



# HERODOTUS

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Volume XXX • Spring 2020

Stanford University Department of History

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Department of History  
Stanford University

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*Herodotus* is a student-run publication founded in 1986 by the Stanford University Department of History and the History Undergraduate Student Association (HUGSA). It bears the name of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, the 5th century BCE historian of the Greco-Persian Wars. His Histories, which preserve the memory of the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, were written so that “human achievements may not become forgotten in time, and great and marvelous deeds . . . may not be without their glory.” Likewise, this journal is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the best undergraduate work of Stanford University’s Department of History. Our published pieces are selected through a process of peer review. As a final note, *Herodotus*’ volume numbering system erroneously begins at 1990 rather than at 1986. We have, however, chosen to retain the existing numbering system for the sake of continuity.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In April 1918 the Spanish Flu epidemic migrated to Stanford University, a campus already altered by World War I. Students donned masks made of cheesecloths, fraternities transformed into infirmaries, and all social gatherings were prohibited. The university emerged from these global events with a deepened connection to the world beyond campus. The cover of the thirtieth edition of *Herodotus* — an image of the university's Main Quad during the 1918 epidemic — pays tribute to the resilience of Stanford, its students, its professors, and its workers.

As COVID-19 evolves into a global pandemic, our community now confronts its cultural, social, and economic consequences. The inequality in disseminating valuable resources during the COVID-19 pandemic echoes the conflict of the Spanish flu epidemic. Such outbreaks, epidemiologists remind us, are cyclical. What we learn from past events clarifies present moments. Medicine and history are sisters of this essential tenet.

Today, as the humanism of medicine becomes increasingly imperative, so is the need to illuminate and understand the past. By examining history, we uncover and listen to the narratives behind evolving institutions, ethics, and ideologies; we analyze the chronology of events that ultimately materialize into the present. Whether historians or physicians, engineers or businessmen, we must all trace how the patterns of yesterday sculpt our actions today.

HERODOTUS

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# THE BLOW THAT WAS HEARD ACROSS THE CHANNEL: ELIZ- ABETH I'S INDIRECT RESPONSE TO JOHN KNOX'S INFAMOUS *THE FIRST BLAST*

Sofia Patino-Duque

Introduction by David Como, Professor of History, Stan-  
ford University

Sofia Patino-Duque's incisive and creative essay was written for my course on "Political Thought in Early Modern Britain." Patino-Duque began with a deep interest in the question of how Queen Elizabeth I of England (reign 1558-1603) managed to rule her kingdom, despite and in the face of the patriarchal and often oppressive gender regime that prevailed in early modern Europe. Sofia also wanted to explore the ways that "political thought" – usually conceived as a rarefied field of intellectual endeavor – actually affected political life on the ground. She chose to do this by looking at the famously misogynistic polemical tract *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, written by John Knox, the legendary Calvinist reformer and one of the fathers of Scottish Protestantism. Knox's work, written on the eve of Elizabeth's unexpected accession to the throne, expatiated in lurid terms upon the unfitness and ungodliness of feminine governance. Patino-Duque's paper tried to show how Elizabeth I, after arriving at the pinnacle of power, navigated and indeed at times managed to exploit the very patriarchal assumptions and misogynistic tropes that found expression in Knox's book. Patino-Duque's thoughtful essay, built on a highly creative and historically nuanced concept, stands as a testimony both to its author's skill and to the canny and sophisticated techniques of self-presentation deployed by one of early modern Europe's most impressive political figures.

## The Blow That Was Heard Across the Channel: Elizabeth I's Indirect Responseto John Knox's Infamous *The First Blast* Sofia Patino-Duque

John Knox did not expect that his journey home would take him five months. With reports flooding Geneva in November 1558 that the Protestant princess Elizabeth would ascend the English throne, the English Marian exiles rejoiced at the news and what Elizabeth's accession would entail for them: a return home. With Elizabeth in the highest position of authority, Protestants, like the Scottish Knox, saw this as an important message for the security of all Protestants as the new queen would protect them and their rights to their religious practice.<sup>1</sup> Many would be returning after a five-year religious and political exile from the previous Catholic regime. Though Elizabeth was not his ruling monarch, Knox still saw the young Elizabeth's rise in power as an important step towards the larger Protestant cause as her supporters had painted her to be the great Protestant monarch whose influence would even her northern Catholic neighbor Scotland. Thus, when Knox stepped on the boat that would bring him back to his beloved Scotland in January 1559, he did not anticipate being barred entry to the English realm. Queen Elizabeth refused to issue the Scottish religious reformer a passport to travel across her kingdom, for the year before he had published a political tract challenging a woman's right to rule titled *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women*.<sup>2</sup> The title alone ensured the contents could not be interpreted otherwise; Knox had written, and then published, a radical piece arguing that women were denied the right to rule by God. Though *The First Blast* was written with Queen Elizabeth's Catholic half-sister in mind, Mary Tudor, the message and arguments expressed in the piece were ones that could undermine the newly-appointed queen's authority.

Although Knox was a minor figure in Queen Elizabeth's life, his tract remains important as it offers acute insight into atti-

1 Geddes MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot: A Portrait of John Knox* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1957), 111.

2 *Ibid.*, 100.

tudes on gender in the middle of the sixteenth century. The tract provides a critical framework for considering how Elizabeth may have negotiated with her gender identity during her reign. Though she was appalled by what Knox had written about queenship, Elizabeth ultimately conceded that governance is fundamentally gendered. However, instead of letting her gender debilitate her, she learned how to consolidate her power by building upon and manipulating public perceptions of her sex. What stemmed from Elizabeth's reign was a marriage of masculine authority and a new conscious form of queenship that altered the perception of ruling power. By placing her public and private speeches, as well as correspondences, in conversation with Knox's *The First Blast*, one sees Queen Elizabeth I's prowess in reconstructing gender to her benefit.

Though her subsequent reign was certainly not a direct response to Knox's comments, Elizabeth was aware of the gender debates surrounding her right to rule. English authorities had banned *The First Blast's* distribution and threatened its readership with the death penalty.<sup>3</sup> If *The First Blast's* attack on female rulers had been unfounded, the royal authority would not have issued this severe of a response. These actions illustrated that political elites could not afford to ignore the document and the conversation it ignited.<sup>4</sup> It was a broader discussion about gender and power that had caused Elizabeth to react to Knoxian critique, not necessarily him but what his tract represented. His opinions were an illustrative set of deep-rooted prejudices to which Elizabeth would need to respond in a calculated fashion throughout her reign.

*The First Blast* tract, though extreme, does offer examples of assumptions on gender and power that were widespread in early modern Britain. Knox based his opposition against the rulership of women on three main ideas. The first claimed that God had denied women the right to rule as women rulers were unnatural. The second targeted those inherent characteristics that would impede women from being rulers. And the third emphasized the importance of marriage and how women should be subjugated to their husband's will. What Knox did not anticipate was how a future female monarch like Elizabeth would turn these critiques to her

3 MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot*, 98.

4 Ibid.

advantage.

When Knox asserted that God had denied women the right to rule, Elizabeth refuted this claim by acknowledging how God had explicitly chosen her to lead the English people. His attack on how women lacked the characteristics that made men fundamentally better leaders were the exact characteristics Elizabeth drew upon to establish pathos in her speeches and writings. While Knox claimed that women should be subject to their husbands, Elizabeth twisted this reasoning and married herself to her kingdom to avoid the transition of power to a spouse. All of these reactions demonstrate how conscious Elizabeth was about gender during her reign and how she learned to balance, and indeed intertwine, monarchical power and gendered politics in the sixteenth century.

### **Sounding “*The First Blast*”**

At the beginning of 1558, no one could have expected how the axis of European power was about to shift. Both England and Scotland were under the stronghold of Catholic power.<sup>5</sup> For Marian exiles like Knox, the return to Protestant rule was limited to wishful thinking, especially as the Catholic Habsburgs continued to dominate Europe. As one of the last Protestant leaders to have left England when Queen Mary ascended the throne in 1553, Knox escaped to Europe to find religious toleration.<sup>6</sup> He was drawn to Geneva, Switzerland, where he mingled with Protestant thinkers like John Calvin, who convinced Knox to become a minister for a congregation of other religious English refugees which doubled as a platform to explore polemical ideas.<sup>7</sup>

Growing more critical towards Mary's regime and her anti-Protestant policies, Knox, alongside his fellow Marian exiles, launched a resistance campaign that consisted of pamphlets with messages and ideas intended to remove her from power.<sup>8</sup> His

5 Jane E.A. Dawson, "The Two John Knoxes: England Scotland and the 1558 Tracts," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42, no. 4 (October 1991): 556, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046900000518>.

6 James Stevenson McEwen, "John Knox," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last modified February 6, 2020, accessed March 4, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Knox>.

7 McEwen, "John Knox," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

8 During Queen Mary's reign she enacted religious oppression policies, such as burning Protestants alive, which were later remembered in history by the name of Marian persecution; Dawson, "The Two John," 556.

frustration with England's intolerant religious policy and volatile political power enraged him to write and publish a tract with a single purpose: to remove Queen Mary from the throne.<sup>9</sup> The gravity of his claims and the audacity of his argument required him to publish the piece anonymously.<sup>10</sup> The piece made its way across the English Channel and royal authorities were appalled. They immediately issued a royal proclamation commanding that anyone found in possession of the tract, and anyone who failed to destroy it, would face the death penalty.<sup>11</sup> Though the threat existed, the tract still made its rounds in political circles attracting debate on Knox's gendered and religious claims.

Knox intended his pamphlet to ignite revolution in England, but instead of fomenting rebellion, the tract sparked controversial discourse regarding rulership. Calvin criticized Knox for being a "thoughtless arrogant" for publishing the piece.<sup>12</sup> Knox, too, would later acknowledge that the pamphlet was unwise, but this admission came too late since his writings had found their way to the English Protestant princess Elizabeth.<sup>13</sup> Though Knox would eventually plead to Elizabeth for forgiveness, especially as she was not the person who inspired the piece, he did remain steadfast in his opinion that she could rest her claim "upon divine providence which could override the general law forbidding female rule."<sup>14</sup> She simply rejected both his apology and stipulation, and she extended her displeasure to anyone who had associated themselves with him, including Calvin.<sup>15</sup>

The very fact that Knox could not have guessed Elizabeth's rise to power makes *The First Blast* fascinating as it offers an unobstructed window into a sixteenth-century political theorist's opinions about gender. His piece offers important insight for historians who are interested in examining how gender affected Eliza-

9 Ibid., 556.

10 MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot*, 97.

11 Ibid., 98.

12 Sharon L. Jansen, *Debating Women, Politics, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 41.

13 MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot*, 100.

14 Jane E. A. Dawson, "John Knox (c. 1514–1572)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, last modified September 23, 2004, accessed March 3, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15781>.

15 MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot*, 100.

beth's reign, for the arguments in the pamphlet were made against the new Protestant queen throughout her rule. While Knox's opinion was neither novel nor widespread, he represented a larger movement of critics whose purpose was to undermine a female monarch's claim to power. In addition, Knox's *The First Blast* is a unique historical document as there is documented proof that Elizabeth had known of its existence and therefore elicits attention in seeing how gender criticism affected her reign.

### *A (Wo)Man's Divine Right to Rule*

Knox claimed in *The First Blast* that women were denied the right to rule not because of any actions they had committed, but because it was per God and nature's will. He felt that "[t]o promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire aboue any realme, nation, or citie, [was] repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reueled will and approued ordinance, and finallie it [was] the subuersion of good order, of all equitie and iustice."<sup>16</sup> By arguing female rulers were against nature, he not only depicted their rule as unnatural, but also as direct conflict with God's will. While Knox spewed this rationale, Elizabeth thought otherwise. In her first speech addressed to her lords at Hatfield, three days after Queen Mary's death, Elizabeth refuted the Knoxian theory that a woman ruler was "a thing most contrarious to [God's] reueled will and approued ordinance."<sup>17</sup> She even copied his language of "ordinance" and stated, "[she was] God's creature, ordained to obey His appointment."<sup>18</sup> Especially during the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth continued to discredit the Knoxian argument that "God by the order of his creation hath spoiled woman of authoritie and dominion."<sup>19</sup> God had not only "ordained" her to rule, but had also given "His permission" for her to govern "a body politic" as he saw her as the next legitimate ruler of England.<sup>20</sup> Her gender, contrary to Knoxian ideology, did

16 John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women 1558*, ed. Edward Arber (The Editor, 1878), 11, accessed February 19, 2020, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_First\\_Blast\\_of\\_the\\_Trumpet\\_Against\\_t/x9EyAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_First_Blast_of_the_Trumpet_Against_t/x9EyAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0).

17 Knox, *The First Blast*, 11.

18 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works* (Chicago, Ill.: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 51.

19 Ibid.

20 Knox, *The First Blast*, 11.

not restrict her from accepting her divine destiny. From her first speech, Elizabeth felt the need to establish that her right to rule was anything but in agreement with God's plans, despite what gender critics may have believed after reading Knox's tract.

In addition, Elizabeth did not mention that her gender would debilitate her rule nor that she was an exception to the rule because she was a female; Knox, on the other hand, would have disagreed. His tract drew upon Deborah, the prophetess of the God of the Israelites and the only female judge in the Book of Judges, to illustrate why she had been an exception to God's otherwise steadfast rule against women rulers.<sup>21</sup> Knox attributed her authority to God's suspension of divine commandment as the reason why He had allowed a woman to rule. Though people remembered Deborah as an exceptional leader in the Bible, her success, Knox argued, relied on her promoting God's Word and not her advancement of the law of the land (which would have been outside her jurisdiction as a female ruler).<sup>22</sup> She had known her place in society and therefore was a rare and commendable example of a legitimate female ruler. Knox suggested Deborah was exceptional because "[God] made her prudent in counsel, strong in courage, happie in regiment, and a blessed mother and deliuerer to his people."<sup>23</sup> Besides Deborah, Knox argued woman monarchs had cheated themselves to their thrones: "For that woman reigneth aboue man, she hath ohteined it by treason and conspiracie committed against God."<sup>24</sup> It was unfathomable for Knox to consider that a woman could naturally succeed without it being an exception to the norm.

While she may have wanted to be compared to Deborah, as the Israelite queen was revered for her steadfastness and success as a monarch, Elizabeth would not have wanted her legitimacy as a ruler to rely solely on an exception. Though she privately prayed to God to give "[her] strength so that [she], like another Deborah, ... may free Thy people of Israel from the hands of Thy enemies," she admired the Israelite for her strength and leadership, not because

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21 John Knox and Robert M. Healey, "Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 25, no. 2 (1994): 371, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2542887>.

22 Knox and Healey, "Waiting for Deborah," 379.

23 Knox, *The First Blast*, 40.

24 *Ibid.*, 49.

she desired to be her reincarnation.<sup>25</sup> In fact, Elizabeth also drew upon the biblical figures of Judith and Esther in the same prayer, which demonstrates more of her awareness towards the legacy she wished to uphold rather than replace.<sup>26</sup> While Elizabeth and her advisors drew upon imagery of Deborah, it was never with the intention of describing Elizabeth as a unique case. Deborah's iconography was used to emphasize that Elizabeth shared enlightened qualities with the Israelite judge and not to suggest that the English monarch was a carbon-copy. This is an important distinction, especially as Knox used Deborah to legitimize his argument that God had denied women the right to rule. Elizabeth never saw her authority as an exception but as the natural succession since she was next in line. In an exchange between Sir Robert Cecil and Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, Elizabeth wrote that "God hath raised me high...God hath made me to be queen" which emphasized God's role in approving her royal authority.<sup>27</sup> Her insistence on God's blessing challenges Knox's argument that God had denied women the right to rule.

Though Knox made bold statements about the unnaturalness of the female monarch, he and Elizabeth did not disagree on all aspects of governance; both understood the important role that nobility played in establishing the a ruler's legitimacy. For that reason, Knox warned nobles in *The First Blast* that those who "receiue[d] of women authoritie, honor or office, be assuredly persuaded, that in so maintaining that vsurped power, they declare[d] them selues enemies to God."<sup>28</sup> To avoid them becoming "enemies to God," he encouraged the men to "refuse [a queen's offer] to be her officers, because she is a traïtoresse and rebell against God."<sup>29</sup> Knox understood that he would rattle Queen Mary's foundation of governance by targeting the power structure that surrounded her, especially if he framed their support of the queen as an offense against God: "[Whoever] receiueth of a woman, office or authoritie, are adulterous and bastard officers before God."<sup>30</sup> Supporting

25 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 157.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., 337.

28 Knox, *The First Blast*, 49.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 48.

a woman monarch became a sinful activity because “[God] will neuer, I say, approue [a woman’s rule], because it is a thing most repugnant to his perfect ordinance.”<sup>31</sup> Knox argued that a nobleman would run the risk of going against God’s will for supporting “a thing most repugnant to his perfect ordinance.”<sup>32</sup> In addition, “[erecting] a woman to that honor, is not onely to inuert the ordre, which God hath established: but also it is to defile, pollute and prophane (so farre as in man lieth) the throne and seat of God.”<sup>33</sup> The decision to support and back a queen would entail turning away from God and his natural laws.

In contrast to Knox, Elizabeth promised her nobles the opposite of what *The First Blast* claimed: prosperity and God’s favor. While Knox berated female monarchs’ “weakness” because of their natural lack of good “counsel,” Elizabeth played into the Knoxian assumption of female weakness in “ciuil regiment” and appealed to her nobility for guidance.<sup>34</sup> In a speech at Hatfield, where she addressed her lords for the first time, she acknowledged the importance of “good advice and counsel.”<sup>35</sup> While Knox warned the nobility of the dangers of a queen, Elizabeth quickly squashed those fears by promising them, “with [her] ruling and you with your service may make a good account to almighty God and leave some comfort to our posterity in earth.”<sup>36</sup> She understood her limitations “as [she was] but one body naturally considered...to govern” and recognized, “[she] shall desire you all, my lords (chiefly you of the nobility everyone in his degree and power), to be assistant to [her], that [she] with [her] ruling [may be successful.]”<sup>37</sup> Importantly, she did not appeal to her gender here when she stated that she was “but one body naturally considered;” her word choice emphasized the enormity of the task ahead of her, which was to rule a nation, and how it would take the nobility’s “good advice and counsel” to succeed.<sup>38</sup> While Knox promised condemnation to any noble who supported a female monarch, Elizabeth promised shared prosperity

31 Ibid., 18.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 33.

34 Ibid., 12.

35 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 51.

36 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 52.

37 Ibid., 51.

38 Ibid.

of the land and also, crucially, suggested to members of the ruling elite that they would play a significant role in governing the kingdom. By appealing to the body which presented the largest threat to her rule, she understood, like Knox, that having the nobility support one's claim would only legitimize her authority and success.

### *She's the Man*

Instead of divorcing her gender and rule, Elizabeth found power in marrying the two. A prime example which contradicted Knoxian theory on gender and power was her speech at Tilbury in 1588, where she addressed a group of English soldiers who were readying themselves to fight the Spanish Armada. Looking only at the number of men and track record of both respective navies, the English were prepared for a defeat as there was no chance they could succeed against what was then the mammoth of European power. The queen's words, however, ignited spirit in these men. In her speech, Elizabeth drew upon her gender and on the specific characteristics that Knox had previously critiqued: "weak" and "feeble". She told the men that "I know that I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too."<sup>39</sup> With this example, Elizabeth illustrated to her men that though they too may feel "weak and feeble", they had the power, like she, to "have the heart and stomach of a king," and not just any king but "a king of England."<sup>40</sup> She resorted to using her gender in the speech not only to remind them of her womanly qualities, but also to show that anything is possible when one remained strong and courageous in the face of adversity. Though she was trying to build contrast between the images of a weak woman against the strength of a king, she was not saying that a woman could not rule—instead, she was playing into the stereotypes that Knox perpetuated and used these perceptions to help inspire her men when the odds were dire. After her short digression into her femininity, Elizabeth returned to her stately authority and promised the soldiers "in the word of a prince [that the soldiers] shall not fail"—evoking the masculine authority to legitimize her power.<sup>41</sup>

Her conscious use of her gender in her speeches illus-

39 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 326.

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Ibid.*

trates her advanced rhetoric. She turned what was perceived to be a weakness into an emotional and political strength. Instead of squirming away from her gender, Elizabeth used womanly and motherly qualities to instill pathos into her rhetoric, especially when addressing her public. She particularly played up the role of a mother when fending off complaints from Parliament about not marrying or producing any offspring, stating, “for every one of you, and so many as are English, are my children and kinfolks, of whom, so long as I am not deprived and God shall preserve me, you cannot charge me, without offense, to be destitute.”<sup>42</sup> She expanded upon this motherly rhetoric and argued that “though you [England] have had and may have many princes more mighty and wise sitting in this seat, yet you never had or shall have any that will be more careful and loving” for it was her “sexly weakness” which allowed her to feel the compassion she felt towards her kinsman.<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth successfully exploited her perceived femininity when she saw fit, a tactic which would have dumbfounded Knoxian gender theorists.

One of the many problems of Knox’s tract was its incapacity to depict women as anything but one-dimensional, a viewpoint that Elizabeth rejected as she saw how her gender gave her the fluidity to evoke her femininity when she saw fit. By Knox laying down what “[God] affirmeth woman to be a tendre creature, flexible, soft and pitifull,” he gave Elizabeth a framework to understand how she could twist those perceptions to her advantage.<sup>44</sup> Whether it was her intention to undermine her critics is not clear, but her specific use of words like “weak” and “feeble” point towards a collective understanding of the terms used against her sex. Her visit to Cambridge in 1564 illustrated this further: “Although feminine modesty, most faithful subjects and most celebrated university, prohibits the delivery of a rude and uncultivated speech in such a gathering of most learned men, yet the intercession of my nobles and my own goodwill toward the university incite me to produce one.”<sup>45</sup> Not only did she mention her “feminine modesty”, but she also concluded her speech to the “most learned men”

42 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 59.

43 *Ibid.*, 340.

44 Knox, *The First Blast*, 25.

45 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 87.

saying she “[had] detained your most learned ears so long with my barbarousness [Latin].”<sup>46</sup> Her use of “feminine modesty” and “barbarousness” illustrates how she leaned into the general public’s opinion of women to humble herself. By addressing the elephant in the room—her gender—she ended up achieving more clout from her followers by acknowledging her supposed female limitations and twisting them to her benefit—an unfathomable outcome for Knoxian theorists. In evoking female gender stereotypes, Elizabeth made the men in her company feel flattered so that they would pay more attention to her. Though she was a master of drawing upon her womanly qualities when needed, Elizabeth also used masculine authority to legitimize her claims. She did not shy away from using princely language, often addressing herself as “prince” or “king.” By drawing upon these traditionally masculine terms, Elizabeth may have implied that it was her prerogative, as a ruler, to invoke any title needed. When addressing Parliament during her famous Golden Speech, Elizabeth exemplifies a sophisticated pairing of masculine and female authority: “For myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king or royal authority of a queen as delighted that God made me His instrument to maintain His truth and glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, and oppression.”<sup>47</sup> In this one sentence, she not only laid claim to kingship and queenship, but also alluded to God’s approval as He had “made [her] His instrument.”<sup>48</sup> Her conscious choice of not feminizing her language, unless she evoked it, and her dominion of masculine authority revealed a union between an advanced rhetoric and conscious form of gender politics, a pairing which granted her the freedom to evoke any royal authority she desired.

### ***I Take You, England, To Be My Regally Wedded Husband***

Beyond her lasting mark on the rhetoric of queenship, Elizabeth challenged customs of marriage with her insistence that she remain the virgin Queen. For Knox, the idea of a woman wielding so much free will to make that decision would have been blasphemous. For her advisors, it was an obstacle they had not expected. However, she immediately raised the marriage question when she

46 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 89.

47 *Ibid.*, 342.

48 *Ibid.*

ascended the throne and made it clear that she had no intentions of marrying. She informed her advisors and Parliament that she was already committed: England was her spouse while her subjects were her children. She was “already bound unto an husband, which is the kingdom of England.”<sup>49</sup> Her coronation day had also, unbeknownst to anyone besides herself, been her wedding day. In a letter to the Scottish Ambassador William Maitland, Laird of Lethington, she told him that she was “married already to the realm of England when [she] was crowned with this ring, which [she] bear[ed] continually in token thereof.”<sup>50</sup> With this circular logic, she not only was able to create a sound argument, but also used her gender to achieve the outcome she desired most: remaining unmarried. She avoided the idea that “Man is not of the woman but the woman of the man” which Knox’s tract proclaimed.<sup>51</sup> She had succeeded in turning Knox’s argument against her critics and instead used the institution of marriage to give her more freedom than was thought possible for a woman in her position.

After witnessing the disaster of her half-sister’s marital union, Elizabeth saw marriage as a power trap. The second she agreed to marry someone, she would lose her power as it would be her duty, as Knox wrote, to “serue and obey man, not to rule and command” her husband.<sup>52</sup> She understood that a marital union would be the most glorious day for her spouse but a funeral for herself, stripped of her sovereign power. Though Elizabeth had advance knowledge of queenship, she could not disagree with the Knoxian argument that “[God] hath subueded [woman] to one... [H]e will neuer permit her to reigne ouer manie.”<sup>53</sup> Even if she found a husband who would allow her to rule, the public would still default kingly authority to her husband and not view her as the head sovereign.

Elizabeth twisted the marital language and rhetoric to her advantage. With the House of Commons scandalized by her refusal to marry, she retorted that “when the public charge of governing the kingdom came upon [her], it seemed unto [Elizabeth] as an

49 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 59.

50 *Ibid.*, 65.

51 Knox, *The First Blast*, 15.

52 *Ibid.*, 15.

53 Knox, *The First Blast*, 28.

inconsiderate folly to draw upon [herself] the cares which might proceed of marriage. To conclude, [she was] already bound unto an husband, which is the kingdom of England, and that may suffice you [from pressing the topic further.]”<sup>54</sup> The House of Commons, like her advisors, were less worried about who Elizabeth married and more concerned what this would mean for the line of succession. At one point, the House of Commons begged her to choose anyone in order to secure an heir: “Whosoever [your husband] be that your majesty shall choose, we protest and promise with all humility and reverence to honor, love, and serve as to our most bounden duty shall appertain.”<sup>55</sup> Their singular desire was for her to have a successor and particularly an heir who would uphold Protestant values. However, Elizabeth would never be convinced to forgo her status as a virgin queen nor her authority as sole ruling monarch.

Elizabeth played into what was expected of her as a wife, but unconventionally projected those expectations onto her metaphorical matrimony. An argument Knox brought up in *The First Blast* was a wife’s devotion to her husband, an idea Elizabeth happily applied to England. If her critics desired her to be devoted to a partner for life, let that partner be the very kingdom that infused her with power and authority. Knox claimed that “[f]or those that will not permit a woman to haue power ouer her owne sonnes, will not permit her (I am assured) to haue rule ouer a realme”—she had successfully turned his reasoning against him.<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth twisted the claim that a woman’s sole purpose was to be submissive to her husband. If that were the case, then she would need to subvert to her husband, England, which would mean she would need to pay heed to his needs, prosperity of the land, and take care of their children, her subjects. Her marriage, therefore, was destined for greatness as she and her “husband” held the same principle: to protect their realm at all costs. She astutely played into people’s perceptions of women and then used those stereotypes to her advantage.

### ***Conclusion***

The year 1558 was a pivotal year for both Knox and Elizabeth: the one published his most famous political tract, the other

54 Elizabeth, et al., *Collected Works*, 59.

55 *Ibid.*, 76.

56 Knox, *The First Blast*, 14.

gained a kingdom. Though Knox specifically attacked three aspects of female rule in *The First Blast*, his message ended up backfiring on him as he provided a framework for Elizabeth to manipulate her gender in her favor. She turned his language and claims against Knox and addressed each major point he made in his tract throughout her life as a public figure. She targeted Knox's major claims by defending her divine right, configuring her gender as a rhetorical asset, and not relinquishing her authority to a husband. What results from placing Elizabeth's words and actions into conversation with Knox's claims is a more nuanced perspective of the importance of gender in the sixteenth century. Elizabeth never saw her queenship as an opportunity to pioneer the female position in society; instead, she learned how to operate in a patriarchal structure and twist her gendered restrictions to her advantage. The question, therefore, is not if Elizabeth was a feminist, but rather, what tactics she used to ensure that her gender would be used to her benefit in a complex political environment. It would be more accurate to call her a visionary. When Knox concluded his essay writing that "the trumpet hath...blown" degrading women, he had no idea of the reply that awaited him by the most celebrated female monarch in history.<sup>57</sup>

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57 Knox, *The First Blast*, 53.

# SINKING IN A SEA OF POPPIES: HOW THE ENGLISH LOST THE OPI- UM TRADE TO THE SCOTTISH

Hagar Gal

Introduction by Nancy Kollman, Professor of History,  
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Hagar Gal's essay was written for the Department's capstone research seminar (History 209s). It is a model of erudition. Her research began with an interest in the origins of the opium export trade from China to England. A voracious reader and researcher, Hagar dove into a huge literature on the East India Company and found herself constantly encountering merchants and colonial administrators from Scotland. That led her to explore why particularly the Scots should be engaged here, which led to a completely original argument of how the Scottish Enlightenment shaped their worldview and how they were marginalized in British economy and politics in the heartland. Not surprisingly, in the colonial setting they advocated free trade and a transformation of Empire. Hagar uncovered underappreciated primary sources, including a journal founded by Scottish merchants in Canton to argue for the opium trade. The essay is original in argument, tightly organized and above all elegantly written – she weaves a fascinating and convincing historical tale, told with authority and style.

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## Sinking in a Sea of Poppies: How the English Lost the Opium Trade to the Scottish Hagar Gal

### *Introduction*

The sunset of the last Chinese empire was the sunrise of the British Empire. The rise of this modern empire and the fall of China's ancient civilization were hammered out on the back of opium.<sup>1</sup> Between the 1780s and the 1910s, an aggressive Britain forged a monopoly on the opium trade, forcibly opening the effeminate Qing Empire to the drug and thus swapping the balance of silver and power that marked the Qing's descent into slow, indebted decline and collapse.<sup>2</sup> Sunrise and sunset. Silver and gunpowder. Modernity and the orient.

If one reads the narrative a little more closely, however, it is not exactly the British who are to be found commanding the opium trade. Instead, in every corner to which one turns, there sits a Scottish figure, quietly minding or pouring the drinks. So, with a little more sifting, and even some delving, it becomes clear that by the 1830s it was the Scottish who were in control of the British opium trade: successfully heading the political, economic and intellectual campaign against the English East India Company's monopoly on the trade, and subsequently profiting from its collapse. By 1830, the largest opium house was the Scottish Jardine Matheson & Co.<sup>3</sup>

Until very recently, the dominant perspective of Chinese history on the opium trade has viewed the trade as foundational to the rise of the West over the East in the long nineteenth century. This conceptualization of the opium trade as an unleashing of hegemonic British power on the Qing was developed in the nine-

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1 Stephen Platt, *Imperial Twilight: The Opium War and the End of China's Last Golden Age*. NY: Boydell Press, 2009.

2 "China was once the superior civilisation of the world, not only the equal of Rome but far ahead of medieval Europe... So why did China fall behind in modern times? How could it be ignominiously condemned by Western and even Japanese imperialists in the late nineteenth century?" in John King Fairbank, *China: a new history*. (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1992), 2.

3 See for instance Hunt Janin, *The India-China opium trade in the nineteenth century*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland 1999), 65-67.

teenth century by the British themselves, and subsequently became an important element of the history of foreign imperialism in Chinese politics after Japanese invasion.<sup>4</sup> The narrative has consequently survived because of its political expedience for both sides of the historiography.

The following paper joins a burgeoning new literature challenging the historiography of the opium trade as an expression of British imperial power. At the centre of this new literature is a methodological model that focuses on the complex networks behind the monolithic view of the British Empire.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, by tracing the development of Scottish economic networks between the 1790s and 1830s, I bring together the history of English imperialism within the British Isles and the history of the British Empire abroad as one connected historical phenomenon. In doing so, I argue that the rise of the Scottish in the opium trade was an unwanted structural outcome of the English attempt to build an imperial economic system for their own profit, both at home and abroad.

The history of the Scottish involvement in the transition from the English East India Company's formal monopoly on the opium trade to the emergence of Jardine Matheson & Co.'s domination of the trade is reconstructed here in four parts. Firstly, I argue that England constructed an imperial state over the Scottish. I then trace the resultant Scottish participation in English imperial economic networks through the biographies of three Scots who led the pressure against the Company's monopoly. Finally, I analyse the campaign materials of the Scottish anti-monopoly pressure: the Glasgow East India Association's political pamphlets in Britain, and the *Canton Register's* free trade campaign in Canton.

Re-examination of the Scottish free trade lobbying campaigns in Britain and Canton builds on extant work to suggest that

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4 See for instance Alan Baumlér, *Modern China and opium: a reader*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); or John M. Jennings, *The opium empire: Japanese imperialism and drug trafficking in Asia, 1895-1945*. (Westport, Conn: Praeger 1997).

5 See for instance David Anthony Bello, *Opium and the limits of empire: drug prohibition in the Chinese interior, 1729-1850*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center 2005); Amar Farooqui, *Smuggling as Subversion: colonialism, Indian merchants, and the politics of opium*. New Delhi : New Age International, c1998; Ritu Birla, *Stages of capital: law, culture, and market governance in late colonial India*. (Durham: Duke University Press 2009).

English attempts at running imperial structures for their own profit backfired.<sup>6</sup> The Scottish so successfully adapted to the English imperial structures that pushed them out of the dominant economy of the British Isles that by 1830 the English lost control over the British Empire's opium trade.

***The subordination of the Scots; or, development of an English imperial system***

The East India Company was an integral tool of the economic and political system that had developed in the British Isles to the detriment of the Scottish by the turn of the nineteenth century. The standard historiography of this period describes the development of an English fiscal-military state centred in London during the long eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, the fiscal-military state describes the phenomenon in which state building, or the growth of an increasingly strong administrative and bureaucratic political structure, is driven by the government or state power needing to develop new methods to finance warfare.<sup>8</sup> In the English context, the fiscal-military state took the shape of a growing political administration coupled with a new fiscal system of tax revenue and government loans that provided resources from the public for state wars, largely against France.<sup>9</sup> London functioned as the centre of the new English "Leviathan" state: it was the location of the Bank of England, which funded the state through excise taxation on domestic and imported commodities, short-term credit loans, and of Parliament, which received the flow of revenue from monopoly

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6 The two main texts on the campaign of the Scottish manufacturers and the free traders in Canton leaned on in this paper are Yukihsa Kumagai's *Breaking into the monopoly: provincial merchants and manufacturers' campaigns for access to the Asian market, 1790-1833*. (Leiden: Brill, 2012) and Song-Chuan Chen's *Merchants of War and Peace: British Knowledge of China in the Making of the Opium War*, (HK: Hong Kong University Press, 2017).

7 See for instance Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the leviathan: building states and regimes in medieval and early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 205-206.

8 See for instance "Bureaucratic Constitutionalism in Britain," in Ertman, *Op. Cit.*, 208-221.

9 *Ibid.*

charter companies such as the East India Company.<sup>10</sup> In short, the English state was built upon a concentration and control of financial capital centralised in London.

After a century of conflict with England, the Act of Union of 1707 integrated Scotland as a subordinate part of England's newly developing state structure.<sup>11</sup> Conflict with France and within the British Isles was a key driver of the development of England's fiscal-military state model from 1688. Direct conflicts between England and France studded the long eighteenth century: the Nine Years' War of 1689-97, the War of Spanish Succession of 1701-1704, the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763, and, ultimately, the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815.<sup>12</sup> Over time, these conflicts, increasingly conducted by the East India Company, contributed to the consolidation of the London-centered English trade empire.<sup>13</sup> However, conflict with France also played out through an indirect rivalry that twined itself around and aggravated tense political relations between the English and Scottish. This political tension was a fundamental element of the building of the new English state, which had begun transforming itself into the Leviathan fiscal-military structure after the 1688 Glorious Revolution enabled the establishment of a new Parliamentary political system of Constitutional Monarchy.<sup>14</sup> The Revolution provided a new foundation for English-Scottish political tension by upending an attempt at a combined English-Scottish political rule through the deposition of James Stuart, who came from Scotland but sat on the

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10 Ertman, *Op. Cit.*, 185-187; See for instance Hoh-cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *The management of monopoly: a study of the English East India Company's conduct of its tea trade, 1784-1833*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).

11 See terms of and debates on the 1707 Act of Union as detailed in the account of David Scott, *The history of Scotland: Containing all the historical transactions of that nation, from the year of the world 3619. to the year of Christ 1726*. Impartially collected and digested into a regular method, (Westminster: Printed by J. Cluer and A. Campbell, in King's-street, near the Abbey, 1727), 725-734. Accessed through <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?>, 03/22/2020.

12 See for instance Ertman, *Op. Cit.*, 126-261.

13 See for instance Ertman, *Op. Cit.*, or Mui, *Op. Cit.*

14 See for instance Rosalind Mitchison, *A History of Scotland*, (Vol. 3rd ed. London: Routledge 2002), 210-234.

English throne.<sup>15</sup> The deposed monarch, James Stuart, had hoped to create an “Anglo-Scottish” court and council, but failed in the face of “intense English hostility” to providing official positions to the Scottish.<sup>16</sup>

After the Glorious Revolution deposed Stuart in 1688, the French continuously supported Scottish rebellions over the course of the eighteenth century that attempted to reinstate the Stuart monarchy.<sup>17</sup> The combination of French and Stuart support within Scotland thus created over time an association between Scottish political autonomy and treasonous or anti-English collaborative activity undermining the newly united Leviathan state structure.

Rather than resolving these mounting political tensions, the Act of Union between Scotland and England in 1707 introduced the Scottish as subordinates to the English Leviathan, with negative effect on the Scottish mercantile trade. Unequal Parliamentary representation of the Scottish quickly characterized the new Union state structure, with only 16 of over 150 Scottish peers selected to sit in the House of Lords.<sup>18</sup> Despite paying for and being embroiled in England’s wars, the Scottish for this reason could not substantively influence English foreign policy. From the inception of the new fiscal-military state, Scottish trade began to experience a pattern of disruption from wars conducted by and for the English state.<sup>19</sup> The Glorious Revolution, therefore, marked the building of a new fiscal-military state structure—a new English Leviathan—at the price of Scottish political and mercantile interests.

The East India Company was central to building this new state model centred in London, England, to the detriment of the Scottish, in two ways. Primarily, the Company provided revenue for the British state, which was mainly expended on warfare, increasingly conducted by the East India Company in rivalry with France.<sup>20</sup> In the seventeenth century, England had Europe’s first standing army; by 1778 the state spent around a quarter to a third

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15 Jenny Wormwald, *Scotland : A History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). 126-140.

16 Wormwald, *Op. Cit.*, 126.

17 See for instance Wormwald, *Op. Cit.*, on Jacobite rebellions, 152-240.

18 Wormwald, *Op. Cit.*, 156.

19 Ertman, *Op. Cit.*, 144.

20 See for instance either Wormwald or Ertman, *Op. Cit.*

of national income on wars.<sup>21</sup> Essentially, the Company paid the state for its monopoly privileges.<sup>22</sup> That Parliament understood the Company's financial role as providing income for the new British state can be largely extrapolated from the strict controls and taxation imposed on the Company by Parliament, whose repeated debates and involvement in the conduct of the Company's trade suggest the interconnectedness of the state and the Company. In contrast to the flexibility of England's main contemporary trading rival, the Dutch East India Company, the English Parliament was highly protective of the Company's trade, as a threat to the Company was directly "an attack on its [the state's] own income."<sup>23</sup>

Accordingly, the Company directly structured its trade practices around ensuring security for the English state's income. For instance, the Company had to conduct an inventory and store at least a year's goods to ensure stock for sale in case of trade disruption.<sup>24</sup> The Commutation Act of 1784 also aptly illustrates the importance of the Company's revenue for the state.<sup>25</sup> The Act attempted to address the growing challenge to the Company's monopoly posed by smuggling through lowering taxes on tea imports. However, the lowering of taxes on Company tea was offset by the introduction of a domestic tax on windows—in essence, aggregated property tax—to minimize subsequent loss of income for the state.<sup>26</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, the Company had become representative of the British state and so also a symbol of the state's failings. The main economic treatises of the late eighteenth century, notably Adam Smith's 1776 *The Wealth of Nations*, centered on a critique of the East India Company's monopoly, which had become associated with corrupt governance. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, a pattern emerged of Company officials who returned quickly to England from postings abroad with mass amounts of wealth, after which they became members of Parlia-

21 Ertman, *Op. Cit.*, 220.

22 Mui, *Op. Cit.*; Chris Nierstrasz, *Rivalry for trade in tea and textiles: the English and Dutch East India Companies (1700-1800)*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 36-37.

23 Nierstrasz, *Op. Cit.*, 35.

24 Nierstrasz, *Op. Cit.*, 30-37.

25 Mui, *Op. Cit.*

26 *Ibid.*

ment.<sup>27</sup> Adam Smith, for instance, argued that

“Since the establishment of the English East India Company, . . . the other inhabitants of England, over and above being excluded from the trade, must have paid in the price of the East India goods which they consumed, not only the extraordinary profits which the Company may have made upon these goods in consequence of their monopoly, but for all . . . the fraud and abuse, inseparable from the management of the affairs of so great a company.”

Instead, wealth should be a public good, spread amongst a multiplicity of private persons rather than concentrated in the hands of the state. For Smith, therefore, “great nations are never impoverished by private, though they sometimes are by public prodigality and misconduct.”<sup>28</sup>

It is notable that Smith uses the collective term “English” to describe those excluded by the trade. However, this does not negate that Scotland pioneered free trade economic theory, indicating that it was the Scottish political and economic context that really drove the push against the East India Company’s monopoly.<sup>29</sup> Hence, a book on Free Trade and Moral Philosophy only addresses Scottish intellectuals: Adam Smith, Frances Hutcheson, and David Hume. Equally, in a book on British Economic Thought and India: 1600-1858, five of eight intellectuals analyzed are of Scottish background: Adam Smith, James Mill, Lord Lauderdale, James Steuart and John McCulloch.<sup>30</sup> It seems that it was specifically from the Scottish perspective that one could interpret the very interconnectedness that characterized the East India Company

27 See for instance Warren Hastings’ *Trial and Old Corruption in Elijah Impey, Memoirs of Sir Elijah Impey, Knt ... with anecdotes of Warren Hastings, Sir Philip Francis, Nathaniel Brassey Hallhed, Esq., and other contemporaries*, 12-13 or Natasha Eaton, “The Art of Colonial Despotism: Portraits, Politics, and Empire in South India, 1750–1795,” *Cultural Critique*, 70 (2008), 63-79.

28 Adam Smith and Arthur Hugh Jenkins, *Adam Smith today: An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1948), 442.

29 See for instance Richard F. Teichgraber, “Free trade” and moral philosophy: *rethinking the sources of Adam Smith's Wealth of nations*, (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1986) or William J. Barber, *British economic thought and India, 1600-1858: a study in the history of development economics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

30 Ibid.

and London-centred English fiscal state building as detrimental to a wider British public who could not access the wealth and capital produced by this system. Smith's critique of the growth of a state system of administration as the concentration of "public revenue" in "unproductive hands" "multiplied...to an unnecessary number" makes sense in a context in which the state bureaucracy grew in order to extract taxes from the public to fund warfare.<sup>31</sup>

***Scottish economic networks unfurl through the cracks of the East India Company***

The biographies of William Jardine, James Matheson, and John Crawford support the narrative of the unique positioning of Scots to lead the pressure against the East India Company's monopoly and thus eventually take over the East India Company's opium trade. The trajectory of their biographies seems to demonstrate that the development of the English imperial state over the Scottish resulted in networks of economic opportunity for educated Scots abroad rather than at home. Hence, economic opportunity for the educated could only be found in the networks of the English imperial system: that is to say, with the East India Company, which was the organ managing the trade empire. By the 1830s, William Jardine and James Matheson had established what would become the largest trading house in opium in Canton, and John Crawford had become one of the leading members of the Scottish free trade movement, the most active of the groups to pressure for the end of the East India Company's monopoly, which was finally abolished in 1833.<sup>32</sup>

From around the mid-eighteenth century to the 1830s, or the latter years of the Company's monopoly, the Company navigated a transition from a mercantilist charter company to an explicit governor of expanding sovereign territories in India.<sup>33</sup> In this navigation to a new role, the Company grew increasingly dependent on private organizations and individuals to conduct its trade. Accordingly, the renewed charter in 1793 conditionally allowed private merchants from Britain to engage in trade in the West Indies for the

31 Smith, *Op. Cit.*, 442.

32 See for instance Mui, *Op. Cit.*

33 Mui, *Op. Cit.*; Anthony Webster, *The twilight of the East India Company: the evolution of Anglo-Asian commerce and politics, 1790-1860*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009).

first time.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the Company permitted increasing flexibility in what was called the “country trade,” in which merchants and employees of the Company on Company ships were licensed by the Company to conduct a limited private trade of their own. An integrated sub- or shadow system of private trade thus developed between 1757 and 1830, which remitted profit to Britain through increasingly pivotal private agency houses.<sup>35</sup> This system supported and was interdependent with the Company, which became increasingly reliant on the capital and incentive produced from this growing private trade to finance its spreading operations. Between 1800 and the 1830s, members of agency houses had begun to take seats in the Company’s Board of Directors.

Jardine, Matheson, and Crawford were quickly drawn into this trade network. Their trajectories demonstrate the development of this adaptive shadow system of private trade, which finally positioned the Scots to take over the East India Company’s monopoly. The three studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh around the turn of the nineteenth century. Jardine and Crawford immediately became employed as ship’s surgeons on Company ships, while Matheson found employment in a mercantile house in London. According to Richard Grace, Jardine quickly realized that the most profitable part of his employment was the small private trade that he was allowed to conduct on the Company ship.<sup>36</sup> Jardine managed investments from this trade with advice from an agent, Thomas Weeding, who himself had been a surgeon and was now in the employ of one of the newly developing agency houses in India.<sup>37</sup> Once Weeding had become a member of the Board of Directors of the Company, he was able to obtain for Jardine a Free Merchants’ Indenture to license Jardine’s full transition towards private trade. Jardine arrived in Mumbai as his own man in 1819.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, Matheson and Crawford’s stories demonstrate the development of Scottish networks adapting to Company regulations and the imperial restructuring of the economy that eventually

34 Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 15-17.

35 See for instance agencies and remittances in Mui, *Op. Cit.*, or Emily Erikson, *Between monopoly and free trade: the English East India Company, 1600-1757*, (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2014), Webster, *Op. Cit.*

36 Grace, *Op. Cit.*, 58, 62-63.

37 *Ibid.*

38 Grace, *Op. Cit.*, 57, 70.

found the Scots replacing the Company as a dominant trade force. John Crawford, unlike Jardine, remained as a Company surgeon, accompanying Company military campaigns.<sup>39</sup> He then returned to Britain and, using his experience and prominent connections in the empire, became a diplomat, sent on British missions throughout the 1820s to Singapore, Burma, and Cochin China (Vietnam).<sup>40</sup> Crawford used his political standing to argue for free trade as opposed to the East India Company's monopoly, first representing the interests of Calcutta private merchants before becoming a spokesperson and writer for the Scottish pressure group known as the Glasgow East India Association in the 1830s.<sup>41</sup>

Matheson's family also found its living in the seemingly limitless holds of the East India Company.<sup>42</sup> It appears likely that Matheson had secured the job in a mercantile company in London through their connections and subsequently used them to obtain his own Free Merchants' Indenture in 1815.<sup>43</sup> He then joined his uncle's agency house in Calcutta, using connections established there to then enter the opium trade between Mumbai and Canton.<sup>44</sup> The opium that Matheson traded, Malwa, was a West Indian opium competitive to the East India Company's opium produced in the Company's territory in Bengal and Patna.<sup>45</sup> Malwa, being outside the Company's reach, accordingly provided an opportunity for private entrance into the profitable opium trade. By 1827, importation of Malwa to Canton was matching and often on a monthly basis outpacing imports of the Company's opium, contributing to the Company's decline.<sup>46</sup>

In 1832, after partnering in management of the Can-

39 See for instance Gareth Knapman, *Race and British colonialism in South-East Asia, 1770-1870: John Crawford and the politics of equality*, (New York: Routledge, 2017).

40 Kumagai, Op. Cit., 93-94, 184-185.

41 Kumagai Op. Cit., 184-185.

42 Grace, Op. Cit., 72-73.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 See for instance Eric Lewis, *Black opium: an account of a "morally indefensible" trade in "this horrible drug," with an appeal to the churches in Great and Greater Britain to unite in one great concerted effort, calling upon our country to pay the price of a god-honouring ending*, (London: Marshall Bros 1910), 9.

46 *Canton Register*, Vol. 1 No.1-4, 1827, Hoover Library Archives.

ton-based trade company Cox & Beale, Jardine and Matheson established their own firm.<sup>47</sup> As opium was illegal to import to China, the East India Company concentrated its opium trade on the production, sale and levying of opium in India, leaving the importation of opium itself to private merchants. These merchants, not being direct representatives of the British state, were comfortable and more able to take the trade risk. In this way, opium, and particularly Malwa opium, became at the same time both the most efficient entrance point into the imperial trade networks and an innate challenge to the Company's monopoly. In a pursuit of economic opportunity from the shores of Scotland, Jardine Matheson & Co. consequently entered the opium trade with Matheson's Malwa connections.<sup>48</sup> By the end of the 1830s, Jardine & Matheson had leveraged this entrance point successfully to become the biggest opium traders in Canton.<sup>49</sup> That is to say, Scottish economic networks that had adapted out of necessity to profit from the East India Company's decline of direct control over the opium trade seem to have unwittingly had the outcome of the Scottish rise in the opium trade.

***The mechanics of the Scottish rise: domestic battle against the East India Company***

The Scottish evidently also perceived themselves as marginalized from an economic and political system underpinned by the East India Company's monopoly, which prioritized and centered financial capital in London. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Scotland's economy, like England's, had begun to rely on the East India Company to open imperial markets for its manufactured goods. Similarly to England, the latter half of the eighteenth

47 Grace, Op. Cit., 123.

48 The phenomenon of Scottish migration in pursuit of economic opportunity was notable enough to be documented by contemporary analyses, for instance in *A Candid enquiry into the causes of the late and the intended migrations from Scotland. : In a letter to J- - - - - R- - - - - Esq; Lanark-Shire* (Glasgow: Printed for P. Tait, and sold by him, and J. Barrie J. Duncan J. Knox Booksellers, Glasgow; J. Dickson, Edinburgh; J. Davie, Kilmarnock; A. Weir, Paisley; J. Hay, Belfast; and other booksellers in town and country, 1771). Accessed through <http://find.gale.com.stanford.idm.oclc.org/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=stan90222&tabID=T001&docId=CB126413320&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>, 03/23/2020.

49 See for instance Janin, Op. Cit., 65-67.

century saw a drastic increase in urbanisation and industrialisation, resulting in the concentration of the Scottish economy in industrial centers in the South, largely in the manufacturing areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh.<sup>50</sup>

Following Scotland's direct integration into the English imperial structure, networks of economic opportunity followed those of the British Empire; by the 1800s, the networks were those established by the East India Company. This economic transformation quickly followed the Act of Union in 1707. Over the next half-century, Scotland, and particularly Glasgow, entered the "tobacco era," during which the wealthiest sectors of the economy were engaged in the tobacco trade with the English colonies in America. The phenomenon was notable enough to birth a new category of *nouveaux-riches* merchants known as "tobacco lords," who enriched themselves from the tobacco trade and then established banks, largely in Glasgow.<sup>51</sup> The loss of the American colonies in 1783 was offset in the Scottish economy by a shift to the industrialized production of cotton goods following England's model, enabled by cheap coal deposits near Glasgow and the replacement of America's imperial raw cotton supply by India and the Caribbean.<sup>52</sup> Scotland swiftly transformed into what can be thought of as an industrial monoculture: its industrialization, concentrated in the South, developed an economy dependent on the industrial hyper-production of a single category of goods enabled by incoming resources from the empire. Scotland itself could not absorb this level of cotton goods. Its economy now required entrance into the British imperial system's captive markets.

However, the East India Company's monopoly charter meant that Scottish manufacturers had no direct access to the remnant imperial export markets after the loss of America.<sup>53</sup> While the East India Company had opened access for Scotland to raw cotton from the Caribbean and India, the terms of its monopoly denied direct private exportation of the manufactured cotton goods subsequently produced in Scotland.<sup>54</sup> In response, a clandestine trade developed between Scotland and the markets controlled by the East

50 Wormwald, *Op. Cit.*, 162-165.

51 Wormwald, *Op. Cit.*, 165; Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 34-35.

52 Wormwald, *Op. Cit.*, 166.

53 Erikson, *Op. Cit.*, 31-36.

54 Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 34-35.

India Company. Yukihiisa Kumagai's work on the development of provincial manufacturing pressure against the Company notes that "In 1781, the West India trade accounted for 21% of...exports from Scotland, 42% by...(1800) and 65% in 1813."<sup>55</sup> Around the turn of the nineteenth century, then, Scotland saw the increasing concentration of people and factories in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and experienced the transformation and integration of rural areas into as resource producing sectors of the industrial system. Consequently, the Scottish economy grew increasingly dependent on the imperial import-export system, which English East India Company controlled for its own profit and formally for the benefit of the imperial London-centred state in the British Isles.

The Scottish manufacturers therefore began to push for an increasingly large formal space for their trade and manufacture interests around the turn of the nineteenth century. This space would necessarily come at the expense of the East India Company's monopoly, which appeared as the clearest barrier against the Scottish manufacturer's ability to manipulate the trade to their own interests. For this reason, while the renewal of the Company's monopoly charter in 1793 formally granted conditional trade rights to private merchants and manufacturers, Scottish interest groups remained dissatisfied.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the Napoleonic Wars, which were entwined with English trade rivalry with the French conducted by the East India Company, were behind a recession in the British Isles that was particularly affecting Scottish manufacturers and the British midlands, continuing the eighteenth century pattern of economic disadvantage from English imperial state building.<sup>57</sup> The dissatisfaction and perception of the Company's monopoly as disadvantageous to Scottish economic interests expressed itself in the form of the establishment of a Scottish free trade committee composed of members of the Chamber of Commerce of Glasgow.<sup>58</sup> This committee sought "to consider and report what steps ought to be taken upon the approaching expiration of the East India Company's Charter," which was scheduled for review in 1813.

The answer that the committee found was to establish the Glasgow East India Association, essentially in order to organize to

55 Ibid.

56 Kumagai, 15-17.

57 Grace, *Op. Cit.*, 66-67.

58 Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 39.

mobilization of manufacturers across towns in Scotland against the renewal of the Company's charter, which would continue to prioritize London over other parts of the British Isles. The Association was one of several pressure groups in British industrial centers outside London at this time.<sup>59</sup> However, it quickly became one of the most active pressure groups against the renewal of the Company's monopoly between the 1810s and the final ending of the monopoly in 1833.<sup>60</sup> The Association coordinated not only across Scotland but also with other similar organisations, as well as mobilising Scots from across the British Isles and the Empire to write petitions and become spokespeople for the Association.<sup>61</sup> According to Kumagai, its main resolutions were thus "(1) the inexpediency and prejudice of the Charter; (2) the unfairness of the Charter for the exclusion of British ships from the East India trade... (3) the determination of their resistance against the renewal of the Company's monopoly; (4) their objection to any regulation confining the trade to the port of London;" and the appointment of a committee for petitioning Parliament to this purpose.<sup>62</sup>

Pamphlets produced in the debates on the renewal of the Company's charter, both in defense and offense against the Company's monopoly, similarly reflect the history of Scottish economic and political marginalization. A pamphlet written by Robert Montgomery Martin in 1832, for instance, was written in response to the Scottish John Crawford, a spokesperson for the Glasgow East India Association in the 1830s.<sup>63</sup> This pamphlet, and another similarly addressed to Crawford, based their defense of the current organization of the East India Company's trade on the claim that the Company in fact did not have a monopoly. Instead, the Company in fact provided the public good that the Scottish Enlightenment free trade theorists were proponents of the British Empire itself. The Compa-

59 See for instance Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, on the manufacturers' campaigns of Manchester and Liverpool.

60 Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 73.

61 *Ibid.*

62 Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 40

63 Robert Montgomery Martin, *The Past and Present State of the Tea Trade of England, and of the Continents of Europe and America: And a Comparison Between the Consumption, Price Of, and Revenue Derived From, Tea, Coffee, Sugar, Wine, Tobacco, Spirits, &c.* (Parbury, Allen, & Company, 1832), 1-8.

ny, Montgomery claimed, was the organ through which “one of the most splendid empires that ever was subjected to the dominion of man” had been established.<sup>64</sup> The Company’s empire had enabled trade through “a commercial union of wealth...talent and patriotism.”<sup>65</sup> The extremely high regulation of the Company meant that the Company was manifestly not a monopoly but an organ of public service for the good of the British people.

The Company’s monopoly as the tool for the construction of an imperialistic state reflects exactly the development of Scottish economic and political grievances with the Company. Crawford’s pamphlet, written in a back and forth with Martin, thus attacked the Company’s monopoly on the same terms of a public good. Crawford mocked the idea of the monopoly charter being a public good, ridiculing the idea that “it is good for the British nation, that each of four-and-twenty private gentlemen frequenting Leadenhall Street, should enjoy a yearly patronage of some 25,000 [lbs].”<sup>66</sup> It was impossible for Crawford that Martin and defenders of the monopoly could claim that “it is good for the merchants and manufacturers of Britain to be debarred from the market of India by a monopoly, and to have their exports reduced” or to have to purchase “the produce of India at exorbitant monopoly prices.”<sup>67</sup> Instead, the monopoly provided wealth for a select group of people who were the elite of London to the detriment of other manufacturers and the British consuming public. Therefore, due to their developing perception over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century that the East India Company’s monopoly was detrimental to their interests, the Scottish became a key source of pressure against the East India Company’s monopoly in the British Isles in the first half of the nineteenth century.

***Battle cries across the Empire: Jardine Matheson & Co.’s profitable campaign against the East India Company’s monopoly***

64 Robert Montgomery Martin, *British Relations with the Chinese Empire in 1832; Comparative Statement of the English and American Trade with India and Canton*. (London: Printed for Parbury, Allen & Co., Ledenhall Street, 1832), vi. Accessed through [https://books.google.com/books?id=zspaZGj026wC&pg=PA58&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=zspaZGj026wC&pg=PA58&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false), 02/2020.

65 Ibid.

66 John Crawford, *Chinese Monopoly Examined*, (London: J. Ridgway, 1830), 5.

67 Crawford, *Op. Cit.*, 7.

On the ground in Canton, the merchant community could recognize or observe the mercantile decline of the East India Company in two main ways. Most explicit would have been the establishment of an increasing number of private companies as the East India Company surrendered more and more direct management/control of the opium trade to private trader intermediaries, and the growing local prestige of these companies. The approximate long decade of the 1820s (around 1818 to 1832) saw the establishment of a new generation of private opium trading houses, three of which would become the most prominent businesses of the Canton opium trade: Russell & Co. in 1818, Dent & Co. in 1824, and Jardine Matheson & Co. in 1832.<sup>68</sup> By the late 1820s, on the eve of the end of the East India Company's official trade monopoly in China, the private merchants were turning over a higher trade volume than the Company.<sup>69</sup> As a final and symbolic marker of the Company's decline, in 1834, Jardine Matheson & Co. deliberately ensured that they rather than the East India Company greeted Lord Napier upon his arrival in Canton as representatives of the local community to the British government.<sup>70</sup>

All this seems to have bolstered the confidence of the private opium merchants in Canton, led by the Scots, to negotiate an increasingly prominent public space for their trade, with a particular focus on the commodity of opium. Thus in 1827, Scottish James Matheson published the first English language newspaper in Canton, entitled *The Canton Register* and Price Current. Its first edition opens by politely explaining that "the want of a printed register of the commercial and other information of China has long been felt...our principal endeavour will be, to present a copious and correct price-current, of the various articles...in the market," as well as the state of connected foreign markets, and "occasionally" the "trade, customs, and peculiarities of the Chinese."<sup>71</sup> On the second to fourth pages, the first volume of the *Register* indeed details a list of current market prices for various goods, including opium, and then concludes with a longer analytical section on opium again.<sup>72</sup>

68 See for instance Janin, *Op. Cit.*, 57-73.

69 Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 12.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Canton Register*, Vol. 1. No. 1, November 8th 1827, 1.

72 *Canton Register*, *Op. Cit.*, 2-4.

In this way, the *Canton Register* already begins with an important discrepancy between the open inclusion of and focus on opium in its list of trade goods and the lack of explicit discussion of this inclusion in the stated goals of the paper. The private merchants had long been negotiating a space in the system of monopoly trade that the East India Company officially dominated. Matheson's generation of private traders had established themselves by maneuvering into the opening that the East India Company had left them by refusing to explicitly smuggle illegal opium into China. As detailed above, the Company instead preferred to develop a system of engaging private companies to do the importation itself, which led to the increasing cession of control to the private merchants.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the inclusion of the current price of opium amongst other commodities in a publication with the public goal of informing the stakeholder merchant community of the state of the market was an act of defiance in the face of the Company's careful public distancing from the trade, which must have been enabled by growing confidence of their position over the Company.

Not openly stating that opium was the evident main market focus of the *Register* in its opening goals seems to indicate that the *Register* under Matheson knew that it was entering into political ground, carefully claiming new space from which the Company was receding. Furthermore, the *Register's* role as a political organ, or a publication with a certain stake and purpose in informing its readers, became very quickly more explicit or central to both its professed goals and its real function. By the second publication of the first volume, the *Register* explained to its reader that "in publishing our first number, we naturally felt a considerable degree of diffidence, from the novelty of our undertaking, as well as our uncertainty how far the community might feel disposed to patronise our efforts, in...[publishing] little else than a copious price current."<sup>74</sup>

However, in response to "numerous" letters and articles of feedback, the reader is assured that the *Register* will publish other informative as well as "commercial" topics.<sup>75</sup> As proof, a letter to the editor is included, signed "Amicus", which beseeches the editor

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73 Mui, *Op. Cit.*; Webster, *Op. Cit.*

74 *Canton Register*, Vol. 1. No. 2, November 18th, 1827, 1.

75 *Ibid.*

to publish information “concerning the peculiar character and policy of the...government of this country, as connected with foreign intercourse, and on the resources and wants of this vast Empire; and the best means for extending and improving our connection with it,” for instance through “notices of the latest political intelligence.”<sup>76</sup> Here, again, is the same delicately maintained disparity between uncontroversial surface claim and an emergent political agenda. The *Register* only explicitly positions itself as mainly focusing on a public service of useful information in response to the needs and pressures of its reading community, while the more politically sensitive stances are left in the body of the paper. It would now begin publishing information and analysis on how to improve the private merchant’s trading position in China.

The *Register* in this way carefully shaped for itself a political role from the very beginning: the promotion of a specific economic agenda profitable to its stakeholder reading community through political action, informed by Scottish political thought. For instance, the *Register* published and translated free trade treatises primarily by Scottish free trade economists in an attempt to facilitate the spread of free trade thought amongst both the non-Chinese and Chinese populations of Canton.<sup>77</sup> To this end, in 1831, the *Register* requested translations of “the latest editions of Dr. Adam Smith’s work. . . , Malthus’, M’Culloch’s and Mill’s...&c.”: all, again, Scots.<sup>78</sup>

The Scottish economic agenda bent and morphed to the touch of the specific necessities of the local economic context over time. This localized version of the free trade economic agenda had two parts: firstly, the portrayal of the East India Company’s policy of negotiating with the local Qing government over trade as historically feeble and detrimental to foreign trade interests. For instance, on the front page of the fourth edition of the *Register*, a little over one month from its first edition, is an article entitled “Portuguese Trade with China.” The article presents a brief history of the “decay” of Portuguese trade to China, from the 16th century onwards, explaining that “a tame submission to the impositions of the Chinese may be considered as one of the principal causes

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76 Ibid.

77 Chen, Op. Cit., 26-31.

78 Chen, Op. Cit., 27.

which have reduced Macao (which had been granted to the Portuguese by the Qing) to its present insignificant and dependant state.”

<sup>79</sup> Similarly, throughout the *Register* are veiled references to the “submissiveness” of “the tenor of the whole conduct of England with China for more than half a century”; the conduct with China, of course, was run by the East India Company.<sup>80</sup>

Secondly, the *Register* suggests almost from the very beginning of its publication that the Qing legal and political structures barring the private merchants from conducting trade completely to their own advantage could reasonably be countered. While the *Register* only treated this claim with increasing explicitness once it grew in confidence over the years of its successful publication, the development of this interpretive framework of merchant relations with the Qing government is clear already in the first non-commercial articles of the paper. In the second edition of the *Register*, shortly after establishing that the publication will now discuss matters of interest to the betterment of private foreign merchant-Qing relations, the reader finds information on the military operations in the “State of China,” followed by articles detailing the “extreme” cruelty of torture “allowed by law in China.”<sup>81</sup>

The articulation of belligerence towards constraints imposed by the Qing authorities particularly grew after the abolishment of the East India Company’s trade monopoly over China, but also after every altercation with the Qing government over trade from the beginning of the *Register*’s publication. The earliest publication of an article explicitly calling for change in relations with the Qing in belligerent language is in the eighth edition of the *Register*, of February 1828. The article protests that “we have lately witnessed two outrageous attempts of the Chinese to take the Law into their own hands upon some disputed point of business,” which resulted in the “atrocious” case of the seizure of a European merchant by Chinese sailors.<sup>82</sup> Its author concludes that “these things ought not to be tolerated,” and that legal matters should only be managed by the “British authorities.”<sup>83</sup> Publications such as this in response to action taken by Qing authorities became a repeated

79 *Canton Register*, Vol. 1. No. 4, December 14th 1827, 1.

80 *Canton Register*, Vol. 6. No.s 13 & 14, September 16th 1833, 76.

81 *Canton Register*, Vol. 1. No. 2, November 18th, 1827, 1-2.

82 *The Canton Register*, Vol.1 No. 8. December 3rd 1828, 2.

83 *Ibid.*

pattern over time, with each altercation resulting in more explicit discussion of the possibility of open war, for instance during 1828 debates of redress over the removal of a merchant's Factory wall by Qing authorities or again on the "Right of Interference" that centered around allowing presence of in British war ships in Canton in 1831.<sup>84</sup> Explicit belligerence grew particularly and immediately after the abolishment of the East India Company, during the subsequent renegotiation of the British trade system with the Qing which was troubled by the banishment and death of Lord Napier in 1834.<sup>85</sup>

The *Register*, in protest of the East India Company's management of the China trade, therefore seems to have been promoting an epistemological framework that primed belligerence towards China. The framework enabled each flare up or squabble with Qing authorities to act as a spark for an open airing of grievances, which increasingly shifted towards battle cries for war. The bias towards war in the *Register* had become so evident by the mid-1830s that it framed the dispute in an internal split. The founders of the English company Dent & Co. left the *Register* to establish the rival newspaper the *Canton Press*, which labeled the *Register* as the "Warlike Party" in 1836, and was in turn branded by the *Register* as the "Pacific Party."<sup>86</sup> Even contemporary audiences, then, thought it fairly clear that the *Register* was not simply for the dissemination of local commercial information but the dissemination of certain types of information for a political purpose relevant to a particular invested community.

By the outbreak of the Opium War, this particular invested community of private opium merchants in Canton evidently saw the forceful opening of China in opposition to the Company's style of trade management as the most profitable forward path. In short, Jardine, of the private opium house Jardine Matheson & Co., published a newspaper calling for war; the War itself was conducted along the lines of a strategic plan that had been published in the *Register* in 1836; and Jardine Matheson & Co. conveniently leased

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84     *The Canton Register*, Vol.1 No. 40. February 18th 1828, 2-4.; *Register* Vol. 4 2nd August 1831, No. 15.; see also the edition of 15th June 1832 calling for a crisis since the current state of affairs is no longer tolerable.

85     *The Canton Register*, Vol.7. No. 28. July 15th 1834, 1.

86     Kumagai, *Op. Cit.*, 11-12.

ships to the British navy to conduct the war.<sup>87</sup> The Scots managed to their profit one of the most definitive moments in Chinese history of the British opium trade. By 1839, the English had lost the opium trade to the Scots.

***Conclusion: from marginalization to drug lords***

Within the word ‘British’, there is to all appearances also a complex story of English imperialism within the British Isles. The influence of English imperialism within the British Isles on the history of the wider British Empire and its foundational opium trade is not often considered. However, the British Empire seems better conceptualized as specifically the English Empire, run for the profit of the English—until the Scottish adapted to the restrictive economic opportunities left to them by the English in the empire that by the 1830s positioned them as inheritors to the English East India Company, formally profiting from and conducting the British imperial opium system.

The first section of the paper attempts to explain the development of the English fiscal military state from 1707 onwards as an English imperial system within the British Isles, which profited the English at the expense of the Scottish. The second section argues that the prioritization of the English in the economic system of the British Isles led to the birth of free trade thought in Scotland that saw the East India Company’s monopoly as an obstruction to public wealth. The third section depicts how the subordinate economic position of the Scottish pushed Scots to seek economic opportunity in the Empire, resulting in the development of economic networks profiting from the Company’s decreasing direct control on the opium trade. In response, I detail how Scottish manufacturers mobilized to pressure against the East India Company’s monopoly. Finally, in Canton, the main entry port of opium to China, the Scottish William Jardine led efforts by local private merchants against the Company’s monopoly, eventually profiting from the Company’s collapse and the First Opium War.

The opium trade can in this way be interpreted not so much as a historiographical foundation for British hegemonic might, but a glimpse into the English struggle to maintain an imperial system for its own profit, both at home and abroad. From this new angle,

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87 John King Fairbank, *China: a new history*, (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 195-197.

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and the understanding that the Scottish and local private traders appear to have assumed influence over British opium trade policy in China, pushing policy to their profit by the 1830s, the history of the British Empire can begin to be entirely reconceptualized. The new narrative is longer, more complex: one of struggle and adapting mercantile practices over time. Key moments such as the First Opium War become, rather than expressions or lashings out of British might in the historiography, moments of uncertainty for the English, and an attempt to re-assert power over changing waters, or perhaps to navigate a sea adrift with poppies.

# PICTORIAL POSTCARDS OF A COLONIAL CITY: THE "DREAM- WORK" OF JAPANESE IMPERIAL- ISM

Won Gi Jung

Introduction by Yumi Moon, Associate Professor of History, Stanford University

The Japanese empire produced many kinds of visual sources in governing its colonies. Won Gi Jung focuses on postcards of colonial Korea collected in the LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago, analyzing their pictorial narratives and the contexts in which they were made and consumed. Comparing Japan's case with Western colonialism, Won Gi associates the flourishing postcard industry with the development of modern tourism in the Japanese metropole. He also accentuates Japan's interest in using foreign tourism to present positive images of its empire to the world. For this reason it was the colonial state of Korea, rather than private studios, that produced the postcards, carefully curating the images of main tourist sites in Keijō (present-day Seoul) and elsewhere. Won Gi also discusses several publications by Western tourists who visited colonial Korea and offers a balanced commentary on the colonial state's "dreamlike" representation of Keijō.

## Pictorial Postcards of a Colonial City: The "dreamwork" of Japanese Imperialism

### Won Gi Jung

It's because she found only one or two 'Korean-made' products... The [Australian] mistress wanted to purchase *Joseon* costume for female, but she couldn't find any ready-made clothes. She said, "How come I cannot find even **one pictorial postcard** made by Koreans?"<sup>1</sup>

Blooming cherry blossom trees adorn the streets of spring-time Keijo.<sup>2</sup> A Shinto shrine, dedicated to the Japanese sun-goddess Amaterasu, stands with dignity at the center of the city.<sup>3</sup> Street signs and brochures written in Japanese fill a crowded marketplace.<sup>4</sup> Tourists saw these landscapes in pictorial postcards sold at train stations, private studios, or near historical sites in colonial Korea. Postcard craze spread across the globe in the early 20th century. And Korea, one of the colonies of the Japanese empire was no exception from the product of global tourism.<sup>5</sup> During the colonial period of twentieth-century Korea, it was common to see the names of Japanese publishers like Wakijaka Shoten, Manazuru & Co., or Hindoe Shoko printed on Korean pictorial postcards.<sup>6</sup> However, as the Australian mistress in the quotation above despaired, not a single pictorial postcard was made by Koreans.

The Japanese empire exerted overarching authority in presenting colonial Korea to the world. For instance, the Japanese-operated Manchuria Railway Company, established early in

1 "Korean-made", *Tong-a Ilbo*, September 28, 1935.

2 "Cherries at Shakei Garden" in *Keijo* series (1939), LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

3 "Keijo Shrine" in *Keijo* series (1939), LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

4 "View of Honmachi Street" in *Keijo* series (1939), LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

5 Hyung Il Pai, "Staging 'Koreana' for the Tourist Gaze: Imperialist Nostalgia and the Circulation of Picture Postcards," *History of Photography* 37, no. 3 (2013), 302.

6 "Postcard Collection of Colonial Korea," LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

the colonial period, had constructed Korea's major railways, the main mode of transportation used to travel between Korean cities. Moreover, Tetsudoshō, the Japanese Department of Railway, published the first official pocket-sized guide books about Korea.<sup>7</sup> The postcard industry was just one aspect of Japanese control of tourism in Korea. The absence of a single Korean-made postcard demonstrated the extent to which the Japanese monopolized the industry, determining the narratives of tourism.

The realistic landscapes photographed in Japanese pictorial postcards represented the ideal state of the colony as imagined by the Japanese empire. Esteemed art historian W. J. T. Mitchell once compared landscape to “the dreamwork of imperialism” that “disclose[s] both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance.”<sup>8</sup> Building on Mitchell's insight, this paper will identify what constituted the “utopian fantasies” of the Japanese colonial state in Korea by analyzing the images of the pictorial postcards produced between 1918 and 1939. By historicizing these postcards in the context of Japanese imperial policy and ideology, this paper will illustrate how the urban landscapes of colonial Korea portrayed by Japanese postcards omitted the “fractured images” of colonial reality, thereby shaping a biased visual narrative of its colonial rule in Korea.

Previous studies of pictorial postcards portraying colonies across the globe have focused primarily on the visual representation of indigenous female bodies. Algerian poet and art critic Malek Alloula's 1986 photographic essay, *The Colonial Harem*, largely contributed to this trend. In his book, Alloula exposed the voyeuristic gaze of colonialism by describing French pictorial postcards portraying the bodies of Algerian women.<sup>9</sup> By criticizing the postcards' exoticization of female bodies, Alloula influenced future studies of pictorial postcards from different colonies. Anthropologist Annelies Moors expands on Alloula's insight, illustrating how postcards of Israel and Palestine “inevitably generate

7 The Department of Railways, *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia* (Japan, Tokyo: 1913).

8 W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 10.

9 Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

particular kinds of knowledge about and sensibilities toward those depicted.”<sup>10</sup>

Hyuk-Hui Kwon’s 2005 study, *Postcards from Joseon*, drew attention to a similar dynamic in the history of colonial Korea. In her book, Kwon focuses on Japanese pictorial postcards of Korean people, especially women, to show how postcard images exoticized and infantilized indigenous Koreans, shedding light on the exploitative gaze of the Japanese colonizers.<sup>11</sup> Historian Hyung Il Pai further describes how this imperial gaze was extended to indigenous culture and monuments in her 2013 article on the early picture postcard views of Korean historical monuments: Pai demonstrates how the postcard images produced in the early stage of colonization shaped “a timeless image of Korea” and emphasized the pre-modern qualities that evoked nostalgia in Japanese consumers.<sup>12</sup> Pai’s study on the Japanese tourist gaze on Korean monuments resonates with what historian E. Taylor Atkins’ expressed as “the politics of curation” in his book *Primitive Selves*. Atkins’ work analyzed how the Japanese empire used historical monuments to legitimize colonization by presenting Japan as the caretaker of the Korean culture. Both Pai and Atkins critically assess the ulterior motives of Japanese Imperialism in the visual portrayal of colonial Korea.<sup>13</sup>

Building upon Pai’s insight on the postcard’s portrayal of the urban landscapes of colonial Korea, this paper analyzes the postcards produced in the later period of the colonization since the late 1910s. A survey of the growing tourism industry in Japan and colonial Korea demonstrates that external factors largely determined the development of modern tourism in both countries. For the purpose of this study, I focus on the pictorial postcards of

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10 Annelies Moors, “Presenting People: The Politics of Picture Postcards of Palestine/Israel” in *Postcards, Ephemeral Histories of Modernity*, ed. by David Prochaska and Jordana Mendelson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 93.

11 Hyök-hüi Kwon, *Chosŏn esŏ on sajin yöpsŏ (Postcards from Joseon)* (Seoul: Minumsa, 2005), 174.

12 Hyung Il Pai, “Staging ‘Koreana’,” 301.

13 E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese colonial gaze, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 145.

colonial Korea's capital city: Keijo (Kyung-sung, in Korean).<sup>14</sup> Transformations in postcard portrayals of colonial Korea reflected the colonial regime's intent to rebrand its colony by introducing so-called "cultural rule" after the violent suppression of a nationwide anti-colonial movement in 1919. Peaceful cityscapes of Korea in pictorial postcards obscured the political unrest that swept the colonial society and presented an image of the colony closer to the ideal "dreamwork" of the Japanese empire.

***Pictorial Postcards: The Byproduct of Modern Tourism***

Tourism in colonial Korea developed as an extension of tourism in Japan. In late-eighteenth-century Japan, the maintenance of road systems and development of new currencies improved travel conditions, and the popularization of domestic tourism established pre-Meiji tourist culture.<sup>15</sup> The pilgrimage to the Ise Grand Shrine, a shinto shrine devoted to the sun goddess Amaterasu, was one of the favorite routes for Japanese tourists. Vendors selling souvenirs and inns accommodating visitors mushroomed along the roads connecting the shrine to the rest of Japan. But tourism remained limited to a small number of Japanese, such as aristocrats, merchants, and Shinto or Buddhist pilgrims.<sup>16</sup>

The demographics of tourists started to change as Japan opened its doors to Westerners, especially after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. From its early stages, the state was a major investor of tourism, actively targeting foreign visitors, such as diplomats and businessmen, to improve the budding empire's global reputation.<sup>17</sup> The state involvement in establishing Kihinkai, the Welcoming Society (1887), and the Japanese Tourist Bureau (1912) exemplified the state's strong interest in controlling foreign tourists' experiences in Japan.<sup>18</sup> Profit from foreign currencies served as an obvious monetary incentive for the rapidly modernizing state, as shown by Minister of Finance Sayaka Yoshio's support of the 1907

14 In order to prevent any confusion, I will use the Japanese spelling of the two cities discussed in this paper, unless the primary sources cited used a different name.

15 Ki-Jae Sö, *Chosön yöhaeng e ttödonün cheguk (Japanese empire in Joseon travel)* (Seoul: Somyöng Ch'ulp'an, 2011), 30.

16 David Richard Leheny, *The Rules of Play: National Identity and the Shaping of Japanese Leisure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 52.

17 Ibid., 54.

18 Sö, *Chosön yöhaeng*, 30-31.

Hotel Development Law. The Hotel Development Law, according to Yoshio, would “remove at least some of the obstacles that are impeding flows of incoming visitors.”<sup>19</sup>

The state also had an ulterior motive in its intervention in the tourist industry. As a latecomer in the wave of modernization and industrialization, the Japanese state had to prove itself worthy of joining the ranks of other modern nations. For example, in the Japanese parliament’s 1929 debate over a bill for national support of the hotel industry, the House of Peers argued that “the purpose of international tourism had to be the creation of international understanding and the improvement of Japan’s global image.”<sup>20</sup> The non-negligible social benefits of modern tourism drove its development in Japan. The state used tourism to shape its national image presented to the rest of the world, developing its soft power as a budding empire striving to compete in the global arena of imperialism.

The Japanese pictorial postcards emerged in the context of this burgeoning modern tourism. With scarce visual information about distant regions, countries around the world used the pictorial postcards as the primary visual medium through which images of foreign cities and nature could be reproduced and circulated.<sup>21</sup> Light and cheap, the pictorial postcards **were** collectibles that tourists could bring back to their countries or include in their travelogues and show off to other tourists they met during the trip. The postcard industry had thrived in Japan since the Japanese government legalized the domestic private production of postcards in 1900.<sup>22</sup> Even though the shortage of paper supplies during the First World War put restraint on the growth of the industry, after the end of the war, Japan constantly published new pictorial postcards.<sup>23</sup>

Keeping pace with the credo of *naichi encho* (extension of the mainland), the Japanese colonial state expanded its tourism policies to its colonies, including Korea. Before the colonization of

19 Leheny, *The Rules of Play*, 59.

20 Ibid.

21 Paul D. Barclay, “Peddling Postcards and Selling Empire: Image-Making in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule” *Japanese Studies* 30, no. 1 (2010), 82.

22 Kwon, *Chosŏn esŏ on sajin yŏpsŏ*, 92.

23 Ibid.

Korea in 1910, Japanese colonizers viewed the peninsula more as a migratory settlement location than as a tourist spot. The signing of the Kanghwa Treaty in 1876 and the subsequent installation of extraterritorial Japanese settlements encouraged the migration of Japanese to Korea.<sup>24</sup> The victories in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War further accelerated this process of migration by enabling the establishment of the Southern Manchuria Railway Company in 1906 and the Oriental Development Company in 1908.<sup>25</sup> The number of Japanese settlers showed a steady increase throughout the early 20th century, becoming the largest ethnic group among the non-Korean population.

It was during the 1910s, after the official annexation of the colony, that Korea emerged as a tourist spot endorsed by the Japanese empire. As its colonial territories expanded overseas, the empire had to display not only itself, but also its colonies to visitors. Japanese colonial policies imitated its Western counterparts through bureaucratic control of colonial development. Railroad infrastructure, for instance, became the backbone of the economic geography in colonial Korea, like the European colonies in South Asia and Africa. It was not a coincidence that Tetsudoshō, the Imperial Department of Railways, published an English-written travel guidebook called *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia*, in 1913.<sup>26</sup> In the context of globally trending twentieth-century imperialism, the guidebook can be read as the Japanese empire's strategy to present colonial Korea as a territory of the Japanese empire to Westerners. Following the state's initiative, Japanese tourism magazines like *Tabi*, first published in 1924, introduced transportation routes and amenities, such as hotels and restaurants, in colonial Korea to the Japanese public.<sup>27</sup>

As tourism developed in colonial Korea, private photographic studios based in Korea joined the booming postcard industry, filling their vendor stands with a series of postcards packaged in envelopes.<sup>28</sup> The earliest production of pictorial postcards in

24 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 120.

25 Sō, *Chosŏn yōhaeng*, 140.

26 Ibid., 142.

27 Ibid., 301.

28 Kwon, *Chosŏn esŏ on sajin yōpsŏ*, 96.

Korea dates to 1889, but for decades since then, the production had been limited to a small number of Japanese photographic studios.<sup>29</sup> The postcards were centered around several themes: indigenous Korean customs and culture, nature or historical attractions, and urban landscapes. Of these subjects, the most widely reproduced images of early-twentieth-century Korea portrayed indigenous Koreans and their customs - particularly the young, female, or old Koreans. One of the most frequently appearing images in the postcard series during this time was a female Korean with bare breasts.<sup>30</sup> Another trope in early pictorial postcards of pre-colonial Korea was to juxtapose the backwardness of the colonial subjects with the old monuments of Korea. In these photos, an innocent-looking young Korean or old man wearing pre-modern traditional Korean attire stood next to palaces or historical monuments of the Joseon Dynasty.<sup>31</sup> Such positioning, according to Pai, accentuated the incapability of the Korean race to survive in the global trend of modernization. Korea was too old as a medieval dynasty but too young as a modern nation-state. Either way, it needed help from a mature caregiver who can provide guidance in the process of its transformation.<sup>32</sup> The Japanese empire, with a successful record of modernization, was the perfect candidate for that role. Pictorial postcards from the pre-colonial period communicated such imperial projects through subtle visual languages.

Compared with such postcards, which Pai categorized as “the first-generation picture postcards,” which underscored the backwardness of the Korean civilization, pictorial postcards produced after the late 1910s portrayed a modernized image of colonial Korea.<sup>33</sup> What distinguished the post-annexation postcard industry from the market populated by private studios was the colonial state’s active participation in the production of pictorial postcards. These pictorial postcards were the primary medium through which people experienced, either directly or vicariously, colonial Korea. Cityscapes portrayed in the pictorial postcards of Keijo exemplified the new Korea as imagined by the colonial state. The transformation of images reflected the changes in tourist

29 Pai, “Staging ‘Koreana,’” 302.

30 Kwon, *Chosŏn esŏ on sajin yŏpsŏ*, 206.

31 Pai, “Staging ‘Koreana,’” 304.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 303.



Figure 1) “Jyurakubi no toshi, Keijo shigai,” in *New Joseon series*, 1925-1933. LUNA Archive.

*Keijo, located in a plateau surrounded by Mt. Nam and Mt. In-Wang, is a city with the population of 0.4 million. At the center of the city is the ivory-white hall of the Government General of Korea, which is located on the site of Keifuku palace near Mt. Buk-Ak. The cityscape, adorned with Namdai-mon, the French church, sporadic textures of red bricks, and Korean stores with gable roofs, presents jyurakubi [idyllic beauty]. The city has been an important political site since the Paikche era. Formerly the capital city of Joseon Kingdom, Keijo, together with the rusty smell of an old city and spiritual beauty of modern culture, reveals its splendor as the capital of the peninsula.*<sup>35</sup>

The caption first mentioned the presence of the GGK building that replaced Keifuku Palace. The location of the building had a political significance, because the palace had long been considered as a symbol of the royal court. The replacement of the Keifuku, a national monument, with GGK, an emblem of colonial architecture, was a physical representation of the empire’s subjugation of Korea. The caption then described a hybrid landscape of the city, where one can see “Nandaimon,” or the South Gate of Keijo, “a high tower of French Church, sporadic textures of red bricks, and Korean stores with gable roofs.” Keijo was a hybrid city where both past and present, modern and traditional aspects coexisted.

The hybridity of the city portrayed in the postcard reflected Japan’s assimilatory policies introduced in the early 1920s. The March 1st Movement in 1919, the largest independence movement of the colonial period left a serious dent in the Japanese empire’s public image. The movement shocked the GGK and forced the colonial state to reexamine its policies in colonial Korea. Assuming its duties in September 1919, the newly appointed Governor General of Korea Saito Makoto introduced a reform package which came to be known as “cultural rule.”<sup>36</sup> Saito’s reform sought “to enhance the development of the peninsula and the prosperity of its people, both prerequisites to the Korean people assuming a status of equality with their Japanese counterparts in preparation for

35 “Jyurakumi no toshi, Keijo shigai” in *New Joseon series*, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

36 Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 126.

assimilation.”<sup>37</sup> On the surface, the “cultural rule” got rid of policies that unsettled many Koreans critical of the oppressive governance of the colonial regime. For instance, the regime lifted restrictions on Korean-language publications, allowing indigenous newspapers and magazines to flourish during the 1920s.

But policies on the ground only partially reflected what the new administration promised. While Korean students enjoyed wider opportunities, the reform maintained segregation between Korean and Japanese students in education.<sup>38</sup> The GGK authorized publication of three new vernacular newspapers and private magazines, but they were all subjected to preemptive and post-publication censorship.<sup>39</sup> The “cultural rule” of the colonial state promised assimilation of Korea with Japanese, but what actually happened disillusioned Koreans anticipating a more full-blown reform. While Korean students enjoyed wider opportunities, the reform maintained segregation between Korean and Japanese students in education.<sup>40</sup> The GGK authorized publication of three new vernacular newspapers and private magazines, but they were all subjected to preemptive and post-publication censorship.

The urban landscape portrayed in the GGK postcard visually represented the irony of the Saito administration's assimilatory policies. According to the postcard, Keijo was a city consisting of “textures of red bricks” and “Korean stores with gable roofs,” allowing both old and new, oriental and occidental cultures to coexist in a single space.<sup>41</sup> This mixture of different architecture, nature, traditional and modern aspects altogether constituted “*kyurakubi*,” roughly translated as the “idyllic beauty” suggesting the integration of Korean and Japanese neighborhoods.

The visual language of the photo and the caption, however, rejects any possibility of the colonial city reaching the level of Japanese cities. The postcards' juxtaposition of mountain ranges and the city, however, created a distance between the city from

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 128.

39 Min Ju Lee, “The Circumstance of the Korean Press under Japanese ruling and the Formation of Discourse on Freedom of the Press in the 1920s,” *SNU Journal of Communication Research* 43, no. 1 (2006), 84.

40 Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea*, 128.

41 “*Jyurakumi no toshi, Keijo shigai*” in *New Joseon series*, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

modernity. Moreover, according to the caption, Keijo was a city that had “the rusty smell of an old city,” retaining the remains of the bygone days. The caption emphasized Keijo’s pre-colonial features to suggest the conservative nature of Koreans, often criticized by Japanese critics as an obstacle to the colony’s modernization. The construction of buildings with modern architectural style and city planning could somewhat transform the physical look of the city, but “the rusty smell” will never go away. It is an indelible sign of the civilization’s backwardness.

A closer look at the caption’s description of Keijo’s cityscape also reveals the colonial state’s stance towards Christianity. In 1911, the colonial state arrested Korean Christian leaders, American and British missionaries, “falsely accusing them of conspiring to assassinate Terauchi Masatake, the first Japanese Governor-General of Korea.”<sup>42</sup> The colonial state was mindful of criticism from Christian institutions, often backed by the political support from western governments. The colonial state’s persecution of Presbyterians during the March 1st movement met backlash from missionaries like Horace H. Underwood, who meticulously documented the atrocities committed by the colonial police force.<sup>43</sup> Conscious of such criticism from the western missionaries, the Saito administration loosened regulations that had limited missionary activities in colonial Korea.<sup>44</sup>

The inclusion of the French Church in the caption could be read as the GGK’s gesture to restore its public image. By mentioning the presence of “a high tower of the French Church,” the postcard signaled the colonial state’s endorsement of religious freedom, ostensibly guaranteeing the safety of Christian missionaries in colonial Korea. Echoing this political gesture, a tourist guidebook published in 1920 also assured that the empire tolerated religious institutions. The chapter “Keijo” in *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia* had a separate section about “Churches and Mis-

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42 Jimin Kim, “Representing the Invisible: The American Preceptions of Colonial Korea, 1910-1945,” PhD Dissertation, (Columbia University, 2017), 91-92.

43 Wi Jo Kang, “The Presbyterians and the Japanese in Korea,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985), 62, 1 (Spring 1984), 42.

44 Ibid., 45.

sions,” which listed Christian institutions operating in the city.<sup>45</sup> The section, however, did not mention the violent history of the colonial regime’s persecution. Both in the postcard and tourist guidebooks, the GGK presented a sanitized narrative of its governance in colonial Korea. The cityscape of Keijo, embracing symbolic sites like the French Church, showed no hostility towards the western missionaries.

The visual language and textual description of Keijo’s cityscape in the GGK postcard represented a significant departure from the “first generation postcards.” The panoramic portrayal of the city celebrated the successful modernization of the colony by the empire. The postcard also included a subtle political gesture to western missionaries, which had been showing constant criticism over the regime’s treatment of Christians in the colony. But its carefully curated description of the city also precluded any possibility of the colony’s complete assimilation into the empire. As long as the “rusty smell” of the old dynasty lingered in the city, Korea could never be the equal of Japan.

### ***The Selective Memory of Tourism***

Commercial postcards published after the March First movement echoed the colonial state’s portrayal of the Korean cityscape. These tourist narratives silenced the history of the colonial state’s violent suppression of anti-colonial uprising. Nowhere in those postcards we can see the tumultuous records of Korean independence movements.

Colonial Korea was not the only place among the empire’s colonies where a political upheaval brought a drastic shift in the narratives of tourism. Paul D. Barclay’s study on Taiwanese postcards demonstrates that political upheaval could recast the visual role of the colonized. Barclay points out that after the 1930 Wushe Uprising, during which the reports on the violent slaughter of Japanese settlers and on intra-Taiwanese tensions were spread widely, formerly common postcard themes, such as “head hunting, Indigenous martial prowess (with firearms), and Han-Indigenous combat in the mountains,” were “absent in post-Wushe imagery.”<sup>46</sup> The case of Taiwanese postcards shows that tourism in Japanese

45 The Department of Railways, *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia* (Japan, Tokyo: 1920), 55.

46 Barclay, “Peddling Postcards and Selling Empire,” 104.

colonies constantly adapted to fluctuating political situations in colonies. When the indigenous uprising posed a real threat to the colony's stability, publishing the exotic, militant images of Taiwanese tribes would have only reinforced the tourists' concern over the region's safety. Instead, the Japanese private studios quickly adjusted their marketing strategy by removing such photos from their postcard series.

The postcard series of colonial Korea after the March First movement also display similar patterns of sanitization as the post-Wushe imageries. In particular, the curation of the images in the series, which mixed the cultural symbols of Korea and Japan, underscored the assimilation of the colony to the Japanese empire. A postcard series called "Keijo," published between 1925 and 1933, presented a peaceful and Japanized urban landscape. Included in this series were the postcards of famous tourist attractions, such as the Independence Gate and Pagoda Park, both of which were the iconic locations of the anti-colonial movement.<sup>47</sup>

However, pictorial postcards included none of this history. The postcard "The Independence Gate" (Figure 2) merely stated the fact that the gate was constructed to commemorate Korean independence from the Qing dynasty.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the postcard "Pagoda Park" (Figure 3) described it merely as a "unique park"

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47 *Keijo* series, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

48 "The Independence Gate" in *Keijo* series, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

famous for its thirteen-story-high marble tower.<sup>49</sup> The postcard depicted the people at the park as an innocuous crowd, sitting down under the pagoda and resting in the shade. In other words, the people in the crowd did not pose any threat to the colonizers. By displaying a pristine and composed portrayal of the historical sites embedded with political significance, both postcards replaced the traumatic memories of the March 1st Movement with the peaceful representations of the sites. The caption on the English version of the postcard series well reflected what the tourism industry in Keijo wanted visitors to feel from their travel: “Keizyo, the capital of Korea, is the centre of commerce, and education.”<sup>50</sup> Tourist industries, reflecting the GGK’s lead, chose what to display and what to hide.

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49 “Pagoda Park” in *Keijo* series, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago. The tower did not have thirteen stories, because the upper three stories of the tower had been taken down and placed next to the tower. Both 1913 and 1920 version of *An Official Guide* did not specify the reason behind this damage done to the tower, stating that the top three stories were removed “for some reason.” Pai identified that during the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592, a Japanese general Kato Kiyomasa attempted to dismantle the pagoda and bring it to Japan as loot but abandoned the plan. However, it is unclear why the colonial state chose not to restore this tower. But what John Foord, a special correspondence of *The New York Times*, wrote in April 20th, 1920 in his article helps us to guess at a possible motivation. In the article, Foord mentions that in 1592, “the Japanese army” attempted to “carry off the pagoda to Japan,” but “the process of transfer went as far as the removal of the two upper courses.” However, Foord used the fact that the tower was left like that for 325 years and no Koreans attempted to restore the monument to show “the nerveless grasp of old Korea on the realities of life.” Perhaps, Foord saw exactly what the colonial state wanted people to see.

50 “Pagoda Park” in *Landscape of Keijo*, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.



Figure 2) “Independence Gate,” in *Keijo* series, 1925-1933. LUNA Archive.



Figure 3) “Pagoda Park,” in *Keijo* series, 1925-1933. LUNA

Archive.

In the postcards, the landscape of Keijo was not only tamed and sanitized, but also Japanese. Again, the “Keijo” series included Joseon Shinto Shrine and Nogi Shrine, which commemorated Nogi Maresuke, the commanding general of the Russo Japanese War. The series also featured Hakubunji, a shrine that memorialized Ito Hirobumi, the Japanese Prime Minister who was assassinated by a Korean nationalist in 1909.<sup>51</sup> In another postcard series, published in 1939, the images of Japanese Shinto shrines were also included to depict the urban landscape of Keijo.<sup>52</sup> The captions of both images read, “the people have deep veneration for the shrine.”<sup>53</sup> The apparent Japanese symbols included in the series suggested successful assimilation of the Korean city. The presence of the Japanese religious institutions in the city implied that the residents followed the traditional rituals practiced at the site and accepted the Japanese values and customs.

However, what was portrayed in the pictorial postcards was less reality than a well-constructed fantasy. While the postcards gave the impression that the practice of Shintoism had been well carried out in colonial Korea, its actual situation on the ground was full of troubles and disputes. As of 1925, “Koreans contributed only 17 percent of total parish donations” to Keijo Shrine, showing that Koreans were not particularly devout followers of the Shinto practices.<sup>54</sup> Police records and news articles during the 1930s also reported on pickpocketing cases during the annual festival procession of Keijo Shrine.<sup>55</sup> The pictorial postcards omitted these deviations from the idyllic. They functioned as a tool of propaganda that made tourists believe that the city and its people were assimilated into the Japanese empire. Depicted as neither a dangerous nor segregated city, Keijo in the pictorial postcards instead reflected the “dreamwork” of the Japanese empire.

51 “Joseon Jinkuu,” “Nogi Shinsa,” “Hakubunji” in *Keijo* series, LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

52 “Joseon Jinkuu,” “Keijo Shinsa” in *Keijo* series (1939), LUNA Archive of the University of Chicago.

53 Ibid.

54 Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese rule and the politics of public space in colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 78.

55 Ibid., 90.

### *Colonial Tourism: Responses and Significance*

Colonial tourism achieved only partial success in propagating the peaceful image of colonial Korea. Depending on their prior understanding about Korea, people had varying opinions about the curated image of the colony. In a short pamphlet published in July 1919, Carlton W. Kendall wrote that “the casual traveler visiting Korea has been shown only the more beautiful aspects of the country,” accusing the Japanese Railway Guidebook and traveler’s pocket volumes of concealing institutionalized atrocities done to the Koreans.<sup>56</sup> Being an American delegate to “the International Peace Conference in 1915” in Hague, Kendall might have been one of the more vocal critics about the human rights violation of the Japanese empire. Furthermore, the publisher of the pamphlet strongly advocated for Korean independence. Therefore, it is not surprising that the pamphlet is unapologetic about its criticism of the Japanese empire.

Nevertheless, only the minority of observers voiced such criticism over the empire’s ostensible attempts for coverups. More westerners shared similar views with people like British journalist John Otway Percy Bland, who sympathized with the Japanese empire.<sup>57</sup> Having been deeply involved in settler communities in China, Bland pitied the Japanese who had to rule the Koreans, who “firmly decline to admit the superiority of Japan’s intellectual culture.”<sup>58</sup> Like Bland, many westerners were persuaded more by the empire’s capability to modernize Korea than the Koreans’ potential for self-improvement. H. S. Crowley, in his contribution to Tong-a Ilbo on November 12th, 1926, pointed out that the views of the historical monuments in Keijo were disrupted by “ugly street

56 Carlton W. Kendall, *The Truth about Korea* (Shanghai: China Press, 1919), 12.

57 What he meant by “the International Peace Conference” is a bit vague. As far as I have found, the only international conference held in Hague was the International Congress of Women. The conference dealt with a variety of issues, such as women and war, actions for permanent peace, and diplomatic cooperation.

“Reference on Korean Situation,” *Korea Review*, vol. 4, No. 1 (March 1922), <https://bit.ly/2FSDozw> (accessed on November 23, 2018),

58 John O. P. B., *China, Japan, and Korea*, (New York, Scribner’s Sons: 1921), 242; “Bland, John Otway Percy,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://bit.ly/2S9XG94> (accessed on November 23, 2018).

advertisements.”<sup>59</sup> He then praised the state’s decision to restore and manage the historical places and urged the people in charge of the project to continue their efforts.<sup>60</sup>

Koreans’ attitudes were more complicated than Kendall’s skepticism or Bland’s advocacy. In response to Crowley’s contribution, a Korean editorialist criticized the colonial state for showing “a political bias in restoring the historical monuments.”<sup>61</sup> For instance, giving the example of Genbu-mon, he claimed that the state showed preference in the preservation of the monuments by their significance to the Japanese empire, denouncing its “vulgar practice” of favoritism.<sup>62</sup> He argued that, “for fear of the eyes of the foreigners” like Mr. Crowley, the state must examine itself and correct its discriminatory policies. Such roundabout rhetoric exemplified the Koreans’ strategy to undermine the authority of the colonial state. His ambiguity allowed him to be critical about the Japanese colonizers and their policies on tourism.

These examples from pamphlets, books, and newspapers demonstrate that colonial Korea was a space where the empire’s narrative and counter-narratives competed. The Japanese empire was mindful of its public image and devised various strategies to improve it. The landscape images in tourism reflected the empire’s intervention in the presentation of colonial Korea through its curation of what to remember and what to forget.

The transformation of the postcard images of colonial Korea in the late 1910s showed the empire’s departure from its original narrative that focused on the inferiority and backwardness of the Koreans. The GJK postcard reflected the changes in the colonial state’s reform policies that aimed for the nominal assimilation of the indigenous. Furthermore, a pristine and peaceful landscape of the cities in the commercial postcards silenced the memory of the March 1st Movement. The empire redeemed its missteps in its policies by presenting the pacified cities by showing the generosity of the Japanese empire as a benevolent caretaker of the Korean nation.

59 “Ugly street advertisements and monuments covered with piles of tiles,” *Tong-a Ilbo*, November 12, 1926.

60 Ibid.

61 “On the restoration of historical monuments,” *Tong-a Ilbo*, November 13, 1926.

62 Ibid.

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The power of pictorial postcards as a medium relied on the authenticity of the photographs. The GGK and the private publishers selected scenes of the colony, pulled them out from the original context of the Korean history, and restructured a narrative that fit into their utopian fantasies. Unless one had prior information about the atrocities of the Japanese empire, as Carlton W. Kendall did in 1919, tourists visiting Korea just believed what they witnessed. The fractured images of the colony were concealed from the eyes of the tourists behind the serene landscapes.

Colonial Korea was a space where multiple narratives in competition co-existed. The analysis of the landscapes portrayed in Japanese pictorial postcards corroborates Mitchell's claim that any portrayal of landscape, however neutral it may seem, is political. As one of the narratives about colonial Korea, the reality portrayed in the postcard series was, like a delicate pottery lying behind the sheet of glass in a museum, a narrative isolated from the actual living conditions under the colonial rule.

# GEORGE PADMORE'S AFRICAN REVOLUTION: REVIVING MARX- IST-LENINISM IN THE PAN-AFRI- CAN TRADITION

Berber Jin

Introduction by James T. Campbell, Professor of History,  
Stanford University

George Padmore stands as the Zelig of black radicalism. Born in 1903 in Trinidad, he traced his descent to an enslaved Asante warrior carried to the Caribbean on a British slave ship. He came to the United States in 1924, enrolling at Fisk University, where he was immediately swept up in a student strike. The years that followed took him to New York City, where he worked as an advisor at The New York Times and enrolled in the Communist Party; Moscow, where he was elected to the City Soviet, taught at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, and headed the Negro Bureau of the Profintern; Hamburg, where he edited the Negro Worker until its violent suppression by the newly ascendant Nazis; Paris, where he resigned from the Communist Party in protest of its betrayal of the cause of colonial independence; London, where he and a group of determined African students -- including Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Nnamdi Azikiwe, all future heads of state -- successfully plotted the overthrow of the British Empire; Manchester, where he revived the moribund Pan-African Congress movement; and newly independent Ghana, where he worked as an advisor for Nkrumah, now Prime Minister. He died in Ghana in 1959, a few months after his 56th birthday. Along the way, he penned a dozen books, edited several newspapers, and corresponded with virtually every significant figure in the history of 20th century radicalism. He was buried at Christiansborg Castle in Accra,

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seat of the Ghanaian government, a former slave fortress, perhaps the very one from which his Asante ancestor had been shipped a century and a half before.

As even this bare summary suggests, George Padmore lived a very consequential life. Yet in contrast to comrades like Nkrumah, W.E.B. Du Bois, and C.L.R. James, each the subject of a vast historical literature, he remains a curiously elusive figure. Like Woody Allen's fictional Zelig, he appears only in the corner of the frame, fleetingly and out of focus. The few historians who have attempted to assay his life -- I include myself -- have usually quit in frustration, undone not only by the scope of Padmore's peripatetic life but also by the intricacy of his political thought, which centered on a life-long quest to develop an independent Marxist theory of African Revolution.

When Berber Jin proposed writing a senior thesis on George Padmore, my first response was to discourage him. I doubted it could be done, certainly not within the constraints of an undergraduate thesis project. Happily, he ignored my advice. The essay that follows is drawn from that thesis. Based on original archival research in Moscow, London, and New York, the essay reconstructs a pivotal period in Padmore's life, from his departure from the Communist Party to the eve of the Second World War. This is historical research and writing of the highest order. From my perspective, it is also a reminder of how blessed I am to teach at a place like Stanford University.

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## **George Padmore's African Revolution: Reviving Marxist-Leninism in the Pan-African Tradition**

### **Berber Jin**

On February 2, 1934, the thirty-one-year-old Trinidadian anti-colonialist George Padmore resigned from the American Communist Party. Then the world's foremost black Communist, Padmore had spent the first three years of the decade leading the Communist International's Negro Bureau, tasked with organizing black and African workers for the impending world socialist revolution. Operating during what historians now call the Communist International's "Third Period," Padmore led the effort to build revolutionary trade unions across the black trans-Atlantic world, eschewing socialist organizations that sought to compromise with political authority. Only a global proletarian revolution, the Comintern believed, would secure the survival and triumph of the Soviet Union as the leader of a new, socialist epoch. Yet, in August 1933, Padmore was asked to pause the Negro Bureau operations indefinitely, then based out of a small office in Paris that coordinated the distribution of revolutionary directives and political pamphlets to black trade union activists across the world. Padmore protested the decision, claiming that Soviet authorities shut down the Negro Bureau to appease the British Foreign Office, which was growing weary of anti-colonial Communist propaganda in the British colonies.<sup>1</sup> After a bitter war of words with the Communist press, Padmore resigned from the Party in February 1934. "The Negro toiling masses of the world," he declared in his resignation letter, "will continue their struggles and build their liberation movements — with or without the Comintern."<sup>2</sup> Now an independent activist, Padmore was determined to carry on the African revolution, with or without the institutions of organized Marxism.

Padmore laid out his plan for African revolution in his book

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1 Padmore made this claim sometime after his formal expulsion from the Communist International in February 1934. See: George Padmore, 'Open Letter to Earl Browder, Secretary of the American Communist Press,' no date. George Padmore Collection/Princeton University Library. Scholars have not been able to confirm the historical accuracy of this claim.

2 Padmore, 'To the Secretariat Communist Party of USA, NYC,' 3 February 1934. George Padmore Collection/Princeton University Library.

*How Britain Rules Africa*, written in the immediate months after his Comintern expulsion. Challenging Communist Party's orthodoxy, Padmore promoted a broad "anti-imperialist peoples' front" that, at once, included reformist nationalists and excluded white African workers, whom he believed had a vested interest in maintaining racial hierarchy to support their economic interests. While rejecting the Comintern's policies of unconditional class unity and revolutionary trade union organizing, Padmore retained faith in the emancipatory potential of Marxist thought, which he believed the Comintern had misinterpreted. Like Lenin and Trotsky, Padmore theorized an African revolution imbricated with a global proletariat revolution and viewed class as the fundamental engine of human conflict. He rejected the idea that underdeveloped nations needed to pass through two distinct phases of revolution: a bourgeois-democratic revolution which established a sovereign nation-state and capitalist economy, and a socialist revolution, in which the proletariat would overthrow the capitalist class. Instead, he believed that the triumph of African sovereignty went hand-in-hand with the success of a white working-class revolution in Europe. The success of both these political transformations would be crucial, Padmore argued, in creating a new socialist world order.

Written by a man without money or a political party, *How Britain Rules Africa* should by most accounts have fallen by the wayside--the deviationist product of a Communist Party exile whose ideas would never take shape in the world. This was the prescribed path for most opponents of the Soviet regime under Joseph Stalin. Even Leon Trotsky, a founding father of the Russian Revolution and leader of the anti-Soviet Trotskyist movement abroad, would suffer an undignified death in 1940, assassinated by a Stalinist agent in Mexico City. However, Padmore would not only survive the tumultuous years of the Stalinist Terror, but also become the veritable leader of the interwar black anti-colonial movement. Through the International African Service Bureau (IASB), founded in 1937, Padmore would lead a group of radical, Marxist Pan-Africanists, all committed to executing the plan for African revolution outlined in *How Britain Rules Africa*. The roster of Padmore's colleagues and proteges includes many of the towering giants of 20th century black history, including the Trinidadian historian and activist C.L.R. James, South African novelist Peter Abrahams, and

three young Africans destined to become heads of state in newly independent Africa: Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah.

Scholars have often used Padmore's departure from the Communist International to reveal Marxism's insufficiency as a theory of racial oppression, drawing a distinction between Western political thought and what political theorist Cedric Robinson calls the "black radical tradition."<sup>3</sup> This study challenges this binary. Rather than argue that Marxism could never provide a solution to the condition of racial oppression, Padmore maintained that the condition of racial oppression was what gave black people the very mandate to interpret Marxist doctrine for their own liberation. He retained faith in the universal potential of the Marxist project even after his break from organized Communism, thinking of Pan-African liberation within the framework of world socialist revolution.

Resurrecting how Padmore attempted to implement his vision of Marxist revolution also recasts interwar black anti-colonialism as, to borrow the words of one scholar, a "world-making" project.<sup>4</sup> Historians have tended to explain Padmore's influence through his work within the Black International, a set of interwar black diasporic thinkers and institutions that advocated a pan-African conception of black identity and united around their opposition to European imperialism.<sup>5</sup> They emphasize Padmore's commitment to African self-determination as part of a broader ethos of black solidarity that transcended geographic and linguistic divisions. But Padmore's story is not just about an ex-Communist who abandoned Communist ideology and shifted towards pragmatic anti-colonial work. Instead, it is the story about how an ex-Communist

3 See Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press); Bogue, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (Abingdon: Routledge); James, *George Padmore Decolonization from Below* (London: Springer). Robinson explicitly places Padmore in the black radical tradition. Padmore's biographer Leslie James also locates Padmore within the "black radical tradition" (see page 9).

4 Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

5 See Matera, *Black London: the imperial metropolis and decolonization in the twentieth century* (Oakland: University of California Press); Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press); Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917 - 1939* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press).

built a political movement that theorized and tried to execute an independent, Marxist-inspired African Revolution. Alongside other members of the International African Service Bureau, Padmore's activism was always informed by a broader theory of world revolution, one that supported black nationalism only as a step towards proletarian internationalism. While the Bureau's political focus centered on promoting African self-determination and political rights alongside various other institutions of the Black International, its ideological motivations rested upon a thoroughly Marxist conception of global revolution.

By the end of World War II, history would disprove the vision of socialist transformation envisioned in *How Britain Rules Africa* and the International African Service Bureau. But Padmore's political thought and activism in the late interwar years still deserves reappraisal. Though the Bureau's prophecy of global proletarian revolution fell by the wayside, it trained a whole generation of African nationalists of the British Empire — including future heads of state Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah — to see the world through an anti-Soviet, Marxist lens. In addition, resurrecting Padmore's early attempts to execute an uncorrupted version of Marxist revolution centering African sovereignty provides an opportunity to reevaluate the relationship between Pan-African thought and the Western political tradition.

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George Padmore was born to the son of a Barbadian slave in Arouca, Trinidad in 1903. He lived a comfortable, black middle-class life in the West Indies and first aspired to become a doctor. As with so many young black nationalists, Padmore's political awakening would come when studying abroad. He emigrated to America in December 1924 to attend Fisk University before moving to New York City in the summer of 1927 to attend New York University's Law School. The following year, Padmore enrolled at Howard University. During this time, Padmore abandoned studying medicine and soon immersed himself in politics, making a name for himself by challenging speakers' attitudes on race and imperialism at university events.<sup>6</sup> At Fisk, he joined Nnamdi "Benjamin"

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6 'Information obtained from Dr. Legrand Coleman,' no date. Nkrumah Papers/Howard University, box 154-41, folder 16.

Azikiwe, a future president of independent Nigeria, in forming an African nationalist student organization on campus. While in New York, he decided to broaden his activism beyond campus politics and began work to create an American “Negro Youth movement” that encompassed Africans, West Indians, and African-Americans. “We realize the part Chinese and Indian nationalist students are playing; and we feel that the time has come for Negro students to close ranks, and think in terms of African nationalism,” he wrote to his old professor Alain Locke, then the impresario of Harlem’s New Negro movement, “and we feel that the time has come for Negro students to close ranks and think in terms of African nationalism.”<sup>7</sup>

Padmore joined the American Communist Party in the summer of 1927, when he stumbled into a group of Communist Party organizers at Union Square, New York. He soon sacrificed his education to pursue Party work. “George’s idea at the time,” one of his classmates would later recall, “was that it was only the Communist Party which was willing to do anything about the Negro problem.”<sup>8</sup> Instead of finishing his Law degree at Howard University, Padmore decided to accept a rare invitation from the American Communist Party to train with the Comintern as a Marxist revolutionary in December 1929. It had been a little over a year since Stalin identified ‘right deviationists’ as the principal threat to the Communist movement, exhorting the Comintern to pressure national Communist Parties to go on the offensive against social democrats who sought to reconcile workers to capitalism via constitutional reform. Stalin predicted an imminent war between the Soviet Union and its capitalist adversaries in the Western world; it was Padmore’s job to mobilize the broader black world in defense of the Soviet Union through the Comintern’s Negro Bureau. But while Padmore worked to persuade colonized Africans to choose socialist revolution over colonial rule, Stalin himself began to collaborate with colonial powers. In 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations with the aim of allying with France and Britain against Nazi Germany. By 1935, the Comintern abandoned its ultra-Leftist approach for a “Popular Front” policy that involved broad allianc-

7 Letter Padmore to Alain Locke, 14 December 1927. Locke Papers/Howard, box 75, folder 20. See also: Padmore to Locke, 18 January 1928.

8 ‘Information obtained from Dr. Legrand Coleman,’ no date. Nkrumah Papers/Howard University, box 154-41, folder 16.

es with non-revolutionary, anti-fascist parties to contain the Nazi German threat.<sup>9</sup>

Exiled from the Comintern in February 1934, Padmore broadened his strategy for achieving African revolution beyond the narrow revolutionary trade union approach of the Third Period. While writing of a broad anti-imperial front in *How Britain Rules Africa*, he also spent the months following his resignation re-building his anti-colonial network. Padmore renounced the sectarianism of his Comintern days and enlisted both revolutionary trade unionists and moderate reformists to convene a Negro World Unity Congress in July 1935. He contacted W.E.B. Du Bois, whom he had previously dismissed as an “uncle Tom” politician who “appealed to the toilers of their race to help the capitalists.”<sup>10</sup> The Pan-African stalwart was asked to provide American representation for the Congress. “The present international situation,” Padmore wrote to Du Bois in February 1934, “demands unity between all Negro organizations, groups and individuals fighting for the emancipation of our race.”<sup>11</sup>

As Padmore promoted the Conference, his old Comintern compatriots accused him of betraying the Communist movement. In a 1934 pamphlet entitled “World Problems of the Negro People: a refutation of George Padmore,” Padmore’s old Comintern boss James Ford chastised him for collaborating with “the Negro Middle class, intellectual and petty bourgeois leaders” who sought to “combine their forces with the growing negro bourgeois for Negro capitalist aims.”<sup>12</sup> Ford accused Padmore of colluding with black intellectuals like Du Bois to build up a network of black capitalists that would betray black workers. The criticisms were part of the American Communist Party’s broader effort to “expose the treach-

9 For detailed examinations of the Communist International’s Third Period, which lasted from 1928-1934, see: Agnew and McDermott, *The Comintern: A history of international communism from Lenin to Stalin*. (London: MacMillan Press Ltd); Pons, *The global revolution: A history of international communism 1917-1991*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

10 Padmore, ‘Negro Workers and the Imperialist War Intervention in the Soviet Union,’ 1931. Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI): 534/3/669.

11 Letter Padmore to W.E.B. DuBois, 17 February 1934. W.E.B. Du Bois Papers/UMass.

12 James Ford, *World Problems of the Negro People: a refutation of George Padmore* (New York, n.d.), p 19.

ery of Padmore,” which included attacks against Padmore and “international Negro reformism” in the Communist newspaper *The Liberator*.<sup>13</sup>

Padmore’s impetus for collaborating with reformist black anti-colonialists was not to serve bourgeois-nationalist interests, but rather emerged from his own reinterpretation of Lenin and Trotsky’s theory of proletarian revolution. In segmenting bourgeois-democratic revolution and proletarian revolution into two historically-distinct phases of societal evolution, Karl Marx’s philosophy of history stressed socioeconomic development over human agency as the main driver of historical change. For Marx, the development of capitalism under a sovereign nation-state defined by representative democracy and liberal political institutions was a historical prerequisite to the class divisions which could give rise to a proletarian uprising. However, Lenin and Trotsky reconfigured this progression in the years preceding the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The two argued that an alliance between the working class and the peasantry in a “semi-feudal” nation like Russia could transform a bourgeois-democratic revolution directly into a socialist proletarian revolution. They emphasized that this alliance’s temporary seizure of power would be consolidated with the aid of a more advanced Western European proletariat class, which would overthrow their own capitalist states and assist their Russian compatriots.<sup>14</sup>

In *How Britain Rules Africa*, Padmore utilized Trotsky and Lenin’s revolutionary logic to theorize an African revolution. Largely agrarian states with small working classes, African nations still needed to go through a bourgeois-democratic revolution that reconstituted political authority along the lines of popular sovereignty, let alone a proletarian revolution that would abolish private property. Drawing upon Lenin and Trotsky’s theories of the political vanguard, Padmore contended that Africa need not wait for capitalism to develop after a bourgeois-democratic revolution in order to bring about a socialist state. Instead, African political par-

13 Quoted in Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939* (Trenton: Africa World Press), p 192-3.

14 See Lenin on the “Revolution of 1905” and Trotsky on “Permanent Revolution” in Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia* (Lebanon: UPNE) for their interpretations of Marxist political thought.

ties could immediately agitate for national independence through a broad anti-colonial coalition while also realizing a socialist revolution by allying Africa's burgeoning working class with an impending proletarian revolution in Europe.<sup>15</sup> For Padmore, the Comintern's apprehension that supporting bourgeois forms of anti-colonial nationalism would empower a reactionary native capitalist class was misplaced. Africa's underdevelopment meant that there was virtually no indigenous, black bourgeois class on the continent. The most important prerequisite for the coming African revolution was to lend the broadest support possible for African self-determination that ensured the support of working-class forces in Western Europe.

Although Padmore was armed with a theory of revolution, his early efforts in building a broad anti-imperial front failed. Padmore's mood and condition deteriorated as he faced daily slander from the Communist Press. Lacking both funds and political credibility, Padmore's 1935 Negro World Unity Congress floundered.<sup>16</sup> The future seemed bleak for a man who had once been the world's most famous black Communist. Where was Padmore to go from here?

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Padmore's opportunity to re-enter black anti-colonial organizing came with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, which energized global, Pan-African activity. On October 3, 1935, one hundred thousand Italian soldiers marched into Ethiopia from Eritrea, beginning an assault on Africa's last independent state. By the start of May 1936, Mussolini's legions entered into Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, ending a relentless campaign of poison gas attacks and aerial bombings that did little to separate soldier from civilian. While Britain and France both voted in support of League sanctions against Italy a month after the invasion, they continued to cooperate covertly with the Italian regime, concluding a secret pact that essentially conceded the majority of Ethiopia to Mussolini in December. Haile Selassie's impassioned speech before the League urging it to affirm its own commitment to self-determination elicited

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15 Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa* (London: Wishart, 1936), p 332.

16 James, *Notes on the Life of George Padmore*.

ed only an uncomfortable silence from Europe's great powers, who ultimately prioritized European peace over a commitment to the principle of self-determination. The white world, it seemed, had abandoned Africa.

Italy's assault on Ethiopia prompted a unified outpouring of support from the Pan-African world in solidarity with Ethiopia. Far more than the world's oldest independent African state, Ethiopia was a symbol of the black world's defiance to centuries of colonial humiliation, the last citadel of black sovereignty in a Western-dominated world order. As the Italian invasion ensued through the late months of 1935, black people across the world rushed to Ethiopia's defense. African-American newspapers proclaimed solidarity with Ethiopians and some black Americans volunteered for military service to fight the Italians. While Britain debated the merits of sanctions against Italy in the early months of the invasion, dockworkers in South Africa and Trinidad enacted their own, refusing to offload Italian cargo. Mass protests in British-controlled Lagos, Nigeria led to the formation of the Lagos Ethiopia Defense Committee in December.<sup>17</sup> Padmore himself joined the International African Friends of Ethiopia, an advocacy group formed by C.L.R. James and Amy Ashwood Garvey to build support for Ethiopia in London.

The invasion pushed London's black organizations to look past political differences and cooperate in defending Ethiopian sovereignty. In the early years of the decade, the starkly anti-communist West African Students Union and Christian-inspired League of Colored Peoples (LCP) in London advocated for reforms, not self-determination, in the colonies. After Mussolini's invasion, these two black organizations escalated their criticisms against imperialism, and even worked with members of the Communist and Trotskyist Left to stage public protests and pen articles in defense of African sovereignty. In spring 1936, the LCP's journal *The Keys* published C. L. R. James' "Abyssinia and the Imperialists," which characterized the British Empire as fundamentally corrupt: "Africans and people of African descent, especially those who have been poisoned by British Imperialist education," James wrote, "needed a lesson. They have got it."<sup>18</sup> Conflicting political

17     Matera, *Black London*, p 66-67.

18     Ibid., p 70.

ideologies — which had already torn apart the Communist movement internally and sharply divided the world along fascist, democratic, and socialist lines — would play a little role in the practical politics of the post-Ethiopia era. As Padmore would later recall, the “personal idiosyncrasies” of black activists at this time did little to affect their unified support for Ethiopian sovereignty.<sup>19</sup>

The anti-colonial solidarity of the Ethiopia moment was crucial in setting up Padmore's new career in the struggle against imperialism. The Italian invasion not only allowed him to find a role in the burgeoning London anti-colonial scene at the International African Friends of Ethiopia, but also engendered political sympathies more favorable to his theory of building a broad, anti-imperial coalition. To Padmore's benefit, the Comintern was now fully committed to the Popular Front, which pushed national Communist Parties across Europe into alliances with reformist progressive organizations that often supported colonialism.<sup>20</sup> This prevented the organization from issuing any effective response to the Ethiopian invasion, constrained by the Soviet Union's need to maintain friendly relations with fascist Italy to contain Nazi German expansionism.<sup>21</sup>

Though Padmore now had a foothold in the London anti-colonial scene, he still lacked the broad political mandate needed to achieve his twin goals of African self-determination and global proletarian revolution. To help achieve the ambitious vision of world transformation laid out in *How Britain Rules Africa*, Padmore realized he needed an organization that could go beyond Ethiopia. His opportunity came with a touch of serendipity, when an old Comintern compatriot arrived on the shores of Britain in March 1937.

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19 Letter Padmore to W.E.B. DuBois, 17 August 1945. W.E.B. Du Bois Papers/UMass.

20 Padmore was most upset by the French Communist Party's shift from supporting colonial independence to assimilation within the French Empire in 1935. See: Cohen, "The colonial policy of the Popular Front." *French Historical Studies* 7, no. 3 (1972): 368-393; Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p 82.

21 Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic: Africa American Agency, West African Intellectuals and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers* (Leiden: BRILL), p 648-649.

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In many ways, I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson's biography mirrored George Padmore's. Like Padmore, Wallace-Johnson had spent the early years of the decade promoting African independence through the Comintern's Negro Bureau. When Padmore moved to Paris in early 1934, Wallace-Johnson left Moscow for West Africa. There, he spent the remainder of the year building support for his proposed West African Youth League. Like Padmore, Wallace-Johnson had qualms about the class-against-class approach to African nationalism. While organizing the Youth League, he worked alongside reformist black activists like Nnamdi Azikiwe, the *African Morning Post* editor who eventually became the president of Nigeria. It seems that Wallace-Johnson, still faithful to the Comintern, deferred Padmore's initial request to help organize the Negro World Unity Congress.<sup>22</sup> But by 1936, he was drifting away from organized Communism for good and likely shared Padmore's disappointment with the Soviet Union's prioritization of diplomatic pragmatism over global revolution. Wallace-Johnson became an unapologetic black nationalist after the Ethiopian invasion. The day after Mussolini's army set foot in Addis Ababa, he penned "Has the African a God?", an article condemning Europe's collective inaction over the Ethiopian crisis. Soon after, British authorities in Nigeria arrested him on charges of sedition.<sup>23</sup>

Wallace-Johnson arrived in London in March 1937 to appeal his conviction before the courts. In order to raise funds to lobby on behalf of his case, he turned to Pan-Africanist T. Ras Makonnen, C.L.R. James, and Padmore for support.<sup>24</sup> But Wallace-Johnson also thought beyond his own trial, proposing to set up a Central Bureau in London that would coordinate anti-colo-

22 Letter from Wallace-Johnson to Otto Huiwood, 1 June, 1934. RGASPI 495/64/138.

23 This biographical note of I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson draws from: Spitzer, Leo, and LaRay Denzer, "ITA Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6, no. 3 (1973): 413-452.

24 'Secret: Wallace Johnson and the International African Service Bureau,' n.d. The National Archives (TNA)/Colonial Office (CO): 323/1610/2.

nial work between the colonies and the metropole. His proposal came at a germinal moment, for Padmore, Makonnen, and James were themselves attempting to transform the International African Friends of Ethiopia into an organization with a broader mandate. They accepted Wallace-Johnson's proposal with open arms and the four of them formed the International African Service Bureau in May 1937.

In the cooperative spirit of the post-Ethiopia moment, the International African Service Bureau established itself as a non-partisan group advocating colonial independence. In its opening manifesto, the Bureau branded itself as a non-ideological interest organization promising not to "usurp or in any other way monopolize" the activities of other black political organizations.<sup>25</sup> Its mission, it proclaimed, was instead to educate the public about socioeconomic conditions across the Empire. The Bureau also volunteered to supply speakers for any group wanting to learn more about the colonies, whether that be Labor Party branches and trade unions, or peace societies and religious organizations.

Though only consisting of a motley group of radical pan-Africanists -- the four initial founders were soon joined by Jomo Kenyatta and Ben Azikiwe -- the Bureau churned out a steady stream of news and commentary on African events. Beginning in July 1937, it ran a monthly news bulletin called *Africa and the World*, which reported on socioeconomic developments across the black world. It frequently held public protests at Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square and initiated petitions on colonial issues to be brought before the House of Commons. Within Parliament, Bureau members secured the support of radical Labor M.P.s who bucked party orthodoxy to support colonial self-determination, including Ellen Wilkinson, Reginald Sorensen, and Arthur Creech Jones. These politicians not only served as financial patrons for the Bureau, but also relied on the organization to stay updated on colonial developments and force the House of Commons to confront colonial policies.

While pressuring the Colonial Office for reform in Britain, the Bureau also agitated for rebellion in the colonies. It distributed *Africa and the World* throughout the black world, often using infor-

25 'The International African Service Bureau: For the Defense of Africans & Peoples of African Descent', 1937. Schomburg Center/Ralph Bunche Papers.

mal networks of distribution to circumvent colonial censors. (Fears over the paper's influence prompted the administration of the Gold Coast to propose banning it outright in early 1938.<sup>26</sup>) During the West Indian labor uprisings of 1937 and 1938, the Bureau not only staged public protests pressuring the government to improve colonial working conditions, but also pressured Parliament directly for change. In a decision that one scholar has suggested was at least partially attributable to the pressures exerted by the IASB, the British government appointed a ten-member Royal Commission of Enquiry under Lord Moyne in late 1938 to investigate the socio-economic conditions of the West Indian colonies.<sup>27</sup> Reflecting the lasting impact of post-Ethiopian black solidarity, the IASB joined the League of Colored Peoples and the more radical Negro Welfare Association in presenting a memorandum to the Commission. Demanding "the establishment of democratic government fully representative of the people of these territories," the memorandum situated Caribbean resistance within a "growing Negro consciousness" that emerged after the "rape of Ethiopia."<sup>28</sup>

Padmore was at the very center of black anti-colonial organizing in London. Though a Communist exile, he retained the allegiance of dozens of revolutionary black trade unionists across Africa, America, and the West Indies. Free from the constraints of the Comintern's Third Period approach to revolution, Padmore now broadened his network to include anti-colonialist activists of all political leanings, and his home at 22 Cranleigh Street became a hub for both revolutionaries and bourgeois nationalists. "Not only a programme and tactics for the revolutionary nationalist movement in Africa but many a tactical approach to the Colonial Office by bourgeois African politicians were worked out with Padmore's advice and not infrequently under his direct inspiration," C.L.R.

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26 Letter from Government House, Accra to Colonial Office, 26 February 1938. TNA/CO 847/11/16.

27 Roderick J. Macdonald, 'Introductory essay' to reprint of *The Keys: the official organ of The League of Colored Peoples* (New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization Ltd.), 1976.

28 Quoted in M. Matera, "Black Internationalism and African and Caribbean Intellectuals in London 1919-1950" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2008), p 126; Gopal, *Insurgent Empire*, p 341.

James would later recall.<sup>29</sup>

Though the Bureau cooperated with other anti-colonial organizations in London, it was distinguished by its theoretical commitments to executing an independent, Marxist revolution for Africa. Because the Soviet Union had abandoned its commitment to world revolution for a program of pragmatic antifascism, the Bureau's members did not trust the European political Left. Padmore was not alone in his disillusionment with the organized Communist movement following his break with the Comintern. C.L.R. James' *World Revolution, 1917-1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International*, published in 1937, also criticized the Stalinist bureaucracy's abandonment of the global revolutionary movement via the Popular Front. For James, as for Padmore, the Popular Front had effectively ended hopes of liberating Africa through formal Communist institutions. "Recent political experience shows us that European organizations tend to ignore the African struggle and to use the colonial movement merely as a decoration to their own for ceremonial occasions," the International African Service Bureau wrote in an opening editorial to its paper, *International African Opinion*, which replaced *Africa and World Peace* in July 1938.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, the Bureau only admitted black people into its membership. "It must never be felt by the masses of black people that people like ourselves were simply operating as agents of some other imperialist power like Russia," Makonnen recollected. "We were out to create a movement that was free from any entanglement; and any black man coming into our camp who had one foot in the communist camp, we would deal with ruthlessly."<sup>31</sup>

This movement broadly incorporated Padmore's theory of revolution developed in *How Britain Rules Africa*. According to James, the Bureau's members shared Padmore's expectation of an impending European war, from which would emerge a proletarian revolution and an opportunity for Africa to throw off the shackles of imperialism. "...[A]ll of us saw African emancipation as depen-

29 C.L.R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, 1978), p 65.

30 Opening Editorial to *International African Opinion*, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1938.

31 T.R. Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within* (London: Oxford University Press), p 117.

dent upon the breakdown of imperialist power in Europe,” James later remembered. “Armed rebellion was sure to be crushed unless the imperialist powers were impotent, and this could only be the result of revolutions within the metropolitan powers themselves.”<sup>32</sup> The Bureau’s job, Padmore explained, was not just to work towards black national liberation, but to “coordinate” these struggles “within the British, French, and other European imperial systems.”<sup>33</sup>

Padmore further developed the theoretical basis of the Bureau’s work in his 1937 book *Africa and World Peace*, which developed a Marxist interpretation of world politics. The monograph, promoted by the Bureau alongside *How Britain Rules Africa*, transposed Lenin’s arguments in *Imperialism: the Highest of Capitalism* onto contemporary European politics. It identified the root cause of conflict between Europe’s fascist powers and liberal democracies as a fight for resources in Africa and Asia. In a capitalist world dominated by ever-expanding monopolies, Padmore characterized the rise of fascist aggression in Germany and Italy as a form of aggressive economic expansionism hidden behind ethnonational principles. With the globe’s resources dwindling, Padmore predicted an impending war between liberal democracies (which had benefited territorially from the 1919 Treaty of Versailles), and the fascist powers seeking to recover the land they lost from the same treaty. Ethiopia, he argued, had been conceded to the Italians to stave off a larger European war for resource distribution. Yet ultimately neither Italy nor Germany would be sufficiently appeased, and Padmore warned blacks against fighting in defense of their colonial overlords. “There is only way out, and that is the Leninist way: ‘Turn the imperialist war into civil war,’” Padmore wrote, again declaring his allegiance to the principles of Marxist-Leninist thought.<sup>34</sup> Black revolutionaries were to wage war against their European superiors in the face of fascist aggression, joining the European proletariat in using the conflict to birth a new socialist

32 C.L.R. James, ‘Notes on the Life of George Padmore’. Unpublished Typescript. University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies archives, 1959.

33 Letter from Padmore to Alain Locke, 3 October 1938. Locke Papers/Howard, box 75, folder 20.

34 Padmore, *Africa and World Peace* (London: M. Secker and Warburg), p 264. Emphasis in the original text.

epoch. "There is only one way of abolishing war, and that is *by a fundamental change in the present social system*," he declared. "And the only class in modern society capable of carrying out this change and thereby saving humanity and civilization from destruction is the organized working class."<sup>35</sup>

The comprehensive theory of world politics developed by the Bureau's members distinguished the organization from other anti-colonial groups in London. While groups like the League of Colored Peoples and the West African Students Union were also committed anti-imperialists, they lacked the theoretical vision of the Bureau's leaders, which had been developed from a strong grounding in Marxist theory and oftentimes direct participation in the Communist movement itself. Almost every black organization in London recognized the moral imperative of Pan-African emancipation. But only the Bureau's members—with Padmore and James leading the way—saw their work as prioritizing African liberation in a Marxist world revolution and restoring the integrity of the Communist project. Their vision, James recalled "ensured that Marxism, unadulterated, uncorrupted, would be applied to the African political scene."<sup>36</sup>

The Bureau's newspaper *International African Opinion* revealed the tremendous influence of this political heritage on the organization. Published between July 1938 and June 1939, the paper not only outlined political developments across the black world, but also articulated a distinct vision of political change. Black political leaders in the colonies were urged to recognize that domestic advances toward political autonomy were only an "intermediate stage" that would lay the basis for a broader socialist struggle. Editorials to white trade unionists explained the importance of white working-class support for black nationalist struggles, particularly as a "counterbalance" to the development of large native bureaucracies following independence. Praising C.L.R. James' monograph *The Black Jacobins*, published in 1938, columnists also highlighted the Haitian Revolution as a historical model for theorizing the collective emancipation of the black and white underclass.<sup>37</sup>

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35 Ibid.

36 James, *Notes on the Life of George Padmore*.

37 See volume 1, numbers 2-4 in *International African Opinion*.

In public protests in London, Bureau members argued that fascism was both a colonial and a continental phenomenon, thus laying a foundation for solidarity between white working-class audiences and colonial subjects. During one June 1938 protest at Trafalgar Square condemning African colonialism, Padmore told the largely-white audience that fascism in South Africa originally emerged with the British, who created the country's first concentration camps in order to control black labor in diamond mines. Kenyatta followed Padmore. He argued that Hitler and Mussolini had "learnt their tyrannical form of dictatorship" from the abuses of the British government in its African colonies, such as the detainment of thousands of black people in Kenya.<sup>38</sup> The public meeting concluded with a speech from Kenyatta's white housemate Amy Geraldine Stock, who appealed directly to the white working-class to support colonial independence.<sup>39</sup>

The Bureau also cultivated a close alliance with Stock's political party, the Independent Labor Party (ILP). In the early 1930s, the ILP occupied a curious in-between space within the British Left, opposing the Labor Party's reformism while also rejecting the British Communist Party's revolutionary approach to organizing workers. Yet by the time the Communist Party adopted the Popular Front and urged workers to vote Labor, the ILP had effectively swapped places with the Communists on the political spectrum. Steadfast in its commitment to anti-colonialism, the ILP criticized the Soviet Union's entry into the League of Nations and Stalin's decision to abandon global revolution. By the early months of 1939, both the Bureau and the ILP operated out of the same building in London.<sup>40</sup>

Padmore developed intimate relationships with many prominent members of the Independent Labor Party. His acquaintances included the British Quaker Reginald Reynolds, who had spent a year at Gandhi's Indian ashram in 1929. The two first met when Padmore was just settling into London, and their political partnership solidified over a shared disappointment with the "Communist somersault of 1934," during which the French Communist

38 Metropolitan Police Report, 8 June 1938. TNA/Metropolitan Police, Special Branch (MEPO): 38/91.

39 Ibid.

40 Summary of letter from I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson to George Padmore, TNA/Security Service, Personal Files (KV): 2/1824.

Party suddenly abandoned its anti-colonial work upon entering negotiations to form a Popular Front government.<sup>41</sup> Padmore also grew close with Reynolds' soon-to-be wife and novelist Ethel Mannin, whose 1936 visit to the Soviet Union left her completely disillusioned with Stalinism. (The two of them, along with the African-American diplomat Ralph Bunche, travelled to Spain in April 1937 to see a concert by the famed black singer and Soviet loyalist Paul Robeson.<sup>42</sup>) Padmore also contributed frequently to the Party's *New Leader* paper and, according to a British police report, was "virtually in charge of [the ILP's] negro activities" by May 1939.<sup>43</sup>

The Bureau's close relationship with the Independent Labor Party and its outreach to the white working-class revealed the integral connection the organization saw between European proletarian revolution and African independence. Throughout the final years of the decade, Padmore and his coterie of radical black Pan-Africanists would not just agitate for colonial independence alongside black organizations. They would also work with white radicals, seeking to ensure that an impending proletarian revolution in Europe would lend its full support to colonial rebellion. This theory of social transformation, however, would take on an added urgency in the late months of 1938, when the European geopolitical situation irreversibly took a turn for the worse.

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Over the summer of 1938, Hitler revealed his ambitions to annex the Sudetenland, a geographical slice of Czechoslovakia that was home to over three million people of German descent. Having turned a blind eye to German expansion into the Rhineland and Austria, the British government felt compelled to stop further Nazi aggression. In September, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain rushed to broker a deal with the Nazi regime, agreeing on the 15th to grant self-determination for the Sudetenland if

41 Quoted in S. Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p 82.

42 Letter from Padmore to Ralph Bunche, 27 April 1937. Schomburg Center/Ralph Bunche Papers.

43 Summary of letter from I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson to George Padmore, TNA/Security Service, Personal Files (KV): 2/1824.

Germany pressed no further territorial claims. But to the shock of much of the democratic world, Hitler rejected this solution, instead demanding the immediate occupation of the Sudetenland by German military forces. As the British naval fleet mobilized alongside the Czech and French armies in the following days, the Bureau's leadership convened an emergency meeting. The coming imperialist war it had long anticipated was finally beginning.

"If Britain and France go to the aid of Czechoslovakia," the Bureau warned in a "Manifesto Against War," "it is not to defend international law and order... but to prevent Hitler from overrunning Europe and stealing their colonies."<sup>44</sup> To the Bureau, Czechoslovakia was Ethiopia all over again, a pawn to be sacrificed in order to preserve the existing class-based system of imperial exploitation. Back in 1935, France and Britain had been willing to sacrifice Ethiopia to appease Italy and preserve the integrity of their own empires. Now, if Britain decided to defend the Czechs, it would only be if it felt Germany's ambitions threatened its own colonies.

With the world standing on the precipice of another global conflagration, the Bureau urged black people to agitate for independence. In the organization's mind, it was imperative that black people remember the folly of World War I, when black soldiers fought in defense of Britain and France under the false promises of increased political freedoms. The responsibility of black colonial subjects was now to enact Lenin's maxim of turning an imperialist war into a civil war by capitalizing on Europe's impending political turmoil. "Europe's difficulty is Africa's opportunity," the Bureau wrote in its manifesto. "We call upon you to organize yourselves and be ready to seize the opportunity when it comes.... Be vigilant, comrades. Watch the traitors in your ranks."<sup>45</sup>

War was temporarily averted when Britain and France permitted Germany to annex Sudetenland on September 30th, a deal struck only two days after the Bureau released its manifesto. But Padmore sensed it was only a delay of the inevitable. Writing to his old professor Alain Locke, he remarked that the mood in London was fast-changing. "We were the first to feel the effects of the repression which is invariably associated with war preparations," he

44 'Manifesto Against War', 28 September 1938. TNA/MEPO 38/91.

45 Ibid.

remarked. "Friends in influential circles informed me that as soon as war was declared it was most likely that we would be completely suppressed and placed in internment."<sup>46</sup> Padmore transferred essential documents out of London and planned to leave the city entirely. He proposed, with Locke's assistance, to return to the United States, but the plan fell through due to visa complications. Padmore would instead spend the final months of the interwar years in London, continuing his work with the Bureau.

Events of 1939 only confirmed Padmore's forebodings. In March, German forces occupied what remained of Czech territory, finally convincing Britain and France that Hitler's territorial ambitions had no limits. The next month, Britain introduced peacetime conscription for the first time in its history. While the prospect of war must have been frightening to Padmore personally, it still presented a unique opportunity for the cause of black liberation. In the final edition of *International African Opinion*, published in May 1939, the Bureau issued a stern letter directed to black working-class people. "A new World War threatens humanity. You, therefore, cannot isolate yourselves from these international affairs," it warned. "In this dangerous situation, we, the colored races of the British Empire must be on the alert if we are to take advantage of the conflicts between the Imperialist Powers to press forward our claims for the maximum economic, political and social concessions which, with firm leadership and consistent advocacy, we may well obtain from our masters in their hour of need."<sup>47</sup>

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As Padmore and the IASB stood on the precipice of World War II, a social revolution in Europe seemed inevitable. The primary task at hand was to promote solidarity between the black and white working class so that neither would succumb to the manipulations of racial nationalism or anti-fascist rhetoric. But by 1945, the IASB's predictions of a European working-class revolution were disproven altogether. The revolutionary dreams Padmore held when writing *How Britain Rules Africa* soon gave way to nonvio-

46 Letter from Padmore to Alain Locke, 3 October 1938. Locke Papers/Howard University, box 76, folder 16.

47 'Open Letter to the Workers of the West Indies and British Guiana', 28 September 1938. TNA/MEPO 38/91.

lent protest and constitutional negotiations with British authorities. Like many of the grand, Marxist projects envisioned throughout the 20th century, Padmore and the Bureau's masterplan for colonial liberation, tied to metropolitan revolution, entered into the waste bin of history.

Although the revolutionary ideology that birthed Padmore's decision to found the International African Service Bureau withered away, the man and the organization would continue to play a leading role in the Pan-African independence movements of the postwar period. Padmore and the IASB organized the historic 5th Pan-African Congress of 1945, whose overwhelming representation of black working-class organizations reflected the distinctly Marxist undertones of the burgeoning Pan-African movement across Africa. Though most interwar black organizations withered away after the war as anti-colonial struggles shifted away from the metropole, the Bureau's influence would manifest itself in post-colonial Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria, whose first three presidents all worked under the auspices of Padmore and the International African Service Bureau.

Padmore shows us that black anti-colonialism in interwar Europe was not a mere negation of Western imperialism. At least in its Anglophone conception, Pan-Africanism did not draw upon some shared ancestral past or revive indigenous culture. Instead, the movement modelled itself after the example of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International's initial commitment to world revolution. Its aspiration was towards a united Africa, but only as a step towards a world socialist state that eliminated racial and ethnic divides entirely. While his dreams of working-class revolution dissipated, Padmore would carry on his vision of Pan-African socialism into the postwar years, eventually settling down in Ghana in 1957 to serve as Nkrumah's Advisor for African Affairs. He passed away two years later.

Further work needs to be done on tracing the Bureau's influence over the postwar battle for decolonization. But a reinterpretation of Padmore's engagement with the black international through his attempt to execute an independent, global Marxist revolution crucially relocates the origins of postwar Pan-African thought to the Marxist-Leninist tradition. In doing so, this essay dispels the idea that there was some fundamental, historical incom-

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patibility between Marxist theory and the problem of racial oppression, and instead highlights the global allure of Marxist thought in the early 20th century as a solution to colonial inequality. At the same time, Padmore's engagement with the International African Service Bureau is a unique story of how a sworn enemy of the Stalinist regime succeeded in leading his own, Marxist-inspired revolution, and lived to tell the tale.

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# IMAGINING THE CHINESE HOME- LAND FROM AMERICA IN THE RADICAL AGE, 1969-1976

Yibing Du

Introduction by Jennifer Burns, Associate Professor of  
History, Stanford University

Although they may have appeared interchangeable to outsiders in the mid-twentieth century United States, affluent Taiwanese university students and working-class residents of American Chinatowns had little in common. How then did some members of these communities come together around a shared vision of China? Set against the backdrop of radical political movements in the late 1960s and 1970s, Yibing Du's essay tackles this question. "Imagining the Chinese Homeland from America in the Radical Age, 1969-1976," analyzes the Tiao-Yu Tia movement to uncover both the literal connections forged through activism and the shared imaginary developed around Communist China. A territorial agreement shifting sovereignty of the Tiao-Yu Tai islands from the United States to Japan catalyzed a social movement that caused both students and Chinatown activists to rethink their relationship to China and Taiwan. Drawing on student publications, mainstream news accounts, fiction, memoir, and oral history, Yibing deftly outlines the dreams, challenges, and social problems that resulted in a new vision of China as homeland. While the intersections of race and politics of the 1960s have a robust historiography, by taking a transnational angle Yibing has found a fresh approach. Yibing's research, which she plans to continue in a senior thesis, is particularly noteworthy as the 50th anniversary of these events approach. History suffers when the only chroniclers of social movements are those who participated. Yibing's scholarship breaks new ground by offering a perspective based in archival research and oral history, mediating between personal memories and the larger significance of transcontinental political movements.

## Imagining the Chinese Homeland from America in the Radical Age, 1969-1974

### Yibing Du

The early 1970s was the time of Mao, Che, and the Panthers. The climate of revolutionary thoughts and protests in America brought two groups closer together: Chinese American youths from Chinatowns and Taiwanese students attending American universities. Neither the Chinese American activists nor the Taiwanese students had ever lived in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Nonetheless, each group independently developed the belief that Communist China was its only homeland.

Since 1969, several Maoist organizations had emerged in San Francisco and New York Chinatowns. In their vision, both Chinese and Chinese Americans and other working-class and anti-imperialist comrades were part of their revolutionary struggle. From other minority activists, these organizations learned to solve issues in their community, reassess their relationship with the Chinese homeland, and spread Marxist-Leninist ideas. To them, America was the source of all evil. Its capitalism oppressed its racial minorities and working classes, while its imperialism tyrannized the Third World, including China. These activists publicized their vision in alternative presses, revealing the hidden thoughts of Chinese Americans that were often neglected by mainstream media.<sup>1</sup> They portrayed a utopian image of Communist China and contrasted an imagined Chinese homeland with the disappointing reality of America's Chinatowns. Though small in number, these activists challenged Chinatown authorities and prompted other members of their community to change their views about Communism—an ideology that many immigrants had learned to hate either in America or in their hometowns in Taiwan or Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, another activist group emerged on college campuses and eventually created a nationwide intellectual network: Action Committees to Defend Tiao-Yu Tai. Starting in early 1971,

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1 William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 101.

Taiwanese students in American universities protested against a territorial dispute over the Tiao-Yu Tai Island that involved the United States, Japan, and China. The government of the Republic of China (ROC), under the Taiwanese Nationalist Party (KMT), attempted to silence the student protests against the “U.S.-Japan conspiracy” since its legitimacy to represent China relied on American support. Disgruntled students soon turned this patriotic campaign into an effort to spread Communism among overseas Chinese. By mid-1971, this student movement transcended the island dispute and splintered into several factions: pro-Communist, pro-independence, pro-unification (merging Taiwan to Communist China), and countless others in between. The dominant claim was that Red China, instead of Taiwan, should be recognized as the legitimate government representing the Chinese people. Student activists founded over a hundred journals, almost all handwritten in Chinese. Though their articles were only circulated within a small community, they catalyzed fascinating discussions about abstract political concepts as well as practical plans of action.<sup>2</sup>

The trajectories of Chinese and Chinese American activism followed parallel and sometimes intersecting paths. Their movements coincided with the groundbreaking moments in international political history, such as the international recognition of the PRC as China’s legitimate government in November 1971, when the PRC replaced the ROC as the representative member for China in the United Nations. Henry Kissinger’s secret trip to Communist China announced in July of that year and President Nixon’s following visit in February 1972 further excited student activists and challenged other overseas Chinese to reevaluate their political

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2 One of the most important Asian American journals, *Gidra*, printed only 4,000 copies; many did not survive more than a few issues. Meanwhile, as a Taiwanese student writer Li Yu later lamented, “we were merely copying and printing and reading among ourselves, and then throwing them to the trash ourselves.” in Yu Li, 应答的乡岸 [The Homeland Shore Answering My Call] (Taipei: Hong Fan, 1999): 1, quoted in Qifeng Huang, 河流裡的月印: 郭松棻與李渝小說綜論 [The Moon in Rivers: Essays on the Novels by Guo Songfen and Li Yu] (Showwe Information, 2008): 38.

affiliations.<sup>3</sup>

This paper will investigate the role of an imagined homeland between the twin movements of Chinatown youths and Taiwanese students. First, it will offer background on the politics of Chinese America and case studies for how different activist groups operated and briefly interacted. By analyzing newspapers, journals, works of fiction, and memoirs produced by both movements, this paper will then reveal how students and activists constructed their visions of a Chinese homeland. They read Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theories to study its ideology, created a romanticized image of the PRC based on limited information, narrated a specific history of Chinese and Chinese Americans, and deployed Communist rhetoric and symbolism to assert their sense of belonging. Finally, this paper will return to the role of America in their search for a new Chinese homeland. By juxtaposing the histories of these two groups, this paper will argue that overseas Chinese, while liberated by an American tradition of activism, were also disheartened by the American and Taiwanese authorities under which they lived and, ultimately, projected their unfulfilled dreams onto a homeland they had never seen and an ideology they had been taught to hate.

### ***The Secretly Politicized Chinese America***

Chinatowns in the late 1960s across the major U.S. cities were more or less the same: restaurants, laundromats, prostitutes, weeds, and gangsters. If anything, crime rate and poverty worsened with the influx of Chinese immigrants into the United States in search of a better life after the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which eased a number of restrictions on immigration in place since the 1920s.<sup>4</sup> Language barriers, inadequate educational opportunities, and a lack of contact with the society beyond Chinatown hindered most of these new immigrants from pursuing the “American dream.” The patron of most Chinatowns, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), sought to keep

3 “Changing Attitudes on Red China Polarize N.Y. Chinatown,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct. 12, 1971; “Maoist welcome for China mission: New York, Nov. 12,” *South China Morning Post*, Nov. 13, 1971; “Taiwan backers from N.Y. Chinatown protest outside Peking mission’s hotel,” *The Boston Globe*, Nov. 15, 1971.

4 Gabriel Chin, “The Civil Rights Revolution Comes to Immigration Law: A New Look at the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965,” *North Carolina Law Review* 75, no. 1 (1996): 317.

Chinatowns as isolated ethnic enclaves, exacerbating problems of poverty, violence, and insufficient social welfare.<sup>5</sup>

Political action was a risky endeavor in these enclaves. Residents operated under the scrutiny of the FBI, the American police, and KMT agents. J. Edgar Hoover claimed, “Red China has been flooding the country with its propaganda” and that Chinese immigrants “could be susceptible to recruitment.”<sup>6</sup> As a result, Chinese American activists were particularly suspicious to the local police. When the police discovered that a young man, Harry Wong, who ran a newsstand, was a firm believer of Mao and socialist China, they raided his goods, arrested him without explanation, and choked him at his throat.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, CCBA was deeply rooted in transnational politics. Operated on behalf of the KMT, it aimed to maintain the ROC’s domination over overseas Chinese.<sup>8</sup> The KMT was known to monitor its overseas citizens, especially university students, by appointing “student spies” who lived off the KMT’s rewards for their secret reports. As a result, Chen Yu-his from the University of Hawaii was arrested and sentenced for seven years for reading socialist publications in the library in 1969.<sup>9</sup> Xianmin Wang, the father of a progressive Taiwanese student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was forced to announce to disown his daughter after she visited the PRC.<sup>10</sup> The fear of Communism shared by the FBI and CCBA led

5 Michael Liu, Kim Geron, and Tracy Lai, *The Snake Dance of Asian American Activism: Community, Vision, and Power* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 29.

6 A debate on the validity and applicability of the testimony of John Edgar Hoover a 1969 congressional record indicated that this opinion remained influential in the late sixties. Philip Burton, “Chinese Americans in San Francisco,” *91st Congress Records*, 1969, 21303.

7 Go Oyagi, “Over the Pacific: Post-World War II Asian American Internationalism,” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2013), 154.

8 For instance, each New York Chinatown CCBA president in the sixties and seventies was simultaneously the executive committee member of KMT U.S. East Coast Branch and Overseas Community Affairs Council. See the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association website, <https://www.ccbany.org/chistorypresidents.html>.

9 Chien-Jung Hsu, “Surveillance on Overseas Taiwanese Students under the KMT’s Administration: A Case Study in the United States,” *Taiwan Studies in Literature and History* 1 (2009): 264.

10 Yu He, “Overseas ‘Baodiao No. 0 Group,’” *Renmin Zhengxie Bao*, *Chunqiu Zhoukan* no. 9, January 15, 2015: 3.

to paralleled efforts to eliminate Leftist activity. For Chinese and Chinese Americans, avoiding politics was the safest move because association with Communist China could send a dangerous signal to suspecting authorities.

Nevertheless, politics in America's Chinatowns bloomed as a result of domestic and international pressure. Despite general pessimism about both Chinese governments, many overseas Chinese immigrants became interested in learning about their homeland by the late 1960s, especially as China became internationally influential and a hot topic in the time of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In 1967, Yiming Bao, a Columbia-educated Taiwanese intellectual in Hong Kong, published articles entitled "Study the Whole China—From Bandit Studies to National Studies" and "Overseas Chinese's Divisions, Homecoming and Opposition to Independence." As one historian, Robert Eng, has argued, Bao was the first to address "the alienation of the overseas Chinese under conditions of political division and spiritual exile."<sup>11</sup> Intellectuals, like Bao, were embittered by the ongoing White Terror under the KMT, which turned their homeland into "a nation afflicted with a spiritual disease and therefore unable to strengthen itself or change its set ways of inhumanity."<sup>12</sup> Thus, many started to reexamine their ideology shaped by anti-Communist Taiwan and look for alternatives. Very few of these writers had much prior experience with socialist ideology, yet many eventually decided that Communist China was likely the best model because its social engineering was believed to have ameliorated poverty and allayed the threat of foreign powers.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Two Youth Movements in Chinese America***

Patriotic international students and scholars soon had an opportunity to further the debate and voice their opinions. News broke out in late 1969 that the Nixon-Sato Joint Declaration had been signed, returning Tiao-Yu Tai Island to Japan in 1972. Locat-

11 Robert Y. Eng, "The Intractability of the Sino-Japanese Senkaku/Diaoyu Territorial Dispute: Historical Memory, People's Diplomacy and Transnational Activism, 1961-1978," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 15, no. 22 (2017): 20.

12 C.T. Tsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 533-534.

13 Li-Yun Lin, Jui-Hua Chen, and Shu-Fen Su, "The Protest Diaoyutai Movement and Overseas Leftist Movement: An Interview with Shiaw-Shin Lin," *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* 103 (2016): 159-160.

ed between Taiwan, the Chinese mainland, and Japan, this island was occupied by the United States from 1945 and remained obscure prior to the discovery of oil reserves in 1968. Though the island was small and inhabitable, students were outraged at this “imperial conspiracy” that harmed China’s sovereignty, threatened its national interests, and reminded many of the Japanese invasion of China during WWII. Thus, in December 1970, Taiwanese students at Princeton University founded the first action committee in the United States as a forum to voice their nascent political grievances.<sup>14</sup> Soon, thousands of students were drawn by the clarion call of defending Chinese territory.<sup>15</sup> Though many students were initially unsure about how to react, various forms of student activism on college campuses, including anti-war protests and self-determination movements, provided models for them to take action.

This movement immediately drew the KMT’s attention. Having lost power in mainland China by 1949, the KMT was desperate to maintain its influence on the overseas Chinese population.<sup>16</sup> The Taiwanese government was caught in an awkward position between its most important allies and its patriotic youths. On January 6, 1971, KMT representatives in New York received the official instruction to “subtly convince the students not to organize, [...] guide them to become a pro-government movement...” because “we cannot allow anti-government expressions.”<sup>17</sup> The KMT

14 Chih-ming Wang, “Tracking Baodiao: Diaspora, Sovereignty, and Chinese American Resistance,” *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* (2009): 131.

15 Youths from Taiwan, along with some from Hong Kong and some Chinese Americans, were already a tight community on campus. There were at least Chinese-related student associations at Columbia: Chinese Student Association, The Dragon Club, School of Education Student Association (mostly Taiwanese students), Taiwanese Student Society, and Bible Study Fellowship. See Yuan-jun Liu, interview by Xiaocen Xie, Yawen Li, and Hongyin Cai, Oct. 24, 2008, transcript, <http://archives.lib.nthu.edu.tw/diaoyun/history/03.htm>.

16 Jeanie Dere, “A Wei Min Sister Remembers,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (2009): 65.

17 Ren-Bo Wu, “Reexamining Diaoyutai Movement in the Early 1970s: Perspectives from the Government of Republic of China,” *Shi yun* 15 (2011): 141.

suspected that students would take this opportunity to self-organize and oppose the government. Indeed, the ROC's lack of response to the dispute infuriated the students and made them feel betrayed. One activist recalled how a special "public hearing" of a student spy they discovered in 1971 worsened people's impressions of the KMT. The spy revealed that, while the KMT told student representatives that it endorsed their protests, only its "core members," the spies among the students, received the real command to quell the movement as quickly as possible.<sup>18</sup> Suspecting the students' loyalties, KMT officials openly interfered with their meetings and reading groups.<sup>19</sup>

As the students learned about the inefficiency and hypocrisy of the KMT, what started as a patriotic movement transformed into a radical Leftist campaign and an attempt to redefine Chinese politics. An irreconcilable divide emerged among students on issues of whether to unite the two Chinas and whether the Communist Party was just. They published articles, formed reading groups, and vehemently debated during meetings. This sentiment peaked at national conferences at Brown University and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Polarized views, subtle distinctions, and shifting opinions on many questions suggested that the movement was no longer united as one. A survey at the Ann Arbor meeting showed that the majority were pro-Communist and pro-unification.<sup>20</sup>

Many Taiwanese students sought sympathy and support from peace-loving, anti-imperialist American friends. While Americans had to guess what was going on in Beijing, it was far easier to learn about the Chinese and Chinese Americans around them.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, it was partly through American curiosity that these student organizations gained a new audience. The association of overseas Chinese with their homeland, in turn, prompted the Leftist activ-

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18 Yi Ding, 鈞運十年有感 [Thoughts about TYT Ten Years Afterward], *Wide Angle* 106 (July, 1981): 76.

19 Wu, 144.

20 Yu-ming Shaw, 保鈞風雲路：一九七〇年代保衛鈞魚台運動-知識分子之激情、分裂、抉擇 [The Bumpy Road of Baodiao: Defending Tiao Yu Tai in the Seventies—The Passion, Divides, and Decisions among Intellectuals] (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 2013), 74-75.

21 Erwin D. Canham, "China, Here and There," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct. 4, 1971: 16.

ists to engage with these curious Americans. Students made their movement bilingual as much as possible and invited journalists from mainstream newspapers and television to their protests.<sup>22</sup> To win the public's favor, a Chinese student even published an article in the *New York Times* to explain their stance.<sup>23</sup> Philadelphia's Tiao-Yu Tai Action Committee and Chinatown activists from the Yellow Seeds co-organized a Sino-American Friendship Night in 1973, which indicated their mutual interest in breaking the ice between the PRC and the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Community activists also appealed to their "siblings" in Chinatowns, where they could adopt practical policies, such as selling groceries to fellow activists at a discounted price, and political strategies, such as screening pro-Communist films. On the East Coast, a group of pro-unification students published the *Chinese Language Movement* journal to highlight the shared culture of Taiwan and the mainland, arguing that Taiwan should merge with the ideologically "advanced" Communist China. Out of 3,000 copies for each volume, one third were disseminated throughout New York City's Chinatown.<sup>25</sup> In San Francisco, they operated Chinese-language television channels and organized a singing competition called "Songs of Our Time," which led to a successful "soft landing on Chinatown."<sup>26</sup> These students and scholars proudly announced that they were finally part of the mass. An activist fondly remembered: "They put aside their sense of superiority as intellectuals, mingled well with immigrants and other laborers, and provided all kinds of service for their daily life."<sup>27</sup> Though the activist efforts to publicize the pro-Communist message did cater to a wide audience, a statement such as this one suggests that success-

22 Dong, Yin, and Yang, 258.

23 Hao Wang, "Senkaku Islands—A Dispute Put in Perspective," *New York Times*, May 30, 1971: E12.

24 "Sino-America Friendship Night," *Yellow Seeds* 1, no. 5, May 1973.

25 Yushan Liu, "An Analysis of the 1970s Bao-Diao Movement Based on the Historical Materials Preserved in Tsinghua University Libraries," *Overseas Chinese History Studies* 1 (2012): 44.

26 Anti-Communist Patriotic Alliance, 愛盟·保釣: 風雲歲月四十年 [Anti-Communist Patriotic Alliance & Baodiao: An Epic of Forty Years] (Taipei: Fengyun Shidai Publishing, 2011), 209-210.

27 Zhongwu Gong, "鈞運學刍議" [Preliminary Comments on the Study of the Tiao Yu Tai Movement], Wuyou zhixiang, May 15, 2011. Accessed November 29, 2019. <http://www.wyzxwk.com/Article/sichao/2011/05/225742.html>.

ful activism required the suspension of a normally condescending tone towards the population at large. Indeed, many of the politically active overseas students in the United States were members of the elite in Taiwan, and always had the choice to return. Junshan Shen, whose father was the Minister of the ROC Council of Agriculture at the time, complained that in the U.S., he and his peers were “merely a group outside of the powerful elite,” yet “things would be so different” when they go back.<sup>28</sup>

While the idea of a Chinese homeland was mobilized to emphasize the shared cultural and political roots of Chinese and Chinese Americans, it carried different meanings for each group. In 1969, Alex Hing, a young man from San Francisco’s Chinatown, left Legitimate Ways (Leway) with a small group of friends. Leway was a short-lived self-help group designed to manage local recreational facilities and support peers during rehabilitation.<sup>29</sup> While Hing and his comrades were in search of a greater goal to pursue, they were asked by Taiwanese students from the Asian American Progressive Association to help facilitate a patriotic celebration of the anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, a student-led nationalist campaign in 1919.<sup>30</sup> After this unusual collaboration, Hing’s group asked the Taiwanese students to come out together as a joint activist group; however, the students declined because they were concerned about the consequences of abandoning the KMT.

Aborting the plan was not a surprising move. Despite sharing a vague concept of their homeland, Hing’s activists embodied Chinatown, not China. Hing did not hesitate to cast doubt upon the priorities of the students: “Who gives a shit about what hap-

28 Junshan Shen, 革新保台、志願統一 [Reforms to Preserve Taiwan and Look Forward to Unifying China], in 風雲的年代——保釣運動及留學生涯之回憶 [A Time of Wind and Clouds—Baodiao Movement and Memories of Overseas Studies], ed. Yu-ming Shaw. (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 1991), 49.

29 Angela L. Zhao, “The Righteous Fists of Harmony: Asian American Revolutionaries in the Radical Minority and Third World Liberation Movements, 1968-1978,” (BA diss., University of Chicago, 2018), 14.

30 Harvey C. Dong, “The Origin and Trajectory of Asian American Political Activism in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1968-1978,” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2002), 224.

pened 50 years ago in China. Right? We said there is more important stuff happening with the Chinese community now.”<sup>31</sup> Though neither Taiwanese students nor Chinatown youngsters ever lived under Communism, the former still felt a deep connection with the PRC because the mainland was where most of their parents were from, and some had even spent their childhood there. Connecting with Mao’s China proved to be a much more convoluted process for multi-generation Chinese Americans.

Later in 1969, Hing and his comrades started a new Marxist-Leninist militant group, the Red Guard Party. A “quasi-criminal and quasi-political” gang, the Red Guards were, in the eyes of journalists, essentially a politicized gang influenced by the Black Panthers’ ideals.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, there was a connection to be drawn between the two groups. In a bilingual rally by the Red Guards, David Hilliard, Chief of Staff of the Panthers, spoke to an audience of nearly 200 people.<sup>33</sup> Hilliard highlighted the danger of assimilating into whiteness and emphasized that Chinese Americans needed to reestablish their relationship with the Chinese homeland: “If you can’t relate to China then you can’t relate to the Panthers.”<sup>34</sup> As their connection with the Panthers demonstrates, the Red Guards were both partially nationalistic and partially communist. Yet, despite the Panthers’ direct influence, the Red Guards envisioned a very different mission: “whereas the blacks see the dominant white society as their chief enemy, the Chinese activists are primarily in rebellion against the older generation of their own people, particularly the Chinese landlords and merchants.”<sup>35</sup> Like their counterparts in other major U.S. cities, they were primarily concerned with the class struggle within Chinatown.

The Red Guards were proud of their grassroots, pro-Peking,

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31 Ibid., 286.

32 Stanford M. Lyman, “Red Guard on Grant Avenue,” in *Culture and Civility in San Francisco*, ed. Howard S. Becker (Chicago: Transaction Books, 1971), 23.

33 Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 281.

34 *AAPA Newspaper*, March 1969: 4, quoted in Daryl J. Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 85.

35 Kenneth LaMott, “The Awakening of Chinatown,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 4, 1970: N6.

and Marxist stances. Despite a tepid response from the Chinatown community, the group peaked at a few dozen active members. In 1971, Hing and his Red Guards merged with comrades from New York, the I Wor Kuen (“Righteous Harmonious Fist,” a reference to the Boxer Rebellion against Westerners around 1900).<sup>36</sup> The formation of this national organization marked the emergence of “Asian American” as a nationwide ethnopolitical identity.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, many other Chinese American activist groups also prospered: Wei Min She (“Serve the People,” San Francisco), Yellow Seeds (Philadelphia), and Gidra (an Asian American journal at UCLA), among others.<sup>38</sup>

The Tiao-Yu Tai movement prompted these organizations to think about their relationship with the Chinese homeland. Some argued that shared language and culture were enough to convince them to side with people from their home country. Others were skeptical about getting involved in transnational politics and “bothered” by a dispute thousands of miles away. They believed the island affair would only be relevant to them if “there is a close correspondence between an ethnic group’s treatment in the United States and the international standing of that group’s homeland.”<sup>39</sup> As a result of this debate, some IWK and Black Panthers joined the Tiao-Yu Tai demonstrations, because they wanted to liberate the oppressed, regardless whether the oppression was due to racism,

36 Unlike Red Guards, the majority of which being street youths, any IWK members were from elite families, including students at Columbia, Princeton, and Sarah Lawrence. See Chia-ling Kuo, “Voluntary Associations and Social Change in New York Chinatown,” (PhD diss., New York University, 1975), 104; Carmon Chow, “Righteous Harmonious Fist,” *Gidra*, June 1971; “History of I Wor Kuen,” *Statements on the Founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist)*, 1978.

37 Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002), 77.

38 Asian Community Center Archive Group, *Stand Up: An Archive Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement, 1968-1974* (Berkeley: Eastwind Books of Berkeley, 2009), 122; Katheryn E. Wilson, “‘Same Struggle, Same Fight’: Yellow Seeds and the Asian American Movement in Philadelphia’s Chinatown” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 140, no. 3 (2016): 423; Lori K. Lopez, “The Yellow Press: Asian American Radicalism and Conflict in *Gidra*,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (2011): 239.

39 Renqi Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 5.

capitalism, or imperialism.<sup>40</sup> The concept of a homeland, while often embodied by the PRC, was yet to be defined and understood and highly up to interpretation.

***Imagining the Mutual Homeland: Between Myths and Reality***  
*Theorizing A Political Agenda*

As the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s broke out in the PRC, the ROC launched a movement of reviving traditional Chinese culture and claimed Taiwan as its legitimate heir. Yet, the notion of cultural and historical homeland suggested by this movement worked against the KMT and further convinced student activists to embrace the PRC where Chinese culture rooted in.<sup>41</sup> In fact, it was quite typical for students to become motivated to learn about socialist theories as they attempted to flesh out the image of Red China.<sup>42</sup> For some, this conversion was not purely voluntary: “Many students from Hong Kong and some older students from Taiwan were touched by Maoism and the anti-war movement. They often told us how bad the KMT was. When I just arrived, I couldn’t believe anything they said, so I got into debates with them. To back up my argument, I went to the East Asian Library to read, to read the Communists’ books—I think many people shared this experience.”<sup>43</sup> Books such as Karl Popper’s *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Franz Schurmann’s *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, and Edgar Snow’s *Red Star Over China* emerged as the “bibles for overseas students to learn about homeland.”<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, Chinese American activists held mixed opinions towards developing a theory of their politics and conception of the homeland. Some also emphasized a solid theoretical basis for their activism. Asian Study Group, one of the lesser-known

40 Junxiong Hua, interview by Yaming Li, May 5, 2009, transcript, <http://archives.lib.nthu.edu.tw/diaoyun/history/06.htm>.

41 Cheng-chieh Chang, “How Do Wind and Thunder Echo? A Comparative Research Between Taiwan’s ‘Baodiao Literature’ and Japan’s ‘Zenkyoto Literature,’” *Chung Wai Literary Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2019): 98.

42 Lin, Chen, and Su, 159-160.

43 Liu, interview by Xie, Li, Cai, Oct. 24, 2008.

44 Yaming Li, interview by Xiaocen Xie, Yawen Li, and Hongyin Caix, July 4, 2009, transcript, <http://archives.lib.nthu.edu.tw/diaoyun/history/01.htm>; Daren Liu, 神話的破滅 [Demystifying A Myth] (Taipei: Hongfan Publishing, 1992), 42, in Xiao, 258.

groups with wide ideological reach, was conceptualized by Jerry Tung using his knowledge of Lenin's ideology and the work of Soviet economist Plekhanov.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, pursuing full proficiency with socialist theories was not always practical or desirable. For youths busy with solving day-to-day problems neighborhood issues, it was challenging and often unfeasible to adjust their activities to adhere to grand Communist claims. Steve Yip, the leader of Wei Min She, admitted that ideologically, "WMS continued to focus on the local community, rather than anti-imperialist issues; [...] It took the group about a year to [...] become more 'internationalist' in outlook."<sup>46</sup> Limited education also proved to be a barrier to street-youth groups. Many Red Guards were not so comfortable with the abstract, philosophical readings. Though they had formed a joint study group with the Panthers, they resisted associating profound theories and big names with their practical, community-oriented programming.<sup>47</sup> Former Red Guard Greg Morozumi recalled his reaction when they merged with IWK and officially declared to be Marxist-Leninist-Maoist: "I was like what is that? [They said] We're gonna become communists! I said what?"<sup>48</sup>

Chinatown activists combined American-styled activism with PRC materials. Even the less theory-based Red Guard Party articulated their missions with a sophisticated system of ten political programs, eight points of attention, and three main rules of discipline. The ten political programs were borrowed from the Black Panthers and Young Lords, who were inspired by Maoist pamphlets in the Cultural Revolution.<sup>49</sup> The Red Guards' version was dedicated to solving a series of community concerns, including housing crises, police brutality, legal justice, employment, and medical care. The list also went beyond Chinatown issues to claim that the U.S. should recognize the People's Republic of China because Mao was "the true leader of the Chinese people."<sup>50</sup> The

45 Wei, 217.

46 Ibid., 210.

47 Zhao, 16.

48 Ibid., 35.

49 Pulido, 282-284.

50 "Red Guard Program and Rules (1969)," Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism On-Line. Accessed Oct. 18, 2019. <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1a/red-guard.htm>.

eight points of attention and three main rules of discipline were almost directly copied from the rules of the People's Liberation Army drafted in 1947.<sup>51</sup> Even phrases such as “do not damage [...] crops of the poor, oppressed mass” and “turn in everything captured from the attacking enemy” were kept unchanged though they clearly did not fit in the context, which implied the activists' pride of their militant nature. By mirroring the Chinese Communist Revolution, Chinatown activists asserted the significance of their mission.

### ***Co-Creating the Image of Homeland***

In a time when travel to China was almost always prohibited, the observations and insights from a handful of visitors were taken seriously by everyone interested in the PRC's development, optimistic or skeptical. Some Taiwanese students, Chinese American scholars, and IWK members were invited to witness agricultural, economic, and revolutionary achievements in their homeland. Chunsheng Wang was very excited when she visited China in 1971 as one of the first team of five overseas patriots. She was warmly welcomed by the PRC Premier and had a six-hour late-night conversation with him, further emboldening her peers.<sup>52</sup> Ping-ti Ho, a professor at the University of Chicago, felt a similar excitement. He visited China and wrote the influential “Examining the New China's Characteristics and Accomplishments from a Historical Perspective.” As a renowned scholar, he was invited by Tiao-Yu Tai activists to deliver over forty talks at various universities.<sup>53</sup> Though the *Los Angeles Times* belittled his passionate praise for the PRC as naïve optimism blinded by excitement, students saw his article and talks as an objective presentation of a homeland that no one else could possibly know better.<sup>54</sup>

Though access to first-hand knowledge of the PRC was usually limited to a few lucky visitors, pro-Communist students

51 Bill V. Mullen, “By the Book: Quotations from Chairman Mao and the making of Afro-Asian Radicalism, 1966-1975,” in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 249.

52 Yu He, “Overseas ‘Baodiao No. 0 Group,’” 3.

53 Liu, “Political Culture of Taiwan Students Studying in the United States in the 1970s,” 15.

54 William F. Buckley Jr., “China Series Doesn't Tell Whole Story,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 21, 1971: B6.

and Chinatown activists actively sought out information about Red China. Statistical research on student activist publications concluded that around half of the articles were about political issues around mainland China, and the runner-up was Taiwanese politics.<sup>55</sup> Many articles were selected and translated from Western journalist reports or Leftist commentaries, which were often politically biased. Similarly, in addition to commentary articles, the bilingual newspapers by the IWK, Red Guards, and Yellow Seeds often updated their readers with news about the Cultural Revolution, daily life in China, and the signs of Sino-American Normalization. These articles, which reported everything from ping-pong games between China and the U.S. to the liberation of Chinese women, were “appealing to a wider audience in Chinatowns for readers who sympathized with the PRC but were apprehensive about being as politically vocal as the young members.”<sup>56</sup>

Most activity centers had already hosted regular film screenings, a tactic quickly adopted by activists to spread the knowledge of the homeland in an accessible and entertaining way. About twenty films and documentaries, ranging from state propaganda ones to Western productions, were screened on college campuses and Chinatown community centers, thanks to the independent efforts of both groups.<sup>57</sup> Students from up to thirty universities across the country circulated videotapes, and many organizations, such as the *Yellow Seeds*, raised funds for purchasing screening equipment.<sup>58</sup> Despite the costs and labor required, films proved to be effective tools for mobilizing crowds. The KMT was so concerned that, as an IWK member recalled, “[d]uring one screening of *East is Red*, a propaganda musical made for the Communist Party in 1965, KMT agents firebombed the storefront and threw garbage at viewers from the roof.”<sup>59</sup>

### *Narrating a Yellow History*

55 Yushan Liu, “The Analysis on the Phenomenon of “Sinophile” among Taiwanese Students in the United States in 1970s,” *Youth Studies* (2016): 83.

56 Zhao, 41.

57 Yushan Liu, “Political Culture of Taiwan Students Studying in the United States in the 1970s—A Case Study of Diaoyutai Movement,” *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University (Social Sciences)* 16, no. 4 (2015): 17-18.

58 “Names of Philadelphia Patriotic Overseas Chinese Who Gladly Donated to Purchase Video Player,” *Yellow Seeds* 1, no. 6, Sept. 1973.

59 Zhao, 27.

The imagined homeland needed a place not only in current affairs but also in global history curricula. Neither activist group found its school's curriculum satisfying. Tiao-Yu Tai activists wondered what caused China to fracture into two in the first place. Back in Taiwan, propaganda, hostility, and lack of access to perspectives other than the KMT's official explanation blocked them from learning about the full history of China. A dialogue in former activist Daren Liu's *Wind and Thunders from Afar* (2010) highlighted their confusion:

“(Class? What Class? Does it have anything to do with our education in Taiwan?) You’re studying History, how can you not know about the ‘gap in history’? Let me ask you in this way, is the history from May Fourth to 1949 mentioned in our textbook? Taught by our teachers? The revolutionary change during these thirty years is something none of us know anything about. If this isn’t brainwash, what is it? The first step of study groups, nothing more advanced than catching up with that.”<sup>60</sup>

Exposure to a variety of interpretations of modern China was, therefore, vital to support their arguments about where the homeland should be.

While Taiwanese students started to reconstruct the past without the interference of ideology, Chinese Americans strived to understand a colored history, specifically a Yellow history, that had been overlooked in the American school curriculum. Alex Hing complained that at a younger age, the “least white” history he ever learned was Ancient Egypt.<sup>61</sup> These students passionately enjoined Chinese and Chinese American historians to study their past and, therefore, to establish the foundation of a solid, properly defined Chinese American or Asian American identity. For example, an anthology of the IWK journal *Getting Together* articles titled “Chinese-American Workers: Past and Present” included almost twenty stories and interviews to trace the life trajectories of different generations of Chinese immigrants.<sup>62</sup> Immigrants who left the mainland before the fifties often contrasted the dark KMT rule that

60 Daren Liu, 遠方有風雷 [Wind and Thunders from Afar] (Taipei: Unitas Publishing Co., 2010), 56.

61 Ho, 281.

62 "Chinese-American Workers: Past and Present," *Getting Together*, 1972.

they lived under to the now booming economy under the PRC. Like the Red Guards, IWK demanded a curriculum that “exposes the true history of western imperialism in Asia and around the world” and “teaches the hardships and struggles of [their] ancestors in this land.”<sup>63</sup>

This call for narrating a Yellow history blurred the distinction between different Asian ethnicities. Chinese American activists often compared their hardships to the Japanese American internment during WWII, exemplified by a featured commentary article on *Getting Together*, “Learn from the Past for Struggles Today: U.S. Concentration Camps.”<sup>64</sup> Racialization also affected their attitude towards the Vietnam War. Many Chinese Americans were against the Vietnam War because they empathized with their Asian brothers and sisters. As Angela Zhao noted, this was “a change from African Americans’ strategy during the Cold War, in which civil rights activists advocated for a double victory campaign that would end racial inequality at home and promote democracy abroad.”<sup>65</sup> This disagreement with other civil rights activists suggested that Asian American activists had unified under the umbrella of pan-Asian hardship that were tightly connected with the fate of their “other” homeland across the Pacific.

### ***Talk and Act Like a Comrade***

Dress codes, language, and celebrations were other common methods of constructing a shared homeland between Taiwanese students and Chinese Americans. For instance, Tiao-Yu Tai activists designed “brightly colored buttons with a clenched fist on a map of China appear on campuses across the country as a new Chinese youth movement feels its pride.”<sup>66</sup> Another open display of ideology was the Red Guards’ Mao-style jackets. Scholars interpreted the Red Guards’ adoption of the Black Panthers’ special dress code as “a political statement that underlined their espousal

63 “IWK 12 Point Platform and Program,” *Getting Together*, May 1971.

64 “The World War II Imprisonment of Japanese in U.S. Concentration Camps,” *Getting Together*, June 1978.

65 Zhao, 30-31.

66 Frederic A. Moritz, “Status of islands fuels Chinese student activism in U.S.” *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 7, 1971: 11.

of the Panthers' racial politics."<sup>67</sup> Simultaneously, Chinese activists added their own twists on this imagery: "Departing from the Panthers' black leather jackets, the Red Guards donned Mao jackets to signify their political allegiance to Red China."<sup>68</sup>

Adopting Communist language was another way for students to declare their political affiliation. The Maoist Chinese Americans often mimicked the tone of Chinese newspapers during the Cultural Revolution, exemplified by IWK articles that often ended with the slogan "all power to the people." In 1977, a year after Mao passed away, *Getting Together* reprinted its article, "The Current Situation and Our Tasks," and included the all-capitalized editor's introduction: "Long live the great, glorious and correct Communist Party of China! Eternal glory to our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao Tsetung! Mao Tsetung Thought will shine forever!"<sup>69</sup>

While such language united different Marxist-Leninists groups, it could quickly stir discontent among the Chinatown public and even within Taiwanese students themselves. Thus, terms evoking communism were sometimes carefully avoided. Before the Tiao-Yu Tai movement became divided, the Taiwanese students insisted on bringing neither the ROC nor the PRC flags to the demonstrations on January 30 and April 10. Communist language such as "knock over" and "long live" were intentionally excluded from the slogans because such vocabulary was expected to represent "all Chinese people."<sup>70</sup> Taiwanese activists who were more alert to Communism even avoided using the phrase "Chinese people" because it "has a special meaning to the Communists."<sup>71</sup> Strategic decisions of including or excluding such language were important to developing unity: the former with other colored

67 Daryl J. Maeda, "Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen: Constructing Asian American Identity through Performing Blackness, 1969-1972," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2005): 1081.

68 Daryl J. Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 109.

69 "Appendix: The Current Situation and Our Tasks," *Getting Together*, 1976.

70 Li, interview by Xie, Li, and Cai, July 4, 2009.

71 Yuanjun Liu, "我所知道的留美学生保钓运动" [The Baodiao Activities among Taiwanese Students in America That I Know Of], in *A Time of Wind and Clouds*, ed. Shaw, 203.

Marxist-Leninists, and the latter with all Chinese and Chinese Americans.

Since the early 1970s, National Days commemorating both the PRC and the ROC were celebrated by overseas Chinese. In 1970, for the first time, “celebrations were held in Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco to mark the anniversary of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China.”<sup>72</sup> A year later, activists coordinated a pro-Peking demonstration at the United Nations when the General Assembly session opened and later organized a reception to celebrate the 22nd anniversary of the PRC.<sup>73</sup> Later in 1973, Philadelphia Chinatown held its first celebration for the PRC.<sup>74</sup> Supporters for Taipei, however, resisted. They took “full-page advertisements in *The New York Times* and the *New York Daily News* to voice their opposition to seating Communist China in the United Nations” and celebrated the ROC’s National Day in Boston as usual.<sup>75</sup>

### **“Only in America”**

Homeland increasingly became an abstract concept for both groups. Communist China was the dream; America, the reality. In the eyes of Chinatown residents, oppressive authorities and capitalists outside of the bounds of their tightly knit community represented an imagined America. Over-policing, urban reconstruction, wars in Vietnam, and unfair treatment by employers embodied everyday interactions with the white, capitalist, anti-Communist America. Though the activists played a unique role in Chinatowns, they never quite managed to engage the Chinatown public. Ironically, according to an active member, the most important purpose of the IWK was “going to the masses to learn from them and serve

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72 Frank Ching, “Peking Gains Favor with Chinese in U.S.,” *New York Times*, Feb 22, 1971: 1.

73 Frank Ching, “Peking Backers Here Stage Welcome,” *New York Times*, Nov. 12, 1971: 16.

74 “Philadelphia Chinatown Celebrated National Day for the First Time,” *Yellow Seeds* 2, no. 1, November 1973.

75 Ching, “Peking Gains Favor with Chinese in U.S.,” 14.

the people.”<sup>76</sup> It was no surprise that their opinions and lifestyles were unfavorable among the largely apolitical Chinatown population. Ben Tong documented a Chinatown resident’s angry response to one of their protests: “[H]ow many of these ladies who used to work in sweat shops are now owners of valuable properties and parents of college-educated, ungrateful, empty-headed ‘revolutionaries?’”<sup>77</sup> While their Marxist-Leninist ideas were not popular, some residents still recognized their efforts to shape a unique Chinese American identity. A journalist visiting the community concluded from his interview that “most older Chinese-Americans don’t like what they consider the militant tone of the literature being put out by growing numbers of young activist Chinese-Americans. But they do endorse the activists’ move to develop a kind of culture that is distinctly Chinese-American.”<sup>78</sup>

To Chinatown activists, America was their actual home, yet they hated to admit it because the chaotic Chinatown could not possibly compare with fantasies of a booming Communist China. Chinese American author Frank Chin had an interesting encounter with the Red Guards when he taught a theater class: “[H]e directed Asian American students to act out some anti-Asian stereotypes, when a group of Red Guards took exception to the repetition of the offensive imagery. The Red Guard leader knocked Chin to the ground, yelling, ‘Identify with China!’ Chin countered, ‘We’re in America. This is where we are, where we live, and where we’re going to die.’”<sup>79</sup> Chin made a fair point in his rebuttal. America was the reality, and many came to realize that the PRC was never as great as they imagined after all. Only a few years later, it became increasingly common for Chinese-language newspapers to default to America as opposed to the ROC or the PRC as “my

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76 Dao, Hua. “Two Roads: From Cricket Fighting to the Cultural Revolution,” *Amerasia Journal* 27, no. 2 (2001): 111-125. DOI: 10.17953/amer.27.2.1v7152h72t75032n.

77 Ben R. Tong, “The Ghetto of the Mind: Notes on the Historical Psychology of Chinese America,” in Kent A. Ono, ed. *A Companion to Asian American Studies* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 64.

78 Herman Wong, “Chinese-Americans: A Silent Minority,” *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 3, 1974: OC\_B1.

79 Studs Terkel, *Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel about the American Obsession* (New York: New Press, 1992), 311.

country.”<sup>80</sup> After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, many Chinatown activists gradually abnegated their Marxist-Leninist belief and focused on Asian American civil rights. Realizing that America was their inevitable home, their movement gradually shifted away from their ancestral homeland.

Witnessing China’s reforms since the late 1970s, many previously anti-Communist Chinese Americans of the older generation still associated themselves with the PRC. A middle-aged San Francisco Chinatown worker Lew Wah Get explained to a *Gidra* journalist: “Whenever there’s a new movie down at Kearney Street, I go along with the other old people who want to pay their respects to their country. [...] Whether the nation is strong or not is not the question. The point is that he has given machines and highways to the people. [...] I’m Chinese and this makes me feel proud. The white man can’t look down on us any more.”<sup>81</sup> Among the various achievements of the PRC, the older generation was most interested in those that benefited the people, as opposed to the state—those that boosted their confidence.

Yet political inclination in Chinatown remained ambiguous. In 1972, the PRC ping pong team’s trip to Los Angeles was enough to cause controversies.<sup>82</sup> Such divides continued to exist until today. Just like a sarcastic comment in the *IWK* journal suggested, Chinatown was at most “sometimes united.”<sup>83</sup> The leadership of Chinatown had never been transferred from KMT representatives to PRC ones, though extreme hostility towards Communism was no longer the major concern of Taiwan or America.

The Tiao-Yu Tai activists also felt this paradigm shift in the relationship between the ROC, the PRC, and the U.S. Some visited the PRC soon after the movement, yet these visits often fractured the romanticized image of the homeland that they held dear. When an activist visited China for the first time in the eighties, it was too disappointing and disillusioning for him to process: “I was completely unable to imagine how those reports we listened to were

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80 McCue, 276.

81 Victor Nee, “Chinatown Pioneer Looks Toward the Mainland,” *Gidra*, Dec. 1972.

82 Herman Wong, “Chinatown Divided on Red Team,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 20, 1972: A5.

83 “We Won’t Move!” *Getting Together* 1, no. 3, July 1970.

fabricated. [...] I find many sacred truths to be twisted lies.”<sup>84</sup>

Many complained that the Party coordinated a clumsy performance to convince them that socialism was a superior ideology, yet poverty, persecution, and violence were hardly alleviated. To their dismay, the reality of the PRC was far from the image they had constructed across the Pacific.

Most activists, by that point, knew that their movement was motivated by lies and misjudgments. To some, it sounded almost absurd that a sovereignty dispute over a tiny, inhabitable island eventually drew their attention to the vast mainland that they had never visited. They regretted spending so much energy on a tiny island: “‘Territory’ should be tangible, yet now as I think about it, it’s really just abstract.”<sup>85</sup> Many gave up their privilege in Taiwan, and some even quit Ph.D. programs to be full-time activists. After the Cultural Revolution came to an end, many student activists were swallowed by confusion and frustration.

Though the Taiwanese activists were physically in the U.S., they were troubled by their dilemma with the homeland across the Pacific: “If I love that land, why did I leave? If I miss that land, why am I not going back?”<sup>86</sup> Some resolved this conflict by going back. Many elite Taiwanese students became prominent scholars and politicians in Taiwan, contributing to the formation of “the two major camps in the spectrum of today’s Taiwanese politics,” according to later historian Baofeng Xiao.<sup>87</sup> Some devoted to other forms of activism and became much more conscious about the history, politics, and identity crises in Taiwan.<sup>88</sup>

Throughout the years, some embraced their new identity as Chinese Americans rather than Chinese in America. *Bridge*, a New-York-based magazine that “initially exhibited a Chinese

84 Wuzhong Xiang, “釣運的片段回憶並寄語青年朋友” [Moments in Diaoyun and Wishes For My Young Friends], *China Times*, no. 18, June 2, 1988, quoted in A-chin Hsiao, “Remember Diaoyutai Islands: Territorial Dispute, Nationalism, and Generational Memory of Nostalgic Intellectuals in Taiwan,” *Taiwan Historical Research* 24, no. 3 (2017): 172.

85 Ding, 76.

86 Hsiu-Mei Liu, “Displaced South and Imaginary Nostalgia: The Homeland Imagination in Chang Hsi-Kuo’s Fiction in the 1970s,” *Journal of Taiwan Literary Studies* 18 (2014): 252.

87 Xiao, 262.

88 Lin, Chen, and Su, 163.

nationalist political bent and envisioned itself as a vehicle for promoting unity among overseas Chinese,” started to gradually transform into a pan-Asian American publication by mid-1972.<sup>89</sup> Its target audience shifted from the “local, Chinese, and middle-class” to the “national, multi-ethnic, multi-class” one.<sup>90</sup> To some extent, the Tiao-Yu Tai movement that united “overseas Chinese of different political viewpoints” also helped establish a basis for an Asian American discourse.<sup>91</sup>

For some Leftist patriots, ironically, America eventually became their only home. Blacklisted by the KMT, they were condemned to gaze at their homeland from an intractable distance: “[They] found their imagined utopia vastly different from the reality. They were disenchanted yet blacklisted, so America became where they decided to self-exile. America was not just a concept, but a place to live and write about the distant homeland.”<sup>92</sup> Their purest homeland had been something imaginary, emotionally salient yet physically distant; in the end, these activists became simultaneously disenchanted by their imagined utopia and disowned by their de facto mother country.

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89 Daryl J. Maeda, “Forging Asian American Identity,” 195.

90 Ibid., 195-196.

91 Frank Ching, “Claims to Distant Isles Arouse Chinese Here,” *New York Times*, Jan. 30, 1971: 8.

92 Chang, 100.

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# WHO GETS SCREWED WHEN SEX IS POLICED?: THE LESS- ER-KNOWN STORY OF THE AIDS EPIDEMIC, 1981-1993

Esther Tsvayg

Introduction by Ana R. Minian, Associate Professor of  
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Esther Tsvayg researched and wrote this paper for History 209S. She was interested in studying how HIV/AIDS affected marginalized communities during the 1980s. Despite the scarcity of sources on the topic, Esther managed to write an insightful essay that helps to change our current understanding about the role of the state during the AIDS epidemic. While most historians and activists have focused on the effects of AIDS on gay men and showed how the federal government remained silent and inactive about the epidemic, Esther demonstrates that the state was, in fact, highly active and vocal about AIDS among sex workers, Haitian refugees, and intravenous drug users. Rather than helping these populations, however, the state's interventionist measures ended up hurting them: they criminalized sex workers and discouraged them from using condoms, they objected to needle-exchange programs, and they barred asylum seekers from entering the United States.

## Who Gets Screwed When Sex Is Policed?: The Lesser-Known Story of the AIDs Epidemic, 1981-1993

Esther Tsvayg

### *Introduction: A War of Worldviews*

Every time Karen Lee Brandt, a twenty-two-year-old sex worker living with HIV, flagged down a car, "another man unknowingly risked death." Or so the newspapers wrote, as four years into the AIDS epidemic, research from the Center for Disease Control based on a limited study conducted on sex workers in Seattle and Miami stated that sex workers were linked to the spread of HIV.<sup>1</sup> Brandt told police that she did not use protection or warn her customers about her HIV status, even though she knew they could contract it by doing business with her. For cops, this was a clear-cut case of criminality. As a headline from the *St. Louis Dispatch* from the same year said, "Prostitutes Carry HIV, Police Say Men, Women 'Don't Care' If They Infect Others."<sup>2</sup> Newspapers, health commissioners' offices, and police departments began to stoke the fire by attributing the AIDS epidemic, in part, to sex workers. An already maligned population became an easy scapegoat for the epidemic. Hysteria was afoot, and public perceptions of sex workers as a "walking HIV danger" meant police crackdowns on sex workers was the strategy of choice in police departments all across the

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1 Margaret Engel, "Many prostitutes found to be AIDS carriers: Many prostitutes found to be AIDS carriers." (Washington Post, Sep 20, 1985). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/138515497?accountid=14026>. Centers for Disease Control "Heterosexual transmission of human T-lymphotropic virus type III/lymphadenopathy-associated virus." *MMWR. Morbidity and mortality weekly report* 34, no. 37 (CDC, September 20, 1985): 561.

2 Bill Bryan & Robert Signor, "Prostitutes carry HIV, police say." (St. Louis Post – Dispatch, Mar 05, 1992). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/404228247?accountid=14026>.

country.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, police in New York City and the Bay Area made sex workers like Karen public enemy number one in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.<sup>4</sup> But these strategies imperiled sex workers and their clients. As "Tammy," a sex worker serving a twenty-day sentence in 1992 at the Fort Lauderdale jail confessed, "If you're just standing on the corner and if you're carrying one rubber in your pocket and the police stop you, they're going to bust you."<sup>5</sup> As police used condoms as evidence of involvement in sex work, criminalization was at odds with the good of public health. As a health education supervisor at the Broward County Public Unit explained, "It's unfortunate. If you use the condoms (as evidence to file) charges, chances are she isn't going to use the condoms."<sup>6</sup>

The first cases of what many associate with the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the public imagination of the United States began in 1981.<sup>7</sup> New York City, Los Angeles, and, to a lesser extent, San Francisco increasingly saw a smattering of very peculiar medical cases. Gay men's immune systems were rapidly deteriorating, and they exhibited symptoms of pneumonia, or a par-

3 Bob LaMendola, "HOOKERS WALKING THE STREETS HIDING HIV DANGERS" (Sun Sentinel, Feb 04, 1992), retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/388934288?accountid=14026>.

Rob Karwath, "Prostitute with AIDS wants out," (Chicago Tribune, August 29, 1991), retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1615942300?accountid=14026>.

4 Ronald Sullivan, "AIDS Test is Weighed in Sex Cases: Mandatory Testing for AIDS is Weighed for Sex Offenders" (New York Times, November 21, 1987), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/110697728?accountid=14026>.

5 Bob LaMendola.

6 Bob LaMendola.

7 Lawrence K. Altman, "Rare cancer seen in 41 homosexuals." (New York Times, July 3, 1981). Interestingly enough, intravenous drug users had been experiencing comparable outbreaks of pneumonia, what we now know to be an opportunistic infection in AIDS patients, as early as the late 1970s. In fact, the first documented case of AIDS in America was that of Robert Rayford, a sixteen year old black boy from St. Louis Missouri in 1969.

Patrice Maurer. "Acting Up Against Junkie Pneumonia" (PDF). (Agenda Publications, April 1992) pp. 1, 4. Milton W. Taylor "HIV and AIDS." In *Viruses and Man: A History of Interactions*, pp. 267-307. Springer, Cham, 2014.

ticularly aggressive case of skin cancer previously observed only in elderly men. Doctors began labeling it "gay-related immune deficiency."<sup>8</sup> It was the AIDS virus. From 1981 to 1990, the HIV/AIDS epidemic claimed the lives of an estimated 100,777 people, according to the CDC.<sup>9</sup> By 1990, an estimated one million people were HIV positive.<sup>10</sup> However, sheer numbers do not necessarily impart the severity and extent of the crisis. In New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, HIV/AIDS was the leading cause of death for young adult men.<sup>11</sup>

The Reagan administration oversaw almost the entirety of the AIDS crisis from 1981 to 1989. Ronald Reagan won the election in a landslide victory in 1980, defeating incumbent Democrat Jimmy Carter. Senate elections brought in a Republican majority for the first time in nearly thirty years, the first time the GOP controlled either chamber of Congress since 1954.<sup>12</sup> This emboldened religious fundamentalists all around the country, having successfully organized for repeals of gay rights laws in a dozen cities in the late 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Twenty years after the sexual revolution, conservatism had a stronghold on the government, with a president whose slogan "Let's Make America Great Again" appealed to a constituency that felt alienated by "sexual anarchy."<sup>14</sup>

As head of state for the majority of the temporal scope of this paper, which runs from 1981 to 1993, Reagan would preside over 89,343 deaths over the course of his administration.<sup>15</sup> Yet he and his administration remained deafeningly silent on the matter. People were dropping dead left and right due to HIV/AIDS throughout the United States, but the new illness seemed to be a concern for scientists and the gay community, and not for main-

8 Lawrence K. Altman.

9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Mortality attributable to HIV infection/AIDS--United States, 1981-1990." *MMWR: Morbidity and mortality weekly report* 40, no. 3 (CDC, January 25, 1991), 41-44.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On* (New York City: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 43.

13 Ibid., 44.

14 Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and its discontents: Meanings, myths, and modern sexualities*. (Routledge, 2002), 33-34.

15 Walt Odets, "Ronald Reagan Presided over 89,343 Deaths to AIDS and Did Nothing." (Literary Hub, July 22, 2019)

stream America.<sup>16</sup> Four years into the epidemic, in late 1984, there was still no lab test for the illness. The AIDS epidemic entered its sixth year before the optics of a lack of access to comprehensive AIDS education subjected the administration to enough political pressure to necessitate congressional intervention in the form of substantial appropriations for AIDS education.<sup>17</sup> AIDS activists noticed the absence of any response. A year before the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (also known as ACT UP) formed in March 1987, six New York City activists likened government silence on the matter to the genocide of gay people undertaken during the Holocaust with the inception of the “Silence Equals Death” poster. The graphic featured a pink triangle, the badge worn by gay men in concentration camps during the Holocaust. Benjamin Incerti, an HIV-positive man and representative of ACT UP Boston, put it succinctly when he declared at a rally: “During Ronald Reagan’s eight year reign of terror, he did not publicly use the word ‘AIDS’ once. Not at all. Never. And in the fight against AIDS, that’s the least of his crimes.”<sup>18</sup>

Many historians corroborate this story of inaction and silence on the part of the Reagan administration. Scholars have argued that the administration’s priorities reflected its appraisal that HIV/AIDS did not concern the general public. Randy Shilts’ 1987 *And the Band Played On*, for instance, details how Reagan’s first-term administration refused to fund AIDS programs, and argues that his slow start to addressing the epidemic typified his response throughout his two-term presidency. These claims are not unique to the older scholarship. Similarly, the 2017 novel, *After Silence*—written by Avram Finkelstein, one of the six New York City activists to create the famed “Silence Equals Death” poster that would come to symbolize a movement—insists, with its very title, that the government was silent on the matter. By amending contemporary understandings of how decidedly global AIDS art activism was, it implicitly endorses the narrative that activism disrupted a

16 Julia Davis, *Evolution of an epidemic: 25 years of HIV/AIDS media campaigns in the US*. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006.

17 Samuel O. Thier and Sandra Panem, *The Aids Bureaucracy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 44.

18 Benjamin Incerti, “We will not be silent, for silence equals death.” (Gay Community News, July 21, 1990.) Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/199418321/86AAC3E45A4143A1PQ/10?accountid=14026>.

government determined to ignore the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This claim is widespread throughout the literature on HIV/AIDS. *Viral: The Fight Against AIDS in America*, a 2019 book by Ann Bausum, contends that federal neglect determined much of the activism on the issue.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, much of the historiography on Reagan replicates the president's silence by ignoring any discussion of the AIDS crisis altogether.<sup>20</sup>

It is undeniably true that little federal help was forthcoming. The silence of the Reagan administration, however, belies the true nature of its interventionist response, which revealed deep-seated societal fears about marginalized populations. Headlines fear mongered that fifty percent of sex workers in D.C. were HIV positive; prisoners were tested for HIV without their consent; and legislation was introduced that barred all HIV positive people from immigrating to the United States, despite the fact that the US had a higher rate of infection than ninety-five percent of the world.<sup>21</sup> These responses did not include increased governmental funding for public health, medical, or research initiatives; rather, they involved legislation and policies that criminalized those who were at risk—populations that were already marginalized and vulnerable—rather than the prioritization of public health outcomes. Whether directly or indirectly, police powers in the United States were informed by public perception, and they responded by criminalizing sex workers, objecting to needle-exchange programs on the basis that they would encourage drug use, and barring approved

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19 Ann Bausum, *Viral: The Fight Against Aids in America*, (Penguin Young Readers Group, June 4, 2019), 77.

20 President Reagan by Lou Cannon, *Sleepwalking Through History* by Haynes Johnson, *Morning in America* by Gil Troy, and *The Age of Reagan* by Sean Wilentz are all examples of Reagan biographies with no mention of AIDS.

21 Based on a study conducted on twenty-six sex workers. Susan Okie and Linda Wheeler, D.C. Prostitutes Show a 50 Percent AIDS Virus Rate." (The Washington Post, March 04, 1987) Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/news/docview/139200840/E32DFF511EA8433FPQ/3?accountid=14026>.

Michael Specter, "Hillary Clinton, Nancy Reagan, and AIDS." (New Yorker, March 12, 2016).

asylees from entering the United States.<sup>22</sup>

To demonstrate the ways in which AIDS-related policies often involved direct intervention in some communities, this paper will highlight three distinct groups, each uniquely and disproportionately affected by the AIDS crisis, the political frenzy it engendered, and the legal consequences it culminated in: sex workers, intravenous drug users, and Haitian refugees.<sup>23</sup> It is imperative to explore the history of these populations because they reveal that the state did not just ignore AIDS, but that it vested law enforcement, from police departments to the INS, with the responsibility to allocate outcomes to the purported perpetrators of the spread of the disease. For these populations, the government intervened heavily in ways that actively compounded the crisis. This understanding will not only amend our perception of the Reagan administration's response to AIDS as being one of largely silence and inaction, but it also will also foreground the experiences of populations left out of AIDS historiography and popular culture knowledge, which has traditionally focused on white gay men.<sup>24</sup>

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22 James Barron, "Health Chief Sees Obstacle to AIDS-Needle Plan: A New York Official Cites Police Objections." (*New York Times*, Mar 15, 1988), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/110577796?accountid=14026>.

23 Haiti, along with the United States, was one of the first two countries where the disease was recognized, and therefore was disproportionately affected by immigration restrictions.

24 Randy Shilts' *And the Band Played On* describes a particular (white, and gay) response to the first few years of the outbreak, presented as the normative framework through which to understand the experiences of HIV positive people during the epidemic, despite having implicit race politics. *How to Survive a Plague*, one of the most oft-cited documentaries on the topic, foregrounds individual gay white men who were part of ACT UP as the primary subjects of this history. The film situates the availability of HIV medication as central to HIV/AIDS activist campaigns, a narrow interpretation of the scope of ACT UP's work, which substantially engaged with leftist critiques of the inequality inherent to American healthcare— work that was largely done by ACT UP's nonwhite members.

Jennifer Brier, Julio Capó Jr., Christina Hanhardt, and Dan Royles, "HIV/AIDS in US History: A Conversation about Early Popular Histories of HIV/AIDS." (Organization of American Historians) Retrieved from: <https://www.oah.org/tah/issues/2017/august/hiv-aids-in-u.s-history-a-conversation-about-early-popular-histories-of-hiv-aids/>.

In order to highlight AIDS policies' intent to harm, I analyze newspaper articles from 1981 to 1993. I choose these years as bookends because 1981 was the first year in which HIV/AIDS was recognized, and 1993 was the year during which the process of detaining HIV-positive Haitian refugees ended. The timeline of this paper encompasses not only the two-term Reagan presidency, but a George H.W. Bush administration, and a year of Clinton in office. However, policies carried out under Reagan—namely immigrant detention and the criminalization of sex workers and drug users—continued well into 1993, and beyond.

First, I will discuss the landscape against which the AIDS epidemic occurred. In the early 1980s, the United States was experiencing a resurgence of evangelical and conservative sentiment. The consolidation, under Reagan, of social conservatives who also sought to minimize government intervention gave Reagan a pretense under which to enact fiscally conservative measures that would cut all HIV positive people's access to healthcare. The remainder of the paper demonstrates how it was not inaction, but intervention by way of criminal law and immigration restrictions, that characterized government responses to sex workers, intravenous drug users, and Haitian refugees, challenging the dominant narrative about an apathetic and lethargic state that was slow to respond to HIV/AIDS.

### ***State Response***

The characterization of the Reagan administration as unresponsive to the exigencies of the epidemic is not completely misguided. For the first years of the epidemic, the financial ammunition needed for HIV/AIDS researchers and public health specialists to wage the battle against HIV/AIDS was in short supply. In keeping with the principle of "trimming the fat" off the federal government, Reagan slashed budgets at the NIH and CDC.<sup>25</sup> The Reagan administration recommended a ten-million-dollar cut in AIDS spending down to eighty-six million dollars in its February 1985 federal budget proposal.<sup>26</sup> The federal government set national policy by establishing budget priorities, and no additional money

25 Robert Pear, "Reagan Seeks Cuts in Funds for Health in '85." (The New York Times, December 14, 1983), Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/12/14/us/reagan-seeks-cuts-in-funds-for-health-in-85.html>.

26 Chris Geidner. "Nancy Reagan turned down Rock Hudson's Plea for Help Nine Weeks Before He Died." (BuzzFeed News, February 2, 2015).

was devoted to the cause of HIV research. Such funds had to be redirected and reallocated internally from pre-established budgets within the NIH and CDC, namely those of the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases under the auspices of the NIH, and the Center for Infectious Diseases under the auspices of the CDC. A large percentage of the budget at the NIH and CDC was fixed, making financial resources for AIDS scarce. The Reagan Administration functionally blocked congressional appropriations for AIDS related programs.<sup>27</sup> This subsequently seriously impaired the CDC's ability to mount prevention campaigns. Little federal help was forthcoming. It was only in 1985 that the NIH Director's Office expedited HIV/AIDS-related research. This significantly affected the ability of American medical institutions to organize an effective, coordinated, and cohesive battlefront against the AIDS crisis.

The neoliberal economic reforms of the Reagan administration fundamentally called into question the role of the federal government. However, to portray government as inactive with regards to the issue would be incongruent with the historical realities. It intervened in the form of criminal law. As Larry Gostin, Professor of Health Law at the Harvard School of Public Health said in 1992, "AIDS is the most litigated disease in the history of America."<sup>28</sup> While figures like Gostin recognized that the mobilization of criminal law was not a serviceable response to the crisis of public health affronting American society at the time, and that crime and punishment goals were at odds with optimizing health outcomes for the holistic well-being of society, the federal government refused to alienate conservatives. In 1988, it became a felony charge to solicit sex for money while living with HIV, regardless of whether one uses protection. It also became a misdemeanor to have protected sex with someone and not inform them of your HIV positive status.

Government rhetoric surrounding AIDS, spearheaded by the Reagan Administration, was incredibly ideological. Reagan broke his silence on AIDS on May 31, 1987, in a speech delivered

27 Ann Bausum, *Viral: The Fight Against Aids in America*, (Penguin Young Readers Group, June 4, 2019).

28 David Magorlick, "AIDS: Facts, Fiction: Legal System is Assailed on AIDS Crisis some Courts are Said to Worsen Fears on H.I.V." (New York Times, Jan 19, 1992), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/108861158?accountid=14026>.

at a fundraiser for the American Foundation for AIDS Research. He called for mandatory testing for federal prisoners and potential immigrants, and even suggested routine testing for marriage license applicants and state and local prisoners.<sup>29</sup> It is hard to capture how tone-deaf this speech was. By the time of its delivery, more than twenty-five thousand people in the United States had died.<sup>30</sup> The AIDS epidemic was not a problem criminal law could solve. Nonetheless, the senate voted unanimously two days following the speech to impose HIV-testing on would-be immigrants to the United States. The risk to the public posed by the importation of HIV by immigrants was negligible, but nonetheless, the federal government decided to bar all HIV positive immigrants from entering in 1987. The state was not concerned with the public health fallout these policies would have for Haitian refugees, but instead with appeasing an increasingly hysterical public. During the course of that speech, Reagan declared: "After all, when it comes to preventing AIDS, don't medicine and morality teach the same lessons?"<sup>31</sup>

### ***Sex Work and its Discontents***

In the United States, sex work engendered vehement debates about HIV transmission.<sup>32</sup> By the late 1980s, the connection between sex work and HIV that had been the subject of much fear-mongering, despite circumspect evidence, was thoroughly debunked by studies with larger subject pools.<sup>33</sup> However, stigma-

29 Kim Westheimer, "Reagan to Force HIV Testing." (Gay Community News, Jun 1, 1987), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/199323599?accountid=14026>.

30 Chris Geidner.

31 Gerald M. Boyd, "Reagan Urges Abstinence for Young to Avoid Aids." (The New York Times, April 2, 1987), Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/02/us/reagan-urges-abstinence-for-young-to-avoid-aids.html>.

32 Erik Eckholm, "Prostitutes' impact on spread of AIDS is debated: Officials question link of AIDS and prostitutes." (The New York Times, November 5, 1985), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/111147315?accountid=14026>.

33 Bruce Lambert, "AIDS Among Prostitutes Not as Prevalent as Believed, Studies Show," (The New York Times, September 20, 1988), Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/20/nyregion/aids-among-prostitutes-not-as-prevalent-as-believed-studies-show.html>

Lawrence K. Altman, "US Examines Prostitutes and AIDS Virus," (The New York Times, March 27, 1987), Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/27/us/us-examines-prostitutes-and-aids-virus.html>.

tization of sex workers continued. It was nothing new.<sup>34</sup> As Nancy E. Stoller writes in *Lessons from the Damned: Queers, Whores, and Junkies Respond to Aids*, “In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe and the United States, state officials alternately attempted regulation and abolition of prostitution as a means of safeguarding the 'public' from venereal disease. In the current era of AIDS, this identification of sex workers with disease has re-emerged strongly.”<sup>35</sup>

The identification of prostitution as an inherent evil facilitated its strong association with venereal disease, which holds particularly true in the case of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Prior to the outbreaks of HIV/AIDS in the United States, the maximum sentence for a sex worker was six months.<sup>36</sup> However, post-1981, HIV positive sex workers were subjected to greater penalties if they were HIV positive, a way for politicians to circumvent state laws and artificially increase the penalty for sex work.<sup>37</sup> By doing so, many perceived that they were not only preventing the spread of HIV, but working to eliminate the social ill at the root of it by throwing sex workers, as well as their customers, behind bars.<sup>38</sup> Fears of HIV positive sex workers drove police crackdowns on their customers in some cities.<sup>39</sup> Some undercover policemen posed as customers who patronized HIV positive sex workers just to be able to arrest them.<sup>40</sup> Demonization of sex work spurned even-handed attempts to combat the HIV/AIDS crisis, as police departments expended money on alarmist billboard campaigns that

34 "Prostitute with H.I.V. puts liaisons in the thousands." (The New York Times, May 22, 1992). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/108952515?accountid=1402>.

35 Nancy E. Stoller, *Lessons from the damned: queers, whores, and junkies respond to AIDS*. (Psychology Press, 1998), 84.

36 Kenneth Freed, "Hollywood's perennial summer war—police and prostitutes." (Los Angeles Times, September 9, 1979), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/158971551?accountid=14026>.

37 Alfonso A. Narvaez, "Newark Moves to Test for AIDS Virus," (The New York Times, January 7, 1988), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/110593962?accountid=14026>.

38 Ibid.

39 Brad Pokorny, "Fall river police seek prostitute reported to have AIDS." (Boston Globe, August 17, 1985), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1821221995?accountid=14026>.

40 Rob Karwath.

warned of the high price of participating in the illicit sex trade: an AIDS diagnosis.<sup>41</sup>

In 1987, Stephen C. Joseph, New York City's Health Commissioner, raised the possibility of "arresting and imprisoning prostitutes and perhaps publicly stigmatizing their customers on a far larger scale than ever before in an effort to halt the spread of the virus that causes AIDS."<sup>42</sup> In tandem with this policy, beginning in 1990, Bay Area prosecutors began enforcing a California law that required people who plead guilty to prostitution or solicitation to submit to mandatory HIV testing, which could have dire consequences for sentencing upon receiving a positive result.<sup>43</sup> The justice system essentially endorsed Joseph's suggestion of waging war against sex workers, despite no substantial evidence of HIV transmission that could warrant the extent of vilification by the City's Health Commissioner. The policy of many police and prosecutors of using condoms as evidence to buttress prostitution charges directly resulted in more unprotected sex among sex workers to avoid the scrutiny of the law and its enforcers, a consequence that has lasted to this day.<sup>44</sup>

### *HIV and the H(arm of) IV Drugs*

The human immunodeficiency virus hit the United States amidst other political preoccupations. In June 1971, Richard Nixon had declared that drugs were "public enemy number one" in an effort to reshape foreign policy and funnel money into punitive, rather than rehabilitative, measures. The state pivoted from an ambiguous position on drugs to a carceral one. Law enforcement became the first line of defense against drug use, which, as a consequence of this reconfiguration of priorities, was understood as a criminal, not a public health, concern. In 1986, Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which legislated mandatory minimum sentencing and

41 "Billboard warns of prostitute, aids link." (Los Angeles Sentinel, September 1, 1988), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/565510393?accountid=14026>.

42 Ronald Sullivan.

43 Polly Thistlethwaite and Zoe Leonard, "Prostitution and HIV Infection: Women, AIDS, & Activism." (1990). 5.

44 Bob LaMendola.

Human Rights Watch. "Sex workers at risk: condoms as evidence of prostitution in four US cities." (2012).

allotted a staggering amount of money to law enforcement to “stop drug abuse.”<sup>45</sup> The average annual amount of funding for interdiction programs, which tried to intervene on the supply side of the drug trade, increased from an annual average of \$437 million during Carter’s presidency to \$1.4 billion during Reagan’s first term.<sup>46</sup> The Reagan administration was foregrounding concerns about the drug trade, which served to facilitate foreign intervention under the subsequent George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations.<sup>47</sup> Carlton Turner, appointed Senior Policy Adviser of Drug Policy by Reagan in 1981, spoke frankly about priorities on the matter when speaking of psychiatry and its rehabilitative purposes for those afflicted with addiction: “They’re trained to treat, and treatment isn’t what we do.”<sup>48</sup> Rehabilitation and treatment programs languished. Funding for programs of education, prevention, and rehabilitation were cut from an annual average of \$386 million to \$362 million in the same year.<sup>49</sup> Underfunded drug programs overflowed with patients, and as a report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse indicated, 107,000 Americans were on waiting lists to get into a treatment program, while the coffers of law enforcement became engorged with money.<sup>50</sup> By the time of Reagan’s

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45 US Dept of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, and United States of America. "Indexed Legislative History of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986." (1987).

46 Leif Rosenberger, *America’s drug war debacle*, (Avebury, 1996), 26.

47 The 1989 invasion of Panama by the United States cited drug trafficking concerns as a pretense for invasion, as well as Plan Colombia, undertaken in 1999. This also has the “balloon effect” of just pushing it to other places.

48 Justin S. Vaughn and Jose D. Villalobos, *Czars in the White House: The rise of policy czars as presidential management tools*. (University of Michigan Press, 2015), 77.

49 Rosenberger, 26.

50 Barry Bearak, “In War on Drugs, Battle Against AIDS Falls Behind,” (The Los Angeles Times, September 28, 1992), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1723294694?accountid=14026>.

departure from office, the prison population had doubled.<sup>51</sup>

By 1983, it was well known that intravenous drug use was a pathway for HIV transmission.<sup>52</sup> Just as critics objected to the distribution of condoms to sex workers on the basis that it would merely encourage more irresponsible behavior, so too did they object to the distribution of clean syringes to drug addicts to avoid HIV transmission, as any hint of tolerance of drug addiction was politically unthinkable in the late 1980s. Completely neglecting the physiology of addiction, criminalization of drug use relied on the assumption that drug users make the agential choice to use drugs. Taken to its logical extreme, this approach to “crime” implied that making injection safer would entice new users, and formed the basis upon which policymakers objected to needle exchange programs. A limited clinical trial of needle exchange programs in New York City received authorization after contentious debate, only to be cut short by Mayor David Dinkins in February 1990, despite the fact that even research at the time indicated that safer injection programs were not associated with increases in drug use and did lead to large-scale risk reduction amongst intravenous drug users.<sup>53</sup>

Politicians were not just concerned with health outcomes, but also with optics. As journalist Mireya Navarro details, “Mayor Dinkins, like many needle exchange critics, is deeply bothered by the idea of doing anything to help addicts continue their drug habit. They question whether the programs are effective and worry about

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51 James Cullen, “The History of Mass Incarceration,” (Brennan Center for Justice, July 20, 2018)

Differential sentencing for crack versus cocaine exposed underlying motivations as police crackdowns disproportionately affected communities of color. From 1981 to 1993, Black people were 2.8 to 5.1 times more likely to be the victims of drug arrests than their white counterparts. Jamie Fellner, *Decades of disparity: drug arrests and race in the United States*. Human Rights Watch, 2009.

52 Marney Saaz, “Women and AIDS: Minimizing the risk.” (WomenWise, Dec 3, 1983), 6, 10. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/231744680?accountid=14026>.

53 Mireya Navarro, “Studies (and Politics) Guided Switch on Needles: [News Analysis].” (New York Times, Nov 12, 1991), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/428290819?accountid=14026>.

the message they send to young people."<sup>54</sup> For fear of appearing to sanction drug use and the political fallout that that would entail, law enforcement in New York City—which is significantly guided by the mayor's policies, because the mayor is in charge of appointing police commissioners—instead sanctioned the avoidable deaths of many due to HIV transmitted from unsanitary needles. Law enforcement essentially signified that it would prefer addicts dead instead of alive and addicted, dependent on the lifeline of sanitary, government supplied needles. Dinkins expressed this most pointedly when he stated that "[i]t has been suggested that distributing clean needles to active intravenous drug users might help prevent the spread of the virus. Though the end is commendable, I question the means. Drug use is unacceptable, and we must not be satisfied with the notion that we can somehow make it safer."<sup>55</sup>

Dinkins' statement did not disclose certain inconvenient truths, such as the fact that drug use amongst the upper classes was not met with the same stringent condemnation. Law enforcement has historically disproportionately imprisoned drug users from lower socioeconomic strata. The War on Drugs necessitated the logic that drug users were somehow an intrinsically unhealthy community. The opposite was true: drug users were acutely aware of the threat that AIDS posed and were capable of modifying their behavior in accordance with this concern.<sup>56</sup> The carceral logic proffered by the War on Drugs disincentivized the implementation of needle exchange programs.<sup>57</sup> Activists and HIV advocates were even getting arrested for passing out syringes to quell the spread of

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54 Mireya Navarro, "Yale Study Reports Clean Needle Project Helps Check AIDS: Clean Needles found to Check AIDS." (New York Times, Aug 01, 1991), Retrieved from: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/108730665?accountid=14026>.

Mireya Navarro, "Studies (and Politics) Guided Switch on Needles."

55 H.L. Jamison, "Dinkins blasts needle giveaway." (New York Amsterdam News, Aug 13, 1988), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/226400438?accountid=14026>

56 Nancy E. Stoller, 99.

57 Felicia R. Lee, "Needle exchange programs shown to slow H.I.V. rates: CITY needle exchange programs are shown to curb infection by H.I.V. among addicts." (New York Times, Nov 26, 1994), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/109386746?accountid=14026>.

the virus.<sup>58</sup> Luckily, the following acting Commissioner of Health in the City of New York, Margaret A. Hamburg, would restart the practice in 1991.<sup>59</sup> New York City would see a dip in rates of HIV infection for the drug users in the program.<sup>60</sup>

In 1990, the National Commission on AIDS chastised the state for its failure to act in confronting the link between syringe sharing and HIV transmission. Unfortunately, the state's position did not budge. Public health experts pointed to projects underway in Europe, which entailed successful efforts to distribute clean needles to intravenous drug users to slow the spread of HIV.<sup>61</sup> However, the extent of stigmatization of drug use in the United States meant that any effort to make it safer, in place of punitive action, was met with friction and severe reproach.<sup>62</sup> Bob Martinez, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, declared in July of 1992 that "Needle exchange programs squander our nation's hard-earned gains in the drug war."<sup>63</sup>

Evidently, police and policymakers demonized these populations. Drug sweeps and mass arrests were the weapon of choice. As Los Angeles Times staff writer Barry Bearak wrote, an altercation between a policeman and gathering of addicts at a shooting gallery resulted in the policeman, Isidro Arroyo, deploring the users. "We constantly try to treat you like human beings, and you constantly try to act like animals." Speaking to a user who looked considerably cleaner than the others, Arroyo declared, "Look at how you're going to look in a couple of weeks. You'll be full of disease, just like the rest." But it was the position of Arroyo's very own department on the matter of needle exchanges that ushered in such an outcome. By aggressively pursuing incarceration as the most substantial response to this malaise, police condemned addicts to sickness and secrecy. HIV/AIDS became hopelessly

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58 Evelyn Nieves, "Judge acquits 4 of distributing needles in an effort to curb AIDS: 'I hope it will cause other people to feel empowered,' a defendant says." (New York Times, Nov 08, 1991), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/108631537?accountid=14026>.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Barry Bearak.

62 As I have demonstrated, a limited trial of a needle exchange program underway in New York was eventually cancelled due to political pressure.

63 Barry Bearak.

inevitable. As Ruben, an older man who had been on drugs for three decades lamented, "You hang around here, you'll be shooting up, and pretty soon you'll have AIDS."<sup>64</sup> What Ruben's statement neglects to elucidate, however, is who should be accorded blame for the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in intravenous drug using communities. It was not the government's willful ignorance, or silence on the matter, that was at fault, an explanation conventionally deployed and reinforced by much of the scholarship on the epidemic. Police intervention in the form of drug sweeps, objections to needle exchanges, and incarceration helped usher in such an outcome.

### *Assailing Asylum: Haitians and HIV/AIDS*

In February 1990, the FDA intervened in the nation's blood supply by adding Haitians to a list of people prohibited from donating blood in the United States.<sup>65</sup> It argued that it had no effective, streamlined way of screening for high-risk donors, so this discriminatory measure was necessary in order to protect the nation's blood supply and restore Americans' confidence in its safety. Once again, institutional responses were guided by fear and not sound medical evidence that this measure would protect public health. But the Haitians were unique. This at-risk group was being defined not by the behaviors that imperiled them, but by their very nationality. This would have serious ramifications for their chances at receiving asylum in the United States.

The experience of Haitian refugees seeking asylum after the coup of Jean Bertrand-Aristide between 1991 and 1993, under the administrations of George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, severely complicated the narrative that HIV transmission was a consequence of immoral behavior. The only identifiable group in which transmission of the virus was primarily through heterosexual means, for Haitian refugees, the epidemic was not a question of evading heteronormative moral norms, but of seeking state protection. Under Jean-Claude Duvalier, whose presidential term spanned from 1971 to 1986, it was illegal to say "HIV/AIDS" in Haiti, illustrative of the severe stigmatization of HIV/AIDS that was just beginning to have decades long consequences both for

64 Ibid.

65 Bruce Lambert, "Now, No Haitians Can Donate Blood," (The New York Times, March 14, 1990) Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/03/14/us/now-no-haitians-can-donate-blood.html>.

Haiti and the United States.<sup>66</sup> What came of Haitian asylum seekers demonstrates just how heavy-handed the Reagan administration's state intervention actually was.

In the beginning of 1993, 270 Haitians, most of whom were HIV positive, were detained at the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, despite having been appraised as having valid claims for political asylum in the United States.<sup>67</sup> Out of those 270, about 230 tested positive. The rest were dependents.<sup>68</sup> Since 1981, the Reagan administration had been forcibly removing Haitians arriving at the shores of South Florida, fleeing from a military dictatorship and the political instability it had engendered, a policy that continued well into the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations.<sup>69</sup> The 1991-1994 Haitian refugee crisis was a consequence of twenty years of political tension that had been building under the cruel dictatorship of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, his son, and the military governments that were loyal to them. Jean Bertrand-Aristide was democratically elected in 1991 with sixty-seven percent of the vote, but was overthrown by military coup after eight months in power in September 1991, with the military junta pursuing all of his supporters. Many of them would flee to the United States. Those who were not deported and were ruled to have a basis for seeking political asylum were then tested for HIV. If found to be positive, they were indefinitely detained in Cuba, where medical facilities were not sufficient to care for AIDS patients.

Not only was the Clinton administration choosing to not admit Haitians on humanitarian parole due to the extenuating circumstances, but this was also a significant departure from how

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66 "The Sleeping Catastrophe: HIV/AIDS in an Already Devastated Haiti," Council on Hemispheric Affairs, February 18, 2010.

67 Philip J. Hiltz, "7 Haitians Held at Guantanamo Unconscious in a Hunger Strike." (New York Times, February 15, 1993), Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/15/world/7-haitians-held-at-guantanamo-unconscious-in-a-hunger-strike.html>.

68 Ibid.

69 David Lauter and Marlene Cimons, "Clinton to Drop Travel Ban on HIV Patients." (Los Angeles Times, February 5, 1993), Retrieved from: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-02-05-mn-1021-story.html>.

Robert Pear, "Report on Refugees Urges a Crackdown." (The New York Times, April 28, 1981), Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/28/us-report-on-refugees-urges-a-crackdown.html>.

the federal government had handled refugee cases prior to 1980. In the past, immigration officials had paroled refugees to relatives or sponsors while they pursued asylum claims in immigration court as per the protocol established in 1952 by the Immigration and Nationality Act.<sup>70</sup> This would change with Reagan, who embraced immigrant detention, a practice inherited from the Carter administration's response to the Mariel boatlift just a year earlier. In May 1981, the INS began detaining Haitian refugees without the possibility of bond. Legal personnel critiqued the brutality of this policy. For example, the judge responsible for repealing this practice, Sterling Johnson, Jr., of the United States District Court in Brooklyn, wrote in his fifty-three-page ruling on the case that

Although the defendants euphemistically refer to its Guantanamo operation as a "humanitarian camp," the facts disclose that it is nothing more than an H.I.V. prison camp presenting potential public health risks to the Haitians held there. The Haitians' plight is a tragedy of immense proportion, and their continued detainment is totally unacceptable to this court.<sup>71</sup>

This decision came a few months after an initial decision by the same judge in March that ordered the government either to provide the sickest of the sick with adequate medical care at Guantanamo, or allow them to enter the United States. One of those people was Joel Saintil, who met the criteria set by the federal judge and was released to the care of his father in the United States, but unfortunately died a mere eight days later. This cruel and unjustifiable policy ignited an uproar after Saintil's death, which in no small part ushered in the Federal court ruling that demanded the federal government release all the HIV positive refugees detained at Guantanamo.<sup>72</sup> The extralegal treatment of these refugees was unprecedented in its cruelty. The immigration restrictions that the

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70 Alex Stepick, "Haitian boat people: a study in the conflicting forces shaping US immigration policy." (*Law and Contemporary Problems* 45, no. 2, 1982), 169-170.

71 Thomas L. Friedman, "U.S. To Release 158 Haitian Detainees." (*The New York Times*, June 10, 1993), Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/10/world/us-to-release-158-haitian-detainees.html>.

72 Mike Clary, "Death of refugee with AIDS renews controversy." (*Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1993), Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1831822318?accountid=14026>.

Haitians were subjected to were severe and uniquely stringent, and qualify as an example of the state's heavy-handed interventionism with regards to HIV/AIDS.

### **Conclusion**

Priorities of security—whether national, moral, religious, or familial—dictated the federal response to the AIDS epidemic. Punishment strategies that sought to alter behavior were inordinately ineffective in curtailing the human cost. Since the start of the epidemic, seventy-five million people have contracted the virus and thirty-two million people have died of it globally. Policing has greatly exacerbated the impact of the global epidemic for communities with compounded vulnerabilities, whether by criminalizing their line of work, criminalizing pathways for safer drug ingestion, or permitting approved applicants for asylum to languish in prison due to their HIV positive status. These populations, underrepresented in the historiography of HIV/AIDS, demonstrate that the presidential administrations in charge while the AIDS epidemic unfolded did not resign themselves to inaction, but instead, mobilized carceral measures that imperiled the health and safety of the most vulnerable, and continue to. Today, prisoners are disproportionately more likely than civilians to have HIV/AIDS, demonstrative of the ways the police and the law continue to treat HIV positive people.<sup>73</sup>

In Europe, the epidemic has garnered a variety of responses. In Scotland, particularly in Edinburgh, the Lothian Health Board began implementing needle exchanges in response to a rate of HIV nearly seven times the national average in the city. In Argentina, sex workers have formed their own unions and organize for labor protections, to demand better working conditions, including health, safety, and contractual rights, and the decriminalization of sex work, since criminalization contributes to the exacerbation of all these problems.<sup>74</sup> These approaches have all been inordinate-

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73 Kate Dolan, Andrea L. Wirtz, Babak Moazen, Martial Ndeffo-mbah, Alison Galvani, Stuart A. Kinner, Ryan Courtney et al. "Global burden of HIV, viral hepatitis, and tuberculosis in prisoners and detainees." *The Lancet* 388, no. 10049 (2016): 1089-1102.

74 World Health Organization. "Violence against sex workers and HIV prevention." *Geneva: WHO* (2005).

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ly more successful than imprisonment.<sup>75</sup>

One cannot help but wonder what the epidemic would have looked like outside the contexts of Reagan, The War on Drugs, or the emergence of the American New Right. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives in the fallout to a political campaign that brutalized vulnerable communities in order to virtue-signal by condemning salacious sex-capades and sinful self-indulgence. The emotional toll was immeasurable, and it is difficult to make sense of the extent of the human suffering. One thing is for certain, however: that the federal government dedicated few resources to initiatives that would help curb or stem the human harm. Ultimately, the policies it did undertake only served to exacerbate the human cost.

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75 Kate Hardy, "Incorporating sex workers into the Argentine labor movement." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 77, no. 1 (2010): 89-108.

Martin C. Donoghoe, Gerry V. Stimson, Kate Dolan, and Lindsey Alldritt. "Changes in HIV risk behaviour in clients of syringe-exchange schemes in England and Scotland." *AIDS (London, England)* 3, no. 5 (1989): 267-272.



