

The CRIMSON HISTORICAL REVIEW

An Undergraduate Journal of History at the University of Alabama



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Thank you for supporting the second edition of the *Crimson Historical Review*. The first edition was a sort of shot in the dark, something that we were proud to have put together but unsure of how it would be received. I am happy to report endless kind praise. Thank you for that. This edition features articles from four bright minds:

In “Ladies’ Delight?” Emily Adams explores how the active participation of women in the “Gin Craze” of eighteenth-century London allowed them unprecedented economic and social mobility.

In “Conceptualizing Communist Collusion” Meilin Scanish conducts a microhistory of Muncie, Indiana to determine the impact of the threat of Soviet interference in the 1948 United States presidential election.

In “To Conquer or Die” Thomas Alexander McLamb argues that the Hijaz Railway served as the vehicle that facilitated political control over the region it spanned.

And in “Fully & Freely” Andrew T. Smith traces “secret communications” from the colonial United States to highlight their importance in the development of the modern concept of privacy in America.

There are many people who deserve recognition for their part in making this edition possible. I would like to praise the entire staff for their laudable work throughout the entire production process—from their hours spent reviewing submissions to conducting line by line copyedits. I would particularly like to thank Production Editor Jackson Foster for his diligence, dedicated work ethic, and drive to see this edition be the best it could.

This edition, let alone this journal, would not exist if it were not for our faculty advisor, Dr. Margaret Peacock. Her expertise in the world of publishing is unparalleled, her mind is sharp, and her leadership is everything that we need.

The work published in this edition showcases some of the best undergraduate historical research being conducted across the country and the publishing talents of our staff. I hope that you enjoy this second installment of the *CHR*.

Sincerely,



Jodi Vadinsky

Editor in Chief, *Crimson Historical Review*



Crimson Historical Review

“LADIES’ DELIGHT?”: Women in London’s 18th Century Gin Craze

Emily Anne Adams

In 1720, gin emerged as the drink of choice among London’s urban poor due to its cheap price, wide availability, and intense potency. The drink was so pervasive that, for the first time, women found themselves able to take part in both the consumption and retailing of liquor. However, those who feared these changing gender norms maligned the collective reputation of women by perpetrating negative stereotypes in popular culture and unfairly targeting female gin vendors with criminal penalties. Despite these impediments, the “Gin Craze” ultimately allowed women an unprecedented level of social and economic mobility in eighteenth-century London.

Introduction

The consumer revolution of the eighteenth century allowed women to participate in drinking culture on a scale unprecedented in modern English history. With the newfound freedom women gained in their ability to inhabit the same social spheres as their male counterparts, and the consequent discovery of previously unavailable business opportunities, their expectations of moneymaking and familial obligations began to shift. Female gin-drinkers challenged societal norms in the early eighteenth century in ways that some perceived as threatening to the moral fabric of urban London, and in order to combat this supposed “social rot” and promote temperance, men in positions of power maligned the collective reputation of these women in the eyes of the public.¹ This enquiry will discuss the role of women as both retailers and consumers of alcohol during the “gin craze,” explore the ways in which gin came to be personified as a negligent mother figure, and argue that the temperance movement of the 1700s was largely an effort to define the roles and responsibilities of women in London society.

Historiography

Ever since academics began to critically examine London’s eighteenth-century Gin Craze, the scholarly discussion surrounding the events of this era ultimately developed into a debate on morality. M. Dorothy George, who published her *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* in 1925, has since received criticism for her argument that “gin-drinkers were the poorest and most wretched of the community, their poverty a cause as well as a result of their craving for gin.”² However, the initial popularity of George’s book meant that it was subsequently referenced in other prominent articles on the subject, including George Rudé’s “‘Mother Gin’ and the London Riots of 1736,” which was written in 1959. In 1982, Hans Medick, a German Professor of Modern History, began a more nuanced discussion of class divides and the consumer

¹ “The Downfall of Mother Gin,” *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, June 1736.

² M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 53.

economy in his paper “Plebian Culture in the Transition to Capitalism,” but he relied heavily on evidence previously put forth by M. Dorothy George.

Peter Clark was among the first to challenge these early understandings of the Gin Craze, writing that while eighteenth-century critics of gin consumption blamed the poor for its widespread and deleterious social effects, it was actually skilled workers who frequented dram-shops most regularly.³ In recent years, Jessica Warner has written prolifically on the subject of the Gin Craze, combining her work as a research scientist at the city of Toronto’s Center of Addiction and Mental Health with her interest in modern European history. Warner’s publications tend to explore the Gin Craze from a public health perspective and investigate the role of women during the period. Other scholars have presently begun to relate the Gin Craze to modern-day crack cocaine addiction in American communities in order to explore historical parallels in urban drug use, as is represented in Pat O’Malley’s and Mariana Valverde’s paper “Pleasure, Freedom and Drugs.”⁴ However, Warner, who remains the most detailed and comprehensive authority on the Gin Craze, focuses on the addiction aspect of this social phenomenon so greatly that she neglects to fully investigate the nuances of gender dynamics during this epidemic. This paper addresses the gap in the historiography and critically examines the origin of negative perceptions regarding female gin-retailers and alcohol consumers between the years 1720 and 1751.

The Rise of Gin in Urban London

In order to provide context for a more in-depth analysis, a brief discussion of the events leading up to the Gin Craze is required. On January 22, 1689, the English Convention Parliament declared William III of Orange and Mary II joint monarchs following the Glorious Revolution and the deposition of Mary’s father, King James II.⁵ In subsequent years, England and France fought on opposing sides in the War of Spanish succession, and French luxury goods began to fall out of favor with upper-class British society. Consuming French brandy began to be viewed as unpatriotic, and many Englishmen turned to William of Orange’s drink of choice, gin, instead.⁶ William established a blockade on French goods and placed duties on imported spirits in hopes of encouraging the domestic production of alcohol from local grains.⁷ Cheap production methods resulted in a low-cost drink, and thus made gin easily accessible to the inner-city poor. The regulations regarding the procurement of distilling licenses were particularly lax, allowing innkeepers to take harmful shortcuts when producing liquor.⁸ Additionally, turpentine and sulphuric acid were substituted for more expensive ingredients, resulting in a drink that was much stronger and far more dangerous than the beer most Londoners were used to. Gin was marketed as a way for the poor to escape the bleak conditions of London urban life, but in reality, the rising prevalence of cheap gin led to an addiction crisis that swept through society in the early 1700s.⁹

³ Peter Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988): 63-84.

⁴ Pat O’Malley and Mariana Valverde. “Pleasure, Freedom and Drugs.” *Sociology* 38, no. 1 (2004): 25-42.

⁵ Jessica Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason* (London: Profile Books, 2003), 15.

⁶ Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), 107.

⁷ “William and Mary, 1688: An Act for Prohibiting all Trade and Commerce with France. [Chapter XXXIV. Rot. Parl. pt. 4. nu. 14.]” in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 6, 1685-94*, ed. John Raithby, 98-103. *British History Online*.

⁸ Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, 23.

⁹ George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*. 30.

Women as Gin Consumers and Retailers

Throughout history, women have faced obstacles in accessing alcohol. Particularly in the time of the Tudors and Stuarts, women’s access to alcohol was consistently threatened, and their roles as alewives and brewsters were also criticized.¹⁰ Until this point, women’s access to alcohol largely depended on fluctuations in real wages, and liberal norms prevailed when the demand for labor exceeded supply.¹¹ Therefore, women were able to partake in alcohol consumption during favorable economic conditions. The mid-seventeenth century saw a rise in real wages that continued for roughly a hundred years and accompanied the phenomenon known as the consumer revolution.¹² Moreover, the rapid population growth that had kept the price of food and grain high began to moderate, subsequently decreasing the cost of grain byproducts like gin.¹³ According to Jessica Warner, changes in female alcohol consumption within rural English communities were most likely negligible in the early eighteenth-century, but they were very present in urban London, as thousands of young single women flocked to the city in search of work every year.¹⁴ No longer under the strict watch of their rural parishes, and armed with newly-acquired disposable income, these women found themselves able to take part in the previously forbidden act of casual drinking.¹⁵ While beer was popular amongst men during this period, the culture prevalent among alehouses discouraged women from occupying these social spaces.¹⁶ However, women found that gin was sold on street corners, at their local grocer, and in other oft-frequented spaces, making the drink easily and publicly accessible. As one 1751 writer notes, “almost at every herb-stall, women will find a private room backwards, where they may take their glass in secret very comfortably.”¹⁷

Women were not only consumers of alcohol; they also made up a significant portion of gin retailers in urban London. Most of the women operating in the gin trade were doing so as petty retailers, so they had difficulty penetrating the markets of more established male distillers.¹⁸ This is illustrated in the records of the London Company of Distillers, the body charged with regulating the production of liquors and spirits, as it admitted only four women to its ranks between the years 1721 and 1759.¹⁹ Nevertheless, for the many young women who journeyed to London in hopes of finding permanent employment, hawking gin was a way to survive downswings in the vacillating English economy, which was intrinsically tied to the seasons and tended to fluctuate sharply.²⁰ Most importantly, the gin trade was popular amongst women

¹⁰ Jessica Warner, “The Sanctuary of Sobriety: The Emergence of Temperance as a Feminine Virtue in Tudor and Stuart England,” *Addiction* 92, no. 1 (1997): 97–111.; Judith M. Bennett, “The Village Alewife: Women and Brewing in Fourteenth-Century England,” *History Workshop* 31 (1991): 20-36.

¹¹ Jessica Warner and Frank Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 24, no. 2 (2000): 85–100.

¹² L. D. Schwarz, “Trends in Real Wage Rates, 1750-1790: A Reply to Hunt and Botham,” *The Economic History Review* 43, no. 1 (1990): 90-98.

¹³ E. A. Wrigley and Roger Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 143.

¹⁴ Warner and Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” 87.

¹⁵ J. M. Beattie, “The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Journal of Social History* 8, no. 4 (1975): 80-116.

¹⁶ Patrick Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva: The Eighteenth-Century Gin Craze* (London: Review, 2002), 232.

¹⁷ “A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth’s Six Prints. London [1751],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 10.

¹⁸ Warner and Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” 89.

¹⁹ Corporation of London Guildhall Library, Register of Freedom Admissions of the London Company of Distillers, 6215A.

²⁰ J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 262.

because little to no capital was required to begin selling the liquor. Retailers were not required to gain membership to a professional guild organization, and it was one of the very few fields in which women were not explicitly forbidden from taking part.²¹ Some women, such as Mary Goudge of Middlesex and Catherine Croft of St. George, even managed to become established distillers in their own right, each running their own thriving gin business.²² In sum, the gin trade allowed women to establish economic autonomy and develop their social mobility in ways that had previously been closed off to the female population.

The Gin Act of 1736

As Dillon writes, “the idea that women might abandon their natural station was the most frightening transformation of all”²³ during the Gin Craze, and a backlash quickly mounted against these financially independent women. Prominent reformers were horrified at the state of gin consumption in London, and they lobbied to pass legislation that was intended to curb the consumption of distilled spirits. Interestingly, while the Whig party campaigned for prohibitive taxes to curb the gin trade, Sir Robert Walpole (the de facto first Prime Minister of England and head of the Whig party) was reluctant to enact such measures.²⁴ Walpole, who was unwilling to challenge the status quo for fear of losing power in Parliament, argued that gin revenue directly profited himself, the government, and the landowners who dominated Parliament.²⁵ Additionally, Walpole had received great pushback from the predominantly urban Tories, who felt that such harsh taxation policies were “highhanded and oligarchic.”²⁶

Originally named the “Spirit Duties Act 1735,” but commonly referred to as the Gin Act of 1736, this Act of Parliament established a retail tax on gin and the annual licenses purchased by gin-retailers.²⁷ The Gin Act was ruthless in its attempts to undercut the distilled spirits trade, and it rewarded informers for submitting prosecutable offenses against poor and disadvantaged retailers.²⁸ According to a study conducted by Jessica Warner, less than 20 percent (472 out of 2,377) of retailers of gin in London were women, yet they accounted for close to 70 percent (641 out of 925) of the defendants in gin prosecution cases.²⁹ Additionally, out of the 641 women who were charged for illegally hawking gin, 628 of them were single or widowed.³⁰ This was not the result of mere coincidence, but instead a consequence of gender dynamics in eighteenth-century London.

These statistics point to several conclusions regarding convictions under the Gin Act of 1736. It appears that unmarried women were particularly targeted by magistrates, as they lacked the financial resources and social clout within their community to avoid criminal investigation.³¹ Moreover, these women were likely unable to pay the fines associated with their convictions, which ultimately led to higher imprisonment rates when compared to male retailers prosecuted under the same

²¹ Warner and Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” 19.

²² London Metropolitan Archives, Session Rolls, Middlesex Quarter Sessions, MJ/SR 2691; PRO, KB 1/6, Michelmas, 13 Geo. 2, bundle 3.

²³ Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva*, 211.

²⁴ Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, 86.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁷ Andrew Hanham, “History of Parliament Online. The Gin Acts, 1729-51,” *History of Parliament Online*.

²⁸ Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century,” 67.

²⁹ Warner and Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” 91.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ David Reamer, “‘Damn the Bitches, They Want Gin’: The Eighteenth-Century English Gin Craze,” *New England Journal of History* 73, no. 1 (2016): 82-103.

act. Four hundred and thirty-eight of the five hundred and eighty-six offenders who were too poor to pay the penalty corresponding to their crime were women.³² These prejudiced legal outcomes resulted in some women taking to the streets in public objection, and these protests typically consisted of attacks on informers. At least fifty-seven such attacks were documented between the years 1737 and 1742.³³

It is important to note that while women retailers were especially targeted by magistrates, nearly every gin-seller operated without a license or circumvented the legislation that regulated the distribution of spirits during the period between 1720 and 1750.³⁴ The 1729 Gin Act was a weak attempt to restrict gin sales by enforcing a £20 fee for annual retail licenses and placing a duty of 5s per each gallon of spirits.³⁵ However, the act defined gin as “juniper berries, or other fruit, spices or ingredients,” and retailers simply thwarted the regulations by substituting these ingredients in their homemade distillations, calling the final product “Parliamentary Brandy.”³⁶ This resulted in only a small number of retailers taking out legal licenses, and the Distiller’s Company of London tirelessly campaigned for the repeal of the law, as it had allowed for the propagation of illicit retailers.³⁷

The Second Gin Act of 1733 was equally ineffective in reducing gin-related debauchery, as it attempted to curb street-side selling of gin by encouraging the establishment of legally licensed taverns. It was argued that a rise in licensed taverns would reduce the prevalence of dangerous “back-alley” gin, thereby resulting in better health outcomes in the population.³⁸ The act relaxed the requirements for opening a tavern, and as a consequence, thousands of houses were turned into questionably-regulated gin shops.³⁹ Brothels also benefited from this act and sold gin in secret back rooms, which contributed in part to the stereotypical association of women drinkers with prostitutes.⁴⁰

The Gin Act of 1736 was by far the most restrictive legislation passed by the House of Commons during this time, and it prevented even legitimate retailers from operating effectively. Specifically, the bill required retailers to purchase a £50 year-long license to sell distilled spirits, which was roughly equivalent to 14 months’ worth of wages for the most skilled gin brewer.⁴¹ In fact, male bootleggers were the primary beneficiaries from these legal loopholes, and men like Captain Dudley Bradstreet became enveloped in a counter-culture of “Puss and Mew shops” that sold gin illegally to the mobs of London’s urban citizenry.⁴² These distillers, who cut costs by substituting turpentine “for taste” and sulphuric acid “for a kick,” were by far a greater threat to the health of London’s populace than the comparatively innocuous efforts of female street-hawkers.⁴³

³² Warner and Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” 92.

³³ Jessica Warner and Frank Ivis, “‘Damn You, You Informing Bitch.’ Vox Populi and the Unmaking of the Gin Act of 1736,” *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (1999): 299-330.

³⁴ Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, 99.

³⁵ Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century,” 72.

³⁶ Simon Difford, “History of Gin (1728 - 1794) London’s Gin Craze,” *Difford’s Guide - for Discerning Drinkers*.

³⁷ Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century,” 67.

³⁸ George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 34.

³⁹ “The Second Parliament of George II: Second Session,” in *The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons: Volume 9, 1734-1737*, (London: Chandler, 1742), 193-238. *British History Online*.

⁴⁰ Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva*, 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 78.

⁴² “The Life and Uncommon Adventures of Capt. Dudley Bradstreet. Dublin, MDCCLV [1755],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 85.

⁴³ Ambrose Cooper, “The Complete Distiller by A. Cooper, Distiller. London, 1800,” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 250.

Mother Geneva in London Counterculture

The counterculture movement that formed in response to prohibition legislation had far-reaching consequences for the representation of women during the Gin Craze. As part of an effort to conceal their true businesses and avoid prosecution under the Gin Acts, bootleggers would rename their gin with catchy monikers.⁴⁴ Names such as “Mother’s Ruin,” “Madam Geneva,” and “Ladies’ Delight” became popular, likely because they referred to the loosened inhibitions that accompanied gin drinking and served as a rival to the personification of beer in Britain, known as “John Barleycorn.”⁴⁵ This folk feminine identity caught on rapidly, and Madam Geneva became the face of London’s eighteenth-century Gin Craze. One of the first pictorial representations of Madam Geneva was published by British satirist Heroman van der Mijl in response to the passage of The Gin Act of 1736. In this engraving, a funerary monument laments the death of Madam Geneva, while a toothless woman in rags drinks gin from a barrel at its foundations (Figure 1). To her left, a pregnant woman ignores her child while participating in the mourning, and a caption for the engraving names her as one of Madam Geneva’s “weeping servants.” Such representations were critical in making women the public face of debauchery in a gin-crazed London.

To fully understand gin’s personification as “Madam Geneva,” a negligent mother figure, one must closely analyze William Hogarth’s infamous 1751 print *Gin Lane* (Figure 2). William Hogarth was born to an impoverished schoolmaster in 1697, but after apprenticing with a silver engraver, he rose to fame with his satirical prints known as “modern moral subjects.”⁴⁶

These cartoons contained a distinct political tone and often addressed problems such as poverty, hunger, violent crime, and prostitution within urban London society. *Gin Lane* was published in the *London Evening Post* and sold for a single shilling in order to reach a wider audience of the lower class.⁴⁷ Hogarth intentionally reduced the price of his prints, as they were meant to be a direct appeal to the primary victims of the Gin Craze—the urban poor—and the cheap price allowed for a greater number of prints to be placed in oft-frequented taverns and coffee shops.⁴⁸ Further, the print was responsible for perpetuating some of the most vicious stereotypes that shaped the reputations of female drinkers in the eighteenth century. Hogarth maintained a close friendship with Henry Fielding, an English writer and magistrate who led a prominent anti-gin campaign in order to reduce rising crime within his jurisdiction. Fielding’s efforts were influential in garnering support for the



Figure 1: Heroman van der Mijl, *To the Mortal Memory of Madam Geneva, who died September 29, 1736.*

⁴⁴ Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva*, 166.

⁴⁵ Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, 63.

⁴⁶ “A Brief Biography of William Hogarth. Sin & the City,” *Princeton University*.

⁴⁷ *London Evening Post* (London, England), February 14, 1751 - February 16, 1751; Issue 3639. *17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers*.

⁴⁸ Jennifer S. Uglow, *Hogarth A Life and a World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 497.

Gin Act of 1751, and Hogarth circulated *Gin Lane* in order to add visual rhetoric and social commentary to the same campaign.

In *Gin Lane*, Madam Geneva sits on the steps of St. Giles in a distortion of the Madonna and Child imagery, and around her are the beggars and decrepit buildings that define the gin-entrenched slums. Her child tumbles to the ground below



Figure 2: William Hogarth, *Gin Lane*, 1751

while she reaches for some snuff, and her body is covered in the black weeping sores that are indicative of a syphilis infection. Her blouse hangs open, as she has resorted to prostitution to finance her gin habit, and her filthy, sunken face stares unfocused into the distance. Here, Madam Geneva is the perversion of what a tender mother and innocent wife should be. A contemporary caption accompanying the print clearly conveys this sentiment, stating “If a woman accustoms herself to dram-drinking, she ... becomes the most miserable as well as the most contemptible creature on Earth.”⁴⁹ It is important to note that this particular representation of Madam Geneva was directly inspired by the 1734 crime of Judith Defour, a woman

who strangled her young daughter Mary and sold her clothes in order to purchase gin.⁵⁰ She was sentenced to death for this crime, and the public outrage sparked by her actions not only reinforced negative perceptions of poor mothers, but also greatly bolstered the campaign in favor of Gin Act legislation.⁵¹

The depravity of London’s gin-drinkers is further explored in the subtler aspects of Hogarth’s print. The spire of the Parish Church of Bloomsbury, St. George’s, can be seen in the distant background, signifying that God is far removed from the scene.⁵² Directly above the spire, the three globes of the pawn shop sign form an inverted cross. Here, a carpenter and a housewife desperately attempt to hawk their tools and household goods in order to fund their gin addiction. The body of a child impaled on a spike, as well as the scene of a mother pouring liquor into the mouth of her crying infant, serve as additional examples of the corruption and immorality that seemed to define female consumers of gin.

In the previous century, women had been portrayed as the victims of male alcohol consumption.⁵³ As Thomas Dekker wrote in 1603, “ale-drinkers left their wives starving at home and their ragged children begging abroad.”⁵⁴ However, as gin gained popularity in London, reformers framed women as the villains of the prohibition movement. Magistrates were particularly concerned about gin’s pernicious effects on women’s chastity, obedience, and humility, as it was believed that gin caused women to lose all sense of morality and engage in licentious behavior. As the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Secker observed, “every gin-shop had a back-shop or cellar, strewed every morning with fresh straw, where those that got

⁴⁹ Hogarth, William. *Gin Lane*. 1751. Tate, Tate Museum, London.

⁵⁰ “Trail of Judith Defour (t17340227-32),” February 1734, *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*.

⁵¹ “Biography of Executed Convict Judith Defour,” March 1734, *London Lives, 1690-1800*.

⁵² “A Brief Biography of William Hogarth.”

⁵³ Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva*, 210.

⁵⁴ Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (New York: Longman, 1983), 292.

drunk were thrown, men and women promiscuously together: here they might commit what wickedness they pleased.”⁵⁵ Hogarth perpetuates this exaggeration in the previously examined print *Gin Lane*, as he illustrates Madam Geneva with the tell-tale sores that accompanied a syphilis diagnosis. In fact, gin-drinking women were largely blamed for spreading syphilis throughout urban London in the early eighteenth century.⁵⁶

Gin’s Perceived Effects on Wives and Mothers

Gentlemen were particularly concerned about gin’s potentially deleterious effects on the virtue of their wives. In Daniel Defoe’s book *The Life of Colonel Jack*, the title character laments the state of his wife’s alcohol addiction. While she was once a “best-humored ... and beautiful creature,” her addiction to medicinal gin transformed her into a “beast, a slave to strong liquor who lost ... her beauty ... her manners, her virtue,” and she soon died.⁵⁷ The *Tavern Scuffle* of 1726 declares that “when a woman once takes to drinking, I give her over for lost, she then neglects husband, children, family, and all for her darling liquor.”⁵⁸ By 1737, newspapers such as the *Grub Street Journal* were proposing a complete ban on selling all types of liquor to women, whether it be gin or the also popular “Barbados waters” (rum).⁵⁹ It is interesting to note, however, that middle and upper-class women of marriageable quality were often the only female drinkers considered to be worth the effort of rehabilitation.⁶⁰ Eliza Haywood’s popular book *A Present for Women Addicted to Drinking*, focused primarily on saving the virtue of “young women of quality,” “a gentleman’s daughter,” and “young gentlewomen of a small fortune.”⁶¹

The question remains, why did upper-class men, those who occupied the House of Commons and the House of Lords, care about patterns of female alcohol consumption? Whig reformers engaged in the sort of “political arithmetic” proposed by John Graunt in the seventeenth century, directly comparing the revenues of the gin trade with the losses to both the economy and the nation.⁶² It was clear that gin consumption resulted in intolerable losses in the cheap labor supply that kept the British Empire running efficiently. Reformers were chiefly concerned therefore, with limiting gin consumption in women who could potentially bring harm to infants, whether they were pregnant women, wet nurses, or caretakers.⁶³ After all, the predominant social and economic theory of the time—Mercantilism—dictated that England needed limitless reserves of manpower to serve as soldiers, workers, and sailors. English economists believed that labor should always surpass demand, as the poor would have to work longer hours to support themselves and have less time for “potentially subversive pastimes,” and low wages would allow the price of English exports to drop, thereby undercutting competition by other European economies.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ “The Life of the Late Earl of Chesterfield Volume 1. London, 1774,” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 42.

⁵⁶ Pat O’Malley and Mariana Valverde, “Pleasure, Freedom and Drugs,” 25-42.

⁵⁷ Daniel Defoe, “The History of the Most Remarkable Life, and Extraordinary Adventures, of the Truly Honourable Colonel Jaque. The Fifth Edition. London, MDCCXXXIX [1739],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 260.

⁵⁸ Saynought Slyboots, “The Tavern Scuffle: or, the Club in an Uproar. London, [1726],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 23.

⁵⁹ *Grub Street Journal*, 27 January 1737.

⁶⁰ Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva*, 215.

⁶¹ Eliza Fowler Haywood, “A Present for Women Addicted to Drinking. London, [1750],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 10.

⁶² Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, 90.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁶⁴ Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, 70.

Additionally, there was a growing concern that England would not have a suitable populace from which to draw its future soldiers. As the British Empire grew to encompass parts of India, Africa, and North America, and as war appeared imminent with France, Parliament began to recognize the need for an extensive professional military.⁶⁵ While women in eighteenth-century England might not have been aware of fetal alcohol syndrome, the Royal College of Physicians had documented a link between alcohol consumption and deformities among infants.⁶⁶ Doctor John Friend petitioned the House of Commons to ban the consumption of liquor by pregnant women and children, as it caused newborns to be “weak, feeble, and distempered.”⁶⁷ Thomas Wilson, an English clergyman, also commented on this problem, writing that children born to alcoholic women “come half burnt up and shriveled into the world,” and that wet nurses who partake in gin-drinking nourish newborns from the “poisonous distillations at their breast.”⁶⁸ The poor health of “these wretched infants” critically threatened Great Britain’s ability to conduct mass-scale warfare, and prominent figures began to question whether such children would survive to become “our future Sailors and our future Grenadiers.”⁶⁹

The majority of the female population was censured from drinking alcohol in order to protect their domestic value, while single working women were allowed more freedom in this regard. According to the *Grub Street Journal*, chandler’s shops “gave servant maids an opportunity of tipping.”⁷⁰ Henry Fielding corroborated this claim, writing that “females, servant-maids, and the wives of middling sort of people who live thereabouts, who perhaps will visit the same shop ten times in a day, under pretense of some sleeveless errand, on purpose to repeat their cordial draught.”⁷¹ However, once a woman found herself married, she was no longer allowed to drink gin in such a public manner.⁷² As Daniel Defoe writes in his work *A Brief Case of the Distillers*, “good wives” conducted their gin drinking in private and “furnished their fire-side cupboards, with a needful bottle for a cherishing cup.”⁷³

Pseudoscience in the Age of Gin Consumption

The paranoia associated with female alcohol consumption resulted in utterly irrational efforts to curb the habit. In fact, as a way of discouraging women’s consumption of liquor, the scientific community spread a pervasive rumor that 13 French, Danish, and English women had spontaneously combusted after being exposed to large quantities of distilled spirits.⁷⁴ The Royal College of Physicians conveniently made the connection that the phenomenon seemed to be confined to women, and that those most at risk for combustion were likely to be females peddling gin on a daily basis.⁷⁵ Patrick Dillon, a historian of the Gin Craze, ponders whether this association with a fiery

⁶⁵ Nigel Dalziel, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the British Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

⁶⁶ The Royal College of Physicians Petitioned the House of Commons: Royal College of Physicians of London, Annals, 19 January 1725, folio 72 recto.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Thomas Wilson, “Distilled Spirituous Liquors the Bane of the Nation. Jan. 1735-6. London, MDCC. XXXVI. [1736],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 36.

⁶⁹ Henry Fielding, “An Enquiry Into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers. Dublin, MDCCLII. [1751],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 15.

⁷⁰ *The Grub Street Journal*, 29 January 1736, p.1.

⁷¹ *A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth’s Six Prints*, 9.

⁷² Warner and Ivis, “Gin and Gender in Eighteenth Century London,” 96.

⁷³ Daniel Defoe, “A brief case of the distillers. London, MDCC.XXXVI. [1726],” *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (Gale), 19.

⁷⁴ Jessica Warner, “Old and in the Way: Widows, Witches, and Spontaneous Combustion in the Age of Reason,” *Contemporary Drug Problems*, Issue 2 (1996): 197.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

death was not entirely unrelated from England's long-held paranoia of witchcraft.⁷⁶ He makes the parallel of an old woman hawking bottles of gin with the memory of other women who sold small potions street-side, as both of these females transgressed the social norms of their time. Additionally, the concept of humors still dominated medical theory in the eighteenth century. People were choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, or melancholic, and sickness was the result of an imbalance between these four natural elements.⁷⁷ Women were believed to be cold and moist by nature (phlegmatic), and the fiery dry composition of spirits was simply incompatible with women's health.⁷⁸

Postmenopausal Women and the Gin Craze

Postmenopausal women who consumed gin openly were often depicted as hags and gross caricatures that embodied the physical decay reformers associated with gin consumption.⁷⁹ In the background of Hogarth's *Gin Lane*, one can see an aging woman being pushed in a wheelbarrow and appeased with drops of gin.⁸⁰ In *The Downfall of Mother Gin*, Mother Gin herself is described as "a good old Lady," thereby associating the most notorious figure of the Gin Craze with the imagery of a woman past her prime.⁸¹ However, the gin trade was actually a boon to this demographic, as selling gin afforded older women a level of economic freedom they would not have obtained otherwise. Those who could no longer make their living "by the needle" due to poor eyesight or arthritic concerns were able to supplement their income by peddling gin in the capital.⁸² Widows also bore the brunt of nasty rumors, because as Eliza Haywood states in her book, *A Present for Women Addicted to Drinking*, "[a widow] is free from many restraints she was under in the lifetime of her husband; and which, perhaps, in many instances, obliged her to act in opposition to her own sentiments."⁸³ It was unfairly expected that widows, baffled by their newfound freedom, would quickly drink themselves into oblivion. These stereotypes harmed women who were already at a disadvantage in their community, as they lacked the financial and social resources to protect themselves from prosecution under the Gin Act of 1736.⁸⁴

Conclusion

As historians of the Gin Craze have noted, little has changed in regard to the portrayal of women during periods of urban decay.⁸⁵ Women became the face of a drug craze in eighteenth-century urban London, despite extensive documentation that their male counterparts were equally complicit in the widespread consumption of gin. England's economic policies and empire-building ambitions during the early 1700s relied on the domesticity of women, as they were needed to serve as caring mothers for the future soldiers and workers of Britain. Therefore, the transformation of women into self-sufficient gin-retailers and public social drinkers was seen as a significant threat, and it allowed them to become an easy target for blame when the Gin Craze evolved into a widespread addiction crisis.

⁷⁶ Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva*, 217.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Warner and Ivis, "Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth Century London," 98.

⁸⁰ Hogarth, *Gin Lane*.

⁸¹ "The Downfall of Mother Gin," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1736.

⁸² Peter Earle, "The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries." *The Economic History Review* 42, no. 3 (1989): 328-53.

⁸³ Haywood, *A present for women addicted to drinking*, 49.

⁸⁴ Warner and Ivis, "Gin and Gender in Early Eighteenth Century London," 98.

⁸⁵ O' Malley and Valverde, "Pleasure, Freedom and Drugs," 26.

The poor Londoners who most critically suffered in the midst of the Gin Craze had turned to the drink in hopes of escaping very bleak aspects of urban life.⁸⁶ Combine the miserable conditions of eighteenth-century infrastructure and disease with the intense social pressures of being a woman in that period of London, and it is understandable that many sought to escape reality in any way available to them. Rather than allowing women to take part in the thriving business of gin distillation in the 1700s, men in positions of power targeted female distillers, spread pseudo-scientific claims regarding the consumption of alcohol, and maligned the collective reputation of women through satirical prints. Instead of treating the root of the Gin Craze—poverty and its accompanying ills—Gin Act Legislation simply punished those who were suffering from addiction and in need of economic stability. Traditional avenues for economic growth were closed off to women, whereas men had opportunities to establish legitimate businesses.

It is true that women were the primary petty hawkers and consumers of gin, but this was due to their extremely limited options for social mobility and lack of the education, capital, and connections of their male counterparts. Men made women into the primary topic of Gin Craze rhetoric because they feared women’s changing roles as business owners, capitalists, and independent money-makers. Concern regarding women’s traditional responsibilities of ‘mother’ and ‘caretaker’ reduced their ability to economically profit from the Gin Trade, and the misogyny entrenched in eighteenth century London society reveals a constant effort to reduce women to subordinate stations in English public life.

⁸⁶ George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 52.

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CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNIST COLLUSION: A Case Study of Anti-Communist Fears in the 1948 Presidential Campaign in Muncie, Indiana

Meilin Scanish

As far back as 1948, Americans questioned whether the Soviets were attempting to meddle in their domestic elections. These fears in turn shaped the course and outcome of their elections. One such instance of how these fears influenced domestic politics is found in the thinking of residents of Muncie, Indiana, the subjects of the famous Middletown ethnographic studies aimed at characterizing working-class Americans before, during, and after the Great Depression. As incumbent Democratic President Harry Truman squared off against Republican Thomas Dewey and third-party candidates Strom Thurmond and Henry Wallace, he sought to prevent the capture of his fellow Democrats' loyalties. Recognizing the jeopardizing influence that these third-party candidates, particularly Wallace, could have upon Truman's voter base in towns like Muncie, Truman's campaign staff formulated their playbook to combat Wallace's candidacy by exploiting the most pressing fear of common Americans: the lurking dread of Communist influence. With this in mind, Truman leveraged preexisting American fears of Communist influence to portray Wallace as a pawn of the Soviets and an enemy of the US in the 1948 election, thus lessening the threat Wallace posed to his campaign.

The narrative of Russian influence upon American presidential elections is not a new one. As far back as 1948, before nuclear arms races and proxy wars and containment theories had turned the Cold War frigid, Americans questioned whether the Soviets were attempting to meddle in their domestic elections. In an era now called “the Second Red Scare,” a fear of the spread of Communism, both as a theory and as a political structure, permeated American political life.¹ This fear crept easily into the minds of average Americans, such as those of Muncie, Indiana, the subjects of the famous Middletown ethnographic studies aimed at characterizing working-class Americans before, during, and after the Great Depression. The results of these Middletown studies make for a unique vessel in analyses of how this fear bled into the 1948 presidential election. As incumbent Democratic President Harry Truman squared off against Republican Thomas Dewey and third-party candidates Strom Thurmond and Henry Wallace, he sought campaign strategy advice to prevent the capture of his fellow Democrats' loyalties. Recognizing the jeopardizing influence that these third-party candidates, particularly Wallace, could have upon Truman's voter base in towns like Muncie, Truman's campaign staff formulated their playbook to combat Wallace's candidacy by exploiting the most pressing fear of common

¹ Don E. Carleton, “‘McCarthyism Was More Than McCarthy’: Documenting the Red Scare at the State and Local Level,” *The Midwestern Archivist* 12, no. 1 (1987): 13-14.

Americans: the lurking dread of Communist influence. With this in mind, Truman leveraged preexisting American fears of Communist influence to portray Wallace as a pawn of the Soviets and an enemy of the US in the 1948 election, thus lessening the threat Wallace posed to Truman's campaign.

The fear of Communist influence, however, did not first arise in the 1948 election. As the name "the Second Red Scare" implies, there existed a long legacy of American suspicions and fears surrounding Communism, including a "First Red Scare" in the early twentieth century that followed the Bolshevik Revolution.² As previous scholarship posits, the Communist Party in the United States remained tiny, with most Americans fearing to associate with it.³ Despite the marginal effect of American Communists upon political life, concerned citizens such as Senator Joseph McCarthy, whose name is now synonymous with the Second Red Scare, imagined it to be much larger. This imagined fear constructed an ideal framework upon which Truman could build his anti-Communist campaign strategy.⁴ While "McCarthyism" was not coined to describe the phenomenon until 1950 (two years after the 1948 election), the phenomenon itself was still present in the looming threat that, should one become suspected of Communist connections, one would face ostracization and unemployment.⁵ Contemporary evaluations of the Second Red Scare vacillate between two poles, one that stresses the national security concerns posed by the Communist Party, and the other that criticizes the threat to democracy posed by political repression.⁶ These continuing debates over the Second Red Scare remain provocative because they resonate with present-day anxieties about the sometimes incongruous relationship between security and liberty.⁷

For the residents of Muncie, Indiana, who, according to the Middletown studies of sociologists Robert and Helen Lynds, were supposedly the idealized concept of typical Americans, the Second Red Scare had a particularly powerful effect. In 1937's *Middletown in Transition*, Muncie residents reported that they perceived that "the 'radicals' ('reds,' 'communists,' 'socialists,' 'atheists'—the terms were fairly interchangeable in Middletown) want[ed] to interfere with things and 'wreck American civilization.'"⁸ Furthermore, to them, the most reasonable solution to these "agitators who masquerade under the ideals guaranteed by our Constitution ... [was their] deportation."⁹ Surely this was a reasonable punishment, for only "foreigners and long-haired troublemakers" could be radicals; real Americans would never stoop to holding such unconventional and offensive beliefs.¹⁰ "Real Americans" believed that the American system already existed in its final, ideal form, and that there was little sense in attempting to change a form of government that had worked

² Markku Ruotsila, "Neoconservatism Prefigured: The Social Democratic League of America and the Anticommunists of the Anglo-American Right, 1917-21," *Journal of American Studies* 40, no. 2 (2006): 327.

³ James Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States 1945-1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 138.

⁴ Bernard Lemelin, "The U.S. Presidential Election of 1948: The Causes of Truman's 'Astonishing' Victory," *Revue française d'études américaines*, no. 87 (2001): 58.

⁵ Steven Heller, "The Lessons of a Cartoonist's Crusade Against McCarthyism," *The Atlantic*, The Atlantic Monthly Group, April 25, 2019.

⁶ Landon Storrs, "McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: American History*, Oxford University Press, July 2015.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Robert & Helen Lynds, *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), 405.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 414.

well enough for Washington and Lincoln.¹¹ Communism was inherently incompatible with all that America stood for because Communism was inherently foreign. Perhaps an even better solution than deportation, one citizen referenced in *The Post-Democrat* mused, was “to build a Chinese wall to keep the foreign devils out.”¹²

Though the Communists were not the only threats to the American way of life perceived by the residents of Muncie, they were considered the most alarming. Among other perceived threats to a “proper American lifestyle” were non-Protestants, Jews, African Americans, intellectuals, pacifists, and international bankers, all of whom the people of Muncie categorized under the broad umbrella of “foreigners.”¹³ To be foreign in Muncie was to be “queer” or “backward”—a judgement that the Lynds attributed to the commonly-held belief that foreigners who had failed to pay their war debts were the cause of the Great Depression.¹⁴ But the worst sin a foreigner could commit was to align themselves with the Communist party. Communists orchestrated civil wars, sold people into slavery, killed innocent pets, engaged in orgies, and participated in virtually any other form of immoral activity that the people of Muncie felt disapproval toward.¹⁵ The people of Muncie saw only one Communism; to them, Soviets, European socialists, scholars of Marx, and members of American organized labor were all servants to a single monolithic evil.

If the most threatening identity a foreigner could have was that of a Communist, then the most threatening action a Communist could do was spreading their ideas. Locals at the Muncie Rotary Club warned of a “red fog” that had descended unbeknownst to unwitting citizens upon the town, spreading Marxist propaganda straight from Moscow.¹⁶ This propaganda supposedly made its way through universities, high schools, and YMCA clubs, where even the strictest adults could not prevent young students from discussing “radicalism” around the soda fountain.¹⁷ Some feared that the Communists had even infiltrated the federal government in Washington, D.C., with one concerned citizen claiming that Truman’s new farm program was “nothing but the Russian system.”¹⁸ Regardless of the Communists’ actual role in American politics, Americans believed that the Communists, as a single monolithic entity, had infiltrated domestic affairs, and if given the chance would strike in an attempt to topple the country.

Thus, when it came time for Truman to assemble his campaign strategy for the 1948 election, the widespread American fear of Communism took center stage. Truman knew he had a difficult race ahead of him: not only did he have to compete against the Republican candidate, Governor Thomas Dewey of New York, but he also had Strom Thurmond and Henry Wallace, two members of his own party, to worry about. Thurmond, a Dixiecrat Governor from South Carolina, threatened to claim the Democratic Party’s Southern votes with his states’ rights and anti-civil rights stances, while Wallace, former Vice President under FDR and leader of the Progressive Party, threatened to take the votes of Democrats who leaned further to the left.¹⁹ Truman knew he could no longer rely upon the typical incumbent advantage; if he wanted to win an election in his own right, he had to take up the aggressive campaign trail.²⁰

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 413.

¹² “The Editor’s Corner,” *The Post Democrat*, June 14, 1935.

¹³ Lynds, *Middletown in Transition*, 407.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 429.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 431.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 433.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 431.

¹⁹ Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 157.

²⁰ Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 188.

To help him achieve this, Truman chose Clark Clifford as his chief advisor for the 1948 election. Recognizing that the election would be tricky (and even going so far as to admit that he was not sure whether Truman could win at all), Clifford began crafting Truman's campaign strategy.²¹ In 1947, he sent a memorandum to President Truman summarizing his predictions for potential challengers in the race and his suggestions for how to deal with them. Within the first few pages of this memo, Clifford predicted that Wallace would pose the most significant third-party threat (he was not able to foresee Strom Thurmond's fourth-party candidacy), not because Wallace had a chance of becoming President, but rather because Wallace's candidacy weakened Democratic support for Truman.²² In a close race against Dewey, every vote counted, even those from small, seemingly-irrelevant towns like Muncie, and thus it was important to treat the threat Wallace posed seriously.

Immediately in his memo to Truman, Clifford described Wallace and his advisors as Communist sympathizers whose "First Lord...is still Karl Marx."²³ Framing Wallace as less of a leader and more of a follower, Clifford suggested that Wallace was perhaps not a Soviet spy himself, but rather an unwitting pawn in the Communist game of destabilizing American executive leadership. With his idealistic stances on foreign policy and promises to guarantee "human rights over property rights,"²⁴ Clifford warned that Wallace's candidacy threatened to siphon enough voters from the Democratic base to potentially win even California or New York.²⁵ Though his money and guidance came from the American Communist party, Clifford argued, his broader appeal was to young people, pacifists, women, die-hard isolationists, and the "lunatic fringe."²⁶ Even if Wallace was not likely to win the election himself, he could very easily cause Truman to lose and thus give the election to Dewey and the Republicans.²⁷ The best solution, then, was to attack Wallace as the Communist conspirator he seemed to be and levy Americans' preexisting fears of Communism in the government against him. If Truman wanted to win the election with average American voters like those in Muncie, he had to speak the language of the Red Scare.

The task of portraying Wallace as a Soviet pawn was likely not a difficult one. His conduct and speeches offered the Truman campaign team plenty of material suggestive of his Communist sympathies, despite his attempts to deny political intimacy with the Party.²⁸ Though not a member of the Communist Party U.S.A., Wallace received their official endorsement, which he accepted with little protest, stating, "if the Communists support me ... if [they] are working for peace with Russia, God bless them."²⁹ In his speech to accept to Progressive Party's nomination, Wallace proclaimed that he was committed to peaceful negotiations with the Soviet Union, to "stopping the creation of fear," and "to using all of [his] powers to prevent the fear-makers from clogging the minds of the people with the 'red issue.'"³⁰ He blamed the division of Germany, the crisis in Greece, and deteriorating relations between the

²¹ *Ibid.*, 189.

²² Clark Clifford, "Memorandum for the President," November 19, 1947, From Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum, *The Clark M. Clifford Papers*, 4.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Henry Wallace, "My Commitments," July 24, 1948, *Vital Speeches of the Day* XIV no. 18., 622.

²⁵ Clifford, "Memorandum for the President," 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ "Mr. Dewey's Victory Chances," September 17, 1948, *U.S. News and World Report* XXV no. 12., 13.

²⁸ Americans for Democratic Action, "Henry Wallace: The Last Seven Months of His Presidential Campaign," December 1948, from Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum, *The 1948 Election Campaign*, 4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁰ Wallace, "My Commitments," 623.

United States and the Soviet Union on the failure of Truman's diplomacy, claiming that these worrisome developments would not have occurred under Franklin Roosevelt's administration.³¹ Like Truman, Wallace had served as Vice President under FDR, and, in a move that "confused and disoriented [his] Presidential campaign," a part of his apparent strategy was to portray himself as the successor to FDR's legacy.³² Meanwhile, his campaign painted Truman as an impulsive hothead whose obstinate personality would undo the progress had been made under FDR's leadership.

Truman's response to this was to draw average American voters away from Wallace by painting him as average America's worst fear realized: a Communist who threatened to infiltrate and destroy democracy and the free market. Following dutifully along his party's platform to "condemn Communism and other forms of totalitarianism ... [and] expose and prosecute treasonable activities of anti-democratic and un-American organizations," Truman denounced Wallace's apparently Communistic beliefs and called for his fellow Americans to do the same.³³ In an appeal to the liberals of America, the Truman Administration lambasted Wallace and the Progressive Party, who "in their foreign policy...invite[d] a betrayal of free people throughout the world," as one of the most concerning threats of 1948.³⁴ To counter Wallace's claim that his plans for an American-Soviet friendship was congruent with FDR's foreign policy, Truman and his supporters asserted that FDR had not been deceived about the aggressive nature of the Soviet Union, and that it was instead Wallace who had been duped.³⁵ The "progressivism" of the Progressive Party was fake, and their ideas for American collaboration with Communists meant only American control by Communists.³⁶

During his rear platform tour of Midwestern towns and cities, Truman again pushed these stances. While speaking to a crowd at the Indiana World War Memorial just a month before the 1948 election, he repeated his belief that the Communists wanted another economic depression to destabilize the United States, thus reiterating the Communist status as the enemies of American freedoms.³⁷ Contrasting himself to Wallace, he asserted "the Communists don't want me to be President," suggesting that the opposite was true for Wallace: that they, the enemy, wanted Wallace to be President.³⁸ Consequently, Wallace was little better than the Communists and the enemies who wanted another economic depression to cripple the country. A vote for Wallace would be a vote for Karl Marx himself.

Truman's statements were seemingly aimed at people from towns like Muncie, Indiana, who had long demonstrated their distaste for and fear of Communism. In Muncie, Wallace's promises to negotiate peace with the Soviet Union and implement a program of progressive capitalism would have impressed few. By the time of the 1948 election, Muncie's perception of Communism demonstrated general continuity with their views from the earlier Middletown studies. Many still

³¹ *Ibid.*, 621.

³² Americans for Democratic Action, "An Appeal to the Liberals of America," October 14, 1948, *Americans for Democratic Action Public Relations File, 1936-1965*, Proquest, reel 113., 456.

³³ "Democratic Party Platform 1948," in *National Party Platforms, vol. 1, 1840-1956*, ed. Donald Johnson, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 436.

³⁴ Americans for Democratic Action, "An Appeal," 457.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Harry Truman, "Address in Indianapolis at Indiana World War Memorial," October 15, 1948, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1964), 241.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

wished to avoid “foreign entanglements” as much as possible, while maintaining the belief that Communism was worthy of hatred.³⁹ Some believed that a war with the Russians was imminent and unavoidable, but the town’s opinion as a whole veered towards isolationism.⁴⁰ “I hear a damn sight more talk about the lack of butter, the lack of cars, the lack of white shirts, than about the United Nations,” one local observed.⁴¹ They did not want the United States to interfere with other countries’ affairs, and more importantly, they did not want other countries to interfere with theirs—least of all the Soviet Union.

As Election Day drew nearer, Muncie residents began to look critically at Wallace’s third-party campaign. In an opinion from the August 7, 1948 edition of the *Muncie Evening Press*, concerns were raised over the extent to which “Communists and recognized pro-Communists dominated the convention of Henry Wallace’s new party.”⁴² Just as Truman had portrayed him in his campaign speeches, Wallace was perceived as “just a stooge, a front man ... [who] would be kicked under the kitchen stairs at any moment he dared to cross the Red and pro-Red crew that really runs the party.”⁴³ It did not matter that Wallace himself was not a Communist; he was too willing to be friendly with the Communists, both domestic and foreign, for the comfort of the strongly anti-Communist people of Muncie. In this sense, Truman’s strategy to portray Wallace as a Communist collaborator in order to weaken his support base was successful.

However, perhaps Truman’s attempts to manipulate and heighten Americans’ existing fears of Communist interference in American politics worked a little too well. Indiana ultimately gave its electoral votes not to Wallace or Truman but to the Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey.⁴⁴ If, as Truman’s campaign staff suggested, the former Democrat Wallace was just a pawn of the Kremlin, then perhaps America needed a leader who lacked any associations with the Democratic Party at all, someone who would take an even stronger stance against the Communists. Perhaps, in voters’ minds, Truman was at least partly to blame for allowing a Communist sympathizer to capture the loyalties of a faction of his party while he was President. Dewey ran on an even more aggressively anti-Communist platform, dubbed “Operation Polecat” following his proclamation that he wanted “to make communism as [disliked] as a polecat.”⁴⁵ Truman may have succeeded in leveraging existing fears of Communist influence to prevent Wallace from gaining significant support among the general American public, but, at least in Indiana, he did so at the expense of the state’s electoral votes.

In 1948, concerns that Communist influence could stretch from Moscow to Muncie played a significant role in the Presidential campaign, resulting in “the most astonishing political upset in modern times.”⁴⁶ Understanding the deep-rooted fears of Communism that many Americans, such as those in Muncie, harbored, Truman leveraged these pre-existing sentiments to portray Wallace as a pawn of the Soviets and an enemy of the US, thus lessening the threat Wallace posed to his campaign. As the Middletown studies demonstrated, Communism was perceived as an enemy of American values; thus, people were quick to accept the narrative that Wallace was a

³⁹ John Martin, “Is Muncie Still Middletown?” July 1944, *Harper’s Magazine* 189, no. 1130, 101.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴¹ John Martin, “Middletown Revisited,” August 1946, *Harper’s Magazine*. 117

⁴² “Communists Run Third Party,” *Muncie Evening Press*, August 7, 1948.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ “Presidential Election of 1948” *270toWin*, 270towin.com.

⁴⁵ Thomas Dewey, quoted in Richard M. Fried, “‘Operation Polecat’: Thomas E. Dewey, the 1948 Election, and the Origins of McCarthyism,” *Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 1 (2010): 1.

⁴⁶ Irwin Ross, *The Loneliest Campaign: The Truman Victory of 1948* (New York, 1968), 6.

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Russian conspirator—in the same way that Russian conspiracies continue to be a topic of great concern today. But was Wallace really a Soviet pawn, or would he have potentially been an even better diplomat than Truman at the advent of the Cold War—could he even have prevented the Cold War altogether? Perhaps, or perhaps he was a naïve politician who believed too optimistically in the willingness of Joseph Stalin’s Soviet Union to negotiate with the US toward peace. In the end, of course, Truman—and his beliefs about the evil influence of Communism in America—won. Truman, and not Wallace nor Dewey nor Thurmond, became President, and for better or worse, led the United States into the beginning of the Cold War.

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“FULLY & FREELY”: Secret Communications and the Chilling Effect in the Colonial through Early-Constitutional United States

Andrew T. Smith

The historical consensus suggests that our modern understanding of the “right to privacy,” a concept that moves beyond property considerations, was born out of Justice Louis Brandeis’s seminal 1890 Harvard Law Review article appropriately titled “The Right to Privacy.” The use of secret communications over the full course of the colonial through early-constitutional United States, however, reflects an American consideration of privacy that at times broke with the European laws and norms of the day and demonstrates a sanctity of private correspondence more closely aligned with post-Brandeis conceptions. This paper examines the contexts and prevalence of secret communications during this period to reveal their importance in the early development of the American experiment.

Introduction

The historical consensus suggests that our modern understanding of the “right to privacy,” a concept that moves beyond property considerations, was born out of Justice Louis Brandeis’s seminal 1890 *Harvard Law Review* article appropriately titled “The Right to Privacy.” In the study of legal traditions of privacy, this article marks the dividing line between the “BCE” and “CE” of privacy rights in the United States, with Brandeis’s contention that the common law extended beyond property to protect other informational privacy concerns. While viewing the legal incarnations of privacy rights through this lens may be beneficial, it obscures prior conceptions of informational privacy in the United States. A deeper look into the use of secret communications paired with the writings and actions of leading figures of pre-Revolutionary, Revolutionary, and post-Revolutionary American society demonstrates a commitment to both the sanctity of private correspondence between individuals and an implicit understanding of the chilling effect of surveillance.

A chilling effect, in modern parlance, refers to the suppression of speech or action not through direct intervention, but rather through the indirect fear of social or legal reprisals. The mere possibility of surveillance may prevent one from speaking openly or wholly developing complex or controversial beliefs. While contemporary interpretations find chilling effects on speech that constitute threats to free speech, the phrase was not present in the legal and political discourse within the early United States. Nevertheless, the historical record indicates both a recognition of the chilling effect posed by unwanted surveillance and active measures to thwart surveillance by both public and private entities.

Times of peace, revolution, and nation building offered vastly different contexts for understanding private communication; throughout each of these phases, the freedom of thought and expression that accompanies security of communication was a major factor that influenced American activities. Framed another way, there

existed a concern for protection against the social, political, and legal costs that accompany unwanted disclosure of information and identity. The primary methods of securing communications were writing pseudonymously, securing the means of transport, and securing the contents of the communication. Despite the changing face of potential intruders, both public and private, the principle of creating a sphere of privacy to surround one's opinions and dealings was present in this early history of the United States. Public and private citizens alike made use of secret communications to overcome the chilling effect of prying eyes and enjoy the experience of being able to write "fully & freely."¹

Historical works covering the use of secret communications in this era tend to approach the topic from several angles. These monographs include broader works on American privacy, specific works regarding privacy-related law and policy, and works related to the history of intelligence. First are the broader, American-centric works on privacy. In this context, historians generally appear to be in agreement on the widespread use, acceptance, and importance of secret communications during this period. The second approach made frames an originalist position for modern privacy-related law and policy. Again, the works in this category generally seem to agree, as those who seek to defend constitutional protections for secret communications would look to this era to support their arguments. Third, secret communications of this era are addressed by historians of espionage and intelligence. These sources tend not to make broad claims on the potential legal or social ramifications of secret communications of this era but are useful for understanding the technical methods by which communications were kept secret.²

The first class of historical scholarship, the broader works on privacy, approaches this specific era only marginally, more often focusing on the modern post-Brandeis era of American privacy. Chief among these is Alan Westin's *Privacy and Freedom*. The text covers a host of issues related to privacy, with a clear bend to those most relevant to the United States in the 1970s. There is, however, less attention given to secret communications in the "pre-technological era." When Westin does address secret communications of that era, he argues they were valued both legally and socially by the founders of the United States. While the previous four sections of his book detailed various other aspects of privacy considerations, Westin was sure to include considerations of the originalist legal position to justify his policy proposals. His overall approach, therefore, is a hybrid between the "broader" historical and the more focused "privacy-related law and policy" approaches. Two other relevant "broader" works are Robert Ellis Smith's *Ben Franklin's Web Site* and Frederick S. Lane's *American Privacy*. The former draws on the pre-19th century chapter of Westin's *Privacy and Freedom*, demonstrating an evolution in the historiography by supplementing Westin's earlier work with more specific examples, uses, and protections of secret communications than originally offered in Westin's work. The relevant chapter in Lane's work is in the same spirit as Smith's and Westin's works, with each author merely choosing to highlight different quotes or aspects of secret communications.

The second class of work, related to privacy-related law and policy, is perfectly represented in John A. Fraser, III's article in the *Virginia Journal of Law and Technology*, "The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an 'Ancient Liberty' Protected by the United States Constitution." Fraser's article makes

¹ Thomas Jefferson, *From Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, 26 November 1798*. Letter. From Founders Online, *Jefferson Papers*.

² See particularly Alan Westin, Robert Ellis Smith, Frederick S. Lane, John A. Fraser, III, and G. J. A. O'Toole.

no pretense of providing a neutral history. Instead, Fraser uses historical research to provide a constitutional and legal justification for modern encryption protections. This journal article tackles the issue of secret communications in this era head-on, providing a more in-depth, well-sourced look than the relevant portions of the broader works. Approaches within this class of work are usually tied into considerations of constitutional law, which requires them to focus more closely on this era and the actions and beliefs of the Founding Fathers.

The final category of approach is the intelligence approach. This category is not useful for determining historical beliefs regarding secret communications; however, it is a helpful aid for understanding prominent methods of securing communications. During this era, ciphers were the most widespread and well-understood means of obfuscating written messages, and historians of espionage and intelligence (such as G. J. A. O’Toole) do well to address how these ciphers worked and were used. O’Toole’s *Honorable Treachery* focuses on revolutionary rather than civilian contexts for ciphers, invisible ink, and other forms of secret communications, but the technologies and methods were effectively the same.

Overall, each class of approach accomplishes its intended purpose from a historiographic perspective. Within each, authors produce works that are similar to or expand on the contributions of previous scholars, but there appears to be little to no viewpoint conflict between them regarding the nature and significance of encrypted communications during this period. The specific topic of secret communications and the chilling effect during the transition from the colonial to constitutional era, however, requires a synthesis of the historical, legal, and technical implications found throughout existing historical scholarship and in several primary source materials from the period. This paper seeks to adapt elements of the prior historical scholarship with archival letters, entries, and an early federal trial to establish the use of secret communications in various contexts as an ever-present and valued element of this early transitional period of United States history.

Prelude to Revolution: Mails, Committees, and Colonial Secrecy (1700s-1774)

In the decades leading up to the revolution, the crop of Americans who would become leaders of the movement displayed early deference to secret communications in their words and actions. Benjamin Franklin, in both an official and private capacity, showed interest in and understanding of privacy concerns, whereas several of his colonial counterparts took advantage of the tools and tactics of the day to conceal their identities or the contents of their writings. As it became clear that collective action was needed against the British, the colonists were quick to form “Committees of Correspondence.” These private correspondence networks circumvented official mail services and were designed to secretly and efficiently exercise control over colonial affairs. This early period reveals the groundwork of secret communications that would prove indispensable in the War for Independence.

Ben Franklin’s actions in the pre-Revolutionary era demonstrated care for secret communications. First was his decision to print George Fisher’s *The American Instructor*, which contained lessons and instructions on writing in cipher to obscure messages.³ This text served as an American example of a long list of existing British works on ciphers and demonstrated both a knowledge of and appreciation for ciphers in colonial American society. Beyond his actions as a private printer, Benjamin Franklin’s tenure as Deputy Postmaster General reflected a deeper commitment to

³ John A. Fraser, III, “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution,” *Virginia Journal of Law and Technology* 2 (1997).

private communications. He went far beyond existing postal standards, introducing new reforms and regulations intended to secure couriers' packages from unwanted snooping and theft. These regulations included "instructing postmasters to keep their post offices separate from their homes, to make sure that no unauthorized individuals handled the mail, to seal the mail for each town in a bag, to only unseal the bag upon reaching the destination town, and to request proof of identification before delivery."⁴

While the administrative realities of mid-eighteenth-century colonial America inhibited the effectiveness of these reforms, it is reasonable to suspect these were not empty actions from Franklin, a man who often wrote pseudonymously in his letters and publications. Indeed, Franklin understood the value of trust in the postal service, as he himself later felt his letters were viewed by "some prying persons."⁵ Franklin's measures, especially clamping down on infidelities in transportation of communications, represented a departure from the widespread British and European practice of private mail snooping and are indicative of a developing American view on the matter, which remained pertinent in the post-Revolutionary United States.⁶

The American colonists were no strangers to the need for self-censorship along with anonymous, pseudonymous, and ciphered writing as a means of avoiding the unscrupulous practices of their government and fellow colonists. Despite Franklin's best efforts and the letter of the law, the colonial postal system was notoriously insecure, and colonists reacted accordingly through self-censorship in letters. In an episode demonstrative of the knowledge and proliferation of ciphers, Boston physician Oliver Noyes practiced self-censorship in a letter, writing: "I'll say no more on this head, but When I have the Pleasure to See you again, shall Inform you of many Things, too tedious for a Letter and which perhaps may fall into Ill hands, for I know there are many at Boston who dont [*sic*] Scruple to Open and Persons letters, but they are well known here."⁷

Matters of business, politics, and conviction were issues warranting protection, but worthy too were more personal and perhaps embarrassing episodes. For instance, a young Thomas Jefferson devised a code by which to communicate with his college friend (and future politician) John Page about Jefferson's failures to woo a love-interest.⁸ Even in matters of the heart, the possibility of unwanted disclosure compelled the need to communicate secretly, a phenomenon with which many can empathize. The public embarrassment from the unwanted disclosure of this juvenile example could have tainted the reputation and public standing of the youthful Thomas Jefferson before he could stake his claim on history.

Censorship and ciphers were useless, however, when one needed to communicate with the public in a manner that kept their identity detached from the content of the communications. This was done both to protect against backlash and to ensure an unbiased take on the materials pending publication. Importantly, pseudonymous writing allowed for the discussion of contentious subjects in the public sphere. Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee, Benjamin Rush, and others published using pseudonyms in the years leading up to 1776 to avoid punishment under harsh

⁴ Frederick S. Lane, *American Privacy: The 400-Year History of Our Most Contested Right* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 8.

⁵ Smith, Robert Ellis, *Ben Franklin's Website: Privacy and Curiosity from Plymouth Rock to the Internet* (Providence: Privacy Journal, 2004), 49.

⁶ Fraser, III, "The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an 'Ancient Liberty' Protected by the United States Constitution."

⁷ Lane, *American Privacy: The 400-Year History of Our Most Contested Right*, 8.

⁸ Fraser, III, "The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an 'Ancient Liberty' Protected by the United States Constitution."

English laws against seditious libel.⁹ Without the legal insulation provided by the pseudonyms, the sort of words needed to enflame the colonists to revolt may have been chilled to the point of impotence or exclusion. The “principle of Seventeenth-Century English licensing laws” reflected this possibility from a position of suppression, “[requiring] books and pamphlets to bear the name of the author and printer.”¹⁰ It is therefore both fitting and unsurprising that the First Amendment, borne out of this revolution, would protect pseudonymous writing as a sacrosanct extension of freedom of the press, once more breaking with the European tradition as the American one continued to develop.

Frustration with actions of the British Empire compelled some colonists to communicate about the sorts of matters which would have resulted in punishment under the aforementioned seditious libel laws. The standard postal network was insecure and composing every letter with a cipher secure enough to fool the authorities was far too inefficient to be reasonable. The way to achieve security, therefore, was to create a parallel correspondence infrastructure composed of trusted members and couriers. The courier networks established by and for the Committees of Correspondence provided the logistical backbone for revolutionary growth, with similar Committees eventually existing in every colony.¹¹ Soon these Committees were functioning as a sort of “shadow government,” overseeing various functions, including the organization of the First Continental Congress.¹² Without the concerted effort to secure their communications, it is fair to suggest these colonists would have failed to instigate and manage the chain of events that culminated in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. Because the law chilled speech, the law was actively circumvented in the interest of free expression.

Secret Communications of the Revolution: Private, Diplomatic, and Military Correspondence (1775-1783)

With the advent of the War for Independence, the security of communications for the Americans involved in the Revolution took on a new importance and purpose. Those caught facilitating or participating in open, armed rebellion against the British Empire would face severe consequences. Communicators had to be hypervigilant. Couples, including John and Abigail Adams, were forced to speak cryptically through trusted networks and ciphers. Securing external support for the Revolution was a top concern predicated on establishing and securing channels of communication across the Atlantic to sympathetic European figures and powers. In the conduct of the war itself, it was crucial for the underdog Americans to win the intelligence game, both by securing their own intelligence networks and successfully penetrating or disrupting those of the British. As such, the activities practiced before the revolution were expanded with increased vigor and import in this life or death enterprise.

Throughout the War for Independence, it was common for those actively implicated to communicate with loved ones on matters of life and the Revolution. For instance, correspondence between John and Abigail Adams was frequently secured by couriers, ciphers, and pseudonyms. James Lovell, America’s “One-Man National Security Agency,” provided ciphers for the couple to use in their letters, but the availability of ciphers alone did not guarantee their use.¹³ In one letter to Lovell,

⁹ Smith, *Ben Franklin’s Website: Privacy and Curiosity from Plymouth Rock to the Internet*, 41-42.

¹⁰ Alan F. Westin, *Privacy and Freedom* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 331.

¹¹ Fraser, III, “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution.”

¹² G. J. A. O’Toole, *Honorable Treachery: A History of U.S. Intelligence, Espionage, and Covert Action from the American Revolution to the CIA* (New York: Grove Press, 2014), 10.

¹³ “The American Revolution’s One-Man National Security Agency,” National Security Agency.

Abigail Adams was appreciative of the cipher he provided, but believed she would likely never use it. She thought herself to have a “miserable proficiency” in the use of ciphers and insisted that she would rather speak plainly with those closest to her.¹⁴ Her husband, John, was “no[t] adept” in the use of ciphers either.¹⁵ However, Abigail humorously speculated that John’s writing was enigmatic to everyone besides his correspondents anyway. She signed the letter pseudonymously as “Portia,” indicative of the sorts of pseudonyms the couple utilized.¹⁶ Abigail’s letter to Lovell serves as a reminder of the inefficiency of ciphers and how, even in the face of severe consequences, such inefficiency at times discouraged or even prevented those in the most acute danger from employing their concealing capabilities.

To effectively conduct their revolution, many Americans went abroad to establish diplomatic ties and seek out foreign support. In order to coordinate official action, correspondence had to be maintained and secured to avoid revealing sensitive information to foreign powers. Americans abroad used similar security measures in some of their private correspondence across the pond. In his article “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution,” John A. Fraser, III compiled a list of Founding Fathers who used ciphers for private correspondence abroad during this period, including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingstone, Henry Laurens, his son John Laurens, and the following Lee brothers: William, Arthur, and Richard Henry.¹⁷ The trio of Lee brothers proved to be of specific interest in Fraser’s article, as they were prolific users of effective ciphers that “remained unbroken until the 1920s.”¹⁸ Arthur Lee’s transatlantic correspondences were “repeatedly stolen or reviewed in transit by British espionage officers,” but the Lee brothers succeeded in their efforts to thwart foreign intelligence gathering of their private thoughts.¹⁹ Complex encryption was paramount to avoid the chilling effect of surveillance and enable the brothers to speak openly with one another.

The British Empire was nearly always better equipped than the rebelling colonists; their only limitation was how many men and materials the crown distributed to the counter-cause. Additionally, the American revolutionaries faced the considerable threat of the colonial Loyalists. To compensate for these distinct disadvantages, the revolutionaries were forced to engage in espionage and counterespionage, which relied in part on the use of ciphers, codes, and secret networks. The Continental Congress authorized the creation of the “Committee of Secret Correspondence” in November 1775 “for the sole purpose of Corresponding with our friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world.”²⁰ To fulfill that purpose, the committee needed to protect its communications from the invasive British eye, often relying on codes and ciphers to accomplish the task.

While ciphers existed that were unbreakable at the time, they were not always readily usable by either side in the War for Independence. The vulnerability of some ciphers and codes made possible the counterintelligence practice of cryptanalysis to break those vulnerable encryptions and ferret out traitors. In a reversal of the usual

¹⁴ Abigail Adams, *Abigail Adams to James Lovell, 11 June 1780*. Letter. From Founders Online, *Adams Papers*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Fraser, III, “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution.”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ O’Toole, *Honorable Treachery: A History of U.S. Intelligence, Espionage, and Covert Action from the American Revolution to the CIA*, 10.

role, the Americans in rebellion against the British crown were tasked with thwarting the same methods of securing communications that they themselves used. In *Honorable Treachery*, G. J. A. O’Toole uses Benjamin Church’s treachery as an illustration. A ciphered letter from Church bound for the British made its way to George Washington and the Continental Congress. Based on the suspicious circumstances surrounding the destination and transit of the letter, Samuel West, Elbridge Gerry, and Elisha Porter worked to decode the monoalphabetic substitution (“one of the easiest ciphers to solve”) and revealed Church’s betrayal.²¹ Unfortunately and ironically for Benjamin Church, a chilling effect suppressing his speech would have prevented his imprisonment, banishment, and early demise—his boat for the West Indies was presumably lost at sea.

Secret communications and the sanctity of private correspondence were valued, but not without exception. In the war time environment, the Americans had few qualms with cracking the ciphers and infiltrating the communication networks of their suspected enemies, both foreign and domestic. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the conflict, though, this behavior should be considered not contradictory, but necessary.

Constitutional Concerns: The Importance of Informational Secrecy in the Creation of America’s Governing Document (1784-1788)

Soon after peace and independence were secured, the difficulties and failures of the Articles of Confederation made plain the need for changes to the central governing structure of the new country. Unfortunately, there was no clear direction or agreement among American leaders for the correct course of action. Conflicts on representation, slavery, and federal authority over the states and populace made compromise difficult to the point of impossible in the court of public opinion. The formative sessions of the United States Constitution were shrouded in secrecy, the ensuing public discourse was rife with pseudonymous writing, and the framers of the Bill of Rights made sure to keep secure some of their discussions of the matter.

Many of the delegates to the convention intended from the outset to craft a new governing document rather than reform the Articles of Confederation. To do so openly, however, would have invoked a level of scrutiny poised to derail the constitutional project by chilling the speech and compromise necessary to produce such a document. In *Privacy and Freedom*, Alan Westin briefly discusses the presence and necessity of strict secrecy in the formation of the constitution, writing: “though opponents of the constitution denounced the “secret conclave,” historians agree that a constitution would probably never have been issued if the convention’s work had been publicized at the time.”²² Westin points out that those running and participating in the convention—recognizing that public scrutiny could create a chilling effect on speech—swore secrecy, published no reports, and kept the proceedings behind closed doors.²³ As Benjamin Hawkins reported to Thomas Jefferson in 1787, “such an injunction of Secrecy...[was] necessary to preserve the fullest freedom of discussion and to prevent misconceptions and misconstructions without doors.”²⁴

In the fight for ratification of the new constitution, the most convincing and comprehensive arguments for and against the document were often published under pseudonyms like “Cato” and “Caesar.” The most famous collection of essays from

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²² Westin, *Privacy and Freedom*, 334.

²³ *Ibid.*, 334.

²⁴ Benjamin Hawkins, *To Thomas Jefferson from Benjamin Hawkins, 9 June 1787*. Letter. From Founders Online, *Jefferson Papers*.

this period, the Federalist Papers, was drafted by a trio of American political leaders using the moniker “Publius.” While discerning readers could reasonably guess at the identities of the authors, the pseudonym offered a degree of separation and deniability, which effectively detached the author’s words from their identity, thus removing any reputational baggage the author carried, and preventing public backlash. For the purposes of contemporaneous debate on critical matters, the temporary secrecy of identity in communication with the public at large was an interest of both the federalists and the anti-federalists. The identities of the authors of the Federalist Papers are well-established, but the authorship of some anti-federalist essays remains unclear, illustrating the effectiveness of pseudonyms in shielding an author wishing to make secret their involvement in communications with the public.²⁵

The inclusion of the Bill of Rights was a critical portion of the debate surrounding the constitution, and its tenets were partially developed through overseas communications between Jefferson and Madison. Both men took measures to encrypt their communications regarding the Bill of Rights, which included early versions of the eventual First Amendment. In that specific case, they only partially ciphered the letter, specifically choosing to conceal the information related to what would be the centerpiece of the Bill of Rights.²⁶ If the political opposition or the press could have acquired early, unpolished versions of constitutional guarantees, it is no stretch to suggest they could have whipped up a fervor against them and tanked the whole affair. Methods like ciphers countered the possible chilling effect on the formation of the very constitutional rights that justices under the new federal court system would later find protected those same methods.

The New Republic: Political, Technical, and Legal Considerations of Secret Communications (1789-1833)

As the new constitutional system birthed intense political rivalries and public scrutiny, several of America’s leaders felt it necessary to take measures to secure their private correspondences for fear that they be obtained by a bad-faith actor seeking to discredit or otherwise humiliate them. In a step above the rest, Thomas Jefferson took particular interest in the means of securing correspondence while illuminating the connection between secrecy and expression. As the constitution’s judicial branch began operating in earnest, it too recognized both the legitimacy and importance of secret communications in American society.

Secret communications in the constitutional era were necessary to protect openness of communication not only from government tyranny, but also public backlash. The excesses of the French Revolution left a poor taste in the mouths of many Americans. Jefferson, Madison, and others who were opposed to the Federalist Party and associated with that unpopular revolution needed a renewed sense of security for their non-official communications. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison wrote extensively in cipher in their effort to organize an effective opposition to the Federalist Party, affording them the opportunity to more openly discuss stances on controversial topics without rousing public anger.²⁷ Once the Democratic-Republican Party was established and partisan vitriol ruled the political discourse, it became necessary for other public figures to conceal their private writings. On the Federalist side, Alexander Hamilton made use of ciphers when corresponding with relatives and

²⁵ Smith, *Ben Franklin’s Website: Privacy and Curiosity from Plymouth Rock to the Internet*, 41.

²⁶ Fraser, III, “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution.”

²⁷ *Ibid.*

associates,²⁸ once stating in a letter to Rufus King that he would withhold certain information from their correspondence until the arrival of a cipher by which to secure it.²⁹ As one author put it, they had “built security fences to protect their correspondence from political rivals and American postal officials.”³⁰

George Washington’s ciphered communications with Henry Innes of Kentucky is another stand-out case. Legislators in Kentucky had been threatening secession, and Henry Innes sought to oppose that effort with Washington’s help.³¹ John A. Fraser, III best captured its significance in the following statement:

“Perhaps the most compelling demonstration of the protection provided by encryption to freedom of thought and developing ideas (those not yet ready for the public eye) is the use made by George Washington and Henry Innes in opposing the Kentucky Resolves. As a private citizen, Washington wanted to act privately and confidentially to instruct and assist Innes in his efforts to undermine the majority in the Kentucky legislature, and he did not want the glare of publicity to surround his correspondence with Innes.”³²

As in the previous decades, pseudonymous writing continued in prevalence in political discourse. As Alan Westin noted in *Privacy and Freedom*, “One historian has estimated that between 1789 and 1809, six Presidents, fifteen Cabinet members, twenty Senators, and thirty-four Congressmen published unsigned political writings or writings under pen names.”³³ However, the practice was certainly not limited to American political leaders. In *Ben Franklin’s Web Site*, Robert Ellis Smith documents a heated exchange between two brothers from Rhode Island on the issue of slavery.³⁴ Reflective of the controversy and public interest in the matter, they chose to publish pseudonymous letters attacking each other and their respective positions rather than debate amongst themselves. Entertainingly, one of the brothers wrote under a second pseudonym to project the idea that he had external support.

In the decades following the introduction of the U.S. Constitution, Thomas Jefferson wrote on several occasions about the importance of informational privacy and the failure of the status quo to protect it. Of note is a 1789 letter penned by Jefferson, in which he hesitates to respond in full to the political queries of the recipient. His justification is worth quoting at length:

“[B]ut I owe you a political letter. [Y]et the infidelities of the post office and the circumstances of the times are against my writing fully & freely, whilst my own dispositions are as much against writing mysteries, innuendos & half confidences. I know not which mortifies me most, that I should fear to write what I think, or my country bear such a state of things.”³⁵

Jefferson’s fear is precisely what is caused by the chilling effect. The fact that one of the most powerful and influential Americans was both aware of and affected by the mere prospect of unwanted disclosure illustrates the pervasiveness of the issue.

²⁸ Alexander Hamilton, *Description of a Cipher*, [23 May 1803]. Document. From Founders Online, *Hamilton Papers*.

²⁹ Fraser, III, “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Westin, *Privacy and Freedom*, 331.

³⁴ Smith, *Ben Franklin’s Website: Privacy and Curiosity from Plymouth Rock to the Internet*, 42.

³⁵ Jefferson, *From Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor*, 26 November 1798.

Unsurprisingly, Jefferson did not send this letter through the postal service but instead through a trusted courier to ensure its safe delivery.

In the first year of his presidency, Thomas Jefferson received a letter from American mathematician Robert Patterson regarding the development of a new method of enciphering materials. In it, Patterson revealed the necessary attributes of a “perfect cypher,” which were as follows:

- “1. It should be equally adapted to all languages.
2. It should be easily learned & retained in memory.
3. It should be written and read with facility & dispatch.
4. (Which is the most essential property) it should be absolutely inscrutable to all unacquainted with the particular key or secret for decyphering.”³⁶

These lofty properties made no mention of official versus private use, as ciphers were widely used in both capacities, but did place a premium on security over efficiency. The imperfect security of ciphers at the time was the chief concern because secret writing obviously lost its value if it was not truly secure.

Ironically, Patterson also provided a perfect instance of the flaw of ciphers. Despite his intention to develop an easy-to-use cipher, Patterson made several errors when transposing it which would have frustrated the intended recipient with the correct key.³⁷ He also did not cipher the letter with some other method, instead preferring to send it with his trusted courier. In the effort against unwanted surveillance or privacy invasion at the dawn of the nineteenth century, ciphers were useful but clumsy tools. They were used as an additional method of security rather than as the default, often outclassed by methods of securing the transportation of information rather than the information itself. Patterson’s work and letter demonstrate an early attempt to use mathematical concepts and patterns to flawlessly encipher text, a precursor to the more complicated methods of encryption to follow. Jefferson himself, meanwhile, developed a remarkably complex wheel cipher³⁸ that was a century ahead of its time, variants of which were used well into the twentieth century.³⁹

Secret communications also prompted consideration in the new legal framework for the United States, notably during a portion of the Burr treason trial in 1807. Chief Justice John Marshall wrote an opinion during the trial concerning the countervailing interests of the state to produce a witness capable of deciphering an encoded message and the witness’s right to protect himself from self-incrimination. Chief Justice Marshall argued both countervailing interests were legitimate and must be reasonably considered. If a direct answer to a question may or may not incriminate a witness, it is up to the witness to declare under oath the answer would lead to self-incrimination; upon so doing, the court would no longer be able to pursue the line of inquiry or testimony. In this case, however, the court was of the opinion that no direct evidence of a crime could be produced against the witness based on whether or not the witness merely had knowledge of the cipher. Thus, the witness ought to answer the question.

³⁶ Robert Patterson, *To Thomas Jefferson from Robert Patterson, 19 December 1801*. Letter. From Founders Online, *Jefferson Papers*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *Description of a Wheel Cipher [before 22 March 1802]*. Document. From Founders Online, *Jefferson Papers*.

³⁹ Fraser, III, “The Use of Encrypted, Coded and Secret Communications is an ‘Ancient Liberty’ Protected by the United States Constitution.”

This opinion provided a legal context for the use of private communications in the case of high treason and ruled that, if the contents of those communications would implicate a person in a crime, the person could not be compelled to speak to the contents or how to decipher them.⁴⁰ This opinion, while seemingly relatively unknown, carries with it incredible grounds for precedent from the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. The top legal authority in the country recognized twenty years after the drafting of the Constitution that it protected both a person’s ability to write secretly using a cipher and the ability of one who had not written the ciphered text to refuse to decipher it if they could be subject to criminal penalty due to its contents.

A little more than two decades after Chief Justice Marshall’s opinion in *Burr v. United States*, Justice Joseph Story addressed constitutional considerations of privacy in his 1833 *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States*. The main thrust of his arguments regarding privacy seem rooted in the idea that “a man’s house shall be his own castle,” but in an analysis of the First Amendment, Justice Story stated its guarantees intentionally function to secure the rights of “private sentiment” and “private judgement.”⁴¹ The First Amendment’s protections explicitly extended beyond the grounds of one’s castle, and the functional expression of private sentiment and private judgement requires mediums of communication or exercise to be realized. Whether in its departure from invasive European postal traditions, its further departure from English norms in its protections for pseudonymous and anonymous publishing, or its legal legitimization of methods for secret writing in the crime of treason, an American legal justification for secret communication had developed from constitutional protections fixed in the First and Fifth Amendments—separate from the property protections generally associated with the Third and Fourth.

Secret Communications as a Ubiquitous Facet of the American Experiment

The period covering the actions of pre-Stamp Act Benjamin Franklin through the *Commentaries* of Justice Joseph Story represents an arc spanning from a time before serious considerations of independence to the early interpretations of the system that independence built. The ubiquity of secret communications over the full course of that arc in a variety of contexts reflects an American consideration of privacy that at times broke with the European laws and norms of the day. Furthermore, this consideration was bipartisan. Adams and Jefferson were fierce political opponents, but each recognized the value of concealment. Adams stated thusly:

“There are Times when and Persons to whom, I am not obliged to tell what are my Principles and Opinions in Politicks or Religion ... This Kind of Dissimulation, which is no more than Concealment, Secrecy, and Reserve, or in other Words, Prudence and Discretion, is a necessary Branch of Wisdom, and so far from being immoral and unlawful...is a Duty and a Virtue.”⁴²

Jefferson, in a letter to Elias Glover, wrote:

⁴⁰ *United States v. Burr*, 25 F. Cas. 38 (1807).

⁴¹ Westin, *Privacy and Freedom*, 331.

⁴² Smith, *Ben Franklin’s Website: Privacy and Curiosity from Plymouth Rock to the Internet*, 29.

“...the general principles of law & reason... render correspondences even between private individuals sacredly secret...”⁴³

Despite the technological realities of the time, an expectation of perfect security was present. By Robert Patterson’s own admission, he believed he had developed a cipher system that would “defy the united ingenuity of the whole human race” to “the end of time.”⁴⁴ The text he enciphered was the opening passages of the Declaration of Independence. Whether this choice of text was symbolically deliberate or chosen merely because of Jefferson’s intimate familiarity, associating what Patterson believed to be the pinnacle of encryption with the document that launched the American experiment fits well with the notion of an American tradition of secret communications.

Patterson’s cipher, pseudonymous publications, postal reforms, etc. were each concerned with protecting against unwanted disclosure of information or identity. The contexts in which Americans employed those protective actions exceeded those with civil or criminal penalty, demonstrating a sanctity of private correspondence beyond the punishable. This sanctity extended from the earliest rumblings of American identity, to the war that won American independence, throughout every phase of the drafting, debating, and ratification of the constitution that would firmly establish the United States, and into the early political and legal tradition of the new constitutional republic. Secrecy was valued for the freedom it offered to engage in unbridled self-expression in the face of suppressive social, political, and legal forces—the freedom to think, write, and communicate “fully and freely” unbound from the chilling effect.

⁴³ Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson to Elias Glover, 13 January 1810*. Letter. From Founders Online, *Jefferson Papers*.

⁴⁴ Patterson, *To Thomas Jefferson from Robert Patterson, 19 December 1801*.

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TO CONQUER OR DIE: The Economic and Cultural Impact of the Hijaz Railway

Thomas Alexander McLamb

This article argues that the Hijaz Railway facilitated political control over the region it spanned; in doing so, it examines the impact of the Hijaz Railway on the region's economy and how this affected cultural and intellectual development. Further, the paper divides the period of the Arab Revolt and attacks on the Hijaz Railway into two periods: The Period of Scarcity and the Period of Demolition. The material conditions of each period are analyzed as determining factors in the intellectual development surrounding the Arab Revolt. The archival sources consulted for this article have been gathered from the Qatar National Library's collection of the India Office Records and Private Papers, as well as a collection of archival records titled "Records of Syria, 1918-1920."

Introduction

T.E. Lawrence, more famously known as Lawrence of Arabia, served as a British officer in the Middle East in the years leading up to and during the Arab Revolt of 1916. As stated in the *Summary of the Hijaz Revolt*, Lawrence's involvement in the Arab Revolt dealt largely with the decommissioning of the Hijaz Railway to lessen Ottoman strength in the region.¹

Prior to Sharif Hussein's proclamation of revolt and Lawrence's involvement, attacks on the Hijaz Railway were frequent yet ineffective due to industrial inequalities between Arabs and Turks. The Arab attacks on the Hijaz Railway were caused by forced underdevelopment by the Ottomans and scarcity in the region. Consequently, Arabs were largely interested in only plundering the trains for weapons, food, and other necessities, rather than completely destroying the railway and their access to these necessities. Ultimately, the Arabs were not experienced nor equipped enough to engage in active destruction of the Hijaz Railway, thus the attacks on the railway lacked any serious impact.²

Due to the Arabs' ineffective attacks on the Hijaz Railway, the Turks were able to maintain the lines of communication from Medina through Damascus made possible by the railway, thus keeping strict military control over the inadequately equipped Arab forces. However, the Hijaz Railway was not just a means of exploitation of the region, but also—as evidenced by early Arab attacks—a valuable resource for plundering food, weapons, and water.³ The ideology and motivations of this period are defined by the scarcity of commodities in an industrially underdeveloped region.

Other contributions to the scholarship on the Arab motivations for attacking the Hijaz Railway, such as Scott Anderson's "The True Story of Lawrence of Arabia,"

¹ "Summary of the Hejaz revolt," British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/MIL/17/16/13, in Qatar Digital Library.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

propose that it was not the economic scarcity, underdevelopment, or settling of indigenous lands that sparked these attacks on the railway, but rather the direct strategy of T.E. Lawrence during his campaign in the Arab Revolt.⁴ Anderson addresses a key point: Had T.E. Lawrence, and by extension the British government, not provided military and economic aid to the Arab revolutionaries, the transition from pillaging the railways towards active demolition of the Hijaz Railway never would have happened.

In contrast to other analyses of policy, actions, and decisions made by Lawrence and the British government towards the Arab Revolt, the argument proposed and developed in this article is a Marxian analysis. The argument suggests that as the material conditions changed in Syria and the Hijaz, the development of indigenous lands, forced changes to religious pilgrimage routes, and the providing of advanced and ample military weaponry, the ideology of the revolution changed. The strategies and military tactics of Arabs did not change spontaneously or out of thin air, rather they were a reflection of the potential of the material conditions and their change over time.

Rails of Subjugation: The Hijaz Railway's Role in Establishing Hegemonic Rule in Syria and the Hijaz

The Hijaz Railway served foremost as a tool for colonial expansion and industrial exploitation of the Hijaz and Syrian regions of the Middle East. The railway stretched across the Western coast of the Arab world from Medina in the Hijaz towards Damascus, then Beirut, in Syria.⁵ The Hijaz Railway was constructed and financed by the Ottoman Empire, so it served as an industrial power that threatened the hegemony of British colonization and imperialism in the Middle East. Further, capital ownership of the Hijaz Railway determined the specific motivations and movements of value throughout the region. M. Metin Hülagü stated in *The Hijaz Railway* that, while the railway served first as a buffer against the interests of European capital, it eventually served as the “Achilles’ heel that would cripple” the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire in the Hijaz and Syria.⁶ The Hijaz Railway served as the key that consolidated Ottoman hegemony over the region in the Levant and Hijaz, but was also its own demise—it proved that hegemony without persuasive ideology does not last.

M. Metin Hülagü stated in *The Hejaz Railway* that generally railways “facilitated the advancement of European colonizing nations.”⁷ The Hijaz Railway consolidated Ottoman control over Syria and the Hijaz, thus threatening the potential grip on the region by British and French interests. However, it was only the *demolition* of the railway that enabled European colonizing nations to establish hegemonic rule in a post-Ottoman Middle East. In a letter between Sir Nicholas O’Conor to Sir Edward Grey in 1906, O’Conor stated that those loyal to Turkish rule yet indigenous to Arabia possessed “no share capital” of the railway.⁸ Such a condition is one outlined fairly frequently in colonized or occupied lands of indigenous peoples. The indigenous Arabs of Syria and the Hijaz possessed no ownership over the new means of production built on their land. O’Conor positioned this conflict of share capital and its relations as one national and financial concern, directly connected to the conflict

⁴ Scott Anderson, “The True Story of T.E. Lawrence,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (Smithsonian, 2014).

⁵ Map of the route of the Hijaz Railway [106r] (1/2), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/10/12/1, in Qatar Digital Library.

⁶ M. Metin Hülagü, *The Hejaz Railway: The Construction of a New Hope* (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2010), xvii-xxiii.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁸ File 3142/1903 “Hedjaz Railway,” British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/10/12, in Qatar Digital Library.

between Arabs and Turks.⁹ Foreign capital constructed a means of industrial and economic exploitation, and, in the region, no native inhabitants possessed a share in this same vehicle of capital.

Before the construction of the Hijaz Railway, the nomadic Bedouin of the region achieved economic viability by providing safe passage for pilgrimage to Mecca. The Bedouins understood safe passage throughout the difficult-to-traverse region. In *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*, Helen Metz described the landscape of the southern regions of the Hijaz Railway as one dominated by largely non-arable land. Further, rainfall was limited in the Hijaz region and deserts of Syria.¹⁰ However, the Bedouin of the region were able to thrive despite low levels of rainfall and a lack of industrialization in Syria and the Hijaz due to their nomadic lifestyle and ability to survey and determine the areas in which rainfall would occur. These skills enabled the Bedouin to be the dominant force in ensuring passage across Syria and the Hijaz for Muslims to complete pilgrimage to Mecca.

Following the construction of the Hijaz Railway, the transport provided by the Bedouin was outclassed by the much faster trains, as the trip from Damascus to Medina took only two days by railcar. In T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Lawrence stated that the pilgrimage to Mecca provided by the Bedouins ceased upon the creation of the Hijaz Railway.¹¹ Further, by the accounts of the British military, some thirteen to fourteen thousand Muslims conducted pilgrimage to Mecca by means of the railway.¹² The Ottoman Empire created the Hijaz Railway to follow the same path used by the Bedouin, traveling through oases and economic centers from Beirut to Medina and disrupting the lifestyle and economic sustenance that these pathways provided for the indigenous people of the region.¹³

The sudden industrialization of the passage offered for pilgrimage by the Bedouins facilitated the economic hardship and forced cultural change for the indigenous groups of Syria and the Hijaz.¹⁴ The Hijaz Railway dictated a forced obsolescence of the pre-industrial Bedouin economy rooted in providing safe passage to embark on Hajj. This forced obsolescence introduced by the Hijaz Railway marks the beginning of what will thus be referred to as the period of scarcity of the Arab Revolt. This period of scarcity is characterized by the economic underdevelopment and inadequate supply of basic commodities for the indigenous people of the region as a function of Ottoman supremacy through the Hijaz Railway.

Productivity, Underdevelopment, and Settler Transformation

The dislocation of indigenous peoples and transformation of land in the regions peripheral to the Hijaz Railway antagonized class and ethnic divisions. With the railway's completion, lines between class and ethnicity became blurred; Arabs became the exploited class of the region, forced out of their homes due to rapid industrialization and economic hardship, while the Turks became the land-owning settler class.¹⁵ Simultaneously, the railway aided mass control over the region by

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Helen Metz and Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*, (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993), 171.

¹¹ T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997),

¹² File 3142/1903 'Hedjaz Railway', IOR/L/PS/10/12, 66.

¹³ Metz, *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*, 171.

¹⁴ "Hedjaz Railway," India Office Records and Private Papers.

¹⁵ J.M. Grierson, "Military Report on Arabia," in *Records of Syria, 1918-1973, Volume I: 1918-1920*, ed. Jane Priestland, (Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions, 2005), 6.

revolutionizing not only the speed of travel and transport of commodities but also by providing a vast communications infrastructure.¹⁶

The *Military Report on Arabia* described the mountain regions of Syria as “fertile and well cultivated.”¹⁷ Agriculture defined the mountains regions while pastoral and nomadic lifestyles defined the deserts of Syria and the Hijaz. Consequently, the nomadic Bedouins generally lived in the less-arable deserts. Unlike the deserts, after the construction of the Hijaz Railway, the mountain regions grew to be inhabited largely by sedentary settlers, mostly Turks. In the *Military Report on Arabia* it is explicitly noted that, while the settler lifestyle in the regions surrounding the Hijaz Railway became more popular, it forced Arabs out of populated regions in the mountains into the less-dominated deserts. The dislocation of indigenous peoples and transformation of land in the regions peripheral to the Hijaz Railway served to antagonize class and ethnic division. With the railway’s completion and successful gentrification of Syria lines between class and ethnicity became blurred as the Arabs became the exploited class of the region, forced out of their homes due to rapid industrialization and economic hardship, while the Turks became the land-owning settler class.¹⁸ Simultaneously, the railway served as a way of mass militaristic control over the region by revolutionizing not only the speed of travel and transport of commodities but by providing a vast communications infrastructure.¹⁹

While the desert regions of Syria were generally infertile, the inland regions—particularly the mountainous ones—were agriculturally productive. For instance, the Hauran, a breadbasket region south of Aleppo produced roughly 200,000 tons of cereals each year, as well as silk, cotton, wool, fruit, and olives.²⁰ As noted in the report from Major-General J.M. Grierson, the Hijaz Railway resulted in a significant increase in the trade of these commodities to other regions, including Turkey, Europe, and Africa.²¹ Jordan’s primary crops were barley and wheat, harvested in April and May respectively. Lebanon harvested wheat as well; however, it was harvested later in the year, in June. The explanation for the differentiation between harvest times can be explained by the vast climate differences in Syria. Climate did not change based on latitude very much, if at all, throughout the region, but rather based on height above sea level. In the mountains, the colder seasons lasted longer, and the climate caused a larger delay in harvests, while in tropical climates, such as Jordan, the climate allowed for much earlier harvests.

The primary inhabitants of the Hauran (and Kerak) province(s) of Syria were described as “those loyal to Turkish rule.”²² As discussed previously, these regions—and the loyal Turkish subjects therein—provided a vast number of agricultural exports for the Ottoman Empire. The increase of settler colonies and wide-scale agriculture were further solidified by the Hijaz Railway, contributing to a larger oppressive force in driving Arabs out of their homes.²³

So, as the Hijaz Railway provided means of securing new agricultural centers in its peripheral regions, it solidified economic power in the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Beirut served as the primary coastal trade town of the Syrian coast; it

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸ J.M. Grierson, “Military Report on Arabia,” in *Records of Syria, 1918-1973, Volume I: 1918-1920*, ed. Jane Priestland, (United Kingdom: Archive Editions, 2005), 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

connected westward to Damascus then went directly south to Medina.²⁴ The Beirut terminus of the Hijaz Railway was used as the primary means of trade outwards from coastal Syria, and it existed as the main economic port in Ottoman Syria. The Hijaz Railway followed the route of economic value through the Hijaz and Syria so that this value could be effectively extracted and controlled by the Ottomans.

However, the agricultural practices of settlers (that is, Turkish subjects) were foreign to the Arabs of the region who lived largely by nomadic lifestyles and subsistence farming. T.E. Lawrence comments in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* that the commodities produced by the nomadic Bedouin were largely nomadic and pastoral goods.²⁵ Due to the accumulation of capital in post-industrial Europe, new sources of exploitable labor and commodities needed to be discovered; in this case, this meant the Middle East. Raw commodities from the Arab world were traded and refined by industrial capitalist powers to fuel the advancement of their individual spheres of capital. Afterwards, these refined commodities produced by the raw goods from the Middle East would then be traded back to Arabs at a cost that generated profit for Ottoman or European powers, while pushing the indigenous people of the Middle East into poverty. Later, the Ottoman Empire capitalized on the productive capability of the region, constructing the Hijaz Railway to deprive Arabs of their productive means.

Class Character and Economic Inflation of Medical Services

The class character of the Hijaz Railway was distinctly separate from the character of the Bedouins, as the only individuals able to afford the expensive travel of the Hijaz Railway—costing nearly twelve times as much per pilgrim as Bedouin travel²⁶—were foreigners, either the 10,000 Turkish subjects or 2,000 Russians living in Syria.²⁷

Additionally, the cost of medical or sanitation services in the regions that followed the railways route faced massive inflation. Along the railway, the class character of town centers shifted from nomadic Arab workers towards sedentary Turkish subjects who held more significant economic means than Arabs. The rapid inflation of repair costs of sanitary facilities within the Ottoman occupied Middle East is discussed in a letter from Dr. Clemow, of the Constantinople Board of Health, to Sir Gerard Lowther, of the Britannic Majesty's Government.²⁸ From 1905, the year of construction, to 1908, costs in Beirut nearly quintupled for sanitary facilities.²⁹ Notably, in other major cities under Turkish occupation, such as Jeddah, costs only doubled.³⁰ The creation of new medical facilities, rather than repairing old ones reached a cost in 1908 of nearly fifteen times the 1905 price.³¹ Clemow wrote in a second letter to Lowther that there was no hesitation from the Constantinople Board of Health to accept the rising costs of constructing and maintaining these medical facilities.³²

The Board of Health's lack of hesitation again evidences that those traveling along the Hijaz Railway (and settling in the cities along its route) were wealthy Turkish subjects. The wealth of these subjects was such that they were able to bear the weight of inflation. Also, this lack of hesitation to pay for construction and repairs on these facilities hints at the economic value that the Hijaz Railway itself provided

²⁴ Priestland, *Records of Syria*, 35.

²⁵ T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997), 87.

²⁶ "Hedjaz Railway," 66.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ File 3142/1903 'Hedjaz Railway', IOR/L/PS/10/12, 92-93.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

³² *Ibid.*, 97.

for the Ottoman Empire. The value that was extracted from the region by means of the Hijaz Railway was significant enough that it allowed for a nearly fifteen-fold level of inflation on medical facilities. Alongside the construction of the Hijaz Railway came economic barriers that the indigenous Arabs of the Middle East could not traverse through—yet these barriers were easily traversable for Turkish settlers.

Early Assaults on the Hijaz Railway and Turkish Defensive Capabilities

The Bedouins initially responded harshly to the Turkish occupation of the Arab world and rapid rates of inflation after the construction of the Hijaz Railway. According to British records, attacks on the railway date to as early as 1908.³³ A small group of Bedouin attacked the advisor in charge of construction of the Hijaz Railway, Kiazim Pasha. The raid killed eight or nine Turkish soldiers, while the Bedouins lost three soldiers. Kiazim received a grant of 30,000 soldiers from Constantinople to continue construction of the railway and “punish the Bedouins.”³⁴

The defensive stations of the Hijaz Railway were designed to allow a small number of Turkish men, normally ten, to successfully defend the station against siege by Arab raiders. The British records of these defensive stations in 1907 note that these defensive stations held essential commodities including but not limited to water and fourteen days of rations.³⁵ These stations imply that prior to British involvement in the Arab revolt, small stone buildings measuring roughly eleven by twelve meters and maintained by less than a dozen men, were successfully able to defend against Bedouin revolutionaries.³⁶ This displays the technological gap between the Turkish and the Bedouins: Turkish industrial power and armaments were strong enough to display raw military supremacy over the unarmed Arabs, who at the time were severely under equipped compared to the Turkish.

The Hijaz Railway and the Emergence of the Arab Revolt

As stated, control of the Hijaz Railway lay in the hands of the Ottoman Empire prior to the Arab Revolt, thus control of these agricultural and economic centers lay in the hands of the Ottoman Empire. The railway served as the vehicle, literally and figuratively, for economic extraction and exploitation of the Arabs’ land. Lifestyles were disrupted, indigenous peoples were forced out of their homes, and the material conditions which defined the Arab or Bedouin lifestyle were fundamentally changed. Ottoman Empire agricultural practices disrupted the Arab lifestyle with the Hijaz Railway as their tool of oppression, further shaping the ideologies of those oppressed by the Ottoman Empire.

In the years of subjugation under the Hijaz Railway, the Hijaz region produced nearly no food of its own, resulting in scarcities of necessary commodities. This resulted in a dependency on the Ottoman Empire. Sharif Hussein, leader of the Hijaz, had become subjugated under the yoke of Ottoman rule by this harsh economic reality. Arabs depended on the great Ottoman project, the Hijaz Railway, for both transportation and trade. The Ottomans distributed food from their fertile regions in Syria to the Hijaz. The strategic planning of the Hijaz railway by the Ottoman Empire forced obsolescence of the Bedouin trade and pilgrimage routes that were now dominated by railroad travel.

Alongside the scarcity of basic commodities was a period of severe water scarcity. Among regions with little rainfall, water quickly evaporated, and shallow

³³ “Hedjaz Railway,” 104.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

³⁶ Priestland, *Records of Syria*, 35.

cisterns became obsolete.³⁷ The British government noted the railway faced the problem of acquiring water not only for the soldiers who defended the railway but also for the staff and passengers of the railway.³⁸ In correspondence between Sir George Barclay to Sir Edward Grey on November 26, 1906, the men discuss the water stored within defensive buildings used by Turkish soldiers along the railway's stations, which amounted to anywhere between 36,000 to 70,000 cubic meters. However, Barclay notes that this amount of water was too little to maintain the regular functioning of the Hijaz Railway.

The Arab Revolt

When World War I broke out, the Ottoman Empire demanded for Arabs to engage in Jihad. Sherif Hussein opposed the false Ottoman Jihad, because true Jihad for him was “doctrinally incompatible with an aggressive war, and absurd with a Christian ally: Germany.”³⁹ In consequence, T.E. Lawrence lauded Hussein as “honorable, shrewd, obstinate, and deeply pious.”⁴⁰ Yet, in reaction, the Ottomans did what Hussein feared most and halted the travel and trade for that benefited Arabs on the Hijaz Railway. In contrast, the British offered a sign of friendship upon the declaration of the Arab Revolt, keeping ports open to allow food (albeit in marginal amounts) to enter the Arab world.⁴¹

In the first meeting between T.E. Lawrence and Feisal, Hussein's son, Lawrence commented on the defeat that Feisal faced at the hands of the Turks shortly following the outbreak of the Arab Revolt. Feisal's attacks suffered from a lack of significant military armaments to stand up to the Ottoman Empire. These attacks depended on the plundering of materials rather than the demolition of the railway.⁴²

In the early days of the revolution and the blossoming relationship between Feisal and Lawrence, the two debated the unequal alliance made between Arabs and British. Feisal remarked that he did not desire for his kingdom to become another British subject. The disproportionate size and strength of the British forces compared to those of the Arabs worried Feisal. He predicted the emergence of a second, unequal, and dependent relationship of the Arabs to a foreign force, beginning with a dependency for food. And Feisal did not want to see his race become subjugated under colonial rule and occupation by the British, just as they had been under the Ottomans. He further expressed his worry of the British sailors who arrived in the Arab world, stating, “soon they will stay nights, and then they will live here always, and take the country.”⁴³

Feisal saw the relationship between Arabs and British as one of necessity, but it was not one he was pleased with. Feisal noted the differences amongst morals, motivations, and culture between the Arabs and the British. He lectured Lawrence with respect to these differences, noting that “our race [Arabs] will have a cripple's temper till it has found its feet.”⁴⁴ In all, the alliance was one of unsatisfied ambitions for Arabs, as Feisal would be satisfied only once he—and his people—had ascended not to ally, but to equal the British and Lawrence.

However, The General Staff, War Office of the British government, reaffirmed Feisal's observation of disproportionate military power in the *Summary of*

³⁷ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 168-169.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁹ Priestland, *Records of Syria*, 35.

⁴⁰ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 33.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

the Hijaz Revolt. The War Office stated that, while Feisal commanded nearly 30,000 troops in 1916 at the outbreak of the Arab Revolt spread between three camps, “no single camp had as many as 2,000 rifles.”⁴⁵

Following British involvement in the Arab Revolt and Hussein’s proclamation in 1916, Feisal’s forces were provided with roughly 6,000 to 8,000 more weapons.⁴⁶ Feisal’s troops, after being provided with British aid, were then positioned for attacks on the Hijaz Railway. This action from the British Military was the single event in the Arab Revolt that defined the end of the period of scarcity, resulting in a period of sufficient military weaponry and demolition of the Hijaz Railway—the period of demolition.⁴⁷ In total, at the end of the revolt and the period of demolition, a total of 28,692 rails, 15 train engines, 29 trucks, and 207 bridges, all operated and controlled by the Turkish soldiers, had been destroyed.⁴⁸ Additionally, this period of the revolt culminated in the death of 4,697 Turkish soldiers and the wounding of 871 more. Amongst these casualties were over 9,000 prisoners held by Arabs; 5,827 of these prisoners were later sent to Egypt for internment in August 1918, marking the end of the Arab Revolt.⁴⁹

Describing the economic and military conditions that facilitated the eventual stage of demolition of the Hijaz Railway displays that the railway itself was what enabled Ottoman control of the region. Following the demolition of the railway, Ottoman hegemony withered away thus marking the importance of the railway in imperial subjugation of the region and its people. The railway enabled the transformation of the routes used by the Arab nomads into economic centers as well as Ottoman defensive positions. With this emphasized, Ottoman hegemony existed solely through the Hijaz Railway. Dependence on the Hijaz Railway was ultimately what enabled the collapse of Ottoman hegemony in the region, simultaneously it was the vehicle that enabled economic extraction, racial subjugation, and indigenous displacement for a period of almost thirteen years. To overcome this oppression, there existed only two options: to conquer or die. Put shortly, the Ottomans built the rail-locked coffin that the Arabs buried their hegemony in—A steel coffin of capital and bourgeois oppression.

The Days After the Demolition of the Hijaz Railway

On July 24, 1920, French troops defeated Feisal in the Battle of Maysalun, enforcing French colonial rule in Syria. The goal of the French attack on Feisal’s Syria was to demand an acceptance of the French Mandate, limit the size of the Syrian army, mandate French currency, and allow for French occupation of the railways which connected Homs, Hama, and Aleppo. Noting the importance not only of independence from the French Mandate but also a railway free of French occupation, Syrian nationalists attempted to resist the demands of General Henri Gouraud. Feisal ultimately ceded to the demands of the French, but his surrender did not reach the French since “the telegraph wires had been cut.”⁵⁰ The French cut the telegraph wires so that even if Feisal approved of the terms of surrender, the message would never be successfully delivered to the French side. In consequence, 12,000 French troops invaded Syria through the Lebanese-Syrian border, leading to Syrian retreat to Khan-

⁴⁵ 'Summary of the Hejaz revolt', British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/MIL/17/16/13, in Qatar Digital Library.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ David Commins and David Leach, *Historical Dictionary of Syria* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2014), 235-236.

Maysalun. The French proceeded to achieve a decisive victory, ending the battle in only four hours. Gouraud was ordered by the French government to occupy Damascus as soon as possible. This battle allowed for the French occupation of the railways and the enforcement of the French Mandate in Syria.

In an article in *The New Republic* following the battle of Maysalun, it was stated that “the Syrian Mandate is the most indefensible example of the mandate system.”⁵¹ The article continued to claim that “no one can be so simple as to suppose that the French are in Syria for any other reason except their own profit.”⁵² Despite a brief alliance during the Arab Revolt, Gouraud’s attack on Maysalun exhibits that the interests of French capital outweighed the aspirations of the Arabs. Occupation of the Hijaz Railway and its connecting tracks was essential to the progression towards colonization of the Middle East. French capital required the efficiency and control guaranteed by the railroads.

Prior to Gouraud’s invasion of Syria, the Syrian people were said to have desperately pleaded for a world “made safe for democracy.”⁵³ Prince Lutfallah of Syria lamented, “In vain we have appealed for a hearing. No one would listen to our pleadings. There is but one thing left to do. That is to fight until we either conquer or die.”⁵⁴ Ultimately, the Syrians were betrayed by the League of Nations who “confirmed the French Mandate without submitting it to the people concerned.”⁵⁵

Concluding Remarks

The construction of the Hijaz Railway disrupted notable aspects of the indigenous culture of Syria and the Hijaz. The agricultural landscape of the Arab world was forcibly changed and dominated by the existence of the Hijaz railway, which tore away the nomadic and subsistence lifestyles of the Bedouin. City centers along the railway became the focal point of all economic stimuli, and along these city centers, economic prosperity quickly became inaccessible to the indigenous people of these lands. It was these changes in the societal structure, facilitated by the Hijaz Railway, that consolidated Ottoman hegemony over the regions it spanned. And, while the railway established industrial hegemony over the region, it starved Arabs economically, intellectually, and socially.

This scarcity was primarily economic through the forced obsolescence of Bedouin pilgrimages to Mecca, as well as the rapid levels of inflation which made the centralized cities along the railways inaccessible to all but Turkish subjects. Yet this scarcity was also defined by a change in military conditions over only a few years. The Turkish forces held a wealth of industrial development and, consequently, weaponry, but the Arab revolutionaries possessed a scarce amount of weaponry in comparison.

Finally, the conditions of this era resulted in the Arab revolutionaries’ formation of military strategies in response: Namely, pillaging the Hijaz Railway rather than destroying it, so that valuable resources for the revolution may be acquired. After British involvement in the Arab Revolt, weaponry and other resources were made readily available to Arabs, facilitating the strategic demolition of the railway. The political aspirations and military strategies of the Arab revolutionaries were responsive to the changes in the economic and cultural landscape of Syria and the Hijaz.

⁵¹ “The Week,” *The New Republic*, Volume XXXII Number 405 (1922), 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

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