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Letter from the Editors

The Spring 2023 edition of the *Undergraduate Journal of History* is now available, and our team is thrilled to share it with readers. We take pride in offering a platform for undergraduate students to showcase their historical research and encourage open discussions, intellectual debates, and curiosity. Our gratitude goes to the six authors who contributed to this volume and to the faculty and graduate student peer reviewers who made it possible. This latest issue covers various periods and diverse topics to illuminate lesser-known stories and provide fresh historical perspectives. Our undergraduate editors extend a warm welcome to both new and returning readers.

We start this issue with Olivia Bauer's article on Queen Elizabeth I and an examination of her diplomatic relationships with the leaders of the Sa'adian Sultanate of Morocco, the Ottoman Empire, and Safavid Persia, which allowed her to establish trading companies and expand Britain's empire. While the history of English foreign policy towards the Islamic world has often been associated with exploitative enterprises and violent warfare, the author argues that Elizabeth I's relationships with Muslim rulers were founded on diplomatic and peaceful means and explored the politics, gender, and religious factors that contributed to this diplomatic success.

Adrian Hammer's article, "Manufacturing Murder," provides a nuanced examination of the evolution of mass murder methods from 1933 to 1945, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of what happened, why it happened, and who it happened to, all to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future. Hammer discussed the significance of memorializing the severity of such atrocity. "The linear teaching of the history of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust," Hammer writes, "fails to fully capture the extent of the crimes committed and the deranged mindset of those responsible."

Victoria Korotchenko's essay explores the role of children during the French Revolution and how they actively participated in the events of the time, including joining mobs, petitioning legislators, and fighting in wars. Korotchenko writes that, while most scholarship focuses on the perspectives of grown men and women who participated in the French Revolution, "the sweeping changes, violence, and warfare impacted those who had no choice but to grow up during this tumultuous decade." This essay highlights children's curiosity and active nature during this unstable time.

Alyssa Medin's article deciphering Sor Juana as a "proto-feminist figure" in history. Medin examines three questions related to Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz's work: whether her work was published without her consent, was submissive or subversive, and if it can be considered "proto-feminist theology." Medin categorizes Sor Juana's contributions to theology into three areas: a promotion of intellectual pursuits

for women theologians, an aesthetic theological claim, and a pneumatological argument for deepening personal relationships with God through the Spirit.

O’Gorman’s work focuses on the Christian religion and military upheavals in late medieval Europe. He argues that losing Christian positions in the Middle East after the Fall of Acre in 1290 led military orders to reevaluate their identities. Many returned to their non-militaristic origins or expanded their crusading ideals into new regions. By comparing the founding stories and rules of military orders with their actions after 1290, Gorman demonstrated how the rules of military orders, including the Teutonic and Hospitaller Orders, also emphasized their hospital care in addition to their military actions.

Susan Samardjian retrospects upon how the post-war Vietnamese regime under communism in 1975 faced setbacks that disrupted both the nation’s stability and that of neighboring countries concludes our issue. Samardjian argued these setbacks contributed to an already deteriorating economy and formed the communist leaders to reevaluate their attitude toward their neighbors. In response, the communist government implemented domestic and foreign policy reforms to encourage bilateral trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and eventually normalized relations with the US, which had imposed sanctions on Vietnam, leading to economic investment opportunities.

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**Conditions for Successful Relations:
Elizabeth I's Foreign Policy Towards Muslim Rulers**

*Olivia Bauer*¹

The history of English relations with Muslim states is dominated by scholarship on the British East India Company and exploitation. However, the foundation of this pernicious relationship is lesser known. This paper expands on the existing literature exploring Queen Elizabeth I's relationships with Muslim rulers by focusing on the contexts of Safavid Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Sa'adian Sultanate in Morocco by considering the motivations of their respective rulers. Elizabeth I famously chartered the British East India Company, defended England successfully against the Spanish, reinstated and fortified Protestantism in England, and created a strong foundation for England to become a global trading superpower. The companies she chartered also included the Levant Company in the Ottoman Empire, the Barbary Company in Morocco, and the Muscovy Company in Russia (which traveled through and traded with Persia to a limited extent), all of which offer a different view of Britain's economic relationship with the Islamic world. While the East India Company represented British domination, "the Levant Company never seriously considered confronting Ottoman rule."² In this initial economic relationship, British diplomats and merchants defied Ottoman authority. Additionally, the creation of the Barbary Company marked the beginning of an involved relationship between England and the Sa'adian Sultanate which produced crucial economic and political benefits for England.³ Elizabeth I's diplomatic relationships with Muslim rulers during her reign were vital to achieving these ends. Productive relations between Elizabeth I and Muslim rulers were possible due to the Spanish threat to England, Elizabeth's style of foreign policy and use of gender norms, and coinciding political interests.

To explain these relationships and the factors that facilitated them, this paper begins by explaining the religious context of sixteenth-century England. The following passage explores the tension between Spain and England and the requirements that this conflict created for Elizabeth I. The following section explains the characteristics of Elizabethan foreign policy and how these features facilitated and hindered close political and successful economic relationships with Muslim states. Once the context has been established, this paper will compare three cases of Elizabeth I's relations with Muslim rulers: Shah Tahmasp of Safavid Persia, Sultan Murad III of the Ottoman Empire, and Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur of the Sa'adian Sultanate in present-day Morocco. These cases represent three

¹ Olivia Bauer graduated from the University of Georgia in 2022 with degrees in History and International Affairs. Her historical interests lie at the cross-section of these two disciplines.

² James Mather, "The Turkey Merchants." *History Today*, 61, no 5 (2011): p. 28.

³ Mather, "The Turkey Merchants," p. 32.

diverging interests of different Muslim rulers at the time. Shah Tahmasp was the first Muslim ruler Elizabeth attempted to build relations with, and her initial failure illustrates important lessons she implemented going forward. The case of Sultan Murad III and his court presents a much more successful case in which Elizabeth could leverage their shared disdain for Catholicism to curry favor. She also capitalized on traditional gender norms, which stipulated that powerful women in the Ottoman court could only correspond with other women, giving Elizabeth another avenue of influence. Elizabeth's relationship with Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur demonstrates the culmination of her endeavors with non-Christian rulers. She exhibited considerable savviness, but al-Mansur's ambition and Elizabeth's caution prevented their relationship from reaching its potential.

Protestantism in England

In 1570, Pope Pius V ex-communicated Elizabeth I for heresy and the persecution of Catholics in England.⁴ In his papal bull published on February 25, 1570, Pius V wrote that "we... declare the aforesaid Elizabeth to be a heretic and favourer of heretics, and her adherents in the matters aforesaid to have incurred the sentence of ex-communication and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ."⁵ This entailed limited commercial access to ports and cities in Catholic Europe, so Elizabeth began to feel domestic pressure to bypass Spanish and Venetian middlemen to trade directly with non-European states.⁶ Official association with the Ottomans was prohibited under Papal decree, but a relationship with the Ottoman Empire and other Muslim nations was now necessary.⁷ Before ex-communication, she had tried not to disrupt Catholic interests in the East. However, the constraints placed on English merchants and the success of initial ventures in Russia, Persia, and Morocco before 1570 pushed her to take a more anti-Catholic stance.⁸ Elizabeth launched expeditions that reached as far east as China. She became more successful than any other European monarch in widening her diplomatic network, expanding geopolitical influence, and developing commercial opportunities.⁹

Before Elizabeth's rule, English people on their remote island viewed Muslims through the lens of archaic stories and images of holy wars. However, Elizabeth could negotiate with Muslim rulers despite their religious differences partly because of commonalities between Protestantism and Islam.¹⁰ The primary similarity was mutual disdain for Catholics. Muslim leaders could use the division within

⁴ Jerry Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, (New York: Viking, 2016), p. 3.

⁵ Papal Encyclicals, "Regnans in Excelsis."

⁶ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 3.

⁷ Matthew Dimmock, *Cultural Encounters*, (Cambridge: 2005), p. 43.

⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 61.

⁹ Carlos Bajetta, Guillaume Coatalen, and Jonathon Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 211.

¹⁰ The Crusades took place centuries before Elizabeth I's rule with European military expeditions that occurred in the 11th-13th centuries.

Christian Europe to their advantage and further weaken the continent. Elizabeth was able to utilize this to achieve commercial benefits and strengthen her kingdom's economic and military base. Regarding beliefs and practices, Anglican Protestantism was founded on equality and asceticism, with an aversion to Catholic iconography, opulence, and hierarchy. These ideas align with Islamic ideas about equality and iconography more closely than Catholic beliefs. The Quran outlines absolute equality among men, and at Islam's inception, Muslims removed idols from the Kaaba in Mecca, giving iconoclasm great symbolic value. Additionally, Elizabeth could depict Protestantism as strictly monotheistic, like Islam, in contrast to Catholicism and its many saints.¹¹ Elizabeth could appeal to these shared values in her diplomatic exchanges successfully.

Competition with Spain

At the same time, Spain had become massively wealthy from its incoming flow of silver from colonies in the Americas.¹² Spanish imperial power and wealth forced Elizabeth to search for commercial opportunities abroad to avoid being overpowered.¹³ Spanish dominance was especially threatening to England because of its geographical proximity and King Philip II's Catholic zeal.¹⁴ After Elizabeth refused the French Duke of Anjou's marriage proposal, tensions escalated between England and Catholic Europe and increased England's need for allies.¹⁵

English competition with Spain motivated Anglo-Ottoman relations.¹⁶ Spain's commercial success helped them "in their holy wars against the enemies of Roman Catholicism—be they Protestant or Muslim."¹⁷ Spain was part of the European league, engaging the Ottoman Empire in war from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. It provided other countries with some protection from the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.¹⁸ Still, the Mediterranean belonged to the Ottomans, who regularly ravaged trade routes and coasts in Western Mediterranean, so commercial success depended on trade deals with them.¹⁹ To keep pace with the vast wealth Spain had produced in the past six decades, as well as the colonial and commercial ventures of its other neighbors, England had to conduct exploration,

¹¹ Bernadette Andrea, *The Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World in Early Modern British Literature and Culture*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), p. 45.

¹² Gerald Maclean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1588-1713*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 50.

¹³ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 50.

¹⁴ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. 189.

¹⁵ Nabil Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 no 1 (2008): p. 59.

¹⁶ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 77.

¹⁷ Susan Ronald, *Heretic Queen*, (London: Lume Books, 2011), p. 125.

¹⁸ Ronald, *The Heretic Queen*, p. 54.

¹⁹ David Quinn and A.N. Ryan, *England's Sea Empire*, (Oxford: Routledge, 1983), p. 92.

construct alliances, and create new commercial ties of its own, prompting relations with the Ottomans.²⁰ The Ottoman threat gave Philip II leverage in Rome as a justification for a crusade against Jews, Moors, Turks, and breakaway sects of Christianity, including the English church.²¹ Additionally, England exported war-related materials such as tin, lead, and strong cloth used for uniforms to the Ottoman Empire, inciting Catholic hostility.²²

The military threat of Spain also motivated Elizabeth to ally with Morocco. This alliance would be geographically important, as Morocco neighbored Spain to the south, but additionally, Moroccan military and economic prowess would benefit English defense. When Philip II annexed Portugal, the Portuguese Prince Don Antonio fled to England, and Elizabeth's need for a Moroccan alliance increased. Al-Fishtali, al-Mansur's court scribe, wrote, "she [Elizabeth I] rolled up her sleeves to help him [Don Antonio]. Nevertheless, she realized that she could only rebuild what had been destroyed, and repair what had been damaged, with the help of the Prince of the Faithful, al-Mansur, who extended his support from across the sea."²³ In England, Lord Burghley, one of the chief advisors to Elizabeth, voiced that an alliance with Morocco would "serve your Majesty."²⁴ Al-Mansur also needed an ally because he was threatened by Spain to the North, in addition to the Ottomans to the East. Murad III intimidated al-Mansur in the same way that Philip II intimidated Elizabeth.²⁵ Apprehension over Spain's growing military power spurred an English commercial and military alliance with Morocco and the Ottoman Empire.²⁶

Philip II was known as "the most Christian king," and his devout Catholicism drove him to oppose Protestant and Muslim expansion fiercely. However, his relations with non-Western rulers were much less successful than Elizabeth's. He sent peaceful diplomatic missions to China and Japan in the early 1580s, but his relations with Near Eastern Muslim kingdoms were limited to conflict.²⁷ Elizabeth's lack of Catholic devotion and mind for diplomacy gave her an advantage in the search for foreign alliances but also left England vulnerable to security threats from Spain.

Elizabeth's Foreign Policy

Elizabeth was more interested in diplomatic and commercial ties for fortification than territorial or ideological expansion throughout her reign. She was prudent with her military decisions, tending to act

²⁰ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson. *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence*, pp. 209-212.

²¹ Ronald, *Heretic Queen*, p. 56.

²² Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

²³ Abu Faris 'Abd al-Aziz al-Fishtali, *Manabil al-safa'*, (Rabat, 1972), p. 101.

²⁴ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes." p. 59.

²⁵ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 59.

²⁶ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 50.

²⁷ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson. *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence*, pp. 209-212.

more defensively than offensively. This was in contrast to leaders such as Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur, who had ambitions to expand his kingdom and colonize the new world. Elizabeth was only interested in defeating Spain in the European theater.²⁸ Unlike al-Mansur, she peacefully inherited her kingdom, never left her island during her reign, and did not aggressively pursue empire.²⁹

Despite lacking military fervor, she expanded the power and influence of her kingdom diplomatically and economically. England's relationship with Spain and Catholic states deteriorated during her rule. However, she initiated relations with the Tsar of Russia, the Sultan of Morocco, the Ottoman Sultan, the Shah of Persia, the Ming Emperor of China, and the Mughal Emperor. Her father, King Henry VIII, had stated that "this realm of England is an Empire." However, he intended to claim religious dominion over this land and authority, which superseded the Pope.³⁰ Elizabeth laid the groundwork for the era of British expansionism, although initially motivated by national defense.³¹ She became the first English monarch to pursue long-term diplomatic relationships with non-Christian rulers through strategic epistolary communications.³² She communicated intimately and personally in her letters to nearby European monarchs, such as James VI of Scotland and Henry IV of France: to appeal to the idea of European family ties, she referred to them as "brother," "sister," or "cousin."

Conversely, in her letters to Muslim rulers, she employed the rhetorical tradition of bestowing high titles upon recipients at the beginning of letters. She wrote on the finest parchment with the most valuable ink. These letters were decorated ornately and accompanied by special gifts to achieve the impression of grandeur and importance.³³ Such grandiosity was culturally significant in an Islamic court and necessary for demonstrating respect. The strategy was successful, as the titles bestowed upon Elizabeth in letters she received from al-Mansur and Murad III were similar to the titles they used in their correspondence with the Sultan of Mecca, showing their respect for her as a ruler.³⁴ Towards the end of their reigns, Elizabeth attempted to apply the same family labels used with European monarchs with al-Mansur as well, but these titles were never reciprocated. Elizabeth also flattered the recipients of her letters by delivering them through important messengers, such as high ambassadors.³⁵ These messengers could also convey particularly sensitive information, which expressed the relationship's value

²⁸ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 58.

²⁹ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes." p. 56.

³⁰ "Act in Restraint of Appeals, 1533 (24 Henry VII, c. 12) in Gerald Bray, *Documents of English Reformation*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), pp. 78-83; Bernadette Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 7.

³¹ Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 8.

³² Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. 211.

³³ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. 212.

³⁴ al-Fishtali, *Manahil al-safa'*, p. 187.

³⁵ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, pp. 212-213.

and the message's importance.³⁶ Her strategy of non-offensive foreign policy and acquired knowledge of Islamic cultural nuances contributed to the success of her relationships with Muslim rulers.

Interests and Personalities of Persian, Ottoman, and Moroccan Leaders

Elizabeth I could establish relations with Muslim rulers only if they had coinciding interests. Her specialized effort made her more successful than any other pre-modern English monarch at creating beneficial diplomatic relations with non-European rulers. However, not all of the attempts that she made were successful.

Safavid Persia

The success of initial trade ventures outside of Europe led Elizabeth to push further into Asia, sending envoys to Russia, Persia, and China.³⁷ The first English embassy to attempt to establish trade with Safavid Persia occurred in 1562 when explorer Anthony Jenkinson presented himself in Shah Tahmasp's court on behalf of the Muscovy Company.³⁸ The letter he presented to Shah Tahmasp was Elizabeth's first letter to a Muslim ruler, and her lack of understanding of the region showed.³⁹ She began, "Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England&c. To the right mighty and right victorious Prince, the great Sophy, Emperor of the Persians, Medes, Parthians, Hyrcanes, Carmanarians, Margians, of the people on this side, and beyond the river of Tigris, and of all men, and nations, between the Caspian sea, and the gulf of Persia, greeting."⁴⁰ The dominion she described is the Achaemenid Empire of Cyrus the Great, who ruled in the sixth century, conquered Babylon and freed the Jews— an important chapter in Christian history but irrelevant to the current Shah.⁴¹ Her letter also lacked the Islamic cultural norm of grandiosity, which she would learn was necessary to communicate with Muslim leaders effectively. In addition, she mentioned herself after she addressed the Shah, which was a cultural taboo with injurious effect because it implied that her power superseded his.⁴² Besides the fact that the letter was weak, Jenkinson also arrived at an inopportune time. The Persian and Ottoman empires had been at war on and off since the Safavid state emerged under Ismail in the early sixteenth century, but only four days before Jenkinson reached the Safavid capital of Qazvin, a Turkish ambassador had arrived to

³⁶ Bajetta, Coatalen, and Gibson, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, p. xxi.

³⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 33.

³⁸ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 64.

³⁹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 45.

⁴⁰ Edward Morgan and Charles Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen*, (London: 1886), pp. 112-113.

⁴¹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 45-46.

⁴² Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations: Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, (London: 1589), p. 362.

negotiate peace between the Shah and the Sultan.⁴³ Shah Tahmasp did not want to do anything that could endanger the fledgling peace with the Ottomans.

In 1553 at only twenty-four years old, Jenkinson successfully encountered Sultan Suleiman I of the Ottoman Empire (also known as Suleiman the Magnificent), from whom he secured limited trading privileges. However, his eloquence was ineffective on Shah Tahmasp.⁴⁴ Tahmasp was offended by the letters being in Latin, Hebrew, and Italian—languages he did not understand—and he had never heard of England.⁴⁵ Elizabeth's request for free trade would have jeopardized the fragile peace with the Ottomans, so Tahmasp berated Jenkinson and cast him away, saying (according to Jenkinson's account) that "we have no need to have friendship with the unbelievers."⁴⁶ Tahmasp's advisers convinced him not to kill Jenkinson because it would be bad for trade if foreigners were afraid to come to the country. Tahmasp was indifferent enough about England to accede to their recommendation.⁴⁷

Because of the political and economic situation between the Persian and Ottoman empires, Tahmasp was not interested in trade with England or a diplomatic relationship with Elizabeth, so the religious differences between Christianity and Islam were suddenly perceived as insurmountable. Thanks to the recent political agreement between Suleiman the Magnificent and Tahmasp, the Sunni Ottomans and Shi'a Safavids overcame their religious divide to block English trade in Persia.⁴⁸ In this situation, being a Protestant was not an advantage because Persia was not in conflict with the Catholic world, and they had no interest in involving themselves in European politics. Religious strife between Elizabeth and Muslim rulers only occurred in the absence of mutual profit. Only four years later, after the death of Suleiman the Magnificent tempered the Ottoman Empire's threat to Safavid Persia, a merchant for the Muscovy Company named Arthur Edwards was welcomed in Shah Tahmasp's court and secured trading privileges for English merchants.⁴⁹

Ottoman Empire

England experienced a stroke of luck in 1553 under Queen Mary I when Anthony Jenkinson negotiated special trading privileges with Suleiman the Magnificent.⁵⁰ However, Suleiman died in 1566, and Ottoman Sultan Selim II succeeded him. However, his wife, Nurbanu Sultan and the Grand Vizier

⁴³ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 50.

⁴⁶ Anthony Jenkinson in Morgan and Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, pp. 147-148.

⁴⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 44.

⁴⁹ Morgan and Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, pp. 393-402.

⁵⁰ Matthew Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism: England, China, and the Rainbow Portrait*, (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2019), p. 155.

Sokollu Mehmed Pasha held much power over state affairs.⁵¹ Elizabeth I never attempted to communicate with Selim II because England had no leverage to create a commercial relationship with the Ottoman Empire, trade outside of Europe was not yet necessary for England, and the Ottoman ruler was more interested in conquest and defense than in diplomacy. Selim II was busy fighting Russian aggression to the North, expanding into the Arabian Peninsula, and fighting the Holy League of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire in the Mediterranean. The Ottomans were also still viewed as mortal enemies by most of Europe. Even after ex-communication, English Christians united with Catholic Europeans to celebrate the historic victory over the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the first European victory over the Ottomans in a century.⁵²

Three years later, in 1574, Selim II died and was succeeded by his and Nurbanu's son, Murad III. Murad III was insular and fickle, leaving the palace with unprecedented infrequency and never leaving Constantinople during his entire reign.⁵³ Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's head of intelligence and spymaster, decided in the wake of the ex-communication four years before recommending that "some apte man be sent with her Majesties letters unto the Turk to procure an ample safe conduct."⁵⁴ England needed trading partners, and they could not safely trade in the Mediterranean without permission from the Ottoman Sultan. Elizabeth decided that the time was right for the inception of strategic ties with the Ottoman Empire. After Shah Tahmasp, the ruler of Safavid Persia, died in 1574, the Ottoman Empire declared war on Persia, creating an opportunity to trade for English cloth and guns.⁵⁵ William Harborne was chosen to travel to the Ottoman court to request commercial privileges for England superior to other European nations in 1579.⁵⁶ He achieved this by delivering a petition to Sokollu Mehmed.⁵⁷ Protocol demanded that petitions be submitted to the sultan, so a petition being delivered to the Grand Vizier in private was an uncommon and inappropriate occurrence. After allegedly bribing the Grand Vizier with three robes of fine English cloth, William Harborne obtained the safe-conduct agreements, allowing English traders to conduct business with the Ottomans. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha directed the Chancellor to write a letter for Harborne to bring to Elizabeth.⁵⁸ According to a report from Imperial Ambassador von Sizendorff from the Holy Roman Empire, he told the

⁵¹ Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 91.

⁵² Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

⁵³ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

⁵⁴ "Memorandum on the Turkey trade, by Sir Francis Walsingham(?). 1578(?)." in Susan Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 29.

⁵⁵ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

⁵⁶ Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 82.

Chancellor, “of course, write the letter, because they are Lutherans, and good people!”⁵⁹ This suggests that the petition and/or Harborne’s arguments regarding the shared ideals of Protestants and Muslims were effective. These shared ideals included religious values and their shared animosity for Catholic Europe. In the letter Elizabeth received in September 1579, Murad granted protections to English merchants and wrote, “Let not your love and friendship be lacking [and] may your agents and your merchants never cease from coming.”⁶⁰ In addition to Sokollu Mehmed breaking custom, the Imperial Interpreter Mustafa Beg sent a letter directly to Elizabeth asking for her friendship, a remarkably uncommon occurrence. He wrote that “Willhelmus Harhrounus” requested a trade license from him, and in his discussion with the sultan, he decided to

Encourage some kind of understanding and friendship between our Most Royal Majesty and your Sacred Royal Majesty [who] hold[s] the most Christian faith among all people.... I considered it to be beneficial for your Sacred Royal Majesty to be able to establish understanding with so great and so powerful an Emperor, with whom almost all princes and kings, of their own free will, wish to be closely allied.⁶¹

Fortunately for England, Murad and his court prioritized diplomatic relations in a way that their recent predecessor did not. Due to the war between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League, Murad sought to divide Christians along Protestant-Catholic lines further, prompting him to flatter her faith as “the most Christian.” In addition to requesting Elizabeth’s friendship, Murad had sent letters in 1574 to “the members of the Lutheran sect in Flanders and Spain,” commending them for banishing “idols and portraits and ‘bells’ from churches.”⁶² Murad also needed cloth and guns for the ongoing war effort to the east against Persia, which England could provide. Elizabeth responded within a month, taking advantage of the Ottoman desire to divide Europe by appealing to the similarities between Protestantism and Islam.⁶³ She introduced herself as “Elizabeth by the grace of the most mightie God, the onely Creatour of heaven and earth, of England, France and Ireland Queen, the most invincible and most mightie defender of the Christian faith against all kinde of idolatries, of all that live among the

⁵⁹ “Translation of part of the Imperial ambassador in Constantinople Joachim von Sizendorff’s report of 21 and 24 March 1579 to Rudolf II” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, pp. 62-64.

⁶⁰ “Translation of the Registry copy of Sultan Murād III’s command to Queen Elizabeth I, promising security by land and sea to all English agents and merchants trading in the Ottoman domains, and requesting her friendship in return. [Constantinople, 8 Muharram 987/7 March 1579],” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 48.

⁶¹ “Translation of the Imperial interpreter Mustafā Beg’s letter to Queen Elizabeth I. Constantinople, 15 March 1579,” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 59.

⁶² Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 37.

⁶³ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 46.

Christians, and falslie professe the name of Christ.”⁶⁴ Including France and Ireland in her domain was a stretch at best, but to achieve amicable and profitable relations, she needed to appear as grand as possible. She also emphasized her monotheistic faith and her disdain for idolatry to curry favor with Muslim readers. Elizabeth’s prohibition from trading with Catholic Europe, Murad’s war with Persia, and challenges from Spain and the Holy Roman Empire created conditions for an advantageous relationship between England and the Ottoman Empire, a stroke of luck for the small, remote, relatively resourceless isle. This exchange began a seventeen-year epistolary relationship between Murad and Elizabeth.⁶⁵

Furthermore, Elizabeth’s gender gave her an advantage over other European monarchs in her diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. The period of 1520-1640 is considered to be a distinct era in Ottoman history in which the sultan’s favorite members of the harem and his mother had significant influence over the Empire. However, cultural conventions prevented the sultanas from corresponding with male rulers.⁶⁶ Nurbanu, Sultan Murad III’s mother, and Safiye, Murad’s chief consort, continued to wield enormous influence on Murad’s decisions, in addition to the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed.⁶⁷ Eventually, Nurbanu had Sokollu Mehmed assassinated, and Safiye’s influence expanded as her son Mehmed III was the heir apparent, and Murad III grew closer to death.⁶⁸ Elizabeth wrote an ornate letter to Safiye and sent extravagant gifts of jewels, clothing, perfume, portraits, and plates, which Safiye replied to in late 1593.⁶⁹ She expressed her gratitude, writing,

While striving for that illustrious princess's and honoured lady's salvation and Her success in Her desires, I can repeatedly mention Her Highness's gentility and praise at the footdust of His Majesty, the fortunate and felicitous Padishah, the Lord of the fortunate conjunction and the sovereign who has Alexander's place, and I shall endeavour for Her aims.⁷⁰

After Murad died in 1595 and Mehmed’s ascension to the throne, Safiye’s power grew further as she became the *Valide Sultan*, the legal position held by the ruling sultan’s mother, which was created

⁶⁴ “Hakluyt’s translation of the letter, in Latin, from Queen Elizabeth I to Sultan Murād III. Greenwich, 25 October 1579,” in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 89.

⁶⁶ Lisa Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves: Or, the Advantage of Being Excommunicated (And a Woman),” p. 217; *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): pp. 209–22.; Andrea, *Lives of Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 45.

⁶⁷ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*; Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 86-95.

⁶⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 95; Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves,” p. 219.

⁶⁹ Jardine, “Gloriana Rules the Waves,” pp. 218-19; Andrea, *Girls and Women from the Islamic World*, p. 45.

⁷⁰ Susan Skilliter, “4. Three Letters from the Ottoman “Sultana” Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I,” in *Oriental Studies III: Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 132-133.

during this period in Ottoman history.⁷¹ In this position, Safiye's duties included mediating the sultan's contacts with foreign diplomats, rendering her a crucial ally.⁷² Elizabeth wrote her another letter in 1599, which she sent along with an organ, a coach, and other valuable jewels.⁷³ Safiye responded with a more personal letter in November 1599:

God willing, action will be taken according to what you said. Be of good heart in this respect! We will not cease from admonishing our son, His Majesty the Padishah [Mehmed III], and from telling him: 'Do act according to the treaty!' [the first English capitulation of 1580] God willing, may you not suffer grief in this respect! May you, too, always be firm in friendship!

One factor that potentially contributed to Safiye's warmth towards Elizabeth was the Ottoman *kul* system. Muslims cannot be enslaved under Islamic law, so all enslaved women in the harem were non-Muslims. At the same time, Safiye's ethnicity is unconfirmed. She likely had an affiliation with Christian Europeans.⁷⁴ This could have influenced her outlook on Ottoman foreign affairs to be favorable toward the English. Elizabeth successfully obtained promises from Sultana Safiye to act as an intermediary between herself and the sultan, but the strategy was not entirely politically successful. In 1592, Mehmed wanted to go to war with Hungary, and Elizabeth wished for the sultan to seek a truce with Emperor Rudolph instead. Safiye tried to persuade the sultan to allow Elizabeth's ambassador Edward Barton to mediate between the sultan and the Emperor, but she was unsuccessful.⁷⁵ Additionally, William Harborne consistently requested naval support for England against Spain from Murad throughout the 1570s and 1580s to no avail.⁷⁶

Despite these political shortcomings, Murad III reportedly described Elizabeth I as a "cloud of moste happy raine," a "fountayne of moste nobleness and vertue" to whom "all nations" resort.⁷⁷ Elizabeth's relationship with the Ottoman Empire laid the foundation for England's future as the preeminent European trading nation in the East. The letters between the English Queen and Ottoman Sultana edified this connection.

The Sa'adian Sultanate of Morocco

⁷¹ Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 13.

⁷² Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 21; The *Valide Sultan* also worked to maintain the dynasty's public image and fortify political networks to exercise imperial authority. Safiye's stipend was the highest in the realm, providing her with vast financial power.

⁷³ Jardine, "Gloriana Rules the Waves," p. 222.

⁷⁴ Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Jardine, "Gloriana Rules the Waves," p. 219.

⁷⁶ Maclean and Matar. *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 54.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Dimmock, *Elizabethan Globalism*.

The Sa'adian Sultanate ruled present-day Morocco from 1510 to 1659.⁷⁸ Sultan Abu Abdallah Muhammad II came to power in 1574 after his father's death, beginning a tumultuous period in Sa'adian history. English trade with Morocco began in 1551, but Elizabeth did not have a diplomatic relationship with the sultan until 1577. English spymaster Walsingham expressed his concern that the new Sa'adian Sultan would not be friendly to English commercial interests in his memorandum on Turkish trade in which he stated the following consideration: "procure the Turkes letters to the Kinge of Barbary... that the portes there may be Free for our merchants."⁷⁹ Abdallah Muhammad was indeed less interested in British trade and relations. He only wanted weapons from England, and he leveraged Moroccan saltpeter to try to attain these weapons.⁸⁰

In 1576, Abdallah Muhammad's uncle Abd al-Malik returned from his seventeen-year exile in the Ottoman Empire with an Ottoman army to retake the throne. Ottoman influence on his upbringing taught Abd al-Malik the importance of diplomacy, and he was eager to establish trade and create a military alliance with England.⁸¹ He requested that England supply cloth and weapons to Morocco in exchange for exclusive access to their saltpeter, and in 1577, Elizabeth sent a letter in response introducing herself, accepting a trade agreement without agreeing to supply al-Malik with weapons, and requesting the resolution of grievances with Jewish merchants who dealt with the English. Al-Malik accepted these terms by declaring upon hearing the letter read aloud that "he, with his country and all things therein, should be at your majesty's commandment."⁸² Morocco's power transitions weakened the state and necessitated seeking alliances against the threat of Spain, while Elizabeth's ex-communication and animosity with Spain made relations with Morocco attractive as well.

Sultan al-Malik's reign was short. After just two years, Ahmad al-Mansur took power in the wake of the Battle of Three Kings between his brother al-Malik who was allied with the Ottomans and his nephew Abdullah Muhammad who was supported by the Portuguese king Sebastian I.⁸³ All three of these kings died in battle. Al-Mansur was uninterested in England when he took the throne in 1578. He may have even had an unfavorable view because Sebastian I had been aided by a contingent of English and Irish soldiers.⁸⁴ However, Morocco's position between the Ottoman and Spanish superpowers trying to conquer his kingdom caused him to turn to countries such as France, Holland, and England for assistance. England was the most cooperative of all possible European allies because they were the most threatened by Spain. In 1580, al-Mansur sent Elizabeth a flattering letter, referring to her as the

⁷⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 56, 67.

⁷⁹ "Memorandum on the Turkey trade, by Sir Francis Walsingham(?). 1578(?)." in Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey*, p. 30.

⁸⁰ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 66-67.

⁸¹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 66-67.

⁸² Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 69-70.

⁸³ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 79.

⁸⁴ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," p. 57.

greatest of all those who follow the “religion of Christ” and “the majesty in the lands of Christ, the sultana Isabel [Elizabeth I], may God grant her all good and continue her good health.” Bestowing the high title of “sultana Isabel” was a custom that showed his respect for Elizabeth I. He wrote that there was “evident love” between himself and “sultana Isabel” and “as you are doing the best to facilitate our affairs there [in England], so will we do the same for you here.”⁸⁵ This letter began twenty-three years of correspondence in which al-Mansur wrote more letters to Elizabeth than any other European monarch.⁸⁶

The common interests of defense against Spain and the need for economic competitiveness generated an enduring but fickle relationship. The Earl of Leicester lobbied furiously to create a regulated company to impose a monopoly on Moroccan trade, and he succeeded in 1585 when the Barbary Company was created.⁸⁷ During the early stages of Anglo-Moroccan relations, al-Mansur was not impressed with Elizabeth because of what he perceived as her isolation and lack of aggression.⁸⁸ However, England’s victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 changed his impression of her and gave him the idea to use her to achieve his reclamation of the Iberian Peninsula.⁸⁹ In 1588, al-Mansur granted privileges to English merchants and sent an envoy, Marzuq Ra’is, to Elizabeth to convince her to consider a joint attack against Spain, but no agreement was reached.⁹⁰ After Spain annexed Portugal in 1580, Don Antonio fled to England and formed an Anglo-Portuguese alliance, which al-Mansur agreed to join after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Al-Mansur promised to send funds to contribute to the alliance in exchange for Don Antonio’s son, Don Christobal, as a hostage.⁹¹ Although he received the hostage, he did not send the funds, prompting Elizabeth to write, “If you would not grant us what we so reasonably ask from you, we will have to pay less attention to your friendship. We know for sure also that the Great Turk, who treats our subjects with great favor and humanity, will not appreciate your maltreatment of them in order to please the Spaniards.”⁹² The vacillatory nature of their relationship became evident at this time and persisted for the duration of their reigns.

In January 1591, after Elizabeth wrote to Murad III about the situation, the Ottoman Sultan wrote back, expressing his dislike for “the faithless Prince of Fez” and promised that he was “forwarding strongly worded despatches insisting on the return of the son of Don Antonio to Our most happy and

⁸⁵ Quoted in Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” from State Papers, Public Record Office, The National Archives, p. 58.

⁸⁶ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 74.

⁸⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 120.

⁸⁸ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 56.

⁸⁹ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 52.

⁹⁰ Khalid Ben-Srhir, *Britain and Morocco During the Embassy of John Drummond Hay*, (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 13; Caroline Stone, “Saudi Aramco World: An ‘Extremely Civile’ Diplomacy,” *Aramco World* (2012).

⁹¹ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 54.

⁹² Quoted in Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” p. 64.

exalted Porte.”⁹³ Al-Mansur sent his reply to Elizabeth in June 1590, addressing her as “the firm-footed, of celestial light and knowledge, the great sultana *al-asila*, *al-mathila*, *al-athila*, *al-khatira* [true-blooded, exemplary, high-born, great], the famous, the possessor of England, sultana Isabel” and purporting that if she extended the agreed upon military aid to Don Antonio, he would send his promised envoy as soon as the “happy action” of conquering Sudan was concluded.⁹⁴ Elizabeth was reluctant to commit troops to North Africa and to become involved in any foreign wars, so both al-Mansur and Elizabeth felt cheated by each other. Despite these feelings and Elizabeth being forced to leverage her relationship with the mighty Ottomans to frighten al-Mansur, their correspondence continued due to the shared threat of Catholic Spain.

By the time Murad’s letter arrived in Morocco, al-Mansur had conquered the Songhai Empire of Sudan in modern-day Niger and acquired a yearly tribute of 100,000 gold pieces and 1,000 enslaved people to Marrakech. Elizabeth once again wrote to him to ask for aid against Spain. Although he patronizingly claimed to be paying attention to her interests, “both great and small,” he would not send support until she sent her promised military assistance to Don Antonio.⁹⁵ He wrote, “give the ayde, then send us wourde.” Later in 1591, he wrote to her again, comparing his conquest of Sudan to her defeat of the Spanish armada, asserting that both were mutually beneficial. His new wealth would allow the Sa’adian Sultanate “to re-take the region [Spain] from the hands of infidelity and to return the word of Islam to its youth and vigor.”⁹⁶ At this point, Anglo-Moroccan political relations were on the verge of collapse but persisted thanks to Spain.

A second Moroccan delegation was again sent to England in 1595 to discuss plans for an Anglo-Moroccan military operation against Spain.⁹⁷ Spain had invaded Ireland, and the envoy was meant to prepare Moroccan support for the English naval strike on Cadiz.⁹⁸ In 1596, Elizabeth’s 150 ships and 6,000 soldiers, along with ships and supplies from al-Mansur, were victorious in their attack on Cadiz.⁹⁹ The Sa’adian court scribe, al-Fishtali, attributed the success to al-Mansur’s diplomatic manipulation:

The one most daring in attacking his [Philip II] kingdoms and tightening the noose around him, was Isabella the sultana of the kingdoms of the lands of England. For Mulana the prince of the faithful [al-Mansur], had lured her with his support and had sharpened her will against him [Philip II]: he showed her his willingness to help confront him [Philip II] by supplying her with copper to use in cannons, and saltpeter for

⁹³ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes.” p. 66.

⁹⁴ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes,” pp. 64-65.

⁹⁵ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes.” p. 67.

⁹⁶ Matar, “Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes.” p. 68.

⁹⁷ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 193.

⁹⁸ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 193.

⁹⁹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, pp. 193-194.

ammunition [gunpowder] which he permitted her to buy from his noble kingdoms. He also supplied her with metals, which were not found in her lands. With God helping him, he pitted her against the enemy of religion and, with God's help, and because of his [al-Mansur's] decisiveness, capable organization, and deep caution, he kept her focused on [Philip II], both on her own and with his help.¹⁰⁰

Al-Mansur sent another delegation in 1600 led by his advisor Muhammad al-Annuri to England. They discussed commercial relations but disagreed on jointly invading Spain.¹⁰¹ In 1601, he proposed an attack on Spanish holdings in the Americas to Elizabeth. He wrote,

And your high estate shall knowe that, in the inhabiting of those countries by us and yow, yow shall have a great benefite: first for that those countries of the East are adjoining to many Kinges Moores and infinite nations of our religion; and further, if your power and command shall be seene there with owre armie, all the Moores will joyne and confederate themselves—by the help of God—with us and yow.¹⁰²

Elizabeth rejected his proposition, and al-Mansur's ambitions for retaking Iberia with an Anglo-Moroccan alliance ended. The following year, he signed a military agreement with Spain against their joint rival, the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰³ Elizabeth's relationship with al-Mansur was never stable, but English merchants gained significant profits from Moroccan trade, and the English military gained assistance in keeping Spain at bay. Elizabeth and al-Mansur were in similar positions, with powerful enemies for neighbors and limited resources. However, their personalities and foreign policy objectives made it so that their alliance never realized its full potential.

Conclusion

Politically, English alliances with the Muslim world produced mixed results. English ambassadors in the Ottoman Empire were able to take the lead on disputes involving Christian communities under Ottoman control.¹⁰⁴ The English Ambassador Edward Barton became Ottoman Sultan Mehmed III's "favorite Englishman" when he died in 1597. He received a full funeral at the sultan's request. During his career, Barton restored Protestantism to Moldavia in 1588 and advocated for other English interests in court.¹⁰⁵ The most significant impact of Elizabeth's friendly relations with Muslim states was its foundation for the future English empire. Commercial elites commanding joint stock companies rather

¹⁰⁰ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," pp. 69-70.

¹⁰¹ Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, p. 261.

¹⁰² Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," p. 73.

¹⁰³ Matar, "Queen Elizabeth I Through Moroccan Eyes," p. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁵ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 94.

than monarchs continued future relations with Muslim states, leading to England's infamous global empire.¹⁰⁶

Relations between Elizabeth I and Muslim rulers contributed to England's national security and development. Elizabeth was initially unable to befriend or trade with Persia because of conflicting interests arising from a fragile peace between the Safavids and Ottomans and the Ottoman interest in acting as a middleman between the West and East. However, when Elizabeth attempted to establish relations with the Ottoman Empire after her ex-communication, she was successful because of Murad III's interest in partnering with Protestants in Europe and because of her gender, given the number of power women held in Ottoman court. These relations persisted under Mehmed III's reign because he shared his father's interests, and his mother, Safiye, continued to wield significant power. Anglo-Moroccan relations persisted because both states were relatively weak and needed allies against Spain and lucrative trade to become more robust and stable. Their connection suffered because of the conflicting foreign policy objectives of al-Mansur and Elizabeth. Overall, Elizabeth's diplomatic, defensive style of foreign policy facilitated good relations with Muslim states.

The road to profiteering and domination began with peaceful commercial relationships established by Elizabeth I. Elizabeth's foreign policy allowed merchant elites and their envoys to negotiate and work with Muslim states extensively. She was the first English monarch to welcome Muslim ambassadors into the royal palace and to seek long-term diplomatic relationships with non-Christian rulers. She was succeeded by King James I, who did not communicate directly with Muslim rulers but expanded trade into Persia and India. His efforts to establish commercial relations with the Mughals generally failed, and subsequent leaders neglected diplomatic relations with Muslim rulers.¹⁰⁷ With the foundation and precedent for trade established and the business of diplomacy in the hands of merchant elites, the path was laid for the profit-driven East India Company to put the Levant Company out of business, multiply exponentially, fund exploitation and colonization, and alter the trajectory of global history.

¹⁰⁶ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁷ Maclean and Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World*, pp. 78-79.

**Manufacturing Murder:
A Timeline of Events that Led to the Final Solution in Germany,
Poland, and Ukraine, 1933-1943**

*Adrian Hammer*¹

The history of the Holocaust is well-known and well-documented. However, the implementation of the Final Solution and the decision surrounding the techniques they used are up for debate. On one side, there are the functionalists, such as Henry Friedlander, a historian who specializes in Jewish history and the Holocaust, stating in the preface of his book *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*, “Eventually, the regime decided to implement a program of mass murder.”² Functionalists argue that the Nazis decided for mass extermination at some point amid World War II. Secondly, there are the intentionalists, such as Klaus Hildebrand, a historian of German political and military history, who states in his book *The Third Reich* that “emigration and deportation... were intermediate stages towards the ‘Final Solution’ which was, in principle, always present in Hitler’s mind.”³ Intentionalists argue that it was always the intention of the Nazi regime to conduct some form of the Final Solution.

To determine how the Final Solution came to be, we must look at the events that transpired and evaluate what influenced the decisions that led to the manufacturing of death through camps such as Chelmno and Auschwitz. There is no denying that the quest for “solving the Jewish problem” was a priority of Hitler; however, genocide was not premeditated, nor was it the Nazi high command’s initial plan for their perceived problem. Genocide became the primary mission of the Nazi regime after failed attempts at removing Jews from their lands and properties to instead settle German citizens there. Examples include the ghettos and unrealistic relocation strategies such as the Madagascar plan, which, if it had succeeded, would have likely resulted in very few Jewish casualties. Considering the move to genocide was a gradual process, it brings to question how the Nazis concluded that death camps were the most effective method in handling the Jewish Question and why they chose to use gas chambers over other forms of execution. This paper will evaluate events that transpired between 1933 and 1943 to

¹ Adrian Hammer is a graduate of California State University Channel Islands with a bachelor’s degree in History and Psychology. His passion for history developed through conversations with his late uncle who inspired this research topic months before his passing. This paper is dedicated to and in memory of Rodger Lee Morris.

² Henry Friedlander, preface to *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

³ Klaus Hildebrand, *The Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 35.

determine why and what prompted them to use death camps, resulting in the wide-scale manufacture of death.

At this particular time in history, eugenics research had been a key focus of the sciences for about four decades. The idea that certain humans were replaceable or otherwise too burdensome to allow to reproduce was nothing new to the global scientific community. While Germany is seen as the be-all and end-all for eugenics and manipulating a minority group that is otherwise incapable of protecting themselves, Great Britain founded their eugenics program around the same time as pre-Nazi Germany in 1905. Across the pond, the United States was the first to forcibly sterilize “idiots,” the “feeble-minded,” and “promiscuous” women beginning in 1907. Eugenics was not isolated to the United States— Hungary, France, Italy, Argentina, Mexico and Czechoslovakia were concerned about the spread of feeble-mindedness and developed their own eugenics organizations by the end of World War I.⁴ Equally important to note is that organizations in the United States also promoted the ideology that the white race was “superior” to all other races. Would it be possible that Hitler and his *fidus Achates* drew some inspiration from the most powerful country on earth and its allies on how to normalize the sterilization process?

Operation T4, also known as the euthanasia program, was the first step in determining the method of execution. However, the thought process behind it was not related to the Final Solution at the time. Unbeknownst to the manufacturers of the euthanasia programs, their process would be later reintroduced and adopted on a large scale during the Final Solution. The grounds of Operation T4’s undertaking began on 14 July 1933, with the passing of the “Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Offspring,”⁵ which was officially implemented on 1 January 1934. This law provided the Nazi regime with a legal means of sterilizing people they viewed as a liability to the German *Volk*— those who prevented the Aryan race from flourishing.⁶ By conducting forced sterilizations, they were under the impression that they were saving the German race and economics by preventing the birth of children considered *lebensunwertes Leben* (“lives unworthy of life”).⁷ The law stated, “Anyone suffering from a hereditary disease can be sterilized by a surgical operation if, according to the experience of medical

⁴ National Human Genome Research Institute, “Eugenics: Its Origin and Development (1883-Present),” 2021; Indiana Assembly, “Laws of the state of Indiana, passed at the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, 1907,” (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, contractor for State printing). <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/1053/1907%20General%20Acts-%20OCR.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁵ Henry Friedlander, “Step by Step: The Expansion of Murder, 1939-1941,” *German Studies Review* 17, no. 3 (1994): p. 496.

⁶ Friedlander, “Step by Step,” p. 496.

⁷ Gisela Bock, “Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State,” *Signs* 8, no. 3 (1983): p. 412.

science, there is a high probability that his offspring will suffer from serious physical or mental defects of a hereditary nature.”⁸ Its application targeted neurological and physical ailments, including congenital mental deficiency, schizophrenia, manic-depression, epilepsy, Huntington’s chorea, blindness, deafness, physical deformity, and chronic alcoholism.⁹ Despite the law focusing on hereditary ailments, a racial component was not referenced but still viewed as a threat. To maintain a pure white race, forced sterilizations predominantly targeted Roma Gypsies, German Africans, and Polish minorities in Upper Silesia.¹⁰ These procedures were conducted unbeknownst to the patients via sterilization by x-ray and were legalized alongside other forms of non-consensual castration in a Law from 3 July 1934.¹¹

Hitler declared in 1934 that sterilization was an “offensive against this [hereditary predispositions] threat of the gradual disintegration of the *Volk*,”¹² further justifying the Reich’s actions toward disabled individuals. Sterilization efforts would adapt, however, with Hitler envisioning the Third Reich as free of incurably sick persons. To free the Reich, Hitler and the Nazi party would have to purge the country in its first attempts at systematic murder. Hitler had discussed the euthanasia programs with Dr. Gerhard Wagner, the head of the Nazi organization for physicians, before the Nuremberg Rally in 1936.¹³ At the rally, Dr. Wagner discussed these concerns at length, at one point using religion as a basis for his reasoning stating, “The creator himself established the laws of life, which harshly and brutally let all that is unworthy of life perish to make room for the strong and healthy to whom the future belongs.”¹⁴ Yet Dr. Wagner was not looking at this from a religious perspective; he was

⁸ German Historical Institute, “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases (July 14, 1933),” *Nazi Germany (1933-1945)*, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=152.

⁹ German Historical Institute, “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases.”

¹⁰ Patricia L. Heberer, “‘Exitus Heute in Hadamar’: The Hadamar Facility and ‘euthanasia’ in Nazi Germany,” PhD diss., (University of Maryland, 2001), p. 69. <https://proquest.ezproxy.csuci.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/exitus-heute-hadammar-facility-euthanasia-nazi/docview/304698936/se-2>. In reference to Bock, “Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State.”

¹¹ Bock, “Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany,” p. 409.

¹² Adolf Hitler, “January 30, 1934,” in *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations, Volume I, 1932-1934*, ed. Max Domarus (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1990), p. 421.

¹³ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949-1953), Vol. 1 (“Medical Case”): p. 894, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llmlp/2011525364_NT_war-criminals_Vol-I/2011525364_NT_war-criminals_Vol-I.pdf. Testimony given by Dr. Karl Brandt during the Nurnberg Military Tribunals in February, 1947.

¹⁴ German Propaganda Archives, “Race and Population Policy,” Calvin University, Dr. Gerhard Wagner, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/pt36grasse.htm>. Original source: Gerhard Wagner, “Rasse und Bevölkerungspolitik,” *Der Parteitag der Ehre vom 8. bis 14. September*

trying to appeal to the general public that it was necessary to rid Germany of lives that did not benefit the state.

In late 1938 and early 1939, Hitler would have the opportunity to justify the euthanasia program to provide a “mercy death” to those unfortunate enough to be born with a hereditary ailment.¹⁵ According to Dr. Karl Brandt, the Reich Commission for Health and Sanitation and member of the Reich Research Council, “The father of a deformed child approached the Fuehrer and asked that this child or this creature should be killed.”¹⁶ The child’s fate would result in death by euthanasia, making the point “that the Nazi leaders were responding to a popular wish.”¹⁷ This case would be used as the pretense for Hitler’s decision to authorize the killing of disabled infants.¹⁸ In the summer of 1939, family physicians whose primary job was assisting in delivering children were ordered to report mentally deficient and physically deformed babies.¹⁹ Dr. Brandt and Reichsleiter Bouhler would then determine the fate of each child. If a child was deemed unworthy of life, they were either given a lethal injection of phenol, or they would be operated on “in such a manner that the result was either complete recovery or death.”²⁰ Newborns and children were not the majority of the disabled population, however, so efforts had to be broadened.

Shortly after introducing euthanasia for children, the Reich Committee for the Scientific Registering of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Illnesses would expand its reach to adults. This led Hitler to issue a memorandum in October 1939, which he backdated to 1 September 1939. Bouhler, at a meeting with the Nazi high command on 10 August 1939, argued that Hitler needed to justify the cruelty. He used the start of the war as part of his reasoning. Euthanasia was merely a wartime measure to free up hospital beds and personnel for the coming war.²¹ The memorandum authorized doctors to commit involuntary euthanasia without prosecution on those performing the depraved task. In his memorandum, Hitler designated Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. Brandt with the “responsibility to

1936. *Offizieller Bericht über den Verlauf des Reichsparteitages mit sämtlichen Kongreßreden* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1936), pp. 150-160.

¹⁵ Sources are not conclusive on the exact date of the Knauer example, see Heberer, “Exitus Heute in Hadamar,” p. 85; Friedlander, “Step by Step,” p. 497; and *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 1 (“Medical Case”), p. 894.

¹⁶ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 1 (“Medical Case”), p. 894.

¹⁷ P. Weindling, “Nazi Euthanasia,” *Eugenics Archive*, 2014, <https://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/tree/535eed177095aa0000000242>.

¹⁸ Friedlander, “Step by Step,” p. 497.

¹⁹ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 1 (“Medical Case”), p. 844.

²⁰ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 1 (“Medical Case”), p. 844.

²¹ Peter Hayes, *How Was It Possible?: A Holocaust Reader*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), p. 284. In reference to Friedrich Kaul’s Nazimordaktion T-4.

broaden the authority of certain doctors to the extent that [persons] suffering from illnesses judged to be incurable may, after a humane, most careful assessment of their condition, be granted a mercy death.”²² After receiving complete authority over the euthanasia program, Bouhler and Brandt were determined to find a method that would not appear as inhumane as lethal injection. Lethal injection tended to be slow, unreliable and necessitated a human connection between victim and perpetrator due to the physical contact.²³ Thus Viktor Brack, a subordinate to Bouhler and Brandt, and Albert Widmann, an SS officer and chemist, recommended using carbon monoxide gas.²⁴

According to postwar testimony, Viktor Brack and Widmann would get their opportunity to test the use of carbon monoxide gas on human subjects in December 1939 or January 1940. They convened with other physicians from the T4 program for the first trial run at the former Brandenburg penitentiary.²⁵ To test the efficiency of carbon monoxide gas, they converted a room in the former penitentiary to resemble a shower room to prevent mentally disabled victims from becoming hysterical. Over the next two days, the tests would conclude with eight male victims’ lives coming to an end, providing the physicians and their compatriots with the evidence they needed to pursue the use of carbon monoxide as the primary killing method during the euthanasia program.²⁶ After the test had concluded, Brandenburg would continue to be developed to increase efficiency, becoming the first assembly line for death. Next to the “shower room” was a small storage room used to store the carbon monoxide tanks and control the levers to release the deadly fumes into the room through the piping system. On the same floor was the crematorium. The crematorium consisted of two mobile ovens heated by oil, where the remains of the victims were burned to ash and dust.²⁷ Five more facilities would be established after Brandenburg, including one in Hadamar in December 1940. The Hadamar facility would be the beginning of the end of the euthanasia program due to public outcry, specifically by Bishop Limburg. In a letter to the Reich Minister of Justice, he stated, “Several times a week buses arrive in Hadamar.... School children of the vicinity know this vehicle and say ‘here comes the murder-box again.’...I beg you most humbly... to prevent further transgressions of the Fifth Commandment of

²² United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Adolf Hitler Authorizing the T4 (Euthanasia) program,” Photograph Number: 67072, 1939, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa15074>.

²³ Nestar Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants, Volume 2: Milgram’s Obedience Experiments and the Holocaust*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 76.

²⁴ Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 76.

²⁵ Heberer, “Exitus Heute in Hadamar,” p. 115.

²⁶ Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*, pp. 102-103.

²⁷ Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*, p. 105.

God.”²⁸ After Dr. Hilfrich’s letter to the Reich Minister of Justice, Hitler grew concerned over public opinion becoming hostile and would order all euthanasia facilities to be closed. With these six facilities, however, we see the introduction of organized mass killing conducted by the Nazi regime. Brandenburg became influential in future endeavors by Hitler and the high command after the invasion of the East during Operation Barbarossa.

Before Operation Barbarossa, the Nazis gained significant knowledge regarding railway usage that could transport hundreds of thousands of people in a minimal amount of time. This is important because the primary method of transportation used during the Final Solution was the rail system. Nahplan I, II, and III was essentially the training grounds for the *Reichsbahn* (the German National Railway) and Heinrich Himmler regarding deportations. The key objective of the Nahplan was the deportation of Poles and Jews from the Wartheland, relocating them to ghettos and labor camps within Poland. During Nahplan I, they were able to evict and deport 87,833 Poles and Jews from their homes between 1 and 16 December 1939.²⁹ Despite meeting the goal of 80,000 evictions in Nahplan I, the deportations underwent extraordinary difficulties. During the seventeen-day ordeal, they ran into issues such as no predesignated drop-off zones, frequently causing reroutes, incomplete or incorrect evacuation lists, and individuals bringing too many belongings, causing problems with the number of people they could fit into a train car.³⁰ Issues like these brought attention to the need to revise the deportation plans. During Nahplan II, between May 1940 and April 1941, they successfully deported 235,961 individuals.³¹ Learning from the mistakes of Nahplan I, the regulations surrounding deportation changed drastically. Limits on personal goods prevented deportees from bringing more than thirty kilograms worth of personal belongings, tight schedules for the trains and predesignated pick-up and drop-off zones.³² Nahplan III had a very short cycle with limited results. Between January and March of 1941, the deportations were significantly less, counting at 26,226.³³ Nahplan III was less

²⁸ “Nazi Extermination of People with Mental Disabilities: Letter from Dr. Hilfrich, Bishop of Limburg, to the Reich Minister of Justice, August 13, 1941,” in *A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust*, University of South Florida Archive, <https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/document/DocEuth.htm>. The letter is accessible in Vol. I of *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, pp. 845-846.

²⁹ Phillip Terrell Rutherford, “Race, Space and the ‘Polish Question’: Nazi Deportation Policy in Wartheland, 1939-1941,” PhD diss., (Pennsylvania State University, 2001), p. 142, <https://proquest.ezproxy.csuci.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/race-space-polish-question-nazi-deportation/docview/251426790/se-2>. Data obtained through the United States National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁰ Rutherford, “Race, Space and the ‘Polish Question,’” pp. 148-149.

³¹ Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942*, (London: Cornerstone Digital, 2014), p. 109.

³² Rutherford, “Race, Space and the ‘Polish Question,’” p. 261.

³³ Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, p. 109.

successful than the previous plans due to the attention of the Nazi high command swaying from deportations in the East to war in the East.

Operation Barbarossa began on 22 June 1941 and was the key to unlocking Nazi aggression against populations they despised, particularly the Jews. The eastward invasion, however, was a plan of Hitler's long before it came to fruition. Hitler had the intent to invade the Soviet Union as early as 1939, declaring in his speech at the Berghof conference, "My pact was only to stall for time, and, gentlemen, to Russia, will happen just what I have practiced with Poland— we will crush the Soviet Union."³⁴ The pact he referred to was known as the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, which would be implemented the day after his statements, on 23 August 1939. This pact entailed not an alliance or peace between the two nations. It was a mutual understanding that neither of the countries would aid a third-party nation in the event of war between one of the signatories and that Russia would not meddle in Germany's military affairs for ten years. Russia had a stipulation that increased its land mass by acquiring Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and part of Poland. Considering Germany wanted to expand itself to provide more land for the *Volk*, there was no conceivable way Hitler would allow this to play out. Hitler believed that if the German military "crushed" Russia, the English would have no one else to turn to and enable Japan to focus all of its forces on the United States to "prevent the latter [The United States] from joining in the war."³⁵ After the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the Einsatzgruppen and German SD units were dispatched behind the front lines with orders from Himmler and Heydrich to eliminate "Jewish Bolshevism" and that "Jews in party and state positions" were to be shot.³⁶ Because of the broad orders given to these military units, and their exemption from being court-martialed on the merits that they were destroying Bolshevism, there was a dramatic increase in mass killings.

Heinrich Himmler assigned SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Security Police and SD, to assemble a new mobile unit called the Einsatzgruppen in 1939.³⁷ Heydrich hand-picked many men who held the same convictions, with ideologies that believed Jews were to blame for Germany's problems and that eradicating them was the only plausible answer. The Einsatzgruppen consisted of highly trained and highly intellectual individuals, with many of the higher-ranking members

³⁴ Alan Clark, *Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1966), p. 25.

³⁵ Hitler, "January 30, 1934," in *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations*, p. 2355.

³⁶ Jürgen Matthäus, Jochen Böhrer, and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, *War, Pacification, and Mass Murder, 1939: The Einsatzgruppen in Poland*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2014), p. 129.

³⁷ Jadwiga M. Biskupska, "Extermination and the Elite: Warsaw Under Nazi Occupation, 1939-1944," PhD diss., (Yale University, 2013), p. 30, <https://proquest.ezproxy.csuci.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/extirmination-elite-warsaw-under-nazi-occupation/docview/1492740304/se-2>.

earning a Ph.D. before the onset of World War II. Regardless of their education and previous successes in life, many of these men operated under the pretense that they would be leading figures in the new Reich if they were willing to do what was deemed necessary by Hitler and the Nazi high command. These units operated independently from the rest of the military. Still, they received a considerable amount of aid from the German troops when it came to their logistical needs for things such as supplies or transportation. Most of their operations were considered top secret, and their reports were very vague to conceal the atrocities they committed, which is represented by the fact that there is only one “surviving written order, from Heydrich to his field commanders.”³⁸ Their effectiveness was primarily associated with their constant mobility and flexibility, allowing them to go virtually anywhere to complete a task.³⁹ On the Eastern front, they were better known as death squads because wherever they went, death would be soon to follow.

After only one month of Nazi occupation in the East, Hermann Göring would also assign Reinhard Heydrich with the sole responsibility of making preparations for the implementation of a “total solution of the Jewish question,” requesting that Heydrich submit “an overall plan showing the preliminary organizational, substantive, and financial measures for the execution of the intended final solution of the Jewish question.”⁴⁰ Göring’s order would lead Heydrich to search for a means of executing every Jew in Europe, from France to Russia. Heydrich would enlist the Einsatzgruppen to carry out his orders and inflict as much damage to the Jewish population as possible. However, if the Nazi regime were to slaughter the Jewish people systematically, the method would have to meet three specific criteria based on my analysis. First, it had to be coordinated, with the ability to inflict massive amounts of casualties. With some ten million Jews in Europe, small, inconsistent executions would not meet the desired goals of solving the Jewish Question. Second, it had to be repeatable, without mental detriment to the Nazi soldiers carrying out the executions. As much as we think of the Nazis as stone-cold killers, many reports were signaling emotional distress among all ranks of soldiers, referenced by Dr. Becker, Adolf Eichmann, Heinrich Himmler, and many others. Psychological well-being had to be considered because if the men were psychologically damaged, they would be unable to perform the tasks they were being ordered to do. Psychology played a significant role in executing the Final Solution through gas chambers. Lastly, there had to be a way to dispose of the evidence. Having received negative responses to the euthanasia programs, the Nazis were intent on not drawing any further attention to what they were doing.

³⁸ David Cesarani, *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 10.

³⁹ Cesarani, *The Final Solution*, p. 30.

⁴⁰ “Letter from Hermann Goering to Reinhard Heydrich, Berlin, July 31, 1941,” *Harry S. Truman Library*, Translation of Document No. 2586 (E), <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/translation-document-no-2586-e-letter-hermann-goering-reinhard-heydrich>.

Mass execution by gunfire had already proved to be an effective method of murdering large groups of people, with an estimated 1.5 million Jewish men, women, and children being executed in this manner during the Holocaust. One of the most notable events during the Holocaust regarding mass shootings was Babi Yar. Babi Yar was one of the first and most well-documented mass shootings of the Holocaust in the small town of Babi Yar outside of Kyiv, Ukraine. Beginning on 29 September 1941 and ending on 30 September 1941, it is estimated that 33,771 Jews of all ages were killed by machine guns, rifles, and pistols and buried alive. On the day preceding the beginning of the executions, 28 September, the Nazis gave notice to herd all the Jews into one concentrated area. The notice read, “All Jews living in Kyiv and its vicinity must come to the corner of Melnikova and Dokhturovska Street by eight o’clock on the morning of 29 September 1941. They are to bring documents, money, valuables, as well as warm clothes, underwear, etc. Any Jews not carrying out this instruction and who are found elsewhere will be shot.”⁴¹ Thinking they were going to be relocated, the Jews came in numbers unforeseen by the Einsatzgruppen, reflected by a report sent out by Einsatzgruppen C, stating “it was initially thought that the action would only involve some 5,000 to 6,000 Jews, more than 30,000 Jews reported.”⁴² The report also noted that despite 75,000 Jews being executed this way, it had become “apparent that this method will not provide a solution to the Jewish problem.”⁴³ Regardless of this statement, and with full knowledge of the downsides of committing such atrocities, mass shootings would continue until the war’s end.

Babi Yar failed to meet two of the requirements listed above— seen in its mental strain on the executions and the inability to cover it up— making mass shootings a less than reliable method for continuation and achieving the overarching goal of complete eradication of the Jewish people. The Einsatzgruppen and German soldiers had failed to destroy any evidence until it was too late, and it harmed the mental health of the soldiers who conducted the murders. After shooting 33,771 innocent people, the Nazis brushed their hands of what had happened at the Babi Yar ravine and had the Ukrainian locals fill the mass grave with dirt. It would not remain that way for long, however: they recognized in 1943 that the Soviets would come across the ravine and discover what had happened there. Russia was pushing back the German forces and would regain control over Ukraine, making it paramount that the Nazis acted quickly to cover up what they had done. To prevent anyone from finding out about the massacres that happened at Babi Yar, SS-Standartenführer Paul Blobel came back to Babi Yar under Aktion 1005 to remove all traces of the event. Aktion 1005’s purpose was to “wipe

⁴¹ Michael Olive and Robert J. Edwards, *Operation Barbarossa, 1941*, (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2012), p. 195.

⁴² Ernst Klee, Willi Dreßen, and Volker Riess, “*The Good Old Days*”: *The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, (New York, NY: Free Press, 1991), p. 68.

⁴³ Klee, Dreßen, and Riess, “*The Good Old Days*,” p. 68.

out the traces of the mass graves of people executed by the Einsatzgruppen,”⁴⁴ with the expected outcome of avoiding future persecution. The corpses were stacked on funeral pyres from a nearby cemetery and lit ablaze using a combination of wood, gasoline, and oil. While attempting to destroy the evidence of what had happened at Babi Yar, Paul Blobel’s men had ordered: “Russian prisoners of war to burn all the bodies, destroying all the evidence of the crime.”⁴⁵ However, after the Russian prisoners of war had burned their bodies, their overseers failed to gun them down, allowing three of them to escape. Having escaped, they told the story; it was later reported to the *New York Times* in 1943, which wrote that “the Germans had machine-gunned from 50,000 to 80,000 of Kyiv’s Jewish men, women, and children.”⁴⁶

From the perpetrator’s perspective, a significant amount of psychological damage was also attributed to the mass shootings. Blobel, speaking of the events at Babi Yar, stated during the Nuremberg trials, “men who took part in these executions suffered... a lot, psychologically.”⁴⁷ There are reports of commanding officers giving their soldiers “large amounts of alcohol to alleviate the stress.”⁴⁸ This is referenced by Kurt Werner, a soldier in Sonderkommando 4a, an attachment of the Einsatzgruppen, who stated that, after shooting Jews at Babi Yar from six in the morning until five or six at night, “we were taken back to our quarters... [and] we were given alcohol (schnapps) again.”⁴⁹ Soldiers being instructed to consume large amounts of alcohol was somewhat expected when carrying out these mass shootings to cope with the scenes they witnessed and contributed to. Nevertheless, alcohol was not the answer to all their problems. Often it was a temporary solution to more significant reactions by the nervous system. In a court proceeding in Germany after the war had ended, the members of the Einsatzgruppen recounted that “The members... were in the long-run not up to the mental strain caused by the mass shootings.” In a conversation between Bach-Zelewski and Heinrich Himmler, Bach mentioned the effects on the men, stating, “Look at the eyes of the men in this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished for the rest of their lives.”⁵⁰ These men were not stone-cold killers. They could not mentally process what they were doing and why they were doing it, which caused their nervous systems to shut down. Himmler, considered one of the most dreaded Nazi leaders of all

⁴⁴ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 4 (“Einsatzgruppen Case”), p. 212, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llmlp/2011525364_NT_war-criminals_Vol-IV/2011525364_NT_war-criminals_Vol-IV.pdf.

⁴⁵ W.H. Lawrence, “50,000 Kiev Jews Reported Killed,” *New York Times*, 29 November 1943.

⁴⁶ W.H. Lawrence, “50,000 Kiev Jews Reported Killed.”

⁴⁷ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 4 (“Einsatzgruppen Case”), p. 491.

⁴⁸ Henri Zukier, “The Twisted Road To Genocide: On The Psychological Development of Evil During The Holocaust,” *Social Research* 61, no. 2 (1994), p. 431.

⁴⁹ Klee, Dreßen, and Riess “*The Good Old Days*,” p. 67.

⁵⁰ Zukier, “The Twisted Road To Genocide,” p. 431.

time, was left shaken after he experienced a mass shooting. During a visit to Minsk, Himmler wanted to view one of the shootings for himself, and after “witnessing the execution of a hundred men... nearly collapsed from shock,”⁵¹ “...he couldn’t stand still. His face was white as cheese, his eyes went wild and with each burst of gunfire he always looked at the ground.”⁵² From his experience in Minsk, Himmler would demand that other forms of execution be found that were less personal and more “humane,” not further to impair the soldiers carrying out the executions.

Side effects of the emotional distress caused by these shootings also impacted the victims in an unforeseen way; what should have been a quick and painless death became something entirely different. Some of the soldiers “were husbands and fathers,” and they were unable to focus on what they were doing, causing them to wince “as they pulled their triggers” because they were reminded of their family at home when staring directly at the innocent people they were shooting.⁵³ Whether it was due to a wince before pulling the trigger or aiming poorly to avoid killing their victims on the spot, trying to spare what lives they could, the result was a more agonizing and slow death. The leaders of these units would then walk around with their pistols or rifles and end the moans of their victims, likely not for the sake of the person dying but for the psychological well-being of their comrades.⁵⁴ SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, the man responsible for sending millions of Jews to their deaths, also felt a moral responsibility to the men, at one point mentioning that “young people are being made into sadists”⁵⁵ due to the mass shootings and that these shootings will cause German people to “go mad or become insane.”⁵⁶ In an attempt to prevent any further complications, the Einsatzgruppen began to experiment with different methods with less personal interaction.

Gas vans, also known as murder wagons and Kaiser-coffee cars, were introduced to “humanely” kill Jewish individuals with few negative side effects to the operator. Initially, the gas vans were experimented with in 1940, using mentally disabled children as their subjects. Yet, the Einsatzgruppen would make them well known in late 1941 as a more accessible and large-scale execution method. By combining multiple facets from past experiences, the Nazis could develop something new that resembles the gas chambers later used during the Final Solution. Using the gas chambers during the Final Solution was likely a combination of the experience gained using gas vans and the rooms constructed during Operation T4. Like mass shootings, gas vans had their inadequacies. Despite finding a more “humane” method that was less hands-on, the men carrying out the duties of driving the vans and emptying them had reported psychological issues, primarily because of the screams they could hear while driving the

⁵¹ Zukier, “The Twisted Road To Genocide,” p. 430.

⁵² Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 108.

⁵³ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 4 (“Einsatzgruppen Case”), p. 448.

⁵⁴ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 4 (“Einsatzgruppen Case”), p. 448.

⁵⁵ Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 109.

⁵⁶ Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 109.

van. There was also no good way to dispose of the bodies, leaving traces of evidence. Similarly to the mass shootings, the men driving the gas vans would drop their victims off in a predesignated mass grave or drop-off zone.

Gas vans went through several different stages of appearance and operational ability. When they were first implemented, the gas vans used a system like Operation T4. A hose was installed from the cabin, where a pure carbon monoxide canister was, into the cab or bed of the truck where the victims were. This method seemed to work seamlessly, allowing up to 40 persons to be executed at a time. Between pick-up, execution, dumping of the bodies, and returning with an empty cabin, it only took roughly three hours.⁵⁷ Although these numbers do not seem extremely significant compared to events such as Babi Yar, it is assumed that as many as 700,000 Jews were victims of the gas vans. That is nearly an eighth of the total number of people who were mercilessly killed during the entirety of the Holocaust. Due to budget constraints, the Einsatzgruppen was issued less-than-perfect vehicles. Pure carbon monoxide would no longer be an option because of the limited resources for these efforts, leaving the emissions from the vehicle as the only suitable means of execution.

The second series of these vans would have appeared to be built with haste. They used wood flooring in the van's bed, drilled a small hole in the back or bottom of the vehicle and connected a hose from the tailpipe to the hole to fill the cabin with carbon monoxide. The dependability of the men operating these vehicles was also a significant issue, which resulted in horrendous deaths for the victims forced into the vans. What they were trying to accomplish was a peaceful transition from life to death, or at least that is what they argued, where the victims would slowly go unconscious and eventually die due to a restriction of oxygen. Wanting to end the misery of the victims as quickly as possible, the drivers would press "the accelerator to the fullest extent. By doing that, the persons to be executed suffer death from suffocation and not death by dozing off as was planned."⁵⁸ This caused the victims of these horrendous deaths to have "distorted faces and excretions,"⁵⁹ which was ruled to be fixed with adjustments to the levers, which limited the amount of carbon monoxide that could pass at any given time, making death come quicker and presumedly make "the prisoners fall asleep peacefully,"⁶⁰ which prevented the aforementioned distorted faces and excretions according to Dr. August Becker in a document sent to SS-Obersturmbannführer Rauff. Another major issue noted in reports sent by the units operating these vans was the unreliability when the weather wasn't near perfect. Dr. Becker also

⁵⁷ Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*, pp. 152-153.

⁵⁸ "Report from SS (Schutzstaffel) Lt. Dr. August Becker to SS Lt. Col. Walter Rauff," *United States National Archives*, Record Group 238, Exhibit 288, 1942, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/596664?objectPage=3>. Translation taken from <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/nazi-correspondence-regarding-gassing-vans>.

⁵⁹ "Report from SS (Schutzstaffel) Lt. Dr. August Becker to SS Lt. Col. Walter Rauff."

⁶⁰ "Report from SS (Schutzstaffel) Lt. Dr. August Becker to SS Lt. Col. Walter Rauff."

reported that “the vans... stop completely in rainy weather. If it has rained for instance for only one-half hour, the van cannot be used because it simply skids away. It can only be used in absolutely dry weather.”⁶¹ Considering the weather in the East was frequently less than ideal, the vans were often rendered useless. With all the issues these vans had and the screams from the people inside, this caused many of the operators to develop serious psychological problems.

The purpose of the gas vans was to allow for a more humane form of execution because the shooting harmed the executioners. Himmler states, “by using these gassing vehicles, the troubles connected with shooting would fall to the wayside.”⁶² Himmler would soon realize how wrong he was. Considering the operators were close to the victims, with only a thin layer of metal separating them, they could hear the screams and groans of their victims as they began to suffocate and go into convulsions. Reality would set in very quickly, however, with documentation from a soldier by the name of Lauer writing, “I can still hear the hammering and the screaming of the Jews— ‘Dear Germans, let us out!’”⁶³ Months into their campaign of murder by death van, the operators were already expressing psychological issues as early as November 1941. If the screams and pounding were not enough to break them, removing the deceased from the vehicle, with distorted faces, excrement, and fumes leaking out, tended to be enough.

Some men believed that the gas vans were more grotesque and gravely worse psychologically than the shootings. Dr. Becker reported concerns about this and sought a solution not to implicate the operators in the post-mortem activities, writing, “I brought to the attention of the commanders of those concerned, the immense psychological injuries and damages to their health which that work can have for those men, even if not immediately, at least later on.”⁶⁴ In a Nazi criminal’s case in Munich in 1972, a defendant named Schuchart gave vivid details of what he had witnessed: “When the doors were opened the bodies were all entangled and covered with excrement. As a result of complaints... Schuchart later refused to use the gas vans again, on the grounds that it was impossible to persuade his men to carry out such a task.”⁶⁵ Operators were not the only ones affected. During an interrogation of Adolf Eichmann, he recounted his observations of the unloading of a gas van: “I couldn’t bring myself to look closely, even once.... The screaming and, and, I was too upset.... The van drove up to a long trench, the door was opened, and bodies thrown out. They still seemed alive, their limbs were so supple... I’d had more than I could take.”⁶⁶ He may have witnessed Einsatzkommando or men of the Einsatzgruppen emptying the

⁶¹ “Report from SS (Schutzstaffel) Lt. Dr. August Becker to SS Lt. Col. Walter Rauff.”

⁶² Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 146.

⁶³ Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 169.

⁶⁴ *Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, Vol. 4 (“Einsatzgruppen Case”), p. 449.

⁶⁵ Russel, *Understanding Willing Participants*, p. 171.

⁶⁶ Klee, Dreßén, and Riess “*The Good Old Days*,” pp. 221-222.

vans. Nevertheless, due to the severity of psychological distress caused by mass shootings and gas vans, the Nazis frequently used Jews, prisoners of war, or locals to handle such duties.

First-person accounts, like Petrivna, a Ukrainian girl, give a glimpse of what it was like for everyday citizens of countries invaded by Germany. In an interview with Father Patrick Desbois, she recounts a day that still haunts her, along with two other girls who were forced to “pack down the bodies of the Jews and throw a fine layer of sand on top of them so that other Jews could lay down.”⁶⁷ During his interview with Father Patrick, Adolf Wislovski made similar statements, stating, “Russians and perhaps others, locals. They were digging the pits.”⁶⁸ Innocence was not an option if you were selected to serve the Nazis in their sadistic efforts. Petrivna learned this at a young age from her mother, being told, “Go, if you don’t go, they will kill you!”⁶⁹ In this statement, her mother tells her that if she does not go and comply with the soldiers’ demands, she too will be lying dead inside the pits that the locals were forced to dig. In the minds of the Nazi high command, this was a large experiment to determine the best means for manufacturing murder on a scale reminiscent of a factory producing cars or toys.

This would culminate in the creation of new units explicitly used for post-mortem activities. These units were referred to as the “Sonderkommandos.” Sonderkommandos were not German men who served in the Nazi military forces; quite the contrary, Sonderkommando units consisted of camp inmates, who were more often than not Jews. Some time between May and September 1942, the first Sonderkommandos took part in a gassing operation inside a renovated cottage called Bunker I.⁷⁰ Their job was retrieving the corpses inside Bunker I and burying them in pre-dug ditches. In September of 1942, the term would be official, as it was the word used by Blobel’s people at the facilities in Chelmno.⁷¹ The duties of the Sonderkommando varied. None of the jobs were anything less than torture, with some Jews choosing to commit suicide by jumping into the burning flames.⁷² With many different steps in the process, the Sonderkommando was in charge of calming people arriving at the gas chambers, collecting their goods and clothing, retrieving the corpses from the gas chambers, harvesting gold teeth, and cremating the remains of their fellow Jews. According to accounts from Jews who served in the Sonderkommando, such as Leon Cohen, a survivor of Auschwitz and a member of the Auschwitz Sonderkommando, they could live somewhat freely within the building of the crematorium. He recalled, “We could do whatever we pleased, as long as we didn’t leave the area of the crematorium

⁶⁷ Father Patrick Desbois and Paul A. Shapiro, *The Holocaust By Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 84.

⁶⁸ Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 118.

⁶⁹ Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 84.

⁷⁰ Gideon Greif, *We Wept Without Tears: Interviews with Jewish Survivors of the Auschwitz Sonderkommando*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 6-7.

⁷¹ Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 8.

⁷² Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 294.

building, of course.”⁷³ They also had access to any food brought by the Jews who were forced into the gas chambers: “Unlike the other Auschwitz prisoners, [we] were not undernourished... we had plenty of food.”⁷⁴ All of this, however, came at the cost of their mental well-being. Dealing with the death of men, women, and children daily, twelve hours at a time, forced them to repress their emotions to feel like “normal people,” which resulted in them being able to view what they were doing as “work.”⁷⁵ From the Nazis’ point of view, the Sonderkommando was a saving grace for their men. They didn’t have to deal with death on such a personal level. They were only responsible for dropping the canisters of gas into the chambers or turning the valve, making them feel less accountable for the atrocities they were committing.

Through trial and error, the Nazis developed what they viewed as the most systematic process of execution, which led to the deaths of nearly four million Jews over two years within the death camp system. Its multivariable approach was established by incorporating aspects of all the previous actions committed by the Nazis, ranging from Operation T4 and the Euthanasia programs to the psychological battles the men had from mass shootings and the use of gas vans. With a new system in place, SS-Sturmbannführer Gricksch, a member of the SS Main Office and camp inspector, confirmed this, portraying Auschwitz as having “The most advanced methods permit the execution of the Führer-order in the shortest possible time and without arousing much attention.”⁷⁶ This would result in the Nazis being prepared to carry out the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. These “most advanced methods” included all the criteria for the Nazis to conduct mass extermination. The death camps, such as Auschwitz, were coordinated, with the gathering of Jews, shipping them to the camp, and processing them through the camp where they met their inevitable death. Actions taken were repeatable, with much of a hands-off approach when it came to the actual implementation of death, resulting in much less psychological anguish for the men operating the camps, and they had a way to dispose of the evidence.

Auschwitz reflected the efforts made in creating an assembly line style death machine. In a report directed at Herff and Himmler, Gricksch explained the process step-by-step, providing us with the most accurate interpretation of what it was like to see the assembly line in action:

The Jews arrive in special trains (freight cars) toward evening and are driven on special tracks to areas of the camp specifically set aside for this purpose. There the Jews are unloaded and examined for their fitness to work by a team of doctors, in the presence of

⁷³ Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 304

⁷⁴ Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 304.

⁷⁵ Desbois and Shapiro, *A Priest’s Journey*, p. 299.

⁷⁶ “Auschwitz: Report from Alfred Franke-Gricksch entitled ‘Resettlement of Jews,’” in *A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust*, University of South Florida Archive, <https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/document/DocAusch.htm>.

the camp commandant and several SS officers. At this point anyone who can somehow be incorporated into the work program is put in a special camp. The curably ill are sent straight to a medical camp and are restored to health through a special diet... The unfit go to cellars in a large house which are entered from outside. They go down five or six steps into a fairly long, well-constructed and well-ventilated cellar area, which is lined with benches to the left and right. It is brightly lit, and the benches are numbered. The prisoners are told that they are to be cleansed and disinfected for their new assignments. They must therefore completely undress to be bathed. To avoid panic and to prevent disturbances of any kind, they are instructed to arrange their clothing neatly under their respective numbers, so that they will be able to find their things again after their bath. Everything proceeds in a perfectly orderly fashion. Then they pass through a small corridor and enter a large cellar room which resembles a shower bath. In this room are three large pillars, into which certain materials can be lowered from outside the cellar room. When three- to four-hundred people have been herded into this room, the doors are shut, and containers filled with the substances are dropped down into the pillars. As soon as the containers touch the base of the pillars, they release particular substances that put the people to sleep in one minute. A few minutes later, the door opens on the other side, where the elevator is located. The hair of the corpses is cut off, and their teeth are extracted (gold-filled teeth) by specialists (Jews). It has been discovered that Jews were hiding pieces of jewelry, gold, platinum etc., in hollow teeth. Then the corpses are loaded into elevators and brought up to the first floor, where ten large crematoria are located. (Because fresh corpses burn particularly well, only 50-100 lbs. of coke are needed for the whole process.) The job itself is performed by Jewish prisoners, who never step outside this camp again.⁷⁷

After reconstructing the process in such vivid detail, there is little left to the imagination. As we can see, there are references to all the previous actions undertaken by the regime, some more subtle than others. The Nahplans are represented in how the Jews were shipped to the camps. The unfit, like the disabled during Operation T4, were sent directly to their death and adopted similarly constructed rooms resembling showers—none of what had happened at the camps happened by chance. Every procedure used in the death camps resulted from prior experimentation, deliberately crafted to end lives in the most diabolical ways. These deaths were not naturally occurring due to the ongoing war. They were specific individuals, carefully selected, and chosen to be killed in the least sympathetic way possible to conform to the delusion that they were no better than animals.

⁷⁷ “Auschwitz: Report from Alfred Franke-Gricksch entitled ‘Resettlement of Jews,’” in *A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust*.

Conclusion

The sad reality is that Jews were being sentenced to death for merely existing, and their brethren were forced to take part in the process, resulting in their demise. It was intolerable and was caused by the deranged opinions of a sadistic man who had argued that it was done for the interest of the German *Volk*. Despite Hitler's dreams of a Germany free of the Jewish population, it was a dream that evolved from incoherent to insane. Based on the scholarly work that has already been done and the primary resources available surrounding Hitler, the Nazis, and their implementation of the Final Solution, it is clear that before 1941, their only solution to the so-called Jewish Question was not predetermined to be genocide. It was in the year 1941 that Hitler must have given a verbal order to begin seeking a means to end the Jewish race, dealing with it once and for all and setting the groundwork for the thousand-year German Reich. If Hitler had premediated the Holocaust and the Final Solution, it would also mean that he had planned to go into the war with methods to commit genocide. This paper has shown that it was a lengthy and indiscriminate process that included disabled Germans, Ukrainians, Roma people, and others, that concluded with the construction and use of the death camps, taking the most suitable elements of previous actions and getting rid of the features that caused harm to the perpetrators. Despite the individual point of view on the topic, it is a topic that must be discussed to provide us all with the insight to prevent such an atrocity from happening again.

**The Child as the Solution and as the Problem:
The Youth of the French Revolution**

*Victoria Korotchenko*¹

“We, the young people, have more than any other class interest in preventing the reestablishment of the feudal tyranny... since we will live with the consequence in this life that we are just beginning.”

“Protest and arrest of students in the city of Angers”

3 February 1789²

When discussing the tumultuous matter of the French Revolution (1789-1799), children and young adults are seldom in the spotlight, even though this decade-long event would undeniably shape how these youths grew and developed into adults who would later shape history. The historiography tends to focus on adult revolutionaries and reactionaries. While some historians, like Lynn Hunt and Adrian O’Connor, focus on children, young individuals are often lumped together and mentioned as monoliths in discussions of the Revolution’s effects, such as how its policies impacted familial relationships and the state of education, respectively.³ Hunt, O’Connor, and others’ monumental monographs featuring discussions of *l’enfant* and *la jeunesse* will be cited further. However, these works view children as *recipients* of effects rather than as subjects of their own narrative. As such, this paper will only seek to add to the understanding of the revolutionary experience and daily life within the tumult, just from a different vantage point. While it has certainly been proven that children felt the effects of the Revolution’s alterations, less attention has been given to the discussion of revolutionary youth as agents of action and change in their own right and as some of the Revolution’s own protagonists: as soldiers in its wars, as dedicated lobbyists, as fiery reactionaries— all roles that youth came to fill in this decade-long stretch of upheaval that certainly complicated the context in which these children grew up. The

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² “Protestation et arrêté des étudiants en droit de la ville d’Angers du 3 février” quoted in Nicolas Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens: The Emergence of a Revolutionary Youth in France, 1788-1790,” *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 1 (2011): p. 232, accessed January 27, 2022, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41678824>.

³ See *In Pursuit of Politics* by Adrian O’Connor and *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* by Lynn Hunt.

Revolution touched children just as it did every other member of society—youth built on precedents past and new revolutionary dialogue in reacting to this life-shaping historical moment.

Defining the Child

Before we explore youth in the throes of revolution, we must first establish the constraints of this conversation and what exactly defined “youth” in late eighteenth-century France. The definition of “childhood” itself was inconsistent before and during the Revolution, complicating any clear answer of exactly what age range embodied “youth.” For example, education in schools is a traditional hallmark of marking childhood. In eighteenth-century France, many children would attend *collèges*, usually between the ages of ten to twenty. However, this was erratic, as many of these schools before the Revolution were charity institutions that varied across regions and had disparate retention rates.⁴ Moreover, during the Revolution, this variance continued as some pupils attended the *collèges* and *lycées* of the “reformed” educational systems while others fell through the cracks or joined the revolutionary armies at very young ages.⁵ Youth occupied many faculties of society, but these were not always the schoolhouses; thus, advancement within education is not the clearest of thresholds between youth and adulthood.

Age is also often looked to as a marker of youth, but that, too, is complicated in the revolutionary era.⁶ The words for child, youth, girl, and boy were fickle and often inconsistent in usage: “*enfant* and *jeune* were employed simultaneously to describe anyone from a newborn to an economically dependent, single person in their twenties,” with age mattering far less than “life stages” like marriage. These life stages varied depending on the sex of the child: the life stage that determined adulthood for a girl was usually marriage, and for a boy, it was finishing his education or obtaining property.⁷ As such, gender also unsurprisingly affected definitions of age and childhood experiences. The average age of marriage for a woman was twenty-four, and men usually achieved independent status at a similar age. However,

⁴ Julia M. Gossard, *Young Subjects: Children, State-Building and Social Reform in the Eighteenth Century French World* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2021), p. 5.

⁵ Antonia Perna, “Bara and Viala, or Virtue Rewarded: The Memorialization of Two Child Martyrs of the French Revolution,” *French History* 35, no. 2 (2021): p. 192, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/craa071>.

⁶ It is difficult to define childhood even now: in the United States, the legal definition of adulthood may be strictly eighteen, but there remain social complexities. A teenager is often defined as a child, as much as that adolescent may not want to be lumped in with the little ones; in publishing, the genre of “children’s literature” often encompasses stories meant for the tiniest of tots to young adults. Even legally there remain loopholes: one may become an adult at eighteen, but there remain restrictions until the ages of 21 or 25 like buying drugs or alcohol or being deemed responsible enough to rent a car. In France, the age of consent is 15, but one cannot drink until eighteen and is not a full adult until 21. The age of so-called “childhood” remains mutable centuries beyond the Revolution.

⁷ Gossard, *Young Subjects*, pp. 14-15.

that was obviously not true for everyone, with some women getting married well into their thirties and men not establishing themselves until after twenty-five.⁸

There were efforts to characterize the *range* of youth, but they, too, were varied. The Académie Française defined childhood as lasting “until the age of ten or twelve.”⁹ One philosopher wrote that “leaving the *collège*, upon entry into the world, [is when] one’s ‘adolescent’ education begins,” signaling even different markers within childhood itself.¹⁰ In contrast, others defined minors as “young men under the age of twenty-five who did not yet have the administration of his own goods.”¹¹ The latter would be reflected in the Constitution of 1791’s minimum voting age requirement, which declared that only those twenty-five and older could fulfill this duty of an “active” citizen.¹² However, legal definitions often do not coincide with social connotations and understandings: when examining sources from this period, one will see the word *jeune* concurrently describing six-year-old revolutionary menaces and twenty-something-year-old law students at university. Also, as seen prevalently in discussions of young revolutionary martyrs, individuals in power, like those in the National Convention, would also twist these labels of “child” and “adult,” of “boy” and “man,” to suit their propagandist purposes, further complicating and eluding definition. For example, martyred child soldier Joseph Bara was initially referred to as a “young man”; however, as soon as Maximilien Robespierre saw an opportunity to vilify the royalist murderers and pantheonize this loyal revolutionary, Robespierre’s speeches, as well as later portraits and writings about the thirteen-year-old boy, increasingly stressed his “young age” and status as a “heroic child.”¹³ There was an understanding of at least two different phases existing within one’s life – childhood followed by adulthood, although perhaps also a period of adolescence in between – but the location of the dividing line remained elusive.

As the above discussion of education and adolescent development suggests, children’s lives were incredibly varied and were mainly shaped by class and economic factors, even after the Revolution attempted its sweeping equalization. In the years leading up to the Revolution, the contrast between the children of the Second Estate and the Third Estate was quite clear— this is evident in the written record, including within the general complaints of the Third Estate and, later, the revolutionary concentration on equality, but also within artistic depictions. At the same time, portraits of Marie Antoinette and her children feature silk taffeta gowns, coiffed hairstyles, meticulous detail, and promenades in the park.

⁸ Margaret Darrow, “Popular Concepts of Marital Choice in Eighteenth Century France,” *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 2 (1985), p. 265.

⁹ Perna, “Bara and Viala,” p. 199.

¹⁰ Adrian O’Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics: Education and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 37.

¹¹ Gossard, *Young Subjects*, p. 15.

¹² “The Constitution of 1791,” (*Conseil constitutionnel*, Paris: 1791).

¹³ Perna, “Bara and Viala,” p. 199.

Depictions of the mass youth often present vague sketches of youth in tattered clothing and with solemn expressions on their faces.¹⁴ Each group lived different lives with very different levels of privilege, evident in the clothes of the royal children and the rags of the poor. However, the influence of class and economics on childhood did not change following the events of 1789: although the Revolution attempted to make all citizens—and thus their families—equal, children’s development, lifestyle, and education remained dependent on external factors such as parental wealth and involvement in revolutionary (or counterrevolutionary) politics. After all, the Parisian child who lost his parents to the guillotine would come to live a very different life than a peasant child in the provinces, where the revolution’s arrival was delayed and not always as violent. Such economic influences also further determined the definition of childhood, as someone who could not provide for themselves retained minority status, while those with some wealth could be legally considered adults. As historian Julia Gossard writes, “if a young man failed to sufficiently provide for himself, he could have his childhood extended.... parents could send their offspring to juvenile detention centers for idleness or squandering their finances even after the child was 25.”¹⁵ Not only was childhood variable by our modern criteria of education and age, but a child’s minority status was dependent on their class and privileges.

Although the word “youth” encompasses various age groups and individuals, indulging in this variety allows a broader, more detailed view of revolutionary conditions. Children during this era admittedly lived very different lives, but accounting for this context allows multiple entryways into the diverse reactions of each kind of youth toward the Revolution. For example, we can examine the methods and responses of each group in comparison to each other: when addressing revolutionary changes, different youth groups would take advantage of the different institutions they found themselves in, whether that be within the family, in their social circles of friends, in schools, in universities, or in youths’ political clubs. This essay will work within the realms of this ambiguity and mutability by looking at the revolutionary reactions of children, adolescents, and young adults as encompassing the French “youth,” as is evasively described by the sources themselves.

¹⁴ Eugène Bataille, *Marie-Antoinette and Her Children in the Jardin anglais du Petit Trianon in 1785*. Artstor. 1867, Oil on canvas, 270 x 194 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.15670277>; Anonymous French draftsman, *Peasant woman with two children*. Artstor. 18th Century, Drawing. National Galleries of Scotland. https://library.artstor.org/asset/AWSS35953_35953_29781731.

¹⁵ Julia M. Gossard, “Why Do We Doubt Capable Children: Constructing Childhood in the Revolutionary Era,” *The Junto*, last modified 17 April 2018, <https://earlyamericanists.com/2018/04/17/why-we-doubt-capable-children/>.

History of Children's Activism in Pre-Revolutionary France

The action and reaction that occurred in the heat of the Revolution may seem unparalleled and drastic—as will be discussed later, youth became politically involved with the National Assembly and young children partook in revolutionary violence—but just as the French Revolution had roots in centuries past, children's responses and movements were not new or unprecedented. Even though youth's reactions to the French Revolution would be tailored to its specific conditions, these reactions existed in a long history of youth activism and response, building on precedents set in prior decades. Furthermore, although children of the 1790s had not directly witnessed these precedents, these influences trickled down through time, coming to shape the conscious and unconscious factors that molded the moment that revolutionary youth found themselves in.

For example, the preceding decades of the eighteenth century saw a growing emphasis on the idea of a child as a separate individual with their own capabilities. This is evident in the increasingly popular genre of children's literature, which directly targeted a child audience. This genre featured children as protagonists in their own right, affirming “the child...as an autonomous being” by portraying their perspectives as worth publishing and thus worth reading.¹⁶ Children and their decisions had been increasingly valued before they became pivotal for securing a Republican future. This century witnessed an ongoing turn towards “regarding children as separate individuals deserving of affection and educational concern.” Such literature embodied and emboldened this narrative of autonomy and independent individuality.¹⁷ Importantly, this medium was targeted directly to children rather than their guardians, thus recognizing youth's autonomy and reinforcing how children could think for themselves. Revolutionary children eventually adopted this mindset: it is reflected within their assertions that they were acting of their own volition and that they were of “political significan[ce].”¹⁸ This unconscious yet prevalent mindset of youth's autonomy and liberty exhibits how society was shifting its conception of children, but its presence in the later messages of youth themselves demonstrates its influence on their revolutionary motivations— children were being told that they could think for themselves, and they did.

This burgeoning notion of children as autonomous, independent individuals was also evident in the responsible and authoritative role children increasingly took in their schools. In the century leading up to the French Revolution, to be a student was also to be a Catholic reformer and promoter of *ancien régime* values outside the classroom. Children were expected to use what they learned in school

¹⁶ Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 25.

¹⁷ Hunt, *The Family Romance*, p. 18.

¹⁸ “Protestation et arrêté des étudiants en droit de la ville d'Angers du 3 février” in Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens,” p. 232.

to better the “quality and knowledge of their parents, siblings, and their households.” Schoolmasters even visited pupils’ homes to check their progress.¹⁹ At the same time, they were also vessels of surveillance with the “responsibility of building nascent early modern French nationalism or at least, loyalty to the French state.” This surveillance usually took the role of correcting accents and dialects, reporting “misdeeds of their parents, siblings, and other household members to their teacher and schoolmaster,” and policing small illegalities that they may have witnessed. However, this put children in positions of power and responsibility.²⁰ When the Revolution came, children still fulfilled these duties but in a new context, as the “pledges of greatness and prosperity of republics;” they remained authorities within their realms and as agents of reform and policing, tattling on those who seemingly threatened the new foundations they were being told to protect.²¹ But by then, such duties and propagation had a long relationship with the youth in France: it was not a new concept, just an expanded one.

Not only were children being distinguished as autonomous individuals, but from the beginning of the eighteenth century, youth were also being presented with authority and, more importantly, used it according to their thoughts and whims. These developments—decades in the making—contradict any ideas that children were just copying adult revolutionaries. Instead, they were subject to top-down and bottom-up influences, like political propaganda in schools and messages in the books they read. More importantly, however, revolutionary children were building upon a long history that had increasingly preached their autonomy, the importance of their perspective, and their ability to wield authority. These were the ideas that, alongside revolutionary encouragements, would be the unconscious permission children used to act of their own accord.

The Effects of Revolutionary Dialogue and Change

As the French Revolution dawned, it did not come quietly or disproportionately: it was not a distant event, touching even the youngest within society. For immediate proof, one just has to look at popular baby names during the Revolution, some of which include Brutus, August the Tenth, Fructidor, and Civilization-Jemmagés-Republics.²² In these cases, the Revolution defined these young individuals’ identities from birth, imbuing them with revolutionary connections and sentiments before they were even cognizant of what their names implied. From this perspective, the individual child was less important than parental (and then later the child’s) devotion to the Revolution.

¹⁹ “Visite Générale” quoted in Gossard, *Young Subjects*, p. 78.

²⁰ Gossard, *Young Subjects*, pp. 87-88.

²¹ “...la fête de la Jeunesse étoit celle des vertus naissantes, parce que c’est par les vertus que s’établissent et se conservent les empires, et que les vertus de la jeunesse sont surtout le gage de la grandeur et de la prospérité des républiques.” in “Distribution des prix de moralité [3529],” (Newberry Library French Pamphlet Collection: Paris, 1798), p. 4.

²² Jean Robiquet, *Daily Life in the French Revolution*, (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 63-64.

This naming trend also reflects the broader “ideal” revolutionary child being crafted and increasingly promulgated through popular and political influences: this character was an active participant, contributing to and sustaining the Republic from a very young age. From the age of six, for example, schoolchildren were expected to know and identify with the new iconography and values introduced by the Revolution and, more importantly, carry them beyond the 1790s. In the National Convention’s framework regarding primary school, for example, the curriculum involved the expected reading and math education but also instruction in revolution-related material:

IV.4. In both sections of each school the pupils shall be taught: 1st, reading and writing, and the reading selections shall make them conscious of their rights and duties; 2nd, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, and the Constitution of the French Republic; 3rd, elementary instruction in republican morality; 4th, the elements of the French language, both spoken and written; 5th, the rules of simple calculation and land measurement; 6th, the elements of geography and of the history of free peoples; 7th, instruction concerning the major natural phenomena and the most common natural resources. They shall be taught the miscellany of heroic deeds and triumphal songs.²³

Not only were these pupils meant to be learned and literate individuals, but they were also being raised to be active citizens, carrying out France’s new patriotic Republican values and understanding that they were to preserve the legacy of the “free peoples.”

Youth were also mandated participants in public, inculcating ceremonies like the Fête de la Jeunesse that “encourage[d] not just obedience, but civic performance, public participation, and preparation for engaged citizenship.” Specifically, at the Fête de la Jeunesse, children gave speeches, reenacted revolutionary dramatic moments, competitively recited revolutionary mantras from the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, and sang patriotic songs.²⁴ Some of this can rightfully be considered indoctrination attempts, but that does not discount the fact that children participated in the revolutionary atmosphere alongside adults who had their own festivals. Children also often encountered—and were therefore shaped by—other public revolutionary markers, like protestations and violence, getting caught in the frustrated crowds or walking past the victims of the guillotine.²⁵ The Revolution was not just a political context but a social one, with its imagery and action shaping how children matured.

However, children were not only witnesses to change: because of this familiarity with revolutionary ideals and processes, children and youth also came to co-opt and participate in the rhetoric

²³ “Decree relative to Primary Schools,” (*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: Exploring the French Revolution*, Paris: 1794).

²⁴ O’Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics*, p. 207.

²⁵ Robiquet, *Daily Life*, pp. 125-127, p. 170.

of the Revolution and its mobilizations, including its violence, when they desired to make their feelings heard. Combined with the encouraging republican rhetoric and legacy of childhood activism and participation, fervor and revolutionary conditions led to an emergence of youth involvement within the French Revolution from its very beginning.

Looking to language first, youth were indirectly and directly encouraged to be active citizens, and to be involved in shaping this republic. So they tried emphasizing their Republican concerns and intellectual autonomy along the way. Just as the adults expressed their complaints in *cahiers de doléances* and then in letters and manifestos to the Assembly, children wrote letters to the National Assembly, hoping to have a part in shaping their new Republic and to fulfill the patriotic duties they kept hearing about. In 1795, Parisian students wrote to the Committee of Public Instruction to “advocate for better instruction in ‘beaux-arts,’... [saying] subjects like reading and math were prioritized over artistic subjects like drawing, sculpture, and painting.”²⁶ Students wrote “proposals for reform, pleas for resources, justifications for existing practices, and condemnations of alternatives or abuses” alongside “teachers, administrators,... and local authorities.”²⁷ In yet another case, *lycée* “correspondents...complained that they were still using works from the Ancien Régime,... suggested establishing a company of learned men to draft suitable texts, and submitted their own works for consideration.”²⁸ When youth partook in the established tradition of petitioning, they were often interested in the realm of education with which they were all too familiar. They asserted themselves as authorities and worthy contributors by suggesting their ideas be considered alongside those of legislators and adults. This had precedence in past youth activism and mentalities, but prominent revolutionary narratives also seep into these words of child activists: especially in the latter example, one can see their concern with the correct integration of Republican values in the curriculum that would shape their growth into the aspirational active citizen.

However, it must be accentuated that these youths were not necessarily mimicking surrounding and preceding adults: many youth movements coexisted with and even predated significant adult reactions. The young people of Brittany and Anjou, for example, began to mobilize in late December 1788, rallying around the Third Estate prior to the meeting of the Estates-General, and then printed pamphlets in 1789 that publicized their thoughts on developing matters, including their perceived degrading subservience to the other two estates and their desire for political representation.²⁹ Even broadly speaking, “immediately after the fall of the Bastille, young men and women, among them

²⁶ Gossard, *Young Subjects*, p. 202.

²⁷ O’Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics*, p. 161.

²⁸ O’Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics*, p. 209 [taken from multiple letters including “Letter to the National Convention from students at the Collège de Condrieu in the Rhône, 1793”].

²⁹ Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens,” p. 228.

children, formed political associations and military bodies, gathered in assemblies, and sent addresses and delegations to Paris.”³⁰ The movements of youth did not just follow those of famous adult revolutionaries, but rather, these youths were among the fray contributing and reacting to revolutionary change.

Not only did youth mobilize to lobby and petition for change like those in the provinces of Brittany and Anjou, but some youth groups also used more brutal, violent means to profess their opinions. At least one pamphlet, published in 1789, spoke about the dangers of “a small troupe [made up of those] who were barely three years old” that fought violently with other children on Parisian streets, resulting in the loss of some young eyes and hands.³¹ While this source is likely exaggerated given its heavily emotional, moralizing message to mothers to protect their future “petits Césars,” this mention of youth violence was one moment that existed alongside other revolutionary brutality, with youth’s physicality coming out on the streets, in their institutions, and on the battlefield. When the controversy around the Civil Constitution sparked conflict across France in 1791, students at the University of Poitiers threw the school into “violent disarray” because of the juror and non-juror debate that had taken hold of their teaching faculty; students ended up “jeer[ing] the political authorities as they installed their preferred instructors” with the backing of national guardsmen.³² From child gangs to passionate university students, these youth resorted to violence to defend their beliefs and what *they* thought would be best for the new France. In doing so, we see that youth were not necessarily always passive reformers — even the very young participated in the French Revolution’s institution of violence.

Also noteworthy are the youth that participated in pro-revolutionary battles against monarchists, counterrevolutionaries, and foreign forces, fighting as “a soldier and a citizen; in this dual quality, [they are] permitted no squeamish thoughts,” thus forgoing their individuality for the preservation of a republic they were being told was worth protecting.³³ Although exact numbers of how many were present are difficult to acquire since only able-bodied men aged eighteen to twenty-five were technically drafted, children aged twelve and up were present on battlefields, sometimes dying while fighting for France and the Revolution. For example, the royalist Baron de Sainte-Croix reported that when the National Guard captured him, he “always had next to me a child [*un enfant*] of fourteen to fifteen years, born in MaLucène with a pistol pointed at my chest.”³⁴ From this source, we can see how

³⁰ Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens,” p. 226.

³¹ Anonymous, “Danger des patrouilles exercées par les enfants: avis aux pères & mères,” (Paris: Chez Cressonnier, 1789), pp. 2, 7.

³² O’Connor, p. 182.

³³ Robiquet, p. 170.

³⁴ “J’avois toujours à côté de moi un enfant de 14 à 15 ans, natif de MaLucène, avec un pistolet armé sur ma poitrine.” Guillaume-Emmanuel-Joseph Guilhem de Clermont-Lodève, baron de Sainte-Croix, “Déclaration de Monsieur de Ste. Croix, officier au régiment de Beauvoisis, concernant sa détention,

youth were commonplace characters within revolutionary armies, even taking higher positions such as guarding important prisoners of war. Some gave more to the revolutionary cause: numerous children were recorded as revolutionary martyrs, dying in the name of the republic. The cry of “Vive la République!” was said to be the last words of one such child-revolutionary, François Joseph Bara. He was born in 1779 and thus grew up in the upheaval leading to the Revolution. His story is complicated in its veracity, but it is true that he defied army rules to become a drummer boy at twelve in Vendée, dying at counterrevolutionaries’ hands in 1793. Bara is arguably the most famous of French child martyrs, largely due to Robespierre’s fascination with elevating him and Jacques-Louis David’s ethereal painting of the child. However, Bara was one of many who died for the revolutionary cause. There were also fifteen-year-old Joseph Viala, a boy named Mosnier, and eleven-year-old Pierre Bayle³⁵— all fought on the Revolution’s side, finding its values and messages worth dying for.

The Revolution’s broad goal was to overthrow tyranny, but in doing so, it also sought to create a bright future. By looking at their words and actions, youth were willing, enthusiastic participants in shaping and creating this— *their*— future. This participation took many shapes, from petitioning and proposing patriotic violence. All of this demonstrates how youth came to see themselves as critical to the processes changing France— they were not outsiders looking in. Youth were involved in the broader conversation and part of those processes shaping history.

External Reactions

By writing letters, suggesting political contributions, and physically “defending” the new republic, these youth acted according to the duties and values preached to them by higher powers. However, despite their efforts, adult revolutionaries, authorities, and legislators did not always reciprocate these actions. Some efforts were successful: the aforementioned Poitiers students were backed by national army men, and the youth of Brittany and Anjou became negotiators with the National Constituent Assembly.³⁶ However, most of the youth’s efforts to fulfill their civic duty were met with mixed or no response from those who could install their proposed changes. The Committee of Public Instruction read the letter from Parisian students advocating for beaux-arts “but appears to not have [been] followed up in any meaningful way;” instead, the Committee imposed a curriculum “upon children [that had] little-to-no input from students.”³⁷ Students in Paris “took advantage of the institutional and discursive space opened up by the events of 1789” by petitioning for an updated curriculum. However, despite the

au quartier général des brigands sorties d’Avignon,” (Newberry Library French Pamphlet Collection: France, 1791), p. 4.

³⁵ Perna, p. 197, 215.

³⁶ O’Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics*, p. 128; Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens,” p. 233.

³⁷ Gossard, *Young Subjects*, pp. 202-03.

reasonableness of such a request, the petition was not acted upon.³⁸ Although violence became a central tenet of the Revolution, it was heavily condemned when present among “innocent” children. For example, the earlier pamphlet that described gangs consisting of toddlers and children was written in a condemning, disgusted tone that judged the children and particularly the parents that allowed the hooligans to run about and get themselves hurt, maimed, and killed.³⁹ Even the success of the students of Brittany and Anjou was complicated: it was more “renegotiation” between youth leadership and political authorities and not recognition of worth or equal civic standing.⁴⁰

It might be too forward to call this hypocrisy, but it contradicts the narrative being spread by higher revolutionary authorities. Even though “the yearly Youth Festival, male morality prizes, or debates surrounding female education [all] expressed... anxieties over the longevity of the republic,”⁴¹ and political and educational authorities went to great lengths to mold the ideal, politically involved revolutionary child, youth were often met with indifference and even condemnation for partaking in activities that were encouraged as well as practiced by revolutionary authorities themselves. Children were the solution to their problem of longevity, but at the same time, youth posed a problem in the way they took matters into their own hands; the youth’s actions demonstrate a hope of molding the new system and its future according to their ideas and interests— interests that did not always align with those of the individuals in power.

Conclusion

When molding a revolutionary child, control of influences is critical. Children are undoubtedly opinionated from a very young age and will act upon their thoughts in frameworks provided by the world surrounding them. Revolutionary authorities sought to control how children learned and grew. Studying such influences on children is a popular subject in French Revolution studies — whether the effects of education or revolutionary propaganda or catechisms — but rarely are children mentioned as the protagonists within these faculties, and not just as the monolithic pool of experimental subjects. Instead, youth have the potential to be useful reflections of the difficulties experienced and the understandings required to grow up in such a tumultuous, ever-changing society as that of France in the late eighteenth century.

This essay is a very brief study of youth participation during the French Revolution. It could be expanded with deeper research looking at archives and media produced by children themselves, like artwork, doodles, and even graffiti. Going further, a continuation of this study may also include how

³⁸ O’Connor, *In Pursuit of Politics*, p. 165.

³⁹ “Danger des patrouilles exercées par les enfants: avis aux peres & meres,” p. 4.

⁴⁰ Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens,” p. 233

⁴¹ Gossard, *Young Subjects*, p. 207.

this rhetoric of their youth may have shaped Napoleonic adults and policy-makers. Nevertheless, even from such a precursory survey, it is evident that children saw a place for themselves within the changes of the Revolution. After all, the Revolution took place roughly over ten years, during which many new minds were born and grew into citizens in a radically different world — one in which they were being encouraged to participate and would do in a multitude of ways, including through words and actions that certainly warrant our attention.

**Beauty, Intellect, and Pneumatological Liberation:
Reconsidering Sor Juana as a Proto-Feminist Theologian**

*Alyssa Medin*¹

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695) was a nun educated in the scriptures, never married, and lived in modern-day Mexico during Inquisition-era Spanish colonial rule. In her autobiographical work, “La Respuesta a Sor Philotea,” Sor Juana describes her life as an intellectual who was overlooked for her accomplishments yet admired for her beauty.² Her poetry, *comedias*, music, and letters reflected her philosophy of aesthetic appreciation and her devotion to Catholicism. However, she gave away her entire library and stopped writing in 1694 for historically contested reasons, providing fodder for the research of modern scholars. George H. Tavard, one of the first Catholic theologians to bring women’s issues to the Church, describes the life of Sor Juana post-Respuesta:

In 1693, she got rid of her books, musical and scientific instruments, ridding herself of the ability to increase her knowledge, her lifelong passion renounced. The next year, she writes lines in her own blood dedicating herself to “‘believe and defend’ the immaculate conception,” a vow which she repeated twice more throughout the year before dedicating herself to aiding her religious sisters who had fallen sick with the plague, then dying of the disease herself.³

This curious event begs the question of what motivated a writer to sacrifice their life’s work? Specifically, looking at the context outlined above, what would make a woman in the Baroque Era of colonized New Spain sacrifice her lifelong passion? While there has been debate over the purpose of the end of her career, I will argue alongside Tavard that her work’s proto-feminist theological aims and clashes with the Church authority ultimately caused her writing of “La Respuesta” and her renunciation of intellectualism. However, the crux of my argument will be its expanded scope: I will argue that her religious and secular works were primarily informed by her status as a proto-feminist theologian and reveal her identity as a theologian interested in the aesthetic quality of religious inquiry and spirituality.

I will argue through the course of this paper that in her letter to Sor Philotea, Sor Juana makes herself into a martyr for the cause of women’s theological education: through the rhetorical devices she employs in her last work, “La Respuesta,” she establishes her legacy as a proto-feminist theologian from New Spain. My argument proceeds by first presenting historiography to delineate the context of her

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² Juana Inés de la Cruz, “La Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz” in *Poems, Protest and a Dream*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (New York: Penguin, 1997), p. 11.

³ George H. Tavard, *Juana Ines de La Cruz and the Theology of Beauty: The First Mexican Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), p. 183.

time. I then discuss the current literature to show her legacy as a proto-feminist theologian. Finally, I closely analyze the primary literature to support my thesis that her works are proto-feminist and support aesthetic theological claims.

Historical Context

Geographical Influence

In order to effectively place Sor Juana in her historical context, I will expand upon two key intersections in her identity: her geographical situation and her status as a woman in the seventeenth century. First, it is important to recognize her status as a nun in Inquisitional New Spain, which was geographically separated from Spain's cultural and social influence. Despite this geographic isolation, Spanish political and religious thought was deliberately promoted in New Spain, in what political philosopher Leopoldo Zea called the "double enclosure": "Spain imposes on America a political and social enclosure and the Catholic church a mental enclosure."⁴ Thus, the shared intellectual milieu between Spain and New Spain influenced the emerging scholarship, allowing Madrid to situate itself as a literary epicenter extending her influence beyond continental discourse. The strong literary influence from Spain allowed Madrid to become a "social, spatial, intra-historical, and literary" focal point.⁵ Richard Greenleaf explains the effects of this, wherein the Inquisitional government's aim of promoting religious syncretism with the mother country allowed Madrid to capitalize on their immense literary influence.⁶ With this context in mind, it is significant that Sor Juana's first volume of works was published not in New Spain but in Madrid in 1689: the success of the "double enclosure" project as a force of literary and ideological power centralization in Madrid is apparent. Moreover, her decision to publish in continental Spain reveals her inability to publish secular prose in the highly skeptical hyper-religious milieu of New Spain mid-Inquisition.⁷

Moreover, the capacity for intellectuals to enter continental Spanish discourse provided a means of acquiring cultural capital.⁸ Yet, as a result of this invitation, the Baroque period sparked anti-oppressive sentiments in New Spain: "Lezama Lima has spoken of the Spanish American Baroque as the

⁴ Leopoldo Zea, *América como Conciencia*, (México: Cuadernos Americanos, 1953), p. 74.

⁵ Carlos Gutierrez, "The Challenges of Freedom: Social Reflexivity in the Seventeenth-Century Spanish Literary Field," in *Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), p. 149.

⁶ Richard E. Greenleaf, "The Mexican Inquisition and the Indians: Sources for the Ethnohistorian," *The Americas* 34, no. 3 (January 1978): p. 336.

⁷ Dorothy Schons, "Some Obscure Points in the Life of Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz," in *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, ed. Stephanie Merrim (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), p. 49.

⁸ See Gutierrez, "The Challenges of Freedom," p. 143, when he notes, "If such cultural capital was recognized by the members of the power field, that could mean, perhaps, an indefinite patronage, an appointment at Court or some other symbolic recognition."

art of ‘counter-Conquest’ and as an urban and intellectual phenomenon close to the spirit of the Enlightenment—a frame for new “*formas de vida y de curiosidad*.”⁹ Thus, an unintended consequence of cross-continental discourse was the promulgation of ideals of liberty and counter-oppression, which will ultimately be seen in Sor Juana’s works through her proto-feminist writings— arguing for the right of women to read and interpret the Bible.

Womanhood in New Spain

The dimension of womanhood as it pertains to the new *formas de vida y de curiosidad* within the double enclosure of New Spain can be seen as integral to Sor Juana’s experience as a writer. Women were confined to personal piety through prayer and spirituality, and this personal dedication to God was much more common and socially permissible than an intellectual entrance into the Church through theology, considering the lack of interaction with scripture allowed for women.¹⁰ Paola Marin confirms this patriarchal religiosity: “[Women] were also seen as more prone to demonic influences due to their weaker biological condition, a conception based on Aristotle and, later, St. Thomas. Therefore, especially after the Council of Trent, they were forbidden from preaching and discussing theological matters.”¹¹ I will show how Sor Juana’s context as a woman in this time unequivocally influenced her major theological writings, such as the *Carta Atenagórica* and “La Respuesta.” Women in Inquisitional Spain were expected to live pious lives, with piety being determined by the male standards and interpretations of scripture. While it is out of the scope of this paper to discuss the copious investigations into indigenous practices seen as “magic” and, thus, satanic, it is clear that the reigning authorities of the Church and State acted upon their fear and mistrust towards women specifically.¹²

I argue that the parameters of piety for a woman in her time had a two-fold influence: it influenced her decision to end her writing career by donating her library, *and* it informed the content

⁹ “Ways of life and types of curiosity.”

Nicholas Spadaccini and Luis Martin-Estudillo, “Introduction: The Baroque and the Cultures of Crisis,” in *Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), p. xiii.

¹⁰ Asuncion Lavrin, “Unlike Sor Juana? The Model Nun in the Religious Literature of Colonial Mexico,” in *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inès de la Cruz*, ed. Stephanie Merrim (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), p. 65. It is important to note that cloistered life as a nun was a very effective way to receive the liberty to become educated and write or learn about a variety of subjects as a woman in this era.

¹¹ Paola Marin, “Freedom and Containment in Colonial Theology: Sor Juana’s *Carta Atenagórica*,” in *Hispanic Baroques: Reading Cultures in Context* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), p. 208.

¹² See Linda Curcio-Nagy, “Rosa de Escalante’s Private Party,” in *Women in the Inquisition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 255, for a more detailed discussion of the perceived threat of the use of magic and the treatment of women engaging in indigenous practices in New Spain.

of her oeuvre to the extent that she integrates traditionally “female” mystical and literary elements and mediums into her aesthetic insights.

Literature Review

In order to review Sor Juana’s place in the history of feminism, I consider whether her work can be qualified as proto-feminist theology or if it simply had loosely feminist-resembling sentiments. In response to this question, I will first lay out the definition of proto-feminism before determining the consensus in the existing literature. Nancy Calvert-Koyzis defines proto-feminism as referencing “those who anticipated certain modern feminist political arguments, yet lived in a time when the term ‘feminist’ was unknown.”¹³ This simple definition provides an intuitive basis for understanding proto-feminism as preemptive critiques that would be revisited throughout the development of feminist thought.

Regarding proto-feminist theology, Calvert-Koyzis explains, “Women in different countries and eras interpreted biblical texts in ways that argued for the equality and emancipation of women. These voices calling for liberation were often unknown by subsequent generations of feminist interpreters.”¹⁴ Labeling and qualifying proto-feminist theology necessitates an understanding of feminist theology as a distinct method of Biblical interpretation informed by the liberating aims of feminism. As discussed at length by Catherine Keller:

We might all agree that feminist theology has from birth confronted a dual dynamic of obstruction, a redoubled density of impossibility. Our task shared but transcended the standard feminist critique of the andromorphic norms for participation in every area of public discourse... we were talking back not just to one more academic -ology, dusty in its patriarchy.

We were mouthing off to the gatekeepers of the Logos, revealed Son of the Father.¹⁵

Whereas feminism decenters the patriarchal institutions and socialization in daily life, feminist theology seeks to decenter androcentrism¹⁶ in the spiritual and religious spheres of academia and personal life. She points not only to the fact that the discipline of theology has, since its inception, been restricted to the male voice and eyes but also to the importance of correcting theology when it is distorted by male bias since religious misinterpretation is at stake. This principle of correction, a foundation of feminist theology, can be traced in Sor Juana’s works as inextricably linked to her subversive texts. Existing literature supports this thesis, with Marin claiming that Sor Juana’s *Carta Atenagórica* is subversive

¹³ Nancy Calvert-Koyzis and Heather E. Weir, “Assessing Their Place in History: Female Biblical Interpreters as Protofeminists,” in *Strangely Familiar: Protofeminist Interpretations of Patriarchal Biblical Texts* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), p. 2.

¹⁴ Calvert-Koyzis and Weir, “Assessing Their Place in History,” p. 3.

¹⁵ Catherine Keller, “The Apophasis of Gender: A Fourfold Unsayings of Feminist Theology,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 4 (December 2008), p. 907.

¹⁶ Androcentrism is the practice of centering male voices, thought, ideas, and concerns.

because it critiques the colonial condition, which was integral to personal and religious spheres of life.¹⁷ Sor Juana mirrors feminist theologians through her indirect responses to the colonial and sexist society, exacerbated by her tensions with the Church, providing a basis for her authorship to show her “voice for liberation.”

Literature affirming Sor Juana’s positionality as a proto-feminist theologian provides two main insights into her contribution to support this claim: one is her positive contribution, and the other is the negative space she inhabits as a “female theologian” in a time when women were constrained to personal piety rather than exegetical contribution. Her “positive contribution” indicates an *addition*, whereas her “negative contribution” is an intentional invisibility or *lack of* contribution to a particular conversation or space.

First, Merrim discusses her positive contribution as a deconstructive and subversive force against the patriarchal authority of the Church. Merrim interprets Sor Juana’s mirroring of typical women’s literature of the time as a push against the status quo and a call to action:

The ‘sin razon’ (unreason) and ‘no se que’ (I know not what), and the mystical quest for ultimate knowledge found in other women’s writings are all called into service here, perhaps ironically, to testify to Sor Juana’s innocence and conformity to God’s will... the *Respuesta* both implicitly counters and explicitly avails itself of the forms of church women’s writing, with the end of asserting a woman’s rights to participate in the *male intellectual order*.¹⁸

Merrim claims that Sor Juana calls upon the traditionally “female” writing strategies and claims to lack knowledge as a part of her writing, ultimately advocating for women to participate in the Church in the “traditionally masculine” sense— through evaluating scripture for themselves.

One negative contribution that aligns Sor Juana with the later feminist traditions is her practice of renouncing authorship. In her *Carta atenagórica*, Sor Juana denies her contribution to her theological exegesis, putting the blame or recognition on the Holy Spirit itself, which has been seen in the literature as a rebellion against the way women of the time interacted with God solely through personal experience:

The *Crisis of a Sermon*—which is the original title she gave to the *Carta atenagórica*—is a rhetorical armor completely removed from experiential matters. It is an astounding display of hermeneutic devices that Sor Juana justifies by stating “*no lo digo yo, lo dicen las Santas Escrituras*” (it is not me, it is the Holy Scriptures that say so). She asserts that she is only an instrument in God’s hands.¹⁹

¹⁷ Marin, “Freedom and Containment in Colonial Theology,” pp. 205-206.

¹⁸ Stephanie Merrim, “Towards a Feminist Reading of Sor Juana Ines de La Cruz: Past, Present, and Future Directions in Sor Juana Criticism,” in *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inès de la Cruz* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), p. 27. Emphasis added.

¹⁹ Marin, “Freedom and Containment in Colonial Theology,” p. 209.

Scholars, including Marin, have claimed that in renouncing her contributions, she makes herself a martyr to her proto-feminist theological cause and thus has a powerful influence on the reclamation of the Bible for women.

Another way she negatively contributes to her society is through apophasis,²⁰ an intentional practice during which one raises awareness of an issue through silence. Julie Bokser views Sor Juana through her apophasis in *Sor Juana's Rhetoric of Silence*, asserting that Sor Juana's "Respuesta" leads to her martyrdom, as substantiated by the end of her career: "Ultimately, *La Respuesta* led to Sor Juana's political downfall, marked by a formal confession of sins, a rejection of humane studies, and the dispersal of her library."²¹ The operative word for historical analysis of this claim here is *led* – if the letter did, in fact, *cause* the end of her career, her use of apophasis reflects a deep disdain for the patriarchal, colonial Church rule of her time. Her martyrdom, encapsulated by her downfall as described by Bokser, is henceforth a substantiation of her works as utilizing apophasis as a negative contribution.

The previous conception of martyrdom is not the only interpretation of Sor Juana's negative contribution. Ambiguity over the end of her career leaves scholars in question regarding her success as a proto-feminist theologian. For example, Stephanie Merrim presents Sor Juana as a figure submissive to her historical context by drawing on her establishment as a martyr through how her career ends. Merrim states, "In its end, attributable less to her own weakness of character than to the *force of patriarchal structures*, Sor Juana's life story descends into martyrdom, deviating from the straight path of feminist illumination and feminine modes."²² In this reading of her decision to give up writing, her martyrdom is equated with a defeat in the face of the patriarchy. Since Sor Juana submitted to the oppressive forces that constantly pushed her to stop writing, she is denounced in some academic circles— even today.

The negative space she inhabits is ultimately an argument both "for" and "against" her status as a proto-feminist theologian. On the one hand, she is seen as a martyr for her cause of female biblical interpretation, and on the other, she is seen as submissive to the patriarchal norms of her society. This distinction is critical to understanding the mixed reaction among academics concerning the proto-feminist theologian label. However, one must question Sor Juana's martyrdom, looking at what factors led Sor Juana to sacrifice her passion for writing and whether or not this is actually a defeat. I will argue in my analysis of her "Respuesta" that Sor Juana became a martyr to the proto-feminist idea that women should be able to read and interpret the scriptures, which was novel and admirable. Thus, Merrim's ideas

²⁰ Apophasis, a type of negative contribution, is the raising of an issue by not mentioning it.

Apophasis allows for those who are critical yet rest within a discipline to auto-deconstruct, such as Sor Juana in her context as part of, yet critical towards, the Church and its authority.

For further information, see Keller "The Apophasis of Gender," pp. 905–933.

²¹ Julie A. Bokser, "Sor Juana's Rhetoric of Silence," *Rhetoric Review* 25, no. 1 (2006), p. 7.

²² Merrim, "Towards a Feminist Reading of Sor Juana Inès de la Cruz," p. 30. Emphasis added.

directly oppose thinkers who draw on the influence of Sor Juana's apophysis and integration of typically female writing methods.

In the most recent scholarship, a turn in the literature has allowed Sor Juana's work to be evaluated for its theological insights rather than simply evaluated as "feminist or not." I view this turn as an affirmation of her position as a proto-feminist theologian and a helpful development toward analyzing the work she once presented to a deaf audience. The two main contributions discussed in these new analyses are her phenomenological insights and her aesthetic theology. María Pilar Aquino discusses the disproportionate attention paid to the theological discourse of Spirit and other mystical components at the hands of colonial, oppressive, patriarchal forces. In Westernized society, aesthetics were at odds with "content," which theologically decentered the importance of beauty in God. As a result, the aesthetic and pneumatological doctrinal aspects of hermeneutical exegesis were sidelined by the influence of other doctrines seen as more concrete, such as soteriology.²³ According to thinkers like Aquino, who evaluate Sor Juana in terms of her circumstance, her theological discourse was anti-patriarchal and subversive, thus fitting into the proto-feminist theologian label. Her emphasis on concrete realities²⁴ can be seen most concretely through her contributions to theological aestheticism—the subdiscipline concerned with how God manifests through beauty and knowledge.²⁵

In conclusion, current scholarship definitively leans towards labeling Sor Juana as a proto-feminist theologian. However, the lack of scholarly attention to her work from a feminist theological lens indicates a gap in the literature, failing to appreciate her contributions fully. Much more research needs to be done to evaluate all of her works, secular and theological, using theological aestheticism, so we may fully appreciate her contributions as a proto-feminist theologian who emphasized an area that was forgotten by the Church Fathers of her time.

Analysis

The Road to Martyrdom

In understanding her work as proto-feminist, we must first look to the context in which her religious work was published: it was intertwined with an increasingly tense relationship between Sor Juana and the Church's authority figures. Under Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, the archbishop of Mexico during the end of her life, Sor Juana suffered from his staunch beliefs in the unholiness of creativity and secular poetry. Dorothy Schons comments on her secular comedy-writing: "That Juana wrote *comedias* and

²³ María Pilar Aquino, "The Collective 'Dis-Cover' of Our Own Power: Latina American Feminist Theology," in Isasi-Díaz and Segovia, *Hispanic-Latino Philosophy*, pp. 241-242.

²⁴ See Marin, "Freedom and Containment in Colonial Theology," p. 218, which discusses Sor Juana as "indirectly [challenging] those primarily concerned with theological entelechy rather than concrete realities."

²⁵ See Tavard, *Juana Inès de las Cruz and the Theology of Beauty*, for a lengthy analysis of Sor Juana's work as a relic of early aesthetic theology.

even published them must have been a crime in his eyes. In Mexico, during his administration, no *comedias* and almost no secular verse were finding their way into print.”²⁶ Suspicion by Spanish colonial authorities impacted Sor Juana’s ability to express herself within or outside the confines of her convent. While Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas disliked her secular works, she detested her religious works, as seen through the involuntary publication of her critique of a sermon, her *Carta atenagórica*.²⁷

The Bishop of Puebla published her theological critique, the *Carta atenagórica*, without her consent. However, the reason for his publication is disputed as either a part of a mounting dispute between Sor Juana and church authorities or a display of appreciation for a writer he admired. In the introduction to *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*, Ilan Stavans notes that the Bishop of Puebla asked her to write the letter and published it with his own money.²⁸ The Church Fathers abhorred the work, and Stavans claims that following the critique, the Bishop of Puebla changed direction and appended his letter to the end of the publication, encouraging her to “abandon the careless roads of reason.”²⁹ It seems there is ambiguity as to the extent to which this Bishop supported Sor Juana, influenced and pressured by the Church to condemn her work, or if he was genuinely against it.

In any case, the primary text addressed to Sor Juana from “Sor Filotea” (the Bishop of Puebla) reveals the harsh backlash she received from the Church as a woman who worshiped and analyzed the Bible outside of private piety. The Bishop of Puebla refers to Sor Juana as the “woman who is the pride of her sex,” evoking Christ in his first page to establish a reverence for her that will ultimately be revealed as irony: “I, at least, have *admired* the wittiness of your conceits, the cleverness of your proofs, and the living clarity with which the theme is persuasively argued... Even Christ’s, when he was wont to utter the highest mysteries veiled in parables, was not considered admirable by the secular world.”³⁰ In speaking of Sor Juana in conjunction with speaking of Christ, her martyrdom is foreshadowed. The Bishop subtly explains that while he admires the work, his religiosity makes him a gratuitous reader. Moreover, as this is appended to her theological critique, he continues to critique the (proto-feminist) lens with which she writes, as it manifests through her “subject matter”: “My judgement is not such a harsh censor that I find anything wrong with your poetry... but I wish you would imitate them [Santa Teresa, Saint Gregory Nazianzus] both in terms of the prosody and the choice of subject matter.”³¹ Much like any trace of mysticism or aestheticism in religion in this cultural context, her aesthetic appeals

²⁶ Schons, “Some Obscure Points in the Life of Sor Juana In és de La Cruz,” p. 48.

²⁷ Tvard, *Juana Ines de La Cruz and the Theology of Beauty: The First Mexican Theology*, p. 7.

²⁸ Ilan Stavans, introduction to *Poems, Protest and a Dream: Selected Writings*, trans. Margaret Sayers Pedan. (New York: Penguin, 1997), p. xiv.

²⁹ Stavans, introduction to *Poems, Protest and a Dream*, p. xiv.

³⁰ Fr. Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, “Letter by Sor Filotea de la Cruz,” trans. William Little (Santa Fe: Santa Fe College, 2008), p. 1.

³¹ De Santa Cruz, “Letter by Sor Filotea de la Cruz,” p.2

were seen as inappropriate and an unworthy pursuit or subject matter in the eyes of the Church authorities.

Ironically, he writes to Sor Juana, encouraging her to “sometimes [read] the book of Jesus Christ.”³² Considering her positionality as a cloistered nun, it is hard to believe that this reference to picking up the book was an attempt to convert her. Rather, this was an attempt to alter her interpretation of the Word. He clarifies, “St. Paul says that women should not teach, but he does not order women not to study [in] order to learn.”³³ He then presents a reading of the changing of Sarai’s name to Sara as an indication of her learning “Fear and domination.”³⁴ Thus, he briefly takes on the role of teacher, asking her to change her perspective on scripture and submit to the Church’s established order and interpretations.

With this information in hand, a historian must look to the overwhelming evidence that there was influence from the colonial, religious (male) figureheads which led her to stop writing, laying the foundation for her martyrdom to her most fundamental principle: Women should have the freedom to be intellectuals— reading, interpreting, and teaching the Bible in their own right and with their own agency.

Reading Subversive Proto-Feminism in Sor Juana’s Works

In her last courtly poem, she says, “And *a Dios*, this is no more than / to show you the cloth; / if you do not like the piece, / do not untie the parcel.”³⁵ As I will explore further, her work can be seen as an attempt to uncover the culture, religion, politics, and anthropology covered through colonial patriarchal Catholicism. Sor Juana contributed to the development of aesthetic theology, which was emergent from her identity as a whole— considering her as a woman, a writer, and a theologian living under colonial rule. However, this “parcel” was not ready to be untied in the climate of her time. In order to evaluate her contributions, I will look primarily at her work in “La Respuesta.”

In “La Respuesta,” the rhetorical devices that Sor Juana uses, including a satirical rejection of her skills and abilities placed alongside an explicit knowledge of theology, create a subversive text that gives irony to the existing misconceptions about women’s ability. Ultimately, she uses this subversion to argue for women to interpret the Bible. Sor Juana says in response to the letter from “Sor Filotea,”

What capacity of reason have I? What application? What resources? What rudimentary knowledge of such matters beyond that of the most superficial scholarly degrees? Leave these matters to those who understand them; I wish no quarrel with the Holy Office, for I am

³² De Santa Cruz, “Letter by Sor Filotea de la Cruz,” p. 2.

³³ De Santa Cruz, “Letter by Sor Filotea de la Cruz,” p. 2.

³⁴ De Santa Cruz, “Letter by Sor Filotea de la Cruz,” p. 2.

³⁵ Tvard, *Juana Ines de La Cruz and the Theology of Beauty: The First Mexican Theology*, p. 182.

ignorant, and I tremble that I may express some proposition that will cause offense or twice the true meaning of some scripture.³⁶

In response to her *Carta Atenagórica* of theological exegesis, this citation ironically states that she does not have the same capacity of reason and thus cannot adequately evaluate scripture. This directly responds to the Bishop's call for her to submit to the predetermined interpretations of the Church. However, by evaluating the scriptures in this letter and the *Carta*, she effectively inserts herself into the male intellectual order, which she claims she cannot enter. As she enters this religious, intellectual order, Sor Juana can be seen as a proto-feminist theologian, catalyzing the inevitable structural destruction while claiming that she was unworthy of making meaningful contributions. As Sor Juana cites herself, "*Rare is he who will concede genius.*"³⁷

In addition to her satirical self-deprecation, Sor Juana's letter utilizes references to Jesus' crucifixion that signify her descent into martyrdom for her proto-feminist theological beliefs. She says, "a head that is a storehouse of wisdom can expect nothing but a crown of thorns."³⁸ This reference, especially when considered alongside the context of her response to the growing contentions with the Church, shows that she sincerely believed her cause to be wise and noble. Here, she also reclaims the parallel between her work and Jesus', which is present in the letter from Sor Filotea. While the *Carta Atenagórica* may or may not have been published with negative intentions, the controversy truly reflects the patriarchal intellectual order under which Sor Juana was metaphorically crucified.

Primary to her contributions as a proto-feminist theologian is her work in "La Respuesta" to defend women's right to theological education. At the time, women, including Sor Juana, were discouraged from reading and interpreting the Bible, as shown by the Council of Trent forbade the translations of Latin to Spanish during the Inquisitorial period, wherein women were not taught Latin. In her "Respuesta," she turns to entertain a question raised by Doctor Arce—a question that elucidates her historical conditions and her goal to subvert the status quo: "*Is it permissible for women to dedicate themselves to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and to their interpretation?*"³⁹ Evoking this question in her text was a critical turn towards challenging the established order of the church, which excluded the female eye from scriptural analysis and depended on their obedience, the "fear and domination" encouraged in the Letter from Sor Filotea. These conditions of preventing women from learning about the Bible must be the underlying reason for which Sor Juana says, "For what objection can there be that an older woman, learned in letters and in sacred conversation and customs, have in her charge the education of young girls?"⁴⁰ The importance of interpretation and women's theological study as a whole

³⁶ De La Cruz, "Respuesta," p. 11.

³⁷ De La Cruz, "Respuesta," p. 33.

³⁸ De La Cruz, "Respuesta," p. 35

³⁹ De La Cruz, "Respuesta," p. 47. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰ De La Cruz, "Respuesta," p. 55

would be the eventual upheaval of female theological movements in the future, and Sor Juana was one of the first to commit to its necessity. Once women are encouraged to interpret the Bible, the traditionally centered scriptures are put into question; the practices of oppression and silence would no longer be justified simply as scripture, as scriptural references to egalitarian principles happen to flood the Bible but were scarcely called upon before. As a Baroque writer, Sor Juana understood the value of intellect, as it was central to her aesthetic and theological considerations. Intellect was beautiful and thus merited divine attention. So, she calls for women to be able to interpret the Bible, asking in effect for the upheaval of the patriarchal dominance of the Catholic Church.

Beauty & Intellect

In addition to her proto-feminist theological assertion that women should be allowed to interpret the Bible, we must also evaluate Sor Juana beyond this claim. Sor Juana's influence was not constricted to her work in her explicitly theological writings nor to her controversial claim that women should interpret the Bible. Sor Juana's influence extends to her own hermeneutical contributions, which merit further discussion.

I argue that her contributions to theological aestheticism, as raised primarily by Tvard, further position Sor Juana as a proto-feminist theologian because these contributions are clearly emergent from her positionality as a cloistered woman in society. In order to make this claim, I draw on the established information on the historical realities of power dynamics in Inquisitional New Spain. In synthesizing the existing literature with the history of the colonial era, historians can understand the acute influence of power dynamics and oppression in women's lives, as well as the specific marginalization of hermeneutical claims such as the influence of Spirit and any mystical elements during this period. In bringing light to theological aestheticism, I argue that Sor Juana had a specific contribution that fits perfectly within the framework of the Spanish Baroque but was overshadowed by her controversy as a female writer.

One major misconception of the time that led, in part, to the rejection of her contributions to aestheticism was the distinction between her secular and religious writings. At the time, secular writings were seen as having a negative influence on the piety of society. They thus were taken as a detriment to a writer's portfolio, especially for theologians.

Her secular works were wrongly hyper-analyzed in their reception, focusing on the romantic interests described rather than the blatantly religious and aesthetic appeal. However, we can see that the themes of beauty and intellect are present in her secular works, a clear connection within her oeuvre: for example, she says, "with luck, love lends us beauty— not the right to keep it."⁴¹ Throughout her works

⁴¹ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "Have You Lost Your Mind, Alcino?" in *Sor Juana's Love Poems*, trans. Jaime Manrique and Joan Larkin (Chapel Hill: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 51.

of supposedly secular poetry, she shows reverence for the importance of aestheticism in her descriptive language and calls to the divine aspects of beauty: one example is her poem, “On the Death of the Most Excellent Señora the Marquise of Mancera,” where she writes lines such as “her light was never meant / to blazon this wretched valley,” a loose reference to the fall of man and the light and beauty in humanity.⁴² In the same poem, she alludes to the reunion of soul and body after Judgment Day:

Laura, split in two beautiful halves:
Immortal soul, glad spirit,
why tear yourself from such lovely flesh?
Why banish such a soul?

Now it dawns on me
you’re suffering this cruel divorce
for the joy of meeting again
on the last day, married for all time.⁴³

These excerpts briefly show that, in her era, her works were misinterpreted. Her intentions and exegesis as a theologian were aesthetic, and the division between her secular and religious works was blurred or nonexistent. Her project had a dual nature and function, ultimately laying a foundation for understanding the relationship between the individual and God as an aesthetic and a spiritual one.

As has been established, her position within theological aestheticism led her to view God as manifesting through the Divinely guided power of knowledge, love, and beauty. Hence, when she discusses knowledge, love, and beauty, she sees her work as part of a divinely guided mission for knowledge: she says, “O World, why do you wish to persecute me? / How do I offend you, when I intend / only to fix beauty in my intellect, / and never my intellect fix on beauty?”⁴⁴ As a woman whose work was often perceived in context with her beauty and various theories about her love life, she wished for others to see that knowledge is a divinely inspired experience and that it corresponds to an aesthetic quality of the human soul that is, in fact, a gift from God. There is no true separation between secular and non-secular under this conception, as Spirit ties these factors together in pneumatological interpretations of an aesthetic mode of being. Hence, her theology, poetry, prose, composition, and playwriting are all divine in that it shares this aesthetic quality. Looking at the concrete nature of Catholic doctrine of the time, it is understandable that this was misunderstood, and her work was

⁴² Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “On the Death of the Most Excellent Senora the Marquise of Mancera,” in *Sor Juana’s Love Poems*, trans. Jaime Manrique and Joan Larkin (Chapel Hill: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 71.

⁴³ De la Cruz, “On the Death of the Most Excellent Senora the Marquise of Mancera,” p. 73.

⁴⁴ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “Sonnet 146,” in *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Selected Works*, trans. Edith Grossman (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2014), p. 171.

positioned in a dualistic nature. However, within modern conceptions of pneumatic and aesthetic doctrine, we can re-evaluate her works under this non-dualistic lens. In this understanding, her love for knowledge and beauty stems from her theological conceptions, which merge her works into a theological aestheticism that was less than appreciated at the time. As Tavad radically expanded upon, her belief in the influence of the Holy Spirit and the emotive relationship between God and humanity are integral, as expressed through her aestheticism: “Artistic activity is therefore always a graced participation in the divine act of creation. Aesthetic theory and reflection are always meditations on the divine attribute of beauty.”⁴⁵ This is a starting point for understanding her mission. However, her position as a contributor to aesthetic theology has yet to be applied in depth to her originally “secular” works, as they have been bifurcated from those “religious” works since their original reception.

Conclusion

While current literature has come to slowly recognize Sor Juana’s prevalence as a proto-feminist theologian, a martyr to the cause of women’s interpretation of the Bible, the extent to which her complete collection of works is viewed through the theological lens is limited in scope to her few explicitly theological works. Hence, a gap in the literature leaves room for re-evaluating her entire collection as aesthetic, theological products that emerged from her historical reality. Everything about Sor Juana’s life can be seen as theology, as we look at her response to the patriarchal historical era and her life work of implementing theological aestheticism in her secular and non-secular works. Sor Juana is an integral figure in the realm of proto-feminist theology, as she turned her struggles into a life of practicing theology instead of solely intellectualizing it through creeds and regulation. The constraints of her time period led to the ostracization of her works due to their mystical and pneumatic qualities, which led to the burial of her theological contributions. Her position as a proto-feminist theologian has been established in the modern conception, but her theological positions have yet to be thoroughly analyzed and understood.

The first step in reclaiming Sor Juana’s contributions is understanding that she wrote aesthetic theology as a response to the hyper-analytical Catholic doctrine of her time. With this information in hand, her works can be viewed as a response to oppression, as a counterweight to the Catholic church, and as diverse mediums to communicate aesthetic theology. Henceforth, religious aestheticism can be seen as parallel to liberation theologies and feminist theologies, with the example of Sor Juana serving to show that a turn to the appreciation of beauty and knowledge can liberate women from the constraints that they lived in during a time when they were limited to practicing religion more than studying it.

As a result of the emphasis on piety and practicing religion, mysticism and religious aestheticism emerged within the female population of Christians during the Inquisition. These mystical ideas,

⁴⁵ Tavad, *Juana Ines de La Cruz and the Theology of Beauty: The First Mexican Theology*, p. 200.

pneumatological in nature, emphasizing the Holy Spirit and divine beauty, were marginalized and seen as demonic. However, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz wrote within the mystic, aesthetic theology style for a secular crowd. When her work became directly theological, she was criticized by Church figureheads and, eventually, forced to stop writing. However, the legacy of her contributions requires reclamation, as it represents the female response to intellectual and theological oppression. Religious aestheticism calls us to question the influence and interconnection of the Holy Spirit, beauty, and knowledge in our daily lives and practice. Quite literally, Sor Juana brought beauty out of her circumstances — a theological contribution worth her martyrdom.

**A Separate War:
The Quest for Identity in Military Orders After the Crusades**

*Kevin O’Gorman*¹

Thunderous applause greeted Teutonic Grand Master Burchard von Schwanden when he entered the city fortress of Acre in 1290. Townspeople and his brothers-in-arms lined alleyways covered with vibrant clothes and led the way with candles and church relics. The knight’s timing could not have been any better. When he arrived at Acre, it was the last major military post remaining in the Crusader states. Also serving as the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun was advancing on the city with a massive Muslim army. While Burchard and the city of Acre were saved from fighting by the sudden death of the Sultan in Cairo, the Grand Master’s journey and plans for the Holy Land did not have a similar finality. In his *Chronicle of Prussia*, written in 1341, forty years after the city fell, the Teutonic Order chaplain Nicholas von Jeroschin recounts with horror how— after only three days in the city— Burchard gathered the Teutonic knights present and resigned his role as Grand Master. The whiplash from his triumphant entrance into the city to his sudden departure was not lost on Jeroschin nor the people of Acre. Lords and vowed knights alike failed to change Burchard’s mind, and even the begging of grand masters of the Hospitaller and Templar orders on their knees was to no avail. Burchard did not leave religious life entirely and joined the Hospitallers soon after. The Teutonic Order still felt bitter forty years later, and Jeroschin emphasized that they refused Burchard’s later request to rejoin.² While Jeroschin does not give an explicit reason for Burchard’s abrupt exit, the timing alongside the permanent removal of Teutonic forces from the Middle East has led many historians to conclude that his decision coincided with a larger debate within the order over the theaters where they crusaded.³ Ultimately, the order would move its headquarters from Acre to Venice in 1291 and then to Prussia in 1302, leaving the city that Burchard had so triumphantly entered only a few years earlier.

This episode highlights the complicated relationship that military orders had with the changing makeup of crusading and their original mission and identity. For Burchard and the Teutonic Order, that conflict took the form of debates about continuing their involvement in the Holy Land or moving their focus to Prussia and the Baltic Crusades. These discussions also took place in other military orders, as the fall of Acre forced them away from crusading in the Holy Land, and they took up crusades in continental Europe. The Hospitallers and Templars faced similar struggles after losing their positions in Acre and the dissolution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in general, becoming landholders in continental Europe as much as they were an active military force. Many of the military

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² Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331*, trans. Mary Fischer (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), pp. 206–7.

³ A. J. Forey, *Desertions and Transfers From Military Orders (Twelfth To Early-Fourteenth Centuries)* in *Traditio* 60 (2005): 176. A.J. Forey also uses Alan Forey in other works. The name he uses for each book will be the one used in the citation.

orders were founded with an explicit connection to the Holy Land, even going so far as to include it in their names. The Teutonic and Hospitaller orders' official names referenced the German House of Saint Mary and the Hospital of St. John, both hospitals in Jerusalem. The Templars likewise include the Temple of Solomon, which the Templars believed the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was built on top of. These names were not exclusive to the largest military orders, as seen in the Leper Knights, whose name applies to the leper hospital in Jerusalem dedicated to St. Lazarus.⁴⁵

The Holy Land not only loomed large as a physical destination for military orders, but it also had an intense spiritual importance. The names chosen by military orders for themselves had deep spiritual meanings and connections to their ministries. The Leper Knights are perhaps the strongest of these connections, with their hospital ministry with lepers directly connected with the spirituality and suffering of their patron, St. Lazarus.⁶ Further, there are connections between the orders and their origins within hospitaller or canonical spiritual traditions. At their core, military orders were religious orders with professed brothers and priests, and their creation and evolution mirrored that of the other medieval religious orders around them. These functions also interacted with the orders' growing military mission and commitments, a religious charism utterly unique in the church. There has been extensive interest in the military orders' dual martial and hospital functions in the work of Anthony Luttrell and Malcolm Barber, with the former claiming every military order carried a hospitaller function in their actions.⁷ This view has received some pushback among scholars like James Brodman, who have argued that military orders are better understood as either fully dedicated to military service or hospital orders that grew to include military elements, with the military and hospital roles never intended in their Rules.

The ultimate stress test of these spiritual and temporal ideas came from the fall of Acre and the ultimate failure of the Crusades in the Holy Land. The loss of Christian strongholds and Christendom's ability to wage holy war in the Middle East effectively directly threatened the understanding military orders had of their service in the Crusades and the Holy Land. Because of this, the fall of Acre acts as a clear break from the traditional mission of the military orders, forcing them to reevaluate their positions through the lens of their respective rules of life and spiritual traditions. The new European institutions emphasized their original purposes, focusing on hospital care or new military engagements, continuing to use crusading imagery and ideology from the Levant. I argue that the end of traditional crusading in the Holy Land challenged the orders' foundational spiritualities and military missions. Drawing on their hospitaller and canon-regular traditions, they repositioned their institutions and spirituality and developed an expanded view of crusading in their European missions.

⁴ The Teutonic Order's official name is Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem, the Templars were the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, and the Leper Knights the Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem.

⁵ David Marcombe, *Leper Knights: The Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem in England, c.1150-1544* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K. ; Rochester, N.Y: Boydell Press, 2003), pp. 6–8.

⁶ Marcombe, *Leper Knights*, p. 11.

⁷ Anthony Luttrell, *The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition, 1291 -1530*, in *The Military Orders*, ed. Malcolm Barber, et. al. (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1994), p. 65.

Lepers, Germans, and Hospitals: The Spiritual Foundation of Military Orders

Military orders were not created in a vacuum, nor did they only see themselves through the lens of warfare. The religious reforms of the twelfth century have long been connected to the development of a new monastic understanding of vocations that expanded them beyond canons serving in parishes or monks in their monasteries. Their creation also occurred alongside monastic movements to return to the roots of religious devotion, encountering Jesus and the church through intense asceticism and the “apostolic poverty” that was lived by, or at least connected with, the earliest Christians. Historians like Jonathan Riley-Smith and Katherine Allen Smith see these desires for authentic Christian living developing and expanding during the First Crusade. In their arguments, these authors highlight the parallels between Crusade preaching on martyrdom and pilgrimage and existing monastic language.⁸ The brutal reality of crusading allowed crusaders to quickly draw parallels between their physical struggles and the spiritual combat that monastic communities were dedicated to. The physical violence of the first few crusades is almost unfathomable, and lords and peasants alike felt the suffering. This experience of widespread suffering also existed alongside an idea of crusading as tangibly helping the pilgrims and Christians of the Holy Land, a well-known goal of the First Crusade.⁹

Military orders viewed their vows as fundamentally connected to the people they served. Orders often describe their initial foundations through moments of service to the poor and the intense emotions generated. Jeroschin writes about the founding of the Teutonic Order in the same *Chronicle* that he uses to tell of their exploits in Prussia. His account uses visceral language to connect the suffering of others with the founding knights’ desire to serve. During the siege of Acre in 1190, several German merchant crusaders saw their fellow Germans in distress. They were overcome with “piety and devotion” and constructed a hospital for them in their tents. The story particularly emphasizes the personal and ascetic nature of this experience. The knights only have a ship’s sail to start their ministry, with everything else “generously donated from the possessions with which God had endowed them.”¹⁰ The order’s origins are echoed in a later passage that justifies their crusading and violence, connecting the order to biblical warriors and their common call to destroy evil and sin. A “true knight” risks “death for the honour of God” and “in the abundance of their love...take pity on the sick, lying in all manner of distress in hospitals, whom they tend generously, humbly and ardently in the course of their duties.”¹¹ The language of this passage ties the knight’s identity as much to their ministry towards the sick and the hospital as their fighting the enemies of God. While the origin Jeroschin tells is contested in recent scholarship by Brodman, who points to the eight-year gap

⁸ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 150–51. For other interesting studies on this topic in Britain and France in the Early Medieval era, see Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013) and Conrad Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁹ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 21.

¹⁰ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 30.

¹¹ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 34.

between the hospital's foundation in 1190 and the assumption of military orders in 1198,¹² it still highlights the knightly ideals that Teutonic brothers saw themselves as living out.

The merchants quickly integrated many German lords and knights into the growing brotherhood. Upon sending delegations to the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope, the order was given a “split” rule. The medical members took up the Hospitaller rule, and the brother-knights the Templar rule.¹³ Though separated by rules, the pseudo-monastic role of the knights and the hospitaller function of the hospital workers led to the institution of a new understanding of a military order that was both spiritually grounded in a singular place, the German House of Jerusalem yet flexible enough to adapt into a distinctly militaristic role. This development is what Brodman describes as the “military-hospitaller” order, firmly placing military orders as part of larger canonical and mendicant reform movements that intended to revitalize religious life.¹⁴

Other military orders have more veiled origins that are nonetheless profoundly connected to their hospital ministries. Perhaps the most famous military order, and certainly the largest one still functioning, is the Order of St. John. The order, known as the Hospitallers or simply the Hospital, innovated the “military-hospitaller” tradition through a broader understanding of service as a core of their identity. Formed in 1099, almost immediately after the capture of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, their exact founding is not described as vividly as other orders. However, their focus on acts of service is ingrained in their *Rule* and *Constitutions*. These foundational texts ordain brothers to “engaging with the poor.”¹⁵ While the Hospitallers were directly connected to a tangible hospital in Jerusalem, like the Teutonic Order, their ministry also grew to include women and lay affiliates. Female branches were common in military orders, with the Teutonic Order and Order of Santiago accepting women in several forms. However, the Hospitallers’ widespread hospital system engrained women even more within the everyday operation of the order.¹⁶ Both the male and female branches of the Hospitallers followed the same general rule that explicitly laid out the member’s responsibility to help the poor around them.

The Hospitaller rule contrasted overtly with monastic military orders like the Templars, whose *Rule* called Templars to emulate the poor in their interior spiritual lives rather than the exterior work associated with the Hospital.¹⁷ St. Bernard of Clairvaux was instrumental in forming the Temple’s spirituality, and he wove rigid Cistercian spirituality into the brothers’ lives. Templar brothers were told to “shun every excess in clothing and on the rare occasions when they are not on duty spend their time repairing their worn armor and torn clothing.” Monastic poverty and the internal purity of the brothers fostered through an intense prayer life within the monastery, would expand into their help

¹²James Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, (United States: Catholic University of America Press, 2009) p. 389.

¹³ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, p. 394.

¹⁵ Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, p. 396.

¹⁶ Anthony Luttrell and Helen J. Nicholson, *Introduction: A Survey of Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, in *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, eds. Anthony Luttrell and Helen J. Nicholson (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2017), p. 5.

¹⁷ Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, p. 398.

with the poor.¹⁸ The female branch of the Hospitallers also took a more intentionally prayerful expression of this service than the brothers. The brothers and priests followed and prayed the same liturgy of the hours and served at the hospitals. However, the female branch was notably cloistered, and many were expected to be literate and able to participate fully in liturgical functions. Likewise, a tradition of noble women entering into Hospitaller convents with the explicit goal of serving the poor or retiring as a widow into a monastic life of prayer also developed as the Hospitallers retreated from the Holy Land and opened more houses in mainland Europe.¹⁹

The same emphasis on hospitaller spirituality can be seen in the Lazarite order, also known as the Leper Knights. While their origins are unknown, like the Hospitallers, Lazarite historians were not stymied by the lack of information. Their chroniclers connected the order's beginnings to physical actions, such as constructing a leper hospital in Jerusalem in the fourth century and important spiritual figures like Judas Maccabeus and St. Basil.²⁰ Regardless of the mythological elements, the first signs of the order appeared in the 1140s through a donation of land for a church named after St. Lazarus and a convent of the sick nearly forty years after the capture of Jerusalem and the First Crusade. The order's spirituality was fundamentally rooted in their service to the lepers from whom they took their unofficial name. While the earliest Lazarite knights are anonymous, other stories about their knights mirror the Teutonic founders' personalization of their spirituality. A twelfth-century Leper Knight known as Alberic was said not just to have served the poor and needy but would submerge his face in the water he washed with as an act of penance and love. The washing and caretaking ground the order's ministry, but Alberic actions are raised as exemplars of the order's charism by taking the suffering of those he serves upon himself. The chronicle states that he was "moved ... to nausea" by the dirty water, yet he immerses himself in it nonetheless. In doing this, Alberic placed himself at risk of catching the disease and symbolically took the place of the lepers.²¹ The description of Alberic's dramatic, saintly actions demonstrates the order's desire to unite their spirituality with their physical ministry.

Alberic's desire to serve and take upon the bodily suffering of lepers is also repeated in other medieval mystics, especially women. Much like Alberic's immersion in the leftover water of the lepers, female medieval mystics like Catherine of Sienna would drink the pus from the lepers and sick that they served to recreate the suffering of Christ physically. Contemporaries even remarked on these incidents among Italian mystics as growing a eucharistic hunger and connection to Christ. In both cases, Alberic and the Italian mystics gained spiritual authority from their acts of bodily holiness. Catherine of Sienna especially attracted the attention of other mystics and church leaders through these actions and was able to spread her spiritual teachings even further.²² This spiritual authority

¹⁸ Andrew Holt. "The New Knighthood: Bernard Of Clairvaux and the Templars." *Medieval Warfare* 6, no. 5 (2016): pp. 14-15.

¹⁹ Luttrell and Nicholson, *Introduction*, in *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, pp. 8-9.

²⁰ Marcombe, *Leper Knights*, p. 7.

²¹ Malcolm Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, in *The Catholic Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (July 1994): p. 446.

²² Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: the Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 171-172.

would have been essential for a military order lacking the distinctive history of its larger neighbors, the position in which the Leper Knights found themselves. The person of Alberic and his extraordinary actions towards their namesake created a perfect opportunity to connect their distinctive way of life to mystical motifs of bodily holiness and the spiritual power that came from them.

The Lazarites did not limit themselves to spiritually taking upon the suffering of the people they served but incorporated lepers as full members. Many secular and religious knights who had contracted leprosy and were rejected from other military orders were welcomed in with open arms.²³ These knights were allowed to serve in military actions as long as they were healthy, transitioning to the order's medical arm once their condition worsened. Secular and religious legal codes codified these entrances, including the French *Livre au Roi* for secular knights and the Templar *Rule of the Temple*. Both mention allowances for knights who had become leprous to transfer or enter into the Lazarites. These transplants were so pivotal to the order's identity that it was a tradition until 1253 to have the Master of the order be a leper himself.²⁴

The foundations of these orders show an interesting conception of religious life within military orders. Many military orders' foundations and early spiritualities were rooted in dramatic personal experiences and deep connections to non-militaristic institutions. The visceral descriptions of the first members of the Teutonic and Lazarite orders and the intentional mythologizing in their telling speak to the profound connection to a particular spirituality and expression of Christian love. The Teutonic Order saw their founders' actions and mission as so important in telling their story that they effectively combined the hospital's founding with the founding of the order itself, even though eight years passed between them. Similarly, the Hospitaller order experienced a deep sense of spirituality apart from the military role they would develop. Hospitaller spirituality was even more varied when approaching the role and importance that women played in its early establishment, with women doing the physical tasks of the hospital and expanding that into a ministry of cloistered prayer.

“The Wrath God Ordained”: Reactions Among the Military Orders to the Fall of Acre

The origin stories and rules of military orders show an attachment to their non-military ministry and witness within a crusading context. Many of the military orders not only took their names from their hospitals in the Holy Land but administered themselves from various Crusader states. Their official names and rules often directly relate to their origins in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, expanding even further as they began militarizing in the twelfth century. While the Templars always had a clear military focus and were given control of military posts and castles²⁹, the Hospitallers began as an exclusively medical order in 1099. They slowly gained military responsibilities until the Kingdom of Jerusalem

²³ It is also worth noting that much like the inclusion of lepers among the Lazarites, chronic illnesses did not exclude people from working in hospitals in Europe. Their hospital service came from desires to physically mirror Christ as well as grow in personal holiness despite their age or health conditions. See John Henderson, *The Renaissance Hospital: Healing the Body and Healing the Soul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 215-218.

²⁴ Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, pp. 444–45.

officially assigned castles in 1136.²⁵ The Teutonic Order was similar. Following their establishment, they began to take up smaller military roles, such as defending sections of Acre's wall in 1193 and explicitly listing their military role in 1198.²⁶ The Leper Knights, despite being more medically focused and having a sizable contingent of members actively sick with leprosy, were also active in military engagements. However, details are sparse aside from a devastating loss in the Battle of La Forbie in 1244.²⁷ The battle, the biggest of the Crusades since the Battle of Hattin in 1187, was so disastrous that the Patriarch of Jerusalem wrote that all the Leper Knights present were killed during the fighting. The Leper Knight's fortunes did not improve over a decade later as a 1252 raid into Muslim territory resulted in the death of the Master of the order and left only four knights alive. This defeat also led Pope Innocent IV to issue a bull in 1223, permitting a non-leper to lead the order, ending a century-old tradition while acknowledging the necessity of military action for their mission.²⁸

By the middle of the thirteenth century, these orders had concrete attachments to the Holy Land through military protection or direct holdings of castles and military posts. This commitment would be pushed to its extreme as the momentum of the Crusades faltered, and Crusader states fell. The Crusader states faced increasingly strong attacks from a rotating list of Muslim empires and powers, each chipping away at their power. Many of the strongholds given to the Hospitaller and Templar orders following the First and Second Crusades were lost in the aftermath of the Battle of Hattin and the loss of Jerusalem in 1187. After several years of incremental warfare and land purchases, the Crusader states regained several strongholds, only to have their progress stopped by the Mongol invasions in the 1240s.²⁹ These gains and losses also incurred a growing view that the Christian forces in the Holy Land lacked the authority and cohesion to deal effectively with Muslim forces. Leadership in the Holy Land was not limited to the monarchies and counts that comprised the Crusader states during the First and Second Crusades and also included military orders, independent barons, and Italian settlements. Significant disunity was also present in these states' treaties and actions. The famed Benedictine chronicler Matthew Paris accused the Hospitallers and Templars of betraying Frederick II by dealing with Muslim forces in the Sixth Crusade, although he later recanted.³⁰ The military orders were not immune from these changes, and the Order of St. Lazarus notably followed the Kingdom of Jerusalem to Acre sometime after the fall of the city of Jerusalem in 1187, re-establishing itself with a new leper hospital and having a gate within the newly fortified city named after their titular Saint and staffed by brothers.³¹ Ultimately, the remaining Crusader States and holdings of military orders were pushed back by Baibars and the Mamluks, who conquered the Templar fortress of Safad and massacred its Knightly inhabitants in 1266. The Mamluk force followed up by capturing Krak de

²⁵ Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 15–18.

²⁶ Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 18.

²⁷ Marcombe, 14.; Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 19.

²⁸ Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, pp. 449–50.

²⁹ Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 61.

³⁰ A. J. Forey, "The Military Orders in the Crusading Proposals of the Late-Thirteenth and Early-Fourteenth Centuries," *Traditio* 36 (1980): p. 318.

³¹ Barber, *The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades*, p. 448.

Chevalier, one of the largest Hospitaller strongholds, in 1271.³² Members of military orders did not ignore these struggles, and there were early indications of their reluctance to continue sending men and resources into what seemed to be a losing struggle. The direct obligations that military orders had to their stations in the east were not always clear. The Hospitaller order only allotted one-third of its revenue in continental Europe to the Holy Land and only had about eighty knights and sergeants-at-arms stationed in Cyprus in the early fourteenth century.³³ While Jeroschin's *Chronicle* does not lay out specific numbers of knights, there is a clear emphasis on the order's continued recruitment and diversion of troops to Prussia and the Baltics, even naming a citadel of theirs after their lost stronghold of Montfort in Palestine.³⁴

All of the complicated political maneuverings that characterized the actions of military orders in the Holy Land came to a head in the Siege of Acre. Following the destruction of the city and Principality of Antioch in 1268 by Baibars, the only remaining Crusader state was the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Acre was their only remaining city of any strategic worth. When the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun, the heir to the terrifyingly successful Baibars, began to march on Acre in 1290, the fear and terror that gripped the town were palpable. The description of the Teutonic Grand Master Burchard von Schwanden's entrance and resignation in Acre that opened this paper shows the tensions felt within religious orders to preserve their presence within the Holy Land. The Grand Master rode into a parade in the streets for him and his men, greeted on all sides by the city's inhabitants, religious figures, and his fellow vowed knights. His resignation was not a case of cowardice or a desire to leave religious life, as he joined the Hospitallers and remained involved in their Holy Land actions. Instead, his leave corresponded to the appointments of Grand Masters, who would progressively push the Teutonic Order's headquarters and actions further toward Germany and the Baltics, leaving a clear lack of continued hierarchical support for the very city that Burchard was attempting to liberate.

The aftermath and reactions to the 1291 Siege of Acre fall represent a dramatic turning point with the physical relocation of the Teutonic and Hospitaller order to Prussia and Rhodes. While the specifics of the siege lie outside of the scope of this paper, its impacts on military orders can be felt both at the political and ideological levels. The Fall of Acre was devastating in a political sense, finalizing the destruction of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Crusader states in a general and personal sense. The Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic, and Lazarites all effectively had their Middle Eastern forces headquartered in Acre at the time. They had significant numbers of knights, even with the dwindling support from their continental houses. The intensity of the fighting took a brutal toll on the men present, resulting in the death of the Templar Grand Master, forty Hospitallers, and all twenty-five Lazarists defenders.³⁵ The defeat was so traumatic that Pope Nicholas IV initiated

³² William J Hamblin, "Muslim Perspectives on the Military Orders during the Crusades," *Brigham Young University Studies* 40, no. 4 (2001): pp. 110–11.; See Appendix Figure #1 for a picture of Krak de Chevalier.

³³ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c. 1050–1310* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1967), pp. 328–47.

³⁴ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 167. The castle and area around it were named "Starkenbergr" which is the German name for Montfort and is used by some historians. For sake of clarity, I use the anglicized name.

³⁵ Marcombe, *Lepet Knights*, p. 15.

discussions on combining the Templar and Hospitaller orders to quell rivalries between members in the region and streamline the leadership questions that many blamed for the campaign failures. Talks even went as far as proposing designs for a unified habit and color scheme.³⁶ The actual members and Grand Masters dismissed the idea readily, and the proposal lost steam after Nicholas died in 1292. The dissolution of the Templars twenty years later in 1312 brought back this discussion, although it was limited to the acquisition of the Templar's property by the Hospitallers, and discussions advanced no further than before.³⁷

There was also an emotional reaction within other orders. Nicholas von Jeroschin reacts with horror at both the loss of life from the siege and the loss of the Teutonic Order's physical connection to the Holy Land. The siege was so violent that "blood rushed like a torrent through all the alleyways" and went as deep as a person's ankles. Jeroschin follows up this visceral description with a personal account of what he thinks led to this moment. He noted three things: the feuding of local leadership, the lack of coordination among armies, and Christians' personal pride and sin. This section is also paired with a long lament for the Holy Land, where Jeroschin gives voice to the Holy Land itself, crying out that its "wondrous inheritance is overgrown and has been given to outsiders."³⁸ The Holy Land is still an essential part of his spirituality, and he decries the loss of life and his connection to the land, going so far as to take upon God's voice in lamenting the loss of his "inheritance." Jeroschin's focus on these events in the Holy Land and the Fall of Acre within the context of the Teutonic Order's Prussian campaigns shows their significance to their Germanic crusading. The importance of the Holy Land is stressed within the *Chronicle*. The order's biblical foundations and the deaths of the knights within Acre all take place within this powerful area, only to be betrayed by the sin and foolishness of the Christians. The Crusader states' suffering and personal failure turned away the Holy Land and left "the wrath of God ordained."³⁹ Even though the area has such a deep meaning, Jeroschin still stops short of calling for any return, nor does he mention any further actions of the order in the Holy Land after the Fall of Acre. The location of the order's headquarters mirrors this tension. Initially located in the iconic castle of Montfort in Palestine until 1265, the order retreated to Acre until its fall in 1291 and stopped in Venice for eighteen years until 1309. The order settled on Marienburg in Prussia in 1309, and their operations would be based in northern Germany for the next five hundred years, much like their gradual movement towards bases further and further away from the Middle East, the Holy Land remained a reminder of their spiritual and biblical past but one that was still in the past.

³⁶ The Spanish philosopher Raymond Lull proposed a black habit with a red cross in the center, combining the black cloth of the Templar habit with the Red Cross of the Hospital. See citation below.

³⁷ Forey, *The Military Orders in the Crusading Proposals of the Late-Thirteenth and Early-Fourteenth Centuries*, pp. 320–24.; While the Templars are an essential part of the story of military orders after the Fall of Acre, their dissolution is a complex topic that is outside of the scope of this paper. There has been extensive literature on this aspect of their history, and I would recommend interested readers to Malcom Barber's *The Trial of the Templars*, Second Edition, for an academic overview of the topic and Anne Gilmour-Bryson's *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus* which contains very interesting translations of testimonies from the Templar dissolution trials.

³⁸ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, pp. 238–42.

³⁹ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 238.

Movements from the East: Ideologically Continuing the Crusade in Europe

Shock and despair were not the only reactions military orders had to the Fall of Acre and their resettlement in Europe. As seen above, physical reactions and discussions followed and hit the heart of the military orders' role. The crusading instincts of these orders were not wholly abandoned but repositioned into their hospitaller functions and continental military operations. The Teutonic and Hospitaller orders are the most obvious example of the physical shift towards the West through their relocation to the Baltic region and Mediterranean islands. However, they also used Crusader language and relics to promote themselves to new members and to continue their ministry. Likewise, these shifts were also accompanied by renewed stress on their hospitaller and canonical roles within their new environments. The Hospitallers made a point to provide care for the sick, and the Teutonic knights emphasized the protection of pilgrims and the poor in their battle tales.

Turning first to the Hospitallers, as seen in their origins and actions in the Holy Land, their order strongly emphasized care for the sick and establishing hospitals. This focus was not lost during their move away from the Holy Land and formed an integral part of new foundations in the Mediterranean. Upon their defeat at Acre, the Hospitallers moved to the town of Limassol on the southern coast of Cyprus in 1291 with a small force of only forty knights and ten men-at-arms. One of their first actions was to plan the construction of a new hospital to replace the one lost at Acre, beginning in 1297, only a few years after their landing. However, funding was hard to come by, and the Master of the Order sent out fundraising requests across Europe, complaining to the court of Aragon in 1306 that he could not even maintain their current level of care for the sick and pilgrims without committing the sin of usury. The Hospitallers would move their operations to Rhodes in 1310, and their plans for a grand hospital came with them. Although the plan for Cyprus failed, the order would finally succeed in Rhodes. Witnesses consistently remarked on the size and scale of their charitable operations on the island throughout the mid to late fourteenth century, noting the number of beds and high-quality medical staff on such a remote island.⁴⁰ The construction and maintenance of a physical hospital became a pillar that the Hospitallers could use to mark an area as theirs. Without it, their presence lacked a critical element, which had to be rectified. While the hospital only became a reality in Rhodes, the lengths that the Hospitallers went to secure resources for the hospital in both areas showed intense commitment, beginning plans soon after they landed, sending letters to kingdoms as far away as Spanish Aragon, and stretching their finances to the point of usury. Apart from the holdings and hospitals in the east, they similarly sought to rebuild and rededicate their new spaces.

Hospitaller areas outside the Middle East also demonstrated a connection between their mission and the continuation of crusading. When writing financial appeals to their lay auxiliary confraternities (groups of non-clerical men and women who supported the order's spirituality and mission and were given certain privileges) in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the English houses of the order made special note of their defense of Rhodes and the spiritual benefits of support. The knights were involved in a nearly biblical struggle, with their hold of Rhodes as the "key to all cristendom standyng in gret paruell betwene the cruell and myghty tirands the Turk and souldan

⁴⁰ Luttrell, *The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition, 1291-1530*, in *The Military Orders*, pp. 68-69.

enmyes to all cristendome.”⁴¹ The descriptions of Rhodes as a defense for all of Christendom match the descriptions of Hospitaller roles during the 1291 Siege of Acre and their early actions in Cyprus. The hospital’s mission was restorative, in the sense that it rebuilt the lost hospitals of Jerusalem and Acre, and an act of sacrificial love for all Christians through the brothers’ work.⁴² Even removed by time and space from the Fall of Acre, the late medieval Hospitallers’ work still viewed crusading as still relevant to their work. Even more remarkable is the shift from the medical application of their interaction with Christendom to militaristic action against the Turks as an act of defense. In the immediate aftermath of the Fall of Acre and their fundraising two centuries later, the Hospitallers connected the idea of crusading to their particular military service on the islands and their healthcare charity.

This similar determination and effort on behalf of their charism can be seen in the Teutonic Order and their care for pilgrims and the poor. While the Teutonic Order was charitable in origin, their actions during the Baltic Crusades were explicitly militaristic. Far from separating the spiritual from the physical, the language used to describe their new European campaigns is inundated with biblical undertones. Jeroschin’s *Chronicle* uses the word “heathen” to describe the numerous pagan tribes in the Baltics and Prussia and the Muslims in the Holy Land. Likewise, Jeroschin displays both struggles as extensions of Abraham’s battle against Lot, emphasizing the appearance and blessing of the priest Melchizedek afterward as a sign of God’s blessing of the combat.⁴³ This language and shared biblical foundation directly connect the “heathen” Muslims that the Teutonic knights fought in the Holy Land with their new enemies in the Baltic. The shared identity of the Baltic and Muslim forces as “heathens” is expanded into the Teutonic Order’s charism towards the poor and the pilgrim within military battles. The *Chronicle* describes many temporary crusaders that joined the Teutonic Order for short stints of fighting as “pilgrims.” The Teutonic Order paid particular attention to these crusaders, not just because they were some of their only reinforcements in an environment of near-constant fighting, but also because they were lauded for the sacrifices they had made to respond to the crusading call of God. While there is considerable doubt as to the motive and true ability of German “pilgrims” who would come annually for the exact time required for the papal indulgence,⁴⁴ Jeroschin still speaks very highly of such “noble heroes” who “put to one side anything which might hinder or delay their propitious journey and set off enthusiastically... to take revenge on the heathens for the injustice evilly and ferociously inflicted on the followers of the crucified Lord.”⁴⁵

The new pilgrims also played a prominent role in the Teutonic Order’s battle plans, with the order making their safety a priority during non-combat situations like harsh weather. Campaigns with

⁴¹ Rory MacLellan, *Hospitaller Confraternity Scripts, Crusading and the English Reformation, c.1440–1537*, in *Historical Research* 92, no. 256 (May 2019): pp. 449–50.

⁴² Luttrell, *The Hospitallers’ Medical Tradition, 1291 -1530*, p. 64.

⁴³ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 32.

⁴⁴ Sven Ekdahl’s chapter *The Treatment of Prisoners of War during the Fighting between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania* in *The Military Orders*, ed. Malcolm Barber, describes the merciless actions that both sides enacted upon each other and argues that these temporary crusaders served more as boosts for the economy than true fighters and their real value came in their capturing and impressment of local Lithuanian and Baltic peoples for the Teutonic Order.

⁴⁵ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, pp. 74–75.

pilgrims were periodically postponed because of severely cold winters, a precaution Jeroschin points out the Teutonic Knights did not take.⁴⁶ This treatment is extended to the non-pilgrim Christians and the poor, who are saved by the divine vengeance of the Crusaders and their pilgrim allies.⁴⁷ These passages occur alongside descriptions of a knight's service and their goals in Prussia. While descriptions of the military and hospital commands have been discussed above, there is also an explicit mention of care for the poor and pilgrims. In addition to "taking pity on the sick," they are first called to "receive guests, pilgrims and the poor."⁴⁸ In a source unabashedly supportive of the Teutonic Order's actions and crusading in general, Jeroschin intentionally portrays the order as fulfilling a knight's virtuous behavior, specifically highlighting the ideal aid they would provide for the pilgrims and the poor Christians around them. The actions of their founders in Acre and other crusaders in the Holy Land are intentionally replicated and held up as signals of their identity. As the founders focused on those made poor or wounded by Islamic armies, the knights in Prussia ensured they could point to times when they liberated Christians captured by the same "heathens." The order replicated the Holy Land crusades in Prussia through the enemies they faced and the pilgrims they fought for and with.

The crusading continuity also extended to their use of relics and items the military orders brought back from the Holy Land. In making the literal bones and material of the Holy Land accessible to the people in Prussia or the Mediterranean, they, in effect, brought the Crusades with them. Relics are a unique phenomenon in Christianity, and each piece carries a story and presence exclusive to the original saint or item they came from. Relics varied from preserved remnants of saints, called "first-class relics," including their bones and blood, to "second-class relics," objects touched to or used by the saint. Just as each saint had connections to particular causes or places, their relics allow believers to feel close to and identify with the saint, even today.⁴⁹ The ability of relics to bring a built-in story and theological message with them gave them powerful standing in the first Crusades. The Lance of Longinus and the True Cross held particular importance and were even brought into battle, as seen before the Battle of Ascalon in 1099 when Raymond of Aguilers and Godfrey blessed soldiers and gave rousing speeches while brandishing the Lance and True Cross.⁵⁰ These relics were important to the Crusaders because of their explicit connection to the crucifixion of Christ, which they commemorated by sewing a cross into their clothes as a symbol of their oath.

Relics have long been a part of military orders and their crusading justification, even outside the Holy Land. The Teutonic Order included relics within their spiritual observance and battles as early as the 1248 Battle of Dzierzgoń in modern-day Poland, where the head of St. Barbara was found and presented to the church and assembled people. The sight of the relic, appearing after a "daring fight" by the Teutonic brothers, began an impromptu processional with "every last man and woman"

⁴⁶ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 277.

⁴⁷ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 257.

⁴⁸ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Tomasz Borowski and Christopher Gerrard, *Constructing Identity in the Middle Ages: Relics, Religiosity, and the Military Orders* in *Speculum* 92, no. 4 (October 2017): pp. 1058-1059.

⁵⁰ Jay Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), p. 308.

in the city. The relic was so spiritually potent that no one who appeared before the Saint left without some blessing, and “miracles... [became] so common that they no longer count as such. It would be a miracle if anyone left there without receiving a pledge of blessing.” The appearance of the Saint and the supposedly limitless miracles that followed were a sign to Jeroschin and the Teutonic Order that their cause was just. St. Barbara’s Turkish origins also point to the explicit crossover and intersection of spirituality. St. Barbara was not only from areas by the Holy Land but lived in a time when the church was persecuted by non-Christians, a connection that the Teutonic knights could make to their own violent battles against pagans. The Middle East and the earliest Christians were present in the minds as much as the eyes of the Crusaders and brought blessings with them. Jeroschin even calls his brothers to “Rejoice, rejoice, Teutonic Order especially, that you have been so blessed.”⁵¹

Military orders began to explicitly incorporate relics from the Holy Land and the Crusades into their non-Holy Land operations following the Fall of Acre. Fragments of relics like the True Cross, a potent symbol of the first crusade and the Holy Land, became very prominent in the reliquary collections of military orders. The Hospitallers housed pieces of the True Cross in houses as far apart as their headquarters on Rhodes and Belvar in central Portugal. The Hospitaller headquarters also contained various other pieces related to Jesus’ life in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, including thorns from the Crown of Thorns and the thirty silver pieces paid to Judas. At the same time, Belvar had pieces from the Holy Shroud and drops of the Virgin Mary’s breast milk.⁵² The Teutonic Order had similar connections to Holy Land relics, with a relic of the True Cross being of particular interest. In 1322, a brother used a relic of the True Cross to resurrect a four-year-old boy from the dead. The relic later jumped out of a fire after being thrown in, proving its authenticity in the eyes of Brother Gebhard von Mansfeld, the commander of the house in Brandenburg. Breaking this story down reveals even deeper connections to the order’s crusading past. Like the previous miracle in 1242, the piece of the cross has special spiritual powers. It is the conduit for several miracles, raising a dead child and surviving an additional test of its authenticity by jumping out of the flames. The raising from the dead can also be seen as an allusion to the raising of the dead by Jesus, whose own life and resurrection are associated with the relic. The relic was also intentionally brought to Prussia by a brother, not being found like the head of St. Barbara. While the knight’s exact reason for returning with the relic is not recorded and could be chalked up to personal piety, it still recognizes the powerful draw of relics of the True Cross and at least some desire to see that same power brought to the Prussian war front.⁵³

Conclusion

When Burchard von Schwanden left Acre only days after riding into it at the head of a parade, he must have known that he was seeing the end of an era. The Grand Masters of the other two large military orders had begged him to stay and fight, only to be rebuffed. Acre would fall only a few months later, and of these two leaders, one would die defending the city while the other barely escaped. The orders would also abandon the Holy Land as their base of operations after. The Hospitallers were forced to the island of Rhodes in 1310, the Teutonic Order re-established itself in Prussia in 1309, and the

⁵¹ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 95.

⁵² Borowski and Gerrard, *Constructing Identity in the Middle Ages*, p. 1069.

⁵³ Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, p. 275.

Templars were dissolved in 1312. The loss of the Holy Land forced military orders to reevaluate their place apart from the land and cities they had fought to control for almost two centuries. The Teutonic and Hospitaller orders' solution was to continue their crusading initiatives in different forms away in their new designated theaters. Military orders had deep traditions that varied in the spirituality and ministries they interacted with. Hospital ministry formed the most prominent of these traditions. As indicated by their name, the Hospitallers were famous for their hospitals and work among the poor. However, the Teutonic Order also originated in hospital ministry, and smaller orders like the Lazarites took their ministry in unique directions, specifically serving lepers and incorporating lepers into their ranks.

These ministerial and spiritual pasts would be leaned on as military orders went through a period of turmoil following their defeat at Acre in 1291. The Hospitallers planned a new hospital upon their arrival in Cyprus in the 1290s, eventually building it alongside their headquarters in Rhodes.⁵⁴ The Teutonic Order likewise had very clear ideas for what made a knight virtuous and holy, especially relating to their 1190 origins during the Third Crusade and the care for pilgrims, the poor, and imitating Jesus' crucifixion. The Order's *Chronicle* of the Baltic Crusades consistently refers to these qualities during their campaigns, caring for the German "pilgrims" and the poor during their battles. Additionally, there was a concerted effort in the language and relics employed by both orders to connect their struggles with their Crusading past in the Holy Land. The Teutonic Order used "heathen" for their enemies in the Middle East and the Baltics, drawing a clear relationship between the conflicts. The Hospitallers use similar sacrificial language about their medical service during the Crusades and their new foundations in the Mediterranean. Relics also tangibly brought the Crusades into the new areas military orders occupied. Both the Hospitallers and Teutonic Orders had a special reverence for relics from the Holy Land and the life of Christ, even spreading them to houses across Europe.⁵⁵ Relics like the True Cross carried with them the stories and sentiments of the Holy Land and the spiritual power, performing miracles and justifying the Teutonic Order's fight in the eyes of God.

The Crusades did not end for military orders when Acre fell. Instead, as Burchard von Schwanden realized, it would just mean moving away from their traditional lands in the Middle East. Nevertheless, there was still continuity in their identities and ministries in this shift. Orders brought the hospitals, relics, and knightly qualities they had in the Holy Land to their new establishments. Even physically separated from their origins, they still saw their spirituality, ministry, and fighting as a continuation rather than a hard break that made their vows obsolete. This was a difficult realization for some brothers. The blood spilled at Acre, and Burchard von Schwanden's transfer to the Hospitallers speak to the tension within military orders and the desire to remain connected to the Holy Land. When the Hospitallers wrote an appeal for their Confraternity members in the fifteenth century, hundreds of years after they retreated to Rhodes, they still spoke of their fight in Crusading terms. The brothers were "redy to shede theyre blode and jeoparde theyre lyves ayenst the Turks and other

⁵⁴ Luttrell, *The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition, 1291 -1530*, pp. 68-69.

⁵⁵ Borowski and Gerrard, *Constructing Identity in the Middle Ages*, p. 1069.

infydells for the defence and augmentation of Crists faythe for the love of God and for the greate quyetnes comforth and tuytion of Crysten people.”⁵⁶

Appendix

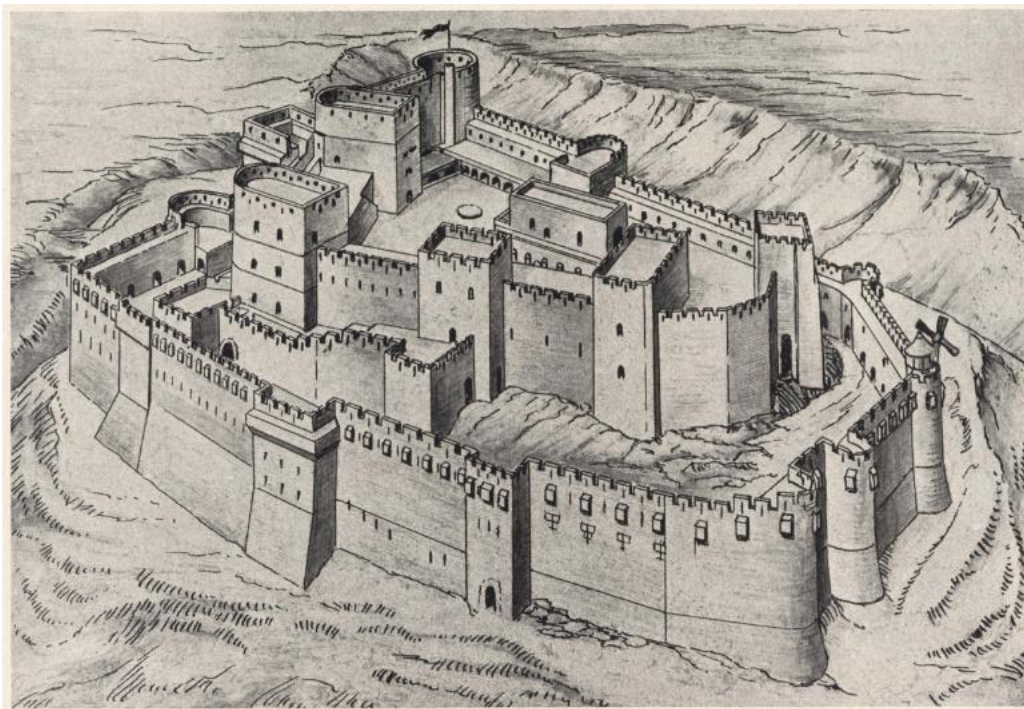


Image No. 1. Illustration of Krak de Chevalier prior to its fall. **Credit:** Reprinted from R.E. Dupuy, “When Knights Were Bold this Fortress Flourished,” *The Military Engineer* 26, no. 149 (September-October 1934): 333-336.

⁵⁶ MacLellan, *Hospitaller Confraternity Scripts, Crusading and the English Reformation*, p. 452.

**From Reunification to Normalization:
Twenty Years of Vietnam, 1975-1995**

*Susan Samardjian*¹

Introduction

As North and South Vietnam united under Communism in 1975, the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) faced continuous setbacks as their goals of a socialist transformation fell to ruin. The severe economic stagnation in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam following the Second Indochinese War sparked a series of events, from a refugee crisis to an invasion of Cambodia and a brief war with China, all of which left Vietnam isolated and ostracized. The domestic policy changes made under the VCP, such as the implementation of collectivization, caused thousands of Vietnamese civilians to flee to neighbouring countries.² Vietnam's weary neighbours depicted the refugee crisis as the VCP's attempt to expand its influence in Southeast Asia, as Thailand and Cambodia marked Vietnamese expansionism as a threat to national security. Frequent border disputes between the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and Vietnam, as well as the purging of the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia, led to the invasion of Cambodia in 1978.³ The occupation of Cambodia by the Vietnamese provoked severe economic sanctions regionally and internationally as the US kept close ties with key Asian states like Thailand and China.

The fate of Hanoi's economy after reunification was the principal reason behind the reconstruction process leading up to the normalization of relations. Conceptualizing the refusal to establish trade relations with many nations that did not share Communist loyalties, Hanoi's leadership overlooked the importance of bilateral regional and international relations. The occupation of Cambodia and the Third Indochinese War further placed Vietnam in a position of isolation and ostracization that put the economy in a precarious position, forcing the Vietnamese government to re-evaluate its domestic and foreign policies. While previous scholarship attributes the *Doi Moi* – the name given to the economic reforms initiated in Vietnam in 1986 – and normalization efforts to the consequences of American economic sanctions, I propose that territorial contentions with the

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² Shimojo Hisashi, "Local Politics in the Migration between Vietnam and Cambodia: Mobility in a Multiethnic Society in the Mekong Delta since 1975," *Southeast Asian Studies* 10:1, (2021): p. 91.

³ Ramses Amer, "Cambodia and Vietnam: A Troubled Relationship," *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2010), p. 93.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) catalyzed reforms due to the immediate national security concerns surrounding its shared border with China and Cambodia. While considering the implications of American foreign policy in Vietnam, precarious relations with regional states greatly impacted Vietnamese foreign policy and economic decline. The economic consequences of the ostracization of Vietnam caused by regional disputes prompted a series of normalization efforts to improve regional and international relations in Vietnam. Economic stagnation since reunification sparked a dramatic re-evaluation of the VCP's domestic and foreign policies leading to *Doi Moi* and bilateral trade reforms.

A Short Victory: Domestic Affairs Following Reunification

After a thirty-year war for independence, Vietnam became a unified state when the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) took Saigon on 30 April 1975, creating the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. For the Vietnamese Communists, 1975 marked the triumph over Western capitalist exploitation. However, for many Vietnamese civilians, this year marked the beginning of a new form of misery. The PAVN quickly took over police services, schools, hospitals, and businesses while confiscating American-supplied war resources.⁴ Given the brutality of the war in Vietnam, the Communists distrusted the South. They maintained a direct rule by increasing the presence of the PAVN, removing all South Vietnamese officials and sending them to re-education camps. By July 1976, Vietnam became a single-party dictatorship controlled by the VCP. The VCP then set out a program for a socialist reconstruction of the North and a transformation of the South.⁵

The Communist takeover came at a significant cost to the economy. In 1975, the United States issued a trade embargo on Vietnam, while China and ASEAN members distanced themselves as Vietnam grew closer to the Soviet Union.⁶ The economic situation deteriorated further when one million civilians in the South became unemployed, many of whose careers were compromised by their collaborations with the anti-Communist movements. In 1976, the Politburo (a Soviet policy-making body) stressed the importance of economic reform and initiated a Five-Year Plan (FYP) from 1976 to 1980, with the primary goal being a socialist reconstruction of Southern Vietnam.⁷ With the new FYP inspired by the Stalinist model, the VCP sought to repair the economy by collectivizing Southern Vietnam to produce enough resources to feed the nation and fund Vietnam's rapid industrialization. If

⁴ Christopher Goscha, "The Tragedy and Rise of Modern Vietnam," in *Vietnam: A New History* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), p. 372.

⁵ David W.P Elliot, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 2.

⁶ Goscha, "The Tragedy and Rise of Modern Vietnam," p. 385.

⁷ Kosal Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), p. 64.

Stalin's FYP was not enough proof, Vietnam's FYP of collectivizing the South dramatically decreased the productivity of civilians as they were no longer incentivized. Collectivized civilians lost their property, and the VCP forced them to work on large government farms holding about 100,000 people in each collective.⁸

While the families loyal to the VCP enjoyed more job opportunities and higher education, southern families had their lands redistributed. The VCP placed discriminatory policies against those who worked with the capitalist regimes dating back to the 1940s.⁹ Like Ngo Dinh Diem's dictatorship, the VCP's police force compiled a list of suspects and mandated identity cards with short biographies to categorize civilians by their previous loyalties. The VCP used identity cards to reward loyal families and discriminate against and punish capitalist sympathizers.¹⁰ In 1975 alone, 6.5 million civilians' careers became "compromised" due to their families' connection to the French or the Americans. The VCP's mistrust of the South hindered their ability to industrialize and repair the country, as the collectivization of the South, along with discriminatory policies, caused a massive economic downturn.¹¹ The FYP showed that the VCP acted out of revenge rather than a desire to rehabilitate the nation. Hanoi's development model was an inadequate way of transforming the South.

Not only were the Southern Vietnamese targeted by the VCP, but the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam also faced discrimination as the scapegoats for the haphazard socialist transformation of the South. While Sino-Vietnamese tensions continued into the late 1970s, the VCP encouraged the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam to leave, including those loyal members of the PAVN and VCP.¹² Many of the bourgeoisie the VCP targeted during the socialist transformation of the South were ethnic Chinese who served the Diem regime. Hoang Van Hoan, a Chinese associate of Ho Chi Minh and a member of the Politburo, fled Vietnam in 1979, making him one of the most senior members of a Communist government to defect. Many ethnic Chinese who attempted to flee became political prisoners and died in the re-education camps.

The "Boat People": Vietnamese Mass Migration

The economic stagnation and discriminatory policies made living conditions so unbearable in Vietnam that civilians, most of whom were Southern Vietnamese, began to flee to neighbouring countries. Civilians bribed border patrolmen to let them pass and went by boat to China, Hong Kong, and other

⁸ D.R. Sardesai, *Vietnam, Past and Present* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 129.

⁹ Hisashi, "Local Politics in the Migration between Vietnam and Cambodia," p. 381.

¹⁰ Hisashi, p. 382.

¹¹ Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 128.

¹² Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 474.

ASEAN countries, where they were referred to as “boat people.”¹³ Many also migrated to Thailand via Cambodia and became undocumented workers in places like cassava farms. Although the PAVN restricted cross-border migration, the passage to Cambodia and Thailand persisted despite all the political chaos in Vietnam.¹⁴ The government could not control migration at the border, considering the civilians took informal routes.

Bangkok and Phnom Penh perceived Vietnamese “boat people” as the VCP’s plan for the “Vietnamization” of Southeast Asia – a ploy to increase the VCP’s influence in the region.¹⁵ Thailand’s strategic location and ideological inclination made Bangkok alert to the disputes in Vietnam.¹⁶ The glue keeping Vietnamese-Thai relations together was Hanoi’s relations with ASEAN countries and Hanoi’s treatment of its members. From Hanoi’s perspective, Thailand’s aid to the US during the Second Indochinese War was one of the most salient implications to Vietnamese-Thai relations. Thailand provided a military base for American fighter planes to remain close to Vietnam during the war. Notably, the fact that US military bases remained in Thailand was alarming, as Hanoi viewed this as Bangkok’s show of support for the US policy against Vietnam.¹⁷ Moreover, Hanoi and Bangkok frequently competed for political influence in Indochina, which made Thailand “sensitive” to Vietnam’s foreign policy in the region, particularly with Cambodia, where the two powers competed for influence. The VCP’s aims to influence Indochinese ideologies impacted Thailand and caused a tornado effect, leading China to react negatively. Although China and Vietnam had a mutually beneficial relationship as the major Communist powers in Asia, Vietnamese reunification caused tensions to rise between the two long-standing allies.

The Sino-Vietnamese Communist Connection

Chinese and Vietnamese Communists had collaborated since the late nineteenth century, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) provided organizational models that the VCP followed.¹⁸ When Vietnam became a unified Communist state, a Chinese representative spoke before the Economic and Social Council, praising North Vietnam’s victory and the “dumping of the puppet Saigon regime.”¹⁹

¹³ Goscha, “The Tragedy and Rise of Modern Vietnam,” p. 385.

¹⁴ Hisashi, “Local Politics in the Migration between Vietnam and Cambodia,” p. 100.

¹⁵ Amer, “Cambodia and Vietnam,” p. 96.

¹⁶ Nguyen Vu Tung, “Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War,” *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2010), p. 67.

¹⁷ Vu Tung, “Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War,” p. 71.

¹⁸ Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 5.

¹⁹ The Black Panther Party, “Intercommunal News: U.N. Appeals for Aid to Indochina,” *Black Panther Productions*, 13:13 (1975): p. 45.

However, Sino-Vietnamese relations became problematic once Beijing realized that Hanoi could rival its influence over Indochina. When Vietnam became a competitor, its “fraternal cooperation” quickly shifted to a power struggle between the two nations. By the end of the Second Indochinese War, the relationship turned into a rivalry between China and North Vietnam as it became evident that a unified Vietnam could be a pro-Soviet state.²⁰ Over the years, Moscow and Hanoi developed a close fraternal relationship over shared ideology, as the *Moscow News* compared Vietnam’s independence to the October Revolution.²¹ When Vietnam joined the Soviet-controlled Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), a 25-year treaty of friendship, China responded by ending economic and military assistance to Vietnam. This, coupled with the fact that China saw the exodus of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam as a threat, caused tension between the Communist allies. Beijing understood the exodus as Hanoi’s way of breaking ties with it and removing any person of influence representing the CCP in Vietnam.²²

China’s fear of the Soviet Union’s growing influence convinced Beijing to seek a normalized relationship with the US. When Jimmy Carter became the president in 1977, he approached Huang Chen, China’s liaison chief, with the thought of normalization as they both distrusted the Soviet Union.²³ Most notably, an improved relationship between Beijing and Washington would force the Soviet Union to divide its attention between two enemies. When Sino-American relations normalized in January 1979, their mutual goals to contain the Soviet Union made Hanoi a target as Moscow’s closest ally in Southeast Asia. Although ideological differences and Sino-American normalization contributed to Vietnam’s increasing reliance on the Soviet Union, it was not the only reason Hanoi moved away from Beijing. One of the most significant blows to Sino-Vietnamese relations was China’s support of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, or the DK, which signalled to Hanoi that the Chinese planned to encircle Vietnam with enemies.²⁴

One view of the Sino-DK-Washington relationship was that it was a product of the Sino-Soviet split and Hanoi’s endorsement of Soviet ideology. When Vietnam grew closer to the Soviets, it became apparent that Beijing would be trapped in the north by the Soviets and in the south by the Vietnamese.²⁵

²⁰ Norman G. Owen, “Vietnam After 1975: From Collectivism to Market Leninism,” *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), p. 473.

²¹ *Moscow News*, “Soviet-Vietnamese Declaration,” *Moscow News*, 45 (1975): p. 17.

²² Owen, “Vietnam After 1975,” p. 474.

²³ Deborah Kalb and Marvin Kalb, “Clinton: The First Baby-Boomer President,” *Haunting Legacy: Vietnam and the American Presidency from Ford to Obama* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2011), p. 61.

²⁴ Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 6.

²⁵ Andrew Mertha, *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979* (Ithaca: New York, Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 5.

The creation of the DK following a coup in 1975 opened a path to offset the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance seeing that the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) had increasing hostilities with the VCP. In 1977, Beijing provided the DK with food and resources and planned for Pol Pot to meet Mao Zedong on a secret visit to China to secure military aid. China sent one billion dollars worth of aid, the most significant commitment in the history of Communist China. The US, which shared the desire to contain the Soviets, ignored Pol Pot's human rights violations and secretly provided covert aid to the DK. Like China, the US hoped to precipitate the decline of the VCP and Vietnamese expansionism as it resented the nation after withdrawing from the Second Indochinese War. The human rights issues in Pol Pot's genocidal regime were not enough to sway the US administration against providing covert aid, despite President Jimmy Carter referring to the Khmer Rouge as the "worst violator of human rights in the world today."²⁶ When the American public began to draw attention to the administration's lack of interest in the Khmer atrocities, Carter stated that the US would continue to oppose nations that violated human rights. However, China and the US did nothing to stop the Khmer regime. Even after the VCP drove Pol Pot from the DK, the US provided covert aid to the Khmer Rouge so that they may one day return to power.

The Invasion of The DK And The Third Indochinese War

The historically tumultuous relationship between the Chinese and Vietnamese greatly influenced the turmoil between Vietnam and the DK. Through Chinese and American aid, Pol Pot's regime came to power with vehement anti-Vietnamese sentiments. Hanoi hoped that the Khmers would adopt a pro-Vietnamese doctrine, similar to the Laotian Communists, to maintain its sphere of influence in Indochina. However, this was not the case.²⁷ When Pol Pot established the DK, he immediately removed any Vietnamese Communist allies. He spread anti-Vietnamese sentiments by claiming land rights to the Mekong Delta, causing collisions with the PAVN located at the DK-Vietnamese border. Vietnam was partly to blame for the disputes, as Politburo reports stated that the status of the Mekong Delta was unclear. The border skirmishes continued until 1976, when attempts to settle these disputes broke down, and the DK government refused to negotiate. Consequently, Phnom Penh and Hanoi officially terminated diplomatic relations in December 1977.²⁸ Until 1978, the Khmer Rouge attacked the Vietnamese provinces of Tay Ninh, Kien Giang, and An Giang, killing thousands of civilians while purging any ethnic Vietnamese and Hanoi-trained Khmers in the DK.

²⁶ Jimmy Carter, "Human Rights Violations in Cambodia Statement by the President," *The American Presidency Project*, April 21, 1978.

²⁷ Stephen J. Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of War*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 95.

²⁸ Amer, "Cambodia and Vietnam," p. 92.

By mid-1978, the Vietnamese government concluded that a conflict similar to its previous 'People's War' would not be applicable in this situation. The VCP decided to launch a military expedition, mirroring the 1968 Prague Spring, to bring the DK under Vietnam's sphere of influence as it had desired for many decades.²⁹ The border disputes soon escalated to a full-scale war in December 1978 when 100,000 Vietnamese troops entered Eastern Cambodia, capturing Phnom Penh after two weeks of fighting.³⁰ Following the fall of the Pol Pot regime, Vietnamese officials created a People's Revolutionary Council to act as the provisional government until the acting council established the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) and remained in power until the PAVN withdrew from Cambodia.³¹

China had something to lose in the war with the Khmers since it supported the Pol Pot regime. In an attempt to retaliate and teach Vietnam a lesson, China invaded Northern Vietnam in February 1979.³² Chinese leaders viewed their southern neighbours as ungrateful for all the CCP had aided them during their Peoples' War. Beijing's leadership agreed to a short attack on Northern Vietnam to limit the costs and other concerns that the senior members had. This way, Beijing would accomplish its goal of punishing Vietnam while keeping the cost of war to a minimum. Many viewed this operation as a military failure for the Chinese but a success in strategy and diplomacy. The war successfully blocked Hanoi's ambitions to attain a sphere of influence over Indochina, forcing Hanoi to keep a portion of the army on its shared border with China.

For the VCP to have facilitated a prosperous post-war reconstruction depended on a peaceful regional environment where military operations could be reduced in favour of foreign aid and trade. Vietnam's economic rehabilitation would have greatly benefitted from a continuous inflow of Chinese aid. However, this was impossible given the political and military relationship between the Chinese and the Khmer Rouge.³³ Consequently, military action against the Chinese-backed Khmers resulted in economic and military retaliation against the Vietnamese instead of support. The only nation to stand behind Hanoi's decision to invade the DK was the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union publicly defended Vietnam's foreign policy. It condemned Chinese aggression, calling it a violation of the United Nations

²⁹ Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 111.

³⁰ Amer, "Cambodia and Vietnam," p. 93.

³¹ Amer, p. 95.

³² Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 221.

³³ Bonny Lin, David Grompert, and Hans Binnendijk, "China's Punitive War Against Vietnam, 1979," *Blinders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2014), p. 89.

Charter and international law and urging international organizations to stand in solidarity with Hanoi.³⁴ Nevertheless, the pariah state known as Vietnam would not receive support from Western nations.

Vietnam's Pariah Era: Economic Ostracization

Even though the invasion and occupation were regionally and internationally opposed, for the leaders in Hanoi to have sat idly while the Khmer Rouge purged ethnic Vietnamese civilians would have made them appear passive and weak. The Third Indochinese War and the occupation of Cambodia brought about a period of instability in Asia where no player left with a positive outcome. Cambodia had the most to lose that being its independence, military might, and integrity, which the Cambodian Civil War only worsened.³⁵ Hanoi's overthrow of the Chinese-backed Pol Pot regime was embarrassing for Beijing. Beijing labelled itself as the country that could check Hanoi's ambitions, but it failed to teach the Vietnamese a lesson by establishing military superiority over its smaller neighbour.

The Vietnamese domination of Cambodia came at a cost to Hanoi's national security, international reputation, and economic stability. Though it achieved the goal of defeating the Khmers, the Vietnamese did not expect the magnitude of international condemnation for its actions and thus endured ostracization for ten long years.³⁶ The FYP failed since it forced Hanoi to postpone reconstruction programs in favour of military defence to maintain "preparedness" at the border with China. With its international credibility dramatically reduced, Hanoi's chances of receiving assistance from other countries were slim. International isolation drastically impacted the Vietnamese economy, and the VCP became more dependent on Soviet assistance to maintain domination.³⁷ The boycott of Vietnam and Vietnamese-occupied Cambodia deprived Hanoi of developmental aid until 1991, with only a handful of Western countries that continued to send supplies, such as Sweden.³⁸ There was a lack of support even in developing countries where the Vietminh revolutionaries were once an inspiration.

Economic advisors in Hanoi regarded the period before the Cambodian invasion as a missed opportunity to establish economic relations with the West. Hanoi's economic planners noted that they had the chance to explore further development in the reconstruction process had they not limited themselves to allying with the Soviet Union. In 1985, Vo Van Kiet, a socialist politician and economic researcher, stated that Vietnam did not recognize the primacy of bilateral and multilateral economic relations. Since 1975, Hanoi made the mistake of primarily building relations with countries with shared interests, and policymakers did not stress the importance of exporting and increasing imports in a

³⁴ Moscow News, "Hands off Vietnam! Appeal of the International Emergency Conference in Support of Vietnam," *Moscow News*, 12, (1979), p. 25.

³⁵ Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 187.

³⁶ Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 219.

³⁷ Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 187.

³⁸ Westad and Quinn-Judge, p. 220.

developing economy.³⁹ This missed opportunity hindered Hanoi's ability to build a thriving socialist state. Van Kiet further wrote:

Our psychology of reliance on outsiders was deep, widespread, and resistant to change. Because of that, we were not able to exploit our strength and potential in our country to widen our economic relations with other countries, particularly to increase our exports. We did not see as important investments in building infrastructure and material foundations in service of large-scale exports. We were too slow to determine the necessary policies and measures to strengthen our export sector.⁴⁰

The Path To *Doi Moi*

From 1985 to 1986, Hanoi was increasingly receptive to economic reform. The shift to a more open-minded approach to economic reform was undoubtedly influenced by Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* policy of loosening economic constraints on civilians to incentivize them to work harder.⁴¹ The Soviet economy, on the brink of collapse, could not afford to fund uprisings in Third World countries, causing Gorbachev to reduce economic and military aid to its allies, including Vietnam. Before this, Vietnam heavily relied on the Soviet Union for aid, especially during the war with Cambodia and the Third Indochinese War. This changed in 1985 when the economic planners in Hanoi paid more attention to the decline of the Soviet Union's economic might and the steady downfall of the COMECON countries, which owed an overwhelming amount of debt to the West. Hanoi had to begin considering partnerships with other nations to save the economy. In a report written in March 1985, decision-makers informed the VCP that many capitalist nations and economic organizations refused to enter a partnership with Vietnam because of political issues, such as the US economic sanctions and regional conflicts, meaning Vietnam's military presence in Cambodia.⁴²

The occupation of Cambodia diminished any prospect of normalization with the US. The US participated in propaganda campaigns labelling Hanoi as the 'aggressive Cuba of the East,' encouraging other nations to distance themselves from the pariah state. The American administration's stance on Vietnam prompted European nations to cut off food aid, and the United Nations (UN) General Assembly refused to recognize the Vietnamese-backed government in Cambodia.⁴³ By 1986, hostilities with China during the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia drastically destabilized the region, which caused unfavourable economic circumstances. Distancing itself from the Cambodian conflict and

³⁹ Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War*, p. 174.

⁴⁰ Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War*, p. 174.

⁴¹ Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 221.

⁴² Path, *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking during the Third Indochina War*, p. 174.

⁴³ Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia*, p. 222.

normalizing relations with China was the only way to repair the nation. A negotiated peace agreement could have been established sooner if the US and China had stopped backing the Khmer Rouge, but the two powers were adamant about bleeding Vietnam dry. By 1989, Hanoi withdrew from Cambodia and accepted a Cambodian government under UN supervision.⁴⁴

Hanoi's decision-makers discussed the withdrawal from Cambodia as early as 1988. Cases of famine and malnourishment spread nationwide, leaving seven-million Vietnamese civilians starving. The threat of another famine in 1989 caused turmoil within the government that urged Hanoi to redirect its focus from military expansion to economic stability.⁴⁵ The food crisis forced Hanoi to come to terms with the impact of regional and international isolation and revisit its relations with ASEAN countries and other international players. As 1989 ended, Communist regimes worldwide fell, which alarmed Hanoi and encouraged decision-makers to seek normalization with China as soon as possible to protect the regime.⁴⁶ By 1990, bilateral trade in Vietnam had dropped from eighty percent to fourteen percent. This dramatic decrease prompted Hanoi to redesign its foreign policy to meet the needs of the economy and national security.

Economic success would strengthen Vietnam's credibility and power, giving it a greater ability to protect its sovereignty and "promote international prestige."⁴⁷ Hanoi found that economic instability was the root of the Communist collapse, which led to political chaos. The VCP did not wish to join the ranks of the fallen COMECON parties in Eastern Europe. Soon after Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia, the Politburo established a resolution outlining the next steps toward protecting national security. The Politburo identified a strong economy capable of covering national defence and opening bilateral and multilateral trade and relations. For these goals to be met, Hanoi must pursue peace with its neighbours and the international community.⁴⁸ With these interests in mind, and with the fear of losing its regime amid the Communist collapse in Eastern Europe, Hanoi had to first create reforms in the regime before turning outward to signal a shift in attitude in Hanoi and to appear receptive to new alliances.

***Doi Moi* And Normalization With ASEAN**

The path to normalization for Vietnam in the 1980s began with domestic reform known as *Doi Moi*, or 'renovation,' where economic development was the principal focus. In April 1987, the VCP

⁴⁴ Le Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus: Doi Moi, Foreign Policy Reform, and Sino-Vietnamese Normalization," *Asian Politics and Policy* 5:3 (2013), p. 388.

⁴⁵ Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 66.

⁴⁶ Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus," p. 397.

⁴⁷ David Denoon, *China, the United States, and the Future of Southeast Asia*, (New York: New York University Press, 2017), p. 155.

⁴⁸ Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Domestic-Foreign Policy Nexus," p. 397.

incentivized citizens by establishing reforms to increase peasants' and workers' wages.⁴⁹ This meant rice farmers could earn an additional forty percent of profits from production, and the increased autonomy allowed people to operate businesses without state intervention. This dramatically decreased inflation as the rate went from seven hundred percent in 1985 to thirteen percent over the next decade.⁵⁰ The Sixth Party Congress also established a "soft reform" of socialism to liberalize the economy and open up to the capitalist world. The VCP worked to shift to a market-based economy, as opposed to a centrally controlled economy, which required their participation in global capitalist institutions.⁵¹

At the Seventh Party Congress, The VCP wanted to hold diversified trade agreements with several countries and economic organizations and build strong relationships with all countries. Rather than isolating itself from one nation as it did with the Soviet Union, Hanoi began to follow a multidirectional foreign policy going into the 1990s known as the "clumping bamboo" strategy.⁵² Bamboo will fall when standing alone, but it stays strong when grouped. This strategy maximized Hanoi's economic inflow and prevented hyper-dependence on one nation. The clumping bamboo almost immediately precipitated the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which severely impacted Vietnam's economy and strategic policy implementation. Hanoi lost a significant source of economic assistance, such as trade agreements and financial aid. This left the nation scrambling to adapt, causing a drastic economic crisis in the early 1990s with hyperinflation, unemployment, and a decline in economic output. As Vietnam's largest trading partner during the Cold War, the collapse forced Hanoi's decision makers to seek new bilateral and multilateral partners.

The Politburo encouraged the foreign policy guideline of having more friends and fewer enemies by mending relationships to promote national interests.⁵³ Without the Soviet Union to protect it from its Chinese neighbours, it was paramount for Hanoi to normalize relations with China seeing that it could no longer afford to remain in defiance of it. As VCP leader Le Duan once stated regarding China, "Behind an enemy, sometimes we can find a friend... Behind a friend, sometimes an enemy."⁵⁴ The history of animosity between these two nations had been consistent, but China, as the most prominent Communist state since the fall of the Soviet Union, made normalization increasingly salient. However, by 1990, the fact remained that China and Vietnam had unresolved territorial disputes making Beijing the biggest security threat to Hanoi. From Beijing's perspective, the CCP was not

⁴⁹ Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 136.

⁵⁰ Sardesai, p. 137.

⁵¹ Sardesai, p. 469.

⁵² Mark Manyin, "Vietnam Among the Powers: Struggle and Cooperation," *International Relations and Asia's Southern Tier: ASEAN, Australia, and India*, (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2018), p. 210.

⁵³ Vu Tung, "Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War," p. 75.

⁵⁴ Lan Huong To, "Thai do cua TBT Le Duan voi lanh dao Trung Quoc" (General Secretary Le Duan's attitude toward Chinese leaders), *SOHA.vn.*, February 16, 1979.

entirely receptive to the idea of normalization with Hanoi. Even though China invaded Northern Vietnam, there was strong resentment and disdain for the VCP in Beijing for damaging its credibility as a military force.

China was reluctant to mend fences with Vietnam over recent border issues and did not share the same ideological outlook. As normalization progressed between the nations, it became clear that its relationship would not be mended over a shared ideology but rather a shared national interest and a desire to avoid political and economic chaos.⁵⁵ Beijing clearly stated to Hanoi that its relationship would be limited and did not constitute an ideological alliance. For Hanoi, the most important factor of its partnership was that it was no longer adversaries with its powerful neighbour. Post-Cold War Vietnam was relatively stable once China was brought into the fold, as it held a mutually beneficial trading relationship.⁵⁶ Once Hanoi stabilized its relationship with its biggest regional adversary, the VCP turned its focus to Thailand and the other ASEAN countries.

Hanoi viewed Bangkok as the most important ASEAN country to mend fences with, seeing that the two nations held opposing ideologies. If Hanoi could improve relations with the Thais, it could be used as a litmus test for the rest of ASEAN.⁵⁷ Even more so, Bangkok was the front-line opposer to reunified Vietnam, and Hanoi would require its approval for other ASEAN countries to consider building a relationship with it. Since the invasion and occupation of Cambodia was the biggest threat to Thai-Vietnamese relations, tensions between the two nations decreased once Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. Following the normalization of relations between Bangkok and Hanoi, Thailand was an avid supporter of Vietnam during its application for membership to ASEAN.⁵⁸ Hanoi continued its involvement with Thailand and similar ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, with which Vietnam had solid relations during its 1980s pariah era.⁵⁹ Increased diplomacy with nations which held opposing ideologies was Hanoi's strongest effort to normalize relations with ASEAN, not only to aid its economy but to facilitate the peaceful environment it initially needed to focus on the socialist transformation of Vietnam. In response, ASEAN countries agreed to a partnership with Vietnam because they shared a fear of the increasing power of China and believed Hanoi could help maintain a balance.⁶⁰

The process of joining ASEAN began in 1991 after the Paris Agreement on Cambodia concluded. Even though the Vietnamese resented the ASEAN countries for their involvement with the US during the Second Indochinese War, Hanoi put this aside to focus on building solid regional relations. For the Vietnamese government, building relations with its neighbours was closely connected

⁵⁵ Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 91.

⁵⁶ Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Pursuit of Alliance Politics in the South China Sea," p. 273.

⁵⁷ Vu Tung, "Vietnam-Thailand Relations After the Cold War," p. 78.

⁵⁸ Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 145.

⁵⁹ Elliot, p. 145.

⁶⁰ Elliot, p. 144.

to the security and overall development of the nation. Exercising a solid relationship with its neighbours was a part of Hanoi's method of creating a "security belt" around it to establish long-term national security and strengthen its defence.⁶¹ Regarding economic rehabilitation, Hanoi found that ASEAN would help contribute to the economy in the long run. Developing ties with the region by joining ASEAN would heighten Vietnam's international significance and make it look more attractive to investors. This gave Hanoi the ability to defend itself while gaining support from ASEAN.⁶²

ASEAN countries also had something to gain from their relationship with Vietnam. While its association with ASEAN made Vietnam more relevant to foreign investors, joining the organization would give ASEAN increased power and influence. ASEAN could utilize Vietnam's strategic location as a relay station between the mainland and the islands in Southeast Asia, as well as between members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the relations between Asian and European nations.⁶³ Consequently, Vietnam, as a member of ASEAN, had the potential to play a vital role in repairing political and national security issues in Southeast Asia. Vietnam could use this opportunity to leverage its influence in the association, giving it more authority over regional politics.

American Reconciliation

The fall of the Soviet Union catalyzed a change in global politics, resulting in the US becoming the dominant superpower. Consequently, with Hanoi's decision to expand relations with regional players, Vietnamese foreign policy in the 1990s worked to normalize relations with powerful Western nations. Addressing the trajectory of Vietnam's road to joining ASEAN comes simultaneously with Vietnam's normalization efforts with the US. In some respects, Vietnam's full membership in ASEAN was contingent on establishing normalization with the US.⁶⁴ Reconciling with the US was vital for Vietnam as it would end the economic embargo and give Hanoi access to greater aid funds from Western-dominated organizations like the World Bank and IMF. However, the Americans, like the Chinese, were not receptive to normalization with the Vietnamese. Even though the Cambodian occupation concluded, which the US government listed as its primary obstacle to normalization, other unresolved issues took its place.

Following the American war in Vietnam and again during the occupation of Cambodia, American civilians regarded Communist Vietnam as a nation filled with "cruel Orientals" whose only wish was to unite Indochina under the VCP's Communist model.⁶⁵ The US government and the

⁶¹ Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 105.

⁶² Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 128.

⁶³ Elliot, p. 152.

⁶⁴ Elliot, p. 131.

⁶⁵ Westad and Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War*, p. 208.

American public resented Hanoi's leadership as they still felt the sting of losing their first war. The Second Indochinese War haunted the American public. When incidents like the My Lai massacre surfaced, the US lost its reputation as a nation that protected and upheld human rights and freedoms. Many concluded that the legacy of the Second Indochinese War would remain for many years.

Americans in the 1980s, in particular, held strong anti-Vietnamese sentiments after the release of multiple prisoners of war (POW) films from 1983 to 1985. This highlighted the missing-in-action (MIA) issue that was prominent at the war's end. The release of the films during the Vietnamese pariah era caused the US population and many other nations to find Vietnam problematic and untrustworthy. This influenced the successive administrations to avoid seeking normalization with Vietnam for several years.⁶⁶ Hanoi and Washington went back and forth on the POW-MIA issue from February 1982, when Vietnam first attempted to improve relations with the US. The Vietnamese government returned MIA remains to a US delegation in Hanoi for the first time, led by the Deputy Secretary of Defence Richard Armitage.⁶⁷ It was not until June 1985 that Hanoi approached the US, stating it was willing to settle the issue of MIA soldiers in Vietnam. Shortly after, Hanoi returned the remains of 26 American soldiers who fought in the Second Indochinese War, the largest transfer of remains since 1982. In November 1985, Hanoi allowed a joint excavation of a B-52 crash site to find the remains of MIA soldiers and service people.⁶⁸ Near the end of 1990, the US government received 100 MIA remains from Hanoi, but Washington listed 1750 MIAs left in Vietnam after the war. By the time Hanoi withdrew from Cambodia, negotiations for a normalized relationship between Washington and Hanoi stalled because of the POW-MIA issue and Hanoi's domestic policies and internal structures.⁶⁹

Washington gave Hanoi an outline of what it must do to achieve normalization with the US on the road to achieving full diplomatic relations and the removal of the economic embargo. To incentivize the VCP to cooperate, Washington announced a program to provide one million USD in prosthetics assistance for those wounded in the Second Indochinese War. By February 1994, Washington lifted the trade embargo on Vietnam and removed it from the official list of American enemies, allowing US trade and investment to flow through Hanoi.⁷⁰ Washington's decision to open trade with Vietnam influenced other Western European nations and Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN members to expand their trading relationships with Vietnam. Bilateral trade and investment between Washington and Hanoi helped build a strong economy for Vietnam, which ultimately aided its socio-political and economic recovery after three Indochinese Wars and an invasion of Cambodia. The United

⁶⁶ Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 204.

⁶⁷ Sardesai, p. 201.

⁶⁸ Sardesai, p. 202.

⁶⁹ Elliot, *Changing Worlds*, p. 143.

⁷⁰ Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 204.

States and China ranked among the top dollar-value bilateral trading partners. Washington also cleared Hanoi's debts and allowed Vietnam to take IMF and World Bank loans. By 1994, bilateral trade between Washington and Hanoi had risen to two hundred twenty million.⁷¹

When Bill Clinton came to office, he advocated for normalized relations with Vietnam as he opposed the Second Indochinese War in previous years.⁷² Referred to as the first baby-boomer president, Clinton did not view the Second Indochinese War through the same lens as his predecessors, thus giving him no reason to oppose normalization. Clinton was known to be a draft dodger during the war and felt guilty when he started his political life as one of the few politicians with no direct ties to the war.⁷³ As president, he was adamant about coming to terms with his past and putting Vietnam behind him by focusing on reconciliation. The prospect of normalization with a country that had deeply scarred the American people was a difficult pill to swallow for the citizens who still believed that Vietnam was harbouring POWs. When Clinton announced in July 1995 that the administration had plans to normalize relations with Vietnam, he did not have the support of the people. President Clinton responded that normalized relations with Vietnam would bolster American interests in Asia and contribute to a stable environment.⁷⁴ An economic relationship with Vietnam promoted trade and investment for American businesses and allowed them to exploit an emerging Vietnamese market. Even though Clinton's administration denied it, advocates stressed the importance of relations with Hanoi as a countermeasure to the increase in China's military power.

The South China Sea: Hanoi and Washington Unite Against Beijing

Normalization between Hanoi and the US was a mutually beneficial establishment, particularly for its interests in Southeast Asia, as China's economic might grew stronger. This was not a favourable prospect for either country as both feared that China would turn against it. The US was aligned with China when they both shared mutual interests in checking Vietnam's expansionist plans. However, unlike in the 1970s, China had become an economic competitor and not a strategic partner for the US. When Washington and Beijing first made an agreement in 1979, China's economy was relatively weak and unthreatening.⁷⁵ By 1995, the Chinese economy experienced dramatic gains, and its growing military strength threatened America's influence in the region and globally.

Hanoi also had something to lose from China's rise in power. By the mid-1990s, normalizing relations between China and Vietnam was simply a label and held no real weight. Hanoi struggled to

⁷¹ Frederick Brown, "Rapprochement Between Vietnam and the United States," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 32:3 (2010), p. 324.

⁷² Bill Clinton, *My Life*, (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2004), p. 173.

⁷³ Clinton, *My Life*, p. 161.

⁷⁴ Sardesai, *Vietnam Past and Present*, p. 205.

⁷⁵ Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Pursuit of Alliance Politics in the South China Sea," p. 279.

preserve its sovereignty and political autonomy while maintaining a peaceful and mutually beneficial foreign policy with Beijing.⁷⁶ Although it abided by China's stance on political non-interference, Hanoi frequently butted heads with Beijing for power and influence.⁷⁷ The two neighbours still competed for influence over Laos and Cambodia to control the Communist movements - a historic rivalry between the two successful Asian Communist nations with diverging ideologies. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea have also been a cause for significant concern for Hanoi policymakers, who felt that Hanoi must protect its sovereignty by establishing strategic relations with other key players.

China's continuing aggression in the South China Sea is a fundamental foundation for Hanoi's strategic policies. Improved relations with the US have been the most promising outcome to emerge from the Sino-Vietnamese tensions in recent decades. Since 1995, Vietnamese-American trade relations and economic agreements have surprised many who believed the two nations could never work together after the Second Indochinese War. Although they do not share ideologies and views on governance, the relationship between Vietnam and the US has flourished through bilateral and regional strategic relationships with which it does share common interests.⁷⁸ In the face of historical animosity in the "largest and least successful war in US history," the US Department of Commerce listed Vietnam as one of its largest markets.⁷⁹ Serving its economic and security interests in Southeast Asia, Vietnam went from a fierce opponent to a close ally in a matter of decades. Normalization was the final straw of a terrible experience on both sides and brought both nations to a place of mutual respect and admiration. Its shared strategic interests in keeping China in check have united them and the ASEAN members. While Hanoi worked to solidify ties with regional states to protect itself against China and the tension in the South China Sea, the US was also working to strengthen ties with ASEAN members to block China's interests.⁸⁰

China's increasing aggressiveness in the South China Sea essentially brought nations together. It led Hanoi to socioeconomic and political security and stability where chaos and famine once existed. Normalizing relations between Hanoi and the rest of the world solidified the importance of regional and international investment and aid. It showed that self-reliance can sometimes be counterproductive due to the lack of trade and investment in the nation. Vietnam's self-reliance during its ostracization turned a nation that had potential into a poverty-stricken country with yearly famines. Since normalization, Hanoi has averted the economic crisis, and the nation has healed dramatically by re-evaluating its foreign policy priorities and trade relations. The regional and global normalization of

⁷⁶ Manyin, "Vietnam Among the Powers," p. 158.

⁷⁷ Manyin, p. 159.

⁷⁸ Brown, "Rapprochement Between Vietnam and the United States," p. 318.

⁷⁹ Allan E. Goodman, "The Political Consequences of Normalization of U.S.-Vietnam Relations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 17:4 (1996), p. 421.

⁸⁰ Hong Hiep, "Vietnam's Pursuit of Alliance Politics in the South China Sea," p. 283.

relations with Hanoi had transformative implications for Vietnam's socio-political and economic stability.

Conclusion

The normalization of relations between Vietnam and the rest of the world drastically transformed the economic capability of the nation and played a crucial role in making Hanoi a significant regional power. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements between Vietnam and the rest of the world were integral to Hanoi's post-Cold War trajectory. After a thirty-year war for independence, an occupation of Cambodia and a brief war with its powerful neighbour, Vietnam finally settled the political and economic chaos. Regional and international trade and investment were the bread and butter of the new Vietnamese economy, which significantly transformed the quality of life for Vietnamese civilians and the global reputation of Hanoi, turning it into an attractive trade and investment partner. The political consequences of ostracization due to Vietnam's expansionist goals paved the way for political and economic reform like *Doi Moi*, which made it possible to readdress foreign policy relations with many key players like the US. Normalization with the US was integral to Hanoi's reformation as it facilitated trade relations with other Western nations and enhanced Vietnam's legitimacy. A long and bloody war between the two nations led to a normalized relationship and a robust trade and investment agreement that continues to protect Hanoi from being overpowered by its ever-growing Chinese neighbours.