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# THE ALEXANDRIAN

Troy University Department of History  
& Phi Alpha Theta-Iota Mu

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*In Remembrance of Professor Nathan Alexander*

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*The Alexandrian* accepts manuscripts pertaining to the subjects of history and philosophy. Accepted forms include book reviews, historiographic essays, and full-length articles.

**Format:** All submissions should be in Microsoft Word. They should adhere to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please include footnotes instead of endnotes and refrain from using headers.

**Abstract:** Any article submission must include an abstract of no more than 200 words. This is not necessary for submissions of book reviews or essays.

**Author biography:** A short biography of any relevant information should be included for the contributors' page of the journal. Such information includes your major and class designation, graduation date, research interests, plans after college, hometown, any academic honors or affiliations you deem relevant, etc. Author biographies should be no more than 100 words. Please be sure your name is written as you would like it to appear in the journal.

Please send all submissions to Dr. Karen Ross at [kdross@troy.edu](mailto:kdross@troy.edu).

**Cover Art:** Our cover art this year was provided by senior Megan Phillips, also a contributing author to this volume.

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## Contributors' Biographies

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### **Tate Luker**

Tate Luker graduated from Troy University with a Bachelor's Degree in History and a minor in Business Administration. At Troy, he was a Phi Alpha Theta member since 2013. Tate was born and raised in Sweet Water, Alabama, but now resides in Enterprise, Alabama with his wife Brittney and daughter Ellie Grace. Currently, Tate coaches football and basketball and teaches seventh and eighth grade English at New Brockton High School and is working on his English certification through the University of West Alabama. He also plans to certify and get a master's degree in history while continuing to teach and coach.

### **Megan Phillips**

Megan Phillips is a Junior double majoring in History with an American emphasis and English at Troy University. She is from Ohatchee, Alabama where she graduated from Ohatchee High School where she was nationally recognized for competition in Parliamentary Procedures with the Future Business Leaders of America. At Troy University she is a member of the History Club, the Pre-Law Society, and Phi Alpha Theta and has written for the school newspaper *The Tropolitan*. Upon her graduation in May 2016, she intends to go on to study law. Due to her interest in film theory and cultural history, she chose to write her paper on elements of government propaganda in American film in the decade following WWII.

### **Jamie Sessions**

Jamie Sessions is a senior at Troy University and graduated with an advanced diploma from Goshen High School. Jamie is majoring in European History with a minor in French. She is also president of Phi Alpha Theta, co-editor of *The Alexandrian*, and a member of the History Club. Jamie has also been inducted into Alpha Lambda Delta, Phi Kappa Phi, and Omicron Delta Kappa. After graduating from Troy, Jamie plans to pursue her Master's and Ph.D. in Early Modern British History to conduct her own research.

## **Benjamin Sikes**

Benjamin Sikes is a Criminal Justice major and History minor at Troy University. He is from Luverne, Alabama where he attended Luverne High School. He received the Dr. Phillip J. Levine Endowed Scholarship to Troy University for his interest in the criminal justice field. Benjamin is currently employed by the Troy University Police Department as a security guard. He is set to graduate in spring of 2015 and plans to find work researching cases at a law firm. Benjamin's interest for writing the article began during a research methods class and was further influenced by his interest in the history of the Middle East.



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## Whither are We Moving?: Social Darwinism and the Rhetoric of Class Conflict in the United States

Tate Luker

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century America, rapid socio-economic change left the nation unsettled. As the social and demographic changes that accompanied commercialization and industrialization began to shift the traditional organizational bases of society, scientific and intellectual trends continued to chip away at conventional understandings of the nature of man and human society. Those who sought to understand these changes found a new organizing principle and new rhetoric in the biology of Charles Darwin, and this rhetoric displayed itself in the language of both the thinkers now known as Social Darwinists and those who opposed them.

Darwin's ideas hold a significant place in modern scientific theory. He and his fellow biologist Alfred Russell Wallace posited the now famous concept of adaptation and evolution through natural selection. This theory was first made public in 1859 with Darwin's publication of *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, and created an immediate firestorm as his supporters and detractors debated the theory's veracity and its implications. Even at Darwin's very first introduction of his theory, a heated engagement erupted that set the tone for the controversy that was to surround this work.

Darwin's work carried with it the essence of several significant intellectual trends of his day. Darwin's idea of the driving forces in evolution, competition and scarcity, stem from the work of Thomas Malthus. Malthusian economics, and its emphasis on the bleak inevitability of struggle, is clearly identifiable in Darwin's work. Robert Lyell's geology formed another facet of the intellectual underpinning of Darwinian theory. Lyell argued that geological changes occurred gradually over long periods of time, a concept Darwin applied to the

biological changes that occurred in species.<sup>1</sup> All of these elements appear in Darwin's proposal that organisms with variations that helped them outcompete their peers would pass these variations on through generations, eventually changing the species.

Darwin considered his theory of evolution to belong solely within the science of biology, but it was almost inevitable that social theorists adopted it to explain the intense changes occurring in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Herbert Spencer, a nineteenth century British philosopher and sociologist, and the originator of the concept of Social Darwinism, had actually already proposed a theory of social evolution and coined the term that many people confusedly believe came from Darwin himself, "survival of the fittest."<sup>3</sup>

From Malthus, Darwin drew the concepts of scarcity of resources and the resultant battle for subsistence. Malthus argued that the growth of a population dramatically exceeds the growth of its food supply.<sup>4</sup> This will in turn create a system driven by scarcity, where organisms compete and strive to subsist, driven by "necessity, that imperious all-pervading law of nature."<sup>5</sup> For Darwin, this principle worked as a selector of evolutionary success- those creatures who could compete well would dominate the battle for subsistence, thereby depriving others of the necessary means of survival.

Darwin published at a time of rapid and unsettling change. New scientific and social ideas were being debated in the halls of universities and governments. The French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, with all their attendant carnage and radical rhetoric, were recent memories that lingered. The early days of empire building were well under way, accompanied by tremendous economic and social change. The rapid rise of commercial markets gave way to rapid industrialization. This hastened the growth of an urban working class. Industrialization and urbanization

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<sup>1</sup> Darwin's indebtedness to Lyell is repeatedly emphasized in Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin: The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Crook, *Darwin's Coat-Tails: Essays on Social Darwinism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Robert C. Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Malthus, *Population: The First Essay*, Ann Arbor Paperbacks (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press), 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

created new social problems, as the vast new wealth that was created found itself largely concentrated in the hands of a few, exacerbating the gap between the haves and have-nots. Traditional social order was changing rapidly. Tensions were high as people began to take notice of the changes and their attendant problems and proposed different solutions.<sup>6</sup>

Darwinism entered this cultural fray and exacerbated it even further. It provided a well-reasoned, solid argument explaining the origins of species without the need to invoke the divine. This further unsettled the traditional foundations of society because it cast doubt on one of the fundamental assumptions of society: that man is special, divinely created and gifted. Darwin's proposal relegated man to the status of an animal, and did so with solid science. The traditional religious and patriarchal model of society found itself challenged in new ways.

People needed a new organizing concept of society. Since man was now an animal, simply another piece of nature, Darwinism lent itself well to this. Darwinism was wrapped in ideas and rhetoric that resonated with people of the late nineteenth century. People of the period heavily internalized the ideas of scarcity, competition, and the struggle for survival. This, coupled with Darwinism's own grounding in social concepts, caused some to apply its concepts to society. These social theorists sought to address the concerns that faced them using a new foundation for understanding society. They appropriated the concepts and rhetoric of Darwinian theory to do so, applying concepts found in Darwinian biology to human society and using its key ideas to construct their social theory. However, thinkers who used Darwinian ideas and language in creating their theories tended to attach their societal preconceptions to them, leading to a dichotomy in usage. Some more conservative theorists seeking to justify the current social system of inequality and wealth disparity used it to entrench their position, while more liberal and progressive voices used the ideas to shore up their proposals for reform.

The earliest prominent voices, British thinker Herbert Spencer and his American disciple William Graham Sumner, were conservatives who used Darwin's terms to justify the inequalities generated by the transforming economy and distribution of power. These thinkers focused on the hereditary nature (as they perceived it) of human characteristics, physical, mental, and moral, to describe fitness and posit conditions for

the advancement of society. They saw themselves and those who achieved economic or political success as “the fittest,” that nature had chosen them in its fierce competition because of their gifts of intellect and innovation. These theorists argued that the poor, the unfit in their eyes, were being weeded out of the human gene pool through their own moral failings, for the “drunkard in the gutter is just where he ought to be. . . . Nature has set him on the process of decline and dissolution.”<sup>6</sup> Those who argued against Spencer and Sumner held that the outcome need not be so cruel, either arguing that humans must all help each other toward the eventual higher state of society or that the evolutionary metaphor did not apply to human society. Essentially, these social theorists applied their preconceptions to certain tenets of Darwinism and used them to engage each other in a debate about social structures and relationships as the weight of industrialization changed them.

Social theory presented in the terms of Darwinian biology held particular resonance for Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As members of a society undergoing change at a tremendous pace and trying to understand itself anew in its rapidly evolving circumstances and position in global politics, Americans could see their own image in the pages of *On the Origin of Species*. American thinkers of this period, who largely valued intrepid individualism, vigor, and tenacity, could identify with the hard-scrabble struggle for a place in the world depicted by Charles Darwin.<sup>7</sup> As such, American thinkers seized on the ideas that they perceived in Darwinian biology and translated it into social theory.

As of yet, historians have not agreed on a definition for “Social Darwinism.” The first use of the phrase identified thus far was by Joseph Fisher, a nineteenth century Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, in 1877. Fisher used the phrase in reference to the evolution of the landholding class in Ireland.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, in a survey of the proliferation of various Darwinian ideas conducted by Darwin’s colleague, George J. Romanes in 1895, the phrase is nowhere to be

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<sup>6</sup> William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1883), 114.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric, *Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage Press, 1987), Pg. 243-244; Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution*, pg. 254.

found.<sup>9</sup> Robert C. Bannister, historian and professor emeritus at Swarthmore College, points out that none of the thinkers who are now eponymous with the movement ever referred to themselves as Social Darwinists.<sup>10</sup> The first historian to produce major work on the subject was the prominent Richard Hofstadter in 1948; however, Hofstadter failed to establish a clear and consistent definition of the term.<sup>11</sup> Even so, the ways in which he depicted Social Darwinism have largely colored subsequent work on the matter in one form or another. Some historians have taken issue with Hofstadter's clearly negative portrayal of Social Darwinist thinkers, citing his tendency to apply the moniker to theorists with whom he clearly disagreed.<sup>12</sup>

Darwin himself struggled mightily with the implications of his theory for human life. "What a book a Devil's Chaplain might write," he penned in reference to the brutal natural world, "on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low and horridly cruel works of nature!"<sup>13</sup> In his work, Darwin had connected mankind more thoroughly to this "blundering low and horridly cruel" natural world than ever before, and afterwards he and all his readers had to deal with the consequences. While Darwin's own thoughts on the issue have been hard to determine, in certain instances he spoke in terms later echoed by Social Darwinists. Take, for example, the following excerpt from a letter written by Darwin in criticism of labor unions:

The unions are also opposed to piece-work, -- in short to all competition. I fear that Cooperative Societies, which many look to as the main hope for the future, likewise exclude competition. This seems to me a great evil for the future progress of mankind...<sup>14</sup>

He goes on to briefly mention the evolutionary advantage of "temperate and frugal" workers have over those who are "drunken and reckless."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> George J. Romanes, "The Darwinism of Darwin, and of the Post-Darwinian Schools," *The Monist* 6, no. 1 (October 1895). 1-27.

<sup>10</sup> Bannister, 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas C. Leonard, "Origins of the Myth of Social Darwinism: The Ambiguous Legacy of Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought*," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 71 (2009), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Charles R. Darwin to J.D. Hooker, July 13, 1856. In the Darwin Correspondence Project. <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/entry-1924>. (accessed April 30, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Charles R. Darwin to Heinrich Fick, July 26, 1872, quoted in "A Recently Discovered Darwin Letter on Social Darwinism," *Isis* 86, no. 4, (Dec. 1995): 611.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

This passage seems to demonstrate a belief that competition represents a means of improvement for human society, as denoted by his worry for the future “of all mankind.”<sup>16</sup>

However, Darwin also recognized that his biology could explain more positive aspects of human nature. In his *Descent of Man*, Darwin attempted to further situate humans in nature by demonstrating the evolutionary basis of our distinct mental, moral, and emotional faculties. This work also serves to provide some understanding of his views relating to the social application of his evolutionary theory. Darwin posits that man’s social and mental qualities made him successful by providing the basis for group cohesion.<sup>17</sup> In turn, this cohesion made humans better competitors, as their willingness to “warn each other of danger, to aid and defend each other” allowed them to “succeed better and conquer the other.”<sup>18</sup> He also notes that humans must participate in the same struggle for existence that other animals do, both within and outside their own species.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, he attributes humankind’s success to natural selection through the struggle, identifying the process of competition as an important factor in the progress of the species.<sup>20</sup> In speaking of the measures taken to protect the poor, sick, and other “unfit” individuals, he states that we “check the process of elimination,” which is “highly injurious to the race of man.”<sup>21</sup> He wrote these words as a warning against these measures, blaming them for preserving the “weaker” members of humankind. While Darwin’s own thoughts remain hard to pin down, at times his opinions seemed to resemble the basic premises of Social Darwinism *a la* Spencer and Sumner. Likewise, Darwin’s emphasis on the importance of man’s sociability lends itself well to the more liberal theories, which tended to be more social democratic and to call for cooperation and social combination. At the very least, one can reasonably surmise that Darwin understood that his work had value for describing society, though he felt the deep ambivalence that came with extrapolating upon that notion.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Charles R. Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871), 163.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 206.

Social Darwinists tended to latch on to a few key concepts of Darwinian biology when constructing their theories, but attached different meanings to them than Darwin had originally intended. Generally, Social Darwinian theorists tended to view society organically, governed by the same laws as natural creatures. They believed that society was evolving towards a higher form of great complexity and advancement. This differed from Darwin's version of evolutionary success, which simply required a species to survive. The idea of advancement as an evolutionary achievement was one not necessarily contained in Darwinism- after all, the most successful competitors according to Darwin's biology are largely considered vermin. Since such a definition made those whom they had spoken against, the poor and laboring classes, the most successful humans, Social Darwinists, especially the more conservative ones, needed to redefine success to fit their pre-existing philosophy and rhetoric.

Social Darwinists also attached great weight to the ideas of competition, struggle for survival, and fitness. As in Darwin's biology, scarcity of resources and the competition to acquire them propelled individuals, and thereby society, forward. Social Darwinists largely defined success in terms of economics. The winners, the fittest, were those who accumulated and controlled vast amounts of resources. These authors also equated economic success with virtue. Therefore, one's virtue and economic standing defined fitness. Conversely, the unfit were the poor, laboring classes, and those who had a disability of any sort. Social Darwinists considered them the morally and physically unfit detritus of society, destined to lose in the evolutionary contest.

Additionally, conservative Social Darwinists, who wrote in defense of the existing social order, spoke in terms of "the laws of nature." Sumner wrote that, "competition is a law of nature" and "this is a world in which the rule is, 'Root, hog, or die.'"<sup>22</sup> To them, conflict was a natural phenomenon, with poverty and inequality both driving and resulting from conflict and struggle. However, society did not need to ameliorate either, as their basis in nature therefore made them inevitable.

Spencer proposed the idea that society could be viewed as an organism, evolving steadily and inevitably over time, a concept that he called social

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<sup>22</sup> William Graham Sumner, *The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays* ed. Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914), 82, 29.

determinism.<sup>23</sup> For Spencer, evolutionary success did not equate to fecundity, as in Darwin's biology, but in the advancement and complexity of civilization the society had attained.<sup>24</sup> Spencer theorized that conflict and competition served to select the fittest societies and individuals in an ongoing evolution toward greater complexity and an eventual equilibrium of any conflicting forces.<sup>25</sup>

Spencer transferred the animals' struggle for survival to economic competition in human society. Practically applied, Spencer's social model had no room for the working class and poor—his unfit—and so society had no mandate for interfering with the process of natural selection through conflict. He opposed welfare laws and governmental intervention in the economy. Any means taken to help the less fortunate in their struggle would hinder the natural evolution of society by facilitating “the multiplication of those worst fitted for existence” because they would not be subject to the culling forces “consequent on their incapacity or misconduct.”<sup>26</sup> Any perceived unfairness in society or exploitation of the lower classes by the upper class was simply the working of nature and the evolutionary cycle. Spencer used the weight of nature as an argument to defend exploitation of the poor and the conflict that accompanied it.

A prominent American theorist in the vein of Spencer was William Graham Sumner, a professor at Yale, an early sociologist, and the most recognized theorist of Social Darwinism.<sup>27</sup> Sumner, like Spencer, viewed society as an organism and equated nature's struggle for resources with human competition in the economic arena.<sup>28</sup> In his view, the amassing of capital represented both an evolutionary goal and significant advantage in the evolutionary struggle.<sup>29</sup> Sumner posited that inequality must exist, both as an impetus to produce the competition that advanced society and as a reward for success. He attached great importance to capital, arguing

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<sup>23</sup> Stated frequently in the chapter on Herbert Spencer found in Orrin E. Klapp, *Models of Social Order* (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1973).

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Spencer, “Progress: Its Law and Causes,” *The Westminster Review* 67 (April 1857): 445-465.

<sup>25</sup> Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (New York: Clarke, Given, and Hooper, 1880), 418-424.

<sup>26</sup> Herbert Spencer, *Man Versus the State; and Social Statics* (New York: Appleton Century, 1914).

<sup>27</sup> Hofstadter, 51, 60.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-57.

<sup>29</sup> Sumner, *The Challenge of Facts*, 145-150.

that the formation of capital represented a significant milestone in societal development, and that its accumulation and hereditary transmission was the human equivalent of a creature passing a superior adaptation on to its offspring.<sup>30</sup>

Sumner's theory had bleak results when applied socially. Some historians and theorists who have studied Sumner's work hold that much of his rhetoric served only to justify the positions of power that his adherents held, or to attempt to stave off class conflict, with its appeals to the inevitability and necessity of inequality and unrestricted competition.<sup>31</sup> Like Spencer, Sumner spoke out against any attempt to impose regulation on the competitive order through governmental intervention.<sup>32</sup> Historian Richard Hofstadter notes that Sumner attacked all but a few economic reforms proposed during his heyday in the late nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Sumner's commitment to social determinism and an organic evolution model of society provided another weapon in his arsenal to deflect proposals of assistance and programs of reform. Since society had been evolving for millennia, he argued, any action taken by man to change any facet of the natural order would ultimately be meaningless. Furthermore, such an action would be contrary to nature. His belief in the importance of *laissez-faire* economics and small government, along with his defense of capital accumulation and transmission of hereditary capital, made him an apologist for the wealthy and conservative.

Sumner was also notable for his rejection of the traditional bases of American political ideology. Natural rights and equality of man were fictions to him, or at best understood as "rules of the game of social competition" arbitrarily grafted onto the struggle for existence at the whim of reformers.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, such an imposition was anathema, similar to governmental interference with competition. According to Sumner, if everyone was equal, then there was no "fittest," thus rendering the evolutionary mechanism meaningless.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Hofstadter, 56.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 63-66.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> William Graham Sumner, *Essays of William Graham Sumner*, ed. A.G. Keller and Maurice Davies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 358-362.

The views discussed above detail the philosophies of those thinkers who sought to defend the existing social order. The umbrella of Darwinist rhetoric also covers viewpoints that opposed Social Darwinism. Like the conservative theorists, this group grafted components of Darwinian theory onto their own social preconceptions and often displayed a deep ambivalence towards Social Darwinism. This group held views across a wide range, from radical anarchists, socialists and communists, and from big government reformers and Reform Darwinists to Social Gospel ministers.<sup>35</sup> They sought to promote reform, remove the view of conflict and inequality as necessary and good states of nature, and “elevate mutual aid to the status of a natural law,” thereby grounding their own argument in nature. Alternatively, some opposed the application of biological principle to society altogether. These theorists crusaded on behalf of the poor and working class, but avoided, and sometimes demonized, Social Darwinism.<sup>36</sup>

One voice that rose in competition with the Social Darwinists was the socialist theorist Laurence Gronlund. While Gronlund’s name has largely fallen by the wayside, his was a moderate and pious voice that articulated reform and socio-economic issues in a way that broadly appealed to intellectuals of his day. Gronlund combated the creed of individualistic, no-holds-barred competition as supported by Spencer and Sumner. Instead, he promoted the advancement of society through combination- working together and pooling resources in order to succeed- which moves society towards socialism.<sup>37</sup>

Gronlund applied parts of Darwin’s evolutionary metaphor to society while rejecting others, and argued that human intervention in evolution should be the next step in human development. Specifically, Gronlund rejected the application of struggle for existence to human societal evolution. He attacked competition as counter-productive economically and evolutionally, because it reduced humanity to our basest instincts, debasing ourselves to the point of inhumanity.<sup>38</sup> For Gronlund, there need not be a free-for-all to produce a winner at the expense of others.

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<sup>35</sup> Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought 1860- 1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 182; Hofstadter, 105-108.

<sup>36</sup> Robert E. Weir, *Beyond Labor’s Veil* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 100.

<sup>37</sup> Hofstadter, 114.

<sup>38</sup> Laurence Gronlund, *The New Economy: A Peaceable Solution to the Social Problem* (New York: Herbert S. Stone and Company, 1898), 28, 60-62.

Instead, people should replace the struggle for existence with the cooperative, mutually beneficial struggle against nature.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically, he demonstrated this using the capitalist movement towards trusts as an example of the inevitability of combination.<sup>40</sup> Implicit in his assertions against unrestrained competition is an assault on the individualists who elevated themselves at the expense of others, a rhetorical jab questioning the true extent of their intellectual and moral evolution. He turns the rhetoric of the superiority of capitalism on its head by writing that the trust renders the individual capitalist unfit by its superiority.<sup>41</sup>

The work of British economist and political thinker Walter Bagehot represents an interesting viewpoint within the spectrum of Darwinian rhetoric. As a liberal writer, Bagehot found himself in opposition to the canon of Spencer and Sumner, but still focused on competition as the driving factor in the progress of civilization.<sup>42</sup> Bagehot argued for liberalism as the best medium for competition of ideas and people.<sup>43</sup> He takes an interesting, somewhat moderate stance on the governance of this competitive field:

Progress is only possible in those happy cases where the force of legality has gone far enough to bind the nation together, but not far enough to kill out all varieties and destroy nature's perpetual tendency to change.<sup>44</sup>

Here, Bagehot speaks of the balance of regulation and free competition needed to produce progress. So, while he shared an emphasis on individual liberty and *laissez faire* competition with Spencer and Sumner, he moderated this with a recognition that the playing grounds must be kept fair, so to speak. Bagehot assigned agency for progress in human society to both legal intervention and free competition, and

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<sup>39</sup> Laurence Gronlund, *Our Destiny: The Influence of Socialism on Morals and Religion; an Essay in Ethics* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Company, 1891), 60-61.

<sup>40</sup> This is stated prominently throughout Gronlund's *New Economy*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>42</sup> Gregory Cleays, "The "Survival of the Fittest" and the Origins of Social Darwinism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 2, (April, 2000): 229.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics; or, Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of "Natural Selection" and "Inheritance" to Political Society* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873).

argued that true progress is found in the “assignment of comparative magnitude to two known agencies.”<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, competition on the societal level, most notably war, created additional facilitators of progress. Bagehot named these “provisional institutions” and “intellectual progress.”<sup>46</sup> As examples of provisional institutions, he cited slavery and wartime expansion of government, societal adaptations that created a competitive advantage for a society, thereby ensuring its victory and progression.<sup>47</sup> He equated intellectual progress with moral progress, albeit inspired by martial action. He writes, “War both needs and generates certain virtues... as valor, veracity, the spirit of obedience, the habit of discipline,” and goes on to relate how societies in possession of these virtues advance themselves and other societies, and thereby civilization at large, by the “destruction of the opposite vices.”<sup>48</sup>

Bagehot’s work is an interesting blend of Darwinian principles found in the work of various other social theorists of his day. In his writings on conflict, he used military imagery and metaphors, and clearly demonstrated a belief that natural selection through competition powered the progress of humanity. On the other hand, he recognized that this can go too far. While he maintained competition produced the virtues that propelled the species forward, Bagehot reminded his readers that the “progress of *man* requires the cooperation of *men*.”<sup>49</sup>

Like Gronlund and Bagehot, ministers of the Social Gospel used Darwin’s language and ideas to advocate a position in opposition to Social Darwinism. Take, for example, Baptist pastor and social thinker Walter Rauschenbusch, who was the primary theologian of the Social Gospel movement. He wrote of Darwin’s work: “Translate the evolutionary theories into religious faith, and you have the Kingdom of God.”<sup>50</sup> Rauschenbusch refers to the doctrine of societal progress toward the perfect social order, the Kingdom of God. This ideal of progress inspired Rauschenbusch and ministers like him to crusade for

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 71, 74.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1919), 90.

improvement in the social order. Furthermore, the idea of society as an organism lessens the importance of individualism for men like Rauschenbusch. Instead, he writes of social redemption, “binding all men together in strong bonds of trust, helpfulness, purity, and good will.”<sup>51</sup>

While he clearly internalized an organic view of society, Rauschenbusch did not adhere to the enshrined ideals of *laissez faire* that the Social Darwinists held. He attacked unregulated competition, writing that “the reign of competition is a reign of fear” and “a reign of fear is never a reign of God.”<sup>52</sup> This reign of fear brought out the worst in men, making them paranoid and selfish, hardly an evolutionary success story.<sup>53</sup> While he conceded that competition was a natural human disposition, he contended that *laissez faire* economic competition was a detriment to society. It “establishes the law of tooth and nail, and brings back the age of savage warfare where every man’s hand is against every man.”<sup>54</sup> Although he followed the Social Darwinist tendency to accept competition as a natural product of nature, Rauschenbusch writes of dire consequences of setting it on a pedestal. He warned that rather than propel humankind forward, as Spencer and Sumner held, unrestrained competition led to savagery and brutality. In its place, he proposed mutualism and cooperation, in a similar vein to other reforming theorists.

Another prominent Social gospel theorist, Congregationalist minister Washington Gladden rejected the application of struggle for existence to human society. In fact, he displayed an animosity for competition altogether, writing that “competition, as the regulative principle of our industry, has utterly broken down” and that “the competitive regime tends... to produce a race of powerful incarnate selfishness.”<sup>55</sup> He argued that this amounted to a state of perpetual war, that it caused division, and questioned whether this represented true progress for humanity.<sup>56</sup> The class conflict that he felt stemmed from the acceptance of nature’s law as man’s law deeply concerned Gladden. The law of survival of the fittest and unrestrained competition was the law of lower creatures, not

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<sup>51</sup> Rauschenbusch, 98.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>55</sup> Washington Gladden, *Applied Christianity: Moral Aspects of Social Questions* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1896), 105; Gladden, *Tools and the Man* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1893), 273.

<sup>56</sup> Gladden, *Applied Christianity*, 113.

applicable to man. Instead, man was subject to the “higher spiritual law of sympathy and good-will.”<sup>57</sup> Gladden rejected the very basis of most Social Darwinist theory and replaced it with a completely different organizing principle, that of the “Christian law” as propounded in works like *Tools and the Man*, *Applied Christianity*, and to a lesser extent in his recollections, major contributors to the Social Gospel. In practice this meant that a form of society should be encouraged which assigned great value to the character and well-being of humanity, and took steps to build this. Gladden held that Christianity could do this, creating a perfect society through creating perfect men. An important facet of this would be the replacement of competition with cooperation:

Its [Christianity’s] work in society may be summed up largely in this statement: it seeks to strengthen the principle of cooperation among men, and hold in check the principle of competition.<sup>58</sup>

Instead of rejoicing in competition and the triumph of “strong” over “weak” individuals, Gladden’s Christian Law called for a society in which people collaboratively built each other up, thereby building up society.

One only has to look at the small spectrum of ideas outlined herein, let alone the tens of thousands of pages of similar theory not discussed in this study, to see the varied uses to which social theorists put the language of Darwinian biology. However, Darwin’s work lent itself well to the rhetoric of conflict. *On the Origin of Species* was written in the language of conflict between individual creatures. Small wonder that those who sought to articulate their position in the burgeoning class conflict of the late Gilded Age and Progressive Era would find ammunition for their arguments contained therein. The various usages of Darwinian rhetoric represented attempts to give the weight of science to the rhetoric of class conflict in the United States, at times tempered by a rejection of that usage altogether.

From its inception, Darwinism was social and its premises lent themselves well to social discourse. Whether he intended to or not, Darwin gave mankind a means of understanding itself on a societal level, complete with socio-economic underpinnings, at a critical moment in history. In a period of drastic, confusing transition Darwinism gave

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<sup>57</sup> Gladden, *Tools and the Man*, 277.

<sup>58</sup> Gladden, *Recollections* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), pg. 248-253.

perceptive social theorists the tools they needed to build a new edifice upon which to construct organizational theories. As thinkers of different stripes approached the issues brought about by rapid industrial change in the Gilded Age, they developed numerous rich social theories. Some of these drew nearly opposite conclusions from each other and competed for adherents and power. Others built upon their contemporaries' arguments in solidarity. Those thinkers who applied the language of Darwin largely used the same language and ideas though some key concepts and metaphors may have entirely different meanings, applications, and logic, even among thinkers who agreed with each other.

This study is a brief survey of some of the theorists who both used and reacted to the rhetoric of Darwinian biology in social discourse. It serves as a microcosm of the rich theoretical battle over class differences and inequality that took place in that dynamic era of American history. The prominence of Darwinist rhetoric in American social thought begs for our attention; nothing so culturally prominent to an historical period should be dismissed lightly. Understanding the genesis, makeup, and usage of Darwinian language and ideas in social discourse deepens our understanding of American discourse on class in the late Gilded Age and Progressive Era United States.

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# Don't Believe Everything You See at the Movies: The Influence of Anti-Communist and Anti-Slavic Governmental Propaganda in Hollywood Cinema in the Decade Following WWII

Megan Phillips

Abstract: "Don't Believe Everything You See at the Movies" is an evaluation of the American film industry in the decade following WWII. It analyzes government involvement in the private film sector and how the film industry responded to pressure to produce films with pro-American stance as well as themes of anti-Soviet and anti-communist sentiment. The essay argues that these films were the direct result of government involvement in the lives/careers of the actors, actresses, writers, producers, and directors of the time, and how their reaction came to shape American film culture throughout the decade.

Movies, like the theatre productions that preceded them, are largely based on the suspension of disbelief in their viewers. This means that in order to enjoy a movie, one must immerse oneself in the world presented on screen and, for that moment, accept this reality rather than their own. This tactic of self-imposed selected ignorance for the purpose of entertainment has acted to hold moviegoers captive for nearly a century. A movie's reality can include a variety of different perspectives based on the motivations and perspectives of the actors, producers, directors, and writers. Film always has a purpose. The American government actively intervened in the film industry in the 1940s and '50s in order to denounce communism and promote "American values". The intent of this paper is to illustrate to the reader that this deliberate intervention had a direct influence on the way that Hollywood would present their movies to the American people over the next decade, using positive

reinforcement or negative censorship of their Constitutional rights to expression.

Without film, there is no film theory, the same way that without cinema, there can be no cinematography. Similar to literary theory, film theory operates on the basis of skepticism on the part of the viewer, which puts the object in question at a distance and the things surrounding it closer, creating a stronger socio-cultural viewpoint as opposed to just the film itself. A nation's film, like the nation's literature, becomes a symbol of the nation itself, and can be used to represent a larger group of people because certain films are just so popular that it is expected that someone of that nationality must have seen the movie. For example, today certain fan fiction based films, such as the Harry Potter series, are so assimilated into our immediate culture that even someone who has not actually seen the films is familiar enough with them to understand what Hogwarts is. Through film theory, historians are able to take information about movies of a particular time, and then apply that information to the culture in which they were presented under the assumption that this work had an impact on those watching it, and how they were to go about their day-to-day lives. The difficulty, however, arises when it is time to "canonize" films appropriate to film theory.<sup>1</sup> What do you include? Does a movie with blatant propaganda make its way into the canon? Is this film as worthy as a blockbuster that was not influenced by government intervention? Yes. Not only is it as worthy, but it is more worthy in that this film represents to the viewer a more accurate representation of a primary source at the time, influenced by the world around it, depicting that with which a society is most concerned. By viewing these films laced with obvious propaganda, we are able to see the bigger picture painted for us by the people who made them, and the reasons for making them.

First, we must address what is propaganda. What makes something propaganda, as opposed to just a movie or just a poster? Propaganda is defined as a "one-sided communication designed to influence people's

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<sup>1</sup>. Deborah Knight, "Back to the Basics: Film/ Theory/ Aesthetics", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 31, no 2, (Summer 1997): 37-44.

thinking and actions,” by *World Book Encyclopedia* in 2005.<sup>2</sup> It is recognizable often due to its call for internment action by the viewer, appealing to the observer’s sense of logic and reason. Materials of propaganda typically purposefully employ psychological tactics such as repetition or drawing off the reader’s sense of moral right and wrong or their patriotism, suggesting that certain actions make them more or less a part of their nationalistic group.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of propaganda is to deliberately manipulate the viewer’s understanding of the world around them as well as their interpretation of current events, often without the viewer being aware that this was the original intent.

Propaganda in film began with the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in 1915, when what was once the pure consumer-interest market of the American cinema became subservient to the government, and on March 3 of that same year, the first propagandic film was produced with *The Birth of A Nation*, which showed the Ku Klux Klan as the saviors of the Reconstruction south, a film that received approval from president Woodrow Wilson himself.<sup>4 5</sup> By taking the film point of view and applying it to a governmental agenda, the film itself was no longer the pure representation of the film industry, but rather a joint issue shared by both the film makers and the government under which that film was produced. This partnership would come to create the film industry that we know today, in which outside forces acting upon a film in a negative or a positive way by the American government would have an influence on the film itself, whether film makers are choosing to comply or to rebel.

As the cinema became increasingly popular among the American public, this new age of technology and entertainment soon became a puppet to

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<sup>2</sup> Paul A. Kobasa, *World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15. Chicago, IL: World Book Inc, 2006, 823.

<sup>3</sup> Kobasa, Paul, 823.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Manley, “Moving Pictures: The History of Early Cinema,” *Proquest Discovery Guides* (July 2011) 11-14, accessed March 20, 2014, <http://www.csa.com/discoveryguides/film/review.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> N. O’Shaughnessy, “The Death and Life of Propaganda,” *Journal of Public Affairs* 12, no. 1 (November 2010), 32.

the American government as a new form of outreach to its citizens. Throughout WWII, the American government used cinema to promote war efforts. It is even suspected that during WWII, while the Nazis were relying on Joseph Goebbels to push their agenda through breakthrough cinematic technological advancements, Hollywood cinema was pushed by the White House to make movies that depicted the Soviets in a positive light due to the two countries working together to stop the Nazis.<sup>6</sup> Such movies included *Mission to Moscow* in 1943, which depicted Stalin as a powerless figure and failed to even mention communism, and *Song of Russia* in 1944, which was a semi-musical that ignored the Nazi-Soviet Pact and showed Russians as happy dancing creatures when they were not fighting off the evil Nazis.<sup>7</sup> While during the war these movies were celebrated as pro-American agenda propaganda, only a few short years after the end of the war they were both named as Un-American by the House Un-American Activities Committee and banned from movie theaters around the country.<sup>8 9</sup>

In the years following the end of WWII, roughly 1945 to 1990, the United States and the Soviet Union entered a war of ideals, in which they competed for the hearts of their own people as well as those around the world. At its start, the Cold War was the concern of the American government. Soon, the concern would spread to the people as the government tasked them to actively participate in the protection of Capitalism and democracy. It became the responsibility of the American people to not only be an American, but to prove that they were more

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<sup>6</sup>. “Joseph Goebbels,” *History*, A&E Television Networks (2010), accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/joseph-goebbels>.

<sup>7</sup>. Bosley Crowther, “The Screen; ‘Song of Russia’ Rich Musical Picture, With Robert Taylor and Susan Peters, Opens at the Capitol”, *The New York Times*, “Movie Review” (11 February, 1944), accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9905EED7103CE03ABC4952DFB466838F659EDE>.

<sup>8</sup>. Nora Sayre, “Assaulting Hollywood,” *World Policy Journal* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 51-52.

<sup>9</sup>. Bosley Crowther, “Mission to Moscow 1943,” *The New York Times*, “Movie Review,” (April 30, 1943), accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9505E5DD1638E33BBC4850DFB2668388659EDE>.

American than their neighbors. It was a time of fear and distrust, abroad as well as at home. Domestically, this push began with the governmental leadership. Then it trickled down to Hollywood producers, actors, and writers who were genuinely afraid of what any opposition would do to their careers. From there, it made its way to the American people - the audiences attending these movies.

Throughout the 1950s and '60s, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), a group fueled by the charismatic Senator Joseph McCarthy, rose to unparalleled prominence. The committee's primary focus was to find communism on the home front in the form of the ACP, the American Communist Party. To do this, the committee looked closely at every nuance of public forum, especially that of film. If the Hollywood filmmakers were not with the HUAC, then they were, by definition, against it. This pressure from the HUAC divided Hollywood, causing major filmmakers to implement blacklist policies for any individual who had been accused of having ties to or sympathies for the Communist Party. This meant that anyone found guilty or even suspected of guilt would be banned from the Hollywood scene, unable to return due to expressed dissonance by major Hollywood players.<sup>10</sup> While countless actors, actresses, directors, producers, and even auxiliary personnel lost their jobs because of this reign of terror, only ten were ever actually prosecuted for their work, known collectively as the infamous "Hollywood Ten".<sup>11</sup>

Among those to pay their career for their art was famed comic, actor, and playwright Charlie Chaplin in his movie *Monsieur Verdoux*.<sup>12</sup> The movie, a comedy as one would expect from Chaplin, is about the French serial killer Henri Landru, who by day was a furniture maker with a happy middle-class family, and by night married rich widows and then killed them and took their money. The film is known as one of Chaplin's

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<sup>10</sup>. "HUAC," *History*, A&E Television Networks, accessed February 15, 2014, <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/huac>.

<sup>11</sup>. Glenda Pearsons, "The Red Scare: A Filmography," *The All Powers Project*, accessed February 15, 2014, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/AllPowers/film.html>.

<sup>12</sup>. Sayre, 52.

darkest creations, and he himself oversaw the writing of the script. The film may have gone down in history as a work of brilliance, maybe even one of the first comedies to contend for an Oscar, had his timing been different. Although Chaplin had never been, nor did he ever become, a communist, the character he chose to portray announced with his dying breath, “One murder makes a villain, millions a hero. Numbers sanctify, my good friend.” This ambiguous reference to Soviet leader Josef Stalin, in the eyes of the public, killed his character as well as his film. In 1947, the movie was removed from circulation due to demonstrations by the American Legion outside movie houses where the film was shown.<sup>13</sup> In the wake of negative response, Chaplain fled the United States in order to live out the rest of his days in France.<sup>14</sup>

While some stars fell, others embraced the capitalism of another’s misfortune, using the beginnings of the Red Scare to flourish their careers. These stars and starlets fed on the misfortune of those being persecuted by the HUAC, as they took Hollywood in a completely different direction, one that willingly mass produced the governmental agenda not only to avoid an ill fate, but to garner a positive one. Through this, many film companies were able to stake their brand on their shining patriotism and rise to the top of the rankings, taking the place of those who had fallen and turning anti-communist propaganda into corporate pressure propaganda that built up their names in American households.<sup>15</sup> One of these starlets whose name still rings true in the hearts of movie lovers everywhere is that of Elizabeth Taylor, who starred in her first adult role in the film *Conspirator*, released in 1949 both domestically and internationally by MGM in an attempt to use international relations with Great Britain and France in order to free up funding that had been previously tied up in the European markets.<sup>16</sup> In this 87-minute film, Taylor’s character plays an innocent eighteen-year-old girl who

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<sup>13</sup> Sayre, 52.

<sup>14</sup> David Robinson, “Filming Monsieur Verdoux,” *Charlie Chaplain: Official Website*, accessed March 22, 2014, <http://www.charliechaplin.com/en/biography/articles/8-Monsieur-Verdoux>.

<sup>15</sup> O’Shaughnessy, 35.

<sup>16</sup> “*Conspirator* (1949),” *Turner Classic Movies*, accessed March 20, 2014, <http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/71448/Conspirator/>.

unwittingly marries a communist. When she finds out that he is a member of the Communist Party, she, like a true American patriot, tells her husband that he must choose between their marriage and his party. The movie ends with the “evil” Communist Party telling the husband, played by another Hollywood A-list, Robert Taylor, that he must kill his beloved wife. Of course, as one would expect in a propaganda film of the decade, the husband chooses the side of democracy and the lovely Elizabeth Taylor.<sup>17</sup> Today, the movie is ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> in Taylor’s best box-office films, only grossing \$28.8 million (adjusted for inflation); however, the movie was responsible for transitioning Taylor from child star to adult symbol.<sup>18</sup>

Over fifty explicitly anti-communist films were produced in Hollywood between 1947 and 1954. Many of these films were cheaply made and shot as quickly as possible by Hollywood companies that wanted to garner as much governmental favor as possible in order to protect them from persecution led by the HUAC. The idea was that if a company was producing enough anti-communist films, then they were not members of the ACP and were, therefore, safe from inquiry or blacklist tactics. Most of these box office disasters were run as the second film in a double-feature so that Hollywood could make back the money that they lost during filming. Such films followed a basic platform and featured B-list actors that the public would likely never see again. In these movies, the communist spy antagonist in his signature trench coat would lurk in corners and sport an unusually large and dark shadow. Unfortunately for audiences everywhere, this description also tended to apply to the FBI protagonist hunting the evil communist. Therefore, moviegoers had to watch for other signs as well, such as cruelty to animals or babies, or a tell-tale sign of communists expelling smoke from their nostrils when they became angry. Communists often also had in their employ a “bad blonde,” who would seduce the good democratic American boy to the

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<sup>17</sup> *Conspirator*, directed by Victor Saville (Chicago, IL: Warner Brothers Archive Collection, 1949), DVD.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Coogerson, “Elizabeth Taylor Movies: Best to Worst”, *Coogerson Movie Score*, accessed February 5, 2014, <http://coogersonmoviescore.com/elizabeth-taylor-movies-best-to-worst.html>.

dark side with her sensual curves and her red lipstick.<sup>19</sup> These films, sporting names like *I Married a Communist* (1949), *The Red Menace* (1949), *I Was A Communist for the FBI* (1951), and *The Commies are Coming, The Commies are Coming* (1957) made no effort to hide their overt themes of propaganda, but rather boasted it on the big screen in rapid fire, despite economic losses, all in an attempt to prove to the American people as well as the government that the actors, writers, producers, and directors were all patriotic and proud.<sup>20</sup>

Among the many genres subjected to anti-propagandic themes, westerns were one of the most scrutinized as they were wildly popular with the American people. In 1949, *Bells of Coronado* began the HUAC witch hunt for westerns, as it is commonly accepted as the first western film to depict overtly an anti-communist theme, rather than relying on subversive ideas of freedom and the American West to do the job.<sup>21</sup> The film gained attention from moviegoers due to the appearance of actor Roy Rogers and his faithful steed Trigger, and the attention of the government as it featured strong themes of espionage and anti-communism.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1950s, America saw the rise of science fiction pictures. In these movies, characters were often riddled with fear of an unknown enemy such as an alien invaders or a nuclear mishap. These films were successful because of breakthrough technology as well as the American fascination with space and science. They also acted to spread the paranoia of an unseen enemy, be it the danger of infiltration and brain washing by the alien visitors in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), or simply the fear of the leader of the Parent Teacher's Association living down the street.<sup>23 24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Sayre, 58.

<sup>20</sup> Glenda Pearsons, "The Red Scare: A Filmography," *The All Powers Project*, accessed February 15, 2014, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/AllPowers/film.html>.

<sup>21</sup> *Bells of Coronado*, directed by William Witney, (1950; New York, NY: Republic Productions, 2012), YouTube.

<sup>22</sup> Pearsons.

<sup>23</sup> Sayre, 58.

The best enemy is that which one never sees coming, and the same goes for swaying tactics. What filmmakers did not say was just as important as what they did. Throughout the decade following WWII, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was constantly in the Hollywood news. Many films focused on the FBI agents rooting out communism at home and doing the good work for the good people of the United States of America. J Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI, even steps out himself on occasion, voicing his opinion when he felt that a movie may not have served the best interests of the FBI or represented them in the “correct” light, even going so far as to actively protest *The Crooked Mile* (1948), a film in which Hollywood A-List star Dennis O’Keefe played an FBI agent teamed up with a Scotland Yard operative to uncover a ring of communist spies in Los Angeles, and which made the FBI look absolutely incompetent and belittled the work of American nuclear scientists.<sup>25</sup> When *The New York Times* published its review for the movie in October 1948, raising questions as to why the FBI would allow its name to be used in such a film, Hoover himself released a statement to the press saying that the film was not supported by the FBI in any way, undermining the documentary feel of the film.<sup>26</sup>

Despite all the fuss being created by the FBI, and occasionally the House Un-American Activities Committee, it is important for the film historian to take into account those organizations that used their influence not to take the limelight, but to stay off the screen completely. Among these organizations, the most successful is that of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), a group that dealt mostly with operations overseas, and remained largely undocumented by the film industry. Historically speaking, the 1950s are often referred to as the “Golden Age” of CIA activities as they carried out covert operations in almost every democratic country in the world in attempts to stamp out communism

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<sup>24</sup> *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, directed by Don Siegel (1955; New York, NY: Republic Pictures, 2000), DVD.

<sup>25</sup> Pearsons.

<sup>26</sup> Bosley Crowther, “Walk A Crooked Mile 1948: Review #1,” *The New York Times*, October 13, 1948, accessed March 20, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9407E0D81F3EE53ABC4B52DFB6678383659EDE>.

where it might lie, yet most Americans did not even know what the CIA stood for, much less what they did for the democratic cause. It could be easily said that this is because that is the way the CIA wanted things to go. As an organization it preferred secrecy, and through tactical denial of cooperation with Hollywood producers, who were scared to film anything that did not hold the seal of approval from the government agency that it portrayed on threat of being blacklisted or jailed, the CIA successfully managed to carry out their covert operations largely undetected and without being scrutinized by the American public.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the decade following WWII, American filmography is permanently marred by the influence of the government in what films were or were not allowed to be shown to the general public. The government employed everything from basic scare tactics and the threat of jail to actual jail time for martyrs like the Hollywood Ten. It was a time of turmoil as well as peace within the hearts of a country torn by a war that the government never actually fought. While the careers of some Hollywood stars and starlets were forever cemented in fame, others watched helplessly as their careers were ruined as their names appeared on blacklists. In order to understand the true meanings of these films, drenched in themes of fear and paranoia, we as historians must look at them in the larger context, taking into account the ongoing ideological battle between the communist Soviet Union and the democratic United States of America, and see them for what they are, blatant anti-communist propaganda pushed on an unsuspecting audience in order to target the most successful yet subliminal impact.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Simon Willmetts, "Quiet Americans: The CIA and Early Cold War Hollywood Cinema," *Journal of American Studies* 47, no. 1 (February 2013): 127-131.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel J. Lean, "Introduction: The Cold War and the Movies," *Film History* 10, no. 1 (1998): 25-26.

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## Feminine Conformities within the Trial of Lizzie Borden: Social Expectations of Women in the Courtroom

Jamie Sessions

**Abstract:** This research looks at the trial of Lizzie Borden in 1893 and how society's view of women effect the way that the evidence was viewed and treated in the courtroom. It analyzes how Lizzie Borden fit the feminine mold that society deemed appropriate and how journalists and the public used these traits to paint the picture of an innocent woman. Through the analysis of this trial, it becomes apparent that even though women were breaking into the workforce and universities they were still bound by clear gender distinctions. This article strives not to argue the innocence or guilt of Lizzie Borden but to use her trial to reveal the traits and values proper women were meant to have and their importance. It argues that if Lizzie had not have shown these proper feminine traits her trial would have been conducted differently.

Women in the 1890s were breaking through into the workforce and universities. They worked to abolish the usage of alcohol in America and put the values of the women's sphere, which consisted of caretaking, piety, and purity, into every day public life.<sup>1</sup> It might seem as if women were making leaps and bounds in society, but in truth, women were trapped in a Progressive Era filled with Victorian values. These values and prejudices against women are apparent in the trial of Lizzie Borden in the way the evidence and the suspect herself were viewed and treated.

Lizzie Borden, a thirty-two year old spinster, was charged with the ax-murder of her father and stepmother on August 4, 1892. The only known

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Separate Spheres," *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), [http://libproxy.troy.edu/login?url=http://literati.credoreference.com.libproxy.troy.edu/content/entry/rcuswh/separate\\_spheres/0](http://libproxy.troy.edu/login?url=http://literati.credoreference.com.libproxy.troy.edu/content/entry/rcuswh/separate_spheres/0) (accessed January 20, 2015).

individuals on the premise during the murder were Lizzie and the maid, Bridget Sullivan. Lizzie, however, was the only one arrested. She was acquitted after the trial, leaving the murder unsolved. Since then, the Borden murder has become a popular American legend. Lizzie is often portrayed as a crazed murderer, despite the court's decision of her innocence. This popular idea and public memory of Lizzie Borden causes the trial to be revisited and see how the influence of femininity affected her trial at the time it took place.<sup>2</sup>

Lizzie Borden (1860-1927) grew up displaying all of the traits that society thought a proper little girl should have. She was described as having a sensitive nature and regularly inclined to be shy among strangers. At school, she was not what one would label as brilliant, but always maintained a high rank in her class and was very disciplined in her studies. Besides her schooling, Lizzie was an attentive student in music and played piano like many young girls at the time. Along with her mother and father, she attended church regularly and was a member of the Sunday school class in Chicago.<sup>3</sup> All of these facts were mentioned in newspaper articles preceding her arrest, prematurely implanting an image of Lizzie as an upstanding society woman that fulfilled all the standards expected of her. One might ask: If Lizzie Borden was such an upstanding woman why she was even considered as a suspect or why a spread on her sister's childhood was never written in any newspaper? The prosecution was convinced of Lizzie's guilt. Yet, the main defense's main argument throughout the investigation and trial, Lizzie's frail and feminine ways were brought up repeatedly.

From the start of the investigation, journalists implanted the image of a male murderer in the minds of the general public. Newspapers wrote articles using the masculine pronoun even though there was yet to be any

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<sup>2</sup> Borden, Lizzie Andrew," *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); "Borden, Lizzie (Andrew)," *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> "Lizzie Borden: Her School and Later Life – A Noble Woman, Though Retiring," *The Boston Herald*, August 6, 1892, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news3.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

evidence as to who murdered Andrew and Abby Borden, male or female. Dr. Dolan, the medical examiner, stated that the wound in both cases caused by the first blow must have resulted in almost instantaneous death. This stated, he also declared the murderer had to have been someone who could strike each person with a hard and heavy enough blow as to crush the skull.<sup>4</sup> This assessment, for many people, confirmed the fact that a man must have been behind the murders of the Borden. Therefore, it was less likely when Lizzie was arrested that she would ever be found guilty in a court of law. This understanding of femininity, gender, and women's abilities is examined even further by historian Jean S. Filetti. In her research, she points out that the evidence from the crime scene was not used to find the murderer, but to prove that it could not have possibly been a woman who committed the crime.<sup>5</sup> At the turn of the century, society commonly believed that women were, in fact, the weaker sex. The idea that a woman of her class and refinement could be strong enough to deliver a bone crushing blow in one swing seemed preposterous.

When Lizzie's friends were questioned about her personality during the investigation they immediately defended her, describing all of her feminine traits and conduct. They said Lizzie was modest, sincere, gentle, and possessed desire to do not only the best, but also the right things in life. Her dedication to church life was also mentioned, marking her as a good Christian lady of the time. This would become one of the most important aspects of her defense and is repeatedly mentioned throughout the investigation and trial. The newspaper stated that from generalized opinion there was "not one unmaidenly, nor a single deliberately unkind act."<sup>6</sup> The statements provided to newspapers by her

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<sup>4</sup> "Thursday's Affray," *The Fall River Herald*, August 5, 1892, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news2.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Jean S. Filetti, "Violent Women and Gendered Justice," *Journal of American Studies* 35, (2001): 475.

<sup>6</sup> "Lizzie Borden: Her School and Later Life – A Noble Woman, Though Retiring," *The Boston Herald*, August 6, 1892, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news3.html> (accessed January 1, 2015).

friends supporting her person were of great importance. Women at the time were thought to be more pure, innocent, and moral than men.<sup>7</sup> By her friends confirming that she possessed all the traits that a woman should have, they also implied, intentionally or not, that there was no way possible that such a woman could perform such a heinous act as murder.

When Lizzie was arrested, journalists sympathized with her immediately through their news articles. The *New York Times* described Lizzie as a physical and emotional wreck upon questioning. She was said to be lying on a sofa, displaying an aptitude for frailty and weakness concerning the murder of her parents. In addition to the description of Lizzie Borden's behavior, the *New York Times* referred to her as a lady, not a woman or suspect, but a title that gives the reader a mental image of someone good and innocent.<sup>8</sup> These writings from the journalists skewed how the public, and even the jury, saw Lizzie Borden from the start. She entered the courtroom with an image of an undisputed lady with an impeccable reputation. Guilty or not, the trial was biased from the beginning.<sup>9</sup> With such a predisposed belief of Lizzie's personality, how was the jury supposed to view her as solely a suspect and view the evidence with an unbiased attitude? They could not. Lizzie Borden's feminine ways that conformed to society in 1892 allowed her an almost guaranteed verdict of not guilty before she ever even stepped foot into the courtroom.

By looking at where Lizzie Borden was held during her trial and why she was held there, one can see a preconceived notion of her innocence before a verdict had been decided by the jury. Lizzie was held in the matron's room in the House of Correction, described as large and

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<sup>7</sup> Kimberly M. Radek, "Women in the Nineteenth Century," *Women in Literature*, [http://www2.ivcc.edu/gen2002/women\\_in\\_the\\_nineteenth\\_century.htm](http://www2.ivcc.edu/gen2002/women_in_the_nineteenth_century.htm) (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> "Miss Borden Arrested," *The New York Times*, August 11, 1892, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/frtrials/LizzieBorden/news5.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> The jury that presided over the trial of Lizzie Borden was comprised of all men.

comfortable, shows the issue of class and character along with gender.<sup>10</sup> This treatment, while in the House of Correction, is just another fact that supports that her trial was not viewed fairly based on her feminine ways. The *San Francisco Call* described how Houses of Correction at the time were viewed as places made to hold examples of “lost womanhood.” Food was carried in buckets and served to inmates that have succumbed to every vice imaginable.<sup>11</sup> This reveals a completely different side of life at a House of Correction than we are shown from Lizzie’s stay. It causes one to ask: If Lizzie Borden had shown any ways less pleasing to society’s view of women, would she have been treated in such a demeaning fashion as well? The answer is simply, yes. The women’s vices included alcoholism, promiscuity, unkemptness, and overall degradation within a world of poverty. Drinking was a vice that men were allowed to indulge in and it was not thought twice about. If a woman was seen with alcohol, she was immediately deemed corrupt and in need of repair. If Lizzie had ever shown one hint of a “vice”, it would have made sense that she murdered her parents to society. Therefore, she would have been thrown into a regular cell with the other “corrupted” women. Instead she was allowed comfort and distance from the “corrupted” women so as not to associate her with “fallen” women of society.

To be sure, just like the media, the defense used similar gendered arguments to make its case for the innocence of Lizzie Borden as well. In the opening statement by defense lawyer A. J. Jennings, he introduced Lizzie as a young woman of spotless reputation. He went on to remind people of her role as a Christian at Sunday School and her charitable works within the community.<sup>12</sup> Jennings was an intelligent lawyer that

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<sup>10</sup> “Borden Jury Found,” *Boston Daily Globe*, June 5, 1893, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news14.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> “The House of Correction,” *San Francisco Call*, April 13, 1890, <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=SFC18900413.2.108> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> A. J. Jennings, “Opening Statement for the Defense in the Trial of Lizzie Borden,” June 15, 1893,

knew exactly what he was doing by reminding the court of Lizzie's dedication to the church specifically. In 1890, religion equated morality and morality equated what a woman should be within society.<sup>13</sup> The defense asserted that because Lizzie was dedicated to the church, it proved she was moral and that, by this reasoning, proved she was incapable of acts of violence. Therefore, she could not possibly be the one that murdered her parents. Jennings just watered the seed the newspaper journalists had planted.

On the second day of the trial, June 6, 1893, Lizzie Borden suffered a fainting spell that is still questioned today whether it was genuine or not. Real or faked, it certainly could not have happened at a better time during the trial. The prosecutor, William H. Moody, addressed the courtroom, explaining his case against Lizzie and why she had reason to kill her stepmother. According to newspapers, the courtroom lacked empty seats, but was not by any means packed disproving any argument that her unconsciousness was caused by lack of oxygen or heat. The paper even states that it was the strain from her nervous system that caused her to lose consciousness, not a physical ailment.<sup>14</sup> One is able to interpret from the newspaper articles that Lizzie's fainting could not have been from lack of air or stuffiness. The only answer could be that the frailty of Miss Borden did not allow her to be able to bear such horrendous accusations against her better person. During this era, it was a very appropriate and feminine for women to have fainting spells.<sup>15</sup> Lizzie fainting gave the public the view that if she was too frail to even hear the accusations against her, then she was certainly too frail to commit such crimes as were portrayed.

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<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/jenningsstatement.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Sara Evans, *Born for Liberty*, (New York: Free Press, 1997), 68-70.

<sup>14</sup> "Lizzie Borden in a Faint," *The New York Times*, June 6, 1893,

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news9.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Nynke van Dijk and Wouter Wieling, "Fainting, Emancipation and the 'Weak and Sensitive' Sex," *The Journal of Physiology* 587 (2009): 3063-64, <http://jp.physoc.org/content/587/13/3063.full> (accessed February 2, 2015).

Throughout the rest of the trial, the press only described Lizzie in terms of purity and innocence in the newspaper and in the courtroom. One article described how the jury viewed her, stating all they could see was a “dreamy-eyed, expressionless woman.”<sup>16</sup> This appealed to society’s view that women were flighty, ignorant creatures. Such coverage portrayed the idea that even if she had a motive to murder, there was no way she would have been bright enough to formulate a plan prior to the act. Yet another article in the *Boston Globe* refers to her chattering happily with other females, once again alluding to a certain naivety due to her femininity.<sup>17</sup>

This conformity of feminism was also applied to Lizzie’s sister, Emma Borden, who was not even a suspect. By this, one can discern just how important of an aspect femininity was to a trial when trying to discern the innocence of a woman. When she was questioned on the stand, journalists took it in their hands to decide if she fit the mold society deemed suitable for women as well. Apparently, she passed the test. The *Boston Globe* described her as a “prim, little, old-fashioned New England maiden,” who was dressed with neatness in a plain black dress.<sup>18</sup> This statement both supported the fact that Lizzie was the ideal picture of a proper woman and validated Emma’s testimony. If her sister was anything but proper, it could influence how people viewed Lizzie. The fact that both sisters displayed feminine dispositions supported the argument that is preposterous to think one of them could have been the murderer.

The write up by the *Boston Globe* reporter once it was decided that Lizzie was not guilty of murder became even more invested in relaying

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<sup>16</sup> “Even So! What if Lizzie Did Ask for Acid?” *The Boston Globe*, June 14, 1893, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news7.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> “One Side: State Rests upon Its Case,” *The Boston Globe*, June 15, 1893, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/bordenarticles.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> “Hopeful: Lizzie’s Counsel Sustained.” *The Boston Globe*, June 16, 1893, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news11.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

how she acted as a proper woman. The reporter begins by describing how she reacted to the verdict. Lizzie displayed emotion as a woman should by emitting loud sobs with her face in her hands. The *Boston Globe* also stated that during the whole time of the investigation and trial that she did nothing that an ordinary woman would not have done in her situation and, therefore, it was only expected that she would be deemed innocent in the eyes of the court. Once again, we get a look into the devotion towards her religious life, except this time how she handled it while in custody. Lizzie visited those in prison and comforted women in the same situation as her. She regularly attended bible class, Sunday school, and prayer meetings, which she said were her most exciting pleasures.<sup>19</sup> Even an Illinois newspaper article that appears to attempt a moderate portrayal of the case, allowing the reader to decide their own opinion of Lizzie Borden, mentioned Lizzie's active church life and participation in the temperance movement.<sup>20</sup> Lizzie Borden's public persona, that of a feminine and proper Christian, during the trial convinced the jury and the public that she was without a doubt innocent. Neither the police nor the detectives believed in Lizzie's innocence.<sup>21</sup> The reason neither the police nor the state detectives used her feminine morality as a statement is because they knew it lacked any correlation with the case. Even in a time where women were believed to be weak, it should not have been used as a matter of law to find Lizzie Borden innocent. The fact that it was, is a reflection of American society and its beliefs during the 1890s.

During the trial, Borden's main defense was never the lack of evidence, opportunity, or motive. Although the defense counsel mentioned both, the main focus was how Lizzie conformed to society's view of the ideal

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<sup>19</sup> "Not Guilty: Lizzie Borden is Acquitted," *The Boston Globe*, June 20, 1893, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news16.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> "Fall River Tragedy," *The Argus Saturday*, December 28, 1893, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn92053934/1895-12-28/ed-1/seq-3.pdf> (accessed January 19, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> "Not Guilty: Lizzie Borden is Acquitted," *The Boston Globe*, June 20, 1893, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/LizzieBorden/news16.html> (accessed February 2, 2015).

woman. This view consisted of a white woman's weakness, morality, and innocence. The Lizzie Borden trial was a trial that, in today's time, would have been handled completely differently. Whether or not the outcome would have changed is not the issue, but that something as irrelevant as how feminine she was considered primary evidence to her defense is.<sup>22</sup> The trial of Lizzie Borden was never a question of whether she was guilty or innocent, but how feminine she was in a time where females were considered weak and incapable of murder.

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<sup>22</sup> Today there are still expectations of gender in the courtroom, such as is the case with rape victims being ashamed to testify because of their sexual history, they are less narrow-minded and are more forgiving than it was at the time of the Lizzie Borden trial.

Van Dijk, Nynke and Wouter Wieling. "Fainting, Emancipation and the 'Weak and Sensitive' Sex." *The Journal of Physiology*, 587. 2009. <http://jp.physoc.org/content/587/13/3063.full> (accessed February 2, 2015).

## The Coup: An American Solution

Benjamin Sikes

**Abstract:** This Article examines the reason for United States involvement in the Iran coup of 1953. It analyzes Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh's, decision to nationalize the country's oil industry. It further analyzes the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's attempt to combat the nationalization through the International Court of Justice, and the British reaction to the loss of revenue from Iranian oil. The article examines U.S. interest in assisting the British with overthrowing Mosaddegh. It also looks at the appointment of Mohammad Reza Shah as the country's singular leader. The article views the coup as one of the many smaller events during the Cold War that had a larger impact on its outcome. The paper argues that the importance of U.S. involvement in the coup was not primarily to prevent Iran from becoming a communist nation. The paper concludes its argument stating that the coup was carried out to ensure the economic security and stability of Great Britain, America's most important European ally during the Cold War.

In 1953 Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh was expelled from office. Mosaddegh's removal from power was the result of a joint operation by the British Strategic Intelligence Service and the Central Intelligence Agency. Initially, the United States government showed little interest when the British first presented the idea of a coup.<sup>1</sup> The SIS first presented the idea of overthrowing Mosaddegh to the United States during the presidency of Harry S. Truman. This first presentation was unsuccessful. The second time the idea was presented was during Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency, and it was put into action. This raises questions of the real motives behind U.S. involvement. The first response from the United States shows hesitation on President Truman's part. Why was President Truman so reluctant to act on the situation during his own term? The answer could be as simple as Truman not wanting to get into conflict with the Soviets. Given that the Korean War was still

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Kinzer, *All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2003), 3, 79.

ongoing, Truman was not ready to open a new theater of war in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> This paper will examine the core motivations of those responsible for the coup. The paper argues that the United States chose to carry out a covert operation in order to secure the economic stability of Great Britain, its greatest democratic ally in Europe.

British control of Persian oil began in the year 1900, when Shah Muzzaffar al-Din sold exclusive rights to Iran's natural resources to a British financier, William Knox D'Arcy. D'Arcy's purchase was not immediately met with the results he had hoped. The geologist that originally surveyed the area of purchase was confident that oil could be found there. In 1904, oil was struck by one of D'Arcy's wells. However, this first endeavor was initially a loss and cost the British financier nearly everything he had. The drilling team had hit a shallow well, or a small pool of oil isolated from the main reserves. In an attempt to retain some of his wealth, William sold his rights to the Burma Oil Company. The BOC reorganized D'Arcy's operation and within two years hit a major oilfield. Upon the discovery of oil, the British government saw opportunity to increase their economic standing on the world's stage. In 1908 the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was quickly founded by a group of investors backed by the British government. The control of the APOC's revenue went to the British government after Winston Churchill authorized the purchase of 51 shares of the company in 1913.<sup>3</sup> This secured British dominance of Persian oil for the next thirty-eight years.

By 1951, the APOC had taken on a new name: the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, or AIOC. The company's agenda still remained the same: Drill, refine, and export oil at minimal cost. On March 15, 1951 the Majlis, Iran's legislature, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, voted unanimously to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.<sup>4</sup> Through nationalization, the company's assets in Iran were completely frozen and refined oil was no longer being exported. England was not about to ignore the distress of their most

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 3,79.

profitable investment in the world. The British had only two cards to play: military action to retake control of their refineries, or quietly orchestrate a coup to oust Iran's current government.

The first action by the British government, in addition to beginning to lay the foundations for the coup, was to file a lawsuit against Iran internationally. The lawsuit was filed through the International Court of Justice on May 25<sup>th</sup>, just over two months from Iran's decision to nationalize the AIOC. The ICJ application argument was centered on Iran's failure to honor the 1933 concession agreement. The discord from Iran was based on the discrepancies in royalties that Iran was receiving compared to other oil exporting countries. Oil companies had begun the practice of offering a fair 50/50 deal on the revenues of exports from the supplying country. The 1933 agreement only ensured Iran twenty percent of all revenue generated by AIOC, including its subsidiaries. However, that percentage was based on AIOC's revenues of the 1930s. By 1951, the money flowing through the company had increased drastically, while Iran still relied on partial payments.

The application addressed these facts in its complaint, but one article in the document stands out. In the British government's claims, one of the complaints filed argues that Iran's alteration of the terms of the agreement not only broke international law, but also wronged the country of England.<sup>5</sup> The British focused their case around the fact that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was a British national, meaning that the AIOC was subject to the same rights and expectations that a British citizen would have while in a foreign country. However, there are some problems with the British stance. The British government was the majority shareholder of the AIOC, therefore making it an extension of British power in Iran. The British also claimed that the 1933 agreement was a double charter, meaning it was both a treaty between states and a business agreement between the AIOC and Iran. These two facts may have been what prompted the justices of the court to rule how they did.

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<sup>5</sup> I.C.J. *Pleadings, Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Case (United Kingdom v. Iran)*, 12 <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/16/8979.pdf>.

The final rulings were neither in favor of Britain or Iran and were based on several conclusions. The first was that the agreement was only an agreement, not a treaty. The court stated that the 1933 agreement was simply an agreement between a State and a company, one that was not registered through the League of Nations, and therefore was not a legally binding document. Instead, the court interpreted the 1933 document as a written version of a verbal agreement. Furthermore, the ICJ ruled that the 1933 agreement did not have a dual meaning, instead it was viewed as a document with a single meaning: the agreement between a State and a foreign corporation.<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of the facts listed above, the court ruled that they lacked the proper jurisdiction to make judgment on behalf of either party. The justices of the ICJ voted nine to five in objection to ruling on the situation and did not support either state.<sup>7</sup> These ICJ documents clearly show the importance that the British placed on reopening the AIOC refineries in Iran. However, a lawsuit was just the first step in a larger plan.

While the British government filed this lawsuit, they also began preparations for a possible coup. Perhaps their idea was to keep Iran's government occupied with an international court case. Since both the talk of a coup and the application of the lawsuit came around at the same time, it is highly likely this was the case. However, it is also possible that the coup was an alternative solution if the International Court of Justice did not rule in favor of the British. The British government's attempt at orchestrating a coup initially failed since Mosaddegh's people caught onto the plot. How they learned of this is still unknown, but British actions after the nationalization of AIOC were not at all subtle. The British sent five warships to the Persian Gulf, which immediately raised the tensions between the two nations.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of how the Iranian

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<sup>6</sup> ICJ *Anglo Iranian Oil Co. Case (Jurisdiction, Judgment of July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1952)*, 22-23, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/16/1997.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Kinzer, *All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, 81.

government found out, they quickly took the measures to prevent a coup from happening. Prime Minister Mosaddegh ordered the British embassy closed and ordered all British diplomats to leave the country. After England was thrown out of Iran, the United States was the only country with the resources and willingness to help the British carry out their coup.

Initially, the idea of a coup was presented during the Truman administration. However, the idea was shunned almost as soon as it was presented. The Truman administration was focused on the economic recovery of Greece and Turkey and prevention of them falling into the Soviet sphere of influence. The Truman Doctrine was introduced to aid Greece and Turkey, and would eventually evolve into the idea of containment.<sup>9</sup> The way in which the British presented the coup to the Americans would largely determine how the United States would react. The initial presentation was strictly based on the loss of AIOC, and was probably the reason it was rejected by the Truman administration. Another potential reason for the reluctance and outright refusal to support a coup could have been the report sent to President Truman by Averell Harriman. Harriman was sent to Iran by Truman in an attempt to salvage the partnership between Iran and the AIOC. In his report, Harriman described the appalling living conditions of Iranian workers. He further more stated that England was in the past, still clinging on to the “colonial age” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Even before the coup, there were disagreements between the United States and England on the topic of nationalization. At the time, the United States believed that Iran had the potential to become a strong democratic nation, but in order to achieve this Iran’s issues with Britain would have to be settled.

In 1950, before the coup and the nationalization of the AIOC, the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, traveled to the United States and

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Government State Department *The Truman Doctrine* (Washington DC: 1952), 1-3,

[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/doctrine/large/documents/pdfs/5-3.pdf#zoom=100](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/documents/pdfs/5-3.pdf#zoom=100)

(accessed March 21, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Kinzer, *All The Shah’s Men*, 108-109.

met with President Truman to discuss the potential negotiations between Iran and the AIOC. Mohammed Reza planned his visit to the United States while Britain was undergoing a change in leadership. Winston Churchill had been out of office since 1945. The Shah saw an opportunity to gain the upper hand with Churchill's absence, but this opportunity was cut short when Churchill returned to his position of prime minister in 1951.

Immediately after returning to office, Churchill began putting pressure on the United States to get behind the British agenda.<sup>11</sup> Two years into Churchill's new term, the United States experienced its own change in leadership. The British, without having any luck with the outgoing Truman administration, could now re-present their plan focused on a new threat: communism. Iran shared a long border with the Soviet Union and the threat of it becoming a communist state had been on the minds of many in the western world after the Azerbaijani crisis of 1946.<sup>12</sup> The Azerbaijani crisis occurred immediately after World War II, when the allied powers agreed to remove garrisoned troops from Iran. The Soviets, however, withdrew forces from the interior of the country and garrisoned them in the province of Azerbaijan. The result was the province splitting from Iran and becoming a communist, Soviet backed state.<sup>13</sup> For the British, this situation was the adhesive that had been missing in their first coup proposal. The British knew the United States would offer assistance if they feared the rest of Iran would fall into the Soviet sphere.

This second presentation was tailored to be on the same level with the ideologies of the incoming heads of office. Dwight D. Eisenhower took presidential office in January of 1953, however, Eisenhower showed hesitation for the same reasons Truman did. The Dulles brothers saw otherwise. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, were both aware of Iran's potential communist threat. In reality, the Dulles brothers worked in

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<sup>11</sup> Abbas Milani, *The Shah* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 145-146.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>13</sup> Homa Katouzin, *Musaddiq and the struggle for power in Iran* (New York, NY: I.B Taurus & Co Ltd, 1990), 58-61.

unison with the British Strategic Intelligence Service, in order to make that threat materialize. Materialization came in the form of a pay-rolled mob that lashed out against Mosaddegh. After witnessing the successfulness of the hired protestors against Mosaddegh, Eisenhower agreed to a coup. Planning had already begun before Eisenhower gave the green light.<sup>14</sup>

The draft of the plan that agents of the SIS and CIA developed had to be subtle, yet effective for the coup to succeed. The effectiveness would depend on how well the draft plan could be written up. Both the CIA and SIS recognized that the coup must appear to have a legal motive behind it in order for it to be believable. It did not matter whether those motivations were concrete or abstract, it only mattered that they materialized in the country. In other words, the population must show severe disapproval of Mosaddegh's leadership before any military operations could be carried out.<sup>15</sup> The United States and Britain took these precautions due to the turmoil the communist world. Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader and the face of communism, died in March of 1953. Any public actions taken to solve the issues in Iran could complicate the delicate diplomatic relations between the East and the West.

The drafting was one of the most crucial elements of the operation. Deciding who would carry out the coup would be relatively easy since both agencies already knew who was in opposition to Mosaddegh. Their first casting was to place someone from the military as the head of the coup. Their choice was General Fazlollah Zahedi for his opposition to Mosaddegh's leadership. Zahedi would no doubt prove a strong military

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<sup>14</sup> Kinzer, *All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, 156-157.

<sup>15</sup> CIA, *Clandestine Services History, Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran: November 1952 - August 1953*, (Washington DC:1954), 9, <http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/iran-cia-main.2.pdf> (accessed February 20, 2014).

leader after the coup, as the new Iranian government would need him to expel the remaining communist parties.<sup>16</sup>

One of the American concerns was that Iran's primary communist party, the Tudeh party, would be able to gain power in the aftermath of the coup. The British and Americans both realized that Iran's new government would have a small window of time to consolidate power and fill their administration. The vacant seats in Iran's governing bodies would have to be filled quickly in order to shut out the possibility of Tudeh party members gaining power. However, the Tudeh party was outlawed by the Iranian government in 1949, four years before the coup. The Shah ordered the leading members to be arrested and imprisoned after the Tudeh party was linked to the failed assassination attempt on his life.<sup>17</sup> Many Tudeh party members were imprisoned and charged with a variety of crimes, and some were even executed.<sup>18</sup>

Although the Tudeh party was outlawed, it was not completely disbanded and still maintained a small presence on the political stage.<sup>19</sup> The Tudeh party had supported Mosaddegh in the nationalization of AIOC in 1951. Even though Mosaddegh did not fully endorse them, in a multi-party government, he would need their votes if he wished to be elected. Therefore, he acknowledged their support of nationalization. The CIA and SIS were aware that the Tudeh party had declined in power. This is strong supporting evidence that the coup was a solution to the British AIOC situation, not to prevent the spread of communism.

Fully aware that the Tudeh party was a minimal threat, the CIA and SIS began to manipulate this information to suit their needs. The CIA began circulation of anti-Mosaddegh propaganda in the local media.<sup>20</sup> This propaganda varied in forms, but some of the most influential pieces were

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<sup>16</sup> CIA-SIS, *Initial operation plan for TPAJAX Appendix A*(1953), 5.

<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/appendix%20A.pdf> (accessed February 20, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Milani, *The Shah*, 132-133.

<sup>18</sup> Milani, *The Shah*, 132-133.

<sup>19</sup> Katouzin, *Musaddiq and the struggle for power in Iran*, 84-85.

<sup>20</sup> CIA, *Clandestine Services History, Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq*, 9-10.

essays and accusations written up by agents on scene. One of these essays entitled *Our National Character*, attempted to cause conflict amongst Mosaddegh's base of supporters.<sup>21</sup> The essay suggested that under Prime Minister Mosaddegh's leadership, Iran's national identity was being altered to a point beyond return. The essay describes how the Iranian people have become less hospitable and more violent between each other and foreigners. One such example in the essay proclaimed that Secretary of State John Dulles was advised not to travel to Iran because of the outburst of violence and rioting in the country.<sup>22</sup> Dulles' absence meant that talks between Iran and England could not possibly gain any progress without a third uninvolved party. This accusation was brilliantly written. First, it implied that Iran could have a positive relationship with the western world if Mosaddegh was removed from power. Secondly, it still portrayed the United States as a supporter of Iran's liberation from a colonial power.

Another part of the essay focused on the accusations of Mosaddegh's involvement with the Tudeh party. Mosaddegh's involvement with the Tudeh party was minimal, as he had his own backing from a party he helped establish, known as the National Front. As mentioned earlier, accusations of Mosaddegh's ties to the Tudeh party were based on some truths. Mosaddegh did not support any sort of an autocratic government, therefore he tolerated the Tudeh party's existence. His tolerance aligned his beliefs closer to democracy than to communism. This could have been an advantage for Western powers, but for the British it was a hindrance. The British preferred their oil over the development of a democratic government in Iran. Unfortunately, as democratic as Mosaddegh's ideals seemed, the United States had to view him as a communist threat in order to preserve the economic stability of Britain.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> CIA, *Our National Character* (1953), 2.

<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/docs/Doc%2020%20-%201953-00->

[00%20231%20propaganda%20-%20national%20character.pdf](http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/docs/Doc%2020%20-%201953-00-00%20231%20propaganda%20-%20national%20character.pdf) (accessed February 20, 2014)

<sup>22</sup> CIA, *Our National Character* (1953), 2.

<sup>23</sup> Katouzin, *Musaddiq and the struggle for power in Iran*, 119-120.

After the foundation for a coup had been seeded in the media, the inner workings of the coup could now come to fruition. The CIA and SIS had carefully funneled funding to key actors in the coup. General Zahedi of the Iranian army, who would take Mosaddegh's position as Prime Minister, was to be given a total of \$60,000 from both agencies.<sup>24</sup> This was not only to assure his loyalty, but it was also for him to spread among predetermined leaders of the armed forces. Zahedi did not have very many connections among the newer junior staff of Iran's government, therefore the funds were there to bribe them if need be.<sup>25</sup>

The presentation of the script to the actors involved was crafted by both agencies. In the presentation to the Shah, both agencies agreed to present the oil as a secondary concern. The idea here was to eliminate doubts regarding the West's true motives. It was agreed that if either side should appear too eager for oil, it would arouse suspicion. Pahlavi was well aware that the British agenda was focused on recovering their oil and lost revenue; as long as he remained the Shah he had no objections. The real challenge was to make the coup appear as if it had been constructed by people within the Iranian government. Also considered was the Shah's understanding of his responsibility. The country was his to gain or to lose if the coup attempt failed. In addition to that, Iran would receive no financial aid from the United States while Mosaddegh was in power.<sup>26</sup>

August 20, 1953, Mosaddegh was arrested and the coup was complete.<sup>27</sup> In the aftermath, the choice to overthrow Mosaddegh was viewed as necessary. This was the first time that United States used covert operations to directly overthrow the leader of a foreign power. The effectiveness of this new tool was noted by the relatively new intelligence agency, the CIA, and in time became one of its specialties. It was also recognized as a tool to carry out U.S. interests abroad. In this case, the interest of the United States was to secure the financial stability

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<sup>24</sup> CIA-SIS, *Initial operation plan for TPAJAX Appendix A* (1953), 2.

<sup>25</sup> CIA, *Appendix E– Military Critique – Lessons learned from TPAJAX re Military Planning Aspects of Coup d'Etat*

(1954), 6 <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/appendix%20E.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> CIA-SIS, *Initial operation plan for TPAJAX Appendix A* (1953), 2.

<sup>27</sup> Katouzin, *Musaddiq and the struggle for power in Iran*, 194-195.

of England, and in turn, the British would be able to help spread capitalist influences across Europe.

In conclusion, it is clear that the orchestrators of this coup were motivated by far more than simple financial gains. The British were not only motivated by financial security, but their legacy as well. The British Empire had once circled the globe, but was now in a declining state. New ideas, such as nationalism, were beginning to take root and challenge the British status quo. As a rising contestant on the world's stage, and ally of England, this left America in a troubling situation. The United States could either support its ally, or a sprouting nationalistic state that may never form into a proper democracy. In the end, the United States enacted the coup in order to secure the financial stability of Great Britain, the most important European ally during the Cold War.

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## Department News for 2014-15

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### Philosophy Minor

The Division of History and Philosophy is pleased to announce the development of a philosophy minor beginning in Fall 2015. As a field of academic inquiry Philosophy deals with issues as profound and broad as “what is the nature of reality,” but also as basic and minute as “how can I win this argument.” More than any other field, Philosophy trains students as critical thinkers and while the hackneyed phrase that philosophy “teaches people how to think” is probably not accurate, what is true is that it trains them to think effectively, to weigh evidence, and to craft solid arguments. Contrary to the common notion that philosophy students will be able to think deep thoughts about unemployment, the field is a common avenue for students who go on to careers in business or government and frequently the background of those who go to medical, law, or graduate school. Interested students can contact Professors Jones or Buckner for details.

### Faculty News

This past year has been a busy one for the faculty of the department. We were fortunate to welcome our newest colleagues: Drs. Aaron Hagler, Luke Ritter, and Kathryn Tucker on the Troy campus, and Dr. Adam Hoose in Dothan.

Aaron Hagler’s most recent work will appear this April in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*: “Sapping the Narrative: Ibn Kathir’s Account of the *Shura* of ‘Uthman in *Kitab al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*”.

On the Montgomery campus, Dan Puckett, newly promoted to full professor, was appointed by Governor Bentley to chair the Alabama Holocaust Commission. He has recently published “Alabama’s Jewish Servicemen in World War II,” in *Alabama Heritage* (Fall 2014), and a

book chapter, “Alabama’s Jews and Refugee Resettlement, 1938-1941,” in *Global Perspectives on the Holocaust: History, Identity, and Legacy* (forthcoming in 2015).

Luke Ritter was awarded a research grant from the Minnesota Historical Society in Minneapolis for his work on the Transatlantic Program of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Dr. Ritter also contributed to an upcoming edited volume (2015), *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the Present*, entitled “Friedrich Weyerhäuser: The ‘Timber King’ and the Transformation of the American Lumber Industry.”

Karen Ross, promoted to associate professor this year, published “Recruiting ‘Friends of Medical Progress’: Evolving Tactics in the Defense of Animal Experimentation, 1910s and 1920s,” in the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, (forthcoming fall 2015).

And Joe McCall welcomed a new addition to the McCall clan, granddaughter Nora Ann, born in August!

## Gratitude

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Co-editors Jamie Sessions and Karen Ross would like to thank the *many* people who have made this volume of the *Alexandrian* possible. Dozens of students and professors from across our campuses have volunteered their time and energy to making the journal a success. Volunteers have read and evaluated articles, provided editing services, and assembled the final product. Our student authors have written and rewritten their work for the journal, typically while also having to keep up with current classes and papers. Thank you to everyone who continues to work hard to produce the *Alexandrian* for the fourth year in a row.

We would especially like to express our deep gratitude to the Alexander family: Sandra, Steve, Rachel, Andrew, Sarah, and Elisa. Nathan's family continues to inspire and support the department, our students, and this journal every step along the way. Thank you for your support – financial, spiritual, and intellectual – and for taking this journey with us.

## Professor Nathan Alexander Remembered

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Below is an excerpt from Nathan's graduation address to the Class of 1986 of Bremerton High School. (June 6, 1986, courtesy of the Alexander family)

“From early age to present, we have been equipped with the skills to conquer the frontiers of life, but now, as we approach these frontiers, some of us are chilled by the stark coldness of a shadow. For it is this shadow which affects, not our ability to succeed, but our will to do so. It affects not the tools with which we will conquer life, but our desire to use them. This shadow is fear, the fear of challenges. The fear of giving in to criticism and calumny. The fear of daring mighty things.”

Nathan dared to do mighty things – and he encouraged and empowered others to dare.

Thanks Nathan.

Phi Alpha Theta Inductees, Fall & Spring 2014-15

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Griffin Allen  
Cliff Coleman  
Alexandra Lan Hackworth  
Amanda L. Hickerson  
Seth Kinard  
Garrett M. Maund  
Megan Phillips  
Eleanor Self  
Jamie Sessions