup>51</sup> This grand expense was clearly a gamble for the Reds. Stanley Frank of *The New York Post* criticized MacPhail for spending such great amounts on an attendance gimmick rather than "bona fide ballplayers."<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the executive board voted to install the lights, despite budgetary concerns voiced by his fellow board members.<sup>53</sup> The game time was set for May 24th, 1935 at 7 pm. Major League night baseball was about to become a reality.

The contest between the Cincinnati Reds and the Philadelphia Phillies was as much of a theatrical production as it was a baseball game. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in Washington, pressed the button that illuminated Crosley Field for the 25,000 fans in attendance.<sup>54</sup> Heightening the spectacle of night Major League baseball, many other celebrities and baseball dignitaries were in attendance. These included Ford Frick, president of the National League, and Prexy Will Harridge, president of the American League.<sup>55</sup> The fans came despite bitter cold temperatures below 50 degrees. Even Cincinnati's mascot was too cold to remain outside for the duration of the game.<sup>56</sup> More remarkable than the 25,000-fan attendance was the rest of the season for Cincinnati. This celebration of baseball was only the third largest crowd of the season in Cincinnati.<sup>57</sup>

49 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

50 Drebinger, John. "Night Baseball on Limited Scale Adopted Unanimously by National League." 13 Dec. 1934. *New York Times*: 1857-Current File. ProQuest. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

51 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 "Reds' Night Game Draws 25,000 Fans." 25 May 1935. *New York Times*, 1857-Current File. ProQuest. State Historical Society Library, Madison. 25 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.proquest.com>>.

55 Ibid.

56 Pietrusza, David. *Lights On!* Lanham: Scarecrow P, Inc., 1997.

57 Ibid.

By the end of the year, 448,247 fans (the fifth largest attendance in the National League) turned out to see the losing Cincinnati Reds.<sup>58</sup> For three of the next four seasons, Cincinnati's attendance would systematically climb, peaking in 1939. When the Reds fell just short of a World Series victory, the Reds boasted Baseball's second highest attendance with 981,443 fans.<sup>59</sup> The club's turnaround would not have been possible without the substantial profit increase that night baseball brought to a mediocre ball club.

As night baseball spread throughout the Majors, overall attendance increased, proving that attendance was not simply due to a team improving or becoming more competitive with the rest of the league. Though attendance would not surpass pre-Depression levels until after World War II, the five years immediately following the first night game saw an average increase of 1,966 fans per every Major League game.<sup>60</sup> Night baseball successfully reversed the trend of shrinking attendance and falling revenues, and kept Major League Baseball afloat until the Depression came to an end.

Like many businesses, professional baseball struggled with finances during the Great Depression. To survive, baseball depended on new innovations like redesigned stadiums and game day giveaways to bolster both attendance and the popularity of the sport. Given the success of night baseball in the minor leagues, it is surprising that the Majors took nearly five years to start playing at night. This delay was ultimately caused by financial and moral arguments against baseball under the lights, though these concerns were eventually disproved. In 1935, when the lights went on in Cincinnati on a chilly spring evening, Major League Baseball began to see the practicality and value of night baseball. By playing games at a time that was accessible to the average American, both struggling teams and championship teams saw its attendance increase throughout the latter half of the 1930s. By turning on the lights, baseball escaped from its own financial difficulties, while capitalizing on fans' desires for an affordable, accessible escape from the Depression's harsh realities. A mutual solution between the clubs and the fans, night baseball began as a novel spectacle and ended up preserving the game's place in American society.

58 "1935 Cincinnati Reds Batting, Fielding, and Pitching Statistics." *Sports Reference*, LLC. 22 Apr. 2009.

59 Ibid.

60 Historical Attendance Figures for Major League Baseball. *Sports Reference* LLC. 7 Apr. 2009 <[www.baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com)>.

## Waging a Propaganda War Against Iran: The American Effort to Oust Mohammad Mosaddeq

Arthur Zarate

### Introduction

In mid August of 1953 the CIA, with the support of the British government and Iranian collaborators, successfully staged a coup against Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran's democratically chosen prime minister. A little more than two months after the August coup, John H. Stutesman Jr. of the US State Department wrote to the American Ambassador of Iran, Loy Henderson, expressing the Department's wish to reassess its propaganda campaign in Iran. The State Department's request is interesting for its frank description of American efforts to shape public opinion in and about Iran. Stutesman takes pains at the beginning of the letter to define those efforts as "propaganda," as opposed to what he calls "public relations" or "information." Although Americans "generally distrust" the word propaganda, he says, "it seems to be the only one which encompasses all the U.S. Government efforts to put across a particular point of view at home and abroad."<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the coup it is clear that the American embassy in Tehran, the State Department, and the CIA were, in fact, engaged in an extensive anti-communist propaganda campaign in Iran. A series of several important declassified documents, including two telegrams between the State Department and the American embassy in Iran and the CIA's official history of the coup against Mossadeq, suggest that by 1953 this propaganda campaign may have included the manipulation of the *New York Times*. Carl Bernstein has written extensively on the manipulation of powerful American media outlets by the CIA.<sup>2</sup> According to Bernstein, American news publications were often willing to employ their resources in service of the US national security apparatus during the Cold War. He goes on to specify the *New York Times* as one publication that had a particularly close relationship with the CIA. In light of the aforementioned declassified documents, Iran seems to be a perfect case study of Bernstein's thesis.

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1 Department of State Letter from John H. Stutesman, Jr. to Loy Henderson. [Propaganda Situation following Coup], October 28, 1953.

2 Carl Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media," *Rolling Stone*. October 20, 1977.

Indeed, an analysis of the *New York Times*' coverage of the events in Iran from 1951 to 1953 reveals that this publication's 'point of view' was strikingly similar to that of the American government. In this essay I will argue that this similarity was too close to be a coincidence. Rather, I contend it was a manifestation of a successful propaganda campaign waged by embassy, the State Department, and the CIA. The propaganda effort was primarily aimed at portraying Mosaddeq as a fanatic and dangerous dictator, driving his country to a communist collapse. Because the *New York Times* held extensive influence in Iran, I will also argue that the coup itself was, in part, the result of the American propaganda campaign against Mosaddeq. This campaign and the CIA's Operation AJAX effectively imbued Iranians with the fear that Mosaddeq was leading their country to a communist demise. It was only after Iranians became imbued with this fear that Mosaddeq lost his once broad based mass support and was suddenly ousted by popular forces.

### Historical Context

The historical context in which American policymakers arrived at the decision to oust Mosaddeq can be divided into two main themes. The first can be characterized as a period of vibrant Iranian nationalism during the 1940s, which opposed foreign control of Iranian resources. With Mosaddeq at the forefront, this nationalist movement's efforts culminated with the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry in 1951. The second can be described as the interjection of American Cold War strategic concerns upon Iran. This interjection culminated with a coup against Mosaddeq and the destruction of the Iranian nationalist movement. The Iranian nationalist activity of the 1940s actually had its roots in two mass protests that occurred at the turn of the century. The first began in early 1890 when the Qajar shah, Nasser ad-Din, granted a British citizen monopoly rights "over the production, sale, and export" of Iran's tobacco.<sup>3</sup> As tobacco was a widely cultivated product in Iran, this concession sparked widespread civil unrest and eventually led to a countrywide boycott on the purchase and consumption of tobacco.<sup>4</sup> According to the historian Nikkie R. Keddie, this period marked the "first successful mass protest in modern Iran, combining ulama [religious leaders], modernist, merchants and ordinary

3 Nikkie R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003), 61.

4 Ibid.

townspeople in a coordinated move against government policy.”<sup>5</sup> In the early 1900s, a second mass protest was sparked by Iran’s increasing indebtedness to foreign lenders because of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah’s excessive borrowing from Russian sources.<sup>6</sup> Growing opposition gradually coalesced and came to a head in 1905 with widespread protests demanding creation of a parliament like institution.<sup>7</sup> By October of 1906, a constitution and representative assembly, or majlis, were established. The constitution’s “intent,” says Keddie, “was to set up a true constitutional monarchy in which majles approval was required on all important matters, including foreign loans and treaties.”

The constitution and majlis developed out of mass outrage to foreign interference in Iranian affairs and, as such, were both efforts to exert influence over the nation’s foreign relations so as to preserve the interests of Iranians. Despite these efforts, however, Iran’s assertion of sovereignty was short lived and quickly overwhelmed by outside interference. In 1907 Britain and Russia negotiated an entente, which divided Iran into two foreign controlled areas. This entente, of course, was negotiated without Iranian consent. Northern Iran became Russian controlled, while the southeast became British controlled. In 1908, the new Qajar shah, Mohammed Ali, successfully staged a coup with Russian assistance. This coup led to the closing of the majlis and the exiling or execution of many of the nationalist leaders.<sup>8</sup> The period thereafter marked the steady decline, but not disappearance, of the Iranian nationalist movement. This decline was fueled by a steady increase of British influence over Iran and the rise of Reza Pahlavi Shah, who came to power after ousting the Qajar family in 1921. It was not until WWII, after the Allied powers forced Reza Shah to abdicate to his weak and inefficient son, that Iranian nationalism again had the opportunity to flourish.

Another important factor in the subsequent course of Iranian nationalism was the British navy’s use of oil, as opposed to coal, after 1908. According to the historian Rashid Khalidi, “Oil therefore overnight became crucial to Britain’s global hegemony, intensifying its attention to Iranian oil and vastly enhancing” the strategic significance of both Iran and the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> In 1901 a British businessman obtained a sixty-year concession from the Iranian government giving Britain the sole right to produce and sell Iranian oil.

5 Ibid., 62.

6 Ibid., 65.

7 Ibid., 67.

8 Ibid., 70.

9 Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America’s Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 85.

The production of oil began in 1908 and led to the establishment of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) in 1909. As oil rapidly became strategically valuable to the British, their interference in Iranian affairs became particularly intense.<sup>10</sup> Britain's entente with Russia allowed it to militarily occupy Iran's oil-rich southern coast. Later, in 1913, the British government purchased 51 percent AIOC. With these actions, Britain now ensured a lasting oil supply—controlling both the region and the company that produced Iranian oil.<sup>11</sup>

In 1941 Iran suffered another joint British and Russian occupation, which again divided the country into a British occupied south and a Russian occupied north. This joint occupation was primarily motivated by concern over Reza Shah's sympathetic attitude towards Germany during WWII,<sup>12</sup> yet it also contributed to the growth of Iranian nationalism. After the German invasion of the USSR, the Allies sought to establish a supply route from Iran to the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> The Allies demanded that the shah expel the Germans from Iran, however the shah delayed. Consequently, the USSR and Great Britain occupied Iran and forced Reza Shah to abdicate to his weaker and more pliant son, Mohammad Reza.

As Khalidi argues, the power and activities of the majlis increased proportionately to the decline of the authority of the monarchy's ruling figure.<sup>14</sup> Importantly, this allowed the nationalists in the majlis to assert Iran's sovereignty more effectively. In a rebuff to the Soviets, the new Iranian government rejected the USSR's 1944 requests for oil concessions in the northern regions of Iran, which were occupied by the Soviet army. Partly in response to this rebuff and partly out of the Soviet's desire to secure a buffer region to its south, the USSR sponsored two separatist revolts in Iran's Kurdish and Azeri regions.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet military occupation of these regions prevented the Iranian army from putting down these revolts. After the USSR's withdrawal in late 1946, however, Mosaddeq, with the support of the majlis, squashed these revolts.<sup>16</sup>

10 Ibid., 87.

11 Ibid.

12 Keddie, 105.

13 Ibid.

14 Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 169.

15 Ibid., 51-53

16 Ibid., 169.

In that same year, the majlis once again rejected another Soviet request for oil concessions. As Khalidi notes, the removal of all foreign armies from Iran and the relative weakness of the Iranian monarch created a “fluid situation,” in which Muhammad Reza Shah was incapable of asserting his authority.<sup>17</sup> This not only empowered the nationalists in the majlis, but also allowed them to confront another interfering foreign power in Iran—the British.<sup>18</sup> By 1949, a broad nationalist coalition known as the Nation Front emerged. With Mosaddeq at the lead of this coalition, Iran reclaimed its oil from the British by nationalizing its oil industry in 1951.

Importantly, this increase of Iranian nationalist activity coincided with the beginnings of the Cold War. Iran, in fact, played a center stage in the nascent Soviet-American rivalry. Indeed, George Kennan’s extremely influential “Long Telegram” of February 1946, posited “Northern Iran” as a primary arena in which immediate Soviet “efforts will be made to advance the official limits of Soviet power.”<sup>19</sup> A presidential memorandum dated two months later illustrates that the Truman administration, like Kennan, was quite alarmed by Soviet actions in Iran. The USSR’s support for Azeri separatists and its refusal to allow the Iranian army to “quell the uprising” are described as hostile Soviet “efforts to form a security zone...along its borders.”<sup>20</sup> Despite the USSR’s gradual withdraw of its troops from Iran in late 1946, the unstable situation in Azerbaijan, as well as the Soviet’s attempt to extract oil concessions from the Iranian government, continued to alarm American policymakers. Indeed, in 1947 the Central Intelligence Group, the CIA’s predecessor, issued a report warning that the “loss of Azerbaijan” to Soviet control “would threaten Iran’s independence.” The USSR’s “ultimate objective,” it says, is “controlling Azerbaijan, and eventually all of Iran.” While the report acknowledges that the Iranian government will probably resist Soviet encroachments, particularly in Azerbaijan, it ominously concludes that it is “doubtful whether the Iranian Government can take effective steps to counter such Soviet subversive activities.”<sup>21</sup>

As is apparent from the preceding, the US became increasingly apprehensive about Soviet machinations in Iran precisely at a time when Iranian nationalists were attempting to assert Iran’s sovereignty.

17 Ibid., 170.

18 Ibid.

19 George Kennan, “Long Telegram” February 1946.

20 “Soviet Foreign Policy in the Middle East”, April 1946.

21 Central Intelligence Group “Developments in the Azerbaijan Situation” June 1947.

In the events that would follow, both American policymakers and media outlets would seemed completely incapable of objectively discerning between manifestations of Iranian nationalism and Soviet subversion in Iran. This lack of discernment became particularly acute after Mosaddeq nationalized Iranian oil in 1951. The instable domestic situation in Iran in the immediate post-nationalization period escalated American fears of a looming communist coup. This domestic turmoil, however, was largely the product of sustained British efforts to destroy Mosaddeq's leadership position through an embargo of Iranian oil and a covert campaign to divide his political base.<sup>22</sup> While this effort was successful in destabilizing Iran, it failed in its ultimate aim of ousting Mosaddeq. Nonetheless, the nationalization, subsequent political instability, and intense American fear of Soviet intentions drove the US policymakers to take an increasingly hostile attitude towards Mosaddeq. Once American policymakers concluded Mosaddeq was driving Iran towards a collapse to communism, they moved to oust him.

### The American Propaganda War

According to Frances Saunders' extensive study on the CIA's effort to manipulate public opinion in Europe, the CIA believed the best type of propaganda was "the kind where 'the subject moves in the direction you desire for reasons which he believes to be his own.'"<sup>23</sup> In September of 1949, the Iranian government decreed that no foreign embassy had the right to "distribute any publication" that openly supported or opposed "certain definite groups."<sup>24</sup> That is to say, US propaganda could not directly attack the USSR nor directly support American interests. According to the US embassy in Tehran, the American propaganda campaign was "designed to appear as an Iranian Government program," even though it would be apparent to observers outside Iran that it was "subsidized and more or less controlled by Americans."<sup>25</sup>

22 Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, No. 3 (August 1987), 263.

23 Frances Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2001), 4.

24 *United States Embassy, Iran Dispatch from Loy Henderson to the Department of State*. "Attaching Memorandum Entitled 'Report on the Use of Anti-Soviet Material within Iran during Period Covered by Last Two Years'," May 29, 1953

25 *United States Embassy, Iran Cable from Edward C. Wells to the Department of State*. "Notes on Expanded Program for Iran" [Includes Memorandum], January 12, 1951.

In other words, the American effort to manipulate public opinion in Iran was designed to direct Iranians towards supporting American objectives for reasons they would perceive to be their own.

Throughout the early 1950s, American propaganda held enormous sway over the Iranian press. According to an embassy telegram to the State Department, the “USIE continues to be the largest single source of foreign news published in the Iranian press.” Indeed, “USIE material,” it says, “accounts for 45% of all the news published in the Iranian press.” The telegram goes on to define the purpose of its propaganda campaign as the maintaining of “economic and political stability in Iran,” enhancing “the prestige the U.S.” and demonstrating “the weaknesses and fallacies of the communist system.”<sup>26</sup> Another dispatch offers a similar description of the purposes of the propaganda, while adding a concise description of the propaganda campaign’s target audience. With the primary aim being “the orientation of Iran towards the free nations,” the embassy held that its program “should be in the main directed to the Tehran audience (the Court, government, intellectuals, wealthy landowners etc.) who actually control the destiny of the country.”<sup>27</sup>

The embassy took its role as an instrument of propaganda warfare in Iran quite seriously. Indeed, in May of 1953 Ambassador Henderson sent a telegram to the State Department responding to what he called “unfair and distorted criticism” of the embassy’s effort “to combat communism” in Iran. In response to this charge, Henderson sought to clarify that the Iranian government’s ban on open propaganda meant that the embassy’s “struggle against communism” had to be waged “discreetly.” Nonetheless, he says, since May of 1951 the embassy has been “unobtrusively, yet persistently and continuously, taking advantage of every opportunity to expose the fallacies of communism and to warn... of the dangers to Iran from international communism.” In this dispatch Henderson includes a description of “nine exhibits relating to the efforts of the USIS [United States Information Services] section of the Embassy to combat communism.” Only two warrant mention here: The first exhibit is described as “the distribution of anti-Soviet leaflets, brochures, etc. originated and produced outside of Tehran,” the number of which “approximates 570,000 per year.” The second exhibit is described as “260 articles, features, editorials and commentaries which have been placed in the local Tehran papers, as well as provincial papers, on anti-communist subjects.”

26 *United States Embassy, Iran Cable from Edward C. Wells to the Department of State.* “Priority Aims and Objectives of the USIE Program in Iran Calls for Enhancing U.S. Prestige and Demonstrating Communist Fallacies,” June 5, 1950.

27 “Notes on Expanded Program for Iran”

To illustrate the effectiveness of the embassy's efforts, the dispatch includes a letter from an Iranian newspaper editor thanking the USIS for "two stories" that were printed in an Iranian paper to "fight communism."<sup>28</sup>

The effort to shape public opinion in Iran not only included the embassy's anti-communist propaganda campaign, but also an apparent attempt to manipulate the American press. Indeed, on June 26, 1953, less than two months before Mosaddeq was ousted, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles wrote to Ambassador Henderson to inform him that the State Department could, if the Ambassador wished, plant stories in American news publications to help shape public opinion. According to the chopped up language of Dulles' cable dispatch, the State Department can, from time to time, "inspire editorials or articles in U.S. publications which can be useful in case Embassy should desire certain points of view brought out for benefit [of the] American public or particular emphasis laid upon points which have not received full understanding and publicity." Dulles concludes by confirming, "[w]hen Embassy thinks such measures required, Department will seek to place appropriate stories," yet only if they relate to "problems of substantial policy interest."<sup>29</sup>

A post-coup dispatch from November 7, 1953 indicates that Ambassador Henderson may have accepted Dulles' offer. In this dispatch Henderson requests that State Department use an embassy-drafted "statement" to serve "as the basis for an editorial or article in either one of the three American publications having most influence in Iran; namely New York Times, Time Magazine, and Newsweek." At this time the embassy was apparently concerned with stabilizing Iran under the new leadership of General Zahedi. According to Henderson's ispatch, the embassy deemed it "vital" for Zahedi's Government "to adopt a planned program of public information" regarding the state of Iran's oil industry and its relations with Great Britain and the US. Henderson goes on to state that "the Embassy believes it would be extremely useful for a publication well known in Iran to carry" the embassy-drafted statement in the form of an editorial. Henderson even specifies a preferred location, writing that given the "article's length, it might possibly be most advantageously used in the Sunday Editorial supplement of the *New York Times*."<sup>30</sup>

28 'Report on the Use of Anti-Soviet Material within Iran during Period Covered by Last Two Years.'

29 Department of State Airgram from John Foster Dulles to the United States Embassy, Iran. [Placement of Stories in U.S. Media], June 26, 1953.

30 *United States Embassy, Iran Dispatch from Loy Henderson to the Department of State*. "Use of Material in American Publications concerning Iranian Situation" November 7, 1953.

Ambassador Henderson's dispatch is informative for it not only posits the American press as a useful tool in manipulating Iranian public opinion, but the accompanying statement also illustrates the type of propaganda the embassy wanted to convey to the Iranian and American publics. According to the statement Iran has been a source of "headaches" for American policymakers. The "Wily Dr. Mosadeq [sic]," has engaged "in a policy of open blackmail against the free world." The substance of this blackmail is described as Mosaddeq's threat that Iran would eventually fall to communism if not financially supported by the US. "When the representatives of the free world would point out to Dr. Mosadeq [sic] that he was leading Iran in the direction of communism," continues the statement, "he was accustomed to reply, 'so much the worse for you.'" It goes on to say:

Like politicians in other countries who bear great responsibility for the loss of the independence of their people, Mosadeq [sic] seemed to believe that he could cooperate with the communists to his own advantage...He permitted the communist elements in Iran considerable latitude in stimulating the hatreds between various groups of Iranians and in stirring up hostility against the countries of the free world. In the latter days of Mosadeq's [sic] regime it would appear that it was being transformed into a vehicle in which the communists would be able to hitch hike to power.

When "the Iranian people finally realized the situation," it continues, they rose up and ousted Mosaddeq.<sup>31</sup>

Thereafter the embassy's statement focuses on Iran's current financial instability and its relations with Great Britain and the US, stressing that the American government is doing all it can to help Iran in this unstable situation.

Whether or not the embassy's request was actually distributed to the publishers specified by Henderson is impossible to verify. Nonetheless, a careful review of the New York Times' editorial section during November of 1953 yields two editorials that resemble the embassy's statement in certain key respects. The first editorial describes Mosaddeq not only as deranged, but also as having led Iran close to a communist coup. The editorial further characterizes the Iranian leader as the "darling" of "both the nationalist fanatics and the Communist plotters" in Iran. It goes on to thank the Shah of Iran, General Zahedi, and the Iranian people for defeating Mosaddeq and placing him on trial on the charge that he "brought his country to the verge of ruin and exposed it to the

31 Ibid.

danger of Communist subjugation.”<sup>32</sup> This charge is curiously similar to that which Ambassador Henderson’s aforementioned statement makes.

Another more extensive editorial, dating from Sunday, November 15, 1953—a little more than a week after Henderson’s request to place the embassy’s statement in the Sunday editorial section of the *New York Times*—reveals a closer similarity to the embassy-drafted statement. The editorial describes the post-coup situation in Iran during Mosaddeq’s trial. According to the author:

Emotion and reason waged war in the minds of most Iranians this week as Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh, the aged invalid who outraged reason but deeply stirred the nation’s emotions...went on trial for rebellion. Reason told them that in most respects the regime of the stubborn, egocentric old man had brought Iran close to disaster. Bankruptcy and Communist domination were imminent when he was toppled from power by supporters of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and the Present Premier, Gen. Fazlollah Zahedi last August.<sup>33</sup>

Just as the embassy-drafted statement asserts that Mosaddeq fanatically drove his country towards a communist collapse before he was ousted by popular forces, so too does this editorial. It would be difficult to dismiss as coincidence the similarity between this editorial and what the embassy wanted the *Times* to say. While it is not clear that the embassy and the State Department were manipulating American media outlets prior 1953, it certainly is possible. It would be helpful here to reiterate that throughout the early 1950s, the embassy, with the State Department’s knowledge, had been waging an extensive anti-communist propaganda war in Iran. As the above illustrates this war not only included embassy provided propaganda to the Iranian press, but also seems to have included the manipulation of American media outlets in 1953. According to Ambassador Henderson these media outlets—the *New York Times* in particular—held extensive influence in Iran.

Parallel to the embassy’s and the State Department’s propaganda campaign, the CIA was also engaged in covert operations in Iran. According to the historian Mark Gasiorowski, the CIA was engaged in covert operations in Iran since the late 1940s at the direction Truman Administration.

32 “Mossadegh on Trial,” *New York Times*, November 10 1953.

33 Robert C. Dowty, “Mossadegh as Prisoner Still Stirs the Masses,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1953.

The CIA's operation BEDAMN was "a propaganda and political action program" that began in 1948 and extended until Mosaddeq's ouster.<sup>34</sup> Under BEDAMN, "anti-communist articles and cartoons were planted in Iranian newspapers, books and leaflets critical of the Soviet Union and the Tudeh party [Iran's communist party] were written and distributed, rumors were started, etc."<sup>35</sup> Gasiorowski describes the political action aspects of this operation as covert attempts to divide Mosaddeq's political base in the majlis and undermine the unity of the National Front. This was achieved mainly through the extensive bribery of Iranian politicians. Given that the Truman Administration did not actively seek to oust Mosaddeq, this political action program seems out of place. Thus, Gasiorowski concludes, it "appears that the decision to undermine Mosaddeq through BEDAMN was taken within the CIA itself."<sup>36</sup>

Two factors suggest that the CIA's propaganda war may have included the manipulation of American media outlets. First, during this period there was an exceptionally close relationship between the State Department and the CIA. In 1951 Allen Dulles became the CIA's Deputy Director of Plans and in August 1952 he became the agency's Deputy Director. When Eisenhower became President in 1953, Allen Dulles was appointed Director of the CIA and his older brother, John Foster Dulles, became the Secretary of State. As the above telegram illustrates, the latter believed it was possible for the State Department to plant stories in American media outlets. Given the close familial relationship between the heads of the State Department and the CIA, it is likely that this ability also extended to the CIA.

Second, as the CIA's declassified history of the coup illustrates, the CIA certainly believed it had the ability to plant stories in American media outlets in relation to Iran. According to the author of this history, in late July 1953 CIA agents in Iran requested "that US papers reflect the Iranian press campaign against Mossadeq [sic] and that inspired articles be placed in the US press."<sup>37</sup> This request, however, remains shrouded in mystery because the author does not specify who made it or to whom it was made. It nonetheless illustrates that at least some CIA agents believed it was possible for the agency to manipulate American media outlets.

34 Gasiorowski, 268.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 269

37 *CIA Clandestine Service History*, "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952 - August 1953," March 1954, 29.

During the early 1950s, therefore, it seems likely that the CIA, like the embassy and State Department, had both the ability and incentive to manipulate American media outlets. Indeed, as Carl Bernstein has persuasively argued in his essay outlining the CIA's dubious relations with powerful American news publications, "American publishers," more often than not, "were willing to commit the resources of their companies to the struggle against 'global Communism.'" According to Bernstein, the CIA's "relationship with the [New York Times] was by far its most valuable among newspapers, according to CIA officials."<sup>38</sup> Two other valuable relationships, he says, were those between the agency and both Time and Newsweek.

There are at least two instances in which it seems that the CIA manipulated the New York Times' coverage of Iran. The first occurred in July 1952. By March of that year, Britain's covert operations to sow tension between Mosaddeq and other members of the National Front began to take effect.<sup>39</sup> The British sought to destroy Mosaddeq's base of support within the majlis so that an individual more sympathetic to Britain's oil interest could replace him as prime minister. In March of that year, Ahmad Qavam, the British candidate, met with English representatives in Paris. While the US government did not openly support these efforts, Ambassador Henderson did approve of the British choice of prime minister.<sup>40</sup> On July 16, Mosaddeq, having become aware of the plot against him, resigned in retaliation. This allowed Qavam to assume power. Yet as Gasiorowski writes, "Massive demonstrations calling for Mosaddeq's return were organized by the National Front."<sup>41</sup> By July 21, "Mosaddeq was triumphantly swept back into office."<sup>42</sup> According to Gasiorowski, Qavam's efforts to assume power collapsed because he did not have widespread support. Mosaddeq, on the other hand, was able to reassume his post because large numbers of pro-Mosaddeq supporters enveloped the streets of Tehran.

Curiously, the CIA and the New York Times presented these events of July as victory for Iran's communist party and evidence of a looming communist coup. In reality, however, as Gasiorowski makes clear, it was a demonstration of Mosaddeq's broad based support among the Iranian public. Nonetheless, a CIA assessment from July 31 describes the principal result of the July riots as "bringing into sharp focus the major issue in Iran

38 Carl Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media," *Rolling Stone*. October 20, 1977.

39 Gasiorowski, 265.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

today: whether or not Iran will fall behind the Iron Curtain.” The CIA’s report goes on to claim that Tudeh was prepared to “seize power” in July, yet refrained from doing so because of “Mossadegh’s [sic] tremendous popularity.” Although the report cedes that the communists would not take the government immediately, “the riots of 21 July,” it says, “accelerated immeasurably the Tudeh programs.”<sup>43</sup> The New York Times had a similar ominous conception of the events of July. Like the CIA, the Times portrayed the situation in Iran as communist subversion. According to a July 23 Times editorial, the “grave” situation in Iran “must cause rejoice in the Kremlin.”<sup>44</sup> Mosaddeq’s return as prime minister, it claims, “can only lead to national suicide, with the Soviets as the heirs to what remains.”<sup>45</sup> While it is not certain that the CIA manipulated the New York Times’ coverage during July 1952, the close resemblance between their conceptions of the events of that month makes it conceivable.

The second instance of possible CIA manipulation of the New York Times occurred in August 1953, during the CIA’s actual coup against Mossadeq. By June and July of 1953 public opinion in Iran was gradually turning against Mosaddeq. The CIA’s Operation AJAX, aimed at toppling the Iranian leader, was in full swing. On August 13 the CIA obtained two firmans, or royal decrees, from the Shah. One dismissed Mosaddeq, while the other appointing General Fazollah Zahedi as prime minister. Mossadeq, however, caught wind of what was occurring and moved to preempt the coup. The Shah fled Iran, while Zahedi was safely hidden in a CIA hideout. According to the CIA’s declassified history of the coup, the agency quickly recognized that “strong effort must be made to convince the Iranian public that Zahedi was the legal head of government and that Mossadeq was the usurper who has staged a coup.”<sup>46</sup> At this end, the CIA sought to utilize the New York Times to publicize the firmans and elaborate upon Zahedi’s position.

Consequently, on the morning of August 16 “two correspondents of the New York Times were taken to Shimran, by [CIA] station arrangement, to see Zahedi.”<sup>47</sup> On this day, however, the Times’ correspondents were only able to meet with Zahedi’s son. Nonetheless, on August 17, after General Zahedi was safely in CIA hands, the Times ran an article quoting him from a “secret hideout” saying “he was the rightful Premier”

43 CIA, “Assessment of Current Situation,” July 31 1952.

44 “A Grave Turn in Iran,” New York Times, July 23 1952

45 Ibid.

46 “Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran,” 45.

47 Ibid. 47- 48.

and that the situation in Iran was stable.<sup>48</sup> This ‘secret hideout’ was, in fact, a CIA hideout in Tehran. The story goes on to quote the very information the CIA wanted to publicize—namely Zahedi’s charge that it was Mossadeq who, in fact, staged a “coup.”<sup>49</sup> A Times article from the following day repeats verbatim the CIA’s propaganda: Zahedi was the rightful ruler of Iran and it was Mosaddeq who had sought to topple the government. According to this article, the situation began when the Shah “wrote out two decrees, one dismissing Dr. Mossadegh [sic] as Premier and the other appointing General Zahedi.”<sup>50</sup>

Thus, in both instances the New York Times’ interpretation of events in Iran is strikingly similar to the CIA’s view of the situation there. It is plausible, therefore, that the agency used its close relationship Times to manipulate the publication’s coverage of Iran in both July 1952 and August 1953. Given that the CIA was actively attempting to undermine Mosaddeq throughout the early 1950s, it is also conceivable that the agency had been utilizing the Times in a propaganda war against Mosaddeq well before July 1952. While it is impossible to verify whether or not the CIA did manipulate the Times before this year, it is clear that between the 1951 and 1953 this publication consistently presented Mosaddeq as a fanatic extremist, leading his country to a communist collapse. In doing so the Times helped ingrain a fear of an imminent Soviet takeover into the American public mind by continually repeating it in its daily coverage. As the Times was one of the three most influential publications in Iran, its coverage also shaped Iranian minds, making the atmosphere ripe for a coup. Indeed, as will become apparent shortly, a key component of the CIA’s coup against Mosaddeq was inducing Iranians to believe that Mosaddeq was communist stooge.

### **The New York Times’ Coverage of Mosaddeq**

After Mosaddeq announced his intention to nationalize the Iranian oil industry in 1951 a Times’ story introduced him as the “aged leader of the extremist National Front.” It goes on to describe him as “[o]ne of the country’s most successful demagogues” who “frequently breaks into tears in the course of his perorations before parliament.”<sup>51</sup>

48 Kennet, Love. “Shah Flees Iran After Move to Dismiss Mossadegh Fails,” New York Times, August 17 1953.

49 Ibid.

50 Kennet, Love. “Statues of Shah Torn Down in Iran,” New York Times, August 18 1953.

51 Michael Clark, “Premier Pledges Reform in Iran,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1951.

Such a characterization, however, serves little informative purpose. Besides implying that Mosaddeq is emotionally unfit to lead his country, the story offers no real insight into the accuracy of his orations. A few days later the Times ran another story repeating a near identical characterization of the Iranian leader. According to the author, “[t]he tidal wave of nationalist fervor that engulfed the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company...has now unexpectedly cast one of Iran’s most redoubtable demagogues, the aged Mohammed Mossadegh, upon the pinnacle of power.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, on the eve of a momentous event in the history of Iranian nationalism, the nationalist movement’s leader was presented to American readers as little more than an extremist demagogue.

As the situation in Iran deteriorated in the post-nationalization period as a result of Britain’s oil embargo and its covert campaign to divide Mosaddeq’s political base in the National Front, the Times continued its demonization of the Iranian leader, characterizing him as a dictator. In July 1952 Mosaddeq requested “emergency powers” from the Majlis in order assert control over the deteriorating situation.<sup>53</sup> After bringing Iran “to the verge of bankruptcy,” claims one editorial, Mosaddeq “is now trying to take [Iran] further along the road to ruin by demanding dictatorial powers for six months, on the plea that he needs these powers to pull Iran out of the crisis into which he has plunged it.” This request, concludes the author, “is in effect a legalized coup d’état that smacks of Hitler’s technique.”<sup>54</sup>

Later that year, the Times began warning its readers of a possible communist coup in Iran. One story described the fears of American policymakers regarding Iran. Their “primary concern,” writes the author, “is the possibility of a Communist coup in Iran that would end all ties with the West and carry the country directly into the Soviet camp.”<sup>55</sup> An editorial from the following day likewise warns of the communist threat. After quoting the perceptions of Winston Churchill and Dwight D. Eisenhower on the strategic importance of Iran, the editorial asserts that “[t]he really vital thing is to save Iran from the Communists.” This can be achieved, it says, through certain American actions, including, among other things, “encouragement for the right men and policies” in Iran

51 Michael Clark, “Premier Pledges Reform in Iran,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1951.

52 Michael Clark, “Premier of Iran: New Iran Premier Foe of Foreigners,” *New York Times*, May 7, 1951.

53 Gasiorowski, 266

54 “A Bid For Dictatorship” *New York Times*, July 15, 1952.

55 “Iranian Situation Disturbs Acheson,” *New York Times*, August 10, 1952.

and “a firm pursuit of the anti-Communist containment policy, which should help to deter the Russians.”<sup>56</sup>

An interesting report on US public opinion on Iran, circa November 1952, reveals that Americans by this time were, in fact, imbued by an intense fear of a looming communist takeover in Iran. As the report writes, “the possibility of Soviet control of Iran has been the major element present in practically all public discussions concerning that country.” According to the report, “U.S. commentators” perceived the instability in Iran following the nationalization of the oil industry as a prelude to “an economic and political upheaval,” and eventually, “a communist-orientated regime coming to power.” While these commentators did not foresee a Soviet invasion of Iran, they foresaw the “possibility of an internal communist coup which would result in Iran becoming a satellite of Moscow.”<sup>57</sup>

In addition to attacking Mosaddeq’s character and warning of a looming communist coup, the *New York Times* depicted the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry as a hostile affront to the civilized world. Because a communist-free Iran was often described as integral to maintaining the “democratic world,” editorialists characterized the nationalization as little more than a reckless action deriving from “an orgy nationalist feeling.”<sup>57</sup> Others described it as an “emotional landslide [that] has threatened to overwhelm the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.”<sup>58</sup> The *Times*’ coverage rarely dealt with the legitimate grievances and aspirations of Iranian nationalists, but instead focused near exclusively on Iran’s geopolitical importance to the West. As one article writes, “The actual conduct of the company [AIOC] is of little importance, for in the context of Iranian affairs, myth is far more important than reality.”<sup>59</sup> Not only would the West lose a supply of oil as a result of the nationalization, went one story, but Iran’s eventual collapse would “undermine the commercial, political and military position of the Western power in the Middle East.”<sup>60</sup>

Nationalism in the Middle East, as a whole, was an anathema to American objectives. As a NSC staff study from April 1952 illustrates, policymakers viewed political

54 “A Bid For Dictatorship” *New York Times*, July 15, 1952.

55 “Iranian Situation Disturbs Acheson,” *New York Times*, August 10, 1952.

56 “Crisis in the Middle East,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1952.

57 Department of State, Division of Public Studies Report. “U.S. Public Opinion on Iran,” November 10, 1952.

57 “Emotion Versus Common Sense,” *New York Times*, May 3 1951.

58 Michael Clark, “Course of Events Forces Premiers Hand,” *New York Times*, June 3 1951.

59 Ibid.

60 Clifton Daniel, “Crisis Over Iran’s Oil Affects Whole Mid-East” *New York Times*, May 20, 1951.

change in the Middle East as a “basic threat” to American interests in the region’s oil and strategic waterways, such as the Suez Canal, because “internal political change may lead to disorder and...to a situation in which regimes orientated to the Soviet Union could come to power.” Thus, the overall American objective “should be to guide this process of political change...into channels that will effect the least compromise of Western interests and will offer the maximum promise of developing stable non-communist regimes.”<sup>61</sup> The US Government viewed Iranian nationalism, specifically, with intense suspicion. In the Truman administration’s last policy statement on Iran, the situation was described as “unfavorable to the maintenance of control by a non-communist regime for an extended period of time.” According to the statement, losing Iran to the Soviet Union would not only remove Iranian oil from the “free world,” but also damage the American position in the entire Middle East. American policy towards Iranian nationalism, it says, should be to “try to direct it into constructive channels.”<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, by 1952 the US government was deeply apprehensive about nationalism in the Middle East. Given the American government’s longstanding suspicion of Iranian nationalism and the fact that both the CIA and the embassy were engaged in extensive propaganda warfare in Iran, the similarity between the US government’s conception of Iranian nationalism and that of the New York Times makes it plausible that the latter was being manipulated. Indeed, as Bernstein writes, during the Cold War struggle against communism “the traditional line separating the American press corps and government was often indistinguishable,” as publishers willingly employed their resources to further American objectives.<sup>63</sup>

### **The CIA’s Coup D’état**

With the change in American administrations in 1953, the CIA was given permission to oust Mosaddeq through Operation AJAX. Perhaps the most important aspect in this operation was its effective manipulation of public opinion in Iran. Indeed, the opinion of the masses had become a central aspect of Iranian politics by July of 1952.

61 National Security Council. “United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Arab States and Israel” [Annex to NSC 129], April 7, 1952.

62 National Security Council, NSC 136/1, “United States Policy regarding the Present Situation in Iran,” Top Secret Report, November 20, 1952.

63 Bernstein.

In that month Mosaddeq was swept back into power by mass public demonstrations. A little more than a year later, however, with the CIA's encouragement, mass demonstrations once again changed the course of Iranian politics by removing him from office.

Mossadeq's ouster by popular forces was largely the result of the CIA's efforts to paint him as a communist stooge. To do so the CIA engaged in extensive psychological warfare that reached its pinnacle in August 1953.<sup>64</sup> This campaign included large amounts of anti-Mosaddeq propaganda that was produced and distributed by the agency.<sup>65</sup> It also utilized extensive bribing of Iranian politicians to organize anti-Mossadeq protests.<sup>66</sup> According to the CIA's declassified history, another aspect of this campaign was the agency's "black propaganda in the name of the Tudeh party, threatening [religious] leaders with savage punishment if they opposed Mossadeq."<sup>67</sup>

As mentioned above, the CIA believed it extremely important to portray August coup against Mosaddeq as the reverse. In other words, the agency sought to portray coup as one by Mosaddeq against the shah. To do so the CIA needed to publicize Mosaddeq's alleged coup attempt and the shah's firmans dismissing him. By the morning of August 19 both the firmans and alleged coup attempt received mass publicity in Iranian newspapers.<sup>68</sup> The pro-Shah crowds that eventually ousted Mosaddeq began gathering later that morning. In the perspective of the CIA, the members of these crowds made a "personal choice between Mosaddeq and the Shah" and were "stirred up by the Tudeh activity."<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, two days earlier CIA agents paid off large crowds to pose as Tudeh protestors. According to Gasiorowski, "[t]his 'fake' Tudeh crowd... was designed to provoke fears of a Tudeh takeover and thus rally support to Zahedi."<sup>70</sup> As Mosaddeq's subsequent ouster illustrates, the CIA was quite successful in provoking fear of communist coup.

64 CIA Clandestine Service History, "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953," March 1954. 36

65 Ibid., 20.

66 Gasiorowski, 274.

67 "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran," 36.

68 "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran," 65.

69 Ibid.

70 Gasiorowski, 274.

## Conclusion and Consequences

The irony of this situation is immediately apparent to the critical observer. The CIA, the embassy, and the State Department had long believed Mosaddeq was the vehicle through which communists would eventually seize power. Yet, in the absence of concrete evidence to support this claim, the CIA had to manufacture the fiction of communist strength. The CIA achieved this by issuing black propaganda against the country's religious leaders in Tudeh's name and by organizing fake Tudeh rallies. In the US, on the other hand, it is likely that the CIA used its close relationship to the New York Times to inspire articles stressing the likelihood of a communist takeover of Iran. The New York Times' coverage of the events of July 1952 and August 1953 stand out as possible examples of CIA manipulation, as the paper's coverage is nearly identical to the CIA's perceptions of the Iranian situation. Given the absence of evidence substantiating a looming communist takeover, one can reasonably conclude that the CIA's coup against Mosaddeq was not motivated by an objective analysis of the actual political situation in Iran, but rather by the intense fear and uncertainty of Soviet intentions in Iran.

Indeed, Iran's long history of nationalism and opposition to foreign interference renders American fears suspect. Since the late 1800s, nationalists fought to assert Iranian control of their nation's natural resources. The nationalization of Iran's greatest resource in 1951 represented the culmination of these efforts. Considering that Iranian nationalists had fought so long to assert their sovereignty from foreign powers, it makes little sense that they would allow their country to be gobbled up by the Soviet Union. The 1940s, as I have illustrated, was actually a period in which the majlis consistently rebuffed Soviet machinations. The atmosphere of the Cold War, however, was not always conducive to a rational assessment of Third World nationalism.

The problem with such ill-conceived policies is that they hold lasting repercussions. For Iranians the coup effectively suppressed their democratic aspirations and inaugurated the twenty-eight year brutal dictatorship of Mohammad Reza Shah. During this period the shah served as a faithful Cold War ally to the US. For American policymakers the shah represented 'stability' in the region, as his regime was a seemingly strong anti-communist force. It was for this reason, in part, that the Nixon administration consistently provided the shah with high-tech, expensive weapons.<sup>71</sup> Throughout the 1970s the US viewed the shah "as the policeman of the Gulf."<sup>72</sup>

71 Keddle, 163.

72 Ibid.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979, however, shattered American illusions about the shah's 'stability.' It also illustrated that the 1953 coup did not completely destroy Iran's democratic experiment. Indeed, the revolution represented its continuation in albeit a different, Islamic form. The new regime brought to power by the revolution, however, was decidedly hostile to the US. Thus, while the coup against Mosaddeq offered short-term gains to American objectives, in the long it was disastrous to them.

According to Rashid Khalidi, one of the most significant factors shaping the Middle East today is "[t]he growth in power of an independent Iran completely outside the orbit of any state."<sup>73</sup> This power, he says, has been furthered by the American decimation of Iran's two most formidable regional foes: Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, Iran has been largely free to extend its influence throughout the region. Whether this extended influence is for the better or worse of the peoples of the Middle East is difficult to tell. Had the coup against Mosaddeq and the subsequent American support for the hated shah not occurred, tensions between the US and Iran today might not have been so extreme. In the absence of American-Iranian tensions a large barrier to regional cooperation would have been removed.

Yet largely as a result of the deep suspicion engendered by the coup, cooperation of any sort is difficult. Indeed, as numerous commentators have noted, Iran today has consistently accused both the US and Great Britain of meddling in its internal affairs.<sup>74</sup> These accusations were particularly intense during the summer of 2009, when Iran witnessed mass protest over the country's disputed elections. The Iranian regime even detained several staff members of the British embassy on charge that they were "inciting protests."<sup>75</sup> Although the protests in Iran were certainly genuine expressions of mass discontent, the Iranian regime has good reason to suspect outside manipulation. In an absurd twist of history, it appears that the CIA, at least under the Bush administration, was engaging in covert operations to destabilize the Iranian regime.<sup>76</sup>

73 Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis*, 228.

74 See, for instance, Chip Cummis, "Iran Says West Encouraged Protests," *Wall Street Journal*, December 30, 2009 and John F. Burns, "Ayatollah, Calling Britain Enemy No. 1, Taps Into Deep Distrust Rooted in History," *New York Times*, July 4, 2009.

75 John F. Burns "Iran Threatens Trial for Detained British Embassy Employees," *New York Times*, July 4, 2009.

76 Seymour Hersh, "Preparing the Battle Field: the Bush Administration steps up its secret moves against Iran," *The New Yorker*, 7 July 2008.

According to Seymour Hersh's extensive article on the subject, these operations may have included financial aid for US designated terrorist organizations, such as the Mujahideen-e-Khalq.<sup>77</sup>

The US today is deeply concerned with Iran's nuclear ambitions. Diplomatic relations between the two countries are extremely tense. In such a situation, ill-conceived policies, such as CIA covert operations to destabilize the regime, are particularly dangerous to both Iranians and Americans. They not only give the regime an excuse to crack down hard on opposition movements, but they serve as a barrier to mutual cooperation in the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The US should seek to constructively engage the Iranian regime instead of issuing bellicose statements. Two steps towards that process would be to end efforts to foment instability in Iran and an American recognition of the past trauma the US has inflicted upon that country. As this paper has argued, CIA covert operations in Iran have been disastrous to the people of the country and have not promoted the region's 'stability.' Bearing this in mind, Americans should learn from history and avoid the mistakes of the past.

