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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

It has been a tremendous honor working with all the people who made this edition of *Report* possible. To our featured authors, valued editors, and trusted faculty advisor: thank you.

In these turbulent times, reading these articles has provided us with some much-needed comfort. 2020 was a terrible year for many and a strange year for all, not unlike many of the years under study in this publication.

Life is a series of months and years punctuated by love, loss, and laughter. The world has always been a messy and chaotic place where we seem to move from one crisis to the next but move we must.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” These are words to live by. So study history, live in the moment, and—whatever you do—keep moving forward.

Enjoy Volume 11 of *Report*. Thank you for your continued support. Wisdom through history and Go Army, Beat Navy!

Very Respectfully,

Brandi Braggs and Collin Keogh
Editors-in-Chief

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EROS IN ARMS: AN EXAMINATION OF PEDERASTIC PRACTICES AND THE *EPHEBEIA* AS SYSTEMS OF CIVIC AND MARTIAL TRAINING IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

BY HARRISON VOSS

Introduction

Coming-of-age institutions within any society elucidate a number of values central to that culture's conception of adulthood and one's transition into it. The *ephebeia* of fifth/fourth century classical Athens proved no exception. The fourth century Ephebic Oath, though with linguistic links to the fifth and potentially earlier, ascribe a number of values pertinent to the coming-of-age Athenian male:

"I will not disgrace these sacred arms, and I will not desert the comrade beside me wherever I shall be stationed in a battle line. I will defend our sacred and public instructions and I will not hand over (to the descendants) the fatherland smaller, but greater and better, so far as I am able, by myself or with the help of all. I will obey those who for the time being exercise sway reasonably and the established laws and those which they will establish reasonably in the future, if anyone seeks to destroy them, I will not admit it so far as I am able, by myself or with the help of all. I will honor the traditional sacred institutions."¹

The oath concludes with a call upon divine witnesses, and "the boundaries" of the country, citing a number of chief Attic agricultural items. The tenets ascribed to the oath are of both civic and military value, preparing the young *ephebe* for his transition into a "hoplite citizen." Amongst the chief virtues are: loyalty to stand one's ground, to obey Athens' laws and institutions, and, if possible, to better the *polis*. A concern for virtue is not reserved alone for the *ephebeia* and is discussed at length in textual sources regarding the idealistic form of pederasty. In Plato's *Symposium*, Pausanias explicates that the institution of pederasty, i.e. of a relationship between an adult man and an adolescent boy, should be of chief interest for the *polis* because of its concern with virtue: "Love's value to the city as a whole and to the citizens is immeasurable, for he compels the lover and his loved one alike to make virtue their central concern."² Through a concern for virtue, these citizens will implicitly seek to better the state. Pederasty and the later *ephebeia* were both classical Athenian social institutions that served a means of preparing young

¹ P. Siewart, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 97 (1977), 103.

² Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 185C.

Athenian males for the trials that come with being adult citizens. How did these two institutions connect, if at all? Is there any notion that the virtues and obligations that the ideal *erastes* needed to teach his younger *eromenos* included those outlined by the Ephebic Oath? Were the virtues taught of martial value at all?

Pederastic practice in fifth and fourth century Athens may have served upper-class Athenian youths as a complementary institution to the *ephebeia* by ideologically preparing adolescent *eromenoi* for the formal hoplite-citizen training they would receive when they turned eighteen. Both served as coming-of-age institutions by immersing the adolescent in inverted aspects of adult citizen life. The *ephebeia* upturned qualities of proper hoplite conduct, whereas the passive *eromenos* inverted the active adult man. Pederasty as a form of martial pedagogy can trace its roots to the preceding archaic period, which survived in classical Athens as the ideal paradigm. However, this idyllic formula did not necessarily translate into practice, and thus granted later comics, such as Aristophanes, ground to critique the institution's reality. Regardless of these evaluations, the military pedagogical potential of the pederastic dynamic remained an ardent ideal that satisfied a key function in properly preparing the adolescent Athenian youth for a lifetime of hoplite service and citizenship.

***Ephebeia* in Context: Adolescent Initiation Rites**

Athenian citizens, as in most Greek city-states, were fundamentally soldiers. Between the ages of eighteen to sixty, Athenians served in the phalanx or navy, critically relying on one another either in the phalanx line or as fleet rowers.³ This reliance warranted discipline on one's "manliness" so as not to let down the larger community, and competition between men so as to see who would be the most "manly" when battle necessitated it.⁴ For Athenian boys, their adolescence and all related rites and rituals centered on this transition from boy to citizen-soldier, coalescing in the fourth century's *ephebeia*.⁵ Borrowing a definition from M. Eliad, Vidal-Naquet argued that initiation is "a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a radical modification of the religious and social status of the person to be initiated."⁶ In regards to the *ephebeia*, this function is achieved through a remarkable process of social inversion, which included dressing *ephebes* as girls in various festival

³ John J. Winkler, "Laying Down the Law: The Oversight of Men's Sexual Behavior in Classical Athens," *Constraints of Desire* (Routledge: New York, 1990), 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

⁵ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, trans. Andrew Szegedy-Maszak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 140.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

activities,⁷ and, more importantly, serving as a light-armed frontiersman on the fringes of Attica.⁸ From an anthropological perspective, the reversal of attributes for the young *epebe*, whether dressing him in black, forcing him to forage naked as in Sparta, or costuming him as a woman, satisfied the process of the adolescent-to-adult transformation by demonstrating the movement from Nature/Savagery, to Culture and Civilization.⁹ The transition depended upon the Greeks' cultural fixation on antithesis, and how an adolescent became a man by transitioning from one undesirable pole to the cherished other.¹⁰ Militarily, Naquet explored this transition from *epebe* to phalanx-hoplite by examining the Spartan *kyrptos*, which involved young soldiers-in-training to "fight by night, unaided, resorting to tricks of the kind deplored by hoplite and citizen values, skulking on the frontiers."¹¹ He extended this analysis to the Athenian warrior through examination of the myth of the Black Hunter, Melanthos, who unaided and through trickery kills a Boeotian king on the border between Boeotia and Attica, the same districts where Athenian *epebes* were sent to garrison.¹² This myth may have been commemorated by *epebes* themselves who wore a black *chlamys* in potential reference to Melanthos.¹³ What Vidal-Naquet's arguments clarify is that the *epebeia* existed as a socialized institution that excelled beyond its pragmatic military goals. The *epebe* did not leave the *epebeia* only as a soldier; he left it as a man.

In addition to serving as a process of social integration, the *epebeia* prepared young Athenians for a lifetime of service in the phalanx or navy. Earliest epigraphic evidence for the *epebeia* survives from 334/3 B.C.¹⁴ A fuller description of the institution is provided by Aristotle. At eighteen, Athenian boys of the ten tribes were confirmed as their citizens and entered a program as "cadets," with supervising instructors, disciplinary officers, and martial trainers conferred upon them via an Assembly vote.¹⁵ Following their first year of training, they performed a drill display in front of the Assembly, and were then granted a spear and shield by the state; thereafter, the "cadets" patrolled the frontiers of Attica for two years, and were exempt from all taxes and being sued, although a handful of caveats remain.¹⁶ This latter rule was in

⁷ Ibid., 115-117.

⁸ Ibid., 118-121.

⁹ Ibid., 112-114; 140-141.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 141.

¹² Ibid., 110-112.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Siewart, 102.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935) 42.1-4.

¹⁶ Ibid., 42.5.

no doubt meant to ensure the focus of the *ephebes* on fulfilling their service without distraction.¹⁷ Although the only extant narrative of the *ephebeia* survives from the end of the fourth century, there are indications of origins well into the fifth. Thucydides mentions the light-armed *perioploi*, lit. “going the rounds,” or patrollers, who lead a night attack against Nicaea in 424 B.C.¹⁸ Notation of the *peripoloi/peripolos* in other early sources indicates a fifth century provenance of connecting “patrolling” or “patrollers” with Athenian adolescents.¹⁹ In addition, the *neotatoi* mentioned by Thucydides as fighting around 457 B.C. are noted as young men between eighteen and twenty, and associated with defending the walls and garrison duty, much like the fourth century *ephebe*.²⁰ The language of the Ephebic Oath itself suggests familiarity in mid-fifth century Athens as evidenced by striking parallels between the Oath and Pericles’ outbreak of war speech, as well as his funeral oration.²¹ Ridley summarized best the practicality of an *ephebeia*-type institution in fifth century Athens: “Common-sense is enough to indicate, even in the face of a total silence by our sources, that no Athenian could be expected at the age of eighteen, on becoming a citizen, to be able without further ado to take his place in the phalanx and to carry on this demanding dangerous fighting for another forty-odd years.”²² In addition to training young Athenians as warriors, Aristotle’s recount of the *ephebeia* suggests it acted as a means of ideological instruction.

The *ephebeia* served to provide both military and civic ideological training to the Athenian youths. As discussed, the *ephebeia* existed in some sense or another through the late-fifth and early-fourth centuries B.C., but under Epicrates’ reforms in 335 B.C. a streamlined “training in citizenship” system formed.²³ The *ephebeia* instituted a hoplite ethos centered on “discipline, bravery, and standing one’s ground,” as described in the Ephebic Oath.²⁴ Moreover, Steinbock elaborated a connection between the Oath’s invocation of deities to the tour of Athenian shrines in *The Athenian Constitution*, and posited that an education of the *ephebes*’ specific tribal heroes coincided as a means of

¹⁷ Vidal-Naquet, 143.

¹⁸ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 4.67.

¹⁹ Vidal-Naquet, 107-108; R.T. Ridley, “The Hoplite as Citizen: Athenian Military Institutions in their Social Context,” in *The Armies of Classical Greece*, ed. Everett L. Wheeler (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 176-180.

²⁰ Ridley, 177.

²¹ Siewart, 104-105, 107-108.

²² Ridley, 179.

²³ Bernd Steinbock, “A Lesson in Patriotism: Lycurgus’ *Against Leocrates*, the Ideology of the Ephebeia, and Athenian Social Memory,” *Classical Antiquity* 30, no. 2 (2011), 295.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 296.

providing the young men with mythological role models.²⁵ The use of role models existed to unite a tribal and age-based loyalty system,²⁶ around which the Athenian phalanx existed, and as represented on a fifth century cup depicting various mythological heroes as respective hoplite age groups.²⁷ The actual means of ongoing physical training for the *ephebes* in the fifth and late fourth centuries likely centered around the gymnasium, existing as a combined means of professionalism, education, and establishing physical prowess.²⁸ Such a system, however, altogether lacked virtuous inspiration via another person, but rather acted as a mechanism of self-improvement through competition against peers. It then makes sense that the *ephebeia*, as outlined in the late-fourth century, would seek to provide an ideological, “role model” component of inspiration. Nevertheless, these legendary models that inspired patriotism, loyalty, and bravery functioned in a fashion similar to love in the ideal pederastic relationship.²⁹

Archaic Pederasty – Social and Pedagogical Underpinnings

Pederasty, or the social institution of men aged twenty and above (an *erastes*) courting and loving adolescent boys age typically no older than seventeen (an *eromenos*), has customary origins pointing towards the archaic period.³⁰ Citing the fourth century historian Ephorus, Strabo in his *Geography* notes a tradition in archaic Crete regarding pederastic custom, albeit in a more violent practice:

“They have a peculiar custom in regard to love affairs, for they win the objects of their love, not by persuasion, but by abduction; the lover tells the friends of the boy three or four days beforehand that he is going to make the abduction, but for the friends to conceal the boy...After giving the boy presents, the abductor takes him away to any place in the country he wishes; and those who were present at the abduction follow after them, and after feasting and hunting with them for two months, they return to the city.”³¹

The lover, or the older abductor in this scenario, is only allowed to seize the boy should the abductee’s family and friends deem his captor worthy, emphasizing his importance to the youth’s learning and honor. The notion that the abductor

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 297-299.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 304-306.

²⁸ Ridley, 185-193.

²⁹ Plato, 178D-179A, 185C.

³⁰ Eva Cantarella and Andrew Lear, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys were their Gods* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 6-7.

³¹ Strabo. *Geography, Volume V: Books 10-12*, trans. by Horace Leonard Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 484C.

instructed his captive is highlighted by gifting him a set of military arms,³² similar to the state's gifting of spears and shields to the young *ephebes* in Athens when their martial instruction concludes.³³ In addition, Strabo emphasized that it is a "dishonor" for a handsome or noble boy *not* to receive a lover, as it presupposes that their character is responsible, thus risking social slander against the boy.³⁴ Nevertheless, when the abducted boy was reintegrated into society he notably received high honors, and even after achieving adulthood wore a distinctive garment that allowed others to know he'd become *kleinos*, "famous."³⁵ The Cretan pederastic institution is thus one of social transition: not only does the boy receive a presumed education by his lover, but he is also elevated to a new adult role upon return to the social sphere.

Evidence of pederasty as a ritual institution in the archaic period may have existed on the island of Thera as well. Archaeologists discovered inscriptions on the island at the end of the nineteenth century within the proximity of a temple to Apollo, a god associated with eternal adolescence.³⁶ A number of these engravings refer to male-male sexual relations: "By Apollo Delphinios, Krimon here copulated with a boy, brother of Bathykses," and, "Krimon copulated with Amotion here," along with, "Timagoras and Emperheres and I copulated. . ."³⁷ Scholars remain in dispute over whether or not the inscriptions themselves lend evidence to homosexual copulation at the religious site as part of any social ritual. Dover presumed that the inscriptions "should not be regarded as solemn declarations of sanctified erotic relationships," but instead of as a form of boasting, likening them to Pompeian graffiti from a much later period.³⁸ In contrast, Bongersma, in concurrence with the theory posited by the inscriptions' discoverer Hiller von Gättringen, argued that the writings *did* connote some sort of sacred, or social significance.³⁹ Bongersma cites that the inscriptions are located on the structural support of a terrace where sacred rites occurred, namely the adopted Spartan *gymnopaideia* in honor of Apollo.⁴⁰ Thus the invocation of Apollo would be pious, for if the inscription was slanderous it likely would have been destroyed or covered up. Moreover, the authors did not leave themselves anonymous, but rather wished to preserve for a present or future reader that he had a relationship with a certain

³² Ibid.

³³ See Note 16 above.

³⁴ Strabo, 484C

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Cantarella and Lear, 8.

³⁷ K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Random House: New York, 1978), 123.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Edward Brongersma, "The Thera Inscriptions Ritual or Slander?" *Journal of Homosexuality* 20, no. 1 (1990), 33-35.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 38.

boy there. While far from a pedagogical practice, pederasty on Thera may have served, in conjunction with fulfilling sexual desires, as a matter of social or religious rites.

Thera's nearby neighbor Sparta similarly exercised pederasty in a number of social functions, mainly pedagogical. Pederasty in Sparta is attested most notably by Plutarch and Xenophon, with the latter presenting a chaste, idealistic portrait. Although these sources survive from much later periods, Sparta's customs originated in the archaic period, and continued through the following centuries with little to no variation in practice or attitude.⁴¹ Xenophon's *Agésilas* preserves a snapshot of such practice. *Agésilas* describes the titular king's relationship with a Persian youth named Megabates, and how he loved Megabates "with all the intensity of an ardent nature," but refused to kiss him, thus insulting the Persian, and in turn losing his respect.⁴² One of Agésilas' companions asked if he would kiss the boy he loved so as to preserve his royal honor, but in an act of profound chastity he refused.⁴³ Xenophon celebrated the king's restraint, but not to the detriment of pederastic practice: it is not the King's love that is under criticism, but rather the physical temptations that threaten self-control. After all, pederasty was likely an institutionalized practice in Sparta.⁴⁴ In his *Lycurgus*, Plutarch documented the training typical of the Spartan youth, and that at twelve he would be "favored with the society of lovers from among the reputable men."⁴⁵ An older *erastes* would be assigned to all boys, not just the most handsome as in Crete, and aided their *eromenoi* in stealing and surviving under the surveillance of the *agoge*, with occasionally multiple *erastai* sharing the same beloved, and developing friendships with one another out of common love.⁴⁶ The assignment of lovers in Spartan society supported the fundamental project to bind the city communally: rather than being raised by fathers, Spartiates are raised by their instructors and *erastai*.⁴⁷ Such relationships may have continued even into the twenties of an *eromenos*, as Plutarch suggests: "Those who were under thirty years of age did not go into the market place at all, but had their household wants supplied at the hands of their kinsfolk and lovers."⁴⁸ Thus in Sparta the *erastes* served as both pedagogue and caretaker of his beloved. Pederastic ideals in classical Athens

⁴¹ Vidal-Naquet, 147, 151.

⁴² Xenophon, *Agésilas*, trans. E.C. Marchant and G.W. Bowerstock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 5.4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5.5.

⁴⁴ Paul Cartledge, "Politics of Spartan Pederasty," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 207, no. 27 (1981), 22.

⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), 17.1.

⁴⁶ Cartledge, 21-22.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Plutarch, 25.1

likened similar attributes.

Pederasty in Classical Athens – Ideal Views

Pederasty's practice in classical Greece is perhaps best preserved through Athenian literary and archaeological sources. In regards to the former, the writings of philosophers often remain in high esteem, and are sought after for conjecturing an accurate physical or mental reality of the institution within a classical context. This remains a mistake. While certain realities may be gleaned from these sources, especially Plato, it is important to announce at the outset that philosophers' perspectives and views on pederasty reflected a distinct population's view of the practice,⁴⁹ and that such sources should not necessarily be taken at face value to extrapolate a universal ideal. That does not mean that none of the perspectives or ideals posited in Plato's *Symposium*, or any other philosophical writings, were not shared by wider audiences; for example, Pausanias' speech likely demonstrated the prevailing social ideals for pederasty of his day.⁵⁰ A number of these ideals are shared in surviving visual arts from the period found in vase paintings. Nevertheless, pederasty certainly existed to satisfy the sexual desire of Athenian adult men.⁵¹ The institution's pedagogical capabilities to transmit civic and martial virtues served a deeper purpose to complement the practice's baser, pleasure-seeking realities.

Pederastic relationships existed along a fundamentally asymmetrical paradigm between an older, typically unmarried man, and an adolescent youth younger than eighteen.⁵² The older *erastai* didn't possess free reign, however. A number of legal rights and protections shielded the adolescent boys from rape by slaves, abusive teachers or coaches, and even their fathers' friends.⁵³ These conventions limited courters primarily to the middle or upper class man between twenty and thirty⁵⁴ who had both the time and expenditure to win the affections of younger lads.⁵⁵ These younger *eromenoi* often remained the point of attack by

⁴⁹ For a more thorough critique see John J. Winkler, "Unnatural Acts: Erotic Protocols in Artemidoros' *Dream Analysis*," in *Constraints of Desire* (Routledge: New York, 1990), 18-19.

⁵⁰ Cantarella and Lear, 19; Dover 82-83.

⁵¹ David M. Halperin, "The Democratic Body: Prostitution and Citizenship in Classical Athens," in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (Routledge: New York, 1990), 91-92.

⁵² David M. Halperin, "Two Views of Greek Love: Harald Patzer and Michel Foucault," in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (Routledge: New York, 1990), 55; Cantarella and Lear, 2-5.

⁵³ Halperin, "The Democratic Body," 93.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 94; Dover, 150-151.

contemporary comics, typically from characters of lower classes,⁵⁶ thus amplifying the cultural tension of beloveds being viewed as *kinaidoi*, i.e. effeminate men. Winkler contended that in ancient Athens, “Male life is warfare, that masculinity is a duty and hard-won achievement, and that the temptation to desert one’s side is very great.”⁵⁷ An adolescent, who would one day be a man and citizen in Athenian society, needed to protect his reputation even at such a transitional age by evading actions that could be perceived as “effeminate.” Thus the paragon of the “frigid lover” took hold, described by Sokrates in Xenophon’s *Symposium*: “For a boy does not share in the pleasure of intercourse as a woman does, but looks on sober at another intoxicated by love.”⁵⁸ By displaying indifference or displeasure in his submissive role, the boy does not warrant a legitimate criticism of effeminacy, and in a sense preserves his masculinity. An adolescent presenting himself as a sexually lustful could shame not only himself, but even his lover, as Theognis relates: “Boy, because of your lustful behavior, you have lost your good sense, and you have become a source of shame to my friends.”⁵⁹ More importantly, an adolescent’s loose behavior risks reflecting a deeper covetous character, as in the case of the fourth-century citizen Timarchos.⁶⁰ Timarchos was put on trial for allegations of prostituting himself in youth, and if guilty this meant all the laws and policies he passed when an adult in the Assembly would have been deemed legally null.⁶¹ Lustful behavior by an adolescent thus had devastating social and political repercussions for his future. These challenges and responsibilities required the genesis of certain social ideals as a means of protecting them. These ideals catered towards instructing the youth on the proper character of an Athenian citizen of his status, e.g. that it is womanly, and therefore un-citizen like, to display pleasure at domination of another man, but that pleasure in dominating another is perfectly respectable. Pederasty therefore served as an adequate institution for informing adolescent Athenian males of the requisite customs and expectations for an adult citizen. Military life being central to the Athenian citizen, it is of little surprise that martial virtues would ideally be transmitted as well.

The speeches by Pausanias and Phaedrus in Plato’s *Symposium* allude to the pederastic transmission of military virtue. Plato’s view of pederasty as a pedagogical institution is a clear adoption of the archaic mindset. A hundred

⁵⁶ Dover, 146-149.

⁵⁷ Winkler, “Laying Down the Law,” 50.

⁵⁸ Xenophon, *Symposium*, trans. by E.C. Marchant, O.J. Todd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 649.

⁵⁹ Theognis, *Greek Elegiac Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, trans. Douglas E. Gerber (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 369.

⁶⁰ Winkler, “Laying Down the Law,” 56-57

⁶¹ Halperin, “The Democratic Body,” 95.

years earlier, Theognis of Megara related the lover's mission from his own perspective: "It is with kind thoughts for you that I shall give you advice such as I myself, Cyrnus, learned from noble men. Be sensible and do not, at the cost of shameful or unjust acts, seize for yourself prestige, success or wealth...do not seek the company of base men, but always cling to the noble."⁶² His remarks on adoring what is noble and shunning what is "base" shares a similar line of thought to Plato's Phaedrus and Pausanias, who clarify that pederasty is a means at attaining that which is "virtuous." Phaedrus proclaims that the greatest good for an adolescent is "a gentle lover," and for a lover, "a boy to love."⁶³ What perfects this good is that it provides guidance for the beloved, and "nothing imparts this guidance as well as love." According to Phaedrus' paradigm, the ideal *erastes* must teach his *eromenos* what is and is not shameful.⁶⁴ The *erastes* achieves this by refusing to act cowardly at the risk of being embarrassed in front of his beloved, and through reproaching his *eromenos* for cowardice, thus teaching his beloved resolute courage.⁶⁵ Phaedrus concludes this summation of virtue by decreeing it would create the most powerful army:

"If only there were a way to start a city or an army made up of lovers and the boys they love! Theirs would be the best possible system of society, for they would hold back from all that is shameful, and seek honor in each other's eyes. Even a few of them in battle side by side, would conquer all the world, I'd say. For a man in love would never allow his loved one, of all people, to see him leaving ranks or dropping weapons. He'd rather die a thousand deaths!"⁶⁶

An additional factor to forming this perfect army is that a true lover would not abandon his beloved should he be found in danger,⁶⁷ i.e. in the heat of battle, thus there would never be a threat of soldiers breaking the phalanx line out of fear. The Sacred Band of Thebes, an army of three hundred professional soldiers, was composed of pairs of *erastai* and *eromenoi* under the same presumption that lovers would fight harder to protect their beloved, whereas the latter would do the same to avoid shaming their lovers.⁶⁸ Plutarch suggested the Band never lost a battle until Chaeronea in 338 B.C.⁶⁹ The Sacred Band existed at the same time as Plato, although there is minimal indication that either was aware of the other. Nevertheless, Thebes' manifestation of Plato's idealism indicates a correlation between pederasty and a successful military. Phaedrus'

⁶² Theognis, 19-38.

⁶³ Plato, 178C.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 178D.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 178E.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 179A-179B.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Lives That Made Greek History*, trans. Pamela Mensch (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012), 200-201.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

remarks alone hearken on the first lines of the martial Ephebic Oath: “I will not disgrace these sacred arms, and I will not desert the comrade beside me wherever I shall be stationed in a battle line.”⁷⁰ Thus the proper lover not only teaches his beloved the proper conduct to avoid shame and cowardice, i.e. to maintain one’s position in the phalanx lines, but if hypothetically fighting beside one another, he would inspire this assurance. Pausanias’ speech enlivens another notable civic-martial virtue that the *erastes* would impart on his *eromenos*: loyalty.

Pausanias’ description of divine love elucidates how it teaches the young *eromenos* the ways and means of loyalty. The speaker first divides love into a vulgar variant and an ideal form.⁷¹ The vulgar lover “loves the body rather than the soul,” and once the *eromenos* either grows too older or ugly the *erastes* “flies off and away.”⁷² Although writing in a far later period, the Greek poet Strato provides numerous exempla of what may have been “vulgar” love, composing epigrams about abandoning boys for acquiring hair on their chins, thighs, or buttocks, and speaking nothing of their character.⁷³ According to Pausanias, this sort of lover is a weaker man than one who loves loyally: “How different from this is a man who loves the right sort of character, and who remains its lover for life, attached as he is to something that is permanent?”⁷⁴ As was common in Athenian practice, the virtuous lover engaged in prolonged courting and chasing of a beloved, and the latter would resist as a test of the lover’s character.⁷⁵ Loyalty and subservience to the *erastes* would only be granted when the youth deemed him an appropriate teacher of wisdom and virtue.⁷⁶ Teaching an adolescent to appropriately evaluate a lover’s character overlaps with the evaluative responsibilities of Athenian citizens, including the scrutiny test of public officials, and the electing and examination of effective military generals.⁷⁷ Moreover, the loyalty that the *eromenos* devotes to his lover after the test’s conclusion is also fundamental to the Ephebic Oath. Pausanias charges that the beloved who accepts a lover believing he is a virtuous man that may impart wisdom, although “in reality the man is horrible,” the beloved is still admirable because he took on the lover out of a desire for virtue.⁷⁸ By the same token, the young *ephebe* swears to “obey those who for the time being exercise

⁷⁰ See Note 1 above.

⁷¹ Plato, 183E.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Lear and Cantarella, 6.

⁷⁴ Plato, 183E.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 184A-E.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ridley, 513-514.

⁷⁸ Plato, 185B.

sway reasonably and the established laws”⁷⁹ despite neither necessarily establishing those laws nor electing those in power. The *ephebe*’s loyalty remains to something deeper, to the city, much like the ideal *eromenos* is loyal not to the lover, but to the virtue he may teach.

Military ideals surrounding pederastic relationships are also found in visual evidence. Surviving fifth and fourth century Greek vase paintings preserve certain ideals, and perhaps moments of reality, through depictions of pederastic courtship.⁸⁰ A notable aspect of courtship iconography includes depictions of hunting and athletics, either separate or as one.⁸¹ Such scenes include gift giving on the part of the *erastes* to his *eromenos*, e.g. laurels in the case of athletics,⁸² and various game, such as hares, from hunts.⁸³ Hunting scenes in particular, especially of a lover gifting his beloved a hare, have been interpreted as metaphoric transmission of hunting skills in contrast to the ambivalent notion that it is a meta-view on pederastic relationships being hunts themselves.⁸⁴ Hunting as a means of military training survives in a number of ancient literary sources across the fifth and fourth centuries.⁸⁵ More importantly, such sources present hunting “as central to social cohesion and as part of the fabric of the *polis*.”⁸⁶ Thus if the metaphorical iconography of an *erastes* teaching his *eromenos* hunting is to be believed, such depictions render the pederastic relationship as a means of teaching the adolescent military and civic assets. Despite the widespread survival of hunting courtship scenes, direct visual manifestations of military instruction survive in sparser numbers.

Lear and Cantarella identified seven vases of particular note of explicit pederastic couples integrated in a heroic military context.⁸⁷ However, the writers also make an important and agreeable note that many vases utilizing war iconography may involve “pederastic implications,” but that inexplicit evidence surrounding the relationship between the scene’s figures renders it challenging to reach such a conclusion.⁸⁸ Amongst the overtly pederastic martial vases are a number of conventions that correspond with literary notions of pederasty and military virtue. Paintings include arming scenes in which the older *erastes* converses with a dressing *eromenos*, or in some cases hands him his

⁷⁹ See Note 1 above.

⁸⁰ Lear and Cantarella, 39.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 95-96.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 97; Judith M. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 2001), 11-15.

⁸⁶ Barringer, 14-15.

⁸⁷ Lear and Cantarella, 97.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

equipment.⁸⁹ Such iconography is reminiscent of Strabo's Cretan anecdote regarding coming-of-age rituals in which the older *erastes* imparts military equipment to his younger beloved.⁹⁰ Whether or not the vase scenes are depicting a similar ritual, i.e. gifting rather than mere handing of the equipment, remains ambiguous, although it is worth noting that *erastes* gift-giving scenes are amongst the most common type of pederastic iconography.⁹¹ Two other martial scenes of note are vases depicting winged Eros in arms.⁹² Both images depict Eros as a nude, beardless youth, in one scenario carrying spear and shield in a manner of delivery, while in the other he is explicitly blowing a war-trumpet. Moreover, Miller cites three scenes, two of which derive from the late-fifth to mid-fourth centuries of Eros, or multiple Erotes, delivering weaponry to Achilles in reference to Homer's *Iliad*.⁹³ Miller contends that the inclusion of these erotic deities in the scene, which are absent in Homer's poem, serves as a nod to the erotic relationship between Achilles and his deceased companion Patroklos;⁹⁴ the pair would've been conceived as such by Athenian audiences in the late-fifth century when the craters in question were created.⁹⁵ Both the delivery of arms and the blowing of the trumpet by Eros, god of desire, invoke the language of Phaedrus' speech of an elite army of lovers fighting beside one another: only Eros can lead a man to perform at his best in battle.⁹⁶

Pederasty's function as a means of social pedagogy has thus far been described, with additional emphasis on the instruction of martial mores to the younger *eromenos*. Needless to say, this form of the pederastic relationship has been set forth as a prescriptive, ideal variant, as localized in fifth and fourth century Athens. However, in order to fully flesh Athenian pederasty's comparison to the *ephebeia* as an ideological training ground, it must be explored as enacting the same notion of social inversion expectant of the *ephebes*.

Pederasty as an Adolescent's Rite of Passage

Pederasty as an institution predated and coexisted with the Athenian *ephebeia* and may have functioned alongside as both an adolescent and military transitional social system. As already discussed, the virtues laid out by Phaedrus

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 98-100.

⁹⁰ See Note 31 above.

⁹¹ Lear and Cantarella, 39, 72-87.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 103-105.

⁹³ Stella G. Miller, "Eros and the Arms of Achilles," *American Journal of Archaeology* 90, no. 2 (1986), 160-161.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 165-170.

⁹⁵ Plato, 180A-180B; Lear and Cantarella, 101-103; Dover, 41.

⁹⁶ See Note 66 above.

and Pausanias in Plato's *Symposium* can be highlighted against the military virtues set forth in the Ephebic Oath: courage, standing one's ground, and loyalty. However, the installation of these virtues into the Athenian *eromenos* likely would have predated their swearing of the oath given that boys would be courted anywhere between thirteen and seventeen,⁹⁷ and *ephebes* swore at eighteen.⁹⁸ Ideally, a function of pederastic practice in classical Athens was to satisfy the adolescent's transition not only by imparting on him certain virtues central to the hoplite ethos, but also by subjecting him to a transitional ritual.

A connection between pederasty and the *ephebeia* is that both functioned as adolescent inversion rituals for the transitioning adult. As the *ephebe* is an inversion of the ideal hoplite, pederasty inverts the ideal adult man's status as a dominant figure into a submissive character. Although the ideal of a secluded woman in ancient Athens manifested, if ever, only amongst the upper classes, the wider social reality produced laws that prevented men from sexually assaulting or seducing wedded or unmarried women.⁹⁹ In a similar vein, Athenian youths were also protected from seducing men via laws and social dicta, but unlike a woman could be courted freely without a guardian's permission. This freedom required greater initiative on the part of the Athenian youth: in an ideal setting, he would submit to the advances of a lover, and subject himself to passivity if and only if he deemed said lover worthy.¹⁰⁰ The social perception, though not always the reality, was that the youth had no sexual motive in this relationship: in theory a respectable Athenian male would not desire to be sexually submissive.¹⁰¹ Displaying such desire meant slipping into the role of a womanly man, a *kinaidos*, which existed at a pole opposite to the model Athenian man.¹⁰² However, willfully partaking as a submissive partner, but distancing oneself from presenting carnal desire, is a social paradox perhaps parallel to the dressing up of Athenian *ephebes* as women. As Vidal-Naquet clarifies: "Dressing up as a woman, as in the procession at the Oschophoria, was a means of dramatizing the fact that a young man had reached the age of virility and marriage."¹⁰³ This notion is reflected in myth when Achilles is disguised as a girl yet reveals his true identity "at the sight of a weapon," as well as in the Cretan custom of the man abducting and "raping" a coming of age boy: both stories reflect the transition from womanly character/subjection to the receiving of arms.¹⁰⁴ Quoting Vernant, Vidal-Naquet

⁹⁷ See Note 30 above.

⁹⁸ Ridley, 155.

⁹⁹ Halperin, "The Democratic Body," 92.

¹⁰⁰ Plato, 184C-184E.

¹⁰¹ Halperin, "The Democratic Body," 93-94.

¹⁰² Winkler, "Laying Down the Law," 50.

¹⁰³ Vidal-Naquet, 116.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

argued the purpose of the Athenian adolescent's rites of passage were to mark "his accession to the condition of a warrior;" in order to become a soldier one first needs to masquerade as the opposite.¹⁰⁵ Pederasty functioned along the same masquerading technique. By submitting to an older lover, the *eromenos* is in semblance of a woman when ideally the relationship is a means of benefiting himself by accruing martial and civic virtues via a lover who already exists as a hoplite and citizen. Thereafter, the young Athenian enters the *ephebeia* and exists in another inverted system that upon completion grants him entry into a lifetime of phalanx service.¹⁰⁶ Whereas perfect pederasty teaches the Athenian youth virtues, the *ephebeia* cements them in practice and oath, both systems resulting in the full hoplite citizen.

Despite pederasty's ideal dimensions, the custom in practice strayed and thus warranted ridicule and criticism. Aristophanes' comedies tend to point their attacks of the practice on the *eromenoi* rather than the *erastai*,¹⁰⁷ under the assumption that "all homosexual submission is mercenary."¹⁰⁸ Such attacks ignore the virtuous possibilities extant in Plato,¹⁰⁹ likely because Aristophanes sourced his comedy and criticism on active reality of Athenian life rather than its theoretical aspirations. The playwright's *Clouds* perhaps best illustrates this criticism through his debate between Better Argument and Worse Argument. Better Argument claims that boys in the past acted with modesty and prudence, and that, "Not a sound, not even a mutter, should be heard from a boy."¹¹⁰ It is worth noting this attribute's similarity to the silence that ideal women are commended for in Pericles' funeral oration,¹¹¹ further strengthening the connection between coming of age boys and women. The notable aspect of the old boys' modesty manifested in their conduct around their trainers, in which they would "cross their thighs when sitting, so they wouldn't reveal anything that would torment the onlookers; and when they stood up again, they had to smooth the sand and take care not to leave behind an image of their pubescence for their lovers to find."¹¹² What's more, boys used to not oil themselves or simper in order to sexually arouse their lovers, or waste their days in bathhouses instead of exercising.¹¹³ Worse Argument prevails by exposing Better Argument for what it is, a thing of the past, and that everyone from the politicians to the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 140.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 141; Ridley, 179-180.

¹⁰⁷ Dover, 135-153.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 147.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Aristophanes, *Clouds*, trans. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 965.

¹¹¹ Thucydides, 2.46.

¹¹² Aristophanes, 971-976.

¹¹³ Ibid., 977-983; 1052-54.

audience is a *euruproktos*: lit. a wide-assed (i.e. sodomized) man, a conclusion that Better Argument concurs with.¹¹⁴ The issue at hand is not only that boys are necessarily submitting themselves to a passive role, but that *everyone* is, including adult citizen men. Moreover, the young have abandoned the ideal, “frigid” stance of a beloved as in the past, and thus overstepped the bounds of ritual adolescence. No longer do they *seem* as women by being silent and modest, but instead they are publicly behaving womanly through lustfully approaching lovers, a sharp point of distinction between a respectable *eromenos* and a true woman.¹¹⁵ This is to say that Aristophanes’ critique of pederasty is not so much of the institution itself, as of the carnal form present to him, which had forsaken the pedagogical, virtuous model of the past.¹¹⁶ Curiously, vase painting contemporary to the *Clouds*’ writing began to emerge depicting same-aged youths engaged in the typical pederastic setting. This convention became the norm in vase artwork starting around the mid-fifth century.¹¹⁷ Although vase paintings should not necessarily be used as manifestations of social reality,¹¹⁸ this trend in convention may nevertheless reflect Athenian pederastic practices and preferences shifting away from social pedagogy.¹¹⁹ These scenes do not corroborate Aristophanes’ explicit criticisms of the sexually wanton youths of his day, but they do evoke the notion that even adult men might be *euruproktoi* through destruction of the traditional pederastic practice. An *erastes* no longer needed to be a bearded, older citizen, but could be a smooth-faced *ephebe*; who’s to say a bearded citizen could not act as a passive *eromenos*? Both Aristophanes’ critiques and the shift in vase painting suggest a collapse of traditional pederastic conventions that pinned themselves to a pedagogical civic-social function in favor of the institution’s sexual foundations. Without this pedagogical focus, the “modern” practice of pederasty that both Aristophanes and vase paintings depict harmed the adolescent citizen and the state by withholding from the youth a virtue education that supplemented his ephebic training. Instead of teaching boys to be courageous, stand their ground, maintain a critical eye, and loyalty,¹²⁰ they behave womanly to their fellow *ephebes*, and learn of pleasure only.

Conclusion

Pederasty as an institution served as means of pleasure for the benefit of

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1080-1100.

¹¹⁵ Winkler, “Laying Down the Law,” 54; Halperin, “The Democratic Body,” 93-97.

¹¹⁶ Lear and Cantarella, 20-21.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-25.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁰ Plato, 178D-179B, 184A-185C.

the older *erastes*, while the *eromenos*' pleasure or displeasure remained subordinate. Nevertheless, the Greeks were too pragmatic to illustrate a sexual institution without a legitimate social function, and the pedagogical opportunities in relationships between adult and coming of age men proved too promising to ignore. Any military society, whether ancient or modern, necessitates a physical and ideological dimension of training;¹²¹ pederasty in ideal form, and in practice during the archaic period, seemed able to produce the latter.

Pederasty in classical Athens served as both an adolescent rite and a means at martial pedagogy reserved to the middle and upper classes of society. The money required of an *erastes* to court a boy, and the time required by a boy in order to be courted, meant that it served as a practice best suited for the hoplite class of citizens.¹²² While hypothetically a pederastic relationship between members of the lower classes is not impossible, the institution's harsh treatment by comic writers, especially as a custom of the wealthy, paints the notion that in public consciousness it was a practice associated with the rich.¹²³ Moreover, even its treatment in philosophical texts indicates it as a reservation of the hoplite-citizens: Phaedrus' speech specifically indicates references to phalanx warfare, not naval combat,¹²⁴ which was predominantly constituted by the Athenian poor.¹²⁵ The lower classes consistently held those above with a critical eye,¹²⁶ and in the Athenian democracy such surveillance was a paramount principle,¹²⁷ thus the need for pederasty to legitimate itself as a system beneficial to the city-state, if at the expense of the relationship's fundamentally corporeal and gratifying pleasures.¹²⁸ In contrast, the *ephebeia* applied to all citizens regardless of wealth.¹²⁹ Thus pederasty's martial ideals were focused to apply to a specific type of soldier, i.e. the hoplite, who would have such mores transplanted into him again in the *ephebeia*'s generalized setting.

Pederasty and the Athenian *ephebeia* shared a number of attributes that accentuated the martial focus of the former's pedagogical ideals. Both institutions could be viewed as a form of adolescent rites via social inversion: with the *ephebeia*, the young warrior serves as a form of "anti-hoplite," whereas

¹²¹ Steinbock, 312-313.

¹²² Dover, 149-150.

¹²³ Ibid., 145-149.

¹²⁴ Plato, 178C-179B.

¹²⁵ Pseudo-Xenophon, *The Constitution of the Athenians*, translated by Robin Osborne (London: London Association of Classical Teachers, 2004), 1.2.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 1.4-1.5.

¹²⁷ Ridley, 514-515.

¹²⁸ Halperin, "The Democratic Body," 91-92.

¹²⁹ Vidal-Naquet, 147.

as an *eromenos*, a boy behaves passively, perhaps in semblance of a woman, in opposition to the virile, dominant man he is later meant to be. Both the *ephebe* and the *eromenos* engage in these inversions as a means of grasping proper citizen and soldier values by experiencing and transitioning from a state of what is improper to one that is not. These institutions fundamentally impart on the hoplite-to-be a warrior ethos expectant of them in the phalanx, and as a citizen at large. Such virtues include loyalty, courage, the will to stand firm in combat, and in the case of pederasty, vigilance. Nevertheless, the warrior ideals that pederasty in classical Athens aspired for, as adopted from archaic practice, in a way prove contradictory. The vigilant eye expected of the *eromenos* and the Athenian citizen could just so easily be placed on homoerotic pairs. Comics such as Aristophanes could pinpoint the hypocrisy of an institution that espouses divine ideals but is fundamentally a means at bodily pleasure reserved for the well to do, and which even threatens the masculinity of the adolescent party. Allowing this hypocrisy to become so blatant, whereas Sparta and Thebes masterfully hid it as a means to a successful military machine, may be seen as an Athenian shortcoming, or perhaps as a testament to their freedom to critique and improve their society.

SCHEMING, SCANDAL, THREATS, PRESS, AND DISUNION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1800

BY WILLIAM HOGAN

On February 11th, 1801, the President of the Senate stood before the combined House of Representatives and Senate and announced the electoral votes for the presidential election of 1800. Those in the room and Americans at large were not surprised, as many had predicted the count with relative certainty in December.¹ The President of the Senate, Republican Thomas Jefferson, had tied 73 to 73 with his running mate, Aaron Burr; the pair eked out a victory over John Adams and Charles C. Pinckney (65 and 64 votes, respectively).² They would now duel each other in a lame-duck, Federalist House that regarded Jefferson as an atheistic radical and Burr as an opportunistic grifter. The intrigue and scandal leading up to this moment and six-day battle that followed drove the fledgling United States to the edge of disunion.

From December 1800 to February 1801, the most divisive months of the presidential election of 1800, Republican accusations of foul play on the part of the Hamiltonian Federalists were largely unfounded. Such accusations centered around a plot to rob Jefferson or the Republicans of the Presidency, motivating even prominent Republican leaders to anticipate or plan for violence and disunion. Despite fervent rumors, the actions of prominent Federalists were a telling sign of some moderation. In fact, Federalist actions during the election revealed a greater capacity for toleration than most contemporary opponents of the Federalists would have been willing to believe. Thus, the events of December to February demonstrated that notions of animosity between the leadership of the two parties and the scandals associated with the election were largely overstated by contemporary sources.

Leading up to the eventual electoral tie, the summer and fall of 1800 were rife with partisan tension punctuated by the specter of war with France. As Republicans feared the continued development of a pro-British aristocratic elite and assaults upon the free press under another

¹ "On the Election of President," *The Spectator*, (New York, N.Y.), December 31, 1800.

² "Wednesday, February 11, 1801," in *Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875*, Vol. 3, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States*, (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 2003), 799.

Adams administration, so too did the Federalists fear the importation of radicalism from France and the disruption of America's growing commercial might under Jefferson. Adams' Sedition Act had been used to convict no fewer than ten Americans, editors of Republican newspapers who severely criticized his administration.³ On the other side of the spectrum, Federalists spent the last years of the Adams administration preparing for war with France and feared that, if elected president, Jefferson would compromise American interests to support France. In short, each party believed the victory of their opponent would undermine the Constitution, liberty, and American sovereignty.

Partisan newspapers thrived in this atmosphere. During the election, Republican and Federalist publications strengthened the divide within the American populace through opinion pieces and even used their platforms to attack other publications. Federalist papers matter-of-factly referred to Republicans as "Jacobins" while Republican papers labeled Federalists the "British faction," not even meriting the title of 'party.'⁴ The implications of such labels were obvious, their readers ought to view the opposing party as un-American, aligned with foreign actors for personal gain. Furthermore, partisan newspapers routinely made outrageous claims that heightened anxieties leading up to the election. One Federalist paper went so far as to predict that, if Jefferson be elected, the "soil will be soaked with blood," a concerningly fantastic prediction sure to stoke Hamiltonian Federalist worries.⁵ Many Hamiltonians fervently believed that Jefferson was irreligious, beholden only to the masses. One Federalist paper even claimed that Jefferson had no God but "The People."⁶ Likewise, prominent Republican papers made outrageous (but more grounded) claims about their Federalist opponents. Pennsylvania's *Herald of Liberty* claimed that Hamilton, the "evil genius of America," planned to supplant Adams with C.C. Pinckney, who would serve as a puppet for Hamilton.⁷ Such Republican accusations tended to

³ Alan J. Farber, "Reflections on the Sedition Act of 1800," *American Bar Association Journal*, 62, (1976): 325.

⁴ "For the Gazette of the United States", *Gazette of the United States*, (Philadelphia, Penn.) December 3, 1800; *Telegraph and Daily Advertiser*, (Baltimore, Md.), January 10, 1801.

⁵ *Connecticut Courant*, (Hartford, Conn.), September 20, 1800.

⁶ *Philadelphia Gazette*, (Philadelphia, Penn.), May 5, 1800.

⁷ "A Letter of John Adams," *Herald of Liberty*, (Washington, Penn.), September 15, 1800.

be less inflammatory than their Federalist counterparts. Regardless, the partisan press fanned the flames of discord and actively depicted the two parties as incompatible. Such notions of incompatibility were compounded by reports of scandal, including targeted attacks on the characters of political opponents often used to establish moral certainty to contempt for the other party.

The election of 1800 was fraught with scandal; Federalist scandals printed in Republican papers heightened tensions that split the party between Adams and Hamilton. These scandals ran the gamut of political intrigue, from fallacious personal attacks to truthful reports of correspondence. The relationship between Alexander Hamilton and the Republican *Aurora* of Philadelphia perfectly characterized this phenomenon. The *Aurora* was a thorn in Hamilton's side, publishing rumor after rumor of the leader of the Federalist opposition. After Aaron Burr's New York Republicans trounced Hamilton in state legislature elections of May 1800, the *Aurora* reported that Hamilton was at the head of a scheme to use the lame-duck Federalist legislature to change the method by which New York selected its electors.⁸ This shocking rumor was true. Hamilton had petitioned Governor John Jay to enact his plan for "the great cause of social order."⁹ Hamilton's shortsighted plan would have used the recently defeated Federalist state legislature to remove the power of elector selection from the legislature; instead, New York would select its electors by popular vote within congressional districts. This would have ensured that a fair portion of New York's electors would remain Federalist, a clear subversion of the May election. The *Aurora* once again set upon Hamilton in October, when it informed its readers about Hamilton's pamphlet decrying John Adams, three days before it was published.¹⁰ Despite these notable examples of partisan attempts to discredit opponents, most rumored scandals amounted to very little. When the election became bogged down in the House of Representatives, Republican papers were flush with frenzied accusations of sedition and civil war. The *Aurora* even mistakenly informed its readers that Federalist militias had assembled in Philadelphia to challenge Jefferson.¹¹

⁸ *Aurora General Advertiser*, (Philadelphia), May 7, 1800.

⁹ Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, May 7, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 24: November 1799 – June 1800, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 466.

¹⁰ *Aurora General Advertiser*, (Philadelphia, PA), October 21, 1800.

¹¹ "From the Washington Federalist," *Gazette of the United States*, February 16, 1800.

Given these instances of scandal and panic, it comes as no surprise that deep anxiety accompanied the election among America's politically involved and increasingly literate population.

The Federalist Party's failure to unite around a single candidate was certainly a key indicator of the heightened anxiety of 1800. Discord among the Federalists impeded efforts to present a united front against Jefferson. Tension between the moderate pro-Adams Federalists and the Hamiltonians peaked after Adams fired McHenry and Pickering, both Hamiltonian acolytes, from his cabinet in May 1800. Adams once again infuriated Hamilton in June, when he liquidated the Provisional Army, effectively relieving Hamilton of military command.¹² These events irrevocably set Hamilton against Adams' reelection, even stating that he would accept Jefferson as Vice President if Pinckney was President.¹³ The fallout prompted one Republican paper to claim that three parties now existed: "The Republicans, the Adamites, and the Pickeronians. The latter party consists of those who have leagued with Hamilton."¹⁴ The Federalist rift was again widened on October 24th, when Hamilton published a pamphlet that tried to slash Adams' reelection to ribbons. Hamilton charged that Adams' personal instability and "ungovernable temper" made him unfit for reelection.¹⁵ Republicans delighted in the discord and the *Aurora* quickly published full copies of the letter.¹⁶ While Federalists had conservative reactions to the pamphlet (no doubt trying to preserve party unity), Republican condemnation of Hamilton's vanity and pettiness was uniform. The editor of the *Aurora* even mused that Hamilton had damaged his own character more than the *Aurora* ever could.¹⁷ Ironically, Hamilton argued that the letter did not go far enough;

¹² Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2004): 616.

¹³ Alexander Hamilton to Theodore Sedgwick, May 10, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 24: November 1799 – June 1800, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 474-75.

¹⁴ *Herald of Liberty*, June 2, 1800.

¹⁵ "Letter from Alexander Hamilton, Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq. President of the United States," October 24, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 222.

¹⁶ Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 177.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

alas, he wrote, “the Federal Stomach would not bear a stronger dose.”¹⁸ Months of internal disunion weakened the Federalists; consequentially, the party entered December unsure if Adams or Pinckney would carry more electors.

Despite obvious division among the Federalists, Republican electors failed to give Jefferson a lead over Burr, causing a tie and sparking a constitutional crisis. In December, the last state electors voted, and it became clear that the Republicans did not drop a vote from Burr to ensure Jefferson would not tie with his running mate. The tie between Jefferson and Burr has been attributed to two possibilities. Either Republican electors toed the party line with such discipline that no man dropped a vote or Republican electors distrusted their counterparts and voted uniformly, expecting for some Republicans to be faithless electors. This second theory, championed by Joanne Freeman in “Corruption and Compromise in the Election of 1800,” is especially intriguing, as it is the best explanation for why not a single man dropped a vote from Burr.¹⁹ Conversely, disciplined Federalist electors voted for Adams across the board and dropped a single vote from Pinckney, dashing Hamilton’s plans.²⁰ Regardless of why it came to be, the tie opened the door to scheming within the Federalist-controlled House, scheming that prominent Federalists fought to prevent.

Federalists in the House and within the party at-large feared the election of Jefferson; to prevent it, they had two legal recourses, the consequences of which would have done irreparable damage to the dignity of their party and to the Constitution. The least destructive and most popular path to defeating Jefferson was to elect Aaron Burr. This was not farfetched since each of the 16 state delegations had one vote and the Federalists controlled most of the state delegations. The second and most destructive path was to delay a vote until inauguration day, March 4th, at which time the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate, a Federalist, would become President until a new election was held. This option was

¹⁸ Alexander Hamilton to James McHenry, November 13, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 236.

¹⁹ Joanne B. Freeman, “Corruption and Compromise in the Election of 1800,” in *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic*, ed. James P. Horn, Jan E. Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002): 106.

²⁰ “Wednesday, February 11, 1801,” in *Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates*.

seriously considered by Hamiltonian Federalists and seriously feared by Republicans, as it was questionably legal under a 1792 law that laid out how to select a President should one be removed.²¹ On December 19th, 1800, Senator Gouverneur Morris of New York wrote to Hamilton and suggested that this plan was being discussed within Federalist circles.²² Four days earlier, Jefferson wrote to Burr and informed him that he feared that should they tie, the Federalists would prevent a vote in the House and “let the government devolve on a President of the Senate.”²³ Even sensationalist newspapers caught wind of such rumors, claiming that Federalists would force Jefferson out of office and select one of their own, as the *Guardian of Liberty* predicted, to “become President of the United States.”²⁴ Clearly, there were substantiated claims that Jefferson’s election would be contested in the House of Representatives.

The result of either course of action would have been disastrous for the dignity of the Federalist Party, the sanctity of the Constitution, and the unity of the nation. It would also lend great weight to the narrative that the Federalists would do anything to win. Republicans across the country carefully calculated responses to both Federalist paths. Governor Thomas McKean of Pennsylvania and Governor James Monroe of Virginia were fully prepared to mobilize the state militias to march on the capitol, should Burr be elected or no vote take place. Monroe went so far as to send a militia officer to scout out the federal armory in Richmond, to seize weapons should the need arise.²⁵ In a March 21st letter to Jefferson, McKean admitted that plans were in place to raise “arms for upwards of twenty thousand ... and an order would have been issued for the arresting and bringing to justice every member of Congress ... who

²¹ Hugh Henry Brackenridge to Thomas Jefferson, January 19, 1801. in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 32, 1 June 1800 to 16 February 1801, ed. Barbara B. Oberg, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005): 484.

²² Gouverneur Morris to Alexander Hamilton, December 19, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 266-268.

²³ Thomas Jefferson to Aaron Burr, December 15, 1800, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 32, 1 June 1800 to 16 February 1801, ed. Barbara B. Oberg (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005): 307.

²⁴ *The Guardian of Liberty*, (Newport, R.I.), February 7, 1801.

²⁵ James R. Sharp, *American Politics in The Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993): 270.

should have been concerned in the treason.”²⁶ Clearly, this would have been tantamount to a rebellion and underscores the anxiety that hung over Republican states in February 1801. Jefferson himself informed James Madison that if Burr was elected, it “would be resisted by arms” in many Republican states.²⁷ However, even if Burr were to be elected, Jefferson refused to entertain the idea of civil war. In a separate letter, he told Monroe that any success at denying him the presidency would be met with “a convention to reorganize the government, and to amend it,” he would “not receive the government on capitulation.”²⁸

Despite the image that Republican newspapers painted of him and his allies, Hamilton took it upon himself to persuade Federalists in the House to not oppose Jefferson’s election. After his near-miss at dividing the Federalist party in October, Hamilton came to his senses and moderated his position. To the surprise of his compatriots and the ignorance of Republican papers, Hamilton championed Jefferson’s election. He dismissed the President Pro-Tempore scheme as absurd and worked to prevent Burr from being elected. His reason for choosing Jefferson was quite succinctly stated in one of his many letters to Federalist representatives: Burr “has no principle public or private. As a politician his sole spring of action is an inordinate ambition.”²⁹ Hamilton knew Burr as an opportunist without moral convictions. This is not to say that Hamilton changed his opinion on Jefferson, quite the opposite is true. Hamilton wrote Senator Morris that “if there be a man in the world I ought to hate it is Jefferson.”³⁰ However, the most consequential of Hamilton’s arguments were brought to Representative James Bayard, of

²⁶ Thomas McKean to Thomas Jefferson, March 21, 1801, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 33, 17 February to 30 April 1801, ed. Barbara B. Oberg, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005): 391.

²⁷ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, February 18, 1801, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 33, 17 February to 30 April 1801, ed. Barbara B. Oberg, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005): 16.

²⁸ Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, February 15, 1801, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 32, 1 June 1800 to 16 February 1801, ed. Barbara B. Oberg, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005): 594.

²⁹ Alexander Hamilton to James A. Bayard, December 27, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 276.

³⁰ Alexander Hamilton to Gouverneur Morris, December 26, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, ed. Harold C. Syrett, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 275.

Delaware. Hamilton warned Bayard of the moral deprecation of a Burr presidency and pleaded with him to “save our country from so great a calamity.”³¹ Hamilton was prepared to tolerate differences of opinion and even cooperate with Jefferson, actively convincing representatives to vote for him, but he was unwilling to tolerate Burr’s character deficiencies. This argument no doubt helped to convince Bayard to cast the controversial deciding vote that secured Jefferson’s presidency.

The plot to elect Burr over Jefferson was ultimately defeated by the conscience of James Bayard, who, like Hamilton, feared that such a result would taint the Constitution and even risk civil war. As the House prepared to vote in February, Republican leaders and newspapers feared that Federalists would subvert what they saw as a Jefferson electoral victory. The *Guardian of Liberty* cautioned its readers that “there has been no stone left unturned, to the defeat the election of Mr. Jefferson.”³² This was false, there were no motions in the House to postpone the vote. On the contrary, on February 10th, before it was officially known that there was a tie between Jefferson and Burr, a motion to only vote between the two Republicans was defeated 36 to 59.³³ It is important to note that James Bayard voted for this motion. Thus, when the House entered voting procedure on February 11th, Delaware’s one man, Federalist delegation was in Burr’s camp only to hold the party line.

Bayard, much like Hamilton, was willing to tolerate Jefferson and risk his standing among the Federalists because he would not tolerate the fallout of electing Burr. Upon entering voting procedure for the first time on February 11th, Bayard unhappily cast his vote for Burr and did so for the next 34 votes that followed. These 34 votes would have the same tally, Jefferson winning eight states (all Republican states) and Burr winning six (all Federalist states).³⁴ The Vermont and Maryland delegations were split and turned in no ballot. During this process, Bayard became acutely aware that the election was more than Federalist against Republican, he feared that preventing the election of Jefferson

³¹ Alexander Hamilton to James A. Bayard, December 27, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 277.

³² *The Guardian of Liberty* (Newport, R.I.), February 7, 1801.

³³ “Tuesday, February 10, 1801,” in *Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875*, Vol. 3, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States* (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, 2003), 795.

³⁴ “Wednesday, February 11, 1801,” in *Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates*, 801.

would jeopardize the Constitution. Bayard recognized the delicate position he found himself in and wrote to Governor Richard Bassett of Delaware that: “if Delaware be added to those votes who have declared, Jefferson cannot be elected.”³⁵ Though he would initially follow the party line and vote for Burr, he told Bassett: “I have not yet determined as to the part which I shall take.”³⁶ Clearly, Bayard by no means fits the archetype of the unscrupulous Federalist, willing to subvert Jefferson’s election at any cost.

Bayard, at risk to his own reputation, convinced Federalists from Maryland and Vermont to turn in blank ballots, allowing their Republican counterparts to secure Jefferson’s election. The actions of Bayard and these other Federalists certainly disproves that most powerful Federalists would do anything to achieve political goals. Bayard was clearly concerned about his decision to decide for Jefferson, writing Bassett that it was not safe to discuss the matter “by Post or even to write at all.”³⁷ After six days of inconclusive voting, Bayard told Bassett that he would go against the party “to not risk the constitution or civil war.”³⁸ This course of action was not without risk. When Bayard called a meeting to announce his intentions on February 16th, “violent spirits of the Party denounced [him] as a Deserter.”³⁹ Some incensed representatives from New England even “declared they meant to go without a constitution and take the risk of a Civil War.”⁴⁰ Bayard’s decision was not well received by all Federalists. Nonetheless, his announcement spurred Vermont and Maryland to his cause. Lewis Richard Morris, Vermont’s lone Federalist representative, announced that he would withdraw his vote and allow his Republican counterpart to vote alone. Maryland’s Federalist

³⁵ James Bayard to Richard Bassett, January 3, 1801, in *Papers of James A. Bayard, 1796-1815*, Vol. 2, ed. Elizabeth Donnan (Washington: The American Historical Association, 1915): 117.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ James Bayard to Richard Bassett, February 10, 1801, in *Papers of James A. Bayard, 1796-1815*, Vol. 2, ed. Elizabeth Donnan (Washington: The American Historical Association, 1915): 124.

³⁸ James Bayard to Richard Bassett, February 16, 1801, in *Papers of James A. Bayard, 1796-1815*, Vol. 2, ed. Elizabeth Donnan, (Washington: The American Historical Association, 1915): 126.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ James Bayard to McLane, February 17, 1801, in *Papers of James A. Bayard, 1796-1815*, Vol. 2, ed. Elizabeth Donnan, (Washington: The American Historical Association, 1915): 128.

representatives followed suit. The next day, February 17th, Jefferson received 10 states in the 36th and final ballot.⁴¹ The election was decided for Jefferson. Bayard's meeting undeniably altered the trajectory of the young republic and clearly demonstrates the existence of moderation. His public declaration to yield for Jefferson influenced other Federalists to do the same.

The decision to go against elements of the Federalist party and support Jefferson demonstrates a dedication to the continued success of the republic. The preservation of the Constitution was more important than the short-term goals of the Federalist party. Men like Bayard recognized that Republican states had firmly decided for Jefferson, to supplant their choice with Burr (or to even consider the President Pro Tempore scheme) would have been a detriment to national unity. Governors McKean and Monroe serve as reminders that there was no guarantee of a peaceful conclusion to the election. After all, if Burr were elected or a Federalist senator ushered into the presidency, by Jefferson's own admission, Republican states would not recognize the legitimacy of that government.⁴² It is not hard to imagine a rebellious response, considering the recent memory of the Whiskey Rebellion and Fries Rebellion. If Republican citizens had rebelled against taxes and perceived incursions upon their liberties, certainly they might have rebelled against a 'stolen' election. Thus, most Federalists were willing to tolerate and even support Jefferson to keep the peace and to secure a future for the Constitution they ratified barely a decade ago.

Furthermore, as demonstrated by Hamilton, several Federalists could tolerate perceived political failings but not moral failings. Thus, Jefferson, though their political opponent, was favored over the more politically agreeable but less virtuous Burr. Hamilton's letters to Federalist leaders, including Bayard, indicate this point. Yes, Burr's policies might have been more palatable to Federalists, but his lack of character would have brought "disgrace abroad and ruin at home."⁴³ Burr was "sanguine enough to hope everything, daring enough to attempt

⁴¹ "February 17, 1801" in *Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875*, Vol. 3, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States*, (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, 2003), 803.

⁴² Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, February 15, 1801, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 594.

⁴³ Alexander Hamilton to James A. Bayard, December 27, 1800, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 277.

everything, wicked enough to scruple nothing.”⁴⁴ On the other hand, though many considered Jefferson’s politics too radical, he was no doubt predictable and certainly morally palatable. Jefferson represented a known challenge to Federalism; Burr represented an unknown evil to Federalism.

Thus, Bayard, Hamilton, and the other prominent Federalists that secured Jefferson’s election serve as examples that animosity between the Federalists and Republicans was overexaggerated in the press. The mood of the Federalist party underwent a significant easing between December 1800 and February 1801. The anxiety and distrust that characterized the election gave way to a lukewarm, albeit cautious, acceptance of Jefferson. Nowhere is this more evident than in the very press that had once pilloried Jefferson. Philadelphia’s *Gazette of The United States* had railed against Jefferson over the course of the election; it had even hinted that Federalists should prevent Jefferson’s election with the New England militia.⁴⁵ However, on February 18th it changed tunes and instead declared that “it is right for the public to support that Mr. Jefferson’s administration must be tried before it can be known.”⁴⁶ It went even further after Jefferson’s inauguration, declaring that “we shall yet be prosperous and happy.”⁴⁷ These were not the words of men unwilling to tolerate their political opponents. The intrigue of the election of 1800 and sensational journalism had heightened national tensions to the point of irrationality, obscuring the moderation that existed under the surface. With the election of Jefferson, that moderation was restored. The Federalist’s mood had moderated, revealing their capacity to tolerate and even cooperate with men of character, even if they were Republicans.

⁴⁴ *Alexander Hamilton to Gouverneur Morris, December 24, 1800*, in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 25: July 1800 - April 1802, ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 272.

⁴⁵ “From the Washington Federalist,” *Gazette of the United States*, February 16, 1800.

⁴⁶ “From the New England Paladium,” *Gazette of the United States*, February 18, 1800.

⁴⁷ “To Our Readers,” *Gazette of the United States*, March 5, 1800.

RESURRECTION & REDEMPTION: HOW THE SECOND COMING OF THE KU KLUX KLAN SHAPED AMERICAN RELIGION, POLITICS, AND CULTURE IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

BY SEAN PATTERSON

In 1915 *The New York Times* hailed David Wark Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* as "an impressive new illustration of the scope of the motion picture camera..." going on to explain how the film's best scenes are those that follow "the night riding of the men of the Ku Klux Klan, who look like a company of avenging spectral crusaders sweeping along the moonlit roads."¹ Griffith's motion picture achieved such success that he would be invited to a special screening of the film at the White House, one month before the *Times* published its review. Upon seeing the movie, President Wilson supposedly exclaimed "it is like writing history with lightning!"² Indeed, Griffith would incorporate Wilson's support for the film in title cards at later showings.³ The motion picture is saturated in religious imagery, and includes the likeness of Christ partially descending from heaven, as well as numerous crucifixes, especially those painted on the robes of the Knights of the Klan.⁴ It is only fitting that the son of a former Confederate officer would ignite a movement that would soon spread like wildfire across the Nation, far eclipsing the Klan's previous, postbellum incarnation.⁵

In truth, Griffith's watershed motion picture was not an original piece, but rather an adaption of a novel titled *The Clansman: An Historic Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, written by the southern Baptist minister, Thomas Dixon. Dixon was one of the first entertainers to romanticize the first-generation Ku

¹ "The Birth of a Nation," *The New York Times*, March 4, 1915, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1915/03/04/100144836.html?pageNumber=9>.

² Marl E. Benbow, "Birth of a Quotation: Woodrow Wilson and 'Like Writing History with Lightning,'" *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, no. 4 (October 2010): 529. It is uncertain whether Wilson said this, but we do know that he saw Griffith's film, and that he likely had a favorable opinion of the motion picture.

³ Benbow, "Birth of a Quotation," 518.

⁴ David W. Griffith, *The Birth of a Nation*, March 21, 1915 (New York: David W. Griffith Production Company), film.

⁵ Richard Baudouin, ed., *Ku Klux Klan: A History of Racism and Violence*, (Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center), 23.

Klux Klan in media.⁶ Later in 1915, another southern minister, William Simmons, would give life to Griffith's and Dixon's ideas by reviving the white-clad cult. In the fall of 1915, Simmons and his first thirty-four disciples marched to the top of Stone Mountain, Georgia. There, they placed a torch at the foot of a cross and watched as the crucifix was engulfed in flames, marking the beginning of the KKK's rebirth.⁷ The Klan was codified in Georgia statute by December of the same year, thus becoming a secret, yet formally recognized order.⁸ Following these seminal events, the cult would increase in popularity, as ministers like Dixon and Simmons propagated their hateful rhetoric across the South and eventually all the United States. This reimagining of the Klan was notable in that it exclusively promoted Protestant Christianity while adamantly opposing other religious sects. This reincarnation of the Klan was not only racist, but xenophobic, violent, and distinctively sectarian, as the Klan portrayed themselves as champions of a militant wing of Protestant Christianity.

This paper sets out to analyze the purpose, extent, and consequences of the KKK's cooptation of Protestantism in early-20th Century America. Primary source evidence suggests that the Klan appropriated Protestant beliefs, using the religion as a vehicle through which to spread its ideologies. By marrying the KKK to mainstream Protestantism, Klan leaders were able to achieve unparalleled success as the most popular cult in American history. The KKK's hijacking of the Protestant faith is best exemplified in media publications, rituals, and the Klan's use of Protestant symbols. Lastly, this paper finds that through its use of religious discourse, the Klan's ideologies were able to transcend boundaries of gender and socioeconomic status. Indeed, while this paper's foremost concern is the thread of religion, it touches on a number of other threads that the Klan so cleverly wove together to form the troubled social

⁶ Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, (New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905). Available online at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26240/26240-h/26240-h.htm>.

⁷ Kelly J. Baker, *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK's Appeal to Protestant America, 1915-1930*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 4-5. Dixon also devotes a chapter of his *The Clansman* to the act of cross burning. On page 325 he refers to the act as the "old Scottish rite of the Fiery Cross," noting that the act was intended to "send a thrill of inspiration to every clansman in the hills." As with many of their titles and ranks, the Klan derived the practice of cross burning from the Scottish, who had traditionally done so to rally clansmen to war. A cross burning is used for a similar purpose in *The Birth of a Nation*.

⁸ Ku Klux Klan Press Recruiting Pamphlet, "A, B, C of the Invisible Empire, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," dated 1917, ID Number 34715, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Tennessee Virtual Archive, TN (hereafter TVA): 7, <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll4/id/223> (accessed January 25, 2020). This citation is credited to page 7 of the pamphlet, or page 13 in the digital catalog.

fabric of early-20th Century America, including the threads of Feminism, Populism, and even Progressivism.

Unfortunately, seminal works on the Klan, while thorough, tend to portray the KKK as a radical movement that operated along an ideological periphery. These works largely ignore the broad appeal that the KKK had to Anglo-Americans of the time. In truth, many of the Klan's ideals were nested neatly within broader, more widely held Progressive Era beliefs. Though, Kelly Baker's *Gospel According to the Klan* does recognize the true extent of the Klan's sociopolitical power in the 1920s, her work still fails to recognize the broad attraction of the ethnoreligious aspect of the group. This paper hopes to remedy these oversights.

The 2nd Generation Klan, while staunchly conservative in its ideas of domesticity and race was also paradoxically progressive in its efforts to incorporate women and exclude immigrants, drawing simultaneously from Victorian, Progressive, and Populist ideals. For these reasons, one must be wary of binomial labels when discussing movements like the Klan's. depictions of the Klan as a socially conservative group has become the *idée fixe* of American historiography, but in truth these labels are simply anthropomorphic conceptions; titles used by historians to ease their reader's cognitive burden. Using the term "conservative" in the pejorative only serves to strip the Klan's ideologies of nuance, therefore inhibiting our understanding of the group.

Above all, the Klan was and continues to be a parasite; an opportunistic organism that served to prolong the pains of Reconstruction and de jure segregation for much longer than necessary. This Klan subscribed to nearly every brand of nationalism: including civic; ethnic; religious; racial; and cultural. Because of the Klan's broad dogmas, any sufficient examination of the hate group must touch on all of these themes. While the 2nd Generation Klan was unique in many ways, its hateful legacy survives today. The spirit of the Klan is alive and well, having morphed and contorted itself into new shapes, fitting neatly within contemporary social discourse. Understanding the Klan is central to combatting its appeal. This article does not intend to restate familiar history, but rather aims to develop new schemas regarding the Klan's memory; in other words, this article seeks to sharpen our understanding of the Klan's impact on the social fabric of America, that when stretched forward into our time, will become unwound in a very distinct manner.

Periodically, these bigoted dictums reemerge in the form of derisive campaign slogans or controversial propaganda. In 1926 one Klan organizer argued that “the Invisible Empire is now placing stones and repairing the wall where enemies of the Cross and civil liberties have well-nigh wrecked it.”⁹ The significance of the metaphorical “wall” should not be lost on today’s

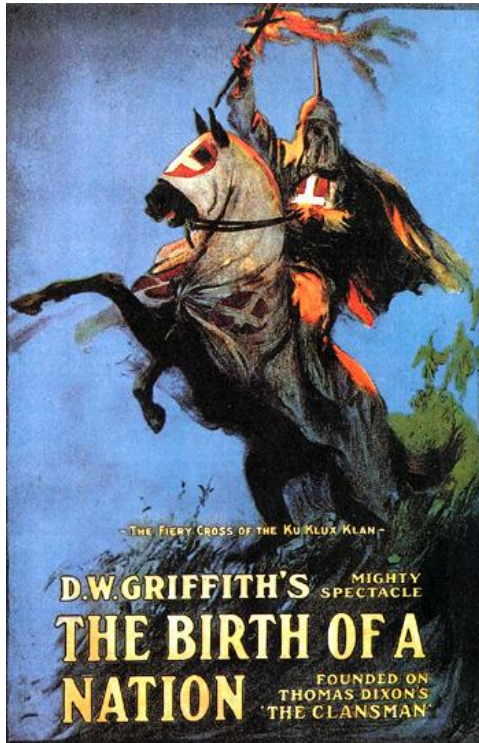


Figure 1: This advertisement is what a moviegoer of 1915 likely would have seen as they passed by a cinema.¹⁰

readers, as only a few pages later the same organizer wrote “our ports have been wide open to aliens of every caste and creed...millions have come to our shores from the slums of lower Europe...and among these are some of the worst criminals.”¹¹ With the reemergence of identity politics and the gradual deterioration of the political center, the study of cults and hate groups is more

⁹ Alma White, *Klansmen: Guardians of Liberty* (Zarephath, NJ: The Good Citizen, 1926), 16.

¹⁰ Richard Schickel, *D.W. Griffith: an American Life*, (New York, NY: Limelight Editions, 1996), 281. Griffith’s illustrative marketing techniques would help *The Birth of a Nation* generate more than \$60 million in box-office business in its first run.

¹¹ White, *Klansmen*, 44-45.

important than ever. History is laden with politically inclined cults, often led by strong personalities, appealing to a bygone era.¹² Indeed, the Klan and its leaders harkened back to the cult's first incarnation; the guerrilla movement led by former Confederate cavalry general Nathan Bedford Forrest, who fomented insurrection across the Post-Bellum South.¹³ Griffith's film was the first of many attempts to romanticize and sanctify the Klan's first manifestation.

Drawing on the film's vivid imagery, Klan leaders and protestant leaders alike were quick to support *The Birth of a Nation*, along with the film's bigoted themes. In fact, many of them voiced their support by using religious prose or by swearing on sacred scripture. One Protestant minister, Thomas B. Gregory, declared that "the story as told by the picture is true...I am ready to swear on the Bible!"¹⁴ Another Protestant reverend, Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, supported the film as a "detailed scholarly study of history," giving the motion picture his "unqualified approval."¹⁵ But clergymen like Gregory and Parkhurst did not support the film solely on their own accord; they were commissioned to support the film by Griffith and Dixon, who used valuable testimony from prominent figures in the rhetorical war surrounding the film. The film acted as a point of convergence for the Klan and white Protestants who felt like the enfranchisement of Black Americans had somehow lowered their relative social standing or political prominence. It is from this motion picture that the next generation of the Klan would emerge, along with its preferences for Christian rituals and symbology. In this way, *The Birth of a Nation* exemplified the KKK's efforts to coopt American Protestantism and marked the culmination of white backlash to Black enfranchisement, otherwise known as Redemption.

In 1925, Dr. Hiram Walker Evans rose to power as the Klan's Imperial Wizard, a title reserved for the most powerful Klansman in the nation. Only ten years after Simmons's march on Stone Mountain the Klan had risen to national

¹² Tyler Cline, "A Dragon, Bog Spawned, Is Now Stretched O'er This Land": The Ku Klux Klan's Patriotic Protestantism in the Northeastern Borderlands During the 1920s and 1930s," *Social History* 52, no. 106 (November 2019): 309-310.

¹³ Ku Klux Klan Press Recruiting Pamphlet, "A, B, C of the Invisible Empire, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," dated 1917, ID Number 34715, TVA: 1, (page 7 in digital catalog). The 2nd Klan's tendency to romanticize the 1st Klan is integral to understanding a Klansman's identity in this era. The Klan of the Progressive Era venerated Forrest's guerilla movements as the "Great Idea of American Reconstruction," as "men of moral and social standing...social character" who defended the South from "adventurers that swarmed down from the North to use the negro for their own damnable, selfish ends."

¹⁴ Schickel, *D.W. Griffith*, 278.

¹⁵ "Griffith and Dixon Duel with Their Critics: A Mini-Symposium on The Birth of a Nation," *Lehigh University*, July 2010, http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/reels/films/list/0_68_9_106 (accessed October 21, 2019).

prominence, having in excess of five million members.¹⁶ In 1924, the rapidly expanding cult was aiming to add another four million adherents by the Presidential election in the fall.¹⁷



Figure 2: Library of Congress photo of the Klan marching on Washington, D.C. (1926) The Capitol Building can be seen in the background, along with tens of thousands of Klansmen.

Evans and his followers had rapidly established a footprint in all forty-eight states, using weekly periodicals to expand their influence across the American heartland. Many of the Klan's circulars were distributed in areas saturated with Protestants. Chief among these areas was the Midwest, specifically Indiana.¹⁸ In total the Klan would influence dozens of local and

¹⁶ William Rawlings, *The Second Coming of the Invisible Empire*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2016), 116-117. Historians rarely agree on the total size of the Klan. Rawlings runs through a handful of figures. He refers to estimates of one million members as being "clearly low," and estimates in excess of eight million as "based on speculation." Rawlings goes on to cite Hiram Evans's figure of five million. A CBS documentary titled *Ku Klux Klan: Invisible Empire* posits that at the time of the Klan's famous 1925 march on Washington D.C. its members included nearly six million Americans.

¹⁷ "Power of Five Million Votes is Tremendous," *The Minnesota Fiery Cross*, (March 7, 1924), <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn90059391/1924-03-07/ed-1/seq-7/#date1=1789&index=1&rows=20&words=Klan+KLAN+Klans&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=Klan&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>.

¹⁸ The Klan's precipitous rise in Indiana was caused by at least two factors. For one, the Great Migration of Black Americans northward bred tension between the races,

national elections. Between 1922 and 1925 the Ku Klux Klan helped to elect “seven governors, three US senators, and half of the 1924 Indiana state legislature.”¹⁹

In one popular periodical, *Kourier Magazine*, Evans wrote “as the star of Bethlehem guided the wise men to Christ, so it is that the Klan is expected more and more to guide men to the right life under Christ’s banner.”²⁰ In another Klan publication, *The Imperial Night-Hawk*, Evans went on to write that his ultimate goal was to preserve “a Christian civilization in America,” explaining that Klansmen had “obligations to the world...to purify America and make her impregnable...”²¹ Allusions to white fraternity and racial prejudice flowed from Evans’s pen, along with overt appeals to nationalism. But ultimately the most prevalent themes are those that appeal to Protestantism using religious imagery.

The Klan’s use of traditional Protestantism is not only exemplified in their publications, but also in their ceremonies. In 1922 Henry Fry published *The Modern Ku Klux Klan*, in which he detailed the innerworkings of the cult. Fry was a member of the Klan for a brief time, but was appalled by the Klan’s naturalization ceremony, or what he refers to as “a sacrilegious parody on the holy rite of baptism...”²² The ceremony, administered by a senior Klansman, usually an Exalted Cyclops, was intended to initiate new members into the secret society.²³ The ritual was conducted behind closed doors at a sacred altar. On this altar rested an American flag adjacent to a Holy Bible, opened to the book of Romans, which encouraged the initiate to “present [their] bodies to God...let them be a living and holy sacrifice...” and to “not be conformed to

especially in the Hoosier state where vigilantism was an established practice. Moreover, the Indiana Klan owed its rapid growth to its charismatic Grand Dragon, D.C. Stephenson. For more information on Stephenson, see William Lutholtz’s, *Grand Dragon: D.C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana*, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ David A. Horowitz, ed., *Inside the Klavern: The Secret Society of a Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s*, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1999), 4.

²⁰ H.W. Evans, “A Message from the Imperial Wizard,” *Kourier Magazine* 1, no. 3 (February 1925).

²¹ H.W. Evans, “Dr. Evans, Imperial Wizard, Defines Klan Principles” *Imperial Night-Hawk*, 1 no. 43, (January 23, 1924).

²² Henry Fry, *The Modern Ku Klux Klan*, (Boston, MA: Small, Maynard & Co., 1922), 89.

²³ Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, (New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905), 375. In his seminal, but distorted analysis of the 1st Klan in *The Clansman*, Thomas Dixon describes the KKK’s taxonomy. Dixon writes “the [Klan] was governed by the Grand Wizard Commander-in-Chief... The Grand Dragon commanded a state, the Grand Titan a Congressional District, and Grand Giant a County, and the Grand Cyclops a Township Den.”

this world, but be transformed be the renewal of [their] mind...”²⁴ After reading the verse aloud, the Exalted Cyclops dedicated the initiate by pouring water “on his shoulder, his head, throws a few drops of water in the air, making his dedication ‘in body...in mind...in spirit...[and] in life.’”²⁵ Fry finishes his description of this perverse baptism by explaining how a Klan chaplain, “very often a minister of the Gospel...” delivers a closing prayer.²⁶

While the Klan used protestant rituals in its secret meetings, at times it would interact with Protestantism directly. In one collection of a Nebraska Klavern’s meetings minutes, several Klan leaders attended an assembly at the First Christian Church at Havelock “in full regalia,” where they gave a “brief address outlining the Christian and patriotic aims of [their] order.”²⁷ The Klan was so determined on appealing to Protestants that in February of 1925, the *Kourier Magazine* published an article titled “Jesus the Protestant,” in which the editor reimagines Jesus as an aggressive defender of Protestantism, arguing that Jesus was not an ethnic Jew.²⁸ Just as *The Birth of a Nation* had done a decade earlier, this *Kourier* article portrayed Jesus as a Protestant,



Figure 3: A headline from a 1925 issue of *The Kourier*. This Atlanta magazine was published monthly for nearly 12 years. In total, 146 issues went into circulation.

²⁴ Rom 12:2-4 ASV. Fry states that the ceremony required this verse from Romans be read aloud. It is unclear exactly how much of Romans was recited, so in order to provide clarity this citation from the American Standard Version Bible has been provided. In 1922, it is likely that the Klan would have read from an ASV translation of the Bible. The ASV was published in 1901 and quickly rose to prominence in America. Another cause to suspect that they used the ASV instead of the King James Bible was the ASV’s ties to the predominantly white Anglican Church, along with the ASV’s preference for “Jehovah,” as opposed to the Jewish practice of using the term “Lord”, which American exegetes disapproved of.

²⁵ Fry, *The Modern Ku Klux Klan*, 90.

²⁶ Fry, 90.

²⁷ “Klan Komment,” *The Imperial Night-Hawk*, (May 9, 1923), <https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/227kkknews.html>. This digital archive from Hanover College seems to be under construction. The author, volume, and edition of this article are unknown.

²⁸ “Jesus The Protestant” *The Kourier*, (February 1, 1925): 3-6, <https://kkknews.revealdigital.com/?a=d&d=KUR19250201-01.2.8&e=-----192-en-20-KUR-1--txt-txIN-Kourier----1925-----1> (accessed October 21, 2019).

white man.²⁹ This article goes on to conflate Protestantism with white ethnocentrism, as the magazine's editor illustrates the Klan's preference for nationalism and ethnoreligious homogeneity.

To attain legitimacy, Klansmen often called upon fallacious logic derived from antebellum arguments for race subordination. More often than not though, the Klan resorted to boldfaced racism. Allusions to religion or appeals to authority may add legitimacy to one's claim, especially in an era of religious resurgence, but the effectiveness and carnal appeal of unapologetic racism is timeless. In his play that would later inspire *Birth of a Nation*, Thomas Dixon explains the order of his desired ethnic hierarchy:

For a Russian to rule a Pole...a Turk to rule a Greek, or an Austrian to dominate an Italian is hard enough, but for a thick-lipped, flat-nosed, spindle-shanked negro, exuding his nauseating animal odour, to shout in derision over the hearths and homes of white men and women is an atrocity too monstrous for belief. Our people are yet dazed by its horror. My God! when they realize its meaning, whose arm will be strong enough to hold them?³⁰

Though perhaps the most resilient defense of racism relies on distorted readings of scripture, especially interpretation involving the book of Genesis and the story of the "Curse of Ham."³¹ One of the Klan's identifying characteristics was not only its use of Protestant language and ceremonies, but its strong anti-Catholic rhetoric. It is important to note that the Klan defined by negation; the hate group excluded as much as it included. In two of the Klan's most popular publications, the *Protestant* and the *Searchlight*, the KKK's anti-Catholic attacks are vividly demonstrated. In fact, these circulars were equal parts racism, nativism, and anti-Catholicism. In the *Protestant*, the Klan made the ludicrous claim the Catholic Church was "arming negroes of the South" so that they could "join in an armed uprising to seize the country."³² The *Searchlight* propagated much of the same rhetoric, but also spoke out against the

²⁹ Griffith, *The Birth of a Nation*.

³⁰ Dixon, *The Clansman*, 290.

³¹ Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8-9. In Genesis 9 Noah's son, Ham, is cursed for looking upon his father's nakedness. Haynes discusses the evolution of religious, proslavery rhetoric. Around 1700, minister John Saffin conflated Ham's descendants in Canaan with all Black Africans, asserting that all black people were subject to this curse. Haynes claims that by the 1830s "when the American antislavery movement became organized...the scriptural defense of slavery had evolved into the 'most elaborate and systematic' or proslavery theory...Noah's curse had become a stock weapon in the arsenal of slavery's apologists, and references to Genesis 9 appeared prominently in their publications." It has since been accepted that this sort of interpretation of Genesis is completely extrabiblical, as the passage has nothing to do with race.

³² Fry, *The Modern Ku Klux Klan*, 119.

Jewish faith. In its July 30, 1921 issue, the Searchlight posited that “the Jew is interested in creating war between blacks and whites...to destroy our government...he [the Jew] is working to overthrow all the Gentile governments of the world.”³³ A Chicago-based Klan newspaper titled the *Illinois Kourier* even ran the headline “Chicago’s public schools controlled by Rome.”³⁴

Anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiments were not just circulated at the national level, but also at local Klan meetings. One editor took the time to compile a robust collection of meetings minutes from a relatively small Klan chapter in La Grange, Oregon. In a meeting held on January 23, 1923, leaders of the Klavern implored their members to refrain from purchasing goods at a local grocery store, because its owners were “100% Jews.”³⁵ In a special meeting held three days later, leaders of the same Klavern explained that the Klan aimed to oppose “the Catholic machine which controls our Nation.”³⁶ We see now that the Klan not only favored Protestantism above other faiths, but that the KKK actively opposed other faiths, as it perceived them to be threats to Anglo-American Protestant hegemony. Moreover, the KKK was able to achieve a remarkable social continuity in its espoused beliefs and practices as klaverns, both large and small, were united in their hatred against outsiders. The orchestrators of Klan meetings in La Grange, Oregon agreed with national leaders in Indiana and Washington, D.C. By attempting to vilify other religions the Klan hoped to solidify its influence within mainstream Protestantism.

The Klan’s anti-Catholic zeal is embodied in the works of female Klan organizer, Alma White. At the Klan’s apogee, White was a prominent Methodist Bishop in New Jersey. Nearly all of White’s thirty-five publications were of a religious nature, many being written in support of the KKK, or related groups.³⁷ As such, her most prolific work, *Klansmen: Guardians of Liberty*, is a compilation of her most impassioned sermons.³⁸ While White was a staunch believer in most of the Klan’s planks, her sermons and speeches tended to focus on the Klan’s exclusively Protestant nature.

The Klan made efforts to utilize every plank of its ideological platform

³³ Fry, 120.

³⁴ “Chicago’s Public Schools Controlled by Rome,” *The Illinois Kourier*, (September 19, 1924): 5, <https://uhia.revealdigital.org/?a=d&d=IFC19240919-01.2.1&e=-----192-en-20-KUR-1--txt-txIN-Kourier----1925-----1>.

³⁵ Horowitz, *Inside the Klavern*, 54.

³⁶ Horowitz, 61.

³⁷ “Bishop Alma White, Preacher, Author; Founder of Pillar of Fire Dies at 84—Established Several Schools and Colleges,” *The New York Times*, (June 27, 1946), <https://www.nytimes.com/1946/06/27/archives/bishop-alma-white-preacher-author-founder-of-pillar-of-fire-dies-at.html>

³⁸ For an examination of Alma White’s life story, see Kristin E. Kandt’s “In the Name of God; an American Story of Feminism, Racism, and Religious Intolerance: The Story of Alma Bridwell White,” *Journal of Gender, Social Policy, & the Law* 8, no. 3.

against the Catholic Church. The illustration depicted in Figure 4 represents the Klan's appeals to patriotism, Protestantism, Populism, and of course anti-Catholicism. The religious appeal here is obvious; a reference to Joshua's divinely sanctioned attack on Jericho, where his army tears down the mighty walls of the city with noise from their trumpets and assistance from the Almighty.

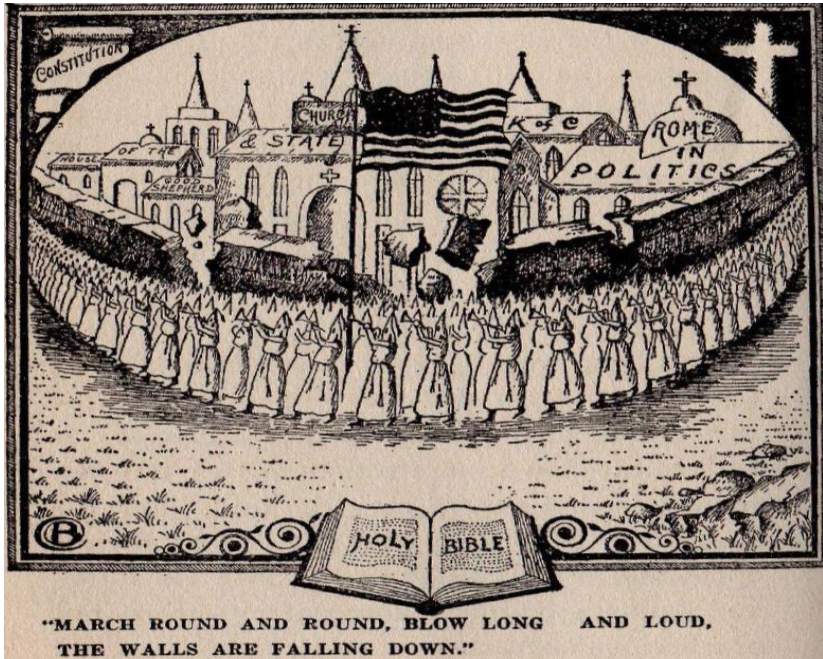


Figure 4: An illustration from Alma White's *Guardians of Liberty*.³⁹

White's impassioned sermons implicitly tie together many of the threads previously discussed, with her strongest sentiments involving Catholicism. The Grand Dragon of New Jersey's Klan chapter, Arthur H. Bell, was one of White's most dedicated supporters. As White's Pillar of Fire church and Bell's klavern grew closer as a function of their shared beliefs, Bell would go on to write the forward to White's *Klansmen*, in which he explains "the

³⁹ White, *Klansmen*, 148. Note the "K of C" markings on the roofs. The Knights of Columbus was an exclusively Catholic labor union that, like other labor unions, advocated for collective bargaining, worker's rights, and would pay the salaries of its constituents during strikes. Therefore, not only did an exclusively Catholic group pose a threat to Klansmen's social and political power, but organized Catholic labor threatened the KKK's ability to control labor and capital.

author of this book, Bishop Alma White...has a great ambition to bring forth to the public the true program which the Roman Catholic Hierarchy has developed to consummate its ambitious desire..."⁴⁰ White echoes these sentiments in her own writings, as she tells readers of the "autocratic system" that is the Roman Catholic Church, and of the Church's "religio-political machine...thirsting for world dominion and willing to pay any price to obtain it."⁴¹ In truth, White's hate was not solely reserved for religious competitors like the Catholic Church. Several ideas converged to form these strong anti-Catholic sentiments, including a pervasive sense of post-war isolationism, populism, and perhaps even the idea that any growth in the Irish-Catholic sphere of influence may equate to a shrinking of White's own Protestant hegemon. To White and her colleagues, the two aforementioned faiths stood diametrically opposed to one another, as mutually exclusive belief systems; the two could not coexist.

Furthermore, White's Anti-Catholic zeal was rooted in racism; it was anti-Irish as much as it was anti-Catholic. While White is careful not to be overt in drawing attention to her vehement racism, her allusions to New York's Tammany Hall and George E. Brannan's Chicago-based political machine, both Irish organizations, more than suggest that she harbored strong anti-Irish sentiments.⁴²



Figure 5: Illustration from Alma White's *Heroes of the Fiery Cross*, 1928.⁴³

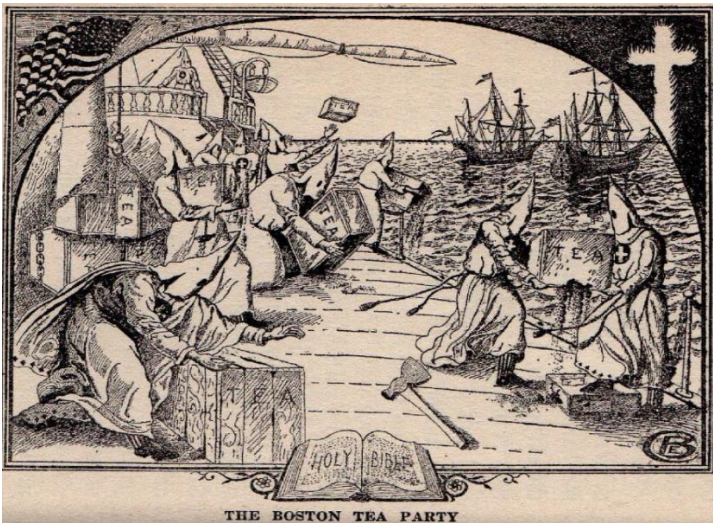
⁴⁰ White, *Klansmen*, 3.

⁴¹ White, *Klansmen*, 23.

⁴² White, *Klansmen*, 31.

⁴³ Depictions of the Irish as subhuman creatures harken back to a thread of Anglo-American racism predating White's works by centuries. Irish racism reached its apogee in Victorian America and Britain, where Irishmen were often depicted as violent,

Moreover, illustrations from White's works are indicative of anti-immigrant sentiments of the time, as the Catholic Church and its presumably Irish adherents are depicted as subhuman, apish characters. This paranoid, reactionary rhetoric seeks to proliferate through the masses by oversimplifying reality into a dichotomy, a black and white contest between good and evil. Such a blatantly hateful worldview requires a fundamental reimagining of history, and this is exactly what White does when she writes a chapter titled *Klansmen of the Revolution*. In this sermon, White reimagines the Founding Fathers as prodigious Klansmen, having written the nation's founding documents in accordance with Klan ideals. Indeed, the illustrations accompanying White's writing depicts the Boston Tea Party and Stamp Act protestors as having sported white robes and hoods, like the Klan of the 1920s. White goes as far as to use the term "colonial Klansmen" when referring to Revolutionary-era patriots.⁴⁴ White moves on, to reimagine the Monroe Doctrine as a presidential effort to protect America from Catholic and by extension, papal influence.⁴⁵



alcoholic, sub-human creatures. It is no coincidence that White's publications often depict Catholics and the Irish as apes. L.P. Curtis explores Victorian-era depictions of the Irish in his work *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1997). Anti-Irish sentiments of the era are perhaps best exemplified in historical photographs of the ubiquitous signs displayed outside of New York City shops, restaurants, and factories, that read "no Irish need apply."

⁴⁴ White, *Klansmen*, 50-58.

⁴⁵ White, *Klansmen*, 68.

Figure 6: A creative reimagining of the Boston Tea Party from White's *Klansmen*. Note the fiery cross and American flag in the background, along with the Holy Bible in the foreground.⁴⁶

Evidence herein suggests that the Ku Klux Klan intentionally used Protestantism as a vehicle through which to diffuse across 1920s America. But surely, the typical Protestant would not have been inherently inclined to follow the Klan in its quest for sociopolitical dominance. Then, the question must be asked, why did the Klan become as popular as it did, and what truly compelled swaths of Americans to join the movement? As Alma White's sermons suggest, the KKK appealed to a substantial number of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant women for different reasons than it appealed to their male counterparts. Sure, the Klan's espoused beliefs in white exceptionalism attracted female recruits, but most women were drawn in by benefits that the Klan did not overtly advertise. In many ways, women saw the Klan as a source of community, social mobility, and purpose.

The Klan overtly venerated the idea of Republican Motherhood and feminine virtue in much of its recruiting paraphernalia. Indeed, one of the group's espoused goals was to "shield the sanctity of the home and the chastity of womanhood..."⁴⁷ The Klan was Victorian in that it placed white women on a virtuous pedestal in the home, and also Progressive in that it gave women a tangible value inherent to their gender. Yet, the Klan was also subtly oppressive toward women, as its views against miscegenation reduced women "to a common function as political symbols – symbols of racial privilege or subordination..."⁴⁸ As part of the KKK, women, although confined to a specific stratum, were venerated in their status as embodiments of what the Klansmen considered to be "the noblest womanhood in all the annals of time..."⁴⁹ Lynching statistics from the early-20th Century lend credence to the notion that Klansmen were acutely concerned with miscegenation and white feminine purity. Excluding charges of homicide, accusations of rape and attempted rape made up the largest proportion of allegations against persons being lynched, at 23%; far exceeding the number of lynchings regarding theft or "insult to white

⁴⁶ White, *Klansmen*, 54.

⁴⁷ "A, B, C of the Invisible Empire, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," TVA: 5, <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll4/id/229> (accessed January 25, 2020).

⁴⁸ Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 15.

⁴⁹ S.E.F. Rose, *The Ku Klux Klan or Invisible Empire*, (New Orleans, LA: L. Graham Co., 1914), 73.

persons”.⁵⁰

Moreover, white men benefitted from the Klan’s gender roles, as it ensured that women had to be completely dependent upon their husbands for protection against miscegenation in order to preserve what made women inherently valuable in a Klansman’s eyes: sexual and racial purity. Yet, even the notion that women were confined to a specific social stratum was challenged by a handful of ambitious Klanswomen, mainly through a deft manipulation of religious discourse. As discussed earlier, Alma White’s ministry demonstrated that a determined woman could pave her own path within the KKK community, despite structural and social obstacles to the contrary. Born around the onset of the Civil War, White described herself as “homely,” which one can imagine was a source of disappointment and frustration for her, considering that she was one of eleven children, the rest of which were reportedly handsome.⁵¹ Despite her parents initially refusing to send her to school, White eventually taught herself to read and quickly began her pursuit of the pulpit. White would eventually become “the first woman bishop in the history of the Christian Church,” when she founded the Pillar of Fire Church, in New Jersey.⁵² Once described as a “mannish-voiced gynotheocrat” by *TIME Magazine*, White would overcome many obstacles in her journey toward renown, including apparently, ridicule from the media.⁵³

Despite breaking glass ceilings within the Protestant community, White remained a staunch advocate for what we today would consider oppressive Republican Motherhood, noting that the men at Stone Mountain, Georgia had nobly “pledged themselves to advocate the supremacy of the White race,” and that these men stood for “purity of the home, for morality, for the protection of

⁵⁰ Gunnar Myrdal, *American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 561. Myrdal elaborates on his statistical findings to suggest that perhaps “lynching is a way for punishing Negroes for the white Southerners’ own guilt feelings in violating Negro women,” and that “the dullness and insecurity of rural Southern life, as well as the eminence of emotional puritanical religion, also create an emphasis upon sex...which especially effects adolescent, unmarried, and climacteric women...” It is no coincidence that a frequent feature of these lynchings was genital mutilation.

⁵¹ Kandt, “In the Name of God: The Story of Alma Bridwell White,” 758. White’s biographer also notes that White was treated differently than her more attractive sisters, as her father found it “more profitable” to send her sisters off to school, while keeping White confined to the house. White felt “confined to prison walls,” like a “bird in a cage.” Despite these obstacles, she taught herself how to read, and would become an exceptionally skilled orator.

⁵² “Bishop V. Drink,” *TIME Magazine*, (December 18, 1939),

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070823233706/http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0%2C9171%2C763099%2C00.html>.

⁵³ “Bishop V. Drink,” *TIME Magazine*, (December 18, 1939).

[their] sisters, wives, and daughters...”⁵⁴ It is important to recognize the effect of White’s words above. By simultaneously empowering women through her example but constraining women to their subservient positions through her speech, Alma White was both a force for change and an instrument of the status quo. Ultimately though, White was the exception, not the norm. And while White’s pursuit of the pulpit may seem socially liberal in that she was likely the first nationally recognized female pastor, it is important to note that her motivations were deeply rooted in a staunchly oppressive ethnoreligious system. White’s example further supports the notion that many of the characters herein do not fit neatly within the political dichotomy that we too often use.

Undeniably, the Progressive era is saturated with examples of political activists with widely varying beliefs, many of whom were self-described “progressives.”⁵⁵ The same progressivism that is represented by the Klan’s treatment of women is the same progressivism that allowed the Klan garner nationwide support through nativist appeals. The point being that by no means was the Klan at odds with progressive ideals. In fact, one historian posits that progressives were fixated on “national purification” and “moral regeneration.”⁵⁶ Like the larger Progressive movement, the Klan also believed in “positive statism” and the idea that it could affect positive change for the nation through electing race-conscious representatives.⁵⁷ Although, the KKK’s brand of meliorism was rooted in ethnoreligious exclusion and prejudice, not government-led business reform or Jane Adams’ Hull Houses.

Indeed, one of the era’s most notable pieces of legislation is the 1924 Immigration Act, which set immigration quotas for foreign nations. These quotas are reflective of the Klan’s preferences for White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant immigrants, as they allow greater throughput from countries like Great Britain, while nearly prohibiting immigrants from Slavic countries and Africa, or in the words of the author of the bill, the act was a response to the “general realization of the fact that the races of men who have been coming to us in recent years are wholly dissimilar to the native-born Americans...seventy

⁵⁴ White, *Klansmen*, 123, 159.

⁵⁵ For more information regarding the paradoxical and fragmented nature of the Progressive movement, see Daniel T. Rogers’ “Capitalism and Politics in the Progressive Era and in Ours,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 13, no. 3 (July 2014): 379-86.

⁵⁶ Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2009), 200, 310.

⁵⁷ Glen Gendzel, “What the Progressives Had in Common,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 3 (2011): 333. Gendzel asserts that Progressives, although part of a highly fragmented and disjointed movement, generally agreed upon the role of the state in stimulating reform on behalf of common citizens. If this is the case, the Klan was highly effective at politicking and filling state and federal seats with Klansmen and Klan sympathizers.

five percent of our immigration will hereafter come from Northwestern Europe.”⁵⁸ Notable women of the Klan such as Alma White, and Progressive era legislation like the Immigration Act serve to reveal the similarities between the two camps, which are far too often distinguished from one another.

Alma White was not completely alone in her endeavors though, as many women became leaders within the Klan, especially as community organizers, magazine publishers, and perhaps most prolifically as producers and distributors of the Imperial Empire’s ghostly white garments.⁵⁹ A gendered analysis of the Klan, both of its first postbellum incarnation and of its Progressive era form, helps us to understand how the role of women fundamentally changed in the half-century that passed between the two eras. In the first Klan, white women were revered for their purity and white men vaunted them in an effort to preserve exclusive access to white women.⁶⁰ In this way, white men, regardless of class, were expected to uphold a gendered *noblesse oblige*, predicated on the protection of the sanctity of white women and their racial purity. The passing of the 13th Amendment and the end of the Civil War threatened these rigidly defined values that white men held dear. Ironically though, while the preservation of womanly purity may seem to benefit women, or at least allow them to retain some sort of privilege, in reality this gendered social structure reduced all women to objects, symbols of political and racial power. As one historian posits, “the racial state of the slave South, like the racist state that followed the Civil War, was built on a foundation that dictated a hierarchical division of male and female, as well as black and white.”⁶¹ Essentially, the social structure of the American South venerated women in language and tradition, but oppressed and subordinated them in practice. In this way, one could argue that the oppression of the Black slave and later the Black citizen,

⁵⁸ “America of the Melting Pot Comes to End; Effects of New Immigration Legislation Described by Senate Sponsor of Bill-Chief Aim, He States, Is to Preserve Racial Type as it Exists Today,” *The New York Times* (April 27, 1924), <https://www.nytimes.com/1924/04/27/archives/america-of-the-melting-pot-comes-to-end-effects-of-new-immigration.html>.

⁵⁹ Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, *Catalogue of Official Robes and Banners* (Atlanta, GA: KKK Robe & Printing Plant of Buckhead, GA, 1925). In 1925 the Klan established an official textile and publishing plant in Atlanta. This was a pivotal moment in the Klan’s history, as this allowed the group to distribute identical catalogues to each local leader, or exalted cyclops. According to the catalogue, the typical Klansman would spend \$5.00 for his outfit, or about \$70.00 in today’s value. Assuming aforementioned membership figures are accurate, women of the Klan were responsible for producing hundreds of millions of dollars in Klan goods.

⁶⁰ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 15.

⁶¹ Blee, 15.

came at the expense of the white woman, albeit to a much lesser extent.⁶²

Miss Robbie Gill

Imperial Commander
Women of the
KU KLUX KLAN

Women of America
You Who Are
White, Protestant,
Native-Born Citizens of
Good Character!

Do You Know
That
the
Women
of
The
Ku
Klux
Klan
Need
You?

**“THE FATE OF THE NATION IS
IN THE HANDS OF ITS WOMEN”**

THE KOURIER,
215-217 G Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.
I am interested in preserving and defending American ideals and institutions as far as within my power. I believe in the principles of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. How can I become a member of this organization.

Name
Address
City State

Miss Robbie Gill, Imperial Commander, Women of the Ku Klux Klan, since her election as head of the Women's Klan has, through her able leadership, drawn millions of the best American women together in one mighty band.

The above is our home, our Imperial Palace, clear of indebtedness and the individual Klans over the Nation are similarly provided for. It all belongs to the Women!

We need you and you need us today in America's greatest organization for the Women, of the Women and by the Women!

Figure 7: Advertisement from the *Illinois Kourier*, urging women to join the Klan.⁶³

In much the same way that the Klan exalted women for their supposed

⁶² The same could be said of any minority groups that were labeled as the proverbial “other” by the Klan, including Greeks, Jews, Slavs, and Catholics. Though, the Black American felt the fullest effect of the Klan’s hatred.

⁶³ For further information regarding Robbie Gill, see Kelli R. Kerbawy’s “Knights in White Satin: Women of the Ku Klux Klan,” *Marshall University Theses, Dissertations, and Capstones*, Paper 687 (2007): 63.

sexual purity, it also glorified the idea of the Victorian Cult of Domesticity.⁶⁴ This idea was critical to developing a uniform identity amongst women of the Klan. Klan leaders saw the American home as a battleground. Simmons writes “here, in the old-fashioned American home, we shall do battle...we shall fight the last fight...if we are to have a greater and better America, we must begin by breeding better Americans in larger number.”⁶⁵ In the same breath, Simmons advocates for eugenics. In this way, white women were given utility and some measure of value amongst Klan communities; they were integral to accomplishing the Klan’s mission of purifying the country, and perhaps to a broader, but more subtle Progressive mission of doing the same.

Gender dynamics of the Klan’s second incarnation were quite different from those of Forrest’s Klan though. The women’s suffrage movement that had begun at the famed Seneca Falls convention of 1848 had gained traction across the rest of the United States by the turn of the century. By the height of Progressive Era, the Klan and the Suffrage Movement were destined to collide. Contrary to what one may expect, the two movements were able to amalgamate, at least to some degree. In the eyes of Klan leaders, suffrage was “considered a privilege, and not an ‘inherent and unalienable right.’”⁶⁶ In Simmons’s opinion, the “burden of proof” for attaining the right to vote rested upon the shoulders of the disenfranchised.⁶⁷ In the Klan’s opinion, it was clear that white women had exonerated themselves of inferiority to the degree necessary to attain suffrage. In this way, the Klan was able to appear progressive on women’s rights and suffrage, while still attempting to maintain social and political dominance of

⁶⁴ For a thorough examination of Victorian and Progressive gender culture, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 22, 57, & 80. In defining gender roles at the turn of the millennium, Bederman explains the White rationale behind the Cult of Domesticity by writing “‘savage’...races...had not yet evolved pronounced sexual differences...savage men had never evolved the chivalrous instinct to protect their women and children but instead forced their women into exhausting drudgery...overworked savage women had never evolved the refined delicacy of civilized women.” Bederman’s analysis is particularly astute, as she notices the continual importance of gender throughout American history, and notes that by 1911, race had become more crucial in defining “manliness.” Bederman examines G. Stanley Hall, one of the psychologists who helped formulate the scientific underpinnings of emerging ideas on gender. Bederman’s study of Hall’s sexually oppressive childhood sees Hall’s own sense of masculinity as representative of an entire generation’s views on gender. See Chapter 2 of Bederman’s work for another examination of how a sense of white sexual inferiority played into lynching.

⁶⁵ William J. Simmons, *The Klan Unmasked* (Atlanta, GA: Wm. E. Thompson Publishing Co., 1923), 279.

⁶⁶ Simmons, *The Klan Unmasked*, 251.

⁶⁷ Simmons, 251.

other disenfranchised people, especially Blacks and newly naturalized immigrants.⁶⁸ Women of the Klan were comfortable with this arrangement, as Alma White's biographer writes "White found it 'humiliating' that the black man gained the right to vote before the white woman, and blamed the black man, at least in part, for the 'oppression of women'."⁶⁹

The Klan changed in another way between its first and second iterations, as the newest Klan actively preached prohibitionist ideals and temperance, in accordance with their aforementioned domestic values. Between the first and second Klan, prohibition had become a national issue, especially amongst politically active women. In fact, Frances Willard's Women's Christian Temperance Union was one of the most influential female political associations of the era.⁷⁰ In the eyes of female prohibitionists, male irresponsibility manifested itself in alcoholism, which adversely affected the ideal Victorian home. While the WCTU also endorsed suffrage and more extensive women's rights outside of the home, it also found common ground with bigoted organizations like the Klan. In areas like Indiana, where the Klan's influence was strongest, the WCTU worked with the KKK in pursuit of statewide dry laws, as both groups subscribed to nativist sentiments and often emphasized the supposed connection between immigrants, alcoholism, and immorality.⁷¹

In fact, the American Midwest was a center of convergence for religion and politics, and women of the KKK were often the binding agent that worked to unite the white community against its perceived threats. In one instance, an Indiana woman, Daisy Barr, rose to prominence as an evangelist, only to use her religious platform to promote temperance and nativism, bringing together multiple organizations, such as a female-version of the YMCA, the Klan, local churches, and even an Indiana chapter of the GOP.⁷² Barr used her religious influence on behalf of the KKK for a number of reasons, most notable of which were her opposition to alcohol, her desire to end apparent political corruption,

⁶⁸ Simmons, 253. Here Simmons calls for new federal voting laws, that would restrict the vote to English speaking, "educated" citizens.

⁶⁹ Kandt, "In the Name of God: The Story of Alma Bridwell White," 786. Kandt quotes White as having said "they gave the black man the ballot sixty years in advance of white women [and thus the] colored man had a voice in making the laws of the land, while half of the white and black races remained in political bondage. When the black man received the franchise, the white women bore the sting of their humiliation for more than half a century, being placed in an inferior position to colored men in the use of the ballot and the rights of citizenship. Such reflections make one feel that man's delinquency has been almost unpardonable."

⁷⁰ Worth R. Miller, "The Lost World of Gilded Age Politics," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no. 1 (January 2002): 58.

⁷¹ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 104.

⁷² Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 105-107; Dwight W. Hoover, "Daisy Douglas Barr: From Quaker to Klan "Kluckeress," *Indiana Magazine of History* 87, no. 2 (June 1991): 177.

and finally, Barr's strong nativist stance. In these ways, Barr did not find it difficult to reconcile her personal beliefs with the philosophies of the Klan. In fact, more often than not each of these groups complimented one another. An excerpt from one of Barr's sermons demonstrates how women and the Klan could develop a symbiotic relationship:

I am utterly disgusted that a man from the foreign land can come here and be made an American citizen in 12 months, when it takes an American born man 21 years with the public schools of our country back of him to become a franchised citizen...the New Patriotism is a patriotism that will take care of the womanhood and its young...no nation ever rises above its womanhood.⁷³

Barr's fervent support of the Klan would become so successful that Indiana's chief Kleeogle would permit her to form a woman's auxiliary to the Klan. Soon, Barr became an interstate icon, as her authority spanned across woman's chapters in West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Indiana.⁷⁴ Of course, prohibitionist sentiments would not be difficult to reconcile with Protestant Christianity either, thus allowing the Klan to secure another plank in its political platform, through which it could continue to appeal to middle-Americans.



Figure 8: WCTU matron and Klan “Kluckeress” Daisy Barr.⁷⁵

⁷³ Blee, *Women of the Klan*, 108.

⁷⁴ Hoover, “Daisy Douglas Barr,” 189.

⁷⁵ Jill Weiss Simins, “‘America First:’ The Ku Klux Klan Influence on Immigration Policy in the 1920s”, *Hoosier State Chronicles*, June 20, 2019. Available online at <https://blog.newspapers.library.in.gov/tag/ku-klux-klan/>

But of course, a historian would be hard-pressed to argue that women were the primary determinants of a family's sociopolitical leanings in 1910s or 1920s America. While the role of women was not insignificant, men were attracted to the Klan for a variety of reasons, many of which diverged sharply from the motivations of white women. Men joined the Klan at higher frequencies, and more specifically, white, middle-class, semi-skilled laborers were called to the Klan more so than any other people group. Klan organizers, especially Simmons, used gendered prose to entice white men who felt that their racial dominance and exclusive rights to white, female sexuality had been challenged. Klan recruiting efforts often sold the Klan as a strictly fraternal organization, founded in an effort to save "the white women of the South," who had "become prey of the Negroes..."⁷⁶ As the Klan's senior-most Grand Dragon, Simmons spoke for Klaverns across American when he wrote on the Klan's legacy and its *raison d'être*:

The white man's civilization that had been thousands of years in the building was imperiled... Tremendous forces leaped from the ashes of defeat and drove like the whirlwind throughout the land... An empire covering half a continent took form in an hour and more than a half million men were mobilized in a single day in defense of the white man, his home, his civilization, and his freedom, against the... assaults of an inferior race...⁷⁷

Here we see Simmons again attempting to resurrect fantasized images of the past to fulfill his vision of "Klannish" socialization.

In the aggregate, it seems that the proliferation of the Klan served to diminish the impact of labor unions, despite the fact that most Klan members were white, lower-class, disaffected laborers. Intuitively, these men would have benefitted from union membership, but they were skeptical of organized labor for fear of immigrants and minorities. Although, this is not uncommon in American history, as the white labor-class periodically subscribes to political ideologies at odds with their economic interests.⁷⁸ The Klan's racism, and indeed America's racist tendencies were stoked by drastic changes in labor that occurred around the turn of the century. Industrialization worked to put unskilled labors in a precarious position in the job market, especially white unskilled workers, as their Black counterparts were often willing to take on the same jobs for lower wages. This relatively new Black labor force posed an existential threat to unskilled whites. In truth, the idea of "whiteness" was the only thing these men could fall back on. By maintaining an ethnically narrow standard of whiteness, the Klan and its members sought to diminish the

⁷⁶ Simmons, *The Klan Unmasked*, 19.

⁷⁷ Simmons, 19-20.

⁷⁸ Thomas Pegram, "The Ku Klux Klan, Labor, and the White Working Class during the 1920s," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 17, no. 2 (April 2018): 391.

bargaining power of competitors; primarily Blacks, but also Asians, Irishmen, and Eastern-European immigrants. Moreover, by opposing its competition, the Klan was able to reinforce a perceived, even if fabricated, class identity amongst its members.⁷⁹

The threat that the new Black labor force posed to Whites is best illustrated in Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Convention Speech. Washington, in an attempt to advance racial equality, attempts to sell Black labor to the south's captains of industry by making a distinction between Black labor and immigrant labor. Washington likens Southern industry to a "ship lost at sea," its crew suffering of dehydration. He implores business owners to quench their thirst by "casting [their] buckets" into the water that is the Black labor force, sixteen million strong.⁸⁰ Washington even goes as far as to say that Black laborers will "lay down [their] lives" in order to protect the interest of white business owners.⁸¹ Washington is often derided for his apparent toleration of white supremacy and his reluctance to pursue racial equality through litigation, but his ultimate goal was to bring economic, and eventual social parity between the two races. Unfortunately, the ideas that Washington expressed at the Atlanta Convention would only serve to increase tension between Black and white labor, as white men reeled against the imposing reality of an emerging Black working class. The threat of a growing Black labor force did more to mobilize whites against the Black community than nearly any other factor, perhaps with the notable exception of the Black community's disjointed involvement with fringe political movements, such as the Communist Party.⁸²

If we consider Alma White's rhetoric as representative of the feelings of

⁷⁹ Pegram, "The Ku Klux Klan, Labor, and the White Working Class during the 1920s," 376. This is ironic considering that more than a handful of Klan leaders were either suspected of or found on charges of fraud and abuse, including Robbie Gill (mentioned herein) and D.C. Stephenson, Grand Dragon of the Indiana Klan through 1925. For a thorough analysis of Stephenson's impact on the Klan and how his downfall coincided the Invisible Empire's retrenchment, see William Lutholtz, *Grand Dragon: D.C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana*, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1991).

⁸⁰ Thomas Aiello, *The Battle for the Souls of Black Folk* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016), 39.

⁸¹ Aiello, 38.

⁸² Matthew F. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 251 and John B. Kirby, *Black Americans in the Roosevelt Era* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 10-11. Kirby argues that Communist support of racial equality may have hurt more moderate desegregationists, as support from the Communist party allowed racists to link the early-civil rights movement to fringe, radical politics. One leader of the Urban League was certain that Communist "agitation amongst Negroes [would] do serious harm to Negro workers and the whole interracial situation."

the Klan's female members, we can infer that labor was also a serious issue for women of the KKK. One historian quotes White in saying that the Klanswoman's views on Black people were cemented in her experience in Millersburg, Indiana, where White wrote that "[t]here were so many colored people that the white man who had to earn wages for a living could scarcely find anything to do...[t]he poor white man had no alternative but to raise [tobacco] to keep the wolf from the door."⁸³ Simmons expresses identical sentiment, but on a national scale, when he writes of the threats posed by the "denizens of the slums of Europe and Asia...because [they] sell themselves cheapest in the labor markets of the world."⁸⁴ Fluctuations in the labor market and periods of economic uncertainty tend to spur on nativist activity. By extension, more prejudiced policies are often adopted in these times, as in the case of aforementioned immigration legislation.⁸⁵ When combined with America's organic history of racism, these economic motivations for ethnocentrism make the Klan's brand of hate particularly potent, and inextricably connected to the KKK's identity.

Having already established that the Klan was not simply a far-right hate group, but rather that the KKK was more of an amorphous, opportunistic, ethnoreligious political entity that drew from Progressive as well as oppressive ideas, it is now worth our time to touch on the populist nature of the Klan. The Klan's mentality was indicative of what we today would call Populism, in that it shared traits organic to nearly all populist movements: an "us versus them" mentality, paired with the idea that nothing should constrain the will of the true people, in this case, white Protestants.⁸⁶ Like many other populist movements, the Klan needed to mobilize the masses to affect change, and directed its rhetoric toward a proverbial "other". In general, this "other" that was so often depicted in sermons, Klan rallies, and klavern propaganda was any people group that posed a threat to racial hegemony. Protestantism and patriotism were veneers for this vicious movement; facades used to make the Klan seem amenable with less radical political discourse. Religion was the perfect cover for the Klan, as religion is a uniquely sacred realm in American society, and nearly any action taken in accordance with one's espoused beliefs is tolerated, so long as it does not overtly rise to the level of armed violence. While the Klan used Protestantism, it would not be correct to suggest that the KKK became an integral faction of Protestant Christianity, just as it would not be proper to suggest that slaveholding was an inherently Christian practice. Commenting on

⁸³ Kandt, "In the Name of God: The Story of Alma Bridwell White," 760.

⁸⁴ Simmons, *The Klan Unmasked*, 169.

⁸⁵ Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 85-87.

⁸⁶ Jordan Kyle, "Populists in Power Around the World," *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change* (November 2018): 12.

biblical justifications for slavery, Frederick Douglas once wrote “what I have said respecting and against religion, I mean strictly to apply to the slaveholding religion of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper,” as Douglas loved the “pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ,” and loathed the “corrupt, slaveholding, woman-whipping, cradle-plundering...hypocritical Christianity of [America].”⁸⁷ In the same way that antebellum slavery used Christianity to its benefit, the Klan of the next era hijacked Protestantism to suit its own needs. In fact, the Klan perverted Protestant ideals in much the same way that other cults muddle the precepts of various mainstream religions. At its core, the Klan was a politically motivated cult that used religion to suit its own narrative. As demonstrated earlier, one of the Klan’s ends was to attain widespread political influence. Indeed, some Klansmen even had ambitions to become President of the United States.⁸⁸ In fact, other Klansmen claimed that the KKK had already put a member of the nefarious cult in the Oval Office.⁸⁹

Throughout history, nationalist groups have used religious rhetoric to justify violence, hate, and bigotry, as demonstrated by the assertions of Klan organizers like Hiram Evans, Alma White, Daisy Barr, and William Simmons. By coopting Protestantism to suit its own needs, the second-generation Ku Klux Klan attained massive power in under a decade, precipitating the postbellum nadir of American race relations.⁹⁰ Moreover, the Klan was both able to exploit and subjugate women in a manner that allowed the Klan to pursue its ends. The modern reader should be weary of the underlying causes of the Klan and the manner in which the Imperial Empire pursued its ends. Between the first and second incarnations of the Klan, Booker T. Washington prematurely referred to the Klan as a bygone organization when he wrote in 1901:

I have referred to this unpleasant part of the history of the South simply for the

⁸⁷ Frederick Douglas, *Life of an American Slave*, (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 116-117. Available online at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abaudfa14t.html>.

⁸⁸ William M. Lutholtz, *Grand Dragon: D.C. Stephenson and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana*, (Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1991), xv.

⁸⁹ Horowitz, *Inside the Klavern*, 4. Here, Horowitz writes that “rumors even suggested that President Warren G. Harding had been inducted [into the Klan] in a White House Ceremony.” Further research is needed to substantiate these rumors. Based on information presented herein, it is not unrealistic to insinuate that the Klan was able to influence the most powerful leaders in 1920s America, even the President of the United States. Indeed, the Klan took credit for defeating Catholic candidate Al Smith, in the 1928 presidential election.

⁹⁰ Dr. Rayford Logan is the father of this phrase “Nadir of American race relations.” Logan placed the nadir at 1901 through analysis in his book *The Betrayal of the Negro, from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1997), 62. Though, I tend to agree with more contemporary analyses that place the nadir at around 1923-1925, at the height of the Klan’s influence.

purpose of calling attention to the great change that has taken place since the days of the “Ku Klux.” To-day there are no such organizations in the South, and the fact that such ever existed is almost forgotten by both races. There are few places in the South now where public sentiment would permit such organizations to exist.⁹¹

Unfortunately, Washington’s eulogy of the Klan was given far too early. In truth, it is unlikely that he could have anticipated the reemergence of the Klan. Moreover, Washington would have been taken aback by the KKK’s rapid proliferation, not only across genders, but also across the Mason-Dixon Line, as the Second Klan’s popularity transcended state boundaries, and counterintuitively was most popular in the Midwest.⁹² Conversely, readers today have the benefits of both historical hindsight and an increasingly robust volume of historical literature on the KKK and know that the Klan has reemerged at least two times, once in the Progressive Era, and again in the Civil Rights Era. By failing to acknowledge the pervasive, stubborn spirit of the Klan, we run the risk of falling prey to its reemergence; albeit, in a new, but equally evil manifestation.⁹³

Moreover, the KKK’s use of Protestantism should serve as a warning for people of all faiths, as quasi-religious nationalist movements reemerge across the globe. In an international atmosphere of increasing uncertainty, world leaders are likely to espouse hateful rhetoric in seeking the support of the majority, even at the detriment of the minority. Time and time again these

⁹¹ Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1907), 41.

⁹² It is often assumed that the Klan was most prevalent in the South, but after the Great Migration that followed World War I, northern whites embraced the Klan with open arms. In truth, southern Whites had little need for the Klan, as racism was overt and much more prevalent than in northern states or the Midwest. Conversely, the Klan provided anonymity for its members in the North and Midwest, mainly through its regalia and communal protection. The Klan’s move northward began around 1921, with Klan chapters eventually reaching past the U.S. border with Canada. The Klan’s rapid expansion is discussed in John T. Kneebone’s “Publicity and Prejudice: The New York World’s Exposé of 1921 and the History of the Second Ku Klux Klan,” in *Virginia Commonwealth University History Scholars Compass*, (Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015).

⁹³ In 1998, three White men from the Texas interior were charged with lynching a 49-year-old Black man and father of three, James Byrd Jr. Responding to questions from the press concerning white supremacists, Gwendolyn Chisholm, a resident of Jasper, Texas replied “they look like normal people, don’t they? That’s the way they are nowadays – they don’t wear hoods anymore.” For further information regarding more recent incarnations of hate such as the abovementioned, see Alison Kinney’s *Hood* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 29. Unfortunately, the spirit of the Klan is alive and well.

movements, much like the KKK, have coopted popular religions to suit their aims. Indeed, as long as ethnoreligious forces are able to reinforce an exclusive sense of American identity, the spirit of the Klan endures. Although distant in time, the history of the Invisible Empire is close in spirit, as stubborn strands of bigotry and hatred continue to occupy public discourse today.

MARK CLARK'S COMMAND OF THE 5TH ARMY AT THE RAPIDO RIVER

BY ROBERT BRABSTON

General Mark Clark's command of the 5th Army during the Italian Campaign of World War II is among the most controversial commands of the entire war. The American 36th Infantry division, which was apportioned to the 5th Army, was repeatedly engaged in sharp combat during this campaign. However, their bloodiest fight would come on the 22nd of January 1944 during the attempt to cross the Rapido River. Mark Clark intended to use the already battle weary 36th Infantry Division to make up the main assault that break the Gustav line. This action would not end well as the Germans stopped the assault almost immediately and ended with many casualties without any ground gained. Later, Clark would describe this assault as a distraction for the Anzio landings that were occurring at the same time. After the war, there would be congressional hearings and much controversy stirred up by division commanders within the 5th Army. Major General Fred Walker would give scathing testimony during congressional hearings deciding whether there should be a full investigation of Clark's actions. The vote to start a formal congressional investigation failed, which some historians have used as proof that Clark was justified in his actions. However, these explanations fail to vindicate Clark's decisions during the campaign in Italy, and it remains clear that Clark was negligent in the planning and execution of his plan to break the Gustav line.

After the initial invasion of Italy, the Germans had established a series of defensive lines utilizing the terrain of the Italian peninsula. The Gustav line was one of these formidable defensive works, which the Germans emplaced from Mount Marrone, to Cassino and then to the West of Garigliano to Monte Scauri.¹ Trying to break through this line, General Mark Clark began to develop a plan of attack. Operation SHINGLE was the result of Clark's planning, which called for an amphibious assault at Anzio and an assault across the Rapido River to draw German reinforcements away from the landing site.² However, facing the Allied army was a determined German adversary. There were over 60,000 men under the command of German Field Marshall Albert Kesselring with the German Tenth Army, which included the 15th Panzer Grenadiers and the 3rd

¹ Jon Mikolashek, "Flawed, but Essential: Mark W. Clark and the Italian Campaign in World War II." (PhD diss., The Florida State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2007), 92.

² Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, Kindle (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1993), 8715.

Panzer Grenadiers.³ These forces were dug into the hills that overlooked the Rapido River and would provide a stout defense to any potential attack. Furthermore, the terrain gave the Germans an almost unobstructed field of fire from hidden firing points along the S-curves of the river.⁴ Not only was there no cover for advancing Allied infantrymen to shield themselves during the assault, but the ground itself was unsuitable for any attack. The path chosen by Clark and his planners was impassible for vehicles, making them useless, and forcing the infantry to move on foot through a swamp that the Germans actively patrolled.⁵ The chosen area was not the only place for an assault in support of Operation SHINGLE. According to General Fred Walker, commander of the 36th Division, the area reminded him of the Marne River during World War I where the Americans slaughtered Germans attacking their positions.⁶ Walker suggested another point north of Monte Cassino where there was significantly less prepared German defenses with a smaller river that could be crossed easier.⁷ Clark and his planners dismissed this suggestion with Walker later writing, “They do not understand the problem [of crossing a river under fire] and do not know what I am talking about.”⁸ Given the problems with the site the 36th Division would have to assault, there needed to be solid planning in order to give any hope of success. Walker later wrote in his memoir, “I’ll swear I do not see how we, or any other Division, can possibly succeed in crossing the Rapido River near San Angelo when that stream is included within the main line of resistance of the strongest German position.”⁹ Unfortunately for the 36th Division, Walker’s suggestions were overlooked during planning and preparations by Clark.

Clark and his staff mismanaged the planning for Operation SHINGLE and the assault over the Rapido River. According to General Walker, the Division only received two and a half days from the receipt of the orders to the

³ Ian Blackwell, *Fifth Army in Italy 1943-1945 A Coalition at War* (South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2012), 156.

⁴ George F. Botjer, *Sideshow War: the Italian Campaign, 1943-1945* (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 2007), 68.

⁵ Carlo D’Este, *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome* (New York City, New York: Harperperennial, 2008), 80.

⁶ Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, Kindle, 8217.

⁷ Duane Schultz, *Crossing the Rapido: A Tragedy of World War II* (Yardley, Pennsylvania: Westholme Pub., 2011), 126-127

⁸ Schultz, 126-127.

⁹ Fred L. Walker, *From Texas to Tome with General Fred L. Walker: Fighting World War II and the Italian Campaign with the 36th Infantry Division, as Seen Through the Eyes of Its Commanding General*, Kindle. (El Dorado Hills, California: Savas Publishing, 1969), 5460

time of expected execution of the plan.¹⁰ This did not give the 36th Division adequate time to prepare for the assault. In addition, the selection of the unit that would carry out the attack was misguided. The 36th Division, at the time of the attack, was seriously undermanned and not in any condition to conduct an attack. They had just been involved in an offensive in December and suffered many casualties that had not been replaced.¹¹ In fact, in previous engagements they had suffered more casualties than they did at Rapido. According to a later statement from Carl L Phinney, the assistant Chief of Staff G-4, the 36th Division had suffered over 5,000 casualties in combat from Salerno in the weeks leading up to the action at the Rapido.¹² The casualties suffered by the 36th Division in previous combat left the division in a depleted state and would negatively affect their combat performance. Regiments would go into the fight understrength with many new men who had not even had the chance to really meet their leaders and the officers to get a sense of their capabilities.¹³ While going into a fight under strength was not uncommon during the war, the level of depletion was worrisome. Within Clark's 5th Army each regiment was understrength by almost 1,000 men had only received replacements for half of the men that were casualties with those who remained being exhausted from constant fighting.¹⁴ Adding to the problems the Americans faced during the fight, was a lack of coordination between engineers and infantrymen to effectively negotiate the river itself.

The American's coordination between their engineers and infantry caused serious problems for the attack. Clark did not ensure the proper rehearsals took place before engaging in battle to get the infantry familiar with the technical problems of crossing a river. The commander of an engineer battalion, Major Jack S. Berry, who was supposed to support one of the infantry regiments cross the river, was not called for guidance on the rehearsals.¹⁵ Another issue with the engineers that should have alerted Clark to the impending disaster was that the engineers found none of the equipment needed to effectively support the attack.¹⁶ They were short of even the basic equipment required to get the soldiers of the 36th Division across the Rapido, namely the

¹⁰ Report of Interview with Major General Fred L. Walker, Folder 9, Box 39, Mark Clark Papers, Citadel Archives, Charleston, SC

¹¹ D'Este, 79.

¹² Statement of Colonel Carl L. Phinney, Folder 6, Box 39, Mark Clark Papers, Citadel Archives, Charleston, SC

¹³ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Backwater War: The Allied Campaign in Italy*, (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2007), 113.

¹⁴ Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 8325.

¹⁵ Martin Blumenson, *Bloody River: The Real Tragedy of the Rapido*, (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1998), 76-77.

¹⁶ Hoyt, *Backwater War: The Allied Campaign in Italy*, 112.

footbridges. Additionally, the engineers were supposed to unload all the supplies at the water's edge, but there were no roads for the trucks to drive. Due to daylight, this exposed them to withering fire, forcing them to dump the equipment several miles from the river.¹⁷ This equipment would have to be carried by the assault troops on their way to attack across the river. The soldiers' only hope would be to have successful coordination with engineers and the British 46th Division's attack on their flanks in support. Otherwise, they were doomed to face the German Defenses alone as Clark preferred to work solely with American troops.

General Clark refused to properly cooperate with the British 46th Division, which would be attacking in support of the 36th Division. In fact, it was more than a refusal to cooperate. It was a refusal to allow British and American soldiers to fight together with the only exception being the fight at Anzio, because Clark's commanders forced him too.¹⁸ At the heart of this refusal to work with the British was his own ego. Clark did not trust General Alexander, the British general, who oversaw the 15th Army Group, which included the British 46th Division; General Alexander was the next level up from General Clark and his 5th Army. Clark was angered at the British performance at Salerno where the Americans fought against a tenacious German defender while the supporting British attack moved too slowly to offer help.¹⁹ What angered Clark more was the British portrayal of the landings after the fighting had stopped. Clark was particularly mad that British propaganda had portrayed Montgomery as coming to the rescue of the American forces, which he believed was not the case and at this moment decided there would be no such confusion over the conquest of Rome, the next step after concluding at Rapido.²⁰

More than just Rome, Clark wanted to ensure his American soldiers got the glory for their victories. This thought was so pervasive that Clark would not consider the better maneuver, which was from the success of the British X Corps' bridgehead at Garigliano. The 36th Division could cross the Rapido from this location and attack there instead of their planned frontal assault.²¹ This would have allowed the Allies to move just south of the Rapido and cross over near Sant Ambrogio and Minturno.²² Though this maneuver would have been difficult to achieve, it was by no means impossible. The problem was that the X Corps was British and the 36th Division was American. Had both these groups

¹⁷ Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 8285

¹⁸ D'Este, 83.

¹⁹ Dan Kurzman *The Race for Rome*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), 17.

²⁰ Kurzman, 17.

²¹ Martin Blumenson, *Bloody River: The Real Tragedy of the Rapido*, (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1998), 122.

²² Mikolashek, 94

been either British or American the maneuver would have been more feasible.²³ More damning than the refusal to maneuver across zones was the refusal to allow British reinforcements to reinforce American divisions.

After the assault across the Rapido on the 20th of January, the 36th Division was under strength by over 3,000 infantrymen.²⁴ The beleaguered Americans needed reinforcement quickly. Instead of getting whatever forces were available and having them relieve the exhausted Americans, Clark refused troops based on nationality. Clark, being offered a New Zealand Corps by General Alexander and having them placed under his command, refused to allow them to move into the front line.²⁵ Clark wanted the glory of the supposed victory to go to the American forces and no one else, especially the British. In fact, it was only when it became apparent the American's assault was going to fail that Clark allowed them to play a part in the operation.²⁶ The refusal to allow for reinforcement highlights Clark's failure of command and how he could not set aside his personal grievances to aid his own soldiers. Instead, he opted to commit his soldiers to the fight at Rapido piecemeal, which allowed them to be destroyed.²⁷ Mark Clark would defend his actions at the Rapido vehemently, especially after the war, in memoirs and against men who served in his division.

Mark Clark never admitted that his attack at the Rapido River was a wasted effort. He believed his attacks at Anzio, which involved his supporting diversionary attack at the Rapido River, held German troops in the Italian theater and therefore having a strategic impact. However, other commanders from both sides dispute this idea in their separate testimonies. Clark defended his idea that the attack against the Rapido River was necessary to pull German reserves away from the landings at Anzio; however the commander of the German 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, General Heinrich von Vietinghoff, thought little of the attack.²⁸ In fact, he thought it was simply a reconnaissance in force and did not commit any local reserves to resist the attack back.²⁹ Additionally, General Vietinghoff thought Mark Clark's attack did not achieve the purpose of launching the assault to draw forces from Anzio. However, despite the clear operational failure and waste of life, Clark became more entrenched in his beliefs. In his memoir *Calculated Risk* he writes that "I salute them [the 36th Division] for their charge and courage. As for myself, I can only say that under the same circumstances I would have to do it over again – and if I

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ian Blackwell, *Fifth Army in Italy 1943-1945 A Coalition at War*, 188.

²⁵ Blackwell, 177.

²⁶ Blackwell, 177.

²⁷ Blackwell, 178.

²⁸ Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 8513

²⁹ Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, 8513

am to be accused of something, thank God I am accused of attacking instead of retreating.”³⁰ Mark Clark’s refusal to acknowledge the failure and futility of the assault over the Rapido River demonstrate his ignorance to the actions he ordered his men follow.

Despite the evidence that seems to illustrate Clark’s failure at the Rapido river, there are some who defend his decisions during the battle. Jon Mikolashek, in his doctoral dissertation, argues that the challenges posed by the terrain and a competent defender forced Clark to launch operations under poor conditions.³¹ Mikolashek attempts to explain that no commander would have been able to have more success given the circumstances Clark found himself in. After all, he was facing two well trained and battle-hardened divisions with relatively green troops.³² According to Mikolashek, Clark believed that if the Allies were able to seize the Alban Hills, which was the dominating terrain on the western side of the Liri River Valley, then the entire Gustav Line would have to be abandoned, which made it a decisive point of the operation.³³ The plan was for one force to land at Anzio and one force to attack and break through the Gustav Line in order to link up within a week and move on Rome.³⁴ The Germans, according to Clark, would be forced to give up their positions on the Gustav Line if the Allies seized the Alban Hills in order to avoid being encircled.³⁵ The plan made sense in theory, generally laying out a feasible means of breaking through stout defensive works. Defenders of Clark would include the Secretary of War Robert Patterson and Randolph Churchill, the son of Prime Minister Churchill. Patterson wrote in a letter to the Committee on Military Affairs in 1946 stating that Clark was justified in his actions at the Rapido River.³⁶ He backed up Clark’s claim that the attacks were used to draw German reinforcements away from the Anzio landings and that Clark “exercised sound judgement in planning it and ordering it.”³⁷ Randolph Churchill would say that the crossing was his father’s idea and Winston Churchill insisted on the campaign despite the protests of other Allied leaders, to include President Roosevelt.³⁸ However, there would be an almost insurmountable number of

³⁰ Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk*, (New York City, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 282.

³¹ Mikolashek, 88.

³² D'Este, 79.

³³ Mikolashek, 88.

³⁴ Mikolashek, 89.

³⁵ Mikolashek, 88.

³⁶ Letter from Secretary of War Robert Stanton to Committee on Military Affairs, Folder 6, Box 39, Mark Clark Papers, Citadel Archives, Charleston, SC.

³⁷ Letter from Secretary of War Robert Stanton to Committee on Military Affairs, Folder 6, Box 39, Mark Clark Papers, Citadel Archives, Charleston, SC.

³⁸ Mikolashek, 108.

problems that should have killed the operation, which discredits the argument absolving Clark of responsibility for the failure.

The main issue of the operation was the allocation of landing craft to deliver the attack force to the Anzio beach head, which was a key portion of Operation SHINGLE. While the Allies were considering the attacks in Italy, they were also in the midst of planning Operations OVERLORD and ANVIL, which could not be interfered with.³⁹ As a result, there was a serious lack of landing craft that would be able to be provided to the Italian theater of operations. This lack of landing craft limited the amount of forces that could be landed at Anzio. Clark himself realized the operation would be doomed to fail if they could not get enough landing craft and he recommended that SHINGLE be canceled on December 18th, 1943.⁴⁰ Additionally, due to the navy being needed in other theaters, there would be no chance to build up forces at sea with additional support to follow after the initial attack.⁴¹ Essentially, the soldiers landing at Anzio would land and be left to sort out any follow-on situation on their own. This added extreme risk to the operation as if the landings were not successful there would be nothing that could be done to help the forces on the beach.

General Lucas agreed with the idea SHINGLE should be canceled and wrote in his diary that the operation had “a strong odor of Gallipoli and apparently the same amateur [Winston Churchill] is still on the coach’s bench.”⁴² General Lucas was certainly not the only one who had doubts about the operation. In fact, British Brigadier General Kenneth Strong, Eisenhower’s intelligence officer, believed that the Anzio landing would not achieve its goals.⁴³ General Strong argued that the Germans would not abandon Italy the way Churchill thought since Hitler saw Italy as politically important and would simply reinforce Italy with unengaged divisions in France or Yugoslavia.⁴⁴ General Strong coldly predicted that Rome would not be taken by the Allies quickly, and the Allied forces would be forced to fight against a strong German defense.⁴⁵ In addition to these prophetic comments from Eisenhower’s intelligence officer, there were serious setbacks suffered by the units who were to be engaged in the operation. Within three days of the landings there was an accident, which resulted in the loss of more than forty landing crafts that were crucial to the attack, which made even the most ardent believers in the plan lose

³⁹ Mikolashek, 89-90

⁴⁰ Mikolashek, 88.

⁴¹ Mikolashek, 91.

⁴² Mikolashek, 94.

⁴³ Mikolashek, 95

⁴⁴ Mikolashek, 95.

⁴⁵ Mikolashek, 95.

hope, calling it a “suicide dash.”⁴⁶ Clark commented in his memoir *Calculated Risk* that the loss of these vehicles was crucial to the attack on the Rapido River.⁴⁷

Despite the setbacks and concern, Clark initiated the operation anyway. After the first day, the British who were supposed to seize the high ground, which overlooked the area where the assault over the Rapido River would occur, failed to accomplish their objectives.⁴⁸ The ground the British forces were supposed to take was the high ground that dominated the Liri valley, where the assault forces attempting to cross the Rapido River would be crossing.⁴⁹ Clark knew that without the possession of this ground the attack at the Rapido River would be even deadlier. Still, Clark ordered the attacks forward, disregarding the clear warnings that the attack would fail. At each of these major setbacks there was an opportunity to call off the attack. Each of these issues were not insignificant and turned an already risky operation into a gamble, which should have led to it being called off.

Mark Clark deservedly bears the blame for the casualties suffered by the 36th Division during the battle of the Rapido River. He selected the worst possible location for the assault to take place, across a flood plain, over a river, and into an integrated defense network. He did so with an understrength and combat exhausted division who had not yet integrated the measly replacements they received. Additionally, he did not allow, or even consult, the engineers to properly train the infantry on the complex aspects of crossing a river while under intense fire. Finally, Clark inexcusably refused reinforcements from his British allies because he was afraid he would not get the credit for winning. He also failed to recognize key points during the planning and execution phases of the operation where the attack should have been called off and forced the attack ahead. After all these glaring problems and worse results, Clark says that he would do the whole operation over again. Even after breaking through the Gustav Line, instead of capitalizing on the moment and encircling the German divisions leaving the area, he went for the prize of Rome so he could bask in the glory of taking the capital of Italy. Despite an attempt to absolve General Mark Clark made by some historians and public officials of the time, the facts remain that Clark mismanaged the deployment of his soldiers during the engagement at the Rapido River.

⁴⁶ Mikolashek, 96.

⁴⁷ Clark, 269.

⁴⁸ Mikolashek, 98.

⁴⁹ Mikolashek, 98.

ANGELS OF WAR: THE IMPACT OF THE AIRBORNE FORCE DURING THE RECAPTURE OF CORREGIDOR

BY ANTHONY MARCO

Summary of Corregidor's Recapture

General Walter Krueger, commanding US 6th Army, determined that the capture of the island Corregidor was necessary to accessing the port at Manila.¹ In 1945, Corregidor—previously an American fortress until captured by the Japanese in 1942—guarded the entrance to Manila Bay. 6th Army intelligence assessed the Japanese garrison consisted of approximately 850 combatants.² The plan for Corregidor's recapture called for the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team to conduct an airborne assault on the island's dominating terrain feature known as "Topside" [reference Figure 1].³ Meanwhile, the 34th Infantry Regiment's 3rd Battalion would perform an amphibious landing on Corregidor's southern Black Beach in San Jose Bay.⁴ In support of the operation, Naval Task Force 77.3's cruisers and destroyers would lay down a pre-invasion bombardment and provide fire support missions throughout the engagement. In conjunction, the 5th and 13th Air Forces pounded Corregidor from the sky with waves of A-20 Havoc and B-24 Liberator medium bombers. Complete air superiority also afforded the American troops on Corregidor critical close air support missions.⁵

¹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 335.

² *OPERATION M-7 SOUTHERN ZAMBALES & CORREGIDOR* (WWII Operations Report, 24th Infantry Division 1940-1948) 30. American intelligence inaccurately reported total Japanese strength on the island which numbered close to 6,000 combatants.

³ Lawrence. Browne, *AIRBORNE OPERATION ON CORREGIDOR* (Instructor Training Division General Instruction Department The Armored School, April 10, 1948) 6.

⁴ *OPERATION M-7 SOUTHERN ZAMBALES & CORREGIDOR*, 129.

⁵ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 340.



Figure 1: Overview of Corregidor with Toppide in the foreground.

The invasion began on February 16th, 1945 with a massive sea and naval bombardment at 0715.⁶ Elements of the 503rd PRCT's 3rd Battalion began dropping from the sky at 0833, followed up by the amphibious phase at 1030 [reference Figure 2]. The 503rd rapidly secured a perimeter on Toppide while the 34th seized Malinta Hill. Throughout the remaining half of the day intense combat engulfed the island, yet 2nd Battalion was dropped on Toppide in the second airborne lift. The 503rd began the arduous process of reducing the Japanese defenses along Toppide but the Japanese launched incessant counterattacks during the night. Meanwhile on Malinta Hill, the 34th held their key position, prompting nightly suicidal Japanese attacks. As the process of rooting out the Japanese and fending off counterattacks took on a repetitive nature, fighting was interrupted by an explosion in Malinta Tunnel—under Malinta Hill—on February 21st; perpetrated by the Japanese, the failed attempt to blow the Hill cost the Japanese heavily.⁷ Enemy resistance ceased on the island's western sector, while the 151st Infantry Regiment's 2nd Battalion

⁶ B.R. Trexler, *ACTION REPORT- MARIVELES- CORREGIDOR – MANILA BAY OPERATIONS, 13-18 FEBRUARY 1945* (Task Group 77.3, March 27, 1945) 19.

⁷ George M. Jones, *HISTORICAL REPORT CORREGIDOR ISLAND OPERATION* (Headquarters 503D Regimental Combat Team, March 6, 1945) 6.

relieved the 34th.⁸ The final phase of the Battle began on the 27th, and after a tough fight Corregidor was secured by March 2nd. Corregidor's recapture was considered by Generals MacArthur and Krueger as an overwhelming success; however, the complex planning, significant resource allocation, and high jump casualties associated with the airborne operation raises the question: how crucial was the airborne element in the overall American success on Corregidor and could the island be recaptured without the 503rd?



Figure 2: 503rd PRTC landing on Corregidor.

Japanese Dispositions and Plans

Imperial Japanese Navy Captain Akira Itagki prepared defenses for the island with three infantry companies, two artillery companies, and 4,000 naval personnel, close to 6,000 combatants.⁹ Captain Itagki received orders from

⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁹ *OPERATIONAL RECORDS OF SHIMBU GROUP* (Japanese Monograph No. 8, October 1946) 12. The Japanese Monograph is solely from perspective of 14th Area Army staff officers and chronicles the Battle of Corregidor in a few paragraphs. The Monograph provides little more than troop strengths and the limited guidance sent to Captain Itagki regarding the island's defense. There are also no written records from any Japanese soldiers on Corregidor, since the majority were killed; however, the 503rd PRCT obtained valuable information regarding Japanese strategy and intentions by interrogating Japanese POWs. Since there is a lack of Japanese sources, this assessment

General Tomoyuki Yamashita, 14th Area Army Commander, to prevent Corregidor's capture and deny the Americans Manila Bay.¹⁰ Itagki received warnings from 14th Area Army HQ regarding a possible airborne attack on the island.¹¹ However, Itagki assessed the Corregidor and decided an airborne assault was impossible.¹² Consequently, outward defensive preparations consisting of strongholds at Malinta Hill, Cheney, James, and Ramsay Ravines along Topside were developed exclusively to face an impending amphibious attack.¹³

Element of Surprise

The element of surprise constitutes the most vital element of all airborne operations. Without surprise, airborne units could confront a prepared enemy who would neutralize them on the ground before they had the chance to assemble and attack, resulting in failure. As mentioned on Corregidor, Captain Itagki believed an airborne attack was unfeasible, so he failed to prepare a contingency plan for such an event. According to 3rd Battalion staff officer Major Blair, "The element of surprise worked to perfection in the 3rd Battalion assault".¹⁴ Captain Hudson Hill, a 503rd company commander, echoes Blair's sentiment and claims the Japanese did not react to the first airborne drop for over an hour.¹⁵ Captain Hill goes further, adding the first landing force should have been "annihilated" in the opening minutes of the attack since the Japanese severely outnumbered the paratroopers; Japanese forces although were in disbelief when they witnessed paratroopers falling on their positions.¹⁶

relies primarily on the credibility of American source material.

¹⁰ Lawson B. Caskey, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM IN THE RECAPTURE OF CORREGIDOR ISLAND, 16 FEBRUARY – 8 MARCH 1945* (The Infantry School Fort Benning, Georgia, 1948-1949), 10. Major Caskey commanded the 503rd's 2nd Battalion and landed during the 2nd airborne lift.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹² John H. Blair, *OPERATIONS OF THE 3D BATTALION, 503D PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT IN THE LANDING ON CORREGIDOR, P.I., 16 FEBRUARY - 2 MARCH 1945* (The Infantry School Fort Benning, Georgia, 1949-1950) 11.

¹³ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 339.

¹⁴ Blair, *OPERATIONS OF THE 3D BATTALION, 503D PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT IN THE LANDING ON CORREGIDOR, P.I., 16 FEBRUARY -2 MARCH 1945*, 28.

¹⁵ Hudson C. Hill, *THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY "E", 503D PARACHUTE REGIMENT AT WHEELER POINT, ISLAND OF CORREGIDOR, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS 23 FEBRUARY, 1945* (The Infantry School Fort Benning, Georgia, 1947-1948) 35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

Consequently, the Japanese focused exclusively on a seaborne invasion and could not effectively react to the airborne threat until over 1,000 paratroopers were already on the ground. Second Lieutenant Edward Flash conveys the paratroopers exploited the situation and “seized key terrain without any resistance”.¹⁷ 3rd Battalion paratroopers quickly secured the drop zones for the second airborne lift at 1230 and continued expanding the perimeter on Topside.¹⁸ During the first airborne lift, Captain Itagki and his staff—located at Breakwater Point—were killed by a party of miss-dropped paratroopers.¹⁹ In the opening hours of the invasion, the Japanese commander including his command team were eliminated, collapsing the Japanese command structure. Not only were the Japanese dealing with an unexpected attack from the sky by elite paratroopers, but they lost their commander and the ability to properly lead and coordinate their forces. The Japanese failure to plan for this attack quickly compounded until it was too late to dislodge the paratroopers on Topside. Another point that merits attention is the ensuing amphibious landing at San Jose Bay. At 1030 companies L and K spearheaded the landing and reached their objectives on Malinta Hill by 1130.²⁰ The rather light resistance encountered on the beach can be partially attributed to the confusion caused by the 503rd and loss of Captain Itagki. Collectively, the airborne component achieved complete surprise and exploited the initiative with significant success.

¹⁷ Edward T. Flash, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM IN THE RECAPTURE OF CORREGIDOR ISLAND, 16 FEBRUARY – 23 FEBRUARY 1945* (The Infantry School Fort Benning, Georgia, 1949-1950) 26.

¹⁸ Jones, *HISTORICAL REPORT CORREGIDOR ISLAND OPERATION*, 3.

¹⁹ Browne, *AIRBORNE OPERATION ON CORREGIDOR*, 11.

²⁰ *OPERATION M-7 SOUTHERN ZAMBALES & CORREGIDOR*, 136.

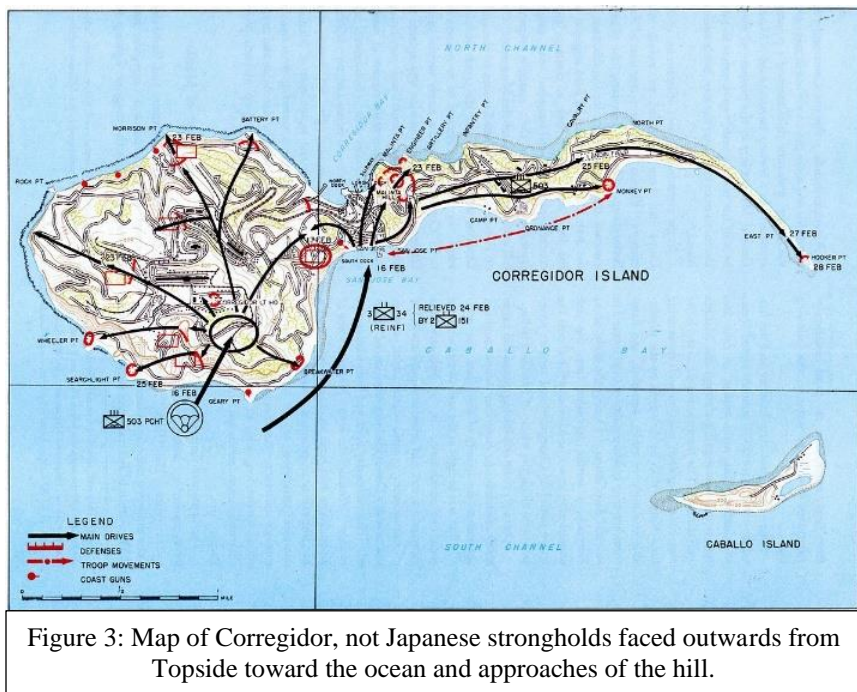


Figure 3: Map of Corregidor, not Japanese strongholds faced outwards from Topside toward the ocean and approaches of the hill.

Impact of Seizing Topside

Topside's immediate capture by the 503rd during the opening hours of the invasion paid significant dividends [reference Figure 3]. According to an American Army pamphlet analyzing the nature of the Pacific War, Japanese defensive doctrine called for a strong emphasis on frontal protection due to an expectation “of stopping us [Americans] cold”.²¹ The pamphlet asserts the Japanese despised flanking assaults and would either retreat or launch furious counterstrokes in the event of an American flanking attack.²² On Corregidor, instead of striking the Japanese to their front and even flanks, Americans paratroopers attacked from behind. Since the Japanese discounted an airborne assault, their defensives across Topside faced toward the ocean. In addition to being completely surprised and dis-coordinated by the 503rd's paradrop, the

²¹ *BATTLE EXPERIENCES AGAINST THE JAPANESE* (Headquarters European Theater of Operations United States Army, May 1, 1945) 17. This pamphlet was created by reports from the US War Department. The European Theater of Operations most likely developed this document to distribute to units—such as the 13th and 101st Airborne Divisions—slated for the upcoming invasion of mainland Japan and provide them with baseline information in regard to fighting the Japanese.

²² *Ibid.*, 14.

Japanese had the Americans in their rear, compromising their entire defensive posture. The 503rd immediately began reducing Japanese strongholds Topside at Wheeler and Morrison Points from behind; rooting out Japanese defenders from their bunkers and tunnels continued until organized resistance ceased on Topside. Japanese forces also launched suicidal banzai charges every night to destroy the paratroopers in their rear. These attacks in the open were slaughtered on a nightly basis.²³ The fighting was intense and close, but the Japanese exposed themselves to American fire and paid a heavy price. During one such attack on February 19th, 200 Japanese combatants were killed for a meager 20 American WIA and 10 KIA [reference Figure 4].²⁴ If the Japanese decided to stay in their positions and force the Americans to attack them like they did at Iwo Jima or Okinawa, American casualties would have been significantly higher. Instead these suicidal attacks—although frightening—made the Americans' job on Corregidor easier.

²³ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 346.

²⁴ Flash, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM*, 20. During this action Private Lloyd McCarter confronted a large Japanese force alone. Private McCarter was wounded and out of ammunition, but repeatedly exposed himself to acquire the ammunition to carry on the fight. When McCarter was relieved, 30 dead Japanese were found around his position: he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.



Figure 4: Pvt. Lloyd McCarter receiving the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman

Support to the Amphibious Landings

The overwhelming majority of airborne operations acted in support of ground forces, such as the 82nd and 101st Airborne Division's objective to support the 4th Infantry Division's landing at Utah Beach during the Normandy invasion. Often the level of assistance the airborne arm contributes to ground forces aids in determining the impact of the airborne operation. Similar criteria applies to Corregidor, and one of the 503rd's objectives was to provide direct fire support to the amphibious landings at San Jose Bay.²⁵ The 3rd Battalion of the 34th Infantry Regiment hit the beaches at 1030; Companies L and K in the first two waves met minimal resistance and advanced immediately to their objective: Malinta Hill [reference Figure 5].²⁶ When the amphibious landings began, elements of the 503rd provided direct fire support onto the beaches from the elevated position on Topside. Major Caskey, commanding 2nd Battalion, claims

²⁵ Hill, *THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY "E", 503D PARACHUTE REGIMENT*, 4.

²⁶ *OPERATION M-7 SOUTHERN ZAMBALES & CORREGIDOR*, 135.

the 503rd laid down .50 caliber machine gun support.²⁷ Major Blair confirms the presence of .50 caliber weapons, but also indicates the employment of an M1 75mm pack howitzer as well.²⁸ Aside from a few vehicle losses due to mines, amphibious landing forces experienced minimal casualties and advanced rapidly toward their objectives.²⁹ The question arises, how effective was the 503rd's direct fire support on the landings? Likely small due to the greater effect of Naval Task Group 77.3's pre-invasion bombardment. Two days prior to the invasion, 14 destroyers and light cruisers began reducing the island's beach defenses.³⁰ Also during the leadup to the invasion the 5th and 13th Air Forces pummeled the island with 3,125 tons of ordnance.³¹ Meanwhile, no more than two platoons from the 503rd probably provided support on the beaches since the majority of 3rd Battalion was securing the drop zones and maintaining a perimeter for the ensuing second airborne lift. Interestingly, the 34th Infantry's subsequent fourth and fifth waves experienced heavy enemy fire, including heavy machine gun fire from Malinta Hill and Breakwater Point [reference Figure 6].³² Heavier enemy resistance later during the landing could be indicative of the Japanese delayed response attributed to the confusion caused by the initial airborne assault. Amid reacting to the 503rd, the Japanese must have shifted their attention from the beach defenses to the growing threat on Topside, reducing Japanese readiness and strength on the beaches. Although the 503rd's direct fire support did not contribute significantly to the amphibious landing, the chaos caused by the airborne component in unison with the naval and aerial bombardments produced success on the beaches.

²⁷ Caskey, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM*, 16.

²⁸ Blair, *OPERATIONS OF THE 3D BATTALION, 503D PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT*, 16. Major Blair's account claims the presence of a 75mm pack howitzer, while Major Caskey indicates only .50 caliber machine guns were used. Interestingly, Major Caskey's 2nd Battalion was not even on Corregidor at the time of the landings and did not even begin to land on Corregidor until 1215. Since Major Blair was on the ground during the amphibious landing, his account holds more weight, so a 75mm howitzer was most likely utilized in support.

²⁹ *OPERATION M-7 SOUTHERN ZAMBALES & CORREGIDOR*, 135. The 34th received only 20 casualties during the landings and 75% of them were WIA.

³⁰ Trexler, *ACTION REPORT- MARIVELES- CORREGIDOR*, 10.

³¹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 340.

³² *OPERATION M-7 SOUTHERN ZAMBALES & CORREGIDOR*, 136.



Figure 5: 34th Infantry's 3rd Battalion storming the beaches at San Jose Bay.



Figure 6: 34th Infantrymen engaging Japanese positions

Supply Situation

The issue of logistics and supplies act as another determining factor for the airborne component at Corregidor. During WWII, airborne forces were designed to operate behind enemy lines for a limited period because they required provisions and ammunition to sustain combat effectiveness. For the 503rd PRCT at Corregidor, their options of resupply comprised of aerial supply drops—due to complete air supremacy—and a land supply route to the beaches once contact could be established with the amphibious forces [reference Figure 7]. On the first day and a half of the operation, February 16th-17th, the 503rd received water and ammunition supplies via paradrop.³³ According to Major Caskey, Japanese attacks were neutralized throughout the first night, and on the second day the paratroopers attacked Morrison and Wheeler Points: demonstrating the 503rd had sufficient ammunition to repulse attacks and go on the offensive.³⁴ When contact was established with the 34th Infantry around 1600 on the 17th, supplies such as water began to flow from the beach.³⁵ The direct supply route acted concurrently with aerial supply drops to sustain the 503rd on Topside during the coming week leading the 503rd's supply officer, CPT Robert M. Atkins, to assert “The Flow of supplies was excellent”.³⁶ Second Lieutenant Flash reiterates Atkins attitude, “Re-supply on Corregidor was of no problem to this regiment ... Air superiority allowed complete freedom of movement by re-supplying aircraft in sufficient quantities”.³⁷ It appears the 503rd did not have any supply or logistical issues, illustrating the paratroopers were adequately supplied to complete their mission. If this was not the case, the airborne element could have been a liability to the operation and required relief from the 34th Infantry Regiment.

³³ Robert M. Atkins, *503rd RCT Supply Section Historical Record* (Headquarters 503d Regimental Combat Team, March 3, 1945) 1.

³⁴ Caskey, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM*, 20.

³⁵ Atkins, *503rd RCT Supply Section Historical Record*, 2.

³⁶ Atkins, *503rd RCT Supply Section Historical Record*, 4.

³⁷ Flash, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM*, 25.



Figure 7: C-47 Dakota Skytrain resupplies 503rd from the air.

Casualty Analysis

During course of the Battle the 503rd suffered 165 KIA, 285 WIA, 330 injured for a total of 780 casualties; while the 151st and 34th suffered collectively 225 casualties.³⁸ Principally, the 503rd accounts for 2/3 of the total manpower on Corregidor and was tasked with eliminating the bulk of enemy forces located on Topside: explaining the higher number of casualties than the 34th and 151st. Roughly half of the 503rd's casualties were caused by jump injuries—entailing broken bones, fractures, sprains, etc.—due to the high winds on the drop zone.³⁹ Despite a 10.7% jump casualty rate, American planners anticipated an “acceptable” jump casualty rate of 25%.⁴⁰ Given the significant advantages of the airborne assault, these jump casualties were worth the cost. In the absence of airborne troops, American forces would have experienced significantly higher combat casualties: serious wounds and KIAs. Captain Browne sums it up well, “[during the amphibious invasion of Tarawa] There were 4,836 Japanese combat troops ... Of the total 4,690 were killed. Marine casualties were 990

³⁸ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 350.

³⁹ Browne, *AIRBORNE OPERATION ON CORREGIDOR*, 19.

⁴⁰ Browne, *AIRBORNE OPERATION ON CORREGIDOR*, 19.

dead and 2,296 wounded. There were 5,783 Japanese troops on Corregidor. 4,773 KIA and 23 POWs. Our casualties [503rd] 169 KIA, 284 WIA” [reference Figure 8].



Figure 8: 503rd Paratrooper engaging a dug in Japanese position with an M1A1 Rocket Launcher.

Recapture of Corregidor without an Airborne Assault

Given the previous assessments, we can simulate, to an extent, the recapture of Corregidor without the airborne component. The Japanese capture of Corregidor in 1942 reveals some indication of the potential outcome. Japanese forces decided to launch an amphibious night attack on the northeastern shores of the island.⁴¹ The Americans, anticipating the assault, constructed beach defenses and laid in wait for the attack. Like the Japanese two and a half years later, the Americans experienced horrendous artillery fire daily—from the Bataan peninsula—in addition to repeated aerial bombardments. Yet the Japanese lacked an airborne element and invaded exclusively from the sea. During the night of May 5-6th American Marines and coastal artillerymen opened on the Japanese with .30 and .50 caliber weapons. In the words of one Marine, “it was like shooting fish in a barrel”.⁴² Japanese

⁴¹ Ibid., 20.

⁴² John C. McManus, *Fire and Fortitude The US Army in the Pacific War, 1941-1943* (New York: Caliber, 2019) 152.

Lieutenant Machizuki asserted, “If it had not been for the fact that it was the dark hour before dawn, I doubt if any of us would be alive today to tell the story”.⁴³ The Japanese ultimately established a beachhead and moved inland prompting General John Wainwright to surrender the island, yet the Japanese lost approximately 900 killed and 1,200 wounded.⁴⁴ Fast forward to 1945, if both the Japanese defense system across the island was not compromised by the 503rd and Captain Itagki was alive to coordinate the battle the amphibious landing would have been bloodier, perhaps on par with the losses on the beaches of Tarawa. Similarly, the Japanese would have maintained control of Topside, forcing the Americans to attack up the hill.⁴⁵ Without the airborne assault, the island would eventually be overwhelmed by American material and firepower superiority; however, combat casualties would have been far greater.

Conclusion

Seldom in military history has there been a more daring airborne operation than the 503rd's assault on fortress Corregidor. The immediate impact of the first airborne drop psychologically defeated the Japanese and paralyzed their ability to effectively react to the Americans. Japanese failure to plan contingencies for an airborne attack permitted the paratroopers to achieve the element of surprise. Since the Japanese focused their complete attention to the 503rd, the amphibious invasion landed with little resistance and rapidly established a beachhead. Capturing Topside compromised the outward Japanese defense structure, allowing the paratroopers to attack the Japanese from behind. Subsequently the Japanese launched furious banzai attacks to destroy the paratroopers, while exposing themselves to American weapons superiority: accelerating the Japanese defeat. Supplies and provisions proved not an obstacle for the 503rd, and the predicted jump casualties were lower than anticipated. Even though the 503rd had higher casualties than the 34th Infantry, they comprised most of the total force and shared a greater portion of the fighting. Overall, these significant advantages were only possible through an airborne assault and allowed 3,000 Americans to defeat close to 6,000 Japanese

⁴³ McManus, *Fire and Fortitude The US Army in the Pacific War*, 153.

⁴⁴ Morton Louis, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 1953) 560. Morton does not provide exact numbers, but rather estimates for the Japanese casualties

⁴⁵ Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed* (New York: Ballantine Books) 136. The American 1st Marine Division faced horrendous losses fighting up the ridges and hills in the Umurbrogol mountains during the Battle of Peleliu. The Japanese forces created a fortress of tunnels, pillboxes, and bunkers across the ridges. Fighting on Peleliu raged for two months as Marines and later soldiers from the 321st RCT attempted to fight the Japanese in a frontal offensive.

defenders. The necessity of an airborne element in this operation cannot be expressed enough, and without the 503rd the Americans would have lost significantly more men in a prolonged battle. The order of the 503rd's presidential unit citation encapsulates the Battle best, "One of the most difficult missions of the Pacific War, they attacked savagely against numerically superior enemy, defeated him completely, and seized the fortress. Their magnificent courage, tenacity, and gallantry avenged the victims of Corregidor of 1942 and achieved a significant victory for the United States Army" [reference Figure 9].⁴⁶



Figure 9: Paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT

⁴⁶ Caskey, *THE OPERATIONS OF THE 503D, PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM*, 34.

THE QUIET DIPLOMAT: HENRY KISSINGER, THE BENGALI GENOCIDE, AND THE ANATOMY OF CRISIS IN THE NIXON WHITE HOUSE, 1969–1971

BY BRIAN CHEN

Henry Kissinger remains, for good reason, the object of much historical fascination. His biography traces the extraordinary ascent of a Jewish refugee from Nazi Bavaria to the west wing of the White House. Unlike most of his relatives, Kissinger—who fled to New York City in 1938—did not perish in a concentration camp. During the Second World War, he returned to the western front as an American infantryman, where he remained as a denazification officer until 1946. From 1969 to 1977, Kissinger served under the administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. First as National Security Advisor and then as Secretary of State, he shaped the outcomes of some of the most important events of the Cold War: the Paris Peace Accords, the Yom Kippur War, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, and the Helsinki Final Act. Above all, he spearheaded America’s opening to the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which integrated the revolutionary regime into the international system and eased the eventual transition of power from radicals like Madame Mao to reformists like Deng Xiaoping.

For his critics, Kissinger represents everything wrong with U.S. foreign policy: its militarism, bravado, and emphasis on power politics over human rights. Journalist Anthony Lewis coined “the Kissinger Doctrine” as “an obsession with order and power at the expense of humanity.”¹ Similarly, historian Greg Grandin argues that Kissinger regarded moral principles as “negotiable and their application contingent on [the] political expediency” of his “quasi-covert warfare establishment.”² Critics cite his intervention in Indochina, Chile, Argentina, and many other parts of the world. In addition, Gary Bass argues that Nixon and Kissinger “bear responsibility for a significant complicity in the slaughter of the Bengalis” during the South Asia crisis of 1971.³ In his view, the White House—by remaining silent in the face of genocide and supporting West Pakistan against India—gave Islamabad tacit consent to commit mass atrocities. Bass also alleges that Nixon and Kissinger tarnished American credibility on matters of human rights, national self-determination, and democracy—values which had supposedly differentiated the United States

¹ Anthony Lewis, “The Kissinger Doctrine,” *New York Times*, February 27, 1975.

² Greg Grandin, *Kissinger’s Shadow: The Long Reach of America’s Most Controversial Statesman*, (New York: Henry Hold, 2015), 72, 12.

³ Gary J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), xvi.

from its Soviet counterparts. This paper will address these central questions: To what extent is the Nixon White House morally culpable for the genocide in East Pakistan? Would alternative policies have alleviated Bengali suffering in any meaningful way? I will argue that Kissinger's policy of "quiet diplomacy" addressed the geopolitical and humanitarian dimensions of this crisis better than the alternative policy of public indignation. When examined in the full context of the Cold War and the limits of U.S. influence in South Asia, the White House's response—or lack thereof—was not inappropriate.

A New World Order

In his doctoral dissertation, Henry Kissinger observed that "men become myths, not by what they know, nor even by what they achieve, but by the tasks they set for themselves."⁴ When he took office as Nixon's National Security Advisor in January 1969, Kissinger set for himself the formidable task of transforming the practice of Cold War diplomacy. "History," he argued, has "placed me in a key position at a time when we are moving from the relics of the postwar period toward a new international structure."⁵ Kissinger criticized the naive idealism of those who were willing—in the words of President John F. Kennedy—to "pay any price [and] bear any burden" to contain Soviet Communism.⁶ Instead, he argued that "in the age of nuclear weapons, it need hardly be added that a relaxation of tensions must be the goal of everyone concerned with the survival of civilization."⁷ Mutual coexistence was necessary condition for survival. From the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958) to the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), nuclear brinkmanship by both U.S. and Soviet leaders pushed the world to the edge of destruction. Furthermore, the People's Republic of China—driven by Mao Zedong's radical ideology—stirred conflict to undermine U.S. interests in Asia. For example, during a territorial dispute in 1958 over islands in the Taiwan Strait, Chairman Mao declared:

The bombardment of [the island of Quemoy], frankly speaking, was our turn to create international tension for a purpose. We intended to teach the Americans a lesson. America had bullied us for many years, so now that we had a chance, why not give it a hard time?⁸

⁴ Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 322.

⁵ Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), 246.

⁶ John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 204.

⁷ Henry A. Kissinger, "The Limitations of Diplomacy," *New Republic*, May 9, 1955.

⁸ Henry A. Kissinger, *On China*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 173.

Kissinger understood that day-to-day crisis management would leave the underlying issues of the Cold War unresolved. Therefore, after taking office, he announced that he would seek “to construct a new international settlement, which will be more stable, less crisis-conscious, and less depending on decisions in one capital.”⁹

The Sino-Soviet split presented Kissinger with an opportunity to implement a new grand strategy. Following Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953, Beijing challenged Moscow’s ideological monopoly, a conflict which culminated in battles at the Ussuri River in 1969. Kissinger realized that this hostility “served our purposes best if we maintained closer relations with each side than they did with each other. The rest could be left to the dynamic of events.”¹⁰ Improved relations with Beijing would incentivize greater concessions from insecure leaders in Moscow on the Vietnam War and nuclear disarmament. In addition, this method of triangular diplomacy would integrate the Soviet Union and China into a stable international system—one in which all members will have a vital interest in preserving. Kissinger argued that “to act consistently abroad, we must be able to generate coalitions of shared purposes.”¹¹ In other words, relationships with foreign adversaries should be based on common interests and peaceful coexistence, rather than zero-sum gamesmanship. However, after decades of mutual hostility, *détente*—the policy of easing relations—was more easily said than done. China, engulfed in the zealotry of Mao’s Cultural Revolution, was preoccupied with its own domestic upheaval. In addition, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 hindered the prospects of reconciliation. To compensate for these inherent difficulties, *détente* became the primary objective of Nixon and Kissinger’s foreign policy; all other considerations were secondary. Their priorities became apparent during the South Asia Crisis of 1971.

The Ghost of Partition

When Britain left the Indian subcontinent in 1947, it divided the former colony into two separate countries: a Hindu-dominated India and a Muslim-dominated Pakistan. During this process, the British government carved up the province of Bengal, giving the western half to India and the eastern half to Pakistan. One Indian diplomat described Pakistan as a “geographic monstrosity,” with its western half separated from its eastern half by a thousand

⁹ Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, 200.

¹⁰ Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years*, (New York: Little, Brown & Company, 1979), 712.

¹¹ Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy: Three Essays*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 51-97.

miles of Indian territory.¹² West Pakistan controlled the country's political and military infrastructure, while East Pakistan remained poor and underdeveloped. To make matters worse, the religious similarities between East and West Pakistan dwarfed in comparison to their ethnic and linguistic differences. East Pakistan consisted primarily of ethnic Bengalis, while West Pakistan consisted primarily of Punjabis and Pashtuns who spoke Urdu. Archer Blood, the U.S. Consul General in Dacca from 1970 to 1971, described "the breakup of Pakistan [as] inevitable from the beginning."¹³

On November 13, 1970, a ferocious cyclone swept through East Pakistan. Tidal waves from the Bay of Bengal submerged the entire region. An estimated 200,000 people perished from the storm. Islamabad's pathetic response to this tragedy exacerbated Bengali resentment. The nationalist leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—widely known as Mujib—rallied the Bengali people to reject Islamabad's authority over East Pakistan. Mujib's "Awami League" campaigned for universal suffrage, separate currencies, independent militias, and political autonomy for East Pakistan. Blood described this radical platform as "a recipe for the dissolution of Pakistan."¹⁴ During the December election, the Bengali people voiced support for the Awami League, which captured 169 contested seats—out of 171—and constituted a majority in the National Assembly. Pakistani President Yahya Khan flew into Dacca to negotiate a new constitution. However, Mujib rejected any proposal short of complete autonomy—a demand that Yahya and other West Pakistani leaders would not accept.

Operation Searchlight

Following the collapse of the negotiations, East Pakistan fell into anarchy. Without military force, the central government had no power to stop the mass protests that erupted under Mujib's leadership. For President Yahya, the unity of Pakistan depended on his ability to suppress this movement. If he could not preserve his country by negotiation, he would attempt to do so by force. On March 6, 1971, Yahya proclaimed over the radio that:

Let me make it absolutely clear that no matter what happens [...], I will ensure complete and absolute integrity of Pakistan [...] I will not allow a handful of people to destroy the homeland of millions of innocent Pakistanis. It is the duty of the Pakistan Armed Forces to ensure the integrity, solitary and security of Pakistan, a duty in which they have

¹² Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 20.

¹³ Henry Precht, Interview with Archer K. Blood, *Foreign Affairs Oral History Project*, June 27, 1989, 60.

¹⁴ Precht, Interview with Archer K. Blood, 43.

never failed.¹⁵

Islamabad regarded the Awami League as a “bourgeois” party incapable of sustaining guerilla warfare. Since the Bengalis would “knuckle under” martial law, a military campaign would be swift and orderly.¹⁶ Due to these misperceptions, Yahya did not anticipate Bengali resistance and, thus, the genocidal effects of the operation.

On March 25, 1971, the Pakistani military, armed to the teeth with American weapons, launched “Operation Searchlight” and unleashed its soldiers onto the streets of Dacca. Archer Blood, crouched on the floor of his bedroom, heard “rhythmic firing which sounded like executions.”¹⁷ Another U.S. official recalled “bodies rotting in the fields,” which were “obviously left there as an example.”¹⁸ The military believed that student-activists in Dacca University were fermenting a violent rebellion from their dormitories. According to Blood, unarmed students and faculty were “either shot down in rooms or mowed down when they came out of [the] building in groups.” In the women’s dormitory, the “building [was] set ablaze and girls [were] machine-gunned as they fled the building.” In an attempt to erase potential evidence, the soldiers destroyed all academic records and buried the corpses in mass graves, which suggests that there was “a campaign underway to erase all traces [of the] current ‘troublemaking’ generation.”¹⁹ The violence that erupted in Dacca University spread throughout the city and eventually throughout East Pakistan.

Bengali resistance exacerbated the scale of military atrocities. On March 26, 1971, one day after the initial crackdown, the Awami League declared the independence of Bangladesh over the radio in Chittagong. In response, the military intensified the brutality of their “search-and-destroy” missions.²⁰ A foreigner in Chittagong observed that the military “systematically burned down the districts of the poor people, apparently because they felt they couldn’t search them thoroughly. They seemed to be enjoying killing and destroying everything.” “In the river,” he continued, “you could count four hundred bodies floating in one area.”²¹ The Bengalis organized a resistance campaign through

¹⁵ Richard Sisson and Leo Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh*, (Berkeley: UC Press, 1990), 99.

¹⁶ Sisson, *War and Secession*, 95.

¹⁷ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁹ Record Group 59, Subject Numeric File 1970-73, Pol and Def, Box 2530 (digitized in National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 79, ed. Sanjit Gandhi, *The National Security Archive* at George Washington University, Document 4).

²⁰ Rounaq Jahan, “Genocide In Bangladesh,” *A Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, ed. Totten, Samuel, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 299.

²¹ Sydney Schanberg, “Foreign Evacuees From East Pakistan Tell of Grim Fight,” *New York Times*, April 7, 1971.

the Mukti Bahini—a Bengali term for “freedom fighters.” These paramilitary forces, poorly armed and inadequately trained, resorted to guerilla tactics and sabotage. The military retaliated with brutal counterinsurgency campaigns, which often included the destruction of whole villages. In one instance, after defeating insurgents in the city of Kushtia, the military incinerated whatever was left in the area. Homes, stores, and all other buildings turned to ash. World Bank inspectors described the devastation as if it was “like the morning after a nuclear attack.”²² Many military officials felt little remorse for the destruction they left behind. One commander proclaimed that “when people start shooting, you shoot back. We killed them all. You don’t go around counting the bodies of your enemies, you throw them in the rivers and be done with it.”²³ The targeting of civilian populations and Hindu minorities constitutes crimes against humanity. Due to the intent and scope of this criminality, these atrocities likely rise to genocide.

Silence from Washington

On March 28, 1971, three days after the initial crackdown, Archer Blood delivered a telegram titled “Selective Genocide” to alert the U.S. State Department of the atrocities. He wrote that “we are mute and horrified witnesses to a reign of terror of the [Pakistani] military.” The authorities, he continued, “have a list of Awami League supporters whom they are systematically eliminating by seeking them out in their homes and shooting them down.” Blood urged the White House to “[express] our shock, at least privately to [the government of Pakistan], at this wave of terror directed against their own countrymen.”²⁴ Similarly, U.S. Ambassador to India Kenneth Keating asked President Nixon to “promptly, publicly, and prominently deplore” these atrocities, which would mitigate “United States vulnerability to damaging allegations of association with [a] reign of military terror.”²⁵ Other than a temporary hold on new military shipments to Pakistan, the White House remained mute. According to Nixon, “I wouldn’t put out a statement praising it, but we’re not going to condemn it either.”²⁶ Blood, in response to “the silence from Washington,” increased the force of his rhetoric.²⁷ On April 6, 1971, Blood delivered a telegram on behalf of the U.S. Consulate in Dacca, proclaiming:

²² “Excerpts From World Bank Group’s report on East Pakistan,” *New York Times*, July 13, 1971.

²³ The Secretariat of the International Commission of Jurists, *The Events in East Pakistan, 1971: A Legal Study*, (Geneva: 1972), 36.

²⁴ Record Group 59, Subject Numeric File 1970-73, Pol and Def, Box 2530 (NSA 1).

²⁵ Record Group 59, Subject Numeric File 1970-73, Pol and Def, Box 2530 (NSA 3).

²⁶ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 64

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities [...] We, as professional public servants, express dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world.²⁸

The message eventually leaked to the press. Kissinger, furious at Blood for undermining White House policy, recalled “this maniac in Dacca” from his post and reassigned him to a desk job at the State Department.²⁹

The atrocities in East Pakistan could not have occurred at a worse time for the White House. Since their first days in office, Nixon and Kissinger attempted to establish diplomatic channels with the PRC. Kissinger reached out to Beijing through channels in Pakistan and Romania, but messages remained sparse and hollow. It was only until late 1970 that he achieved any meaningful progress. President Yahya Khan, an ally to both the United States and China, was an important intermediary between the two governments. Kissinger recalled that the “Chinese attached special value to the Pakistani channel” due to fears that the Romanian leader Nicolae Ceaușescu would leak intelligence to Moscow.³⁰ Once exchanges between the United States and China grew serious, Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai agreed that “for secrecy, it is essential that no other channel be used.” When Operation Searchlight began in March 1971, Yahya was still relaying messages between Kissinger and Zhou to organize a secret U.S. envoy to Beijing. After stories about these atrocities became public, Kissinger insisted that “Yahya must be kept afloat for six more months... The last thing we can afford now is to have the Pakistan government overthrown, given the other things we are doing.”³¹ For the White House, diplomatic relations with Pakistan were the means to a larger end.

In addition to Yahya’s importance as an intermediary between the United States and China, Pakistan was a strategic ally to Beijing. As a result, the atrocities in East Pakistan placed the Nixon White House in a serious geopolitical dilemma. According to Kissinger, China demanded “strategic reassurance” from the United States to “[ease] their nightmare of hostile encirclement.”³² During the prior decade, the Chinese fought border wars against the Soviet Union and India, two continental rivals. U.S. retaliation against Pakistan would exacerbate China’s fear of encirclement. In addition, the

²⁸ RG 59, SN 70-73 Pol and Def. From: Pol Pak-U.S. To: Pol 17-1 Pak-U.S. Box 2535 (NSA 8).

²⁹ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 117.

³⁰ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 181.

³¹ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 148.

³² Kissinger, *White House Years*, 685.

question of PRC membership in the United Nations would determine the success of rapprochement. Kissinger believed that Beijing would regard pressure against Pakistan as an attempt to “split off a part of Pakistan in the name of self-determination,” which would set an unacceptable precedent “for Taiwan and Tibet in [Beijing’s] eyes.”³³ Thus, even if Yahya Khan was not the intermediary between the two powers, Kissinger would still have been hard pressed to denounce him. For the Nixon White House, the strategic importance of appeasing China paled in comparison to any humanitarian concerns for East Pakistan.

Quiet Diplomacy

In *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, Christopher Hitchens argues that Kissinger’s South Asia policy was an act of “deliberate collusion in mass murder” and “a means of preventing the emergence of Bangladesh as a self-determining state.”³⁴ This assessment fails under any close scrutiny of the documentary evidence. By late April 1971, Kissinger realized that Bengali autonomy would be inevitable. In a memo to Nixon, he wrote that this crisis was “a period of transition to greater East Pakistani autonomy and, perhaps, eventual independence. How prolonged and how violence this period is will depend heavily on the judgements made in East and West Pakistan.” He went as far as to declare that “there will someday be an independent Bangladesh.”³⁵ Rather than resist the inevitable, he advised Nixon to “make a serious effort to help Yahya end the war and establish an arrangement that could be transitional to East Pakistani autonomy.”³⁶ On another occasion, Kissinger stated that “we have no illusions that West Pakistan can hold East Pakistan and we have no interest in their doing so.”³⁷

Historian Srinath Raghavan presents a more sophisticated critique of Kissinger’s South Asia policy. He points to Islamabad’s liquidity crisis, caused by its expensive military campaign, as an opportunity for U.S. intervention. The World Bank and the IMF remained unwilling to alleviate Islamabad’s dire financial situation because they were unimpressed by Yahya’s reconstruction plan. Therefore, as Kissinger observed at the time, “U.S. economic support,

³³ Nixon Presidential Materials Project, National Security Council Files, Indo-Pak War, Box 570 (NSA 19).

³⁴ Christopher Hitchens, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, (New York: Verso, 2001), 48.

³⁵ LOC, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 210, Nov 69–July 1971 (digitized in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971, eds. Louis J. Smith and Edward C. Keefer from the Department of State, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005, Document 112).

³⁶ NPMP, NSC Files, Country Files: Middle East, Box 625 (NSA 9).

³⁷ NPMP, NSC Files, Country Files: Middle East, Box 596. (NSA 13)

multiplied by U.S. leadership in the World Bank consortium of aid donors, remains crucial to West Pakistan. Neither Moscow nor Peking can duplicate this assistance.” Due to this outsized influence, Raghavan argues that:

Nixon and Kissinger’s unwillingness to use their economic leverage over Pakistan effectively reinforced Yahya’s intransigence. Had they made it clear that come October they would be unable to bail out Pakistan, the military regime might well have been stopped in its tracks.³⁸

This counterfactual, if true, suggests that an alternative approach may have shortened the genocide. However, this argument assumes that economic isolation would have moderated Islamabad’s military planning. In my view, desperation radicalizes genocidal regimes. Survival, after all, is the primary goal of any nation-state. It is more likely that an impending financial collapse would have prompted the military to escalate their atrocities in an attempt to expedite East Pakistan’s destruction. President Yahya’s mode of thinking gives weight to this alternative counterfactual. In April 1971, he told British Prime Minister Edward Heath that “it was sometimes necessary to take firm action to prevent more appalling bloodshed later on.”³⁹ For Yahya, the urgency of Pakistan’s short-term financial woes paled in comparison to dismemberment of his country. The appeasement of Bengali secessionists would destroy the legitimacy of his government and, perhaps more importantly, the honor of his homeland.

Rather than publicly confront the military regime, Kissinger believed that the White House should exploit Nixon’s close ties with Yahya to help Islamabad achieve a negotiated settlement with the Bengalis. On July 7, Kissinger told the Indian Foreign Minister that “the whole point of our policy has been to retain enough influence to urge creation of conditions that would permit the refugees to go back.”⁴⁰ Similarly, Nixon claimed that he “did not see any alternative to working with the present government to help it do the best it could with the situation.”⁴¹ On the issue of economic aid, Kissinger told Nixon on April 28 that “we would not withhold aid now for the sake of applying pressure. We would face that question only after giving the West Pakistanis every chance to negotiate a settlement in the face of the costs of not doing so.” However, the White House did not offer a blank check. Economic relief was contingent upon “Yahya [producing] an administration in East Pakistan that would have enough Bengali acceptance to win popular cooperation in restoring

³⁸ Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 100.

³⁹ Raghavan, *1971*, 164.

⁴⁰ NPMP, NSC Files, Haig Chron, Box 983 (NSA 14).

⁴¹ NPMP, NSC Files, NSC Files, Indo-Pak War, Box 578 (NSA 11).

essential services and preventing a further constitutional crisis...⁴² The White House hesitated to end economic aid because doing so would eliminate the incentive for Islamabad to find a political solution.

This approach to the crisis was not unreasonable. Public condemnation of the military atrocities would have diminished U.S. influence over the crisis, rendering West Pakistani concessions impossible. Despite Nixon's personal friendship with President Yahya, officials in Islamabad loathed the United States. The theory that the White House was conspiring with India to dissolve Pakistan was widespread in government and military circles.⁴³ Yahya would not have been able to appease the right-wing officials who were already skeptical of U.S. intentions, since, according to Kissinger, "he must answer to the dominant hardliners in his army."⁴⁴ In addition, humanitarian relief could not enter East Pakistan without permission from Islamabad. At the beginning of the crisis, Yahya rejected international humanitarian aid on the basis that the human suffering was "highly exaggerated, if not altogether tendentious."⁴⁵ In this sense, Yahya was holding Bengali civilians as hostage. Both the United Nations and the White House feared that his insecurities would trigger mass famine. As Kissinger pointed out at the time, "severing ties with the regime would make relief efforts impossible," especially since "the army just doesn't give a damn and isn't good at this kind of thing anyhow."⁴⁶ Finally, he understood that "the U.S. must retain influence over the West Pakistanis in order to resolve this crisis, because they don't have the political imagination to resolve it themselves." The regime was led by "loyal, blunt soldiers," he continued, but they have "a real intellectual problem in understanding why East Pakistan should not be part of West Pakistan."⁴⁷ This challenge was the crux of Kissinger's dilemma: to exert too much pressure would diminish U.S. influence over the situation and to exert too little pressure would prolong human suffering. As a result, Kissinger believed that quiet diplomacy—the policy of pressuring Yahya through private channels—would strike a balance between these two undesirable outcomes.⁴⁸

In addition to the delicate situation in West Pakistan, the political necessities of the Cold War placed strict limits on the scope of Kissinger's

⁴² NPMP, NSC Files, Box 625, Country Files, Middle East, Pakistan, Vol. IV, 1 Mar 71–15 May 71 (FRUS 36).

⁴³ Tillman Durdin, "In Pakistan, United States is Villain," *New York Times*, March 26, 1971.

⁴⁴ LOC, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 210, South Asia, Nov. 1969–July 1971 (FRUS 8).

⁴⁵ Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan: 1947-2000*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2001), 190.

⁴⁶ NPMP, NSC Files, Box H-112, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1971, (FRUS 111; 105)

⁴⁷ NPMP, NSC Files, Box H-112, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1971, (FRUS 105).

⁴⁸ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 865.

South Asia policy. Kissinger admitted that he was “torn between conflicting imperatives:” far-reaching geopolitical interests on one hand and humanitarian concerns on the other.⁴⁹ Due to the time-sensitive nature of Chinese rapprochement, Kissinger needed Yahya Khan’s immediate goodwill, which was contingent upon remaining silent. Once Kissinger returned from his secret trip to China in July 1971, the Pakistani channel was no longer necessary. Without the risk of terminating his communication with Beijing, Kissinger could exert more pressure on Islamabad. Through private channels, Nixon condemned Mujib’s secret trial and death sentence, insisting that killing him would “definitely and decisively affect virtually all assistance, humanitarian and economic,” to the regime—a threat which prevented Mujib’s execution.⁵⁰ In addition, the White House pressured the regime to cooperate with international organizations to deliver food and medical supplies. The United States also became the largest humanitarian donor in the world, delivering \$90 million to India and \$150 million to other international relief efforts.⁵¹ Despite efforts by the Mukti Bahini to sabotage the program, these contributions helped prevent widespread starvation. If the White House had severed relations with Islamabad and remained a bystander to mass famine, the scale of human suffering would have been more profound.

To be sure, while it may have averted famine for the upcoming winter, quiet diplomacy was less effective in other areas. In an attempt to stem the flow of refugees, Kissinger pressured Yahya to announce an amnesty for all Bengali citizens—except those under active prosecution, including Mujib—and the transfer of power over to a civilian governor. Yahya also promised to draft a new constitution and convene a new National Assembly by the end of the year. However, while these proclamations were steps in the right direction, they had little practical impact. Blood observed that these measures were “all too little and too late, as well as completely out of touch with reality in East Pakistan.”⁵² In addition, CIA reports confirmed that “any civilian government established in East Pakistan under the army’s aegis is likely to be more shadow than substance.”⁵³ Most importantly, these concessions failed to address the underlying issues. Due to the suffering that they endured, the Bengalis no longer demanded autonomy; they would accept nothing short of independence with Mujib as their new leader. Despite pressure from both India and the White House, Yahya Khan stubbornly insisted that “I am not going to talk to that

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 854.

⁵⁰ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 245.

⁵¹ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 866.

⁵² Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 244.

⁵³ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 37, President’s Daily Briefs, Dec, 1–Dec. 16, 1971 (FRUS 247).

traitor!”⁵⁴ Similarly, the Bengalis would not accept any settlement that did not involve Mujib. By the fall of 1971, it was clear that this impasse required a military solution.

Cold War Battleground

The suffering produced by the Pakistani military was not confined to East Pakistan. The atrocities prompted an estimated ten million Bengalis to flood India’s eastern border. Despite financial support from the United States, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi quickly realized that her country could not sustain this mass exodus. The refugee camps along India’s borders were plagued by disease, malnutrition, and squalor. However, India’s position in the international system limited the scope of its response. Rather than ally with the United States, India proclaimed itself as a “non-aligned” spectator in the Cold War. Nixon was skeptical of Gandhi’s neutrality. According to Kissinger, “no one could speak for five minutes with Nixon without hearing of his profound distrust of Indian motives...”⁵⁵ From its inception, the White House’s South Asia policy was Nixon’s design. Kissinger only added strategic coherence to the president’s personal prejudices.

Since the start of the crisis, Gandhi considered military means to put an end to the outflow of refugees. She realized that India’s vast military superiority would decimate any Pakistani resistance. However, she feared the possibility that Beijing would retaliate against India for attacking a Chinese ally. Faced with a seemingly insurmountable challenge, Gandhi asked the Soviet Union for help. As a result, on August 9, 1971, the two countries signed the “Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation,” which stipulated the “sincere friendship, good neighborliness, and comprehensive cooperation” between the two powers.⁵⁶ To be sure, negotiations for this treaty began prior to the events in East Pakistan. However, the severity of India’s refugee crisis and the announcement of Nixon’s trip to China pushed both countries toward consensus. Many U.S. officials were not alarmed by the treaty. The Under Secretary of State wrote to Nixon that “the Treaty represents no substantial change in Indo-Soviet relations,” even though it demonstrated India’s “geo-political necessity [for] close relations with Moscow.”⁵⁷ Yet the White House regarded the treaty as another example of Soviet provocation. Kissinger insisted that “Moscow

⁵⁴ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan*, 197.

⁵⁵ William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency*, (New York: Hill & Wang, 1998), 274.

⁵⁶ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 220.

⁵⁷ National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 21 INDIA–USSR (FRUS 116).

threw a lighted match into a powder keg.”⁵⁸ For Nixon, this treaty confirmed his long-standing suspicion that India was never truly non-aligned. In a phone call with Kissinger, the President proclaimed that “if they want to be dependent on the Russians, let them be, but when the chips are down India has shown that it is a Russian satellite.”⁵⁹ This crisis was no longer confined to the strategically unimportant region of South Asia. Soviet intervention turned this dispute into a proxy-conflict between three nuclear-armed states. The Indian military—now armed with Soviet tanks and weaponry—was in prime position to retaliate against Pakistan.

In the fall of 1971, the White House was busy making arrangements for President Nixon’s upcoming summits to Moscow and Beijing. Kissinger recalled that “our policy objective on the subcontinent was, quite simply, to avoid adding another complication to our agenda.”⁶⁰ Kissinger believed that a war in South Asia would risk nuclear brinkmanship between the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, an outcome that the White House had worked so hard to avoid. In his imagination, India would invade West Pakistan after defeating the forces in East Pakistan and trigger a Chinese military response. To preserve the balance of power in Asia, the Soviet Union would invade China from the north. Threats of nuclear war lay at the end of this slippery slope. Under these circumstances, “we would be presented with excruciating choices if the Chinese were to attack India following an outbreak of Indo-Pakistani hostilities,” especially since Gandhi admitted that “the Soviets have promised to counterbalance any such action.”⁶¹ Kissinger told Nixon that “if the Russians get away with facing down the Chinese, and if the Indians get away with licking the Pakistanis... we may be looking right down the gun barrel.”⁶² Many of Kissinger’s critics argue, for good reason, that this logic exhibited the extremes of Cold War paranoia. Srinath Raghavan describes this potential conflict as a “war of illusions,” which makes Nixon and Kissinger seem “not as tough statesmen tilting toward their ally but as a picaresque pair tilting at windmills.”⁶³ However, Kissinger did not believe that an Indian invasion would necessarily trigger a Soviet-Chinese war; it was only a possibility worth taking steps to prevent. Even if the resulting conflict did not reach nuclear proportions, any military struggle involving the United States, Soviet Union, and China would undermine international stability for decades. In a recent interview, Kissinger recalled that “the U.S. had to navigate between Soviet pressures; Indian

⁵⁸ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 867.

⁵⁹ NPMP, NSC Files, Country Files: Middle East, Box 643 (NSA 28).

⁶⁰ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 848.

⁶¹ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 239; NPMP, NSC Files, Box 642, India/Pakistan Situation (FRUS 246).

⁶² Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 307.

⁶³ Raghavan, *1971*, 263.

objectives; Chinese suspicions; and Pakistani nationalism.”⁶⁴

As the prospects of a negotiated settlement between East and West Pakistan turned hopeless, Kissinger warned Nixon of “the inevitability of war,” “not necessarily because anyone wants it but because in the end they will not know how to avoid it.”⁶⁵ No amount of pressure, not even threats to end economic aid, would have deterred India from invading East Pakistan. On November 12, Kissinger stated that “the Pakistanis aren’t so stupid as to challenge Indian military now. If a war starts, it would have to be by India.”⁶⁶ By late November, frequent border skirmishes brought both countries to a tipping point. When war finally broke out on December 3, 1971, Kissinger was convinced that it was India that fired the first shot.

The Short War

In a hopeless attempt to preempt India’s invasion, the Pakistani military struck airfields in Northern India. Indira Gandhi was relieved to find out that the first attack was the result of “the adventurism of the Pakistan military machine.”⁶⁷ “Thank God, they’ve attacked us,” she proclaimed.⁶⁸ The Indian army, which was twice the size of the Pakistani army, launched an invasion into East Pakistan, which Gandhi immediately recognized as the independent nation of Bangladesh. The speed of India’s advance was remarkable. In less than a week, the Indian army captured half of East Pakistan. As the army marched through the desolate villages on their route to Dacca, the Bengalis welcomed Indian soldiers as liberators. The U.S. Consul in Dacca—Blood’s replacement—observed that the “noose is obviously getting tighter” for Islamabad.⁶⁹

While he was not surprised, Kissinger was still enraged. Prior to the war, the White House asked Indira Gandhi to refrain from military measures, at least until January 1972 to see if Yahya’s concessions would improve the situation in any meaningful way. On November 24, Kissinger explained that “it’s not outrageous to ask that Yahya be given four weeks to try to adjust the political situation in East Pakistan.”⁷⁰ To be sure, the situation would not have dramatically improved even if Gandhi had waited until January. Nevertheless, the White House believed that if the United States permitted the Indians to

⁶⁴ Jeffery Goldberg, “World Chaos and World Order: Conversations With Henry Kissinger,” *The Atlantic*, November 16, 2016.

⁶⁵ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 860.

⁶⁶ NPMP, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files, Box H-115, WSAG Minutes (FRUS 183).

⁶⁷ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 755, Presidential Correspondence File, India, (FRUS 226).

⁶⁸ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 269.

⁶⁹ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 37, President’s Daily Briefs, Dec 1–Dec 16, 1971 (FRUS 247).

⁷⁰ NPMP, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files, Box H-115, WSAG Minutes (FRUS 198).

humiliate Pakistan, nations abroad would raise even more questions about the reach of American power. Kissinger warned Nixon that “if we collapse now, the Soviets won’t respect us for it; the Chinese will despise us and the other countries will draw their conclusions.”⁷¹ Convinced that the Soviet Union was encouraging Indian aggression, Kissinger described the war as “a Soviet-Indian naked power play to dismember a country.” Similarly, on December 6, Nixon wrote to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev accusing Moscow of “supporting the Indian Government’s open use of force against the independence and integrity of Pakistan...”⁷² While Nixon firmly oriented the United States behind Islamabad, he understood that public support for the regime would tarnish his credibility. As a result, Nixon directed Kissinger to facilitate a secret arms transfer from Jordan to Pakistan. Kissinger warned the president that this action was illegal, but Nixon, as per usual, did not care. On December 8, Kissinger told the Pakistani ambassador that “we are working very actively on getting military equipment to you, but for God’s sake don’t say anything to anybody!”⁷³ In addition to these illicit supplies, the United States worked with Beijing to pass a UN resolution calling India to withdraw. The Soviet Union vetoed each resolution to buy time for its ally.

As Indian troops marched toward Dacca, the liberation of East Pakistan was only a matter of time. However, the future of West Pakistan still remained in question. Since the start of the war, the Indians launched devastating airstrikes on West Pakistani cities. By December 8, they had penetrated fifteen miles into its interior.⁷⁴ The Joint Chiefs of Staff warned Kissinger that “when East Pakistan is gone, the Indians will transfer their divisions to West [Pakistan]... If the war continues to the end, the outcome for Pakistan is inevitable.”⁷⁵ Similarly, a CIA report stated that Gandhi would not end the war until she annexed the Southern region of Kashmir and diminished Pakistan’s military to the point that “Pakistan will never again be in a position to plan another invasion of India.”⁷⁶ This intel prompted Kissinger to conclude that “we have to prevent an Indian onslaught on West Pakistan, since the outcome will be

⁷¹ LOC, Kissinger Papers, Box 397, Telephone Conversations, Home File, Dec 1971 (FRUS 227).

⁷² NPMP, NSC Files, Box 497, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin and Kissinger Notes (FRUS 236).

⁷³ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 297.

⁷⁴ LOC, Kissinger Papers, Box 397, Telephone Conversations, Home File, Dec 1971 (FRUS 223); NPMP, NSC Files, Box 642, Country Files, Middle East, India/Pakistan Situation. Secret (FRUS 246).

⁷⁵ NPMP, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files, Box H-115, WSAG Minutes (FRUS 255).

⁷⁶ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 642, Country Files, Middle East, India/Pakistan Situation (FRUS 246).

the same as in East Pakistan.”⁷⁷ Once the South Asia crisis developed into a contest of wills between the United States and Soviet Union, Islamabad enjoyed the unconditional support of the White House. Kissinger elaborated on this position when he told the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan that “in everything we do with Yahya, we cannot have it said that we stabbed Pakistan in the back.”⁷⁸

While Yahya Khan insisted that he would fight “to the last Muslim,” the Pakistani army surrendered to India on December 16, 1971.⁷⁹ Gandhi responded that “it is pointless in our view to continue the present conflict.”⁸⁰ To the present day, Kissinger remains convinced that he successfully deterred an Indian invasion toward Islamabad. While perhaps exaggerated, his fears were not idle. Nixon and Kissinger were justified in their distrust of Gandhi. During her visit to the White House in November 1971, Gandhi lied to Nixon by denying that her government was funding the Mukhi Bahini. Without the benefit of hindsight, the White House could not know with any certainty whether or not India would escalate the hostilities that were already occurring in West Pakistan.

The Long Peace

The Bengali genocide constitutes one of the most appalling events of the Cold War. From March 26 to December 16, 1971, the Pakistani army murdered anywhere from three hundred thousand to a million Bengalis. This reign of terror forced over ten million people to seek refuge in India, most of whom had yet to recover from the deadliest cyclone in recorded history. Due to their close relationship with the perpetrators, Nixon and Kissinger’s involvement in this genocide deserves strict scrutiny. However, a fair assessment of their moral culpability requires counterfactual speculation: Would alternative policies have improved the conditions in East Pakistan? How would these policies affect American standing with the other great powers? These questions, by nature, are impossible to answer. After all, as Kissinger once told journalist Oriana Fallaci, “the history of things that didn’t happen has never been written.”⁸¹

On the geopolitical issue, Gary Bass argues that “Kissinger’s policies [in South Asia] were not only morally flawed but also disastrous as Cold War strategy,” since it created “the conditions for Soviet-backed India to rip Pakistan in two—a strategic defeat for the United States and a strategic victory for the

⁷⁷ NPMP, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files, Box H-115, WSAG Minutes (FRUS 255).

⁷⁸ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 643, Country Files, Middle East, India/Pakistan December 1–10 (FRUS 265).

⁷⁹ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 37, President’s Daily Briefs, Dec 1–Dec 16, 1971 (FRUS 254).

⁸⁰ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 322.

⁸¹ Orianna Fallaci, *Interview with History*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 42.

Soviet Union.”⁸² Not only does this analysis support the validity of Kissinger’s geopolitical tunnel-vision, it also fails to take into account the larger aims of his grand strategy. Kissinger understood that “no country can act wisely simultaneously in every part of the globe at every moment of time.”⁸³ Therefore, policymakers are forced to sacrifice interests in some regions to achieve more important long-term objectives. Kissinger believed that lasting stability between the United States and the Communist world depended on the success of Chinese rapprochement. If the White House failed to open China, the United States would have less leverage over Moscow and Hanoi in upcoming negotiations. More importantly, this policy would moderate Beijing’s foreign policy and lure China into the family of nations. The future of America’s fragile relationship with China also depended on how the White House dealt with allies, especially those who did not value Western conceptions of human rights. In the final analysis, détente greatly improved the prospects of peace between the United States and its rivals. In May 1972, Nixon and Brezhnev eased nuclear tensions by signing the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Two years later, Kissinger helped negotiate the Helsinki Accords, which further normalized relations between the Communist and Western blocs in Europe. In addition, China’s open hostility against the United States eventually transitioned into a state of mutual understanding. According to historian John Gaddis, the “long peace” that governed the Cold War required “the realization that great nations can have a stake, not just in the survival, but also the success and prosperity of their rivals.”⁸⁴ Therefore, the process of détente, which began with Richard Nixon and ended with Ronald Reagan, helped ensure the Cold War did not escalate into a hot one.

In his searing indictment, Christopher Hitchens describes quiet diplomacy as “the deliberate sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of Bengali civilians.”⁸⁵ However, Kissinger’s critics take for granted that public indignation would have alleviated Bengali suffering in any significant way. On the contrary, public attacks against the regime would have severed U.S. relations with Islamabad, eliminating all possibility of political concessions or famine relief. Furthermore, the extent to which such attacks would affect the conduct of the Pakistani military remains unclear. Even Archer Blood admitted that moral indignation “might have not dissuaded the Paks from continuing” their genocidal campaign.⁸⁶ This was due, in part, to the fact that President Yahya did not have absolute control of the events in East Pakistan. In November 1971,

⁸² “Henry Kissinger: Good or Evil?,” *Politico Magazine*, October 10, 2015.

⁸³ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 277.

⁸⁴ John L. Gaddis, “The Long Peace: Element of Stability in the Postwar International System,” *International Security* 10, no. 4, 142.

⁸⁵ Hitchens, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, 42.

⁸⁶ Precht, Interview with Archer K. Blood, 60.

Maurice Williams, the deputy administrator of USAID, warned Kissinger that “the Pakistan army in East Pakistan is operating in many respects independent of the policies and direction of President Yahya.” As a result, the fate of the Bengalis “is in the hands of army commanders in the East who are not subject to foreign influence.”⁸⁷ Thus, even if Yahya was receptive to public criticism, it would not affect meaningful change because his military commanders were unmoved by American aspersions. Indignation may have exacerbated the military’s brutality by fueling conspiracy theories that the United States supported Bengali insurgents. Therefore, critics who argue that Kissinger did not do enough to prevent the atrocities must also consider the unintended consequences of doing more. Lastly, the choice that Kissinger confronted during this crisis was between the policy of détente and America’s Cold War credibility. He did not sacrifice Bengali lives in pursuit of his grand strategy, for the fate of East Pakistan was out of his control. Quiet diplomacy may have damaged America’s self-prescribed image as the defender of democratic self-determination, but it was the most prudent policy that Kissinger could have pursued under difficult circumstances.

While he conceded that American indignation may not have led to any practical consequences, Archer Blood insisted that this policy “would have positioned ourselves on the side of right and justice.”⁸⁸ However, diplomacy can rarely be measured in such terms. The challenge of foreign policy lies in the balancing of conflicting values: national security on one hand and moral credibility on the other. While these interests often compete for priority, one cannot survive without the other. Security without virtue lacks legitimacy; virtue without security lacks longevity. The difficulty of balancing these two goals is compounded by the fact that foreign policy seldom presents a choice between good and evil. In *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (1957), Kissinger argues that in order to participate on the world stage:

We must find the will to act and to run risks in a situation which permits only a choice among evils. [...] To deal with problems of such ambiguity presupposes above all a moral act: a willingness to run risks on partial knowledge and for a less than perfect application of one’s principles.⁸⁹

In the arena of international relations, especially during the Cold War, the lesser of two evils is rarely self-evident. Kissinger understood this dilemma from a young age, writing to his parents after the Second World War that “the real tragedies in life are not in choices between right and wrong. Only the most

⁸⁷ NPMP, NSC Files, Box 627, Country Files, Middle East, Pakistan, Vol. VIII, Nov–Dec 71 (FRUS 188).

⁸⁸ Precht, Interview with Archer K. Blood, 60.

⁸⁹ Niall Ferguson, “The Meaning of Kissinger,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 2015, 139-140.

callous of persons choose what they know to be wrong.” “Real dilemmas,” he concluded, “are difficulties of the soul, provoking agonies, which you in your world of black and white can’t even begin to comprehend.”⁹⁰ The burden of this dilemma rests on the shoulder of every statesperson. The tragic history of the Bengali genocide demonstrates that moral perfection requires engagement with an imperfect world. To effect meaningful progress abroad, the United States must, in many cases, temper its missionary zeal and face political realities. Failure to do so will, in the long run, undermine the principles that the country claims to represent. The true test of statecraft, therefore, lies in one’s ability to recognize and bridge what is desirable with what is possible—without losing sight of both.

⁹⁰ Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger: 1923-1968: The Idealist*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), 203.

WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN?: THE VIETNAM WAR IN VIETNAMESE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS, 1975-2000

BY LAM THIEU HIEN (ETHAN)

Introduction

The massive body of literature devoted to the Vietnam War testifies to its pivotal status in American and Vietnamese histories. Yet, it faces a historiographical dilemma. Documentation on the conflict continues to be mostly dominated by American scholars, who utilize American and South Vietnamese perspectives. Even as growing segments of these scholars attempt to introduce mainland Vietnamese perspectives into the conversation, these works continue to downplay how the contemporary Vietnamese communist regime understands the conflict.¹ Simultaneously, the lack of Vietnamese language sources readily available in English and general distrust towards these sources exacerbated the one-sidedness of the conflict's historiography. Such a distorted view does not help to advance scholarly understanding of the country and its ties with the conflict. At the same time, it disregards the complexities of Vietnam's relationship with communism and the dynamics of everyday communist experiences. As Glennys Young points out, communist regimes and societies go beyond transforming themselves into the higher stage of historical development.² They also envision and enforce a transformation of the self through self-realization that unfolds from within and without through institutional apparatuses.³ Following Young's cue, this paper attempts to fill this gap by examining Vietnamese textbooks, thereby highlighting the ways in which the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) constructs the history of the conflict and sustains its legitimacy and relevance.

Within the Vietnamese context, education has been at the center stage of the CPV's socialist-building project. In the 1979 "Resolution of the Politburo on Education Reforms", education was seen as an essential tool for "ideological and cultural revolutions," a component with "great usefulness to accomplish the historical mission victoriously" and a means to cultivate the new socialist "person" and culture with "socialist and nationalist characteristics found on the

¹ I refer Vietnamese who stay in Vietnam as mainland Vietnamese. From now on, I use the capitalised "North" and "South" to mean the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the Republic of Vietnam (ROV), respectively. I use the miniscule "north" and "south" to mean the different region of Vietnam.

² Glennys Young, *The Communist Experience in the Twentieth Century: A Global History Through Source* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), xviii.

³ Young, *The Communist Experience*, xviii, xix-xxi.

basis of Marxism-Leninism and socialist collectivism.”^{4 5} Within this parameter, history education plays the utmost importance.⁶ Accordingly, history textbooks must occupy a central role in pedagogy. An analysis of history textbooks is practical for other reasons. Only two decades after the War, the CPV abandoned the planned economy and formally ended the Subsidy Era (in Vietnamese: Thoi Bao cap), while recognizing the market as the principle for economic operation. Meanwhile, its closest ally and primary aid source, the Soviet Union collapsed, signifying that there was no turning back or room for errors for the Party in its road ahead. Consequentially, it forced the regime to plan its move carefully so as not to lose its grip on power. Vietnam, in time, established closer ties with its former foes, the United States and China. These developments seemingly contradicted and discredited why the conflict was fought in the first place and effectively challenged the regime’s legitimacy. Nevertheless, despite many changes in social, political, and economic conditions, the regime continued to maintain its power. History education and primarily, historical interpretation in history textbooks remained relatively unimpacted by “foreign” influences, unlike other state-controlled ideologues. This suggests that any deviations in historical narratives of the conflict, must, therefore, result from the CPV’s changing narratives, at the regime’s will.

For these reasons, this paper draws upon a number of history textbooks used in primary schools, middle schools, and high schools that were published between 1976 and 2000. It argues that how the CPV portrays the War, on the one hand, aligns with Marxist views of history yet on the other, deprives the understanding of the conflict as one that involved two halves of the country. These characteristics instill political ideologies in audiences’ mind and dictate what an ideal Vietnamese in the new post-War political system should think and how they should behave. That is, one must not only be anti-imperialist and later on, class conscious, but also be a nationalistic Vietnamese person, without regionally prejudiced connotations. It also argues that the CPV’s portrayal of the War conveys that violence is justified to build a prosperous and morally pure nation. Highlighting how the narratives of the conflict change over time, this paper argues that the regime adapts the textbooks to make sense of

⁴ I do all translation of Vietnamese texts to English. While attempting my best efforts, it is inevitable that some words lose meanings when translated into English. In such case, I will provide additional definition where needed in the Notes section.

⁵ Communist Party of Vietnam, “Resolution of the Politburo on Education Reforms” [Nghị quyết của Bộ Chính trị về Cải cách Giáo dục] 14-NQ/TW, 11 January 1979, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1979* [Van kien Dang: Toan tap — 1979], vol. 40 (Hanoi: National Political Press [Nha Xuat ban Chinh tri Quoc gia], 2005), 7-9.

⁶ Communist Party, “Resolution,” 28.

contemporary political events and deal with traumatic experiences of violence.

The Textbooks

The textbooks used in this paper are part of a private collection in response to recent increasing interests in the Vietnamese education system (and experiences) of the past. All have been scanned and made available online. The collection includes materials in different academic subjects, published in different eras and regions, giving a partial lens into the variety of learning experiences in different social and political settings. The size of the collection is vast, but this paper only examines a narrower subset of eight textbooks: Three textbooks target students in Grade 5, published in 1975, 1985, and 1994. Two target students in Grade 9, published in 1985 and 1999. Three other targets at students in Grade 12, published in 1975, 1988, and 2000. Of these, textbooks published before 1990 must receive some close examinations. Although reunification was already in place, northern Vietnam and southern Vietnam continued to maintain distinct cultural institutions: while northern students took only ten years to graduate, southern Vietnamese only graduated after twelve years of general education.⁷ For that reason, textbooks published before 1988 were used primarily by Vietnamese students south of the seventeenth parallel and represented a localized interpretation of history that fits with the respective social, political, and economic reality.⁸

State monopolies on textbook publication are not a new phenomenon in Vietnam and are not unique to the country either.⁹ Most textbooks examined are compiled and published by the Education Press, which is a state-run publisher and set up by the Ministry of Education and Training in 1957. The only exceptions in this subset are the 1975 textbooks, which were instead compiled by the short-lived Liberation Press. Textbooks are also compiled collectively, though it was not until at least 1999 that the primary editors were named. This

⁷ Even in the early 1970s, North Vietnamese education officials have demonstrated admiration for the twelve-year education system in South Vietnam. The first step to integration began in 1981, when the ten-year education system in the North switched to eleven-year education system, suggesting that preparation had already been made before the War. The disparity between the regions continues until 1992, when the twelve-year education system applied across the country.

⁸ All textbooks examined are consulted from *Thuong Mai truong Xua*, www.thuongmaitruongxua.vn. For a complete listing of textbooks, see Appendix A.

⁹ Apparently, ROV maintained an active and lively private textbooks compilation industry. While the ministry responsible for education under the ROV also published some textbooks, they were not widely circulated as the government lacked the capital to do so. Hence, it was common for secondary school teachers to compile and publish textbooks of their own. However, these textbooks fall out of the scope of this paper, and I do not include them.

change seems to indicate a move to assert accountability on authors and editors and instill trustworthiness of the source through transparency. Furthermore, secondary school's textbook publication regime in Vietnam is peculiar in that textbooks are reprinted annually, and new reprints may or may not include changes. As a result, there might be alternations that these textbooks do not capture. Regardless of how minor these changes are, considering the significant gap between the publications, a chronological approach to trace how textbooks change over time is not logistically possible. Instead, this paper seeks to identify key themes and events of the Vietnam War mentioned in these textbooks, highlight the commonalities and differences between them, and see how the Vietnam War changes over time as it relates to the CPV.

Being Vietnamese, Becoming Vietnamese

When the North Vietnamese force entered Saigon, they not only had to take over the collapsed political apparatus of South Vietnam but also inherited an extremely politicized generation of youth. Their peculiar time of “liberation” created a state of uncertainty. While schools were required to operate as usual, as well as the examination that was planned in summer, the new regime had to adapt them into the new political environment. In June, a short two months after “liberation,” the CPV urged the “revolutionary education system in the South to rapidly eradicate the backward and reactionary natures of American and puppet government’s neo-colonist education system in newly liberated areas.”^{10 11} At the same time, it called for an immediate baptizing of all teaching staffs with “basics of present revolutionary conditions and duties, and revolutionary

¹⁰ Communist Party of Vietnam, “Directive of the Board of Secretariats on Educational Affairs in the South After the Day of Complete Liberation” [Chi thi cua Ban Bi thu ve Cong tac Giao duc o Mien Nam sau Ngay Hoan toan Giai phong], 221-CT/TW, 17 June 1976, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1975* [Van kien Dang: Toan tap — 1975], vol. 36 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2004), 225.

¹¹ The “examination” I refer here is the Baccalaureate examination which is modelled after the French Baccalaureate. I make some guess here on when the examination was supposed to be held based on various scarce information compiled from memoirs and several websites, or the so-called “memorial sites,” dedicated to remembering anything related to the Republic of Vietnam. After the “liberation” at the end of April, students were asked to return to school, and schools were requested to finish the curriculum. It is unsure whether the curriculum was significantly modified, and the students were asked to use the new 1975 textbook, as I examined here, since I cannot find a credible source that confirms so. The examination was held in September with several alternations. See Nguyen Van Thanh, “Phan 12: E- Giao duc va Thi cu tu Nam 1975 den Nay” [Part 12: E- Education and Examination from 1975 to Now], *Education and Examination Through Times in Vietnam*, originally published May 2005, last accessed 29 November 2020, www.ninh-hoa.com/bk-ThuyNguyen_GiaoDucvaThiCu-12.htm.

lines.”¹² As David G. Marr observes, while teachers in “science, medicine, and engineering found that little had changed in their conditions of employment, except that they had to attend occasional political instruction sessions,” those in social sciences and the humanities “had to assimilate and endorse sweeping alterations in course content before being permitted to lecture again.”¹³ The directive also called for outright discrimination against those whom they saw as “reactionary” for refusing to cooperate.¹⁴

From this perspective, the post-War authority understandably wanted the youth to continue to be as politically enthusiastic as they were during the conflict. As Olga Dror demonstrates, various newspapers in the DRV had raised enthusiasms when “the Vietcong had managed to recruit many youngsters between the ages of 14 and 16.”¹⁵ At the same time, however, they wanted youth to be enthusiastic in the correct ways and in *their* vision. As often as Southern youth could switch their political allegiance during the conflict, they could also easily place their loyalty elsewhere and challenge the newly established regime’s legitimacy in the post-War year. Hence, it was not a surprise when the authority seemed uninterested in radically sowing loyalty among students in similar ways as those in political re-education camps — actions that many South Vietnamese and foreign observers usually associated and overgeneralized with the communist regime in the post-War years.

Indeed, one would expect textbooks circulated immediately after 1975 to be radical. On the contrary, they maintain a balance between nationalist and the new communist narratives. Textbooks of all eras and for all audiences avoid labelling the Vietnam War as a “war” and mute the term “civil war.”¹⁶ This terminology suggests that the new authority steered away from recognizing the North-South division as well as the antagonism stemming from regional divides. In other words, it demonstrates an attempt to not “other” the southern Vietnamese populace by portraying the conflict not as one fought between South Vietnamese and North Vietnamese, but as one fought between the *Vietnamese* and the Americans.

However, not calling the “Vietnam War” as a “war” is just one step in

¹² Communist Party, “Directive,” 233.

¹³ David G. Marr, “Tertiary Education Research, and the Information Sciences in Vietnam,” in *Postwar Vietnam: Dilemmas of Socialist Development*, ed. David G. Marr and Christine P. White (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 16.

¹⁴ Communist Party, “Directive,” 233.

¹⁵ Olga Dror, *Making Two Vietnams: War and Youth Identities, 1965-1975* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 58.

¹⁶ I borrow this term from Marilyn B. Young, “Epilogue: The Vietnam War in American Memory,” in *Vietnam and America: The Most Comprehensive Documented History of the Vietnam War*, ed. Marvin E. Gettleman et al, revised and enlarged 2nd eds. (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1995), 516.

satisfying nationalistic fervor maintained by South Vietnamese students at the time. Instead, all textbooks emphasized the conflict as a “revolution” and describe it as “nationalistic,” “democratic,” and “popular.” Yet, with these terms, textbooks are divided on the treatment of the conflict. The 1975 high school textbook, for example, goes as far as to explicitly argue the conflict’s spiritual ties with the August Revolution in 1945. It reads, “The compatriots and soldiers of the South, with heroic vigor, intelligence, and strategising talent, have applied and improved to the highest levels experiences of the *August Revolution* and the previous *Anti-French Resistance*.”¹⁷ Later textbooks, however, are more ambiguous in making such bold connections. The 1988 publication only makes a brief note, “After 30 years of resilient fighting, the Vietnamese people have beaten the French imperialists [...] and has beaten the American imperialists.”¹⁸ The 1985 middle school publication, cuts ties with August Revolution in 1945 completely and implies, “However, in 1954, our revolutionary force was not strong enough to liberate the whole country; the enemies have lost but not been completely beaten.”¹⁹

Here, one can see that the authors muddle between 1945 and 1954 as a starting point to establish continuities in revolutionary history. This is repeated in textbooks that serve a unified Vietnam’s audience: in particular, the 1999 and 2000 textbooks do not establish clear connections with the August Revolution in 1945, but the 1985 and 1994 primary school textbooks do. What explains this inconsistency? By conflating the term “revolution” to, on the one hand, charge the conflict as a separate and localized revolution, and on the other, see the conflict as a national phenomenon and continuation of the 1945 event, the authority asserts that the Vietnam War was essentially a colonial war and equates the twenty-year division between the DRV and the ROV as exogenously imposed upon the country. The “liberation” in 1975, hence, was not only historically necessary and relevant but also nationalistic. Furthermore, the term instills new nationalist narratives and dishonors those of the ROV as “phony.” For those who entered school shortly after 1975, this is to warn students to abandon the nationalist discourse of the fallen regime in favor of the “new” nationalism presented in the textbooks. As such, the textbooks feed into nationalism shared among South Vietnamese students while applauding and “correcting” their sentiments to fit into the new political regime.

But “revolution” goes beyond a simple historical, nationalistic aura. As

¹⁷ *History Grade 12 General Class: Book 2* [Lich su Lop 12 Pho thong: Tap 2] (Ho Chi Minh City: Liberation Education Press [Nha Xuat ban Giao duc Giai phong], 1975), 107-108.

¹⁸ *History Grade 12 General Class: Book 2* [Lich su Lop 12 Pho thong: Tap 2], 10th reprint (Ho Chi Minh City: Education Press [Nha Xuat ban Giao duc], 1988), 189.

¹⁹ *History Grade 9 General Class* [Lich su Lop 9 Pho thong], 9th reprint (Ho Chi Minh City: Education Press, 1985), 117.

any self-respecting socialist regime, the use of “revolution” must align with the classist connotation under Marxist-Leninist interpretations. Linking with “revolution,” the textbooks liberally sprinkle terms such as “neo-colony” to describe the divided South and “imperialist” to portray the United States. Publications circulated before 1990 employ this description whenever the United States appears as an actor in historical narratives. Concurrently, they also add in terms such as “contradiction” and “struggle” very typical of Marxist-Leninist didactic. Such liberal uses perhaps serve a dual purpose: they introduce students with Marxist vocabularies and at the same time, render the conflict in more familiar through terminologies introduced before in other disciplines. Yet, given the political conditions at the time, repeated appearances of these terminologies also reinforce the “new” image of the conflict in students’ mind. Textbooks, therefore, serve as a tool to introduce and reinforce in students the Marxist-Leninist ideas.

More vividly, these Marxist-Leninist connotations also apply to the ways in which the textbooks describe how the Vietnam War came to terms as an armed conflict. In this matter, the textbooks all begin with the creation of SEATO. As the 1975 high school textbook reads, “In September 1954, American imperialists summoned a conference in Manila to establish a conquering military alliance bloc called ‘Southeast Asia [Collective] Defense Pact’... This pact placed southern Vietnam into their ‘protectorate’ area in an illegal way.”²⁰ Looking more inwardly, the narratives continue by mentioning “atrocities” committed by Ngo Dinh Diem’s regime — something that the new post-War regime does not shy away from. The 1988 textbook, for instance, goes at length, such as “[stealing] away lands gained by peasants during the [1945] revolution,” turning the south into bases for American military actions, “[transforming] the south to consume idling goods [...], under the guise of ‘economic aid’,” and “[perverting] southern Vietnamese [...] to live a deprave life.”²¹ In all textbooks, the narratives put forward the argument, albeit differently worded, that Diem’s regime is “authoritarian and fascist” and “extremely cruel.” Here, one can trace the language about “imperialism” and “fascism” liberally employed in these textbooks to Lenin’s thesis.²² As a fervent follower of Marxism-Leninism, over solely Marxism, this strong linguistic appeal come as no surprise.²³ American “imperialists” militarism and economic

²⁰ *History Grade 12* (1975), 24-25.

²¹ *History Grade 12* (1988), 92-94.

²² Vladimir Ilych Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, first published in April 1917, last accessed 29 November 2020, www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/.

²³ While the CPV’s political doctrine is the so-called Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh, in many official accounts, claim to have read only Lenin’s many theses. See Pierre Brocheux, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biography*, trans. Claire Duiker (New York, NY: Cambridge

grabbing conform with interpretation in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which Le Duan, one of the highest-ranked member of the CPV, masterfully pens,

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, capitalism has developed into imperialism; monopoly has replaced free competition. To harness maximum profit, those monopoly capitalists not only increasingly exploited workers and working people in the country but also waged colonial invasion, exported capitals, and transformed small, weak, and backward nations into sources that supplied cheap raw materials and markets that consumed its excess goods.²⁴

All narratives then provide contrasting images to highlight the agony between the regime and the “people,” a move that manipulates and dichotomizes historical narratives. The 2000 textbook, echoing previous publications, on the one hand, reads, “[Diem] organized a series of siege, massacre, and imprisonment” all those who did not agree with Diem, and “With a motto ‘destroy communism without mercy’ [and] ‘rather mistakenly killing than missing out,’ American-Diem uses many savage slaughtering methods....”²⁵ On the other, the textbooks mention many protests that sprung up and emphasize their peacefulness and cross-class nature. The 1988 textbook writes: after the “Peace Movement” agitated by “intelligentsia and urbanites,” “thirty thousand workers in Hue” and “more than 200 thousand workers” joined the strike while farmers struggled against the new land reforms and journalists “did not stop displaying and accusing many policies that were against the people and treasonous of Ngo Dinh Diem.”²⁶ However, the narratives then point to these movements’ susceptibility to being suppressed and put down. According to the 1999 textbook, “revolutionary forces only react with political struggles, so it

University Press, 2007), 14. For official statement, see Ho Chi Minh, “The Path Which Led Me to Leninism” [Con duong Dan Toi den Chu nghia Lenin], originally published 22 April 1960, in *Ho Chi Minh: Completed Works — 1959-1960* [Ho Chi Minh: Toan Tap — 1959-1960], vol. 12, 3rd ed. (Hanoi: National Political – Truth Press [Nha Xuat ban Chinh tri Quoc gia – Su that], 2011), 561-563.

²⁴ Le Duan, “Lenin and the Vietnamese Revolution: A Speech at a Solemn Rally to Commemorate the Ninetieth Anniversary of the Birthday of V. I. Lenin, April 1960” [Chu nghia Lenin va Cach mang Viet Nam: Bai noi tai Cuoc Mit tinh Trong the Ky niem Lan thu 90 Ngay sinh V. I. Lenin, thang Tu 1960], in *Le Duan: Completed Works — 1950-1965* [Le Duan: Toan tap — 1950-1965], vol. 1 (Hanoi: National Political – Truth Press, 2007). See also Lenin, *Imperialism*.

²⁵ Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) [Bo Giao duc va Dao tao], *History Grade 12: Book 2* [Lich su Lop 12: Tap 2], 8th reprint, ed. Dinh Xuan Lam, Nguyen Xuan Minh, and Tran Ba De (Ho Chi Minh City: Education Press, 2000),

²⁶ *History Grade 12* (1988), 95.

was damaged quite heavily.”²⁷ Along this line of reasoning, an armed response is needed to counter Diem’s squash of revolutionary actions. In these circumstances, the Party then “has timely assessed the situation and clearly outlines, ‘The fundamental lines of the revolution in the south [...] primarily [involves political resistance] combines with [the use of] armed force.’”²⁸ Unsurprisingly, after the Party’s reassessment, “uprising movements of the mass” spread across the South and was particularly successful in the Ben Tre with the Dong Khoi movement, where “an autonomous people’s committee was formed” and “farming land of rich landlords was confiscated and given out to poor toiling peasants.”²⁹

One observation can be made here. Despite the “nationalistic,” “democratic,” and “popular” nature of the “revolution” in the South, the textbooks, especially those published between 1975 and 1988, focus almost exclusively on the movements initiated by the peasantry and the workers. The Vietnamese Marxist-Leninists see these two social classes as the primary force of their socialist revolution. This goes against the fact that the anti-Diem and anti-American movements at this time were largely guided by students and intelligentsia, sometimes involving individuals who held high-ranked office. Nevertheless, because of this silence, the textbooks force its audience to see themselves narrowly in the two social classes ideologically permitted to exist in the new socialist political reality. The dual and somewhat circular observation is exactly what Gotelind Müller argues in *Designing History in East Asian Textbooks: Identity Politics and Transnational Inspiration*, where she emphasizes that textbooks engage students and other audiences in a process called “political socialization.”³⁰ Given the new political reality, the textbooks, as examined, through its selective choice of language, do not only present themselves as manifestos of new orders but also familiarize or “socialize” students with the new changes. In other words, what one can expect when reading these narratives is that denouncing Diem is not only meant to instill nationalism among students but also inculcate the students with anti-imperialist and internationalist—thus, Marxist—spirits. Being Vietnamese and being anti-imperialist and internationalist is, therefore, fundamentally and forcefully synonymous.

Nevertheless, there is another lurking ideological motive behind this kind of narrative. Recalling how the textbooks call the North as “having gained

²⁷ MOET, *History Grade 9: Book 2* [Lich su 9: Tap 2], 10th reprint, ed. Ho Song and Nguyen Kien (Hanoi: Education Press, 1999), 88.

²⁸ MOET, *History Grade 9* (1999), 88.

²⁹ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 129-131.

³⁰ Gotelind Müller, ed., *Designing History in East Asian Textbooks: Identity Politics and Transnational Inspiration* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 1.

necessary conditions to transitioning into the socialist revolutionary period.”³¹ However, by viewing the conflict the way the textbooks do, as Vietnamese against Americans, one can detect the sublime ideological implication: Vietnam was in a severely incomplete transitory period, and the South remains in the lower stage of historical material development which, according to the Marxist-Leninist worldview, is capitalism.³² Only through such lens can the existence of a capitalist South pose not only a “possibility that capitalism is going to recover” but an active and direct threat to the “socialism.”³³ To uphold the “revolution” then, it is logical to have a concentrated political apparatus, or “proletarian dictatorship,” as Marxist-Leninists theorize.³⁴ The CPV assumes this responsibility.

Another issue remains. So far, “revolution” and other narratives of these textbooks all point to a balance between nationalism and classism. This seems contradictory considering that orthodox Marxism and Leninism tend to discard the national aspect in favor of internationalism in political theorization and application. It is imperative to stress that whether Marxist, Leninist or neither, the “imperialism” and “fascism” that these textbooks liberally sprinkle in their narratives still reflect an internationalist connotation. According to an article written by Giovanni Arrighi, Terrence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein,

The national struggle and the class struggle have been seen as related historically, and so theoretically, but as different in kind because their historical trajectories differ, the one toward reproducing the capitalist world-economy by extending and deepening its interstate plane of operations, the other toward eliminating the capitalist world-economy by eliminating its defining bourgeois-proletarian relation.³⁵

How can the CPV explain this contradiction? As Huynh Kim Khanh argues, unlike other hardcore socialist regimes, the CPV blurs the lines between classism and nationalism in their political and theoretical foundation.³⁶ This goes beyond, say, the Communist Party of China, which Arif Dirlik observed during the Chinese Revolution placed nationalist movements as equal to class

³¹ *History Grade 12* (1975), 27.

³² Eero Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World: Marxist-Leninist Doctrine and the Changes in International Relations, 1975-93* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press Inc., 1997), 29-31.

³³ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 29-31.

³⁴ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 29-31.

³⁵ Giovanni Arrighi, Terrence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Liberation of Class Struggle,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Centre)* 10, no. 3 (Winter 1987): 403, www.jstor.org/stable/40241065.

³⁶ Huynh Kim Khanh, “The Vietnamese Communist Movement Revisited,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1976): 453-457, www.jstor.com/stable/27908295.

struggles.³⁷ Furthermore, in contrast to Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein, the CPV's strong and repeated emphasis that the conflict as a "revolution" cannot be understood simply as a matter of ideological and political conception.³⁸ According to Khanh, this comes much from the Party's peculiar founding history, that is its colonial contexts, which helps to translate that nationalism *always* trumps Marxist appeals, for it has real political necessities to establish support, thence, legitimacy among the Vietnamese mass.³⁹

One can also observe that narratives remain consistent across eras and audiences, reflecting an effort to tell a common story about the path towards revolutionary violence. However, these consistencies serve other functions as well. As Gotelind Müller elaborates later on, the "role of curricula for history and related school subjects in inculcating rigid, homogenous and totalist visions of the national 'self'."⁴⁰ Yet, given the appearance of the Party as a "wise" and prophetic institution, divine and powerful against all odds, the textbooks clearly aim to accustom them to see the Party and the State as intertwined and necessary. They also aim to help them to understand Marxism-Leninism as an "accurate" historical force. With the post-War context in mind, this surely gives legitimacy for the new regime that was taking hold of power.

Educate or Indoctrinate?

Textbooks, communist or not, always contain biases and ideological components in their narratives. With this kind of reading, it would be wrong to overemphasize that the authors of these textbooks only aim to indoctrinate its audience. Doing so would reduce recipients of these narratives as passive subjects who accept whatever is presented. As Young comments, "Communist citizens [...] constructed complicated and messy relationships to Communist ideology and the Communist political system more generally."⁴¹ In other words, the attitudes of textbook recipients may range from completely supporting the ideology and its political regime to a variety of skepticism or complete dissidence. Nevertheless, as the previous section indicates, textbooks do not just enforce a vision of the future socialist society and socialist citizens – something that the CPV can control; textbooks also are shaped by society. For the authors, it must be recognized, are also products of what Marx theorized as "superstructure" — something over which the CPV has little control. In that sense, textbooks must compromise the conditions of the individuals,

³⁷ Arif Dirlik, *Marxism in the Chinese Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 54.

³⁸ Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein, "Liberation of Class Struggle," 403-404.

³⁹ Khanh, "Vietnamese Communist," 453-457.

⁴⁰ Müller, *Designing History*, 1.

⁴¹ Young, *Communist Experience*, 120.

subsequently, their “micro” vision, or the “base,” and the larger imposition of the state, or the new “superstructure.” At the convergence of the two, Raymond Williams argues, textbooks must present some form of reality, albeit ideological.⁴² With this in mind, the authors of these textbooks must seek to teach historical events and provide accurate, albeit limited, factual information, not just simply seeing textbooks as a pure ideological propagating means.

Indeed, the desire to instill accurate information beyond the boundary of ideology can be seen in how each history lesson is organized. From 1975 to at least 1988, the textbooks do not feature any questions that would perhaps engage students with history lessons. In contrast, authors of the 2000 publication do not only seek to encourage students to actively learn history, given they prompt questions frequently, but also to urge the textbooks’ audience to critically interpret history through “how” and “why” questions. For example, in the subsection that discusses the Vietnam War between 1961 and 1965, the textbooks prompt the following questions,

1. *How* have the people and the army of the south fought against “Special War” of American – Nguy?
2. *How* has the resistance struggle of the people and army of the south against the scheme and actions of American – Nguy between 1954 and 1965 impacted the protection of the socialist North?^{43 44}

The mere inclusion of these questions indicates that authors of textbooks published before at least 1988 saw these more as a means of indoctrination (which is expected considering the political conditions mentioned above) and a more passive way of organizing history lesson. One can also observe the 2000 textbook invited students to deliberate historical information. And given the sensitivity that history can present and the temporal proximity to the conflict, textbooks must provide a good measure of historical information.

For another example, let us consider the 1988 textbooks and the 2000 publication. Despite the fact that the latter has its narratives completely

⁴² Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” in *British Marxist Criticism*, ed. Victor N. Paananen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 474.

⁴³ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 141.

⁴⁴ I make a direct translation here with the term “Special War” (in Vietnamese: Chien tranh Dac biet). “Special War” is how Vietnamese historiography calls American strategy proposed by Eugene Staley, an economist from Stanford University, and Maxwell D. Taylor, who served first as a Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and later on, as an ambassador to South Vietnam. American historiography often refers the “Special War” as McNamara-Taylor strategy. I am unaware of why Vietnamese historiography chooses this term. On the other hand, Nguy (偽) is a Sino-Vietnamese word/character/term that means “fake” or “illegitimate.” Vietnamese historiographies use this term to refer to the ROV, signifying its political illegitimate and puppetry nature to the Americans.

rewritten, the two textbooks maintain discussions on the period's most crucial events — the McNamara-Taylor fact-finding mission, the deployment of troops in Vietnam, the implementation of “Strategic Hamlet,” the founding of the Liberation Army of Vietnam, and the Battle of Ap Bac and its subsequent developments — relatively intact. One key change made, however, is that the 2000 textbook mentions in detail the Buddhist Crisis in 1963, a prelude to the assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem.⁴⁵ That these textbook authors expanded their scope of narratives to include more events and portray the conflict more comprehensively demonstrates their desire to ensure accurate and factual history lessons.

Besides, it is not difficult to point out that the 1999 and 2000 textbooks are significantly less didactic than those published in previous decades. By the turn of the century, most polemical and emotionally loaded language had fallen out of use. How textbooks refer to Americans represents a prime example. Whereas the “imperialists” label had been so fervently applied to United States in the earlier publications, as mentioned above, by the turn of the century, it is employed more sparingly if it is used at all. The 2000 textbook only describes the United States as “imperialists” a handful of times in the first chapter that discusses the Vietnam War and even opts for the more formal name to label the United States in parts that discuss the Paris Peace Accord in the early 1970s.⁴⁶ This assessment is also compatible with more recently published textbooks that no longer feature the quotes and teachings of Ho Chi Minh or political assessments taken directly from the Party's directives.⁴⁷ It seems like triggering and maintaining revolutionary attitudes is no longer the underlying motivation for textbooks authors.

Indeed, this shift can be attributed to the fact that when the 1999 and 2000 textbooks were published, enough generations of Vietnamese had been trained under its education system that the need to quickly sow loyalty and familiarity with the new political environments was no longer a priority. Essentially, the highly politicized and nationalistic attitudes of southern Vietnamese public had been neutralized; therefore, the CPV found the less didactical language more permissible when its presence and actions were no longer challenged. Indeed, one can best see this shift in various education policy directives published by the CPV. In the Board of Secretariats' Direction compiled 1975 and the Politburo' Resolution produced in 1979, one can observe that the regime overtly emphasized the role of education in cultivating a “collective of labors [...] that suit the increasingly demanding requirements in

⁴⁵ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 140.

⁴⁶ For “imperialists”, see MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 140. For formal term, see MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 165.

⁴⁷ *History Grade 12* (1988), 119.

the socialism-building project.”⁴⁸ Likewise, it should be no surprise that “socialism” appears in high frequency in the two documents. The 1975 and 1980s textbooks are products of these political directives. This explains why the textbooks’ narratives are embedded with terms and articles that are particularly revolutionary. Nonetheless, the Standing Committee’s Resolution published in 1993 no longer connects education with socialism building. Interestingly, it mentions “socialism” once and calls for more attention on “teaching Marxism-Leninism [and] Ho Chi Minh Thought” without explicating its main purpose.⁴⁹ Within this context, the 1999 and 2000 textbooks are no longer concerned with socialism-building; hence, the textbook authors could strip away the revolutionary-laden lexicons.

A cursory reading of the 1999 and 2000 textbooks might convey the changes that these publications underwent to return history education to its foremost function: “education.” Max Hocutt provides interesting insight on this issue. He argues that while “indoctrination seeks to inculcate belief, which may or may not be true,” “education seeks to inculcate knowledge, belief in proven truth.”⁵⁰ As Hocutt elaborates, while indoctrination portrays history from “only one side of the story” by handpicking only pieces of evidence that support the belief and suppressing others, education presents history with a diversity of opinions yet “only to the degree to which [the evidence] supported [the narratives].”⁵¹ According to this definition, textbooks published between 1975 and 1988 are clearly less concerned with educating history and more concerned with indoctrinating students based on their ideologically and emotionally laced languages and the omission of questions that informally suppress the possibility of diverging private opinions. Alternatively, the 1999 and 2000 publication align more with “education” purposes, as Hocutt argues.

Or do they? While later publications remove elements that are generally considered subjective to foster a more objective view of history, the motives become disputable when the 2000 textbook also purges appendices attached at the end of each chapter, which contain relevant excerpts from memoirs and interviews of political figures or revolutionary heroes, but also official documents, relevant statistics and information compiled by the authors themselves.⁵² Of course, one would expect that the contents in these appendices

⁴⁸ Communist Party of Vietnam, “Resolution,” 9.

⁴⁹ Party Central Executive Committee, “Resolution on the Continuing Renovating of Education and Training Matters” [Nghị quyết về Tiếp tục Đổi mới trong Sự nghiệp Giáo dục và Đào tạo] 04-NQ/HNTW, 14 January 1993.

⁵⁰ Max Hocutt, “Indoctrination v. Education,” *Academic Questions* 18, no. 3 (September 2005): 35-36, doi.org/10.1007/s12129-005-1016-y.

⁵¹ Hocutt, “Indoctrination v. Education,” 35-36.

⁵² Compare *History Grade 12* (1975), 73-76; *History Grade 12* (1988), 131-133, and MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000).

would serve greatly in illustrating the Vietnam War for the textbooks' audiences and affirming the revolutionary stance and the regime's ideology. Especially on the second purpose, it is questionable why the regime would back the removal of such ideologically persuasive tools when its legitimacy and credibility heavily relied on them and effectively subordinate ideology to historical information. However, the 1986 Speech by Truong Chinh, the CPV affirmed that it no longer differentiated between pure ideological works and real-life practices in socialism building in the realm of education, where education must "combine teaching [and] learning with productive labors, scientific experiments and researches, [and] application of technological advancement."⁵³ In other words, history became equated with technical knowledge that could be attained through real-life interactions. Whether to include the appendices, thus increasing its ideological efficacy, or not makes no difference and is no longer important and necessary. Ideology could still be instilled without explicit mentioning in textbooks. One could see how little the 1999 and 2000 textbooks depart from the 1975 and 1980s publications when according to Norbert Gaworek, in communist education, "history that is written not only reflects the philosophy and policy of the regime; it is its auxiliary. As such it must explain current policies and events in terms of the founding myths and charters provided by Marx and Lenin."⁵⁴ That is to say, history is a technical tool used to help students better understand society and, in particular, what Vietnam came to be.

This leaves the first purpose relatively unanswered, however. To understand the first purpose, one must adopt a more pragmatic evaluation of the function of history. Indeed, the questionable motive is far more understandable when we consider this seemingly radical break from past narratives with the function that historical narrative has in dealing with conflicts and its memories,

⁵³ Truong Chinh, "Political Report of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Executive Committee at the Sixth National Delegation Congress of the Party: Given by Comrade Truong Chinh, General Secretary of Party Central Executive Committee (Fifth Session), President of the Council of the State" [Bao cao Chinh tri Ban Chap hanh Trung uong Dang Cong san Viet Nam tai Dai hoi Dai bieu Toan quoc Lan thu VI cua Dang: Do Dong chi Truong Chinh, Tong Bi thu Ban Chap hanh Trung uong Dang (Khoa V), Chu tich Hoi dong Nha nuoc, Trinh bay," 15 December 1986, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1986* [Van kien Dang: Toan tap — 1986], vol. 47 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2006), 773.

⁵⁴ Norbert H. Gaworek, "Education, Ideology, and Politics: History in Soviet Primary and Secondary Schools," *The History Teacher* 11, no. 1 (November 1977): 56, www.jstor.org/stable/492726

and the context in which these textbooks were published.

Trauma: Remembering and Forgetting

As Stuart Foster and Keith Crawford argue in *What Shall We Tell the Children?: International Perspectives on School History Textbooks*, history and its construction in textbooks are “intensely political [activities].”⁵⁵ This stems from a standpoint that history textbooks are discursive means to propagate “shared attitudes and the construction of shared memories.”⁵⁶ In other words, one must understand textbooks as a two-layer politics: as how the regime can translate conflicts so they are conceivable to an ordinary audience on the one hand, and as to how the regime can fit the conflict into the political conditions that it faces on the other.

From a pragmatic assessment of the Vietnam War, one cannot deny the sheer traumatic scales of the “shared attitudes” and “shared memories.” The conflict’s temporal proximity to when these textbooks are published only aggravates the grueling trauma. So much so that Vietnamese historiographies have avoided dealing with these traumatic experiences in a frank manner. One of a few articles brave enough to compile the numbers comprehensively, “Consequence of the Vietnam War (1954-1975) – Several Issues Discussed” claims that on the Vietnamese side there were around two million civilian deaths, over two million civilians with permanent bodily damages, and another two million people exposed to toxic chemical properties.⁵⁷ War sacrifices numbered around nine hundred thousand—a third have yet to be found.⁵⁸

Yet, these numbers did not speak much for the mundane, every day, and on-the-ground experiences of civilians: Vietnamese historiographies have consistently neglected, censored, and even outright condemned and forbade discussions of this topic. Indeed, in harmony with mainstream historiographies, despite many chances to include these statistics into the narratives, all textbooks are vague and often skip over quantitating the scale and the effect of the War on

⁵⁵ Stuart J. Foster and Keith A. Crawford, ed., *What Shall We Tell the Children?: International Perspectives on School History Textbook* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 6.

⁵⁶ Foster and Crawford, ed., *What Shall We Tell the Children?*, 4.

⁵⁷ University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH), Vietnam National University, Hanoi [Đại học Khoa học và Xã hội Nhân văn, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội], “Consequence of the Vietnam War (1954-1975) – Several Issues Discussed” [Hậu quả của Cuộc Chiến tranh Việt Nam (1954-1975) – May Van de Ban luan], originally published 29 April 2015, last accessed 01 December 2020, www.ussu.vnu.edu.vn/d6/vi-VN/news2/Hau-qua-cua-cuoc-chien-tranh-Viet-Nam-1954-1975-may-van-de-ban-luan-6-616-11757.

⁵⁸ USSH, “Consequence.”

the Vietnamese side, overall. Reflecting on the Tet Offensive, the 2000 textbook, for example, makes only one note: “In the second and third phase of the general offensive and resistance [campaign], our forces faced not least disadvantages and damages.” No numbers follow nor are there terms that connote violence. In a rare sight, the 1975 and 1985 textbooks demonstrate a more genuine attempt to quantify the range and the human impacts of Agent Orange as well as the amount of napalm the American dropped on the South, but they do not go on far enough to discuss the long-term impacts of such atrocities, especially in the 1985 textbook, when enough time has passed for the consequences to surface.⁵⁹ At the same time, this also explains why when Bao Ninh’s *The Sorrow of War*, which deals very critically with the experiences during and after the War, was finally allowed to publish in the 1980s. David W. P. Elliott calls the reactions from domestic readers and critics “sensational.”⁶⁰

Nevertheless, these textbook authors are not alone when they choose to leave out the gruesome and violent parts of the Vietnam War. The fact that War trauma is a very personal or specific experience makes the description about the pains and controversies in textbooks necessarily abstract: while the students may see and acknowledge the violence, they could never relive the trauma when learning it. When studying Indian textbooks, Sylvie Guichard notices that these publications present violence “very cursorily and in a very general and abstract away.”⁶¹ According to Guichard, “In a post-conflict situation, the content of history textbooks is seen as potentially helping or hindering reconciliation.”⁶² Along this line of reasoning, textbook authors might have chosen to leave out the traumas and violence of War to facilitate reconciliation between social groups with emotional ties to the conflict. In the Vietnamese case, that would be between the North and the South Vietnamese. While we have clearly seen that the CPV had no misgivings about the widespread persecution against many South Vietnamese, it is also clear that only a limited group of people were incarcerated for a prolonged period of time: those had held influential positions or had served in South Vietnam’s political, administrative, and military apparatuses. Also, shortly before the Fall of Saigon, the CPV instructed cadres in newly liberated territories to temporarily utilize any individuals with their technical skills, including soldiers and military officers — anti-communist and reactionary as most of them might have been in the eyes of the CPV — in post-liberated works and promised that they could return to their hometowns as well

⁵⁹ *History Grade 12* (1975), 55-56; *History Grade 12* (1988), 111-112.

⁶⁰ David W. P. Elliott, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam’s Transition from Cold War to Globalisation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 53.

⁶¹ Sylvie Guichard, “The Indian Nation and Selective Amnesia: Representing Conflicts and Violence in Indian History Textbooks,” *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 1 (2013): 78, 10.1111/j.1469-8129.2012.00556.x.

⁶² Guichard, “The Indian Nation,” 80.

as employments in domains outside the military once the War was over.⁶³ Officials have also claimed that the fact they did not pursue trials on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity on these individuals, and that they, once released, would nominally civil liberties again as evidence for the CPV's works towards national reconciliation.⁶⁴ Thus, by not extolling details about the suffering that Vietnamese on any sides experienced, all textbooks also seek to prevent potential conflicts between those whose families had served the CPV and the Vietcong and those whose families had allegiant with the South Vietnamese government.

Of course, in the highly political atmospheres that these policies were carried out, one must take these claims with a grain of salt. As Tran Huu Quang observes, post-conflict reconciliation in Vietnam was fairly limited and, in many cases, agitated resentments from the mass population. Poor and harsh living conditions for those in the re-education camps, political harassments of those whose relatives were in re-education, and the total surrender of the material wealth of the South Vietnamese populace would only make it easy for many to connect the bleak post-War outlook with the atrocities committed by the Northern forces against South Vietnam. Partially blaming the mentality of "drunken with victory," where the victor, the CPV, asserted excessive "propaganda and celebration of one side's achievements in warfare and victory," Tran Huu Quang laments the lack of mobilization and subsequently, the quick disbandment of "groups or components," which he saw as "could have played an important catalytic role in the reconciliation progress": social and cultural organizations, independent newspapers, the so-called "Third Segment," and even the National Liberation Front.⁶⁵ Hence, reconciliation in the post-War is achieved by leaving out violent details in narratives. Textbook authors, especially for the 1988 publication, avoid agitating disillusionment from South Vietnamese towards the new regime.

Clearly, textbook authors and the new post-War regime are particularly anxious in dealing with the violence of the War directly. However, this

⁶³ Communist Party of Vietnam, "Directives from the Board of Secretariats on the Policies Towards Imprisoned and Surrendered Soldiers in the New Situations" [Chi thi cua Ban Bi thu ve Chinh sach doi voi Tu, Hang binh trong Tinh hình Moi], 218-CT/TW, 18 April 1975, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1975*, vol. 36 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2006), 122.

⁶⁴ Ginetta Sagan and Stephen Denney, "Re-Education in Unliberated Vietnam: Loneliness, Suffering, and Death," *The Indochina Newsletter*, October-November 1982, www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~sdenney/Vietnam-Reeducation-Camps-1982.

⁶⁵ Tran Huu Quang, "The Question of Reconciliation in Vietnam: A Relevant Social Issue," in "Peace and Reconciliation in Vietnam," ed. Sophie Quinn-Judge, special issue, *Peace & Change* 30, no. 4 (October 2013): 419-421, doi.org/10.1111/pech.12038.

reluctance to deal with traumatic experiences, especially painful memories caused by the “our” side suggests that the regime is particularly torn with its desire to teach history “objectively” and indoctrinate. In other words, purging and censoring primary sources that are supportive of historical narratives is not a retreat from objectivity that characterized history textbooks at the turn of the century. Instead, it is a move to remove emotional elements in an effort to portray history objectively. In one observation, Patrizia Violi critiques the term “history” and argues that even though “[history and memory] are interwoven in highly complex ways,” they are two distinct entities.⁶⁶ As Violi demonstrates further, the thin line between history and memory often results in “the collective memory [...] diverging from historical reality.”⁶⁷ The history that textbooks try to reconstruct can only be understood as an attempt to re-represent memory in an objective light.

Nevertheless, despite the “national” aura of trauma and violence that the textbooks in this subset demonstrate, the bombs, Agent Orange, and all the deaths that the textbooks might tally are still personal experiences. At most, they are collective trauma, which is remembered strictly by those within the specified community. Here, this paper borrows Benedict Anderson’s definition of a “nation” as an “imagined political community.”⁶⁸ However, contrary to Anderson, this paper extracts from that “nation” and focuses solely on one “community.” Because “community” is imagined, its image must be drawn from individuals, yet the necessity to fit the collective translates to a need to bypass individual experiences in favor of common, albeit abstract, narratives. Examining German and Jewish identities in the post-Holocaust era, Johannes Pfäfflin agrees, “The suspension of differentiation in favor of a shared, albeit broken, German identity meant that, for a long time, individual fates could not be acknowledged — that is to say, remorse and grieving were suspended as well.”⁶⁹ In a similar light, the textbook authors’ decision to shun the individual’s traumas, to minimize or removes gruesome details (even if they are directed towards the collective) and particularly in the 1999 and 2000 textbooks, to tone down polemical and emotionally pumped lexicons from the narratives functions to suspend the pain and the grief from collective memories. Effectively, the 1999 and 2000 textbooks build up a shield of self-defense against the memory of the War and against reliving the events. By carefully selecting which parts of

⁶⁶ Patrizia Violi, *Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Space, and History*, trans. Alastair McEwen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2017), 9-10.

⁶⁷ Violi, *Landscapes of Memory*, 9-10.

⁶⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

⁶⁹ Johannes Pfäfflin, “From Broken Identities to Repair: German-Jewish Dialogue,” in *History, Trauma, and Shame: Engaging the Past Through Second Generation Dialogue*, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 141.

history to include in the narratives, all textbooks forge a collective “official” amnesia. Forgetting, in this sense, becomes a means to deal with and remember the War without dealing with it head-on.

This does not mean that the textbooks do not deal with suffering during the War; they just do so without mentioning the suffering at all. Guichard argues that understanding violence necessitates an “an individual emotional component” that “supplement the explanations of the socio-historical context” and in turn, demands shifting “the level in the discourse from structures to actors or from ‘high politics’ to common people.”⁷⁰ In other words, to understand violence, discussions about it must focus on recreating the individual experiences and employing language comprehensible to the person. By the turn of the century, perhaps the only textbooks in the examined subset that continue to deal with individual sufferings are those targeted at primary school audiences. Following trends of middle school and high school textbooks, the 1985 and 1994 textbooks purge several interesting articles, one of which is reading called “The American-Diem Militants Cannibalize” that displays gruesome details to the young audience.⁷¹ However, they also retain and add more biography-style articles that skip the term “damages” and use more frank terms such as “sacrifice” and “dead.”⁷² Some examples include “Remember My Words!” which recalls the death of Nguyen Van Troi, or “Nguyen Ba Ngoc Forgets Oneself to Save Two Young Children” which recounts the sacrifice of a primary-school-age boy. It is not difficult to understand why: the abstract and vague references made in middle school and high school textbooks would render violence, and the history of the War, incomprehensible to primary schoolers. However, while the direct and gruesome languages are more freely used in narratives, there are still gaps in narratives that textbooks refuse to abridge.

Recalling that “nation” and its narratives — history — are imagined, it is logical to say that nation can be imagined in many ways. While the primary textbooks incorporate individuals’ sufferings into their narratives, the personalities honored therein are isolated cases and little resemble the experiences of actual civilians. Both the 1985 and 1994 textbooks ignore the *actual* voices and only capture a specific moment of these characters, without dealing much with their personal self, which would fundamentally impact how

⁷⁰ Guichard, “The Indian Nation,” 81.

⁷¹ Compare *History Grade 5 General Class* [Lich su Lop 5 Pho thong] (Ho Chi Minh City: Liberation Education Press, 1975), 94; *Tales of History Grade 5* [Truyen ke Lich su Lop 5], ed. Hoang Nguyen Cat and Pham Ky Ta (Ho Chi Minh City: Education Press, 1985), 127-128; *Tales of History Grade 5* [Truyen ke Lich su Lop 5], 8th reprint, ed. Hoang Nguyen Cat and Pham Ky Ta (Ho Chi Minh City: Education Press, 1994), 128-129.

⁷² *Tales of History Grade 5* (1985), 79-85; *Tales of History Grade 5* (1994), 79-84.

they perceive the violence of War. Another commonality among the biography-style articles is how the narratives about these individuals are structured. For example, “Remember My Words!” reads, “The [enemies’] commanders quickly ordered [the firing squad] to have [Nguyen Van Troi] immediately shot. The first round of bullets was released, the voice of the 24-year-old youth hoarsened.”⁷³ Then, the reading abruptly comments, “Brother Nguyen Van Troi has died, but his indomitable, heroic courageous spirit endured with the Fatherland.”⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ Indeed, the individuals that the textbooks depict neither feel pain nor express mundane, human interests, except for the selfless cause for the “nation” at large, while their deaths disseminate lessons for others to look after. These descriptions fit the definition of “heroes” that James W. Loewen argues in his analysis of American textbooks.⁷⁶

As Scott Allison and George Goethals emphasize, “Heroes fulfil us emotionally... Heroes inspire us to aim higher. They make us feel good to be a member of the group or society in which they do their heroic work.”⁷⁷ Essentially, textbooks transform these individuals into role models. The primary school textbooks infuse these “role models” with traits such as selflessness for (the love of) the nation and more subtly, bravery. For primary schoolers, these themes are not unfamiliar; they are consistent with the Five Lessons of Ho Chi Minh.⁷⁸ According to official claim, given its wartime origin, these “lessons” are essential to establish morality needed to defend and construct socialism, as this

⁷³ *Tales of History Grade 5* (1985), 80; *Tales of History Grade 5* (1994), 80.

⁷⁴ *Tales of History Grade 5* (1985), 80; *Tales of History Grade 5* (1994), 80.

⁷⁵ “Brother” is the closest translation for “Anh” which in Vietnamese is both an honourable, friendly, and comradery way to address a man/boy whose age is more senior than the speaker or who the speaker pays respect. “Fatherland” is the closest translation I can get for “non song dat nuoc” which word by word in Vietnamese means “mountains, rivers, land, and waters.” Vietnamese has diverse ways to address their patria.

⁷⁶ James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 11, quoted in in James Zajda, Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady, and Michael Lovorn, ed., *Globalisation and Historiography of National Leaders: Symbolic Representation in School Textbooks* (Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht, 2017), 4.

⁷⁷ Scott T. Allison and George R. Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do and Why We Need Them* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 188, quoted in Zajda, Tsyrlina-Spady, and Lovorn, *Globalisation and Historiography*, 4.

⁷⁸ Five Lessons of Ho Chi Minh (in Vietnamese: Nam Dieu Bac Ho Day), includes

Love Your Country, Love Your People	Yeu To quoc, Yeu Dong bao
Study Well, Labour Well	Hoc tap tot, Lao dong tot
Be United. Be Disciplined.	Doan ket tot, Ky luat tot
Keep the Sanitation (Very) Well.	Giu gin Ve sinh that tot
Humility. Honesty. Bravery.	Khiem ton, That tha, Dung cam

paper has mentioned above about the textbooks' view of the Vietnam War.⁷⁹ By embedding these individuals with Ho Chi Minh's lessons, the primary school textbooks aim to rally their young audience to continue upholding and supporting these moral values and the revolutionary spirit. The ability to uphold these values elevate Vietnamese who live up to the role models, above their enemies as morally superior entities. The War, then, appears as a testament to revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist, and Ho Chi Minh-style morality.

Crisis and Morality: Navigating Through Uncertainty

Addressing and emphasizing morality, especially from the mid-1980s onward when these textbooks were published, also indicates the socialist values and morality were in crisis. Indeed, historians have offered many opinions on this matter. It is imperative to re-emphasize here that while this paper has liberally labelled textbooks according to their respective publication year, these publications are ideological products of at least a decade prior. That means the 1999 publication should be correctly understood as a reflection of 1990, and so forth. The considerable time lag in the contents, as well as the ideological discourses embedded within, is likely because Vietnamese textbooks are not regularly rewritten and instead reprinted, with minor changes. This is most evident when one compares middle school and high school textbooks published in the 1970s and 1980s: the contents are identical, with some very minor alternations.

Indeed, a cursory look might offer that the Vietnamese socialist moral and value crisis was a direct reflection of the general crisis in the Soviet Union by the late 1970s and early 1980s because Vietnam orbited relatively neatly within the Soviet sphere of political, ideological, and economic influence in the first decade after the War. Thus, the CPV would likewise adopt similar political, ideological, and economic postures as the Soviet. Therefore, Vietnam would experience a similar crisis. This is even more convincing considering that, when speaking at the Sixth Congress of the CPV, Nguyen Van Linh affirmed that “the sense of renovation” was “inspired by the Twenty-seventh Communist Party of the Soviet Union Congress and the restructuring of the Soviet Union.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union – Student Union at the University of Danang [Doan Thanh nien – Hoi Sinh vien Dai hoc Da Nang], “Origins of the Five Lessons of Ho Chi Minh Teaching Adolescents and Children” [Xuat xu cua 5 Dieu Bac Ho Day Thieu nien va Nhi dong], *Youth of the University of Danang* [Tuoi tre Dai hoc Da Nang], last accessed 03 December 2020, tuoitredhndn.udn.vn/chu-tich-ho-chi-minh/hoc-tap-va-lam-theo-loi-bac/xuat-xu-cua-5-dieu-bac-day-thieu-nien-nhi-dong-899.html.

⁸⁰ David Wurfel, “*Doi Moi* in Comparative Perspectives,” in *Reinventing Socialism: Doi Moi in Comparative Perspectives*, ed. William S. Turley and Mark Selden (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993), 19.

However, this reasoning drastically ignores that these two political entities would end up on opposite trajectory. While the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Vietnam persisted on, and the CPV consolidated its political power. Likewise, this reasoning would portray the Vietnam War as a proxy ploy of the Soviet Union. This would ignore the character of the National Liberation Front (NLF). While it was established by cadres who remained in the South after 1954, the NLF largely enlisted Southern nationalists and intelligentsia and in particular, organized most rallies and military attacks in the South before Northern armies could substantially join in — hence, its struggles against the ROV and the Americans were relatively independent from the CPV, though closely linked.

Eero Palmujoki agrees. In an extensive analysis of the CPV's theoretical rhetoric and Vietnam's behaviors in international relations, Palmujoki argues that the CPV's ideological orthodoxy and inaccurate theorization, instead of the Soviet influence, were the main factors contributing to the Vietnamese socialist moral and value decay.⁸¹ Indeed, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Soviet Union no longer held the classical Marxist-Leninist concept of proletarian internationalism prominent in its didactical lexicons. It was accepted that since socialism had reached the mature stage in the Soviet Union, the new concept of internationalism—that is socialist internationalism, which seeks solidarity on the state over the class line—was necessary.⁸² Nevertheless, despite the changing ideological landscape, the CPV remained committed to proletarian internationalism, which continued to see class as the principal analytical agent, and was reluctant to switch to the new concept. In fact, the CPV had good reasons to trust the classical Marxist-Leninist concept. In contrast to socialist internationalism, the Marxist-Leninist concept articulates a more militant version of revolutionary solidarity and worldview.⁸³ For the Vietnamese who just concluded twenty years of fighting, proletarian internationalism, as such, not only justifies the revolutionary lines the CPV adopted during the War but also fittingly explains the elevated position that the CPV had internationally and among national liberation movement. Meanwhile, the global trajectories by in the late 1970s and early 1980s were never more optimistic and affirming for the CPV from an ideological standpoint. Besides the victory over the Americans which signifies on-site the superiority of the socialist camp over the capitalist

⁸¹ Eero Palmujoki so far provides the most comprehensive look on Vietnamese ideological synthesis. However, I am unable to write in depth nor reproduce much of his fascinating reflections on the topic, partially because the semantic and discourse analysis approach he used is not within the scope of this paper, but largely because his analysis proves to be too detailed and lengthy that it would dilute the focus of this paper.

⁸² Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 52.

⁸³ Tobias Rupperecht, *Soviet Internationalism After Stalin: Interaction and Exchange Between the USSR and Latin America During the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 9-11.

world, successes of various Marxist revolutions in many parts of the world, and the United States' retreat from and decreasing influence in Asia Pacific as well as its internal political crisis seemed to match the early symptoms of the capitalist crisis that Marx and Lenin predicted.

However, it does seem that the CPV had been too confident. A premise for proletarian internationalism is the solidarity between proletariats transcending the national line. Yet, by focusing entirely on class and disregarding the hardening nation-state element in their worldview, the Vietnamese seemed to miscalculate the extensive implications of inter-socialist camp rifts. It became clear in the post-War years that principles of proletarian internationalism were severely compromised by both the Soviet Union and China for their military and political strategic planning. And after the United States left Vietnam, rivalries heated up between these two socialist superpowers. Clearly, proletarian solidarity central to Vietnamese Marxist-Leninist worldview could not explicate why two socialist countries and comrades-in-arms would turn against each other, especially when Vietnamese Marxist-Leninist theorists expected it to be only temporary and likely projected that common ideological interpretation would reconcile the two.⁸⁴ For the most part, an effort to remain independent from both the Soviet Union and China provided some leeway for Vietnamese ideological integrity. However, when the Sino-Soviet disputes turned into Sino-Vietnamese maritime disputes, then the Vietnamese decision to occupy Kampuchea in 1978, and the Chinese "lesson" on Vietnam the next year, the CPV's inability to produce any coherent Marxist-Leninist interpretations to these events demonstrate that the ideology was highly inappropriate in the new post-War situations.⁸⁵ Within this logic, between 1975 and 1978, the CPV's reluctance to provide any interpretations and commentaries demonstrate its intent to ensure consistency between its thoughts and its actions. When it did speak, the CPV's Marxist-Leninist languages "had no real referent."⁸⁶ In a regime that builds and justifies its legitimacy on a coherent ideological framework, the CPV's inability to provide a consistent and meaningful interpretation of the world poses an imminent threat to the its ability to hold power at home and retain the credibility just gained abroad.

Being more conservative, however, does not mean the CPV was not susceptible to change nor were all of these changes endorsed voluntarily. One such change could be observed with Hanoi's slow but persuasive endorsement of socialist internationalism after the country's admission into the Council of

⁸⁴ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 47.

⁸⁵ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 73.

⁸⁶ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 72.

Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).^{87 88} Being part of the CMEA, however, meant that Vietnam's economy would have to be more integrated into Soviet spheres of influence and adopt the Soviet model of development, which focused heavily on rapid industrialization.⁸⁹ However, while the rapid industrialization was necessary to fast-track Vietnam's transition into socialism, the subsistent post-War economic conditions and the sheer scale of the project meant that Vietnam had to rely heavily on other socialist countries, critically challenged Vietnam's own sovereign and independent position. The CPV's ideological posture was further compromised when it had to "[agree with Moscow] on a common approach to the world situation."⁹⁰ Of course, the "common approach" that Moscow wished to refer here was nothing else but "peaceful coexistence."⁹¹ Essentially, Vietnam had been stripped away its ability to maneuver its diplomatic lines, which openly undermined the CPV's nationalism stance and subsequently, its credibility in the eyes of a highly politicized and nationalistic population.

The CPV's adoption of socialist internationalism, however, was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the concept called for "socialist self-determination and the responsibility of the socialist community to act as the guardian of the sovereignty of the Communist Party in each country."⁹² That other socialist states had the right to intervene in Vietnamese domestic affairs

⁸⁷ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 80-81.

⁸⁸ Another change that Palmujoki observes is the CPV's re-adoption of more conventional terms such as national independence, sovereignty, and self-reliance. Since these terms do not fall within the Marxist-Leninist parameters, I choose not to include them. However, it is relevant as a side note because according to Huynh Kim Khanh, besides Marxism-Leninism, nationalism provides another source of justification for the CPV's existence as well as the changing world situation. Along this line of reasoning, wherever Marxism-Leninism could not explain, the CPV substituted nationalistic rhetoric to affirm its ideological credibility and legitimacy by seeing Vietnamese disputes with the Chinese over maritime issues and the Kampuchians as defence against threats to the nation. However, for much of the 1980s, nationalism could only be only a tint in the CPV's foreign policy rhetoric; its move towards orthodox Marxism-Leninism leaves little viability for nationalism to dominate mainstream interpretation.

⁸⁹ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 80.

⁹⁰ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 79-82.

⁹¹ This was affirmed in the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, signed between Moscow and Hanoi in 1978, after the forceful but necessary move to integrate economically as well as after consistent pressure to encourage Vietnam to abide some more political obligations. Historians have debated since if this Treat was a tactical move to secure Moscow's strategic postures in Asia or a theoretical move which sees the interconnectedness between material conditions and political attitudes as a natural development that "[reinforces] the old themes of proletarian internationalism and the struggle of national liberation movements."

⁹² Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 96.

clearly contradicted and threatened the CPV's emphasis on sovereignty, independence, and self-reliance. On the other, the concept, once used by the Soviets to justify its intervention in Czechoslovakia, was now similarly employed by Hanoi to validate its actions in Kampuchea to safeguard Indochina against "imperialists and reactionaries who have great ambitions in Southeast Asia."⁹³ Indeed, the new language — socialist internationalism and "peaceful coexistence" — did give some room to maneuver. Nevertheless, it did not free the Vietnamese from contradiction. Together with "peaceful coexistence" which signified that Vietnam now accepted the existence and actions of imperialist nations, socialist internationalism questioned the validity of the CPV's image as an anti-imperialist and national liberation supporting force. It even exposed its "imperialistic" nature with political affairs in Indochina. From an ideological perspective, criticism from the global audience and the persistence of the "the Kampuchean question [...] despite Hanoi's every attempt to evade it" demonstrated that Vietnamese Marxism-Leninism could no longer buy political support or adapt to the rapidly changing post-War world situation.⁹⁴

Hence, it is evident that the Vietnamese ideological framework, regardless of the concept of internationalism it adopted, could not fit with the changing post-War conditions. Another consequence, Palmujoki observes, is the growing gap between Vietnamese theoretical framework and the actual political environment at play. Of course, this "political environment" applies to the country's economic issues. In contrast to Palmujoki, Elliott lends a similarly excellent observation on the impact of ideological orthodoxy on Vietnamese internal politics by instead focusing more on economic concerns as the centerpiece of Vietnamese socialist moral and values decay.

One of the promises for the post-Vietnam War era was the fundamental transformation of the country into a socialist state. But for the socialism equation to work, it needed not only the complete elimination of the bourgeois class but also for some level of material abundance and well-being to be guaranteed. It seems clear in Elliott's observation that the CPV seemed to focus too much on the first clause and erroneously disregarded the latter. Mai Chi Tho recalled, of the "comprador bourgeoisie" being targeted in the two campaigns designated as X1 and X2 that the CPV implemented immediately after the April victory, there was a "considerable number [of whom] focused purely on 'doing business.'"⁹⁵ Yet, according to Mai Chi Tho, the strict application of this "arbitrary" policy had essentially "[wiped] out the strong points and existing material base" — properties, capitals, and facilities — that would not only neatly satisfy post-War recovery plan but also ironically, socialist

⁹³ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 98.

⁹⁴ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 138.

⁹⁵ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 36-37.

transformation.^{96 97} Gabriel Kolko would not be surprised with the economic chaos in post-War Vietnam when he observes that the entire Vietnamese communist apparatuses, North and South, did not have even the concrete post-War economic plan in mind.⁹⁸ The contrast between the failures of the first two five-year plans that sought to rapidly industrialize Vietnam along Soviet lines and “[the paralysis and total depletion]” of the South’s “entire industrial production” seems like a vivid coincidence.⁹⁹ While those who lived in the South suffered the most from this rapid post-War socialist transformation, North Vietnamese also felt disappointed with the material subsistence conditions during the post-War year.¹⁰⁰

These unfavorable conditions made the population doubt the efficacy of the promised post-War socialist utopia. As Elliott observes, “Even the Northern leadership of the early postwar period has been the subject of revisionist attempts to explain away the failures of ‘socialist transformation’ and exonerate the party.”¹⁰¹ In other words, similar to the CPV’s inability to explain changing world conditions with Marxist-Leninist ideologues, the subtle realizations in Hanoi indicated the inefficacy of Marxist-Leninist style of economic organization. However, early efforts to reform what Northern leadership saw as the “unprincipled cutting of corners” and “undermining [of] socialism,” took some interesting turns.¹⁰² While the conditions of the South — namely, its recent experiences with nonsocialist mode of economic organization and the significant material betterment — would logically point to top officials who were either Southerners or had celled in the South as responsible for reforms,

⁹⁶ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 37.

⁹⁷ Readers should take some cautions when reading Mai Chi Tho’s words. Even though Mai Chi Tho does not refer the ethnicity of those who were allegedly branded as “comprador bourgeoisie,” it was clear given the context that these individuals were ethnic Chinese. Before 1975, although the ethnic Chinese constituted a small proportion of the South Vietnamese total population, they monopolised in almost all aspects of the economy, from wholesale, retail sales, exports, and credit lending. Likewise, they were the one who owned most of the “strong points and existing material base” of South Vietnamese economy. The wholesale attack on the Chinese constituted the so-called “Chinese issue,” which was one of many reasons that historians have argued contributed to the worsening Sino-Vietnamese relations. For a more detailed examination of this issue, see Nicholas Khoo, *Collateral Damages: Sino-Soviet Rivalry and the Termination of the Sino-Vietnamese Alliance* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011). For Mai Chi Tho’s quote, see Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 36-37.

⁹⁸ Gabriel Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975: Winning a War and Losing the Peace,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 25, no. 1 (1995): 8, doi.org/10.1080/00472339580000021.

⁹⁹ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 32.

¹⁰¹ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 38.

¹⁰² Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 34.

supporters for economic changes had various backgrounds. In fact, Premier Pham Van Dong, the highest official of the both the DRV and the post-War government, and Nguyen Van Linh, an ex-Vietcong and the then General Secretary of the CPV, virtually the highest-ranking official in Vietnamese political apparatus, all urged against adopting economic lines as in the North.¹⁰³ These two were not the only ones. In an interesting observation, Dang Phong comments that “Almost all of the people who took the lead in ‘breaking out’ were revolutionary warriors who had defended the nation and the Party, [and] had waded through blood during the Anti-American Resistance.”¹⁰⁴ Here, it is clear from Dang Phong’s words that the general perception equates these “revolutionary warriors” as heroes similar to those in the aforementioned primary textbooks.

The diverse backgrounds indicate that the departure from orthodox Marxism-Leninism had occurred at least before 1975. However, this does not mean that all cadres opposed the CPV’s goal of socialism. On the contrary, the diverse backgrounds demonstrated to the CPV that there existed another way to achieve socialism and made it question whether the conservative option or collectivism had been the most suitable one. In other words, it was essentially a challenge to not only the CPV’s political and economic lines but also its credibility in upholding a subsistence style of socialism. Interestingly, more conservative leaders of the CPV continued to accuse the deviation on the North-South divide. In 1982, for example, Hanoi sent overseers to Ho Chi Minh City to “‘crush the rebellion,’” and in 1986, “Some Hanoi officials saw the South as ‘the source of corruption, political deviation, and many-faceted sabotage’” with some did not shy to even assert that “South Vietnam is in a state of moral secession.”¹⁰⁵

In contrast with Palmujoki and Elliott, Kolko focuses more on fundamental changes that affected Vietnamese socialist morality and values and argues that it was the Party as a whole, not the changing world conditions or individual cadres, that initiated the decay. In other words, the Party was not the victim but the cause of its own troubles. Since its inception, the CPV, like any other Marxist-Leninist party, faced a dilemma between its branding as a mass-mobilization party and its emulation of Leninist theory of democratic centralism, which gave its power to an elite few. However, as Kolko reasons,

¹⁰³ In September 1975, in a reception of Southern cadres, Pham Van Dong said, “You are here to visit places, look, and learn in a discriminating manner. Do not imitate the North — if you force [the South] into the mold of cooperatives [like those in the North] there will be a great outcry.” Nguyen Van Linh, in fact, turned blind eyes to “blatant violations of policy of necessary” to ensure production and internal trades to post-War Saigon were maintained. For quotes, see Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 35, 38.

¹⁰⁴ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 44.

¹⁰⁵ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 45-51.

this dilemma is “far less likely to become a source of crisis” as long as the party could “successfully implement something of the socialist notion of egalitarianism that coexists with organizational hegemony.”¹⁰⁶ Up until the 1975 victory, the Vietnam War *is* that “something.” However, when the War ended, the CPV was left with an emptiness that it could not reconcile with the outpouring optimism and prospects of the mass. Just as problematic in 1975 as in 1945, the pressure to be both the party of the mass and practicing democratic centralism influenced heavily on the characteristics of the CPV’s cadres. According to Kolko, nearly half of the two million Party members in 1990, joined after 1975.¹⁰⁷ The motivation for joining varies; however, it became clear after 1975 that the rapid growth in membership was overwhelmingly attributed to “outright opportunists” who saw the Party as a pass for preferential access to opportunities and social mobility in a supposedly egalitarian society.¹⁰⁸ The CPV was cognizant of this problem but could not ignore these individuals, especially those who joined shortly after the War, for they possessed the skills and flexibility that the regime critically needed.¹⁰⁹

The rapid growth of membership, too, compromised the “quality and social character of the Party’s ranks.”¹¹⁰ A report estimates that by 1991, the majority of the CPV’s members were highly incompetent ideologically and did not even demonstrate their “exemplary vanguard role.”¹¹¹ If by 1990 the Party had already seen such dramatic scale of issues, conditions between 1975 and the eve of *Doi Moi* could only be worse. Quoting a senior leader in 1990, Kolko notes that “thirty to forty per cent of the Party should be purged.”¹¹² Meanwhile, corruption was widespread, partially as the result of subsistence pay, and more likely because of the atmospheres of changing doctrine. As Kolko observes, getting rich becomes the official encouragement and virtues of the Party in 1988, while “the historical origins and consequences of wealth” were completely ignored.¹¹³ Effectively, by the mid-1980s, the CPV name had lost its revolutionary and ideological stance. If the founding socialist morality and values of the CPV was egalitarianism, then the outright devaluation of these principles for the sake of political relevance were a prime showcase of the CPV’s moral downfall.

As Palmujoki argues, ideology is auto-communication—the ability to

¹⁰⁶ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 10.

¹⁰⁷ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 11.

¹⁰⁸ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 11.

¹⁰⁹ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 11.

¹¹⁰ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 11.

¹¹¹ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 12.

¹¹² Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 13.

¹¹³ Kolko, “Vietnam Since 1975,” 24.

communicate embedded ideas without explicit use of terms.¹¹⁴ Hence, it is apparent why the regime and textbook authors refuse to change the narratives: wordings in textbooks remained unchanged between 1975 until at least 1992. This is a vivid attempt to perpetuate the “reality” of the 1975 textbook as long as possible, effectively “being ignorant” to the changing political landscapes. It is, thence, also apparent why the regime and the textbook authors of the 1999 and 2000 publications purged traumatic events from narratives and emphasized high moral figures. On the one hand, by emphasizing “revolution” and including internationalist connotations in textbooks’ narratives, all textbooks, and especially those published in the 1980s, justify the country’s loosening grip on independence, sovereignty, and self-reliance by placing the Vietnam War in a worldwide revolutionary movement. In doing so, they shield their audience from understanding the conflict in some other definitions during the crumbling of and divergence from Vietnamese Marxist-Leninist doctrine. On the other, by removing unpleasant scenes, textbook authors for the 1999 and 2000 publications seek to offer a sanitized version of history, where the sacrifices were subtly acknowledged as worthwhile to the revolution and post-War conditions, despite unfavorable circumstances that would potentially discredit Vietnamese revolutionary, anti-imperialist stance, and the miserable post-War economic conditions. Finally, by emphasizing moral figures, the textbooks not only inculcate their audiences to mirror these figures, but they also serve warn against adopting the perceptions that ordinary citizens adopted. Yet the Party condemned revolutionary warriors who went against the Party’s lines for moral failings.

However, the unambiguous evidence of North-South language adopted even by those who have advocated most to see Vietnam as one nation and the Vietnam War as one between the Vietnamese against the Americans questions the effectiveness and the sincerity of the post-War regime in truly reunifying the country.

Making Sense of the Riches

In previous sections, this paper has examined the textbooks’ attempts to shield their audiences from traumatic events and changing ideological landscapes, both globally and at home. This is not to say the regime fails to provide accurate historical information. On the contrary, the regime depends heavily on its ideological integrity. This deliberate ignorance of changes that appear consistently in all textbooks presents an alternative interpretation of reality that is highly ideological and that embodies an effort to preserve the regime’s credibility, legitimacy, and relevance in an evolving world. This helps

¹¹⁴ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 10-11.

students understand how Vietnamese society came to be. So far, this paper has examined how the regime and textbook authors relate their ideological framework with contemporary events and vice versa. However, one may be tempted to ask, given that history does not only offer a lens to the past but also a way to understand the present, how could the regime and textbook authors justify the contemporary events with the past events? Framed another way, how can the regime and textbook authors establish a sense of historical continuities? This is especially critical when by the 1990s, Vietnam underwent a myriad of social, political, and economic changes that the gap between textbooks' rhetoric and real-life events seems to have grown beyond compromise.

Let us first look at how the pre-1990s and the 2000 textbooks describe the economy during the War. Whereas all textbooks highlight the socialist character of the Vietnamese economy during the first five-year economic plan between 1961 and 1965, especially the cooperative/collective nature, much of the 2000 textbook's rhetoric, which has already been significantly less didactical about the importance of economic development to tackle "poverty [and] backwardness" can be read as attempts to justify the CPV's new approach to the economy. In the 1988 textbook, the authors accentuate that agricultural cooperatives were "consolidated [and] continued to be expanded in scale to transform [existing] cooperatives into the more advanced form," with the established network of irrigation systems and specialized facilities such as seed treatment center "built" by the state to support the cooperatives.¹¹⁵ According to the authors, as a result of these supports, "by the end of 1965, over a thousand agricultural cooperatives have been equipped with machines" and over "seven hundred cooperatives have achieved or exceed the five tons per hectare yield," all of which contributed to a growth of nearly seven per cent and a step closer to establishing new relations of production.¹¹⁶ A similar impetus lays behind the focus on industries, where the 1975 textbook also mentions the variety of heavy industrial complexes as well as those from light industries that produced "eighty-percent [of the total] domestic consumer goods with 12000 different products."¹¹⁷

Students reading these textbooks between 1975 and 1990 would find it easy to identify the similarities between the economic directives during the first five-year plan and one during the post-War years. In April 1978, Hanoi issued a directive that called for vigorous cooperativization of agriculture in southern Vietnam.¹¹⁸ By 1979, nearly two thousand cooperatives were formed in the

¹¹⁵ *History Grade 12* (1988),

¹¹⁶ *History Grade 12* (1988),

¹¹⁷ *History Grade 12* (1975),

¹¹⁸ Communist Party of Vietnam, "Directive of the Politburo on the Consolidation and Promotion of Agricultural Rehabilitation in the South" [Chi thi cua Bo Chinh tri ve Viec Nam vung va Day manh Cong tac Cai tao Nong nghiep o mien Nam], 43-CT/TW, 14

south, along with another two thousand production teams.¹¹⁹ In 1986, cooperatives became the dominant forms of economic organization in Vietnam, the majority of which unsurprisingly concentrated in agriculture and industries.¹²⁰ Though controls were more lenient in 1981 and 1988 to respond to the reduced agricultural productivities, cooperatives remained the primary medium of economic production and transaction in the Vietnamese economy.¹²¹

¹²² By explaining historical precedents of economic collectivization, the 1975 and 1988 textbooks, in particular, do two things. First, they affirm the superiority of collectivization and encourage students to understand that this way of organizing the economy is natural and crucial for post-War reconstruction. Second, they introduce southern students with the socialist way of economic organizations and familiarize them with the CPV's economic socialization policies in the south.

The 2000 textbook follows similar narration motives as those published in 1975 and 1988 in regard to the first five-year plan. However, unlike the pre-

April 1978, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1978* [Van kien Dang: Toan tap — 1978], vol. 39 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2005).

¹¹⁹ Ngo Vinh Long, "The Socialisation of South Vietnam," in *The Third Indochina War: Conflict Between China, Vietnam, and Cambodia, 1972-1979*, ed. Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge (London: Routledge, 2006), 142.

¹²⁰ The Economic Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam [Uy ban Kinh te cua Quoc hoi] and United Nations Development Programme in Vietnam, "The Development of Cooperatives and The Role of Cooperatives in Social Security" [Su Phat trien cua Hop tac xa va Vai tro cua Hop tac xa doi voi An sinh Xa hoi] (Hanoi: Knowledge Press [Nha Xuat ban Tri thuc], 2012), 33-40.

¹²¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Review Report on Agriculture and Food of OECD: Agricultural Policies of Vietnam 2015* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015), 138-139, dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264235151-en.

¹²² The first policy, executed in 1981, only obligated farmers to contribute a predetermined amount of their produces to the cooperatives. The second policy, and the most detrimental to cooperatives, was executed in 1988, where agricultural productions were now transferred to individual farmers, instead of cooperatives; cooperatives now only acted as the middleperson to facilitate transaction and technological supports. See Communist Party of Vietnam, "Directives from the Board of Secretariats on Renovating on Contractual Matters and Expanding 'Product Contracting to Working Teams and Workers' in Agricultural Cooperatives" [Chi thi cua Ban Bi thu: Cai tien Cong tac Khoan, Mo rong 'Khoan San pham den Nhom Lao dong va Nguoi Lao dong' trong Hop tac xa Nong nghiep], 100-CT/TW, 13 January 1981, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1981* [Van kien Dang: Toan tap — 1981], vol. 39 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2005). See also Communist Party of Vietnam, "Directive of the Politburo on Renovating Agricultural Economic Management" [Chi thi cua Bo Chinh tri ve Viac Doi moi Quan ly Kinh te Nong nghiep], 10-NQ/TW, 05 April 1988, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1988-1989* [Van kien Dang: Toan tap — 1988-1989], vol. 46 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2006).

1990 textbooks, the 2000 textbook, while labelling the economy between 1961 and 1965 as centrally planned, refuses to extoll such characteristics in narrations. For example, the authors in the 1975 and 1988 textbooks accentuate, “Our State has set out the primary target for the first five-year plan” with “*intentions* to bring the value of industrial and handicraft outputs up on average seventeen per cent per annum,” “state-run economic sector [...] will gradually enhance its advantages,” and so forth, all to ensure that “socialist relations of production *will more and more* perfect.”¹²³ Yet, details of how the State determined the goals of the economic plan do not appear in the 2000 textbook’s discussions at all, especially in regards to “relations of production,” something in that a proclaimed Marxist-Leninist state would be deeply interested. Similarly, it also focuses less on agricultural cooperatives. Whereas the 1975 and 1988 textbooks describe how cooperatives become more ingrained in the Vietnamese economy, the 2000 textbook assumes the natural presence of this form of economic organization without detailing much about its consolidation and growth. This is most telling when one observes how the authors arrange the description of economic development in the first five-year plan. Irrigation facilities and machinery, and farmers — elements which Marxists would label as “force of production” are mentioned first, before the cooperatives — or in Marxist terminologies, “relations of productions” — are described.¹²⁴

The shifting attitudes towards different components of Marxist analyses of the economy are consistent with the ideological climate of Vietnam on the eves of *Doi Moi*. By the early 1980s, leaderships of the CPV were concerned by local official’s intensifying deviations from the CPV’s economic directives in midst of an economic crisis. The solution to this threat was to reframe how the Party thought about the economy, which involved refitting existing theorization for the new economic conditions and consulting different models from inside and outside the socialist world. Nguyen Van Linh asserts that “it was necessary to solicit investments from capitalists and to help Vietnam get rich,” but those who benefited most from this — what he called as “‘socialist’ bourgeoisie” — would be “held in check by Vietnam’s socialist framework” with their excess cash “invested in production in goods for society.”¹²⁵ Also, according to Elliott, Truong Chinh, then, by the mid-1980s, was the General Secretary of the CPV, [...] subtly reversed his long-standing view that the “relations of production” were more important than the “forces of production,” that is, the right economic organization would produce the best results and the way to increase production was to have tight central planning and agricultural

¹²³ *History Grade 12* (1988), 86-87.

¹²⁴ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 135.

¹²⁵ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 82.

cooperativization.¹²⁶

By describing the first five-year plan with nothing but just a thin label of “planned economy,” the 2000 textbook justifies that the Vietnamese economy was still fundamentally socialist, softening the dramatic shift the economy was experiencing in the early 1990s that were probably surprising and ideologically contradicting to what many students have learnt in lower grades.

A similar impetus explains why the authors of the 2000 textbook adopt new language in their narratives. To compensate for the decreased importance of socialist agricultural, as well as industrial transformations, the most recent textbook introduces another kind of economic activity: commerce. The textbook reads, “In commerce, state-run commercial ventures were prioritized by the State to develop so [they] had dominated the *market*.”¹²⁷ Similarly, the textbook also highlights that to ensure economic development during the first five-year plan, the State “has [made] capital investments to construct the economy”; in agriculture, the State “prioritized *investments* to construct and develop [agricultural facilities]”; and in industries, the State “has prioritized *capital investments* for development.”¹²⁸ Terms such as “market” and “capital investments” are unprecedented in textbook narratives. In Marxist articulation, these lexicons lay far outside the parameters of what socialism should look like and fundamentally challenge the scientific and rational nature of the ideology. In this context, “market” denotes an irrational and unconscious organization of productive activity of all member of society: “the market is the very soil on which bourgeois social relations in their entirety and bourgeois social consciousness arises.”¹²⁹ Meanwhile, “capital investment” — or, “investment” — connotes an expectation of profit in return, or extracting some surplus of values. In fact, these features—the “market” and the “extraction of surplus of values,” along with private ownership of means of production, the advancement of capital, and the dependency of wage labors by the majority of the population—are defining characteristics of capitalism.¹³⁰ The only difference here that sets Vietnamese socialism apart is the State taking over the role of the bourgeoisie or private individuals in a non-planned economy.

It seems apparent that the logic of the new economy since *Doi Moi* is some toleration of the State’s engagement in capitalism. The conclusion drafted by the Politburo in 1986 recognized the existence of a multisector economy,

¹²⁶ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 39.

¹²⁷ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 136.

¹²⁸ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 135.

¹²⁹ *Encyclopedia of Marxism*, s.v., “Market,” last accessed 21 December 2020, www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/m/a.htm#market.

¹³⁰ *Encyclopedia of Marxism*, s.v., “Capitalism,” last accessed 21 December 2020, www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/a.htm#capitalism.

where private, “small commodity-producing economy,” “private capitalist economy” — or petit-bourgeois economy — and “private-public joint venture economy” — or “semi-socialist economy” — as an objective necessity and called for appropriate use of “these economic sectors, for the benefits of socialism.”¹³¹ The meaning of the socialist economy was also redefined, where the socialist market is a conglomeration, “struggle,” “intertwining and complement” between an “organized economy,” or planned economy, and “free market.”¹³² An unpublished resolution of the Politburo in 1986 also called for an abolishment of the subsidy system and demanded all state-run enterprises operate accordingly to the principles of the market.¹³³ By embedding “un-socialist” terms to describe the first five-year planned economy, the authors seek to expose and familiarize the students with the principles of the new Vietnamese economy since *Doi Moi* and create an alternative historical precedent with the ultimate goal being to justify the regime’s changing ideological standpoints.

Comprehending the World

Perhaps the most remarkable change between the pre-1990s and the 2000 textbooks has to do with how the authors emphasize one issue in relations to another. The latter publication devotes a greater proportion of its narratives to topics relating to economic development during the War. Along with using less didactical rhetoric and fewer revolutionary references, as mentioned above, it appears that material well-being is treated equally if not more importantly than military successes in the 2000 textbook. For example, the newest publication in the examined subset dedicates two separate sections to examining economic activities and recovery during Operation Rolling Thunder (1965-1968); the 1988 textbooks, in contrast, touch on the issues very briefly and embed them into the larger discussion of the Americans’ aforementioned military campaign.^{134 135} At

¹³¹ See Communist Party of Vietnam, “Conclusions of the Conference of the Politburo on Some Issues of Economic Standpoints” [Ket luat cua Hoi nghi Bo Chinh tri ve Viec mot so Van de thuoc Quan diem Kinh te], 20 September 1986, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1986*, vol. 47 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2006).

¹³² Communist Party of Vietnam, “Conclusions of the Conference.”

¹³³ See Communist Party of Vietnam, “Resolution of the Politburo on Maintaining the Self-Determining Right to Production and Business of Base Economic Units” [Nghị quyết của Bộ Chính trị và Ban Thường vụ Bộ Chính trị về Bảo đảm Quyền Tự chủ Sản xuất, Kinh doanh của Các Đơn vị Kinh tế Co so], 306-NQ/TW, 8 April 1986, in *Documents of the Party: Complete Set — 1986*, vol. 47 (Hanoi: National Political Press, 2006).

¹³⁴ Compare *History Grade 12* (1988), 134-150, and MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 146-160.

¹³⁵ I use the term Operation Rolling Thunder for easy reference. Operation Rolling Thunder is the title given to a strategic aerial bombardment campaign against the DRV with four main objectives: (1) to boost the morale of the South Vietnamese forces; (2) to

first glance, the new balance between the two domains in the 2000 textbook — the economy and the military — seems contradictory to how the Vietnam War has always been understood in terms of why it was waged: that is, national liberation and socialist construction. However, the new balance is entirely consistent with the CPV's changing political and ideological attitudes at the turn of the century. A look into Vietnamese foreign policies is particularly effective because, since the 1980s, they have become more responsive to new changes.

The crisis in socialist morality and values as mentioned above had placed Vietnam in a political deadlock, for neither proletarian internationalism nor socialist internationalism could provide Vietnam with a consistent and comprehensive answer to the changing world. In either theoretical framework, Vietnam's occupation of Kampuchea seems inevitable and both lead to the prioritization of military security above anything else. Whereas proletarian internationalism justified Vietnam's militant fervors, socialist internationalism validated its intervention in Kampuchea. Within this domain, the international backlash that limited Vietnamese trade options and poor economic situations sufficient clearly cast a warning to Vietnamese leadership. Firstly, in 1986, the Party re-identified its objectives on foreign affairs to "take advantage of favorable international conditions to build socialism and defend the nation and proactively create a stable environment to focus on economic development."¹³⁶ Concerns over national defense and military security persist, which indicates that there had been a considerable imbalance in Vietnamese foreign affairs' objectives. As Le Hong Hiep notes, the 1998 Resolution 13 illuminates that military security has been reduced to a negligible level while it redetermines the goals of Vietnam's foreign policy, which, then, were "to assist the stabilization of the political system and to facilitate the country's economic renovation."¹³⁷ Though, this does not mean military security is not crucial; it does indicate that the textbook no longer assigns as much importance to military concerns as before. Hence, the 2000 textbook's equal focus on economic development and military security is a way to impress upon students that economic policies have historical precedents and that the Vietnam War is equally a military struggle and a socioeconomic struggle. Through the new rhetoric, the 2000 textbook's authors also seek to provide students with enough foundation to help them

force North Vietnamese supports for communist insurgency in South Vietnam; (3) to destroy strategic facilities, such as transportation systems, industrial complexes, and defence bases; and (4) to halt transportation of soldiers and materials to South Vietnam. The Vietnamese, however, call it the First Sabotaging War Against the North (in Vietnamese: Chien tranh Pha hoai mien Bac lan thu Nhat).

¹³⁶ Le Hong Hiep, "Introduction: The Making of Vietnam's Foreign Policy Under *Doi Moi*," in *Vietnam's Foreign Policy under Doi Moi*, ed. Le Hong Hiep and Anton Tsetov (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2018), 9.

¹³⁷ Le Hong Hiep, "Introduction," 9.

familiarize with and justify the CPV's foreign policies. At the same time, they highlight where the primary concerns of the State are located and given that material well-being is more intimately connected with the daily life, the textbook likewise subtly provides exposure and initiates students to internalize and take on these concerns. Hence, the goal would be helping students to understand economic development under *Doi Moi* conditions is also constructing socialism.

In addition to intensifying attention on economic issues, the reduced concentration of military successes also fits with the CPV's awareness in 1989 when the national security situation no longer involved direct military confrontation but "low-intensity warfare and military deterrence" and the so-called "peaceful evolution."¹³⁸ Writing in *Quan doi Nhan dan* in 1989, Nguyen Van Linh argued that in the faces of all these concerns, Vietnam needs a "new thinking about the role of the military," which while recognized "past experiences of 'liberation struggle' was 'precious,'" they were "not relevant to the current circumstances," and "political, economic, and diplomatic factors also [played] a key role in the mission of defending the country."¹³⁹ Similarly, Premier Do Muoi also argued that the military "would need to be sustained at a level 'just enough' to assure Vietnam's defense."¹⁴⁰ The ultimate solution was identified, again, in Resolution 13. In addition to altering the economic-military balance, it also removes socialist-themed worldview, in particular the two internationalisms, and centers "multidirectional foreign-policy orientation" as the primary concept of Vietnam's foreign policy.¹⁴¹ Here, the "multidirectional foreign-policy orientation" is telling because it suggests that previously Vietnam had seen the world as a strong dichotomy between the "us," which consists of Vietnam and its friendly and socialist allies, and the "other," which consists of imperialist, capitalist, and other hostile enemies. Hence, a strong military was required to defend the country against threats. Therefore, because these threats disappear or lessen in the new circumstances, the more assertive militaristic rhetoric is no longer relevant. In this context, the textbook authors justify and set the "right" attitudes in response to the Vietnam's retraction of military forces and revolutionary stance, its reduced global prestige, and its expanding diplomatic ties.

Another way of making sense of the present is by emphasizing Vietnam's diplomatic ties during the War. For example, in the high school textbooks published in 1975 and 1988, the authors assert increasing importance and positive connotations towards the Soviet Union. Whereas the 1975 textbook emphasizes that Vietnam received "significant and effective [amount of] aid

¹³⁸ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 75.

¹³⁹ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 79-80.

¹⁴⁰ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 64.

¹⁴¹ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 62.

from the Soviet Union, China, and the brotherly [socialist] states,” the 1988 textbook drops “China” from the phrase and maintains only “significant and effective [amount of] aid from the Soviet Union *and* the brotherly [socialist] states.”¹⁴² This small but substantial change signifies that the authors seek to affirm that only the Soviet Union should be considered favorable and trustworthy during the Vietnamese revolution. The textbook consolidates the students’ worldview so that the Soviet Union stands at the center and Vietnam orbits in its universe. As mentioned above, when the 1975 and 1988 textbooks were published, the CPV shifted its ideological focus from the broad Marxist-Leninist concept to the more pro-Soviet one. By explaining the intimate ties between Vietnam and the Soviet Union through wartime aids, the pre-1990s textbooks seek to “naturalize” the Soviet-Vietnamese ties, familiarize students with the Treaty as a natural development, and justify Vietnam’s dependency on the Soviet Union.

However, this omission in the 1988 textbook suggests that confirming the ties with one country also means cutting ties with another, at least in the Vietnamese post-War context. A similar impetus drove the textbook’s negative, if not polemical, connotations toward China. Indeed, another way to look at the phrase above is when the textbook authors drop China from the phrase, they also dictate the country as no longer trust- and noteworthy. To provide another example, the authors seem to blame the devastating effect of the Vietnam War on the Chinese military advisors’ inaccurate “advice” to the Vietnamese military. The 1988 textbook reads, “Leaders in China ‘recommended’ us to fight a protracted war.”¹⁴³ According Edward Katzenbach and Gene Hanrahan, the “protracted war” that the textbook authors mocked (by the use of quotation, thus amplifying the insincerity of such recommendation) and criticised stands as the centerpiece of Maoist ideology.¹⁴⁴ Along this line of reasoning, it is apparent that the regime considered China as similarly possessing incorrect ideology. Indeed, since the Sino-Vietnamese disputes, Vietnamese media had been engaging in an “all-out attack against China, which did not calm down until the end of the 1980s.”¹⁴⁵ From that, one can posit this more subtle attack against China as part of the larger, more systematic trend. Similarly, in the 1988 textbook, the compilers include an additional sentence not found in the 1975 publication: “Nixon arrived in Beijing and with those Chinese ruling reactionaries plotted the scheme to destroy Vietnamese revolution.”¹⁴⁶ While the

¹⁴² *History Grade 12* (1975), 95; *History 12* (1988), 152.

¹⁴³ *History Grade 12* (1988), 96.

¹⁴⁴ Edward L. Katzenbach and Gene Z. Hanrahan, “The Revolutionary Strategy of Mao Tse-Tung,” *Political Science Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (September 1955): 331, doi.org/10.2307/2145469.

¹⁴⁵ Palmujoki, *Vietnam and the World*, 78.

¹⁴⁶ *History Grade 12* (1988), 143.

sentence focuses primarily on Nixon, yet given that the CPV has been consistent about the Vietnam War as also an anti-American resistance, describing how the Chinese leaderships cooperated with the Americans is a convenient way to conflate China as counterrevolutionary and partially responsible for the unfavorable outcomes of the War and its aftermath. As such, the textbooks' featuring China's counterrevolutionary policies against Vietnam is a way to expose, albeit limitedly, students to issues of intra-socialist camp relations and help them understand why Vietnam broke ties with China. Authors of the 1975 and 1980s textbooks also prompt students to think that Sino-Vietnamese maritime disputes and 1979 war were schemed by imperialist forces. More importantly, the antagonism presented here resonates a theme not unfamiliar for textbooks' audiences: that Vietnam has always resisted against Chinese domination and annexation. The publications evidently try to establish historical continuities by evoking nationalism. Hence justifying the Vietnam War as a purely nationalistic cause.¹⁴⁷

As one would expect, in the 2000 textbook, this emphasis disappears from the narratives. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp in the late 1980s and early 1990s make it absurd for the 2000 textbook's authors to glorify their past support. The normalization of Sino-Vietnamese diplomatic ties would also make the polemics against China that were used in the pre-1990s textbooks particularly damaging to Vietnam. Xinhua News Agency, for example, reports that by 2003, China was already Vietnam's second largest trading partner.¹⁴⁸ A report compiled by the General Department of Vietnam Customs reveals that up until 2005 (conveniently when the 2000 textbook was replaced by the newer textbooks in the wake of the new curriculum), Vietnamese economy increasingly depended on China: bilateral trade volume amounted to less than a billion in 1991, reached 16.7 billion in 2000 and doubled to over 32 billion dollars in 2005.¹⁴⁹ Clearly, agitating anti-Chinese sentiments, which could have been done effectively through textbooks, proved

¹⁴⁷ In 1979, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam published *The Truth About Vietnam-China Relations in the Past Thirty Years* [Su that ve Quan he Viet Nam – Trung Quoc trong Ba muoi Nam Qua], commonly referred in the 1988 textbook as the *White Book* [Sach trang], that includes several important documents and that, according to the publisher, claims to “expose the reactionary faces of the expansionist Beijing gangs towards [Vietnam] for a long time.” See *The Truth About Vietnam-China Relations in the Past Thirty Years* [Su that ve Quan he Viet Nam – Trung Quoc trong Ba muoi Nam Qua] (Hanoi: The Truth Press [Nha Xuat ban Su that], 1979).

¹⁴⁸ “China-Vietnam Bilateral Relations,” *Xinhua English*, 23 October 2003, english.sina.com/1/2005/1028/51407.html.

¹⁴⁹ See Table 1 and Figure 1, cited from Le Dang Minh, “China-Vietnam Trade Relations: Realities, Issues, and Solutions,” *Van Hien University Journal of Science* 4, no. 3 (November 2016): 20-21, www.vhu.edu.vn/Resources/Docs/SubDomain/qlkh/3%20Le%20Dang%20Minh.pdf.

economically and politically risky for the CPV and the textbook authors to venture in. Hence, the 2000 textbook's failure to mention the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, and China helps students make sense of the post-War diplomatic ties and economic interdependency of Vietnam. Though chapters on the Vietnam War do not express their political attitudes besides the aforementioned details, the next chapter in the 2000 textbook, which examines Vietnam between 1975 and 1979, affirms the country's new look on China. It reads,

China is an intimate neighbor of Vietnam, in the process of revolutionary struggle, the peoples of the two countries had once closely attached with each other and united to assist each other; however, when the Polpot junto had hostile actions against Vietnam, *a number of people* in the Chinese leadership, yet, at that time, agreed and supported [them].¹⁵⁰

The Vietnamese textbook authors only blame specific people instead of every individual of Chinese leadership. An effort to separate the unfavorable elements from the Chinese leadership indicates that the regime seeks to preserve the inherent positive views towards China. In doing so, the 2000 textbook helps students to understand that the normalization of diplomatic relations with China is a necessary step to reconcile the past for the sake of the present economic interests.

Resilience Against the Changes

Indeed, as the previous section suggests, textbook authors, especially those of the 2000 publication, critically engage in shaping and changing the narratives about the Vietnam War so that it facilitates students' understanding of the present events. However, making senses of the present also implies the necessity to convey students to understand why the regime persists, while its comrade states and the socialist camp had crumbled. The question now: how could the CPV justify itself in the new conditions?

Amidst this new changing "present," one point remains relatively constant: the supremacy of the Party-State. In almost any military campaign, the 2000 textbook, as in those previous publications, stresses the Party and the State's correct understanding and identification of the issues as the precursory to success. For example, in discussing Nixon's Vietnamization of the Vietnam War, the textbook stresses, despite some losses in the early years of the resisting campaign, "Following to the Tet wishes at the beginning of 1969 of President Ho Chi Minh [...] and the sacred will that He [Ho Chi Minh] had left behind before passing away, peoples and the armies of the South along with the peoples and the armies of the North exerted and magnified the anti-American resistance

¹⁵⁰ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 184.

and save the country.”¹⁵¹ Here, the Party and the State the 2000 textbook describes played a leadership and, to a certain extent, spiritual role in leading the Vietnam War. Similarly, examining the Easter Offensive in 1972, the textbook describes, “Taking advantage of the enemy loopholes due to misjudgments about the time, the scale, and the directions of our advancement, our armed forces pursued the directive of the Politburo of May 1971 and began strategically and accurately advanced according to the plan of the Central Military Commissar.”¹⁵² ¹⁵³ The fact that the armed forces are described in the 2000 textbook as with the ability to act immediately implies that the Party and the State had foreseen and “accurately” evaluated the situations.

Especially in the realm of the economy, the Party-State is described as having a more active and decisive role in the 2000 textbook. In several paragraphs discussing the first five-year economic plan, the textbook authors choose to phrase that “the State had increased capital investments for the economic construction [...],” or “the State prioritized investment in construction and development of [agricultural facilities],” instead of “the economic was invested with capitals from the State” or like how the 1988 textbook is compiled, “[agricultural facilities] was prioritized to be constructed and developed by the State,” respectively.¹⁵⁴ This subtle change, from the passive voice in the 1988 textbook to a more active voice in the 2000 textbook, does not change the result of the achievement; however, it helps to reorientate the focus from the acts to the actors. This illuminates the role of the Party and the State. It is also useful to compare the way the pre-1990s and the 2000 textbooks describe how the CPV and the State sought to amend the effects of the conflict and to recover and develop the economy. The 1988 textbook reads,

[The unfavorable conditions of the United States in both North and South Vietnam in 1968] created advantageous conditions for the North to further stimulate socialist construction and aided the South. [...] The people of the North had to quickly amend the wounds of War [and], concurrently, make use of peacetime to selflessly labor, advancing [oneself] into the productive and construction front. [...] [And] turning the pain [of Ho Chi Minh’s pass away] into strength, the whole Party, the whole mass vowed to seriously pursue the

¹⁵¹ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 153.

¹⁵² MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 155.

¹⁵³ Easter Offensive was a military campaign by the North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces against the South Vietnamese and American forces in 1972. As Operation Rolling Thunder, I use this term for the sake of convenience in references. The first attack occurred on 30 March, only a few days before Easter, 2 April, and one day before Good Friday, hence, explained the name on the American side. The South Vietnamese, however, called it Red Fiery Summer (in Vietnamese: Mua he Do lua). However, the North Vietnamese termed this campaign as the 1972 Spring – Summer Offensive (in Vietnamese: Chien dich Xuan – He 1972).

¹⁵⁴ Compared *History Grade 12* (1988), 88, and MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 135.

sacred will of President Ho and united tightly around the Party Central Executive Committee.¹⁵⁵

In contrast, the 2000 textbook reads,

In the new situation, the Party and the State prioritized amending the war consequences, [and] recovering and developing the economy. [...] Pursuing the policies of the Party, the State, and the sacred Will of President Ho Chi Minh, by the end of 1969, three large political campaigns had been launched. [...] Responding to the three large political campaigns of the Party and the State, our people of the North exaltedly push for emulation [in various social, political, and economic activities].¹⁵⁶

Already, the repeated term “the Party and the State” indicates that the textbook authors stress their importance in the eyes of the students. However, there are few implications to this rhetoric. A brief comparison between texts that are dedicated to describing military achievements and ones dedicated to outlining economic attainments indicate that the term “the Party and the State” only appears in the latter. From this, the textbook authors likely seek to instill in the students’ perceptions that the CPV and the various economic developments for which it is responsible must be intimately connected. In other words, one can see through the 2000 textbook that the Party increasingly depends on economic performance to define itself. According to another article by Le Hong Hiep, the textbook’s rhetoric is consistent with what the author terms as “performance-based legitimacy.” As described above, the inability of Marxist-Leninist to explain the post-War situations made the CPV looked incapable and politically irrelevant by the late 1980s. Furthermore, as Le Hong Hiep argues, the end of the Vietnam War on the one hand, and the outbreak of the Sino-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict on the other, both exhausted and discredited the CPV’s nationalist stance and “historical mission” of defending the country’s sovereignty.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, as the author points out, “socio-economic performance emerged as the only feasible legitimation mode for the CPV.”¹⁵⁸ As such, the new emphasis is an essential move to save the regime’s legitimacy and sustain its survival. The 2000 textbook, therefore, becomes a means to propagate the legitimacy of the regime and justify its prolonged position in power even after the fall of the socialist camp.

Moreover, all textbooks stress the need for the proletarian Party leadership by implying that the lack of working-class and the CPV’s leadership

¹⁵⁵ *History Grade 12* (1988), 141-142.

¹⁵⁶ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 156-157.

¹⁵⁷ Le Hong Hiep, “Performance-based Legitimacy: The Case of the Communist Party of Vietnam and *Doi Moi*,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 34, no. 2 (2012), 156, www.jstor.org/stable/41756339.

¹⁵⁸ Le Hong Hiep, “Performance-based Legitimacy,” 158.

would lead to Vietnam losing its sovereignty and becoming susceptible to the scheme of imperialist forces. The 2000 textbook, in particular, argues that the “overarching factor [to Vietnamese victory against the Americans] is the leadership of the Worker’s Party of Vietnam — *the vanguard team of the working class of Vietnam* [my emphasis].”¹⁵⁹ This reinforced the idea that the CPV plays a critical role in the success of Vietnamese revolution, which is the message the Truong Chinh gave out in his speech in 1986.¹⁶⁰ However, this emphasis had a more pragmatic undertone. Indeed, when the 2000 textbook was first published in 1992, the rather totalitarian control over both the military and economic spheres indicates the CPV’s fear of other looming threats: pluralism and economism. While the CPV in the mid-1980s did allow certain conversations about political reforms and liberalization to be made, the collapse of all socialist regimes in Eastern Europe proved a horror to the Vietnamese. As Bui Tin claims in his private writings, already in 1990, the CPV had determined that “the collapse of the socialist countries in Eastern Europe was due to plots to overthrow them by imperialism and the reactionary gangs inside and outside those countries, of the CIA and the Vatican.”¹⁶¹ Similarly, as Nguyen Van Linh recalled in 2005, the poor economy allowed the emergence of “rightist opportunist ideology” that claimed “‘socialist’ and ‘capitalist’ did not make any difference for commerce [...] it was all right as long as production increased and the livelihood of the people was improved.”¹⁶² Along this line of reasoning, the appearance of the non-CPV and opposing forces proved dangerous to the regime’s legitimacy. Logically, its appearance in the 2000 textbook was a way to reinforce the CPV’s power by exposing students to only the CPV and its messages and shield them from “reactionary” or foreign ideas.

Unfortunately, the centrality of the CPV also meant that other forces once integral to the conflict would have to be purged, the most prominent one being the NLF. The 2000 textbook fails to clarify that many military campaigns were planned and waged entirely by the Vietcong forces. For example, in the Easter Offensive in 1972, whereas the 1988 textbook reads, “The Liberation Army, with coordination of local armed force and the mass political force, had advanced against the enemy on three main forces,” the 2000 textbook only denotes, “*Our* armed force advanced with strong intensity [and] with large scale, [and] in a short time penetrated the three strongest defensive fronts of the

¹⁵⁹ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 180.

¹⁶⁰ Truong Chinh emphasised, “From the realities and practices of revolutionary [works] in the past few years, we [the Party] drew out [that] we need to construct the Party whose political mission is equivalent to a ruling party that leads the people to conduct a socialist revolution.” See Truong Chinh, “Political Report,” 712.

¹⁶¹ Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 92.

¹⁶² Elliott, *Changing Worlds*, 67, 82.

enemy.”¹⁶³ This narrative clearly conflates the North Vietnamese forces and the NLF. In 1986, a group of veterans of the communist movement in southern Vietnam formed an independent Club of Former Resistance Fighters.¹⁶⁴ As Carlyle Thayer notes, “Its leadership comprised several notable high-ranking southern party and military figures.”¹⁶⁵ While the initial goal was to address the poor socioeconomic conditions faced by many veterans in the post-War year in 1986, the group became overtly political, attracted larger audience — many were party and army veterans —, and began to petition to challenge the CPV’s “mono-organizational socialism.”¹⁶⁶ It is possible that because of this, the NLF was distrusted. Thus, given the high political vigilance that the CPV vowed after 1986, it was more convenient to leave the NLF out altogether. Yet, it is also possible that this conflated narrative in the 2000 textbook was meant to reinforce students’ belief that the CPV was committed to genuine reconciliation and reunification. The 2000 textbook is a prime example of these concerns.

From North-South to north-south to Vietnam

Guichard argued that the contents of history textbooks will make or break the reconciliation process of any nation. Indeed, beneath the veneer of the Vietnam War that is free from personal and communal trauma, all textbooks, and especially those published in the year 2000, must deal with another kind of painful experiences: the national trauma of humiliation. It is tempting to immediately limit the term “national trauma” with respect to only the present-day unified Vietnam since the division between the two regions/ex-political entities had technically been amended. However, Anderson’s concept of the “nation” as an “imagined political community” suggests that one should also find the political line that divides the communities. The North-South (or north-south) mentality illuminates many painful experiences of national humiliation unique to the populace in each region/ex-political entity.

Whether it be in North or South or unified Vietnam, the conflict entails the same repercussions. Writing about the traumas in the United States, Arthur G. Neal distinguishes collective national trauma from personal trauma in that the former “involves sufficient damage to the social system that discourse throughout the nation is directed toward the repair work that needs to be done.”¹⁶⁷ From this analysis, when the “integrity of the social order” and “shared

¹⁶³ Compared *History Grade 12* (1988), 138, and MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 155.

¹⁶⁴ Carlyle Thayer, “Political Legitimacy in Vietnam: Challenge and Response,” *Politics & Policy* 38, no. 3 (June 2010): 428, doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2010.00242.x.

¹⁶⁵ Thayer, “Political Legitimacy,” 428.

¹⁶⁶ Thayer, “Political Legitimacy,” 428-429.

¹⁶⁷ Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 5.

values” are threatened, nations are compelled to “repair” the trauma and the wounds that it causes.¹⁶⁸ Even though textbooks seem indifferent to the personal and collective trauma that the soldiers and civilians experienced during the War, they directly confront the collective national trauma of being humiliated. But the question here is not *what* humiliation the textbooks deal with, but *whose* humiliation the textbooks tackle. As described throughout this paper, the textbooks promote nationalism by emphasizing that the War was fought between Vietnamese *and* the Americans—not between the two Vietnams—by portraying those fighting against the South Vietnamese regime and the Americans as heroes, and by highlighting the Vietnamese victory over the enemy. Thus, evoking the sense of patriotism that counter the collective trauma of partition. This narrative fits with the rhetoric of the unified Vietnam, where the trauma identified would be the painful experiences of the prolonged *inability* to reconcile.

Similarly, from a regional perspective, the textbooks promote ideological integrity by liberally incorporating Marxist-Leninist terms in their narratives, even in purely non-socialist and non-Marxist-Leninist settings and by describing war heroes with terminologies of Ho Chi Minh morality to counter the ideological defeat in the post-War year. In the 2000 textbook, Ho Chi Minh morality becomes more prominent in the narratives and is more associated with economic issues. Discussing North Vietnamese economy activities during Operation Rolling Thunder, the 2000 textbook’s authors emphasize, “In fighting and production, anti-American and save-the-country patriotic emulation movements intensified, demonstrating the lucent verity: ‘Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.’”¹⁶⁹ The narratives then continue, “Our military and people of the North clearly show the strength of a nation with a rich *patriotic* tradition, that loves socialism; clearly show the *diligent labor spirit*, the *brave* fighting spirit, and the revolutionary heroism.”¹⁷⁰ Of course, it is not difficult to understand why. Ho Chi Minh’s morality and Thoughts, according to official claims, are,

[Comprehensive] and profound [systems] of views on the fundamental issues of the Vietnamese revolution, [and] the result of the inheritance and development of fine [Vietnamese] *traditional* values of the nation and the quintessence of human culture [and] the application and creative development of *Marxism-Leninism* in Vietnam’s specific conditions.¹⁷¹

In essence, the balance between nationalist ideals and Marxist-Leninist

¹⁶⁸ Neal, *National Trauma*, 5.

¹⁶⁹ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 148.

¹⁷⁰ MOET, *History Grade 12* (2000), 148-149.

¹⁷¹ Van Thi Thanh Mai, “The Values of Ho Chi Minh Thoughts Are Undeniable!” [Gia tri tu tuong Ho Chi Minh La Khong the Phu nhan!], *Propaganda* [Tuyen giao], last

principles make Ho Chi Minh morality and Thoughts useful tools for the CPV in the changing tides of global conditions. Indeed, the CPV officially extolled Ho Chi Minh morality and Thoughts in the early 1990s when many reforms initiated by the CPV removed much of the socialist contents in actions.¹⁷² In other words, they provide the CPV with nothing but the Marxist-Leninist brand name that the Party desperately needed to continue to justify its existence while also delivering the nationalism the CPV increasingly relied upon.

Nevertheless, while the textbooks promote economic development and elucidate the CPV's reorientation to material well-being by throwing in non-Marxist terms, these promotions aimed only to justify the collectivization and cooperativization of the economy in the South after the War ended. Little has been done to recognize the material well-being confiscated and destroyed in the "arbitrary" socialization policies in the South during the post-War year or the deaths of many South Vietnamese due to confrontation between the two sides and of South Vietnamese soldiers who served the Saigon regime. In this way, textbooks leave the humiliation of the South/south Vietnamese relatively untouched.

Nevertheless, examining the complex psychological and cultural responses to defeat, Wolfgang Schivelbusch argues that nations react to national traumas in phases. They go from blaming and abdicating responsibilities to the losing authorities, attributing the enemy as morally inferior while claiming spiritual morality on the losing self, learning from the winner to denying defeat and awaiting for future revenge and hopeful vision of renewal.¹⁷³ The textbooks' representation of the Vietnam War addresses each of these stages. For the national humiliation of the North Vietnamese, they portray the Vietnamese, equipped with Marxist-Leninist and Ho Chi Minh moral ideals, as morally superior to the South Vietnamese and the Americans, using insulting terms in Marxist-Leninist frameworks such as "imperialist" or "neocolonialist" to denigrate the enemy, enraged at the moral falling of South Vietnamese society, and looking toward the CPV for guidance to recover themselves from unrevolutionary actions and avenge the defeats that, at any time, would result in success. For unified Vietnam, the new post-War regime's adoption of the market economy and the South's twelve-year education system, the "rebellious" act of several former southern resistance fighters in the mid-1980s, and the mass exodus of refugees during the 1980s demonstrate the inability of the CPV to coercively remove the social, political, and cultural influence and failure to reconcile with many former South Vietnam's populace. Reciprocally, for the

modified 9 April 2020, tuyengiao.vn/bao-ve-nen-tang-tu-tuong-cua-dang/gia-tri-tu-tuong-ho-chi-minh-la-khong-the-phu-nhan-127447.

¹⁷² Le Hong Hiep, "Performance-based Legitimacy," 157.

¹⁷³ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 10-35.

South Vietnamese, addressing defeat culminates in the revival of its material wealth since the beginning of *Doi Moi*.

Such implications lead to a conflicting legacy of the War. While the textbooks seek to incorporate national trauma into the trajectory of historical development by addressing these stages, the conflict could not result in a renewal stage and a propellant to its vision of an ideal socialist future but allowed many practices in the former South to interrogate who had *really* won the War. By addressing these stages, the textbooks connect the national trauma of humiliation in the past with post-War realities and use the history of the Vietnam War to help all heal and move beyond the painful memories of the conflict.

Conclusion

This essay hopes to provide insight into how the Vietnamese mainlanders perceive the Vietnam War as a counterweight to the Western gaze of the conflict. As the process of delving deeply into the pages of Vietnamese history textbooks of different eras and of different grade level drags on, this paper also seeks to provide some insight on the childhood experiences of a Vietnamese student through the most often overlooked aspect in the lives of a citizen in a communist regime: education.

Indeed, while Western historians often look at the Vietnam War as a conflict between the two Vietnams, looking through the narratives, textbook authors see the Vietnam war as a national liberation war that operates strictly on the Vietnamese-versus-Americans paradigm. The Vietnamese authority also sees the Vietnam War as an anti-(neo)-colonial war with roots from colonial past and a part of the global socialist revolution. Indeed, through a conscious choice of terminologies and formulated narratives, the textbook authors inculcate Marxist-Leninist and communist ideology.

On the other hand, it is a common perception from the Western point of view that the socialist childhood “often appeared as ideological rigid, politically controlled, and therefore entirely homogenous.”¹⁷⁴ However, as the authors warn in the introductory chapter of the *History Grade 6* textbook, “[While] learning [history] and talking of the past, [one] should not mechanically imitate the past and instead, must apply it appropriately with the requirements of the present and

¹⁷⁴ Nelli Piattoeva, Iveta Silova, and Zsuzsa Millei, “Remembering Childhood, Rewriting (Post)Socialist Lives,” in *Childhood and Schooling in Post(Socialist Societies: Memories of Everyday Life*, ed. Nelli Piattoeva, Iveta Silova, and Zsuzsa Millei (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3; MOET, *History Grade 6* [Lich su Lop 6], 14th reprint, ed. Nguyen Kien and Nguyen Cao Luy (Ho Chi Minh City: Education Press, 2001), 4.

the vision of the future.”¹⁷⁵ Indeed, it would be bad practice to disregard the complexity of the history textbooks used during the post-War era to see the authors’ efforts of coercively feeding Marxist-Leninist and nationalist ideology into the students’ mind as their sole goal. The aims of the authors and the regime are more varied and complicated than that. Besides ideology, the textbooks also teach students about Vietnamese history and the post-*Doi Moi* textbook, in particular, prioritizes education over indoctrination by requesting students to interrogate historical information. The authors also explain the current affairs by adopting terminologies of the new era and justify contemporary policies by drawing (and in many ways, re-creating) parallel historical precedents. The narratives also subsume personal traumas for the sake of reconciliation yet confront the national traumas head-on and engage in a cathartic repair work through stages of defeat to envision a better future communist society.

Looking at the proposition given by the author of *History Grade 6*, one can also infer that the textbooks’ narratives value diverse topics and stream of thoughts differently and “appropriately with the requirements of the present.” Whereas textbooks circulated within years after the War overemphasize the revolutionary, communist, and nationalist spirits, that aim dwindles the more one approaches the turn of the century. Emphasizing material well-being and deemphasizing military successes in the 2000 textbook, for example, is a sign that the authors fit the narratives to the *Doi Moi* era. And in a time of crisis, textbook authors try to shield students away from uncertainty and immoral gestures.

Most of all, textbooks are legitimizing tools. High-tide revolutionary spirits in the immediate aftermath of the post-War year present a powerful energy to harness for supports as well as to maintain for the greater socialist political project; hence, the authors incorporate these elements into their narratives. They needed South Vietnamese students to be loyal to the new post-War regime. The socialist camp also showed signs of distress in the late 1980s, which meant strengthening the Marxist-Leninist historical viewpoint. When the socialist order finally collapsed and prosperity became more important than revolutionary gestures, an economic-centered rhetoric was utilized to demonstrate and justify the regime’s existence.

This paper also introduces the concept of “political socialization.” As one observes, the intricate aims of the authors suggest that while ideological indoctrination is important, formulating a common history through a set “proven truth” that can be corroborated with personal memories so students can perceive as part of one “imagined community” is essential. Thus, no matter how indoctrinating the textbooks’ rhetoric might seem to an outside reader, the main aim of history textbooks is, after all, to teach students about real historical events and ensure that students can participate in a nation whose shared memory

is the Vietnam War. In this sense, political socialization, forces students to “socialize,” that is to familiarize themselves with the society and the structure within which they belong. To do so, textbooks require students to link the Vietnam War to current affairs — from Vietnamese posture in Indochina to the conflict with China and the new-found prosperity after *Doi Moi*. On the other hand, political socialization also involves students in the collective emotion of pain and trauma. Such understanding is only possible when the national trauma is more important than the personal trauma subsumed, though not all memories and traumas are treated equally.

Similarly, one can see that the strategies that textbook authors adopted to introduce various ideologies are not at all different from those adopted by other countries. The fact that Neal’s, Guichard’s, Schivelbusch’s and many more scholars’ theories about historical memory play out in Vietnamese history textbooks confirm that the CPV’s approach to national history, especially a defining and highly controversial chapter in Vietnamese history such as the Vietnam War, is hardly the exception. One can expand this observation to argue that the CPV’s strategies of ideological promotion are neither unique to Vietnam nor to the CPV. As Foster and Crawford argue, “the manipulation of national histories [is] not confined to fledgling nations or to one-party totalitarian states.”¹⁷⁶ And, just as how the West gazes upon the socialist education experiences as “rigid,” “controlled,” and “homogenous,” a similar force is playing out in Western history curriculum. Whereas the socialist education is perceived in this way because it is *socialist*, one must wonder whether history education in the West is more, “rigid,” “controlled,” and “homogenous” simply because the ideology it attempts to inculcate is even harder to detect.

In a few years’ time, Vietnam will again overhaul its aging curriculum (the last update was in 2005). Unlike previous curriculum, the regime now only dictates very briefly what the contents of history will be, and private authors are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the writing process. A few years’ time also marks nearly forty years since the country embraced the market economy and other things that an orthodox Vietnamese Marxist-Leninist would decry as capitalist, and almost half a century since the Vietnam War ended. It will be interesting to see how the conflict evolves in the narratives. Will the orthodox Marxist-Leninist doctrine once again dominate the narratives of the textbook? Will nationalism persist, in midst of increasing hostile geopolitical conditions? Or will the materialistic tone become mainstream when the country envisions itself as a prosperous nation in the ten-year time? No matter what, one thing is clear: ideology will still be the force that drives education since even the most ideological textbooks still aim to teach history, current events and how to grapple historical memories.

¹⁷⁶ Foster and Crawford, ed., *What Shall We Tell the Children?*, 7.

West Point.
The United States Military Academy