Editorial Staff

Chris Wachs  Editor-in-Chief
Sara Lowe    Assistant Editor
John Baldwin Editor
Al Borowski  Editor
Veronica Cruz Editor
Matt Holloway Editor
Susan Jacobs  Editor
Christie Pierce Editor
Gordan Skaro  Editor
Sadie Stuck   Editor
Kristen Thomasberger Editor
Ethan Wallace Editor
Nic Wyse     Editor
Dr. Lisa Zwicker Faculty Advisor
Acknowledgements

The editorial staff would like to thank all of those that have made this, the second edition of the Undergraduate Research Journal of History, possible. First, we owe sincere gratitude to the continued support of the faculty of the IUSB History Department. They have been instrumental in encouraging students to submit their work and have allowed us to promote the Journal during their valuable class time. We also owe many thanks to the Student Government Association of IUSB for their generous financial backing. Without their continued endorsement, we would not have been able to publish the Journal this year. Special appreciation goes to Sara Lowe, who sacrificed an enormous amount of time ensuring that this Journal achieved the highest level of quality and excellence. We would be remiss if we did not point out the singular efforts of Dr. Lisa Zwicker. No one person has done more to bring this Journal to fruition, from initial spark to final product, and for this we are forever grateful. Lastly, we thank the authors themselves; their work speaks for itself on the following pages, and represents the high quality of historical research here at IUSB. Any endearments earned by this Journal should justly be redirected to them.

On a personal note, I must thank the editors for their many hours of work reading and copyediting the many submissions we received. Their contributions of time and effort have turned this idea into reality; I am appreciative of the time we have spent putting this project together.

Chris Wachs

Editor-in-Chief
Table of Contents

Conversos: A Convenient Alibi
Sadie Stuck 1

ТЯДИТОЯS: Patriotism for Sale
Gordan Skaro 34

A Martyr for Suffrage
Kristen Thomasburger 48

The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games: The World Responds to Notions of Aryan Superiority
Dustin Tam 59

Unintended Consequences: Communism and the Famine of 1921
John Baldwin 73

Strategic Bombing during World War II: The American Press and Public Reactions
Lizette Busquets 86

A Swoon of Misery and Rage: The CIA’s Actions in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution
Joseph Pinter 104

Detroit 1941-1943: Manufacturing Racial Strife
Matt Furnas 123

Pick Up the Broken Peaces: The Rise and Fall of the Taifa Kingdoms in Islamic Iberia
Nicolas Wyse 138
Conversos: A Convenient Alibi

Sadie Stuck

As King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella captured the last Muslim city of Granada, they became the sole Christian rulers of Spain. It would prove only to be the beginning of a long battle to unify their kingdom under Catholicism since they had inherited a complicated social structure infused with religious issues. Spain had been ravaged by crusading warfare during the Reconquista or Christian reconquest of Spain for generations, and in its aftermath the Crown had to find a way to meld various cultural and religious differences into the mold of a unified Christian Spain. As a result, the Crown’s first order of business was to expel all the Jews from their country in an alleged attempt to protect the converso community. These conversos were Jews who had either forcefully or willingly accepted baptism to become a unique class of Spanish citizens referred to as the ‘New Christians.’ In the 1492 Expulsion Edict, which informed the Jews of their expulsion, the Crown stated “we have been informed that…there were some wicked Christians who Judaized and apostatized from our holy Catholic faith.”\(^1\) The edict

then went further to explain that these were not singular accidental incidents but rather a planned and deliberate plot on behalf of the Jews since they habitually “steal faithful Christians from our holy Catholic faith.”

It appeared as if the Crown sought to safeguard this fledging community of New Christians. However, what the Crown claimed and what it did were two very different things. Even before the Expulsion edict, through royal and local government decrees conversos’ citizenship rights were slowly degraded until they became parallel with that of the Jews’ second-class citizenship. It should also be noted that the Spanish Inquisition specifically targeted conversos through accusations without legal backing and that Old Christians of all social classes and the Crown profited when conversos were inevitably found guilty. Lastly, if not more tellingly, one should observe how royal authority completely reversed its stance on the protection of the converso community after the expulsion. One has to question then why the Crown would go to such lengths to banish Jews who were their greatest taxable source of income; especially since the Jews’ taxes had largely financed the war against Granada in the first place.

By focusing on how Christian Spain handled its converts, we will be able to bring to light the real reason why the Crown expelled the Jews from Spain.

When studying converso history, many writers skip straight to the mass murders and forced conversions that happened during the 1391 riots. Though this is a considerable milestone in our story, it is important
to realize that Christian rulers acted contemptuously towards conversos even while Christianity was still a minority in Spain. As Christians reconquered lands in Toledo, the Jews who had previously been under Muslim protection were attacked by Christians during the massacre of 1109.5 The Jewish communities were given the choice of conversion or death, and those who chose to convert serve as our first converso communities of interest whose social standing was not yet set in stone. This lack of definition created a considerable amount of tension in the community, and it is difficult to determine who pushed for the conversos’ second-class citizenship first. One possibility is that the Old Christian community complained to their king or alternatively the king was independently alarmed at the fact that many Jews in Toledo were now Christians. Regardless of the origin, in response to the situation on December 16, 1118 the king of Toledo, Alfonso VII, proclaimed in his fuero (law) that no Jew or recent convert could have authority over any Christian.6 Alfonso VII’s law was popular among the people and spread to Cordova (1241), Carmona (1247), and Alicane (1215) a town whose local government received it so enthusiastically that it extended the law to apply to all conversos both old and new, adding a touch of derogatory language by calling them tornadizos (turncoats).7 From this first wave of anti-converso sentiment one can see that not only royal authority but local communities sought to define conversos as legally inferior to Old Christians.

In 1255, King Alfonso X of Castile wrote the Fuero Real in an attempt to have a uniform treatment of conversos throughout his

---

kingdom at a time when each town had its own *fuero*. The conversos had not met with a warmer reception as time wore on, so the king stated that he would fine twenty *moravedis* each time any Old Christian called a converso a *tornadizo*; this created a nice surplus for the royal treasury since these fines went straight to the Crown.\(^8\) Creation and enforcement of this law hints at the negative attitudes Old Christians fostered about conversos and how often they displayed their disdain against conversos. One also cannot help but draw parallels between the need for royal protection of conversos and Jews from their hostile Christian neighbors. According to historian Jonathan Ray, “For the Jews, such safeguards and protective measures were the principal benefit of royal sovereignty.”\(^9\) Though it is technically a gracious action on behalf of the Crown, more than anything else, it demonstrated how the Crown similarly viewed Jewish and converso communities’ legal standing as being equal.

Despite the treatment of conversos up to this point, local Christians were still eager to convert the Jews living in their midst and suffered from a type of baptizer’s remorse directly afterwards. The year 1348 saw a plague, economic hardships, and a Castilian civil war between King Pedro who worked hard to protect his Jews, and his half-brother Henry who used popular anti-Jewish sentiment against him. Jews were an easy scapegoat, and these circumstances fused together to create legendary pogroms in Seville, Cordova, Madrid, Toledo, Segovia, Burgos, and not to mention the fact that the Catalanian Jewish community was completely destroyed all in the same year.\(^10\) When one

---
takes into account the charismatic archdeacon of Ecija, Ferrán Martínez, preaching for the complete conversion of Spain’s Jews, it is not hard to imagine when riots erupted again in 1391 why the rate of conversion was so successful. This is especially the case when offered the choice between baptism and death. \(^{11}\) Though numbers vary in different accounts, most historians can agree that a third of the entire population refused to surrender their religion and died sanctifying the Name of God; approximately another third of was forced to accept conversion and only one third of the Jewish population survived. These included some entire communities, and refugees who managed to flee from their homes to places of safety. \(^{12}\)

Hasdai Crescas, a Jewish scholar in Aragon, wrote his eyewitness account during the riots, recording that “the Lord bent His bow like an enemy against the community. Many changed their religion; Many died to sanctify the Holy Name, and many violated the holy covenant.” \(^{13}\) Therefore, many conversos began their new Christian lives as targets of Old Christian violence just as much as they were to live and eventually end them the same way. As New Christians, conversos were initially able to attain jobs that were not available to them as Jews. Reasonably enough, many former Jews attained positions of power to regain a sense of empowerment and stability in their lives much to the dismay of Old Christians. \(^{14}\)

---


\(^{13}\) Raphael, *The Road from Babylon*, 111.

In 1392, a mere year after the mass conversions, the citizens of Burgos complained that “the Jews who recently turned Christian oppress them and do them much harm.”\(^{15}\) The following anti-converso riots that openly expressed this resentment and the aftermath that ensued provide an interesting study for the treatment of Jews and conversos at this time. In the heat of the riots, Old Christians illegally imprisoned both Jewish and converso survivors alike. In response, King Enrique III sent a strongly worded letter telling the locals to free all the imprisoned Jews. The locals followed his instructions to the letter but kept the conversos who had ‘oppressed them’ in jail. A few months later, on October 14, 1392 he sent another strongly worded letter to the locals that outlined in no uncertain terms that Old Christians were not allowed to “dare seize the person or property” of conversos and “that, furthermore, if any of them be arrested as indicated…that he be put in the customary place of imprisonment, and in no other place.”\(^{16}\) This episode demonstrated how Christian Spain dealt with the converso issue up to this point. Old Christians would treat conversos the same as Jews, only treating them differently as it benefited them, like in this case, the few extra months of prison hospitality they offered their local conversos.

Between 1412 and 1414, another ambitious preacher, Vincent Ferrér, incited riots that massacred and converted many remaining Jewish communities throughout Spain.\(^{17}\) Recent conversos, much as they had after the conversions in Burgos, attempted to stabilize their lives

---


after a period of violence by attaining offices and positions of power. The Old Christians in the Segovia community were not pleased, and a Christian Chronicler, Alonso de Palencia, lamented that conversos “shamelessly took over all the public posts and discharged them with extreme contempt of the nobility and with grave harm to the state.”

These conflicts were not isolated rivalries in a single community. Diego de Valera in Cordoba, a converso historian himself, recorded this same attitude in reference to power struggles over city council issues: “There was a great enmity and rivalry, since the New Christians were very rich and kept buying public offices, which they made use of so arrogantly that the Old Christians would not put up with it.” King Juan II, the inheritor of Enrique III’s kingdom, faced “a new stream of converso complaints about their mistreatment by the Old Christians,” but the most he could or tried to do was remind his subjects of the *Siete Partidas* (The Law of the Jews). He also added onto the law by saying “that it was to be observed in all its points and in every respect, and for all time.”

A generation later, conversos had been more successful in infiltrating middle and upper-classes of Christian society. “Interrmarriage with families of the local nobility became increasingly common and their control over positions in the city government so marked that it created popular resentment and opposition.” The Church had even stepped in to erase the old argument that converts were not ‘real’ Christians and dictated that Old Christians should “accept these converts as brothers and

---

equals.” 23 Old Christian nobles and merchants, who found themselves in economic and political competition with conversos, had to find a new argument on which to safeguard their place in society. Therefore, if one’s religious classification could no longer be a mechanism to determine socio-economic status, then the Old Christians would have to make a defensive stance against conversos using ‘purity of blood’ or race as the new class divider.

This ‘purity of blood’ argument began to sprout its roots in the Toledo anti-converso riots on January 17, 1449. What began as a standard tax collecting assignment to gather funds for war between Aragon and Castile exploded into scenes of violence as Old Christians refused to allow converso tax collectors to gather payments from Old Christians. In fact, in retaliation Old Christians plundered and confiscated converso property around the city. 24 After falsely imprisoning a group of conversos, fourteen of the more notable ones “were put on trial. Estéban García de Toledo appeared as procurador (attorney) for the town of Toledo, in the name of its judges, alguazil (constable) and other functionaries, to protect the town’s rights, as well as those of its prominent citizens.” 25 Of course, the citizens he aimed to protect were exclusively the Old Christian nobility of the city. The trial resulted in the dismissal of these conversos from their positions in local government and Mayor Pedro Sarmiento’s creation of the “Sentencia-Estatuto de Toledo” (Pure-Blood Statutes of Toledo). 26

23 Martz, A Network of Converso Families, 23.
24 Martz, A Network of Converso Families, 24.
26 Levine-Melammed, A Question of Identity, 18.
The *Sentencia-Estatuto de Toledo* was one of the first documents that sought to put conversos in their place by using their Jewish lineage against them when it declared

that all the said conversos descended from the perverse line of the Jews, in whatever situation they may be...be held as incapable and unworthy to hold public or private office in the said city of Toledo and in its lands, by means of which they would be able to hold lordship over Old Christians believing in the holy Catholic faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ and cause damage, injury, and to be incapable and unworthy of giving testimony and faith as public notaries or as witnesses.\(^{27}\)

Not only were conversos blamed as the cause for the riots against them and dismissed from their offices, but all conversos from then onwards were to be denied many basic aspects of Christian citizenship. They would no longer be able to hold positions of authority in and around Toledo, and their word as a Christian no longer held weight since conversos’ blood was ‘impure’ or polluted due to their Jewish heritage. This decision reverted conversos back to the legal standing of middle or lower-class Jews who were also not allowed to be office holders or testify against the Old Christians since “legislature on Jews holding offices of any jurisdiction over Christians…stated: ‘anyone giving an office to them lowers himself into blasphemy’.”\(^{28}\)

At this point, one might argue that these racial limitations were only a by-product of economic competition and that we should presume that these were very special circumstances to be taken in its historical context as a kind of fluke. However, as the records show, this *limpieza*


(pure-blood) argument soon transcended past the secular sphere of converso life. The Bishop of Cuenca, Don Diego de Anaya, was a prominent head of a religious studies college in Spain. He declared that since it has always been our will and intention that no person of Jewish origin should be allowed entrance to this college, and since we cannot permit this wish of ours to be forgotten in the course of time, we have stipulated and we order that no one who originates in the said stock [of Jews], whether from both sides or one, be admitted to the collegiate and chaplaincy of the said College, and that in this matter no difference be made whether the grade of origin is remote or near.\textsuperscript{29}

Therefore, conversos, who had been defined and defended by Church authorities to be valid Christians as much as any of the Old Christians, were discriminated against with the same pure-blood argument that barred them from success in the secular world. This double-standard of classifying conversos as Christians while at the same time treating them as Jews did not go unnoticed even during the time that these events took place.

In 1449, the royal secretary Fernán Díaz de Toledo responded to the Bishop of Cuenca when he argued “that all the leading noble lineages of Castile, including the Henríquez (from whom Ferdinand the Catholic descended) could trace their descent from conversos.”\textsuperscript{30} Therefore, it put into question how the bishop could dare declare this racial limitation for the Church when the king, Ferdinand the Catholic, himself came from a converso heritage. In 1450, the year following the creation of the Pure Blood

\textsuperscript{29} Netanyahu, \textit{The Origins of the Inquisition}, 272.
\textsuperscript{30} Kamen, \textit{The Spanish Inquisition}, 32.
Statutes of Toledo, converso Bishop Alonso de Cartagena wrote his “Defensoriam unitas Christianae” (The defender of the unity of the Christian). He was disgusted by the treatment of his fellow conversos and voiced the theological argument that through the martyrdom of Jesus Christ and the process of baptism “that from that point onward no distinction among ancestors based on carnal birth should be observed, but only a spiritual unity based on rebirth.”

He was only one in a series of conversos in positions of power that argued for the equal treatment of New Christians. However, valid arguments for their cause both logical and theological in nature landed on deaf ears. By 1451, the practice of racially dividing conversos from their Old Christian counterparts was in full swing, and “the pope was asked by King Juan II to suspend his excommunication of those practicing racialism.”

This contrasted with previous years where either Church or royal authorities had in their turn in some measure attempted to protect the conversos, though they were usually too weak to make good on their commands. The Old Christians gained a further political edge over their converso rivals on August 13, 1451 when “the king formally gave his approval to the Sentencia-Estatuto” that had been developed in Toledo, now displaying how royal and local governments were working together. The year 1467 showed no signs of this tide slowing as anti-converso riots exploded in Toledo.

---

33 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 35.
34 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 35.
and Ciudad Real, and “King Henry IV confirmed in office in the city all holders of posts formerly held by conversos.”

In 1468, the archbishop of Toledo, Alonso Carrillo, noticed “there are many guilds and brotherhoods of which some under pretense of piety do not receive conversos and others do not receive Old Christians.” Therefore, this line of racial division was not limited only to the upper-class, but had begun to be the status quo among middle-class artisans as it further cemented the societal divide. The violence against converso communities worsened in the years leading up to the beginning of the Spanish Inquisition. The year 1473 saw riots and massacres in multiple towns throughout southern Spain with a focus especially in Córdoba. In Jaén, while conversos cowered in a cathedral for sanctuary against rioters, the converso Constable of Castile, Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, was “cut down at the high altar of the cathedral as he attempted to defend the conversos.” This incident in itself served as an omen for things to come. It hinted at the reality that the Church and their faith would no longer protect conversos from the mark of their Jewish lineage.

The converso community of Spain, regardless of each individual’s socio-economic standing, found itself in an impossible situation that thrived in a grey area between Judaism and Christianity. Old Christians thrust a conversion opportunity on them that was deadly to refuse; yet at the same time conversos were not supposed to enjoy any of the benefits of being a Christian citizen without incurring the same wrath that was incited by their former practice of Judaism. Through the endless progression of violence and legalized racism, the status of a

35 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 36-37.
36 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 35.
37 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 36.
converso in Spanish society was repeatedly reduced to the second-class citizenship of a Jew. However, it would only prove to be the beginning of their troubles as the Inquisition loomed venomously ahead.

The Inquisition began haphazardly in random spots throughout Spain under the direction of the Church. The Church believed its purpose was to safeguard Christians from themselves in case they should start to hold unorthodox beliefs, and more importantly from those who would pull good Christians away from their faith. It began to raise the question of what a ‘good’ Christian was in communities all over Spain. As the concept of blood purity permeated throughout the country, Old Christians began to scrutinize their fellow Christian neighbors who had Jewish lineage for signs of ‘Jewishness’ to report to the Church authorities. The Christian chronicler, Andrés Bernáldez, recorded that conversos began to be burnt at the stake, and many tried to leave in a panic. “A penalty was imposed on them, that they could not flee the city under pain of death, and guards were put at the city gates; so many were seized that there was no place to put them.”³⁸ In mid-October 1480, Queen Isabella found the Inquisition quite useful when it came to settling old political scores. She used it to wipe out the opposition she had faced in Seville’s civil war, both by targeting the rebel nobles and their converso supporters, who found their dedication to Catholicism questioned just because they allied themselves with the wrong politician.³⁹

³⁹ Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 46.
After Queen Isabella’s success, it comes as no surprise that King Ferdinand took a strong interest in the Inquisition as well. After a considerable amount of arguing with the Pope, Ferdinand eventually wrested control of the Inquisition from the Church in 1482.\(^{40}\) It was now officially a mechanism of the Crown. King Ferdinand was well aware of the fact that the Inquisition targeted conversos, and stated himself that “many wish to become Christian, but are afraid to do so because of the Inquisition.”\(^{41}\) Some historians may argue that the Inquisition was a force into itself and that there was no specific agenda in mind. However, when it was all said and done, the records indicate that in Catalonia of the 1,199 who were tried all but eight were conversos. In Barcelona, the records from that area show 99.3% had Jewish origins in their family histories, and in Valencia 91.6 % had Jewish origin in theirs as well.\(^{42}\)

If all other evidence was to be ignored, the Inquisition itself could make the argument for Spain’s targeted abuse of the converso population. Firstly, conversos often faced ridiculous accusations that would never have been put to Old Christians. Secondly, trial records show that the Inquisition was used as a tool by both Old Christians from all socio-economic classes as well as by the royal government to profit from conversos being falsely accused. Lastly, condemned conversos as well as their offspring were faced with a series of punishments meant to degrade them socially, legally and economically. Though the pure-blood argument had enjoyed numerous successes in both the secular and religious realm up to this point, such victories would appear as a mere fad when compared with the long-standing effects of the Inquisition.

\(^{40}\) Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, 48.
\(^{41}\) Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, 22.
\(^{42}\) Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, 53.
To begin to understand the nature of the Inquisition, one must try to first determine what conversos were being accused of. They were told that they were not true Christians, but were really *Judaizers* or supposed Christians who were practicing Judaism in secret. When converso Pedro de Villegas was accused and brought to trial on January 2, 1484 he testified to the inquisitors as follows:

I am a loyal and Catholic Christian and have such a reputation. And that I do the works of such a man: I have gone to churches and heard Masses and divine sacrifices; I have confessed and received the Eucharist in times of affliction and at the times so commanded by the Church; I have held, believed, and confessed all that the Holy Church commands us to hold and believe, and commands us to perform and observe.43

This statement is what many would consider a textbook definition of a ‘good’ Christian. However, just having a reputation for being a good Christian was not a good enough defense for a converso. When there was repeatedly a lack of religious evidence, inquisitors had to rely on slight cultural differences on which to accuse conversos of judaizing. Defendants were brought in for charges such as relaxing on a Saturday since it was the Sabbath or the Jewish day of rest.44 They were also charged with cutting one’s meat a certain way or not eating pork.45 Sometimes, they were brought in on charges not having to do with them at all, but for being acquainted with the wrong person; thus they were guilty by association as Pedro de Villegas. He was forced to swear in his


testimony, “I never talk with Jews, nor was I raised to have such an inclination.”\textsuperscript{46} All of the above was not to judge the criteria of what made a good Christian as much as what made a possible secret Jew. Furthermore, “if the crime appears half proven, the inquisitors, in consultation with the \textit{ordinario}, shall consider putting the accused to the question of torture” until accused conversos admitted to whatever crime the inquisitors wanted.\textsuperscript{47}

According to historian Henry Kamen, “The basic ignorance of Jewish law shown by the inquisitors meant that by default they accused people of offences which were cultural rather than religious.”\textsuperscript{48} This fact was extremely frustrating for conversos as they were falsely arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for violations of which Old Christians would never be accused\textsuperscript{49} In fact, Old Christians were given much more freedom when it came to religious matters as well. “Blasphemies against Christ, the Virgin, and the mass were (as the inquisitors knew very well) common among the Old Christians. Yet in the anti-conversos trials they carried a mortally heavy assumption of guilt.”\textsuperscript{50} However, we have seen even when conversos were upstanding practicing Christians, they were treated with as much contempt and suspicion as Old Christians would have treated Jews. An imprisoned Castilian converso, Maria López, best

\textsuperscript{46} Fernando Rodríguez de Barco, “Interrogation of Pedro de Villegas,” 19.
\textsuperscript{47} Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions of the Holy Inquisition, Produced by the Very Reverend Lord Friar Tomás de Torquemada, Prior of the Monastery of Santa Cruz of Segovia, First Inquisitor-General of the Kingdoms and Lordships of Spain; and by the Other Most Reverend Lord Inquisitors Who Succeeded Him, Concerning the Order that Must Be Observed in the Exercise of the Holy Office. These Instructions Were Complied… by the Order of the Most Illustrious Reverend Lord Alonso Manrique, Cardinal of the Twelve Apostles, Archbishop of Spain, Inquisitor-General of Spain,” In \textit{The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: An Anthology of Sources}, ed. and trans. Lu Ann Homza (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. Cambridge, 2006), 66.
\textsuperscript{48} Kamen, \textit{The Spanish Inquisition}, 39.
\textsuperscript{49} San Martín, “Inquisition Trial of Marina González,” 45.
\textsuperscript{50} Kamen, \textit{The Spanish Inquisition}, 40.
questioned the purpose of the Inquisition when she lamented “Oh, Holy Lady Mary of Monserate, protect me, Lord Jesus Christ, for I have been a good Christian. Oh, look, Our Holy Lady Mary, why did you consent to such a thing?”

This leads us to question what benefit it was for the Inquisition to target innocent conversos. The same year King Ferdinand took control of the Inquisition, Pope Sixtus IV released his bull that declared

that in Aragon, Valencia, Mallorca and Catalonia the Inquisition has for some time been moved not by zeal for the faith and the salvation of souls, but by lust for wealth, and that many true and faithful Christians, on the testimony of enemies, rivals, slaves and other lower and even less proper persons, have without any legitimate proof been thrust into secular prisons, tortured and condemned as relapsed heretics, deprived of their goods and property and handed over to the secular arm to be executed, to the peril of souls, setting a pernicious example, and causing disgust to many.

One may think that this was a pure character attack on Ferdinand since he had taken control of the Inquisition away from the Pope. The Pope’s statement may also seem increasingly suspect when one notices the contemptuous way he writes about the “secular” prisons and arms. However, this does not take away from the fact that one can discover through Inquisition records that it was mainly upper-class, and upper-middle class conversos who were targeted by the Inquisition. Historians note that “conversos penalized by the Inquisition between 1493 and 1599 came from professional and commercial classes. They held posts ranging from that of mayor and municipal officer to the lesser occupations of

---

52 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 59.
physician, lawyer, trader, shopkeeper, and manufacturer.” The higher socio-economic position of these conversos made them targets of three different groups during the Inquisition.

The first type of people who habitually falsely accused conversos was naturally the ones who were in direct economic and political competition with them, the upper-class Old Christians. As such, there are endless records of conversos defending themselves, saying different variations of the following like “he sold wine and was my neighbor. When I began to sell wine, he became so angry that he threatened me, saying if we did not stop selling it, it would cost us dearly.” In the best ruling outcomes, such obvious bias was recorded in the inquisitors’ ledger as a side note but was not considered as a valid counter-argument. The fact that most of these upper-class Old Christians were able to make monopolies in places where conversos had been strong economic or political rivals was a fact ignored during Inquisition trials. Furthermore, these same testimonies showed that first-hand accounts were unnecessary, and Old Christians could testify based solely on rumors or hearsay.

The second group of individuals who took their turn to falsely accuse conversos was lower-class Old Christians. Normally, servants or people of lower-class were not allowed to legally bear witness against people medieval society considered their betters. However, the Inquisition lifted the ban to allow Christian servants to testify against their converso masters. Accordingly, records bloomed with accusations from those who were eager to vent resentment in a way society had never

---

54 San Martín, “Inquisition Trial of Marina González,” 43.
55 San Martín, “Inquisition Trial of Marina González,” 37.
previously allowed them to do so. The trial of Marina González included a long list of witnesses along with numerous reasons why they would bear false witness against her given by her husband in her defense.57

The first witness had been a fired servant in their household who had “said publicly that she would make sure my wife would not come back from Toledo, but would die in the process” in front of the whole neighborhood as she stormed out.58 This part of his defense best represents the practice of Old Christians who used the Inquisition to settle old personal scores often and successfully. The second character witness against Marina was “a whore, a drunk, a pimp, and most days is worse than addle-headed. A short time ago, in Almargo, they whipped her through the plaza and the streets for being a public pimp.”59 This further proved that the accuser did not even need to be of strong moral or religious character themselves to accuse a converso. The third witness was not only another fired servant, but one who had been dismissed under suspicion of having had an affair with Marina’s husband. Apparently, after Marina threw her out she “went away and threatened my wife, calling her a Jewish whore and saying that she would make her burn; she said this to many people who from hearsay will be able to depose against my wife.”60 The fact that a servant was allowed to publically make such threats without fear of repercussion and then later be allowed as a witness against Marina shows a unique power shift in which a lower-class Old Christian held the power of life and death over her rich converso masters. The final witness presents perhaps the most interesting piece of legal evidence that illustrates how conversos were

57 San Martín, “Inquistition Trial of Marina González,” 40-41.
58 San Martín, “Inquistition Trial of Marina González,” 40.
59 San Martín, “Inquistition Trial of Marina González,” 40.
60 San Martín, “Inquistition Trial of Marina González,” 40-41.
treated similarly to Jews. The servant Mayor was a poor Old Christian woman who had initially befriended Marina. Mayor had made a habit of ‘asking’ for gifts, and when Marina “did not give her what she wanted, she left the house cursing that my wife was a Jewish heretic, and swearing that she would pay her twice over.” Mayor extracted bribes from this upper-class converso woman much like Christian noble and royal authorities had taken protection money in the form of specialized taxes from Jewish communities. When Marina refused to pay, Mayor knew exactly what to say to threaten her by calling her a “Jewish heretic”, an offense punishable by being burnt to death at the stake. The fact that inquisitors needed little to no real proof to judge conversos as guilty was well known, and a converso in Aranda swore that “most of those burnt by the Inquisition were burnt because of false witness.”

The third group which profited quite well from the Inquisition’s targeting of conversos was the Crown itself. King Ferdinand must have had incredible foresight when he decided to commandeer the Inquisition since the Inquisitors’ Manual stated that “the goods of those heretics shall be confiscated and applied to the Treasury and Exchequer of the King and Queen, our Lords.” Almost as profitable were the shake downs during the edict of grace. This was a time period specified for conversos to have a chance to confess without penalty. The Inquisitors’ Manual made sure to add in fine print

Still, if it seems appropriate to the inquisitors – given the quality of the reconciled person, the crimes confessed, and the duration and seriousness of those crimes– then they must order the

61 San Martín, “Inquistition Trial of Marina González,” 41.
62 Levine-Melammed, A Question of Identity, 5-6.
63 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 41.
64 Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 69.
reconciled to give a certain part of their goods as an offering in addition to any other penalties.65

This of course gave inquisitors free reign to “order” such an “offering” if it appeared that the accused converso was of a certain “quality,” or more commonly referred to as “rich.” Between 1486-87, 4,300 conversos made cash payments to inquisitors in an attempt to wipe the slate clean during the edict of grace, and many would consider this bribery a small price to pay if it saved one from a gruesome execution. However, “several were subsequently brought to trial for offense committed after their rehabilitation.”66 In the past, Jews had been able to pay the Crown for protection. However, the converso community found itself in a difficult situation since they had paid the Crown’s inquisitors handsomely, yet were called on to defend themselves regardless.

The economic exploitation of conversos tells us a lot about the predatory nature of the Inquisition. However, the punishments meted out to the survivors had the most damaging effects on the converso community as a whole. In this way, the Inquisition sought to determine for that generation and all following generations the social, legal and economic position of conversos in Spain. More important than economics, was the necessity to keep a remnant of the old social hierarchy. It was profitable to make money off conversos, but it was more important that they know their place in the social order.

The first standard Inquisitor’s manual was written by Friar Tomás de Torquemada, Prior of the Monastery of Santa Cruz of Segovia and was used as the instructions for standard operating procedure during the

65 Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
66 Kamen, The Spanish Inquisition, 59.
Inquisition.\textsuperscript{67} Though it did not specify the mistreatment of conversos specifically in writing, the track record of the Inquisition shows the targeted treatment of the converso population and it should be assumed that these were punishments meant for conversos.

When conversos came forward of their own free will, all confessions were to be made publicly; none were allowed to be done in private.\textsuperscript{68} This was only to be the start of a drawn-out and degrading series of punishments for all suspected and convicted conversos during the Inquisition. After the confession, conversos were paraded about in public as the victims of insults and ridicules from their on-looking neighbors.\textsuperscript{69} During the procession, conversos were to wear a blackened \textit{san benito} (penitential garbs). Afterwards, these would be put on display at the church they attended.\textsuperscript{70} This form of psychological warfare served to remind conversos that they were spiritually marked every time they walked through the doors of their church. If conversos chose to stop attending because of this embarrassment, they risked much more than reddened cheeks and an averted gaze. The whole penitential ceremony informed the Old Christian community that these individuals were to be put under constant surveillance for any signs of backsliding for as long as they should live, and when conversos stopped attending church, then the inquisitors were readily informed.\textsuperscript{71}

After accused conversos made the processional rounds, the seriousness of their supposed crimes began to set in. They were to be informed that they may not “wear any sort of silk or camlet, nor carry it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[67] Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 69.
\item[68] Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
\item[69] Levine-Melammed, \textit{A Question of Identity}, 23.
\item[70] Levine-Melammed, \textit{A Question of Identity}, 27.
\item[71] Levine-Melammed, \textit{A Question of Identity}, 23.
\end{footnotes}
on their clothes or belongings.”\textsuperscript{72} This was the first social-dividing tool that the inquisitors used to put conversos in a lower-class position. The Inquisition meant to stunt the rising middle and upper-class converso population; so it made sure to deny them access to expensive clothing that may allow them to be mistaken for and treated like upper-class Old Christians. These sumptuary laws were also applied to Jews as well throughout Spain’s history, and such class distinctions were even further defined by the “yellow star” badge Jews were meant to wear on their clothing to separate themselves from their Christian neighbors.\textsuperscript{73} This was only the first restriction, and others were to prove far more devastating to the converso community than a limited clothing selection.

Any remaining stragglers who had managed to make an admirable living, despite the pure-blood limitations that economically constricted the converso community, were relieved of their professions and positions by the Church. Even after performing the humiliating penitential procession these “reconciled individuals” were never again “to possess public offices or benefices; nor may they be advocates, landlords, apothecaries, spice dealers, physicians or surgeons, or bleeders or public criers.”\textsuperscript{74} It was one thing to deny conversos’ ability to wear expensive clothing, but it showed an amazing level of maliciousness to cut off their ability to afford such luxuries in the first place.

Conversos were no longer protected by the symbols or the reality of high social status. Their safety in a very real sense was to be threatened with further restrictions as well. The medieval period was a dangerous time to be alive, and this went doubly so for conversos who

\textsuperscript{72} Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
\textsuperscript{73} Sassoon, “The Spiritual Heritage of the Sephardim,” 3.
\textsuperscript{74} Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
were no longer allowed to “carry arms their entire lives.” Some may argue that these restrictions were only meant to eliminate the political and economic competition that conversos offered in certain urban areas. One might assume that conversos possessed the ability to move on and seek greener pastures anywhere else in Spain’s expansive territory. However, a closer study of the restrictions that inquisitors placed on conversos shows that this is not the case.

The accused “may not ride horses,” not even when they belonged to someone else. The lack of transportation forcing many to travel on foot coupled with the arms restriction would prove a long and dangerous journey for any converso wanting to start afresh somewhere else. The restrictions went further to eliminate the right to “carry gold, silver, corals, pearls, or other things, nor precious stones.” This eradicated the possibility of conversos paying Old Christians from outside of town to guard them or even the ability to pay for sea passage. Not only were conversos essentially economically nullified through employment restrictions ranging from upper-class to lower middle-class professions, but their ability to move and flourish elsewhere became severely limited as well.

We have analyzed expansive evidence in the years leading up to the Inquisition that has proved that conversos were treated equally to Jews. When one considers the economic limitations placed on conversos during the Inquisition, one can notice an amazing similarity in the Expulsion Edict of 1492 when it proclaimed that expelled Jews were not allowed to “export gold or silver or coined money or other things

75 Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
76 Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
77 Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 65.
prohibited by the laws of our kingdoms.”

Therefore, it appears that the Crown did not want conversos or Jews to leave Spain. Instead, the Crown intended conversos to occupy the lowest stratum of society assigned to them by the Old Christians. These restrictions were written with the intent to help conversos “complete their penances with humility, and feel the pain of their errors,” and if conversos did not follow all of them to the letter of the law then they would be labeled as “relapsed” and would be exposed to the dangers of another trial and possible execution.

Working as a tool of the Crown, the real sinister genius of the Inquisition was not only in restricting the social, legal, and economic standing of individual conversos. It was how the inquisitors managed to legally implement the punishment of the offspring of the accused as well. The total population of ‘guilty’ conversos was not limited to the living who could actually attempt to defend themselves. “Even the deceased were tried and their corpses exhumed and burned at the stake as family members watched.”

In the midst of these public burnings, one can easily assume that the moral and spiritual reputation of the corpse’s family would follow them like a curse for the rest of their lives.

The Inquisition took no chances in the family of the accused escaping real and economic repercussions for this ‘relapse’ as well. The goods and property of the deceased Judiazer “shall be confiscated and applied to the Treasury and Exchequer of the King and Queen our Lords.” This was not limited only to the goods and property that the

81 Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 69.
dead had passed on to their heirs, but “their fruits that the condemned left to any heirs and successors in whose power those goods may be found.”\textsuperscript{82} Therefore, if one used even just a small fraction of their inheritance to invest in any venture then the property, goods, and businesses that their descendents had built would be forfeited to the inquisitors in its entirety. After all, such goods were a spiritually bad seed that needed to be pulled out by its roots even if it had spawned an entire garden on its own through the course of time. The inquisitors directly punished a guilty party’s offspring when they ruled that “the direct descendents of the guilty had numerous limitations, ranging from inability to attain public office, bear arms, serve in various professions, and what clothes they might wear”; despite the fact that these conversos were never put on trial to defend themselves, let alone be proven to be anything besides good and honest Catholics.\textsuperscript{83} If a family member was guilty, then the association was the only proof the Inquisition needed to judge another converso of being as equally guilty.

The Inquisition, through the direction of the Crown, gives us invaluable insight as to how the royal government was able to unify both local governments and Church authority under its rule. By heading and controlling the Inquisition, the Crown had tested the limits of its power and had not found it wanting for anything. Through the Inquisition, the Crown was able to define once and for all the social, legal, and economic second-class citizenship of the converso community. As one studies the Expulsion Edict of 1492 that followed the Inquisition, it seems that the protection of the converso community could not have possibly been the real reason for the Jews’ expulsion from Spain. In fact, what protection

\textsuperscript{82} Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, “Compilation of Instructions,” 69.
\textsuperscript{83} Levine-Melammed, \textit{A Question of Identity}, 27.
the converso community truly needed was from the Crown itself. However, some historians may still attempt to cling to the argument that all the evidence leading up to this point was purely circumstantial. They would argue that the Crown truly cared for the spiritual well-being of the converso community, and at worst they simply pursued the Inquisitorial trials with a certain level of religious overzealousness. Therefore, the most convincing argument that refutes this claim is the evidence of how the Crown handled the Jewish Expulsion of 1492 and the continued mistreatment of the converso community afterwards.

When the Expulsion Edict was posted everywhere throughout Spain, “priests and demagogues roamed the countryside, trying to woo the heavy hearted and despondent exiles to stay, if only they would agree to baptism.” After all, if Jews were to join the established converso communities then the edict would no longer pertain to them, and they would not have to leave Spain. We have already analyzed how the Crown restricted Jews and conversos’ ability to leave Spain by limiting what economic assets they were allowed to take with them. Even if Spain’s Jews were to leave the country voluntarily, the Crown was not about to let the nation’s wealth leave with them. This push for the Jews’ conversion instead of their actual expulsion became more apparent not only as we have seen at the level of church authority with attempts at mass conversions, but at the level of royal authority as well.

Even seven years after the Expulsion of 1492, the Crown allowed Jews who had left to return if they converted or promised to eventually convert to Christianity. Royal policy had created and enforced an entire Inquisitorial process to root out potential ‘Jewishness’

from Spain’s conversos. The whole purpose of the 1492 Expulsion Edict had been a last ditch effort to finish what the Inquisition had allegedly started in protecting the converso community from the Jews’ influence. Royal policy had suddenly completely reversed itself the same year of the expulsion, and actively tried to recruit Jews to join the converso community. This total break in logic calls into question why the Crown would want Jews to join the conversos. The nature of their baptism would have been questionable at best, since they would have converted out of a complete lack of options. Theoretically, these future secret Jews would contaminate the converso community that the Crown had worked to purify during the Inquisition for years.

The conversos’ welfare in Spain had worsened considerably after the expulsion, and in 1493 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella noted that Old Christians used “intimidation to the point that some New Christians were afraid to leave the confines of their own houses.” This shows that, unlike the victims of mass conversions in the past, Jews would have little to gain by becoming New Christians. It was incredibly dangerous to be a converso, and the Crown had personally seen to it that the conversos’ citizenship rights were practically none existent. This second-class citizenship is all that the Jews in question could hope to aspire to. Therefore, given the evidence, one could view the Expulsion Edict of 1492 as a little better than a form of forced conversion. The Crown wanted the best of both worlds. They would have theological dominance by coercing Jews into ‘willingly’ giving up their religion and submitting to the Catholic faith. This in turn would finish the victory they had begun in Granada at a much deeper and meaningful level. They would also have their cake and eat it too through social, legal and economic

---

dominance over the new conversos by treating them as they had the older ones, and not as ‘true’ Christians with all the rights and privileges that entailed. In short, they would treat them like second-class citizens. Like Jews.

This was a policy left entirely up to royal authority since the king had fully taken over the functions of the Church in this regard through his control of the Inquisition. Royal authority also benefited from a strong centralized government that Christian Spain had not seen for hundreds of years that allowed for this level of control to be possible. As we have seen from incidents like the declaration of the Bishop of Cuenca, the Crown also had the support of many authorities within the Church who did not agree with the Pope’s protective stance on the converso issue, not to mention the endless evidence of anti-converso sentiment that thrived at the local government level as well. All of these factors contributed to the popular support of the Crown’s policy towards conversos. Though morally and arguably spiritually reprehensible, it was a brilliant political maneuver that accomplished what the Crown had set out to do: unify Spain under an unwavering devotion to what the Crown interpreted as the Holy Catholic faith.
Bibliography


The Central Intelligence Agency was created in 1947 during the early stages of the Cold War while America was under the threat of Communism. The purpose of the CIA is to protect America and its interests abroad through clandestine work. Since its creation, the agency members seemed to exhibit a strong sense of brotherhood and unity that is often exhibited by fraternal organizations. Many members of the CIA believed in the illusion that their agency had a God-like power. This belief stemmed from the notion that the Cold War was a battle of good versus evil. The U.S. was representing the good, and the CIA was on the front lines of that battle. The CIA employs spies to find out the national secrets of other countries that could be useful to U.S. security and dominance. All successful spies must be traitors; the problem arose when the traitors working for the agency turned into the traitors working against the agency. The overconfidence led many in the CIA to feel as if their agency was immune to betrayal from its traitorous employees. The Biblical story of Judas Iscariot, the man who betrayed Jesus with a kiss for 30 silver coins, tells us that every one of us, including the supposed son of God, is vulnerable to betrayal by the individuals closest to us. The men in charge of the CIA seem to have ignored the moral of Judas’ story, and as a result they jeopardized the safety of countless Americans.
If someone at the CIA had kept that ancient tale of wisdom in mind, perhaps history would not have repeated itself. Russian novelist Boris Pasternak wrote in *Doctor Zhivago* that “those who wield power are so anxious to establish the myth of their own infallibility that they turn their back on truth as squarely as they can.”\(^1\) The CIA’s Achilles heel was made of that very myth of infallibility that Pasternak wrote about and it allowed three Judases to betray the agency to its biggest enemy and rival, the KGB. During the 1980’s Aldrich Ames, Edward Lee Howard, and Harold James Nicholson were the three CIA employees that did more damage to the agency than any Soviet-born KGB agent ever could.

The Office of Strategic Services, the CIA’s predecessor, employed and trained the first of these American traitors. The OSS, America’s first intelligence organization, was created during World War II to help combat the Nazis. During World War II, a cryptanalysis project was started by the U.S. Army’s Signal Intelligence Service. The name of the project was VENONA, and its objective was to identify possible Soviet spies posing as loyal Americans.

VENONA’s revelations created alarm through the U.S. Intelligence community, but they were quickly forgotten. In his article on VENONA in the second volume of the *Encyclopedia of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Rodney Carlisle noted that the objective of VENONA was to “examine and possibly exploit encrypted Soviet diplomatic communications. Early analysis of the messages revealed that some were from KGB and GRU (Soviet intelligence services) operatives working undercover in the United States.” Various branches of the U.S. government were penetratd by Soviet spies. In their book about project

---

VENONA, John Haynes and Harvey Klehr stated that they were able to “identify twelve Soviet agents within the OSS.”\(^2\) The CIA was aware of the problems that the OSS had with traitors, yet the religious-like belief in the myth of their infallibility stopped the CIA from preventing the same problems from plaguing them. The difference between the OSS’s traitors and the CIA’s traitors is that the OSS men betrayed America because they agreed with communist ideology, while the CIA’s traitors betrayed America for the money. Countless Soviet citizens spying for the West have been executed or imprisoned along with their family members as a result of Ames’s, Howard’s and Nicholson’s greed.

Greed did not seem to be the factor for the OSS’s spies because the immaterial values of post-World War II America differed drastically from the cultural materialism of 1980’s America. On July 15\(^{th}\) 1979 American President Jimmy Carter warned his fellow Americans that “too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns.”\(^3\) A little over a year after hearing President Carter’s warning the American people decided not to re-elect President Carter. The people voted instead for President Reagan, who did not accuse the American people of worshiping self-indulgence and consumption. In 1980 in his address accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Detroit, President Reagan stated that “the economic prosperity of our people is a fundamental part of our


environment.”⁴ The idealization of economic prosperity that presided during the 80’s created an atmosphere in which Ames, Lee, and Nichols could almost feel justified for their treasonous actions.

Many individuals joining the CIA do so because they feel that it is their patriotic duty as a citizen. Unfortunately for the CIA some of their employees’ patriotism was for sale. The first CIA employee known to be spying for the KGB was Edward Lee Howard. After he realized that the FBI was closing in on him, Howard defected and escaped to Moscow. Howard wrote an autobiography in Russia in which he attempted to tell his side of the story. Howard states that when he was being hired by the CIA, an agent interviewing him said that he “would have to take a pay cut, of about $10,000 per year if [he] joined the CIA.”⁵

Howard wrote an autobiography in which he attempted to tell his side of the story. Howard states that when he was being hired by the CIA, an agent interviewing him said that he “would have to take a pay cut, of about $10,000 per year if [he] joined the CIA.”⁵

Howard still chose to come aboard in 1981. Early on in Howard’s autobiography it becomes evident that he believed himself to be superior to the other trainees. Howard met a couple of people at training similar to him; he observes that they all shared a “dim view of the ex-military students, who for the most part, preferred to solve problems with their muscles rather than their minds.”⁶ Before he was even sent on his first mission, Howard began exhibiting signs of a bad team player. Howard was preparing for his first overseas mission with the CIA to Moscow, and the only thing that stood between Howard and Moscow was the polygraph test. The A&E network’s documentary “Spies” claims that “the CIA has great confidence in polygraphs. It is almost a religious

---


⁶ Howard, Safe House, 38.
belief in the CIA.”

Howard failed the polygraph and was denied official assignment to Moscow. This setback, however, did not prevent him from traveling to Moscow and forging his own relationship with the KGB.

Only two years after hiring Howard, the CIA decided that he should be fired because he continuously showed deception on the polygraph. In his book about Howard, the Washington journalist David Wise states that there was a short debate at the CIA of whether it would be safe for the agency to fire Howard because of the classified information that he knew; in the end it was “decided that Howard must go.” In August of 1985 a KGB colonel by the name of Vitaly Yurchenko defected to the U.S. embassy in Rome. In his book *The Killer Spy*, Peter Maas wrote, “Yurchenko said that there was a former CIA officer code-named Robert who’s been passing information to the KGB… he knew the man had been thrown out of the agency right before he was supposed to be assigned to Moscow.” The description that Yurchenko gave of Robert was very similar to Howard. Howard almost single handedly immobilized the CIA’s whole Soviet clandestine operation, Weiner states that in “1985 and 1986, the Soviet/Eastern Europe division of the clandestine service had lost every one of its spies.” Yurkchenko’s statements combined with the loss of all the CIA’s spies forced the agency to accept the unacceptable; there was a traitor. The FBI was preparing to arrest Howard on espionage charges.

---

Howard, however, sensed the threat and managed to evade the FBI and escape to Europe where he would eventually defect to the Soviets.

Howard did not start spying for the Soviets until he was fired from the CIA. David Wise claims that after being fired “Howard left a note with the Russians, identifying himself as a disgruntled former CIA man.” 11 Greed and revenge seem to have been the initial motives for Howard’s betrayal. Wise writes that Howard’s wife Mary “told the FBI the truth: Howard had a numbered bank account in Switzerland.” 12 A disgruntled employee would not need a monetary incentive to hurt the company that hurt them. Howard was not interested in hurting the agency; he seemed only interested in satisfying his financial needs, and the damage he caused in the process did not seem to bother him. Weiner writes that Howard “could not possibly be responsible for more than three of the dozen deaths that had wiped out the CIA’s roster of Soviet spies.” 13 The chaos caused by Howard’s defection diverted a great deal of attention to him and away from Aldrich Ames, a much deadlier traitor in the CIA.

Aldrich “Rick” Ames was another disgruntled agent. Unlike Howard, Ames did not wait for the agency to fire him before he started spying for the KGB. In the early 1980’s Ames was on assignment in Mexico City. David Wise states that while Ames was in Mexico City his boss Francis MacDonald “thought that Rick Ames considered himself superior to everyone else.” 14 Wise then goes on to state that in truth Ames “felt that his talents had not been adequately recognized by the

12 Wise, The Spy Who Got Away, 220.
13 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 482.
14 Wise, Nightmover, 10.
agency.”¹⁵ Like Howard, Ames showed similar characteristics when it came to his views of his co-workers at the CIA. Most employers find that issues with unsatisfied employees can be quite problematic. The problem gets much worse when the unhappy employee works for the CIA. The agency is responsible for having a system set up for monitoring such behavior in employees so gross errors like missing the deception of Ames and Howard do not happen. In both the Howard’s and Ames’s case the agency missed the clear warning signs.

With no one to monitor Ames, his situation only continued to deteriorate. Ames did not hide his dissatisfaction with the agency. He complained to whoever would listen, apparently his complaints fell on deaf ears. Wise quotes David Samson, Ames’s colleague from the CIA as saying “Rick always argued that the Soviets were not as aggressive as we made them out to be in the cold war. He (Ames) said we still have strategic superiority, and we knew it and they knew it.”¹⁶ This could be a valid argument by Ames, but it also could be an excuse he was telling himself in order to minimize the damage of his betrayal in his eyes. Even traitors must have a bit of a conscience, and they have to find a way to convince themselves that their betrayal is not so bad. It must not have been a great challenge for the arrogant Aldrich Ames to convince himself that his treachery was somehow just or noble.

Ames finally decided to cross the line. He found an intelligence agency that would pay attention to him and make him feel important, the Soviet KGB. Tim Weiner states that Ames “was known to be an alcoholic malcontent. Yet the agency gave him access to the files of nearly every important spy working for the United States behind the iron

¹⁵ Wise, Nightmover, 18.
¹⁶ Wise, Nightmover, 39.
It is hard to believe that people who are in charge of keeping us safe were so careless with such important documents. It was only a matter of time before a disgruntled alcoholic agent would be tempted to cross the line. David Wise quotes Ames as saying that “In April 1985, seeking money to pay debts...in exchange for $50,000, I provided the KGB with identities of several Soviet citizens who appeared to be cooperating with the CIA.” Ames already believed that he was smarter than most people at the CIA; after not getting caught for spying the first time he did it, his confidence must have grown. After the first successful betrayal, selling out the CIA only became easier.

The CIA’s failure to notice that there was a problem resulted in many people who were helping the CIA having to pay the ultimate price. The history channel documentary “Spies” states that Ames “gave Chavaukin (his KGB handler) every name in Moscow spying for the U.S. now estimated to be about two dozen people.” Many men were either imprisoned or lost their life as a result of Ames’ greed and the agency’s inability to police itself. Weiner writes that “it was as if neon lights and searchlights lit up all over the Kremlin, shone all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, saying, there is a penetration. Yet the CIA’s leaders refused to believe that one of their own betrayed them.” Ames did not even seem to hide the fact that he had acquired some wealth. David Corn of The Nation writes that Ames “traded lives for a Jaguar and a $540,000 house.” Ames was living lavishly while the CIA’s

---

17 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 518.
18 Wise, Nightmover, 115.
19 Spies, 2008.
20 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 518.
Soviet contacts were disappearing yet no one at the CIA seemed to make the connection.

The amounts in Ames’ bank accounts were rising along with the numbers of dead Soviets who had been spying for the U.S. After nine years of betraying his country to the Soviets, the CIA and FBI managed to catch on to what Ames was doing. They were at least eight years too late. In his interview to *The Nation* after his arrest, Ames tells journalist David Corn that the Russians he “identified to Moscow as U.S. agents …[were] only a small slice of the losses he inflicted upon the CIA…he is sure that he slipped the Russians leads to the identities of many, many thousands of our agents all over the world.”

The damage Ames inflicted on the agency is astronomical. If the agency had failed to learn from lessons in history, they should have not failed to learn a lesson from their own mistakes. After Edward Lee Howard and Aldrich Ames there was no reason for the CIA not to implement better measures to prevent a traitor from having such easy access to damaging information. The agency however, continued down their old path of ignorance, and it would end up wounding them again. Apparently the damage Ames and Howard inflicted was not devastating enough and another man at the agency followed in Howard’s and Ames’s footsteps. Perhaps the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 led the CIA to make the mistake of letting down their guard in the Eastern European division.

After the breakup of Soviet Union, many believed that the Soviet threat was gone. Out of the wreckage of the fallen empire, a new superpower arose that proved to be just as tough an adversary for the U.S. as the Soviet Union was. Russia, the largest and most populous of the Soviet Union’s fifteen republics, continued on a similar path to the

---

22 Corn, “C.I.A. Mole Seeks Daylight,” 238.
Soviets when it came to spying on America. The fall of communism did not end the spy games between Moscow and Washington D.C. nor did it prevent Harold James Nicholson from betraying the CIA to the Russians. Weiner states that Nicholson “had been spying for Moscow since 1994, selling the Russians files on dozens of CIA officers stationed abroad and the identities of every new officer graduated from the farm in 1994, 1995, and 1996.”

Like the two men before him Nicholson tried to disguise his greedy motives for betraying his country. In an interview to the Washington Post Nicholson “said he betrayed his country to the Russians to get money for his three children.”

Even though government officials do not get paid great amounts of money, they are paid enough for a comfortable lifestyle. Nicholson’s claims that he did it for his kids are not very believable. His kids could have had a normal life had he stayed loyal to his government. Weiner states that that the CIA told the judge sentencing Nicholson that “it would never be able to calculate the damage he had done to its operations worldwide. The careers of three years’ worth of CIA trainees were blighted; once burned they could never serve overseas.”

Once again the agency had allowed itself to be fooled. Once again innocent people suffered as a direct result of the CIA’s failure to discover the mole soon enough.

In all three cases the CIA’s failure to respond in adequate timing led to irreparable damage to the agency. Even though it took the agency a long time to act in the cases of Edward, Ames, and Nicholson, some sort of justice eventually caught up to them. Edward seemed to have been the smartest one of the three since he was the only one who successfully

---

23 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 537.
25 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 537.
avoided capture and defected to the Soviets. On July 23, 2002 a newspaper article in the online edition of the *New York Times* stated that Howard has “died…Mr. Howard's death remains as mysterious as his life.”26 The circumstances regarding Mr. Howards death are not clear and it is possible that he was assassinated either by his Russian handlers who had no more use for him, or by a CIA hit man. Assassination or freak accident, justice finally reached the traitor as it always does. Ames and Nicholson were more fortunate than their fellow traitor Howard. Writing about Ames, Wise states that the “court sentenced him to life in prison.”27 Weiner writes that Nicholson was “sentenced to twenty-three years in prison.”28 There is no evidence proving that Nicholson’s actions have caused any individuals to lose their lives, so his punishment fits his crime. Fortunately for Ames his punishment does not fit his crime. David Wise writes that Ames “betrayed three dozen CIA and allied agents and caused at least ten of them to be executed.” 29 A life sentence for a traitor responsible for ten deaths is far from the justice Ames’s victims and their families deserve.

The most discouraging of all is the knowledge that these three men were able to carry out such horrific actions right under the nose of the agency responsible for keeping us safe. Greed seemed to be an initial motive for the three traitors. Later on they seem to be ashamed to admit that they were driven by nothing else but greed, so they made up excuses of being mistreated at work in order to justify their betrayal.

---

There is no way we can expect the CIA to devise a foolproof method to prevent treason. We cannot, however, allow the agency to turn a blind eye when the evidence points to the fact that someone is committing treason. The CIA learned about traitors from firsthand experience because they refused to learn from the past. We can hope that after Edward, Ames, and Howard the agency has finally learned their lesson. There will always be people willing to betray someone close to them and do the unthinkable. An agency serving on the front lines of our national security should always be prepared for all possible threats. Only when they are willing to accept the possibility of an attack from within, will they be able to prevent such betrayal from occurring. Until then we are all at risk from a new Judas.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Periodicals


Secondary Sources


On June 4, 1913, a woman stood in a crowd of people at Epsom eagerly awaiting the running of the first race of the British Derby Day. The woman watched as two sets of horses ran past her on the track, and then she ducked under the railing and ran into the middle of the track. As she ran onto the track the King’s horse was running toward her, and as the horse neared, she threw her hands up in the air, perhaps to stop the horse, but to no avail. The King’s horse trampled the woman and she lay on the track suffering a severe head injury.¹ This woman was not just a regular spectator amongst the crowd who had suffered an unfortunate accident; the woman was Emily Wilding Davison, a member of the Women’s Social and Political Union and a suffragist with a militant past. Davison suffered from her head injuries for four days, and then she died without ever regaining consciousness. Without her explanation of the event and explanation of whether or not her act was an act of suicide, speculation arose about the reasoning behind her fatal trip out onto the track. Davison’s fellow suffragists used the confusion over Davison’s act as a way to gain sympathy for their cause as they made it known to the world that Davison died fighting for women’s right to vote. However, even though Davison suffered her injuries while carrying two suffragist flags under her coat, she did not intend to become a martyr that day at

Epsom. It was only through the propaganda of the suffrage movement that Davison’s accidental death turned her into a martyr for suffrage.\(^2\)

The British suffragists granted Davison martyrdom, hoping that the death of this woman would bring sympathy and support from the British people. The suffragists needed this support for their cause because many British people looked down upon the suffragists and their militant actions. In order to understand why the suffragists used Davison’s death as a ploy to gain sympathy for their cause, the history of the British suffrage movement must be briefly discussed. In the early twentieth century, Great Britain experienced an uprising of women demanding the right to vote. British suffragists became militant during this time under the leadership of Emmeline Pankhurst.\(^3\) Their militant activities, such as arson and bombings, resulted in many suffragists’ arrests. As a result of the hatred towards the suffragists’ campaign, and the suffragists’ unwillingness to be submissive to the law enforcement personnel, many of these women faced cruel and horrific conditions during their incarceration.

During incarceration, many suffragists resorted to desperate tactics, such as hunger strikes, with the hope that the government would take their message seriously. Instead of acknowledging the validity of the suffragist’s campaign, the government and prisons implemented the practice of subjecting the women to harsh punishments such as force-feeding them through a tube to suppress their militant nature. The brutal tactics proved to be debilitating to the health and mental status of the women who were imprisoned, and occasionally the suffragists were left

\(^2\) Gullickson, “Emily Wilding Davison: Secular Martyr?” 461.
\(^3\) Gullickson, “Emily Wilding Davison: Secular Martyr?” 462.
permanently disabled and many died while they were still incarcerated. One suffragist who felt the wrath of these brutal tactics was Emily Wilding Davison. Davison was a devoted suffragist whose militant tactics often resulted in her arrest. Her stories of the horrific treatment of women inside the prisons flooded the headlines of The Times during the early twentieth century. It was Davison’s intention to show the people of England the brutality that the suffragists faced while fighting for their cause.

Emily Wilding Davison first made headlines after her desperate attempts to avoid being force-fed while incarcerated. Davison’s name inundated the British papers during her involvement in the suffrage campaign due to her militant nature. Davison worked as an activist for the women’s suffrage movement for many years. In 1909, Davison first made headlines when, after being arrested, she had gone on a hunger strike in order to show her resolve for the cause of suffrage. In attempts to avoid being force-fed, Davison barricaded her cell door in order to keep the prison guards out of her cell. The prison guards then placed a hose pipe into her cell and attempted to fill her cell with water, nearly drowning her. The freezing water made her ill, and she was then confined to bed due to her illness. After her release from prison, Davison attempted to collect damages from this incident of assault, but with no avail. This result was largely due to the fact that that while in prison it was Davison’s “avowed intention of breaking every rule of that institution, and she did in fact do so from the time she went.” Davison’s story of abuse during her imprisonment flooded the newspapers and

---

brought about attention to the mistreatment of the women suffragists who were locked away in prison. Suffragists, such as Davison, used these stories of ill treatment as reasons for people to support the cause for suffrage and Davison continued her fight after this incident.

In 1911, Davison wrote a letter to the editor of *The Times* expressing her outrage at the paper regarding a negative story about working class women taking their children into a public house. Davison’s responded to this story by saying that women would have refused to bring their children into a pub if “women had possessed a feeling that they were responsible citizens of their country.”\(^7\) This letter not only supported the women among the British working classes, but also displayed Davison’s feelings about the lack of suffrage for women in Britain. Davison felt that without women being given the right to vote, they would not be viewed as actual citizens of Britain. The anger and frustration felt by the failed sense of citizenship ignited her militant nature and disrespect for government institutions. Though her many militant actions—including a bomb threat—made headlines in the paper, her most famous act for suffrage took place in June of 1913 during the opening race on Derby Day at the racing course at Epsom.

On June 4, 1913, the middle and upper classes of Great Britain gathered together at Epsom to enjoy the opening races of the horseracing season, on Derby Day. The spectators not only experienced the excitement of a close horse race, but many also witnessed a horrific and fatal act displayed by Emily Davison. According to *The Times*, after the opening race, Davison “rushed from the rails on to the course as the

---

horses swept round Tattenham corner.”8 After Davison ran onto the track, she encountered the King’s horse, Anmer, and when the jockey was unable to avoid her, he was forced to trample over her leaving her fatally injured with a head wound.9 This desperate act by Davison was done in order to bring the attention of the Derby’s spectators to the cause for suffrage. Davison had run out onto the track in order to wave the suffragist colors and evoke support from the women and men in the crowd. However, this event did not bring forth sympathy for the suffrage movement, this violent display invoked rage amongst the British people and Davison’s actions were criticized in both the British and the American press.10 While the suffragists hailed her as a champion for their cause, the general public saw her as a miscreant female who suffered from a mental disease. Though there were some positive responses, and some negative, from the public, the publicity caused by this act made the quest for women’s suffrage in Britain known internationally, with Davison heralded as its champion. Davison’s fatal accident made her a legend in the eyes of British suffragists and they used her death to make her a martyr for the cause of suffrage.

The distaste for the militant suffragists and their cause, by the British government and the people of Britain, was a result of the forceful nature portrayed by the suffragists and their refusal to become subservient. These women strayed from the typical submissive behavior that was expected of them, and took on stronger more dominant qualities not usually hailed as lady like. This new behavior and the militant acts that the suffragists committed were not seen as strong and independent qualities of a woman, but rather it was often seen as a result of a woman

8 “A Memorable Derby,” The Times, June 5, 1913.
9 “A Memorable Derby,” The Times, June 5, 1913.
suffering from a mental disease. After Davison’s death, there were many who thought Davison was a lunatic and not of sound mind when she ran onto the race course. It was the common belief, immediately following the accident that her troubled mental state was the reason she threw herself in front of the horses that day. ¹¹ This claim of madness was evident in all the newspapers articles from that day, as both the *New York Times* and *The Times* hailed her as “mad.” The common belief that Davison had gone insane was due to the fact that many believed it was her intention to die that day on the track; however, according to the coroner’s jury for Davison’s case, her death was ruled as an accident.

In order to dismiss the claim that Davison was insane and had intended to die, the coroner’s jury called on Captain Henry J. Davison, Davison’s brother, to attest to her sanity. While at the coroner’s jury Captain Davison stated that his sister “was a woman of very strong reasoning, faculties, and passionately devoted to the women’s movement.”¹² Since a respected member of the British military attested to the sanity of Davison, the charge that she suffered from mental illness was dropped and the conclusion was made that Davison was of sound mind and body when she entered the course.

Testimonies by witnesses present at the racecourse that day suggested that this event was accidental. One witness stated that “it was my impression, when she was trying to get under the rail, that, believing all the horses had passed, she intended to run into the center of the course, as many people do at the Derby, to get a view of the horses dashing up the straight.”¹³ Testimonies such as these show that it was

---

commonplace for the public to run onto the course after the race concluded, and it was not considered an action that would have been taken by a person suffering from a mental disease. This evidence shows why it would not normally be considered out of the ordinary to run onto the track, but because she was a woman and because she was associated with the suffrage movement, the public saw her act as an act of lunacy. Many claimed that she wanted to die and those claims justified the arguments against her mental status. However, it has been concluded by historians that on the day of the Derby, it was not Davison’s intention to die, because she had purchased a round trip ticket from London to the racing grounds at Epsom.\textsuperscript{14} This shows that Davison had no intention of becoming the hero and martyr for suffrage that day; she only wished to stand in front of the crowd to show her support for the cause. It was not Davison who made herself a martyr for the women’s movement, it was her sister suffragists that used her untimely death as a story that would bring publicity to the fight for suffrage.

The idea that Davison was willing to die, on that June day in 1913, was not only born in the stories wielded by the press, but also in the propaganda used by Davison’s fellow suffragists. The women suffragists claimed that Davison willfully laid her life down that day to die for their cause. A fellow suffragist, Mrs. Mansel, spoke to The Times, and discussed a meeting that she and Davison had prior to her trip to the racetrack at Epsom. Mansel stated that Davison

\begin{quote}
went with the expressed intention of stopping the King’s horse. To show that she was contemplating how her action might end, she even expressed a wish as to where to be buried...Miss
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} Gullickson, “Emily Wilding Davison: Secular Martyr?” 462.
Davison had the conviction that a great tragedy would have to come and that she herself would lay down her life.15

With these claims, Mansel had intended to build up pride amongst the community of suffragists and display Davison as a true and selfless martyr for their cause. However, these claims were propagandistic in nature and were used to give evidence to Davison’s alleged martyrdom.

The claims made by Mansel are evidence of the propaganda that was spread by the suffragist community. To refute the claims made by Mansel, many articles in both The Times and the New York Times, gave evidence that it would have been impossible for Davison to specifically target the King’s horse. The coroner’s jury also discussed this matter, and when asked whether it was possible for Davison to target the King’s horse, the coroner stated, “I do not think it would be possible the way they were bunched together.”16 Regardless, the suffragists used the event of Davison being trampled by the King’s horse, as a symbol of women being stepped on by the British government. These stories of grandeur made the public sympathetic to Davison’s plight and the suffragists’ cause, and masses of people attended the funeral of the slain suffragist in both the support of the victim and in support of the cause.

The propaganda surrounding Davison’s death, produced by the British suffragists, enabled a grand funeral for Davison, with a massive crowd and a funeral procession throughout London. The Times reported that, “in many of the streets the crowd was so thick that it was with utmost difficulty that the police kept a clear passage for the

---

procession.”\textsuperscript{17} Due to the amount of press coverage of the Davison story and the martyrdom granted to Davison by the other suffragists, crowds came to the funeral to honor a hero. This was helpful to the suffragists’ cause—the massive crowds made it appear that the suffrage movement had the support of many British. However, not all that attended the funeral were there to support Davison and the cause. From the crowd there were shouts of, “Three cheers for the king’s jockey.”\textsuperscript{18} Critics of women’s suffrage saluted the death of a militant woman that they saw as a nuisance to society. This showed that even though there were many who were sympathetic to the suffragists’ plight and the martyred Davison, the movement was still hated by many men of Great Britain who saw no need for women to have the right and the power to vote.

Though male compassionates for suffrage were in a minority in Britain, there were some who were inspired by Davison’s passion for the cause. In honor of Davison’s actions at Epsom, a man repeated these actions two weeks later at the racecourse at Ascot. \textit{The Times} reported, “A man put himself deliberately in the way of the leading horse in the race for the Gold Cup…The man, who carried a revolver in one hand and a flag of the suffragist colors in the other, has been identified as Mr. Harold Hewitt.”\textsuperscript{19} This action by Hewitt showed how Davison’s action and death not only motivated other suffragist women, but also motivated men who believed in the cause for the women to gain the right to vote. Though the press dismissed him as a lunatic, just as they did Davison, this action demonstrated the passion that people felt toward the cause.

\textsuperscript{17} “The Suffragist Outrage At The Derby: Funeral of Miss Davison,” \textit{The Times}, June 16, 1913.
\textsuperscript{18} “The Suffragist Outrage At The Derby: Funeral of Miss Davison,” \textit{The Times}, June 16, 1913.
\textsuperscript{19} “Outrage at Ascot,” \textit{The Times}, June 20, 1913.
Though Davison was not intending to be a martyr, her intentions inspired people to support the cause for which she so desperately fought.

Davison will be remembered throughout history as the woman who willingly gave her life for the right of women’s suffrage. During the time in which she was associated with the suffragists’ cause, she experienced abuse by government officials and prisons. However, Davison stood behind the cause, accepting the harsh punishments, because she was a firm believer that women were citizens and should be treated as citizens by having the right to vote. She wanted to rally as many supporters for her cause as she could, and by so doing, she met a tragic end. After accidently being trampled by the King’s horse she died while supporting the fight for suffrage. Through press and propaganda, Davison’s sister suffragists used her death as an aid to their cause; they immortalized Davison with their stories and press releases and by granting her martyrdom for suffrage. Though Davison did not intend to become a martyr for the cause, her story inspired others to act against the injustices of the British government, and her name—and death—became immortalized in the history of the women’s suffragist movement in Britain.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games: The World Responds to Notions of Aryan Superiority

Dustin Tam

If the arc of history bends towards justice, then the sports world has always been ahead of the curve. When politics create perceptions of racial, religious, cultural, national, and ideological superiority, the sports world gives the oppressed a platform to prove the fallacy of these ideas, and provides for people a chance to rethink their prejudices. No better sporting event represents this ideal than the Olympics, which welcomes amateur athletes of all races, religions, nationalities, ideologies, and cultures from all over the world to participate in friendly competition. In the summer of 1936, Adolf Hitler had hoped to use the Olympic games, hosted by Berlin, to prove to the world the superiority of the Aryan superiority race and to justify a German Aryan takeover of Europe. However, the mere presence of popular and winning non-Aryan athletes at the Games, such as Jesse Owens, discredited his racial philosophy. Not only did Owens defeat Hitler’s Aryan athletes, but also, he was cheered by crowds of as many as one hundred ten thousand screaming German fans chanting his name. German athlete Luz Long, who offered advice to a nervous Owens in the broad jump competition, befriended him.1 Although Germany dominated the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the appreciation of the non-Aryan athletes in the Games demonstrated by the

German crowd suggests that the belief in Aryan dominance, as held by Adolf Hitler, was not universal in 1930s Germany.

The 1936 Olympic games in Berlin provides fascinating evidence of an ideological disconnect between Hitler and the German people. The “Nazi Olympics” also faced opposition from all over the world, including several of the world’s most competitive nations who threatened a boycott of the Games in response to Nazi Germany’s discriminatory and anti-democratic practices concerning the rights of minority citizens. Hitler had hoped the Olympic games would be the perfect propaganda tool to put German Aryan superiority on display, but the world and the German people rejected Hitler’s racial philosophy, instead incidents during the Games created the possibility of heroic displays of international cooperation and racial pluralism.

Berlin was awarded the Olympic Games in 1931 to welcome Germany back into the international community since its defeat in World War I, but the decision was faced with criticism shortly after Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor in January of 1933. European nations that considered boycotting the Olympic Games in Nazi Germany included France, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia. In voting to approve one million francs to Germany for the Olympic Games, Florimond Bonté, a Communist Deputy of France “violently opposed the credit,” citing racial discrimination in Germany. The United States, aware of Germany’s racial and religious discrimination, was the loudest voice against the Games being held in Berlin.

---

In April 1933 there was already talk of cancelling the Games or moving them to either Rome or Tokyo.\textsuperscript{4} Amidst allegations of the Nazi government barring Jewish Germans from participating in the Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) launched an investigation into the country’s alleged unethical treatment of Jewish athletes. Avery Brundage, President of the American Olympic Committee (AOC), held that the United States’ participation in the Games would be contingent on the IOC’s findings. The country, which would be Germany’s greatest competition, would not boycott the Games despite pleas from human rights groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).\textsuperscript{5} Jeremiah T. Mahoney, president of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU), led the movement to boycott the Olympic Games and sent a letter alleging Germany’s racial and religious discrimination to Dr. Theodore Lewald. Lewald, the chairman of the German Olympic Committee (GOC) and who had Jewish heritage, once experienced discrimination personally in Nazi Germany when Hitler objected to his position as chairman of the GOC.\textsuperscript{6} In his letter to Lewald, Mahoney declared that “the present German government has injected race, religion, and politics into sports in general and into the Olympics in particular.” Mahoney then accused German Olympic teams of excluding Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant athletes from participating in the Games who did not “[submit] supinely to the Nazi will in all spheres including the sphere of conscience.” He then boldly claimed that if there were no “Jewish athletes of Olympic caliber, this is because [Germany] had denied them adequate facilities for

training and competition and has forced them into exile and suicide.”

Lewald countered with a letter of his own, in which he contradicted Mahoney’s assertions, and stated that politics should not be inserted into the Olympic Games, a sentiment that was shared by Brundage, who voted in favor of the United States participating in the Games. “The Olympic Games,” said Lewald, “have nothing to do with any political or religious question, irrespective of whether the charges against Germany are true or false.”

Though Lewald expressed his belief that the Olympics are free of religious or political ideologies, he did address several questions about discrimination in Germany.

While Lewald faced questions about discrimination in the athletic ranks, he answered by citing two specific Jewish candidates who had been considered for the German Olympic team: female high jumper, Gretel Bergmann, and the half-Jewish female fencer, Helene Mayer, who was residing in California at the time. However, he claimed there was only “one serious candidate” among the Jewish candidates; ultimately there were no Jewish athletes on the German Olympic team.

Despite the claim by Lewald that every athlete was given a chance to join the German Olympic team, Reich Sport leader Herr von Tschammer und Olsen required athletes to “express through their bearing and character the new mode of life of the German nation.” In other words, athletes were at least required to show support for the Nazi Regime, and he added, “German sports are for Aryans… and not for Jews.”

Further evidence of discriminatory practices in Germany came with the denial to
admit Dr. Daniel Prenn to the German Davis Cup team despite his apparently excelling in the game of tennis. *The Times* wrote of this move by the Germans:

the Nazi point of view, as privately expressed, is that it is, in present circumstances, unthinkable that Germany, which is systematically expelling Jews from the public services and professions, should call on Dr. Prenn to represent her simply because he is the best player in the country.12

Because Prenn was regarded by some in the press as the best tennis player in Germany, his absence from the German Davis Cup team, adding the fact that he was Jewish, understandably raised questions of anti-Semitic discrimination by Germany’s Olympic team. In addition to addressing allegations of discrimination in the athletic ranks, Lewald also addressed allegations of racial discrimination in athletic training facilities. Lewald acknowledged that some private sports organizations might discriminate by disallowing some into their facilities, but that other sports organization were open to all visiting athletes regardless of their religious or political beliefs.13

The question of Germany’s practices of discrimination were not the only question of concern to the other countries, they were also concerned with how Germany would accommodate visiting fans, especially visiting Jews. The world was well aware of Nazi Germany’s suppression of civil liberties and the atrocities perpetrated against racial, religious, political, and other minorities, so the pressure was on Lewald to prove that the nation would be accommodating to all visiting peoples and not just visiting Aryans. Lewald’s job was complicated by Hitler and

the Nazi Party who viewed Jewish and African Germans as a “racial infection,” and passed laws limiting their rights and privileges.\textsuperscript{14} One such law, the 1933 Peasants Farm Law, stated that only peasants could take land and that only Germans could be peasants. The law defined a German as a person who does not have paternal or maternal ancestors with “Jewish or colored blood in their veins.”\textsuperscript{15} Laws such as these made it clear that the Nazi Party believed that a racial hierarchy existed and that the “Aryan race” was at the top. Lewald would have to prove that despite these laws, the Germans would not treat visiting non-Aryan athletes and guests as they had treated non-Aryan Germans. He promised American critics that there would be no differentiating between Jews and non-Jews when it came to the care of Olympic athletes and assured them that he had witnessed fair treatment of Jews in the streets of Berlin during the summer of 1935, the year before the Olympic Games.\textsuperscript{16} Lewald’s accommodating sentiment was reinforced by the removal, just prior to the Olympic Games, of anti-Semitic and otherwise offensive propaganda that once appeared throughout the streets of Berlin.\textsuperscript{17} Though the Nazi Regime embraced the Aryan philosophies taught by Hitler, they also realized that they needed to be accepting of all athletes from around the world; thus they were accommodating not only to Aryan athletes but also to visiting Jews during the Olympic Games.

However genuine Lewald was in displaying an accommodating Germany to the visiting world, the Nazi Regime still used the Olympic Games in Berlin as a propaganda tool to further an agenda of Aryan

\textsuperscript{15} Scales-Trent, “Racial Purity Laws,” 295.
\textsuperscript{16} “Germans Reject Olympic Protests,” 1.
\textsuperscript{17} Edmondson, \textit{Jesse Owens: A Biography}, 40.
superiority. Initially, strongly nationalistic Hitler was opposed to the international cooperation represented by Olympic Games, but he was persuaded by his Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, to use the Games as a propaganda event for the country. Goebbels had noted that, for Germany, sports had “only one task: to strengthen the character of the German people, imbuing it with the fighting spirit and steadfast camaraderie necessary in the struggle for its existence.”

Though he was never very athletic himself, Hitler did see the value of sports in strengthening his “Race-Nationalist state.” In his “Race-Nationalist state,” Hitler said, “the school itself must set aside infinitely more time for physical conditioning.” Hitler’s belief in athletic instruction for young people could be attributed to his belief that the confidence of young Aryans in their physical abilities could replace the sense of pride Germany had lost when the nation was demilitarized as one of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. In the absence of a forceful military, Hitler had hoped to use the Olympics to exert his nation’s physical dominance, a fear held by many who considered the boycott of the Games. Hitler put so much stock into the importance of physical activity among Germany’s Aryan youths in his demilitarized nation that he had the educational system reformed to promote the “aggressively physical over the pensively intellectual.”

The aforementioned French Communist Deputy Florimond Bonté claimed that the Germans “regarded sports as a preparation for war,” an “exact contradiction to the Olympic spirit.”

---

21 “Credit for Olympics is Voted in France,” 14.
Once Hitler conceded that the Olympic Games would be an effective propaganda tool, he led his Olympic committee in creating the most extravagant opening Olympic Ceremony in the Games’ history. The introduction of the participating nations proved, to a degree, the intention of the Nazi Regime to use the Olympics to showcase their physical dominance to the world. While other nations’ athletes dressed in formal—and some casual—wear as they marched to their places on the field, Germany’s athletes wore militaristic uniforms and held the Nazi salute as they marched past the Führer to their designated spot for the opening ceremonies. Several other nations’ athletes also held the Nazi salute (not to be confused with the similar Olympic salute of stretching one’s right arm upward and to the right of one’s body), but more in the manner of honoring the host country rather than to express support of the Nazi Regime. Germany’s future enemies—the French, British, and Americans—held the “eyes right” position, facing the Führer, but not saluting him. The United States, in fact, did not “dip” their flag, a long-held Olympic tradition to honor the hosting country’s leader. The U.S. had not dipped their flag since the Games were held in London in 1908 when they declared, “this flag dips for no earthly king.” At Hitler’s announcement that the Games had begun, twenty thousand white doves were released by the Hitler Youth, followed by a 21-gun salute to signal the arrival of the final Olympic Torch runner. To a crowd of one hundred ten thousand, the Olympic Games opened with a perfectly Aryan German man sprinting down the track of The Olympiastadion (Olympic Stadium) and lighting the Olympic Torch as the crowd of thousands honored the Führer with the Nazi Salute, followed by a

23 Edmondson, *Jesse Owens: A Biography*, 44.
singing of the German National Anthem by the crowd. In the opening ceremonies, Hitler appeared confident and jubilant, eagerly awaiting his athletes to prove Aryan superiority to the rest of the world. His jubilance would shortly be replaced with frustration at his athletes’ inability to defeat the United States’ athletes, particularly the African American sprinter and long jumper, Jesse Owens, the audience’s support for Owens, and the insistence of people in his cabinet, and the IOC, to show support for all athletes at the games.24

Jesse Owens’ victories at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin extended beyond the track: winning the support of the German crowd and befriending German athlete, Luz Long. Owens’ arrival to the games was long awaited by the Germans who greeted him upon his arrival in Berlin by chanting his name and bombarding him for autographs before he even took to the track.25 Owens went on to win four gold medals at the Games, each time cheered by the German crowd. Most famously was his competition with his future and long-term friend Luz Long in the broad jump. In solidarity, Long raised Owens’ fist and impelled the crowd of one hundred ten thousand to cheer Owens’ name, which in their German tongue, Owens recalls, sounded more like “Jaz-eee-ooh-wenz.”26 Long was posthumously awarded the Pierre de Coubertin medal for his extraordinary show of sportsmanship during the 1936 Olympic Games.27 During Long’s record-breaking long jump event, Hitler had been seen cheering on Long. In the very next jump, Owens’ jump shattered Long’s record, and Hitler left the stadium.2829

24 Olympia, DVD, directed by Leni Riefenstahl (1938; Venice, CA: Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2006).
25 Edmondson, Jesse Owens: A Biography, 42.
26 Owens, Blackthink, 191.
27 Edmondson, Jesse Owens: A Biography, 49.
28 Olympia.
When Hitler walked out of the stadium after Owens’ win, it was not the first time he had “snubbed” Owens, or any athlete in the Games. The first time came after Owens’ fellow African Americans, Dave Albritton and Cornelius Johnson, in addition to Delos Thurber swept the high jump competition.\(^{30}\) This marked the first time Hitler had not invited the winners of an event up to his private box to shake their hands and personally congratulate them on their victories. Previously, Hitler had invited gold medal German shot putter Hans Woellke to his personal suite along with the other medalists in the event to congratulate them. The other two medal winners were from the Finish team, thus all three medalists in this event were Aryan. When the two African American high jumpers from the United States defeated their Aryan opponents, however, Hitler left his private box before they even took to their victory stands.\(^{31}\) Some contended that Hitler was leaving the stadium to avoid a threatening rain storm while others believed he left the stadium to avoid acknowledging that a non-Aryan athlete had bested his athletes, and other Aryan athletes, during his Olympics. After Hitler’s failure to congratulate the African American athletes in the same way he treated the Aryan athletes, both the IOC and Nazi officials suggested to Hitler that he either personally congratulate all of the winners, or none of them. After this suggestion, Hitler invited no other medal winners to his private box.\(^{32}\)

Owen’s success in the Games delivered a major blow to Hitler’s hopes of using the Berlin Olympics as a forum to spread his beliefs of

---

31 Bennet, “Jesse Owens’ Olympic Triumph,” 146.
Aryan superiority. A second factor was the Germans’ favorable response to the success of non-Aryan athletes. Japanese Naoto Tajima, gold medal winner of the triple jump competition, was also cheered on by the German audience as he set up for his final jump, which set a new world record. Of course, the Germans could not have won every event, and Hitler surely recognized that, but the Berlin Olympics would serve to disprove Hitler’s theories of Aryan supremacy, than to prove them. The world responded with its own racial philosophies; but rather than contend one group was superior to all others, it answered with racially diverse Olympic teams, which one writer summed up in a *New York Times* article,

> America’s “black auxiliaries” at the Olympics are not the only problem for Nazi race philosophy. Here, for instance, is India defeating the United States in field hockey at Berlin, and of the ten men fighting for India five are called Emmett, Cullen, Grewal, Michie, and Phillips. They are in the line-up with players called Chand, Roopsingh, Jafar and Ahsan Khan. And here again is Argentina beating the British in polo in Berlin, and two of the four Argentinians are called Duggan and Cavanagh.

> It all goes to show that mankind outside present-day Germany is imperfectly totalitarian. It accepts racial inconsistencies and nationalist anomalies for the sake of a good game of polo or hockey or a fast 100-meter sprint.

The presence and success of racially diverse athletes at the Games showed that the rest of the world was either unwilling to accept Hitler’s race philosophy, or that nations were unconcerned with race when it came to picking the best athletes to represent their country in the Olympics.

---

33 *Olympia.*

In the end, the Germans took away the most medals by a wide margin (Germany earned 101 total medals—38 gold—followed by the United States with just 57 total medals), but Hitler lost his battle to prove Aryan superiority. The wins of non-Aryan athletes over Aryan athletes, especially those by Jesse Owens, undermined Hitler’s race philosophy. The 1936 Olympic Games were never without controversy. Just months after Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor of Germany, nations around the world considered a boycott of the Games if Germany could not prove to be fair in its treatment of Jewish athletes. Ultimately, these nations did join the Games, and they contradicted Hitler’s philosophy of Aryan superiority by sending the best athletes to compete, regardless of their race. The world, especially the nations that would eventually defeat Germany in World War II made it abundantly clear to the Nazi leader that they did not accept his notion of Aryan superiority. Perhaps the most significant outcome was the rejection of his racial philosophy by the German crowd who cheered non-Aryan athletes before and after they won gold in their respective events. This sentiment could be seen in the close friendship that developed between Jesse Owens and Luz Long, who secretly admitted to Owens that he did not believe in Aryan superiority. The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games was Hitler’s chance to convince the world of Aryan superiority, but despite Germany’s many victories in the Games, the world, the German crowd, and even Germany’s own athletes were unwilling to accept Hitler’s race philosophy.

36 Owens, Blackthink, 192.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Periodicals


Secondary Sources


“Three million hapless people are said to have started a blind migration hoping to find food, and typhus and cholera are raging. The richest agricultural regions have been hardest hit and the less favored ones, never entirely self-supporting, can barely exist on reduced rations. .... The blame for these conditions rests squarely on Communist policy…”

In 1921, Russian agrarian lands buckled under tragic famine conditions, and five million people perished. Famine and starvation have frequently scourged other climes and times throughout history, the causes for which can be attributed to various natural, economic, and political circumstances. This particular famine, however, followed the Bolshevik Revolution, and thus, communism has been seen by some to be its attributing cause. However, while communism did not produce the famine in Russia, communist reforms exacerbated the severity of the famine. The narrative began with dreadful weather conditions, which effects were further intensified by hasty and poorly implemented governmental reforms accompanied by gross corruption. These events led to tragic unintended consequences, which were used to forever tarnish the reputation of communism.

Ninety years of hindsight allows us to look upon this event within its historical context. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, communism was gaining international popularity. The eyes of the world were fixed upon Russia to see what would become of her revolution. Communism was an idea borne out of critical anti-capitalistic sentiment, and worldwide battle lines were being drawn between sympathizers of the two camps. Entrenched pro-capitalist governments were fully aware of the threat that communism posed to their political and economic control. Campaign speeches, press reports, and diplomatic maneuvers were carefully tailored to highlight communism’s shortcomings thereby casting their own system in a favorable light. Against this backdrop, the French Journal des Debats declared, “Russia is not suffering from drought but from Bolshevism.”

Despite this popular rhetoric, however, chronological precedence does not insinuate cause, and therefore due diligence must be exercised to formulate a more comprehensive explanation for this famine.

In brief, examination of the agricultural specifics of this famine shows that the rural farming lands, which had hitherto fed a growing nation, suddenly became paralyzed. In the primary food-growing provinces, such the Black Earth region of the Volga River, pre-Revolutionary output had been 20 million tons of cereal grain annually. During this fertile time, only a fraction of this cereal was either required to feed the peasant producers or to be retained as seed for subsequent harvests. The remainder would be used to sustain the urban industrial workers or to be exported to neighboring countries to create national wealth. By 1920, just three years following the revolution, the output

---

2 “Bolshevism’s Harvest of Famine,” *The Literary Digest*, August 20, 1921, 18.
dropped to 8.45 million tons and in 1921, to a pitiful 2.9 million tons. These meager harvests threatened to starve their very own producers and provided little, if any, seed grain.

Conditions regressed so rapidly that survival depended upon scavenging for even the foulest sort of sustenance, the likes of which were never intended for modern human consumption. Emaciated peasants ingested caloric surrogates of tree bark, acorns, leaves, clay, and insects in an attempt to ease hunger pangs. Russian peasant folklore revered the pigeon as an emblem of the Holy Spirit, but survival demanded its frequent consumption without regard to custom. Such harsh conditions even produced unconfirmed reports of cannibalism in the Orenburg district, incidents that seem probable given the harsh famine environment. These drastic measures only delayed the deaths of the millions who would inevitably succumb to this tragedy.

Before we can delve into the specific causes of this catastrophe, we must first acknowledge the complex interdependency of a national economy. Economic meltdowns over the past one hundred years are usually traced back to just a single or handful of events that trigger the mass devastation. Each economic factor, such as low inflation, low interest rates, stable governance, consumer optimism, natural environments, infrastructure, etc., like many Roman columns, collectively hold the economy in prosperous suspension. It is possible that events cause one of these columns to be intentionally dismantled for the purposes of fortifiable restoration yet the overall structure remains due only to the fortitude of the others. However, this particular economic

5 “Through Hungry Russia. Food Trains for Moscow,” *The Times*, September 17, 1921.
crisis appeared at an inopportune time when the integrity of all of Russia’s columns was in question. The slightest disturbance, whether brought on by external factors or communist reforms, triggered a ruinous collapse that still echoes throughout history.

In light of this tragedy, it can be expedient to look upon the Bolsheviks and their shortcomings with an air of condemnation, but before communism is summarily pronounced guilty, a critical look at its own fundamental tenets is in order. A brief examination of pure communist policy is necessary to separate what was in fact communism and what were impromptu and hasty modifications implemented by this inexperienced government. To gather a general idea of communism’s basics, both Marx and Lenin provide convenient ten-point outlines for nations striving to become communist in their *Communist Manifesto* and *April Theses*, respectively. In step six in the *Manifesto*, Marx called for the nationalization of the media and transport industries. This does play a role in the famine, but the effects of his other nine steps are negligible in regard to this Famine.\(^6\) In regards to the *April Theses*, it is difficult to claim that a single one of Lenin’s points as outlined directly contributed to the starvation of these millions. The bureaucracy of sole Soviet governance in step four is cause for blame, but in step five, Lenin concisely denounces the bureaucratic monster and calls for its abolition. Step six, another key principle of this incendiary document, called for the “nationalization of all lands in the country, the land to be disposed of by the local Soviets of Agricultural Laborers’ and Peasants’ Deputies.”\(^7\) This platform was a significant reason for the rise in

---


\(^7\) Vladimir Lenin, “April Theses, 1917,” in *Europe in the Contemporary World*, ed. Bonnie Smith (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007), 169.
Bolshevik popularity and subsequent political success. However, ease and boldness of declaration does not bring with it a guarantee of seamless implementation, and during the civil war of 1917-1923, the Russian agrarian society remained largely autonomous. So if not for pure communist doctrine, other factors must have contributed to this famine.

Before carefully examining these other contributing factors, further examination of communism’s supplementary contribution is necessary. Specifically, three policies were found to be among the many causes of this famine, the first of which is the nationalization of the transport and logistics systems. Famine relief efforts rely heavily upon industries like public transport and freight logistics. Public industries of this complexity can be of such fragility that the slightest tampering can result in ruinous collapse. The civil war brought compulsory changes to the industrial sectors causing them to produce only products that would prove useful for the Bolshevik war effort. This market manipulation quickly caused the maintenance yards of the transport industries to run dry of replacement parts to the extent that only 15% of the operating locomotives were being repaired. New production was also affected in that only 40 to 50 new engines were being produced annually compared to the pre-war average of 800 to 1,000. At a time when one thousand engines laid idle due to unavailability of fuel, this neglect for upkeep brought a 75% reduction in total motive power. Such a severe blow to these industries ensured inefficient and untimely allocation of grain stores and prevented starving masses from traveling to more fertile areas in their search for food.

Communism’s second contribution to this famine, although not mentioned in the previously referenced lists of Marx and Lenin, is the official foreign policy to proselytize communist doctrine in hopes of bringing about a world revolution. As news of peasant starvation reached Moscow, and as external assistance became the Bolshevik’s only option, this commitment to spread the message of communism brazenly in western nations created quite a dilemma. While the Bolsheviks contemplated swallowing their pride to plead for help abroad, and as vindictive Western democracies shuffled their feet in debate over their responsibility for the relief efforts, millions continued to suffer and die as the full ramifications of this policy yielded deadly results. Lenin eventually capitulated and officially authorized Maxim Gorky, Russia’s world-renowned author, to plead with wealthy nations for assistance. This aid was delivered but not without strings attached. The United States government demanded unconditional release of its Russian-held prisoners and direct distribution of its “capitalist” aid materials.\textsuperscript{11} In Britain, a Parliamentary Committee demanded immediate renunciation of all Bolshevik propaganda on its soil.\textsuperscript{12}

The final charge against communism for this famine is its requirement for the abolition of multi-party politics in favor of single party governance. Governments in countries with active and unadulterated dissent have a tendency to function optimally during a time of crisis because political opposition will strive to capitalize on the misfortunes and subsequent missteps of the incumbents. As the Bolsheviks had just violently rid the country of its political opponents, there remained no unifying voice of criticism among the masses. This

\textsuperscript{11} “Russia Can’t Shift Her Food Supplies,” \textit{New York Times}, August 3, 1921, 2.
\textsuperscript{12} “Ruined Russia. Helpless Without Foreign Aid,” \textit{The Times}, May 5, 1921, 11.
now autonomous government was at liberty to neither regard the best interest of the people nor exercise initiative in generating rapid solutions for this widespread crisis.\(^\text{13}\)

Having acknowledged communism’s role, let us now move to address the natural causes of this famine. Russian agriculture was prone to a cyclical devastating weather pattern and in fact experienced a similar drought and subsequent famine in 1891-92. As other economic factors remained relatively stable at that time, starvation and disease claimed only a tenth of the casualties then that of the famine of 1921. Its harvest only dipped to thirteen percent below normal output, which allowed for agricultural production to quickly return to normal.\(^\text{14}\) The 1921 drought, however, did not come during a period of economic stability, and its untimely arrival yielded crushing results.

Compounding the effects of devastating weather, political and economic ideologies external to Russia also played a role in this 1921 famine. Russia was only three years removed from the economic and spirit-crushing devastation of the Great War, a conflict primarily wrought by the culminating competitiveness of European imperialism.\(^\text{15}\) In Russia alone, this war yielded 1.3 million fatalities and 3.9 million war prisoners.\(^\text{16}\) Just a few decades before this famine, sudden implementation of Western European-style capitalism enticed millions to seek their fortunes in the great cities of Petrograd and Moscow, forever disrupting the stable agrarian tradition.\(^\text{17}\) These manufacturing sector employees now became wholly reliant upon the fragile public logistical

\(^\text{13}\) “Through Hungry Russia. Food Trains for Moscow,” *The Times*, September 17, 1921.
systems to provide them with their sustenance. When the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, this capitalist system was nowhere near maturity, and many new, immediate concerns impeded the new government from quickly addressing its shortcomings.

Between 1918 and 1921, violent counter-revolutionary movements formed to oppose the fledgling communist government. These inexperienced leaders had no script on how to wage an internal political war while simultaneously dismantling and rebuilding an entire national economic structure. They were compelled to implement policies known as War Communism out of impromptu necessity. One of War Communism’s central tenets was the hasty and rather sloppy nationalization of the means of production and transport.\(^\text{18}\) Of course, this also included isolated accounts of agricultural production, and it soon became common practice for Red Army officials to seize the output of the peasantry along strategic routes. However, even well after the Bolsheviks had solidified their victory in the civil war, the Red Army continued its banditry “brutally and without regard to the needs and supplies of the peasants.”\(^\text{19}\) This violent requisitioning was necessary as the troops were unable to feed themselves in the service of a financially ruined government.

Lacking a broad oversight administration, the government failed to control the extent of this plundering, which threatened the survival of both soldiers and peasants. For basic sustenance and seed corn, each peasant required approximately five hundred pounds of grain annually.\(^\text{20}\) In the case of one particular farmer, the army seized eighty percent of his roughly eleven-thousand-pound harvest, which left little else for him to

\(^{18}\text{Pipes, A Concise History of the Russian Revolution, 193.}\)  
\(^{19}\text{“Through Hungry Russia. Volga Famine Horror,” The Times, September 17, 1921.}\)  
\(^{20}\text{Pipes, A Concise History of the Russian Revolution, 357.}\)
feed his loved ones or sell and trade for other necessities. The term “War Communism” may imply that it was a necessary supplement to communism, but rather it led to the creation of yet another oppressive class, this one of armed and official bandits who robbed, exploited, and starved the very people that the revolution had intended to liberate.

A necessary condition for the existence and effectiveness of a large communist bureaucracy is tax revenues. Every type of government must rely upon tax revenues to some degree, but when building a communist bureaucracy from scratch, it is vital to tax at relatively high levels. When initially calculating these potential revenues, the government assumed—albeit erroneously—an economic status quo and in one particular case levied a tax upon the pre-revolutionary industrialists. This particular band of bourgeoisie (the targets of the revolution) drastically adjusted their production levels to minimize their tax burdens, and the tax yielded only one ten-thousandth of the amount estimated. The burden of revenue now fell upon rural Soviets, and they began levying their own taxes upon the members of their peasant communities. Starting in 1918, these “in kind” taxes collected vast amounts of excess agricultural production. Once again, poor oversight of this vast and largely autonomous bureaucracy enabled local officials to seize so much that it began to threaten the livelihood of the producers and their ability to grow subsequent harvests. Implementation inefficiencies and economic experimentation, although orchestrated by the Bolsheviks, are not hard and fast rules of communism. The famine therefore, cannot be directly attributed to communism, per se, but rather to its clumsily implemented and arguably unnecessary byproducts.

Another contributor to this famine was gross administrative incompetency. Mid-level Soviet officials and Bolshevik newspapers demonstrated consistently irresolute positions regarding the famine realities. Political expediency caused greenhorn party members to exaggerate the extent of the famine while others sought to cover up the agricultural failures and death tolls of their provinces in fear of retribution. These inconsistent reports confused the decision makers in the central government, which brought further delay to the remedies. Although many other causes could be presented, such as the existence of the black market, uncontrollable inflation, and the collapse of the industrial segment, the final cause worthy of mention is the bureaucratic corruption of the Soviets. Opportunistic officials frequently abused their powers of office through speculation or profiteering. A certain Moscow Soviet was confirmed to have levied an illegal tax upon its bourgeoisie residents. They then internally redistributed the proceeds and thereby subsidized idle party loyalists. Other reports confirmed that devious Soviet officials actively sought assignments in the government distribution houses of foodstuffs and daily wares. These “Soviet Mice” comfortably survived the famine by pilfering their nation’s only recourse against the devastation. This corruption flourished due to lack of oversight, but such activity could not be further from communist policy. Once reprimanded, these thieves were given public death sentences or long prison terms.

For 160 years, communism and capitalism have waged an epic battle of economic superiority, and in the present day it is obvious which

---

system has survived. History has also shown us, however, that victors can be prone to look upon their most bitter opponents with an air of criticism. It is acknowledged that communism played a role in this tragedy, but not as the sole cause. After presenting other important contributors to this famine, and despite implications levied against some of the most storied implements of western civilization, such as imperialism and capitalism, we are now left with a more robust understanding of this sad blight of history.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Periodicals

Economist. “Conditions in Russia.” March 1, 1919.


Literary Digest. “Bolshevism’s Harvest of Famine.” August 20, 1921.

Weekly Review. “The S.O.S. from Russia.” August 20, 1921

Times (London). “Through Hungry Russia; Famine in a Ruined Land.” September 13, 1921.


Times (London). “Through Hungry Russia; Food Trains for Moscow.” September 17, 1921.
Secondary Sources


Strategic Bombing during World War II: The American Press and Public Reactions

Lizette Busquets

Strategic bombing has been a major part of military operations for many decades. Air raids became widely utilized during World War II, in Korea and Vietnam, and the more recent wars in the Middle East. Today, when bombings during the Vietnam conflict are discussed, visions of anti-war demonstrations, examples of investigative reporting, and the eloquent photographs published in *Life Magazine* may come immediately to mind. The American press has continued this legacy of investigative reporting during the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The American military and government, aware of the sensibilities of the American public toward civilian casualties, has allowed the broadcast of actual bombing operations in an attempt to prove the efficacy of precision bombing and the efforts in minimizing the loss of life among non-combatants. The realities, and sometimes the horrors, of the war have been brought into American homes, influencing the opinions and reactions of the American public. It is tempting to view the Second World War in the same context as the current war in the Middle East considering the controversies and debates over the last two decades surrounding the strategic bombing operations over Germany—particularly the bombings of Hamburg in 1943 and the baroque city of Dresden in 1945. Despite the tremendous loss of life and the destruction of historical and cultural buildings and artifacts, press coverage of the
Allied air strategy in Europe during World War II was often influenced by patriotic discourse. Newspaper reports, with some exceptions, remained somewhat detached from the actual human tragedy that unfolded in Germany during the last three years of the war. While occasional reports did convey the full reality of the effects of the bombing, it was not until Germany had capitulated and throughout the months leading to the use of the atomic bomb that Americans’ opposition to strategic bombing became more vocal.

In the past, civilian casualties had been considered accidental and regrettable yet an unavoidable side effect of armed conflict. According to historian Hew Strachan, this view started to change with the First World War and especially in the years between the two world wars when the definition for total war began to “breach the principle of non-combatant immunity.”¹ Civilians could be part of a nation’s war machine through their contributions to war industries and, therefore, could also be justified targets. In Strachan’s view, there were already historical precedents in Britain’s colonial endeavors and in the First World War in which civilians had been considered part of the war machine.² As the Second World War in Europe progressed, this idea soon became accepted within the higher echelons of the British High Command and government. and influenced allied bombing strategy. When the United States began its raids in 1942, however, the strategic plan presented to the public included the targeting of oil plants, railways, and industrial complexes. The center areas of major cities were considered only secondary targets. According to Davis Biddle, the

---

current George C. Marshall Chair of Military Studies at the U.S. Army War College, the United States government and the American High Command publicly insisted that they were only conducting “precision bombing.”³ In this way, the American government attempted to maintain a different image in the press from that of the British.

The American insistence in distancing their goals and strategy for bombing from that of the British indicates, in Biddle’s view, that American sensitivity to the targeting of civilians was considerable. It also explains the type of information made available to the American press and, therefore, to the public. Before the Americans got involved in the war, the press was already reporting on British aerial bombings. These reports were rather factual and statistical in nature, often lacking any statements about the human aspect of such events. Press releases often made clear that the targets were oil depots and industrial centers but did not give much detail about what these “industrial centers” were or whether there were civilians within these locations. For example, in a May, 1941 New York Times article, the only reference to potential civilian casualties during a bombing in Mannheim was that “fires were plentiful both on the docks and in the town of Mannheim itself.”⁴ The article does not mention any possible civilian casualties.

After the United States joined the bombing efforts in 1942, the great majority of articles in The New York Times and other newspapers still followed this formula. An article published in January 1943 about Mannheim placed more emphasis on the difficulties that the bombers

faced due to weather than on the human tragedy unfolding in the city.⁵ Only occasional glimpses of the actual effect of the bombings of the cities would trickle into the news. Often these glimpses originated from the media in European countries such as Sweden and Norway. For example, the city of Hamburg suffered 213 raids during the war.⁶ In July of 1943, a photograph released by the German government and published in The New York Times showed Hamburg in ruins after it had been wiped out by Allied bombing.⁷ Although the photograph depicted the destruction of structures, it showed none of the human tragedy that resulted in the deaths of about forty thousand people. Instead, it only showed a group of people walking alongside several destroyed buildings.

The human drama was sometimes downplayed and often ignored in these reports. There was some effort from the press to put the bombing in more realistic terms. In contrast to The New York Times articles discussed above, in an article published in Time Magazine, the attack on Hamburg was described as “killing a city” and that great damage to docks, industry, railways and U-boat pens had been made.⁸ The article affirmed that 14,000 people had died, and over 400,000 were left homeless. This number of civilian casualties in Hamburg was grossly underestimated in this article since casualties have actually been calculated to have been about 40,000.⁹ Although a few articles provided enough information for the public to develop a strong opinion, these

---

⁸ “Battle of Europe: Some Germans Learned,” Time Magazine, August 9, 1943.
articles did not have great impact, and public opposition to strategic bombing did not increase.

Even though some articles attempted to provide a true picture of the effects that strategic bombing had on the German civilian population, they failed to encourage more vocal opposition to strategic bombing from the American public. The motivations behind the Allied strategic bombing were expressed in a few articles and were not completely hidden from the American public. Hints at these motivations for the bombing and the targeting of civilians can be found, for example, in an article published in November 1944 that described the bombing strategy to be conducted in the winter months of that year. The article mentioned that the objective of the renewed bombing campaign would be to “[strike] beyond the battle lines at the core of the enemy’s military effort and will to fight.”\(^\text{10}\) It also stated that the attacks would “necessarily entail heavy losses among the industrial population,” thereby making it clear that the campaign would target a specific civilian population. However, the article only mentioned the workers as targets and said little about the many other civilians that were also being affected. The American public was provided with some degree of truth and, at the same time, was kept in the dark about the full scope of the effects on civilian populations. Due to the press’ disclosure of some facts and the omission of others, the American public was not able to forge an informed position on strategic bombing. To some extent, it explains why increased opposition to strategic bombing did not develop.

Another factor that may have influenced the American people was the concept of precision bombing. Many of the newspaper and magazine articles reviewed for this study reflected the idea that bombing

\(^{10}\) “Winter to Bring Peak of Strategic Bombing,” New York Times, November 19, 1944.
of specific targets could be achieved. Targets such as railroad tracks, specific industries, shipyards, etc. were referred to constantly in these articles. Today, it is known that the technology necessary to implement surgical bombing or the destruction of specific targets while minimizing damage to other structures was not available at the time. Targets proved to be difficult to destroy with the technology available to the Allied forces.\textsuperscript{11} Ironically, the newspaper articles also hinted at this truth. One article reported that German authorities stated that an attack on Hamburg had destroyed two hospitals, killing over fifty individuals.\textsuperscript{12} The article added that authorities claimed that the hospitals had been hit because German defenses had forced the bombers to fly too high, thereby affecting precision. The quantity of airplanes and explosives used in each attack as reported by the press was an additional indication of the difficulties of precision bombing. The number of airplanes used in each attack on German cities varied between several hundred and several thousands. The quantity of explosive and incendiary bombs dropped on each city was also in the thousands. An article in 1944 reported that 2,200 American planes had been involved in an attack on Berlin on June 22, 1944.\textsuperscript{13} Another article described a bombing operation over Stuttgart and stated that “an estimated 2,200 tons of missiles, including 27,000 fire bombs” had been dropped on the city in a fifteen-minute saturation attack. These blanket bombings over Germany contradicted the Allied forces’ strategy of precision bombing. Yet, the press and the public either


did not realize that there was an obvious contradiction in the reports, or ignored it entirely.

Newspaper reports also stated that strategic bombing was conducted with the intention of interfering with the ability of Germany to wage war and to break the morale of the German people. This last point, alluding to the issue of German morale, was the one aspect of strategic bombing that was occasionally in contention in the press. For example, an article that appeared in *The New York Times* stated that “Germany can be defeated on the actual battle field, although morale in that country actually has been strengthened during the last six months.”¹⁴ The writer had been recently released from a German prison, and he concluded that the air raids and the defeats in the Eastern Front had actually strengthened the Germans’ will to resist rather than the desire to give up. These reports indicated that the main objective of strategic bombing—to lower German morale—had not been achieved, but these reports did not result in a heightened public reaction against strategic bombing. In the course of this study, letters to the editor were also searched for evidence of public opposition to strategic bombing and that evidence was rarely found. Moreover, in spite of the articles that questioned the success of the strategy in affecting German morale, the absence of follow-up articles also hint at a lack of aggression in the press in addressing the issue.

These same passive tendencies in the press influenced the coverage of the Allied plan for the air attack on the German city of Dresden. Jörg Friedrich, German broadcaster and historian, contends that the Allies had wished to deliver a horrible blow that would have

---

catastrophic consequences in terms of deaths—a “thunderclap.” According to British historian Sebastian Cox, in a memorandum submitted by Sir Charles Portal British Chief of the Air Staff, this was the name of a proposed plan for an attack against Berlin or an alternative target, where “immense devastation could be produced if the entire attack could be concentrated in a town other than Berlin.” Cox also argued that the motivation of the High Command in attacking cities like Dresden at such a late time of the war originated from a sense of pessimism among the leaders because the war had not yet come to an end and the bombings so far had done little to force the Germans to capitulate. General Henry Arnold, the Commander in Chief of the United States of America Armed Forces (USAAF), had confirmed that any increase in tonnage or explosive capacity would be accepted as long as it hit where it hurt. The author also concluded that attitudes among the leadership had hardened because of the length of the war. “Thunderclap,” the idea of a single devastating blow was not mentioned in the press. The press was never given details of upcoming attacks as these details were classified. The articles reviewed for this study spanned the last year of the war and they did not reflect the overt pessimism among military leaders that Cox has suggested. If the leaders and High Command were pessimistic about the course of the war, they did not allow the press or the public know.

In the absence of aggressive reporting and with little opposition from the American public, the military operation “Thunderclap” went on

---

as planned. Dresden was founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century and was a prime example of Baroque architecture and a center for major art and music development and expression. In February 1945, the “Florence of the Elbe” became a major target of allied strategic bombing and the old center of the city, with all its precious buildings and art, was destroyed. The bombing and the resulting fires ended in a death toll of between thirty and forty thousand.\footnote{Cox, “The Dresden Raids: Why and How,” 51.} Even though the bombing of Dresden so late in the war has been a major cause for debate, in February 1945 the bombing of Dresden was simply one more attack.

The initial reports describing the bombing over Dresden followed the same outline as most articles about previous bombings in Hamburg and other cities. In an article published in \textit{The Times} on February 15, 1945, readers were informed that the forces had “struck one of their most powerful blows at Dresden, now a vital center for controlling the German defense against Marshal Konev’s armies advancing from the east.”\footnote{“Smashing Blows at Dresden,” \textit{The London Times}, February 15, 1945.} The Russian armies under Konev’s command had been forcing the German army to retreat from the Eastern Front and closer to Germany by the time the bombing of Dresden took place. The article was rather superficial about the bombing’s effects on the city but also suggested a relationship between the bombing and Marshal Konev’s offensive. It gave the impression that Dresden was vital in aiding the Russian offensive. The article also gave exhaustive accounts of how many incendiaries and bombs had been dropped over Dresden and it provided justifications for the attack. These justifications included the idea that Dresden was a communication center for the German
Command, that it had a railway system vital for the Germans, and that it was a great industrial town.

In addition, an article in The New York Times reported that 14,000 thousand tons of explosives and incendiaries had been dropped over Dresden and that between 12,000 and 13,000 allied aircraft had taken part in the operation.\(^\text{20}\) Another article included Germans reports of over 70,000 deaths in Dresden and that the city was cut off from the rest of Germany.\(^\text{21}\) Among the few articles that described the bombing of Dresden in some detail, this was the only one that provided any information regarding possible casualties. Yet by mentioning that the information came from German-controlled sources, it could have placed doubt on its veracity, as Goebbels’ propaganda was notorious for exaggerating. Dr. Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda during the Third Reich, controlled the German press, radio, literature, and art.\(^\text{22}\) The press under Goebbels’ control had often exaggerated German victories and had downplayed the importance of those of the Allied forces. It is unlikely that Americans would have placed great trust on any information provided by the German press.

Even though initial reports regarding the bombing of Dresden followed the same trend as those preceding them, the remarks made by military officials created some controversy. According to Davis Biddle, British Air Commodore Grierson made some comments to the press that some reporters interpreted as a change in policy regarding the bombing


of cities.\textsuperscript{23} As discussed previously, the public stance of the American military had been that the bombing of the cities was primarily conducted with the intention of crippling the enemy’s industrial capability and resupply in addition to breaking German morale. Grierson’s comments and the fact that it was well-known at the time that Dresden was a center for refugees, women, children, and the elderly made it difficult for reporters to accept that the military objectives were so important that the bombing could not have been avoided. Howard Cowan, a reporter for \textit{Associated Press}, wrote an article in the \textit{Washington Star} denouncing the Allied strategy as “terror bombing.”\textsuperscript{24} The article resulted in heated editorials defending the military position and also forced the Allied Bomber Command to release statements reiterating the policy of bombing communication and industrial centers.\textsuperscript{25} Again, in spite of the controversy, little evidence of public opposition to the bombing through letters to the editor or news of demonstrations, etc. could be found. Certainly, if there had been any public opposition, the press would have reported it. In addition, there is no evidence that Cowan’s editorial was published in any other major newspapers. The fact that the editorial was either downplayed or ignored by major newspapers such as \textit{The New York Times} could have played a role in maintaining public opposition to a minimum.

This trend towards silence on the part of the American public and the somewhat lenient press coverage came to an end after Germany capitulated. This may seem contradictory, but it is explained by the fact that Germany became more open to reporters. The press was allowed to

\textsuperscript{23} Biddle, “Wartime Reactions,” 106.
\textsuperscript{24} Howard Cowan, “Terror Bombing Gets Allied Approval as Step to Speed Victory,” \textit{Washington Star}, February 18, 1945.
enter occupied Germany more freely, the destruction could now be seen first-hand, and the results of the strategic bombing that had been hailed so earnestly could now be inspected. Articles released by the press between May and August of 1945 questioned or flatly refuted the accomplishments of the bombing strategy. For example, one article in *The New York Times* stated that Allied bombing had not destroyed the war potential of Germany.\(^{26}\) The article ended by adding, “the principal lesson gained from a ground inspection of our primary targets is that the German powers of recuperation and resourcefulness are almost beyond belief.”\(^{27}\) There were some who found it difficult to believe that the Germans were capable to recover after such devastating attacks encouraging a sense of complacency among the Americans. Any press coverage that implied that strategic bombing by American and British forces did not have the desired result would not have made a great impact. Since the evidence could only be examined first-hand after the capitulation of Germany, it was then that trends among the press began to change, although they did not change completely.

As reports such as the one above were being printed after the capitulation of Germany, the military was conducting strategic bombing assignments in Japan. The type of reporting that had been so helpful in keeping public reaction somewhat minimized did not disappear. On May 30, 1945, an article in *The New York Times* presented the bombing of Tokyo in the same light as the bombings in Hamburg and Dresden. The article stated that the city had been destroyed and burned and that Japanese industry had been damaged.\(^{28}\) However, an inclination to report

---


\(^{27}\) Shapiro, “Allied Bombing Did Not Wreck Reich’s Power,” June 13, 1945.

more candidly could be seen. Therefore, it was during this period that American opposition to allied air strategy became more tangible.

In addition to questioning the effectiveness of the bombing, and in spite of some of the same type of dry reporting still being conducted, evidence of more vocal protests from the American public can be found after Germany’s capitulation. Since the effects of the bombing on German cities was becoming better understood by the public and more widely presented by the press, people started to demonstrate opposition to strategic bombing. In an article found in *Time Magazine* it was reported that religious groups were protesting against strategic bombing. In this article, two groups of churchmen had expressed opposition by stating that nobody in the military had given the American public any proof that “unrestricted bombing” was a military necessity. They further criticized the bombing of Japanese cities and the “large scale massacre of defenseless women and children.” Religious groups were usually at the forefront of public opposition to perceived abuses of power or actions that resulted in the deaths of innocents. It is somewhat predictable that religious groups would have become very vocal about strategic bombing once more information became available. General opposition became much greater after the atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²⁹

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the lack of aggression in the American press during World War II. The government applied censorship of the information that was provided to the press, while maintaining a semblance of cooperation. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8381 in May 1940 and cited a law passed in 1938 that forbade unauthorized photographs, sketches, and other information, and

---
it also gave the President the authority to define which types of military information needed security protection. Herbert Hoover helped establish the Office of Censorship in 1942, making Byron Price its leader. This office maintained an atmosphere of cooperation with the press and Price, according to historian Robert J. Hanyok, attempted to keep it separate from the Office of War Information and its “pseudo-propaganda.”

The propaganda presented by the American Office of War Information was successful in presenting the Third Reich as an evil regime and also portrayed American soldiers as making a great sacrifice for freedom. The American military and the government were concerned enough about American sensibilities to tread carefully around the issues of bombing German cities, not only through the establishment of the Office of War Information and censorship policies, but also by the establishment of a civilian committee to study the effects and effectiveness of the bombing policy. While there was apparent cooperation and concern by the government, to question the motivations and effectiveness of strategic bombing and to sympathize with German civilians would have been construed as unpatriotic. Even today, investigative reporting that presents the American military in a negative light is sometimes criticized. However, the Vietnam War and events such as Watergate has made the public more receptive to aggressive investigative reporting. In addition, newspapers, radio, and television stations are profit-seeking businesses. Investigative reporting sells newspapers and magazines and it is a profitable endeavor. The acceptance of this type of reporting, especially if it was deemed to be

---

unpatriotic, was simply not as popular during the Second World War as it had become after the Vietnam War when there was widespread opposition not only to strategic bombing but to the entire war. Therefore, it is possible that investigative reporting during World War II would not have provided the desired profit.

Evidence has been provided regarding the often factual and dry press reports of the Allied bombings over Germany. The reports lacked the investigative nature of reports that Americans are used to seeing today. In spite of contradictions and the occasional report of civilian loss of life, the actual targeting of civilians and the cost and efficiency of the bombings were not often questioned. Following a few cases when the loss of civilian life was reported and the bombings were questioned, these reports failed to increase public opposition to the bombings. After the bombing of Dresden, Cowan’s article caused some debate and controversy and caused great concern within military and governmental circles. The press became more aggressive and questioned the results and effectiveness of the bombing in Europe after the capitulation of Germany, most likely influencing public views. Public response in opposition to strategic bombing became more prominent and vocal.

The policy of strategic bombing conducted by the Allies during World War II is still highly debated not only in terms of its shortcomings and effectiveness but also on ethical and moral grounds. The bombing of Dresden has become a symbol of this debate because the justifications provided for the attack on the city have been questioned and because of the high number of refugees in the city in February of 1945. However, the relationships between the press and the government, and the press and the public were complex during the war and continue to be so in recent times. The balance between freedom of the press, the rights of the
public to be informed, and the needs of the military in times of war will certainly continue to be a complicated issue.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


*Time Magazine*. “Battle of Europe: Some Germans Learned.” August 9, 1943.


Secondary Sources


A Swoon of Misery and Rage: The CIA’s Actions in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution

Joseph Pinter

We knew little of what was happening in Budapest or of the encircling movements of Soviet troops, and we had no composite picture of the status of the Revolution in the period between its first victory and its suppression by the Russians.

-Central Intelligence Agency, Clandestine Services History

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a critical event during the Cold War. Hungary, a relatively small nation in Central Europe, did something unheard of at that point in the Cold War and revolted against their Soviet-controlled government. The revolution caught the world off-guard, beginning with small protests and demonstrations and quickly escalating to armed conflict between the people of Hungary and Soviet forces. The Soviet Union quickly moved to take action against the revolution while forces within the Hungarian government attempted to control and guide the revolution to some peaceful resolution. The West was surprised as well and unable to capitalize on the opportunity to free a nation from Soviet control, in no small part due to their wholly inadequate intelligence about the situation on the ground.

The Central Intelligence Agency was tasked with gathering and analyzing intelligence and thus should have known about and been ready to respond to the 1956 revolution. However, in nations such as Hungary, the Agency was woefully understaffed and unprepared. Leaders like the Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles misjudged the nature of the revolution and the wishes of the Hungarian people, and the absence of solid operations within Hungary made clandestine actions impossible. One of the few ways that the CIA was able to offer assistance was through Radio Free Europe, though this did little but offer false hope to the revolutionaries. The CIA had little recourse but to watch as the Soviet Union ended the revolution and re-established its authority in Hungary.

The 1956 revolution was an attempt to wrest control of the Hungarian government away from the Soviets. The Hungarians were not necessarily seeking a complete rejection of socialism but rather the removal of the Russian influence provided by the Soviet Union.\(^2\) The revolution itself began as student demonstrations against Soviet rule. MEFESZ – Magyar Egyetemisták és Főiskolai Egyesületek Szövetsége, the Association of Hungarian University Students, was created outside the realm of the Hungarian Workers’ Party (Magyar Dolgozók Pártja), a first in communist Hungary.\(^3\) This coincided with growing discontent with the government and with living conditions within Hungary, which were reaching all-time lows.\(^4\) MEFESZ issued a list of demands to the Soviet Union called the Sixteen Points, which included Soviet

---


\(^4\) Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, 12.
withdrawal, new elections within the HWP, the installation of Imre Nagy, new labor regulations, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press.\(^5\) The Revolution quickly turned violent, and for a time it appeared that Hungary would free itself from Soviet control.

Nagy, a former prime minister of Hungary who had been expelled from the Communist Party, was named prime minister again on October 23. While in office he made reforms designed to satisfy the protesters and to move Hungary away from total Soviet rule. Historian Charles Gati states:

> He concluded, at long last, that a popular uprising rather than a counterrevolution was taking place. He was ready to make common cause with the workers, students, and soldiers who sought independence from the Soviet Union, a coalition government rooted in political pluralism, and a socialist economic order.\(^6\)

Nagy became the leader for the revolutionaries in this sense. He took on their position of a Hungary free from the Soviet Union, with multi-party participation, while retaining socialism in the economy. The Soviet Union for its part was willing to remove itself from Hungary. A declaration by the Soviet Union from October 30 states that “the Soviet Government is prepared to enter into the appropriate negotiations…on the question of the presence of Soviet troops on the territory of Hungary.”\(^7\) Things appeared to be working in Hungary’s favor – the

---


\(^6\) Gati, *Failed Illusions*, 173.

government was undergoing reform under the leadership of Nagy and it appeared that the Soviet Union was preparing to leave Hungary.

This situation would not last, though, as the Soviet Union brutally ended the Revolution beginning November 4th of that same year.\(^8\) Nikita Khrushchev decided on October 31, the day after declaring the removal of Soviet troops, that the Soviet Union “should not withdraw our troops from Hungary and Budapest. We should take the initiative in restoring order in Hungary. If we depart from Hungary, it will give a great boost to the Americans, English, and French...We would then be exposing the weakness of our positions...We have no other choice.”\(^9\) Khrushchev felt that Hungary needed to keep Hungary as a Soviet satellite for fear of the West seeing the USSR as weak. The Soviet Army would be put to use in crushing the revolution in Hungary. Nagy appealed indirectly to the West for help on November 4, broadcasting a message that “the Soviet troops launched an attack against our capital city with the obvious attention of overthrowing the lawful, democratic, Hungarian government…I inform the people of the country and world public opinion of this.”\(^10\) He pleaded on behalf of democracy in its fight against the Soviet regime trying to reclaim its authority. The help that Nagy sought never came, and the Soviets reasserted control in Hungary that would endure until 1989. Hungary was a Cold War battleground, a country fighting against Soviet authoritarianism and seeking to democratize.

---

\(^8\) Gati, *Failed Illusions*, 14-17.
The United States had committed itself to opposing communism, especially Soviet communism, throughout the world. This commitment was first espoused in George Kennan’s policy of containment. Kennan at the time was an American diplomat in the Soviet Union and had a better grasp on the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and also the reasoning behind the Soviet Union’s actions.\textsuperscript{11} His policy advocated for “the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world.”\textsuperscript{12} The containment that Kennan promoted took shape in the Truman Doctrine. In the doctrine, President Truman stated that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures…we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.”\textsuperscript{13} These two important statements of policy placed the United States in a position to help every country attempting to resist the Soviet Union. Other documents and polices of the United States further connect the principles of the policy of containment and the Truman Doctrine specifically to Soviet satellites such as Hungary.

In addition to the policies already accepted by the U.S. government, the latest policy on how to manage the Soviet satellites detailed in NSC (National Security Council) 5608/1 implied heavily that use of covert action, as opposed to direct military action, would be a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Paul S. Boyer, \textit{Promises to Keep: The United States Since World War II} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 46.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} “Truman Doctrine,” in \textit{The United States Since 1945}, eds. Robert P. Ingalls and David K. Johnson (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 22.
\end{itemize}
favorable tool in fighting the Soviets. The report states that the United States should employ “appropriate means short of military force to oppose, and to contribute to the eventual elimination of, Soviet domination over the satellites,” but also to carry on with “propaganda and special operations by official and unofficial means.”¹⁴ In these sections the National Security Council prevents the United States from engaging in armed conflict with the Soviet Union, while allowing subversive means of warfare to continue. A supplement to NSC 5608/1 further outlines United States policy in regards to Eastern Europe:

1. In general, however, do not discourage…spontaneous manifestations of discontent and opposition to the Communist regime…when their net results will exert pressures for release from Soviet domination. …

2. [B]e prepared on a case-by-case basis generally, covertly, and under appropriate policy guidance to assist nationalists in any form where conducive to independence from Soviet domination and where U.S. and free world cohesion would not be jeopardize thereby.¹⁵

Thus the policy was to provide assistance through covert means to people seeking freedom from Soviet rule. Under this policy the United States, through the CIA, should have provided aid to Hungary in fighting the Soviets. Radio Free Europe allowed the Agency an opportunity to communicate with and assist revolutionaries without needing to supply troops or weapons.

¹⁵ “NSC 5608/1,” The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, 156.
The main avenue of CIA intervention in Hungary was through Radio Free Europe. The CIA was responsible for much of RFE’s funding—$16 million of $21 million in 1956.\textsuperscript{16} RFE, in addition to its anti-communist radio broadcasts, also undertook Operation Focus, delivering anti-communist propaganda through air balloon drops.\textsuperscript{17} In their radio broadcasts, RFE encouraged the Hungarian revolutionaries to continue fighting, and implied that help was coming. In one broadcast from October 28, 1956, RFE related a story of how 500 Serbian partisans had resisted Nazi Germany in 1943. The Serbs had deceived the Germans into thinking they had a larger force, and ultimately the Serbs escaped while inflicting substantial losses on the Germans. Of greater importance is the weaponry that RFE described the Serbs as possessing: “automatic weapons, mine throwers, a few 75 millimeter guns, bazookas and different explosives which were all thrown by English-American planes.”\textsuperscript{18} While this does not say directly that America would be supporting Hungarians with weapons, by drawing parallels between the Serbs in 1943 and Hungarians in 1956, the implications were difficult to ignore.

A later RFE broadcast from the beginning of the Soviet counter-attack on November 4, 1956, goes even further with its suggestions, detailing opinions from media outlets about the Soviets’ handling of the revolution. According to the editors of The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents, “throughout the revolution the producers at RFE failed to make listeners aware of the difference between an opinion

\textsuperscript{16} Johanna C. Granville, The First Domino: International Decision Making During the Hungarian Crisis of 1956 (College Station, TX: Texas A&M UP, 2004), 165.

\textsuperscript{17} Gati, Failed Illusions, 6.

published in the press and the official U.S. government position.” 19 This failure became worse when compounded with what opinions they were broadcasting. In the case of the November 4 broadcast, they discussed the British newspaper Observer, whose Washington D.C. correspondent had reported that if “the Hungarians will hold out for 3 or 4 days, then the pressure upon the government of the U.S. to send military help to the freedom fighters, will become irresistible.” 20 These types of broadcasts encouraged the Hungarians to continue fighting and to hold out until the United States could come to their aid. A letter to the editor of the New York Times from one of the Hungarian revolutionaries supports this claim. Bela Liptak wrote “I can confirm the accuracy of your Sept. 28 report that Radio Free Europe gave false hope to the Hungarian freedom fighters in 1956. What we understood R.F.E. to say was that we needed to hold out for only a couple of days, while the West mobilized.” 21 With RFE supporting the continued fighting, and the revolutionaries believing that the West would be providing help, it became imperative for the CIA to intervene beyond RFE, a very difficult task for the Agency.

The CIA’s main actions within in Hungary came through RFE despite covert chief Frank Wisner’s desire to send in forces. 22 Some agents saw the Revolution in Hungary as a golden opportunity for the CIA: the ability to assist in a legitimate revolt against the communist regime. In reality, despite the eagerness on the part of Wisner, the CIA was completely unprepared to carry out a coup or even provide military

---

19 Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, 389.
support for Hungarians. Hungary was not viewed as important by policymakers, and the CIA was tremendously outmanned within Hungary.\footnote{Gati, Failed Illusions, 72.} According to CIA historian Tim Weiner, “Wisner had one man in Budapest when the uprising began: Geza Katona…who spent 95 percent of his time doing his official work as a low-level State Department clerk…he was the only reliable set of eyes and ears the CIA had in Budapest.”\footnote{Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 149.} The CIA could not afford to engage in any sort of covert operations in Hungary. Their inability to gather accurate intelligence was the primary way in which the Agency failed in their response to the revolution. The CIA never had a true grasp of the situation, a scenario compounded by having only one agent within the country.

In the months leading up to October 1956, the CIA regularly reported that the possibility of revolution in Hungary was minimal at best. In National Intelligence Estimate 10-55 from April 12 1955 regarding the feasibility of an uprising in Hungary, the CIA stated:

> Effective internal security control and lack of know-how will continue to limit the development of organized resistance, active or passive. Cold war activities, at best, will probably remain restricted to information collection, clandestine antiregime propaganda, isolated acts of sabotage, and unorganized passive resistance. Poor terrain impedes the formation of nuclei for future guerrilla operations; the development of contacts for escape and evasion would be difficult, even on a local level. Further factors militating against an active resistance build-up are: the vigilance of the police, the presence of Soviet troops, lack of experienced resistance leaders, lack of contact with Western agencies that could guide and help them, and the absence of a well
developed security consciousness. However, Hungarian capabilities for unorganized passive resistance, especially in industry and agriculture, will remain substantial.\textsuperscript{25}

Here the CIA estimates that the population of Hungary does not know how to form a resistance group effectively. The Agency was convinced that minor, individual actions would be the extent of Hungarian opposition to the Soviets because there were too many conditions that would prevent a resistance movement from starting. The revolution that took place would prove these assessments wrong. The CIA did get one thing right in this report when they note that Hungarian resistance would not be able to be assisted by the West.

Other reports from Hungary further reveal the CIA’s lack of a complete picture of Hungarian resistance and the strength of the Soviet Union’s control over Hungary. In National Intelligence Estimate, 12.5-55, the Agency reported that among the Soviet-controlled nations, “Hungary has in recent years shown the most consistent symptoms of political disharmony, economic dislocation, and popular unrest…We do not believe that the regime is, in fact, seriously threatened.”\textsuperscript{26} Once again, the 1956 revolution would prove this assertion wrong – the Soviet regime would be seriously threatened, not by passive resistance, but by active resistance. The estimate goes on further to say that “there is little likelihood that Communist control over Hungary will be jeopardized during the period of this estimate, but the difficulties confronting the


regime will continue to be accentuated by the hostility of the people.”

This claim is basically correct, as the estimate only covered the time period up to the summer of 1956, while the revolution would happen several months later. However, other estimates by the CIA show that their assessment of Hungary changed little when the time period extended beyond 1956.

In National Intelligence Estimate number 11-3-55, titled *Soviet Capabilities and Probable Soviet Courses of Action Through 1960* from May 17, 1955, the CIA came to the conclusion that “popular resistance of an organized and active kind is unlikely to appear in any of the Satellites during the period of this estimate. Disaffection showing itself in noncooperation in economic fields and even passive resistance might increase.” The CIA again asserts that the satellites will not participate in active resistance against the Soviet Union, and they cling to the idea of passive resistance being a probable course of action, and again, they were wrong. A later Estimate of 11-4-56 dated August 2, 1956 again places little stock in the possibility of a national uprising:

“Dissatisfaction among the Satellite populations will continue and, in the short run, may even increase and dramatize itself in sporadic protest movements.” This begins to hint at an uprising, but “sporadic protest movements” are very different from a full-scale revolution. The CIA fell short in their predictions regarding a possible revolution among the

Soviet satellites. This failure would continue as the revolution was taking place.

On October 24, 1956, the CIA viewed Imre Nagy as “the most powerful man in Hungary” and stated that Nagy “has long argued for Hungarian independence and a cutback in draining Hungarian commitments to the USSR.”\(^\text{31}\) This should have made the CIA’s position on Nagy clear; if he was an advocate for independence and a strong national figure, then he should have received the support of the CIA during the revolution. Two days later, a memo to the Deputy Director of Intelligence asserted that “The government of Premier Imre Nagy at this point apparently does not exercise real authority. There may be, therefore, no effective central control of the Hungarian forces combatting the rebellion.”\(^\text{32}\) In two days time, Nagy had somehow gone from the most powerful man in Hungary to having no authority in the country. A Current Intelligence Bulletin from October 28, 1956 stated that “The Nagy regime has also assured the insurgents that it is already negotiating with the USSR for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from the country. By so doing, Nagy has, in effect, shifted the basis for whatever authority he now possesses from reliance on Soviet support to hoped-for insurgent support.”\(^\text{33}\) Within four days, Nagy now had gone from a supporter of Hungarian independence to relying on the USSR to hoping for the support of the revolutionaries.

The CIA suddenly expressed great fear of Nagy. Another memo to the Deputy Director from October 30, 1956 claimed to have “Reports


from reliable eyewitnesses in Budapest,” which, given the aforementioned existence of only one man in Hungary at the time of the revolution, is not a convincing statement. The memo goes on to state:

In an attempt to gain full support throughout the country, the Nagy regime is currently engaged in an all-out campaign to convince the insurgent forces that their “national revolution” has triumphed. Some observers view this tactic as a ruse designed by Nagy or by the Soviet Union to lure the rebels into at least de facto surrender…The new “inner cabinet” seems to be a further effort by the regime to give the appearance of surrendering to rebel demands without actually giving up control or committing itself to meeting the basic demand of all revolutionaries, Soviet troop withdrawal from Hungary.

The CIA had committed itself to the idea that Nagy was a loyal Communist leader when in fact he was not. This memo reveals the doubt within the CIA towards Nagy’s commitment to Hungarian independence. Every action he took was a possible Soviet plot. This failure was not limited to just the intelligence analysts within the CIA. CIA leaders also failed in understanding both the situation in Hungary and the attitudes of the revolutionaries.

Allen Dulles, then the Director of Central Intelligence, made several critical errors in judgment in the important period of time between the initial uprising and the Soviet attack. During a meeting of the National Security Council on November 1, 1956, Dulles stated that

the Soviets could not utilize their military to retake Hungary. The events of November 4, just three days later, would prove him wrong on this account. In the same meeting he also asserted that Nagy had little support and was unable to lead the people in their revolution and that the best person for that task was Cardinal Mindszenty. On October 26, 1956 in a NSC dictation by Dulles, he stated that “in the Hungarian revolt the rebels were clearly both anti-Communist and anti-Russian and were unwilling to settle for a Gomulka type government represented by Prime Minister Nagy.” As noted earlier, though, the revolutionaries did support Nagy, and the revolution was primarily aimed at removing Soviet influence from Hungary. It was only anti-Communist insomuch as the people wanted free elections. Dulles was unable to see any of this.

Weiner writes that even “as Nagy took power and sought to dismantle Soviet control over Hungary, Allen Dulles deemed him a failure…The CIA’s radios falsely accused Nagy of inviting Soviet troops into Budapest. They attacked him as a traitor, a liar, a murderer. He once had been a communist and so he was forever damned.” Dulles was wrong in his assessment, though; Mindszenty had no hope of leading the people while Nagy was supported by them. Even Wisner, though he had limited access in Hungary, knew this fact but was unable to persuade anyone of its validity. The CIA’s leadership failed to assess the

37 “302nd NSC Meeting Memorandum of Discussion,” The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, 324.
39 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 150-151.
40 Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, eds., The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, 216.
situation in Hungary properly, and as a result the Soviets had little trouble ending the rebellion.

Between 2,500 and 3,000 Hungarians were killed in the Soviet intervention, which lasted until November 10.41 Following the end of the Revolution, the Soviets placed János Kádár, a member of Nagy’s cabinet, in power while Nagy was executed in 1958 on orders from Kádár’s government.42 Soviet officials entered Hungary to help the new government restore order after the Revolution. Over 10,000 Hungarians were arrested and sent to various prisons.43 While it seemed that the government of Hungary would be transformed into a more oppressive one now that the Revolution had ended, Kádár did create a more liberal form of Soviet communism in Hungary. The reason for this may be more practical than ideological. Historian Johanna C. Granville claims that “Kádár had to make a virtue out of a necessity: to make minimal demands on the people and to separate politics from ideology as much as possible in order to stay in power and prevent another revolution.”44 In this respect, Kádár did manage to keep power and order in Hungary for the next thirty-three years.

For Wisner, the failure to assist the Hungarians contributed greatly to his future breakdown. He had earnestly and whole-heartedly wanted to work covertly in Hungary, and the inaction ate away at him. According to Weiner, Wisner “soothed his nerves with cigarettes and alcohol. He drank whisky by the bottle, in a swoon of misery and rage.”45

42 Granville, The First Domino, 126, 143.
43 Granville, The First Domino, 149.
45 Weiner, Legacy of Ashes, 153.
Wisner was distraught as Hungary remained under Soviet control and an opportunity to fight Communism slipped through his fingers. Instead, the people of Eastern Europe would live under Soviet rule for another three decades.

The CIA was not prepared to handle the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, despite the desire of leaders like Wisner’s to help. Hungary was not viewed as strategically important, and the Agency had only one operative within the nation, which prevented a true understanding of the situation. The revolution was misjudged, its goals misunderstood, and its outcome tragic for the revolutionaries who hoped to remove Hungary from the Soviet Union’s gasp.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Central Intelligence Agency. *The Hungarian Revolution and Planning\nfor the Future, 23 October – 4 November 1956, Volume I of II.*

**Periodicals**


**Secondary Sources**


On June 20, 1943, Detroit, Michigan was engulfed in the fires of civil unrest, caused by long-smoldering racism and discrimination. A fistfight between a group of blacks and whites, at Belle Isle Park, escalated into a full-scale riot by the early hours the next morning. Federal soldiers were called in on the evening of June 21 to quell the violence. When the smoke cleared, thirty-four people were killed and over one thousand had been injured.¹ Twenty-five of those killed were black. The rioting and violence in Detroit is a clear manifestation of the racism that existed in the city in the years prior to and especially during World War II. One of the most fitting examples of this virulent racism comes from the case of four young Italians who admitted to killing a black man with a rifle “to have some fun”.²

The terrible events that occurred in late June 1943 leave a single question: Why? The obvious answer is that racism and discrimination against blacks in Detroit, especially during the war years, created a powder keg of ill feelings and contempt between blacks and whites. The cause of the riot cannot be attributed to the fighting at Belle Isle Park, as fights break out often in our society, yet rarely does chaos ensue on the level seen in Detroit over a fistfight. And racism, while clearly the cause,

does not often result in massive violent uprising either. If racism is the
spark or the cause of the riot, what events or instances shortened the fuse
and built up the explosive potential of the bomb that went off on the
night of the 20th? Three events that occurred during the period of 1941 to
1943 can be seen as adding momentum to the building racial tensions of
wartime Detroit.

Detroit was one of the centers of military production during
WWII and was even known to some as the Arsenal of Democracy. The
race problems present in Detroit in the 1940s were magnified by the
unique problems bundled with the demands of massive wartime
production in the city. Striking, overcrowding, and the migration of
persons from the southern United States added to the uneasy relations
between the large immigrant groups and first generation Americans, and
the black community in Detroit. It is through this understanding that the
three events become important signals of the imminent explosion in the
city. One event occurred each year, from 1941 to 1943, on a scale large
enough to impact the racial conflict at play in the city. In 1941, a strike at
Ford’s River Rouge plant ended after non-union blacks were pitted
against striking whites by the Ford Motor Company. In 1942, the issue
of overcrowding in housing exhibited itself in the racially motivated
protest and violence at the Sojourner Truth projects. Finally, a number of
hate strikes set the tone and culminated in a large strike at Packard Motor
Car Company.

Each event portrayed some form of overt contention and racism,
discrimination and manipulation pointed at the black community of
Detroit. The signs of imminent disaster were clear to several journalists.
The combative nature displayed in Detroit was combined with
overcrowding and general misgivings between races and was observed in *Time Magazine* in the warning that “Detroit is Dynamite” in 1943.³

To fully understand the problems of Detroit in the 1940s one must examine the racial makeup of the city up to that point. Detroit was built on the back of a growing industry that attracted hundreds of thousands of migrants to the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1900, the population of Detroit was 285,704 and by 1904, 48,879 of its citizens made their living in industry and manufacturing. This constituted nearly one sixth of Detroit’s population. Pre-war numbers (war industry had a significant effect on population and manufacturing) show that by 1939 the number of workers in Detroit’s manufacturing sector had grown to 372,900, a segment that came out of a population of 1,623,452 persons. Nearly one quarter of the population worked in manufacturing.⁴ Industry expanded through the innovations of the industrialists, Henry Ford in particular.

Henry Ford was one of the principal players in spurring the growth of Detroit. Ford invented and implemented the moving assembly line in 1913, and then shortened the workday to eight hours while raising the daily wage to five dollars in 1914. The intended effect of the assembly line was to cut the cost of production by eliminating all unnecessary steps and workers involved in the production of cars. This efficiency would allow Ford to produce more cars than his competition, and at a more affordable rate, thus putting the automobile within reach of a larger market. As a result, the Ford Motor Company produced 15,458,781 individual Model T cars from 1908 to 1927. The implementation of the five dollar-eight hour workday was designed to

cut costs to the company. The rationale was that assembly line work was highly monotonous and had an inherently large turnover rate as a result. The constant hiring and training of workers brought inefficiency to Ford plants. The tactic worked. Fifteen thousand jobseekers applied for just 3,000 available positions at Ford’s Highland Park factory after the wage change. Turnover difficulties diminished as Ford expected, allowing him increase productivity by implementing three shifts instead of two.

By inventing an efficient production system that minimized cost and maximized production, and by improving the work conditions of employees, Ford gave his company the chance to expand to the massive vertically integrated River Rouge plant. “The Rouge,” as it was known, employed 100,000 workers at the height of production, and generated 800 car bodies per day by 1919. The Rouge was just one of many massive plants that Ford would build during the first half of the twentieth century. The Willow Run factory built bombers during World War II and employed 25,000 women. The Ford Motor Company is a prime example of the widespread industrial growth and success experienced in Detroit during the first half of the twentieth century.

In 1909, there were 2,036 manufacturers located in Detroit, employing 81,011 employees. By 1919, the city had added just another 140 manufacturers, but the number of persons employed had grown to

---

8 “Ford's Rouge Complex Is Known as an Industrial Trend-setter in Both the 20th and 21st Centuries.”
167,016. The war industry of World War I accounts for some of this growth. By 1921, manufacturers and employees both decreased to 1,684 and 95,376 respectively. However, two years later the city added only two more plants while the number of employees had risen to 170,960. The number of manufacturing facilities and employees would continue to rise every year until 1939 when Detroit had 2,684 facilities employing 372,900 persons. Detroit had become the model of efficient manufacturing in the United States, and half of the working population was employed in manufacturing.\textsuperscript{10}

The lure of employment in Detroit’s manufacturing industry motivated thousands from across the world to migrate to the city, which grew in three separate, overlapping stages. The stages are defined more by the type of immigrant than by the chronology of migration. The city’s first substantial growth occurred at the turn of the twentieth century when Europeans entered the city in great numbers. Significant numbers of Poles, Germans, Canadians, Austrians, Italians and Hungarians increased the population of Detroit and by 1916, one of every three in a population of 725,000 was foreign born.\textsuperscript{11}

Southern blacks define the second migratory phase, which occurred near the end of the large European migration. Known as the Great Migration, this period saw hundreds of thousands of blacks migrate to the industrialized cities of the Midwest. The black population in Detroit increased by 611\% at the height of the Great Migration, between the years of 1910 and 1920; and Detroit’s total population increased by 113\%. Only Gary, Indiana had a larger percentage increase

\textsuperscript{10} Holli, \textit{Detroit}, 275, 279.
\textsuperscript{11} Holli, \textit{Detroit}, 135.
in population during this time, but the actual black population there only
grew by 4,916, whereas Detroit added 35,791.\textsuperscript{12} 

The third migratory phase took place between 1940 and 1943. The city grew from a population of 1,623,452 in 1940 to a population estimated at 2.1 million by 1943. It is believed that 440,000 whites migrated to Detroit during this phase.\textsuperscript{13} Nearly 350,000 of the white immigrants came from the southern United States.\textsuperscript{14} These white immigrants originated from states where Jim Crow laws were still enforced: “there has been a large influx of southern white[s]…They are ignorant and hold traditional southern attitudes toward the Negroes.”\textsuperscript{15} Detroit was a city transformed by the migrant Germans, Poles, Austrians, Hungarians, Italians, blacks and whites, and in just forty-three years the population had ballooned from 285,704 to 2.1 million. It was this rapid growth that would accentuate and facilitate the growth of racial strife in the Motor City.

One of the first signs that Detroit was on the path to large-scale racial violence came in 1941 at a strike at the Ford Motor Co. River Rouge plant. The company had a large contingent of non-union blacks in its employ. Most of these men worked at the foundry located at the Rouge. Blacks were not unionized in any significant numbers as there was “much skepticism” among blacks as to the goals of the UAW.\textsuperscript{16} One reason for this was the racism that ran through the rank-and-file members of the UAW. The adversarial relationship between blacks and whites in the auto industry had been utilized as a strikebreaking technique once

\textsuperscript{12} Holli, \textit{Detroit}, 145, 146, 269-271.
\textsuperscript{13} Lee and Humphrey, \textit{Race Riot: Detroit 1943}, 92.
\textsuperscript{15} Lee and Humphrey, \textit{Race Riot: Detroit 1943}, 92.
\textsuperscript{16} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 103.
before at a Chrysler plant in 1939, where the strategy “was to provoke interracial violence and thus force the governor to break the strike,” \(^{17}\) and in April 1941, the Ford Motor Company showed no qualms about using similar tactics.

Union men had walked out of the foundry on the night of April 1, 1941 after eight UAW members were fired. As the striking UAW membership exited, 2,500 non-union blacks remained at work. Only 300 whites refused to join the picket line. \(^{18}\) The strike was relatively peaceful, with the pickets even allowing some men to cross their lines during the morning of April 2. As *Time Magazine* reported, there was no violence until,

200 non-striking Negroes, who had remained inside the beleaguered plant, made a sortie through Gate 4 armed with iron pipes, steel bars, bolts, razors, knives, and charged the pickets. Hot & heavy was the battle until the attackers withdrew, fled back inside. \(^{19}\)

The black workers aimed to break the strike. These men were not union members and had been ordered to undertake the attack. The blame for the violence was laid at the feet of Henry Ford himself.

The NAACP objected to the events at the Rouge, claiming, “Ford had deliberately injected the race issue by utilizing blacks as strikebreakers.” \(^{20}\) Historian August Meier agrees with the accusation that Ford had manipulated racial tensions when he writes that “the corporation’s tactics on that first morning, April 2, lent credence to these suspicions when strikebreakers were sent out twice to smash the picket

---


\(^{19}\) “Showdown at Ford,” *Time Magazine*, April 14, 1943.

NAACP leaders had real fear that the violence at the River Rouge plant, or in any similar situation, would lead to large-scale race rioting, adding further struggles for blacks in Detroit. Meier writes that the UAW was also guilty of manipulating blacks during the strike, as had been done at Chrysler in 1939 by “exploiting the Negro leaders’ fears of a race riot” in an effort to get blacks to leave the factories. In truth, neither Ford nor the UAW conducted itself with the blacks’ interests in mind, but took advantage of and manipulated the racial awareness of blacks and whites for gain during the 1941 strike.

Just ten months after the fighting between blacks and whites at the River Rouge plant, another significant buildup to 1943’s race riot came in the form of a dispute over who would occupy new defense housing near a Polish neighborhood. Defense housing projects had sprung up in the industrial centers of the United States in response to the lack of housing available to migrant war workers.

The Federal Public Housing Authority (FHPA) had instructed the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC) to select two sites for future projects in 1941. The FHPA rejected the proposed project locations of the DHC and arbitrarily relocated them. The problem with the government’s plan was that it had relocated the black project in a white neighborhood, against the DHC’s initial plans to locate the black project in a black neighborhood. Detroit had long operated under a system of neighborhood homogeneity during the twentieth century to ensure high property values of white homes. The DHC appealed the FPHA decision of locating a black housing project in a white neighborhood, but the appeal was denied. Protest continued to pour out of Detroit, and, “by

mid-November a storm of protest had reached proportions that could be heard in Congress. Rep Rudolph G. Tenerowicz, Democrat of Michigan, sought to arrange a changeover to white occupancy.”24 Eventually, the FPHA changed occupancy status of the black project to white only, but reversed the decision when no suitable location could be found for the black housing project. Black families were authorized to begin moving in on February 28, 1942. The whites of Hamtramck responded to black occupancy on the night of February 27.

That day, a group of whites gathered at what had come to be called the Sojourner Truth Defense Housing Project. The AP reported that, “more than 150 white pickets who had patrolled the project last night, when a fiery cross was burned at the site, were augmented by hundreds more at dawn.” In fact 1,200 whites formed lines against the black families on the morning of the February 28, and they were found wielding “knives, clubs, rifles and shotguns, ready to do battle in the street separating the project from a row of dwellings occupied by white persons.” The president of the Seven Mile and Fenelon Improvement Association, which encompassed the area in which the Sojourner Truth project had been erected, claimed, “the area had been all white until Negro occupancy was encouraged.”25 Others in the area believed that, “Negro occupancy of the project would lower the value of their homes.”26 The whites who gathered demonstrated racist motives, whether by their pure dislike of blacks or a fear of devaluation of their

property. So they gathered on the morning of February 28 to fight for their neighborhood.

Meier writes that the Ku Klux Klan, who had burned the cross the previous night, was operating with “the tacit approval of the improvement association,” and had decided to intervene. By the time the 200 police arrived at the project to supervise the move they found an overwhelming white force opposing the black tenants. However, the police did little to control the situation as they began arresting the peaceful blacks whose moving vans had been tipped over by the mob. At this point that the police lost control of the crowd; blacks from nearby neighborhoods responded to the rumors of trouble at the project by fighting with the whites there. In all, 200 blacks and a small number of whites were arrested according to Meier. By mid March, blacks were allowed to move in under a more imposing police escort.

Detroit’s war factories were not impervious to strike during World War II, as demonstrated by the River Rouge strike. Most strikes, however, were in response to firings or frozen pay levels. A different type of strike began to occur with more frequency in Detroit. These strikes were known as hate strikes, and were simply a form of wildcat strike motivated by race. White workers staged infrequent hate strikes as early as October 1941, when 250 workers at Packard staged a strike after two black men were transferred to a war factory. Hate strikes occurred irregularly over the following fifteen months, and were generally small, brief incidents. White protests were seen at Chrysler, GM, Dodge and Hudson, and after the 1941 River Rouge strike, Ford Management increasingly rejected black employment while increasing white

employment.\textsuperscript{30} In fact, out of 25,000 employees at Ford’s Willow Run bomber plant, only 200 were black.\textsuperscript{31} Racism had become a system-wide policy with the Ford position change, and the black community allied with the UAW.

Hate strikes began occurring regularly in 1943. In fact, there were twelve hate strikes in the first six months of 1943.\textsuperscript{32} The racism that permeated the auto industry was largely responsible for the significant labor shortage reported in Detroit. Meier cites a government report listing the “25,000 available black women as the city’s ‘largest neglected source of labor.’”\textsuperscript{33} The racism that permeated the Packard Motor Car Company brought about the most significant hate strike in June of 1943.

Of the major manufacturers in Detroit, Packard was the most openly racist. Meier claims, “hate strikes occurred in a stronghold of virulent anti-black hostility that characterized not only the workers but high levels of management as well.”\textsuperscript{34} The company had a large contingent of Polish and southern American workers in its employ. The Sojourner Truth incident had taken place in a Polish neighborhood and there had been some ongoing agitation between Poles and blacks in the Detroit. Meier claims that the Ku Klux Klan had attempted to recruit men from Packard, and may have even infiltrated the company.

When the Packard strike began in earnest on June 3, 25,000 men walked off the job in protest of the promotion of three black men.\textsuperscript{35} The strike was largely encouraged by Packard management who told whites, “they did not have to work with blacks,” and that the black men could

\textsuperscript{30} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 136.
\textsuperscript{31} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 153.
\textsuperscript{32} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 162.
\textsuperscript{33} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 162.
\textsuperscript{34} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 126.
\textsuperscript{35} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW}, 169.
only keep their jobs with, “white worker approval.” When these promises could not be kept, a fact of which Packard management was aware, the white workers went on strike.

The strike was against UAW policy as blacks were members of the organization. UAW president, R.J. Thomas, claimed that the strike was the work of, “agents of the Ku Klux Klan or its successor body in Detroit,” and that he had proof of KKK involvement. The KKK had also been involved with the Polish families in the Sojourner Truth incident. Racism clearly ran deep at Packard. At one point during the strike a southerner yelled to the crowd that, “I’d rather see Hitler and Hirohito win than work beside a nigger on the assembly line.” The Packard strike was resolved by June 7, and nearly all the men involved went back to work that day. War production was unharmed, but the damage to Detroit had been done.

The escalating instances of violence between blacks and whites and open discrimination against blacks were caused by racism. It was magnified by the rapidly expanding population of wartime Detroit, which had only increased overcrowding in the inner city slums, and added more racist citizens as a result of heavy recruitment in the south. Housing was in short order, and when provided a chance for decent living conditions blacks were met every step of the way with protest and violence. Despite labor shortages in Detroit, blacks were largely under-utilized, and when they were hired their presence was so offensive to whites that hate strikes were staged as signs of disapproval. Black

---

38 Holli, *Detroit*, 189.
workers in Detroit became marginalized as the UAW proved unable to handle its white membership and improve wartime work opportunities.

The 1941 River Rouge strike, violence and discrimination at the Sojourner Truth project, racist hiring and management policies and the openly racist hate strikes of 1943 were the explosive material that had been added to the tense racial environment of wartime Detroit. All that was necessary to ignite the tension was for an incident of violence, and a failure to control the initial event by the authorities. Just over two weeks after the Packard strike, a fight broke out at Belle Isle Park and quickly grew into a riot that consumed the city for the better part of two days. Death and destruction followed as society lowered itself to the lowest common denominator. Looting, assault and murder were seen on the 20th and 21st, and thirty-four individual lost their lives as a result.

The 1941 River Rouge strike, violence and discrimination at the Sojourner Truth project and the openly racist hate strikes of 1943, and in particular, at Packard were the antecedents of the 1943 race riot. These events clearly accelerated the level of racism and violence in the city preceding the 1943 race riot. Blacks and whites were agitated due to living and working conditions, and violence exploded wherever the city’s institutions were unable to cope with discrimination. As the newspaper publisher Louis Martin extolled in a column after racism divided the UAW vote during the 1943 Mayoral election, “Here was a partnership of the two groups wrecked on the shoals of racism. Until this bogey of color is dispelled, such an alliance will always be at the mercy of those who dare to exploit racial prejudice.”40

Bibliography

Primary Sources


*Time Magazine.* “Showdown at Ford.” April 14, 1943.


Secondary Sources


Pick Up the Broken Peaces: The Rise and Fall of the Taifa Kingdoms in Islamic Iberia

Nicolas Wyse

Following over three hundred years of Muslim rule on the Iberian Peninsula, the Christian Reconquista,¹ so long dreamed of, began to become a reality. In the twenty-first century lands of Portugal and Spain, Muslim warriors ruled with very little challenge from 711 until late into the eleventh century. They called their beloved new territory al-Andalus in reference to the Slavic Vandals who dominated the headland prior to the arrival of Islam. Upon acquisition, the Muslims did not annihilate the ethnic Christians and Jews of the domain. Instead, they allowed them to coexist in a subordinated role. They did, however, attempt to remove political opposition. But the remnants of the Visigothic kingdom managed to maintain their own territories in the far north of the peninsula.² It would take several centuries until the Christians grew powerful enough to challenge the Muslims, but once able they began the process of land reclamation. The Christians used a variety of instruments to achieve their objectives. Some were diplomatic, in the form of alliances and truces; others were militaristic and included

¹ La Reconquista, or “The Reconquest,” is a Spanish term that deals with the Christian Kings of the Iberian Peninsula who, together with the Papacy in Rome, used religious ideology to remove opposing belief systems (Muslim and Jewish) and political groups from the region of modern Spain and Portugal. It is worth noting that this retaking of land took centuries to complete, while the Muslim conquest of the 8th century took roughly two years.

² The Visigoths were an East Germanic people who, after sacking Rome in 410 CE, established kingdoms in southern-France and Iberia.
advances in siege weaponry. While these tools were important, they were not the decisive element in what made the Reconquista attainable. To understand what truly made it possible, one must turn away from the Christian enterprise, for it was the overwhelming force of disunity and betrayal amongst the Muslim kingdoms themselves that presented the Christians with the opportunity to wrestle control away from their Muslim overlords.

Soon after the start of the eleventh century, long before the papacy in Rome would begin to flex its ideological muscle in Iberia, the peninsula was divided into independent Muslim kingdoms known as taifas. In the pivotal year 1031 there existed 21 such taifas, but that number would eventually expand to 38. Their radius extended from the northern frontier lands bordering the Christian kingdoms and moved south across the Straits of Gibraltar and into North Africa.\(^3\) The mere fact that the number of kingdoms was expanding indicates that the factionalism amongst the rulers was growing.

As indicated, the Christian kingdoms, although pushed into the inhospitable regions of the Pyrenees Mountains of the north, had managed to maintain some level of self-determination during the era of al-Andalus. To gain a full understanding of how their presence - combined with the attitudes of the Muslims themselves - eventually led to the downfall of Islamic rule in Iberia, one must understand the situation of the Visigoths at the time of the initial Muslim raids. It was in July of 710 that a small contingent of ships crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, which separates Europe and Africa.\(^4\) The expedition was


comprised of indigenous North African Muslims known as Berbers. At the head of this convoy was a man named Tarif Ibn Malik, whose mission was to scout the area and discern the merit of a larger invasion. When he brought back riches and Spanish captives, the governor of the region, Musa Ibn Nusayr, was motivated to send a much larger force. This army was again comprised of the recently converted Berbers from North Africa. They moved quickly and easily through a much divided Visigothic kingdom. Before the coming of the Muslims, the population of Iberia had shrunk from about six million in Roman times to about four million in the late Visogothic period due to “plague and war.” The findings of archaeologists indicate that once great cities had fallen into ruin, and the area was encompassed by small isolated settlements. To make matters worse for the Visigoths, and much better for the Muslims, the kingdom had been recently and continuously divided by civil war. A priestly chronicle written around 754 CE described the situation as “Roderick lost both the crown and his realm in the general destruction caused by wicked rivalries.”

The success of the Berbers under the general Tariq Ibn Ziyad must have been appreciated by the Caliphate on some level. However, the rapidity of their advance caused a great deal of alarm amongst to the ethnically Arab Umayyads. The fear was that these African Berbers had become too powerful, and their expansion was going unchecked. The Umayyad governor, Musa Ibn Nusayr, gathered an even larger force and led them into Iberia. This army, in contrast to its predecessor, was made

---

6 Read, The Moors in Spain and Portugal, 34.
up mostly of Arabs from the aristocracy in Yemen. While it is difficult to discern the mindset and motives of Ibn Nusayr, it is clear that the Arab Umayyads did not relish the idea of Berbers dominating this newfangled territory in Europe. In fact, when Musa finally caught up to Tariq he lashed out at him with his whip.⁸ This response by Musa Ibn Nusayr would not have been surprising to the Visigoths. One contemporary account stated

> Altogether pitiless, destroying everything as he went, Musa reached the royal city of Toledo. He separated off the areas around it by offering deceitful peace, and beheaded certain noblemen who had for some reason stayed…He speedily burned fair cities, sentenced noble and leading men of the time to be tortured, and had children and nursing mothers beaten to death.⁹

In the details of this initial excursion into Iberia we are already shown the depth of conflicts, not only between the Muslims and the Visigoths, but between the Islamic conquerors themselves. The theme of ethnic disunity was prevalent from the very beginning. It would be one of the primary driving forces that would lead to the fall of the Taifa kingdoms and thus of al-Andalus as a whole. In the meantime, however, the Muslims on both sides were extremely pleased with the riches they were accumulating in their new territory.

While the raiding calmed and the settling started, the factionalism persisted. The Arabs settled into the fertile lands, such as the Guadalquivir, while the Berbers were left with the harsh and unfertile mountainous regions.¹⁰ It is important to understand that this demographic separation encouraged the Berbers to settle with the

---

⁹ *Continuatio Isidoria Hispiana ad annum 754*, 13.
Christians and Jews. This would parlay into an area of importance in the centuries to come. The Arab Muslim’s harsh treatment of the Berbers, on whom they had relied so heavily in the initial excursions into Iberia, eventually erupted into open revolt. By 740, the situation was out of the control of local Arabs, and a huge force of men was dispatched by the Caliph in Damascus. Eventually, the Berbers were repressed, and the Andalusian capital in Cordoba was kept intact. The Caliph’s soldiers had been originally decreed to return to their Arab homelands. However, they were not eager to abandon the rich lands they had won for their Caliph. In the end, the vast majority of them stayed on in Iberia. These men, known collectively as junds,\(^{11}\) came largely from Egypt and the new Islamic center of Syria itself. As historian Hugh Kennedy noted

> The events of 741-43 profoundly changed the political character of Muslim Spain. It substantially increased the Arab element in the population, especially in those rural areas in the south which were to be the heartland of al-Andalus for centuries to come. It also increased the Syrian element.\(^{12}\)

In the coming years the fall of the Umayyad caliphate in Damascus allowed for the remaining Umayyads in al-Andalus to strengthen their hold on power there.

The ‘Abbasids gained the caliphate in the Middle East from the Umayyads, and ties were largely broken to Iberia. Thereby the social order in al-Andalus was, more or less, allowed to develop unrestricted by the caliphate in the East. During their bloody rise to power, the

\(^{11}\) Literally “army” - Junds is a term used to describe the members of an Arab reinforcement sent by the Caliph in Damascus. Their aim was to quell the rebellion of the Berbers. Their settlement in the Iberian Peninsula following the end of the rebellion provided the Arab contingent in al-Andalus with a ready made army that was pro-Arab. This setup was known as the Jund system.

‘Abbasids attempted to violently snuff out all semblances of the Umayyad caliphate. Very few members of the Umayyad clan escaped, but the young grandson of the great Caliph Hisham was one. His name was ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Mu’awiya. His mother was a Nafza Berber from Tunisia, but his father was of the Arab Quraysh tribe (of the Prophet Muhammad) and an Umayyad. It was this strong lineage that provided ‘Abd al-Rahman with the credentials to become the ruler of Muslim Iberia.13 This idea of notable lineage would prove instrumental in asserting the legitimacy of rulers in al-Andalus for centuries to come.

Immediately al-Rahman set forth the precedent of isolating al-Andalus from the caliphate in the East. As one historian noted, “The successors of ‘Abd al-Rahman I continued his policy, ignoring the ‘Abbasids so far as possible, being largely ignored by them in their far-off corner of the Islamic world.”14 By 928, his ancestor ‘Abd al-Rahman III had established the Umayyad’s of Iberia as an entirely separate new Caliphate. His presumption of the title of Caliph was addressed in a grouping of letters he sent to his regional governors which proclaimed

> We are the most worth to fulfil [sic] our right…to put on the clothing granted by the nobility of God, because of the favor which He has shown us…He has made our name and the greatness of our power celebrated everywhere; and He has made the hopes of the worlds depend on us…and their rejoicing at good news be about our dynasty…We have decided that the da’wa15 should be to us as Commander of the Faithful and that letters emanating from us or coming to us should be [headed] in the same manner.16

---

15 Literally meaning “call” or “invitation,” typically in reference to a person being called to Islam.
16 Wasserstein, *Caliphate*, 11 – Wasserstein notes that this text is found in the works of Ibn al-Khatib (1956: 30); Ibn ‘Idhari (1948: 198-9); as well as some Anonymous sources.
The situation in al-Andalus proved largely stable for generations. However, things began to unravel for Muhammad I, who came to power as Amir in Cordoba in September 852.\textsuperscript{17} His administration began by appointing many mawali wazirs. These mawali were non-Arab converts to Islam. As wazirs, a term for a high ranking official, they held a great deal of power and prestige. Naturally, this was upsetting to those of Arab ethnicity who dominated the capital. Again, Hugh Kennedy surmised the situation succinctly when he stated

Mass conversion, however, brought different problems: in particular, it undermined the fiscal basis of the Umayyad state. People who converted no longer had to pay the jizya,\textsuperscript{18} which was an important source of revenue for the amirs, so conversion actually weakened the Muslim state apparatus.\textsuperscript{19}

In addition, descendents of the Syrian junds, who had come to the aid of the Cordobans of Iberia in 740 (and then stayed despite their proposed intention not to), had to pay taxes or perform military service. These new mawali converts were exempt from such payments, which created a situation ripe for ethnic hostility. Muhammad, however, was initially able to avoid further tensions by exempting the jund descendants from military service.

Muhammad’s control was constantly challenged by the muwallad\textsuperscript{20} ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Marwan al-Jilliqi who maintained his separatist leadership in Merida near the city of Badajoz. As a further

\textsuperscript{17} The importance of the title of Amir stems from the leaders of the early Muslims who were known as Amir al-Mu’mīnīn, or “Commander of the Faithful.”
\textsuperscript{18} Jizya, as defined by Encyclopedia Britannica is a “head or poll tax that early Islamic rulers demanded from their non-Muslim subjects.”
\textsuperscript{19} Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 68.
\textsuperscript{20} Muwallad is a term referring specifically to a native of Iberia who had converted to Islam.
A demonstration of ethnic hostilities a fierce anti-Muwallad coalition in Cordoba convinced the Amir Muhammad to lead an expedition against those of native heritage. However, as Kennedy tells us, the rebel Ibn Marwan “…was able to preserve his independence by disappearing, when he was under threat, into the no man’s land (of the) north…where Umayyad forces were unable to pursue him.” 21 This was accomplishable, in part, because Ibn Marwan was “able to receive intermittent support from the Christians.” 22

In the Ebro Valley of Northeast Iberia, the hostilities between Arabs and Berbers erupted once again. The Cordoban appointed Arab leadership was violently removed from power by Berber factions, most notably the Banu Qasi tribe. Their conquest was complete following a violent massacre of the Arab population. Tribal unity, so important in the world of the early Muslims, remained a powerful force at this time. This is supported by the story of an Umayyad, Ibn al-Qitt, who proclaimed himself as ‘Messiah’and who led a jihad 23 against the Christians in the north. However, he was only able to sustain success through the cooperation and aid of the Nafza Berber tribe around Merida, and when they withdrew their support, his efforts failed. 24

In addition to the strife present in the hinterlands, the Amir Muhammad I was forced to deal with rebellion close to home. ‘Umar Ibn Hafsun, a muwallad from southern Spain, had converted to Christianity and taken the name Samuel. He began a revolution in Cordoba in the

21 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 71.
22 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 71.
23 A jihad as defined by Merriam-Webster is “a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty; also: a personal struggle in devotion to Islam especially involving spiritual discipline.” http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/jihad.
24 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 71-2.
year 879. His rebels consistently raided small towns centralized around Cordoba. As one historian noted, Ibn Hafsun “began a Robin Hood career of brigandage” by leading a coalition of fellow muwallads combined with disaffected Berbers. Here it is important to remember that the Berbers had been forced to settle with the native Visigoths after the arrival of Arabs in the Peninsula. The historian Ibn ‘Idhari recorded the words of the rebel leader, Ibn Hafsun, as he addressed his troops. The tone of his speech clearly indicates that Ibn Hafsun focused on securing the aid of the Berbers. He said:

For too long…you have borne the yoke of a government which seizes your belongings and loads you with heavy taxes, while the Arabs humiliate you and treat you as slaves. I desire nothing but to render you justice and to deliver you from your bondage.

Campaigns by this rebel faction continued past Muhammad’s death and even circumvented the efforts of his successor al-Mundhir. Interestingly, a prophetic document from around this time sighted references in the Christian Bible that proclaimed the downfall of the Islamic hold in Iberia. The text utilized the prophecy of Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, which stated:

As indeed the same prophet says again to Ishmael (ancestor to the Arabs): ‘Since you have abandoned the Lord, I will abandon you and hand you over to Gog (Goths such as the Visigoths),

---

26 Read, The Moors in Spain and Portugal, 68.
who will give you your deserts. After you have punished them 170 times, he will do to you as you did to him.28

Undoubtedly, such religiously motivated predictions were used by rebellious converts such as Ibn Hafsun. In 891, Ibn Hafsun attacked Cordoba itself, and the failed response of the new Amir ‘Abd Allah showed how completely ineffective the military of the Umayyads was at this time.29 Compounding his inability to pacify his own realm, ‘Abd Allah was unable to counteract the forces of Arab lords around Seville, and in 891 an Arab coalition slaughtered the leading muwallads in the area, along with the Umayyad governor.

Several years later, Ibrahim Ibn al-Hajjaj organized a dinner-time massacre of his rivals and became undisputed ruler of Seville. He ruled as a king, fully recognized by ‘Abd Allah in the capital of Cordoba, from 899 until his death around 910.30 Here again, Ibn Hafsun comes into the picture. He had attempted to procure the favor of this new king in Seville, Ibn al-Hajjaj, as he had many of the Amir’s other enemies in al-Andalus.31 However, his conversion to Christianity that same year put him at odds with a broad spectrum of the Muslim leadership. Even without such aid he was able to survive with the help of similarly disgruntled individuals, many of whom were Muslims who were willing to overlook his abandonment of Islam. One historian noted that this was a time of severe strife and disunity in al-Andalus, which “suffered from internal disintegration on a scale unparalleled since Tariq’s landing.”32

30 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 76.
31 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 78.
Ibn Hafsun’s ideological uprising lasted for nearly fifty years, being eventually carried on by his sons after his death in 917. If nothing else his conversion and insurgency gives credit to the inroads made by the Christian church in the lands controlled by Muslims. It also points to the extreme divisions between different ethnic factions of Muslims. Upon the defeat of these converts, the famous chronicler Ibn Hayyan wrote of Ibn Hafsun “the non-Arab (‘ajam)…confided in the Christian dhimmis.” He favoured [sic] them with his words, supported them and preferred them.” After the defeat of the rebels at Bobastro, the leader of the Muslim army, al-Nasir li-Din Allah, desecrated Ibn Hafsun’s grave. Finding that he had been buried according to Christian customs, al-Nasir tore apart the corpse and had the limbs hung from stakes at the gate of the city. On either side of him were the stakes used to crucify his two sons, Hakam and Sulaiman, who had died in the final battle. At the time of their occurrence, the gruesome deaths of Ibn Hafsun and his sons appeared to have been detrimental to their purported cause. The Muslims of Cordoba were united by hatred for Ibn Hafsun as Ibn Hayyan tells us, “Once his apostasy was out in the open, the people realized it was a religious obligation to fight against him.” In the long term, however, Ibn Hafsun set a precedence of recalcitrance that would be integral in the following century.

33 Melville and Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain, 32.
34 Dhimmi is a term used to describe a non-Muslim subject of a region controlled by followers of Islam.
35 Melville and Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain, 33.
36 Al-Nasir li-Din Allah is another name for ‘Abd al-Rahman III.
38 Melville and Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain, 33.
The death of ‘Abd Allah gave rise to something of a golden age for the Umayyads in Spain. His grandson, Abd al-Rahman III was a great politician, bred to lead from an early age. However, by the end of the tenth century, the control of the land lay in the hands of a man with a relatively undistinguished, and certainly non-Umayyad, background. His name at birth was Muhammad Ibn Abi ‘Amir, but he took the title of al-Mansur (the victorious), which had previously been held by a great ‘Abbasid caliph, Abu Ja’far al-Mansur in the second half of the 8th century. His rule, as something of a regent, would last until his death in 1002. He was responsible for dismantling the jund system and incorporating a full-time army of professional soldiers in its place. He maintained this large hired army through the practice of granting fiefs to the soldiers, who worked the lands cooperatively with the peasants. However, the poet and historian Abu Bakr al-Turtushi wrote of this system’s replacement by a tribute (jibaya) on the land that was collected to pay the soldiers monthly stipends. As he illustrated, “The troops ruined the people and devastated their agriculture. The population fled and agriculture became impoverished, the army was enfeebled, so that the enemy could conquer Muslim territory, taking most of it.”

The people, as spoken of, were largely the Syrian Arab jundis; while the new military force was predominantly that of Berbers brought from North Africa along with Slavic slaves from Eastern Europe and the areas around Leon (known as saqaliba). As Kennedy tells us

(T)he result was that Andalusi society was divided into a small military caste recruited from outsiders, and the bulk of demilitarised [sic] taxpayers. Perhaps more than any other factor,

39 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 118.
this accounts for the inability of the Andalusis to resist Christian advances more effectively.  

It should also be noted that when al-Mansur recruited Berber soldiers from North Africa, he did so in tribal groups and not as individuals. These groups were allowed to remain under the direction of their tribal chief, which provided them with a continued spirit of unity, while becoming something of an alien force in al-Andalus. Most of these Berbers came not from Morocco, but from Zirid controlled Tunisia. Kennedy refers to this practice as “the concentration of military power in the hands of non-native groups.”

It is true that al-Mansur was able to make solid military advances and was also able to secure his place in society’s eyes as a devout Muslim. Despite his professed piety, in 983 he married the Christian daughter of King Sancho Abarca de Navarre. In addition, ten years later he liberated and married the daughter of King Vermundo II of Leon. This is notable because his religious ardor was largely unquestioned. In the coming centuries Muslim rulers who maintained friendly relations with the Christians were often condemned by the more religiously pious members of society. This typically would result in the removal of the ruler, often with the use of violence.

The people of Cordoba, who clearly desired a return of the Umayyad family to the Andalusian caliphate, so detested the Berbers that they hoped to completely expel them from Iberia. Melville summarized the situation thusly:

---

40 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 119.
41 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 121.
42 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 120.
The decade that followed al-Mansur’s death saw the release of the tensions buried beneath the outward glory of the ‘Amirid dictatorship. The competing elements were the Umayyad family, largely dispossessed by al-Mansur, the Berbers and the Slavs, and the people of Cordova [sic], who detested their alien masters, particularly the Berbers.\textsuperscript{43}

They started by driving them out of Cordoba and forcing them into the wilderness of the north. When the era of the ‘Amirids had come to a close, the two factions sought the help of Sancho of Castile to fight one another. Ibn ‘Idhari, the pro-Berber author of the early fourteenth century, claimed, “Their (Berber) messengers went to Count Sancho, where they found messengers from Ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbar (ruler in Cordoba)...who were asking him to make a treaty with them.”\textsuperscript{44}

In the end, Sancho chose the Berbers, and his assistance allowed them to prevail over the forces of Cordoba, which allowed their reentry and placement of their own Umayyad supporter, Sulaiman, on the crown in the capital. In this same chronicle Ibn ‘Idhari provides a lengthy, and probably false, quote by Count Sancho. In his account he promotes the idea that the Muslims of Cordoba had no religious convictions, as evidenced by their willingness to murder one another and then purchase the stolen booty from Christian warriors. The words he gave to Sancho were, “There is neither intelligence, bravery or religion among these people.”\textsuperscript{45} That a Muslim chronicler would directly accuse his own people of such improprieties signals the degree to which the Andalusians were divided. Finally, according to Ibn ‘Idhari, the surrender of fortresses to the Christians was significant enough to comment, “All this was done out of a stubborn insistence on not making peace with the

\textsuperscript{43} Melville and Ubaydli, \textit{Christians and Moors in Spain}, 60.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibn ‘Idhari, “al-Bayan,” 61.
\textsuperscript{45} Melville and Ubaydli, \textit{Christians and Moors in Spain}, 63.
In addition to the Muslim chroniclers were the poets. Ibn al-‘Assal, wrote a poem about the fall of Barbastro to the Christians in 1064. Its final lines contained the verses:

Were it not for the sins of the Muslims – they have committed great sins, which cannot be hidden – No knight would ever be able to give the Christians victory over them, but these sins are the malady; The wicked ones among them do not keep out of sight to work their evil, while the virtue of those who profess virtue is hypocrisy.47

In 1008 al-Mansur’s son ‘Abd al-Rahman (grandson of the Christian King of Navarre) came to power. Even before his own death al-Mansur saw the situation as foreboding. When his end drew near he cried and told his hajib48, the slave Kauthar, “now I am dying, and none of my sons can succeed me, for they are preoccupied with wine, women and song. The enemy will come.”49 While both al-Mansur and his son al-Muzaffar had been content to hold power as a regent or advisor to the powerless Caliph, the following son, al-Rahman, had the audacity to demand that Umayyad Caliph Hisham appoint him as his heir. To further worsen the situation, instead of including a variety of Muslim subsets in his court, al-Rahman relied heavily on the Berbers while alienating the other ethnic groups. Perhaps, the final straw was when al-Rahman decreed that dignitaries must appear before him in Berber-style turbans

46 Melville and Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain, 65.
48 Hajib, not to be confused with Hijab, which is a Muslim head covering, was a man of great political importance on par with a Wazir or chieftain.
as opposed to traditional Arab headgear.\textsuperscript{50} The result was his overthrow by the Umayyads, who had clearly had enough of the ‘Amirids’ regency. The new caliph, Muhammad al-Mahdi (previously Muhammad Ibn Hisham Ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbar Ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir) intended to restore a more unified and religiously acceptable government. By claiming lineage from the Prophet’s tribe of Quraysh, this new caliph had gained a deal of legitimacy that had been missing in Cordoba since the seizure of power by al-Mansur. One of his first actions was to eliminate the stranglehold of Berbers in the militia by appointing Cordobans and Umayyads to positions of power. Again, we are faced with hostilities between the Berbers and the Arab Muslims, made significantly more apparent by the desertion of a large proportion of the Slavic saqaliba.\textsuperscript{51}\textsuperscript{*} The harsh treatment by al-Mahdi prompted the Berber forces to coalesce with Sancho Garcia of Castille, and in late 1009 al-Mahdi was forced to abandon his city following an attack by these enemies of his own creation. In his work, \textit{The Ring of the Dove}, Ibn Hazm (d. 1064) gave a firsthand account of the tumultuous period. His father was an advisor to the hajib al-Mansur. He was forced to flee from Cordoba due to this civil war. This was Ibn Hazm’s only work of elegant literature as most of his 400 writings were devoted to theology and law. He wrote

\begin{quote}
Then my father the vizier (God rest his soul) moved from our new mansion in Rabad al-Zahira on the eastern side of Cordoba, to our old residence on the western side, in the quarter of Balat Mughith; this was on the third day of the accession of Muhammad al-Mahdi to the Caliphate (in 1009). Thereafter, when Hisham al-Mu’aiyad succeeded to the throne, we were
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50} Read, \textit{The Moors in Spain and Portugal}, 93.
\textsuperscript{51} Peter C. Scales, \textit{The Fall of the Caliphate of Cordoba} (Leiden, The Netherlands: EJ Brill, 1994), 133. Scales defines the existence of the Saqaliba as follows: “This is the term which the Muslim state of the Middle Ages used for slaves of European origin: The Qur’an authorised [sic] slavery and slaves formed an important part of the booty taken.”
sufficiently preoccupied with the misfortunes which came upon us, thanks to the hostility of his ministers; we were sorely tried by imprisonment, surveillance and crushing fines, and were finally obliged to go into hiding. Civil war raged far and wide; all classes suffered from its dire effects, and ourselves in particular.52

Al-Mahdi was now forced to cooperate with the saqaliba who had abandoned Cordoba due to his anti-Slavic policies. In doing so, he raised an army and in turn defeated the Berbers at ‘Aqabat al-Bagar on May 10, 1010.53 To finalize the incredible tumult of this époque, the saqaliba had al-Mahdi arrested and executed, restoring the Umayyad al-Hisham II once again.54 The Berbers would eventually abandon Cordoba to shadow Umayyad rule, but before leaving they devastated the city through murder and pillage. Once more, Ibn Hazm gives a stirring account in a poem he wrote while attending a funeral which read

They weep for one now dead,
High honoured [sic] in his tomb;
Those tears were better shed
For him who lives in gloom.
O wonder, that they sigh
For him who is at rest,
Yet mourn not me, who die
Most cruelly oppressed.55

The destruction of Cordoba’s power was clearly marked by the infighting of Muslim factions; enhanced by the development of seeking and utilizing support from supposed Christian enemies in the north. Time

53 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 127.
54 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 127.
and again the Islamic leadership in *al-Andalus* sought to maintain their power by gaining favor with diverse factions of Muslims, only to be opposed and typically executed when their motives were understood to be contradictory to the aims of the groups they excluded. Not to be outdone, the Berbers continued their attack on Cordoba. Again, from Ibn Hazm, “Then destiny struck its heaviest blows, and we were banished from our loved abodes; the armies of the Berbers triumphed over us. I set forth from Cordoba on 13, July, 1013.”56 The Cordovans were finally persuaded that the Caliphate was “more trouble than it was worth,” and in 1031 the “Umayyad caliphate of Andalus was definitely and finally abolished.”57

The unity that Cordoba had provided was now fully eroded. The stage was set for an unconsolidated and uncloaked period of Muslim disunity. In Arabic it would be termed the *muluk al-tawa’if*, meaning “kings of factions.” Today it is Anglicized as the period of the *Taifa* Kingdoms. As the name indicates, this was a period of rule by kings, not caliphs. These kings could not easily disguise themselves as legitimate rulers. That, however, did not stop them from trying. The rulers of the various Muslim states in Iberia attempted to authorize their claims to power by a variety of means. In Seville, the *hajibs* asserted that the former caliph, Hisham II (whose body had never been found after the final sack of Cordoba), had reappeared alive and well in their state. The pronouncement of Hisham II’s presence in a kingdom was critical for asserting legitimacy as Hisham II was the last of the Umayyad caliphs. As late as 1083, Hisham II was still being included on coinage, though

---

57 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 129.
he would have been over 120 years old by this time.\textsuperscript{58} Other \textit{hajib} took the names and titles associated with the ‘Abbasid caliphs, who were still largely recognized in the larger Muslim world as the true caliphate. Regardless of these attempts, the rulers of the various \textit{Taifas} were in reality nothing more than war-lords, who ruled by the dominance of force.

After the fall of the Umayyads in Cordoba in 1031, Ibn Hazm, the eleventh century historian, jurist, and theologian, wrote of the scandalous behavior of men who referred to themselves as caliph in the Friday \textit{khutba}.\textsuperscript{59} He declared, “We had in the area of al-Andalus four caliphs…This was a humiliation, the like of which had never been seen before, which showed [our] everlasting decline – four caliphs in an area three days journey square.”\textsuperscript{60} The chaotic situation in the peninsula is made clear by his words, and his description was supplemented by other writers of that time. ‘Abd Allah Ibn Buluggin, the Party King of Granada (1073-1090) detailed the events at the beginning of the \textit{Taifa} period:

When the ‘Amirid dynasty came to an end and the people were left without an \textit{imam},\textsuperscript{61} every military commander rose up in his own town and entrenched himself behind the walls of his own fortress, having first secured his own position, created his own army and amassed his own resources. These persons vied with one another for worldly power, and each sought to subdue the other.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} Kennedy, \textit{Muslim Spain and Portugal}, 131.
\textsuperscript{59} The \textit{khutba} is the Islamic Sermon delivered before Friday prayers. Moreover, it is an address to the entire Muslim community.
\textsuperscript{60} Wasserstein, \textit{Caliphate}, 192.
\textsuperscript{61} Merriam-Webster defines an \textit{Imam} as “a Muslim leader of the line of Ali held by Shiites to be the divinely appointed, sinless, infallible successors of Muhammad.” http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/imam.
\textsuperscript{62} Kennedy, \textit{Muslim Spain and Portugal}, 134.
Missing from the list of *Taifa* rulers were the Umayyad clan, as well as native *muwallad* peoples. The Umayyads’ fall from grace is likely attributable to the distaste for the clan’s leaders felt by the *Andalusi* populous, whereas the lack of politically active *muwallads* is more of a mystery. Kennedy made the careful assumption that their disappearance stems from the practice of “adopting Arab or Berber genealogies to secure their place in the elite.” Some historians have argued that despite the varied ethnicities of the *Taifa* overlords, the disunity which existed amongst them was caused primarily by self-serving desire for more land and thus the availability of additional resources. This does not seem likely, given the abundance of evidence that conflicts arose stemming from ethnic animosities.

In all, the noted *Andalusian* historian David Wasserstein listed thirty-eight *Taifas* that existed at around this time in Iberia. Almost all of these were once cities under the authority of the Caliphate in Cordoba. Although many of the initial rulers were elites during the reign of the ‘Amirids, the cultural and ethnic differences amongst the leadership is significant. Six *Taifas* were led by men from Berber contingents of the old army, three were of the Berberized Arab Hammudid dynasty, seven had leaders who were Slavic, and four were remnants of the ‘Amirid family. Most of the remaining *Taifas* were ruled by local military generals who were able to establish a central authority in the region or city.

A very important aspect of these *Taifa* leaders was their willingness to abandon a central tenet of their faith. They often intermingled so closely with Christians and Jews that their subjects

---

63 Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, 143.
64 It should be noted that Ceuta, in North Africa, is counted among this group.
65 Wasserstein, *Rise and Fall*, 100.
became enraged. Samuel Ibn Naghrela (993-1056), a Jewish poet and wazir to the Zirid King of Granada, wrote *The Battle of Alfuente* in 1038. Included within his work is the story of Prince Zuhair of Alermia, and his failed attack on Granada in 1038. This attack was prompted because Samuel, a Jew, was placed in the powerful position of wazir. According to Samuel, “they felt resentment over my high rank, and resolved to see me overthrown at once; for how (they said) can aliens like these be privileged over Muslim.” Then, when the king had died and his son Badis ibn Haddus came to rule, these foes from Almeria came again to denounce the wazir saying to the new king

> Never will I let you be in peace as long as any breath is left inside this Jew. Get rid of him, and that will put an end to quarreling and strife; come, deal with me. But if you won’t, just know that all the kings of Andalus have formed a league against you.’ Badis sent in reply: ‘If I should do what you demand, damnation fall on me! Before I yield my servant to his foes, I’d see myself a bondsman to my own!" 

After a very gory description of the battle and the death of the Almerians, Samuel wrote, “We took possession of their towns and lands, wreaked our vengeance on their castle walls, seized their settlements and villages, (and) took their fortifications by force of arms.”

The story of Samuel is not the only example of the degree to which cross-culturalization was occurring between different religious and ethnic sects. A collection of texts concerning Muslim jurists shows that the people of *al-Andalus* were becoming so homogeneous with one

---

another that the conquering Muslims actually celebrated some of the religious festivals of the Christians. One such text comes from a Berber jurist and lawmaker, Yahya Ibn Yahya al-Laithi, who held positions of power during the reigns of the last Umayyad Amir al-Hakam I (796-822) and ‘Abd al-Rahman (822-852). It appears that Muslims were exchanging gifts with one another, and with Christians, to celebrate Christmas. In his hadith Yahya b. Yahya related the Prophet Muhammad’s words, “You will become settled amongst non-Arabs; whoever imitates them in their [celebration]…will be mustered with them.”69 A poem by Abu ‘Abd-Allah Ibn Haddad, a native of Guadix, demonstrated another example of the comingling between the religions in regards to holy days. He wrote how

I…celebrate on their Easter Day, among the lofty trees and the artas; They had come from there to a rendez-vous [sic], and congregated there at the appointed time, To stand before a bishop holding a lantern and a staff, And many priests displaying piety, with signs of ostentatious quietness and humility before God.70

Regardless of their religious intimacy, one thing is certainly clear – Muslim rulers of the Taifas were willing to enlist the aid of the Christian kings of the north in order to subdue rival Muslims. As previously illustrated, this practice began in earnest in Cordoba at the beginning of the eleventh century when the Berber coalition struggled to regain footing in the early capital. Early in the fourteenth century, Ibn ‘Idhari wrote about the Berber Dhu’l-Nunid tribe. These Berbers had

70 Al-Wansharishi, “Kitab al-mi’yar al-mu’rib,” 75. According to Melville III, “An arta is a type of tree that grows in sandy soil, producing a bitter fruit.”
become the rulers of Toledo and had allied with Christian King Garcia Sanchez of Navarre to fight against the Arab leader of the Taifa in Zaragosa. He stated that “The Christians…roamed unchallenged…in the lands of the Muslims.” Ibn ‘Idhari went on to claim that the Zaragosan ruler Sulayman Ibn Hud and his sons took refuge in their own castles, then watched helplessly while the Christians settled on their land, harvested their crops, and took the food back to their own lands and people. In response to this betrayal of religious brotherhood, Ibn Hud hired Fernando I of Leon-Castile, another Christian king, to counterattack Toledo. Not only did the Muslims ravage the lands and destroy the economies of one another, they greatly enhanced the wealth and capabilities of the Christians in the process.

This mid-eleventh century practice of employing religious outsiders to fight rival Taifas had the undesired result of encouraging further raids by the Christian kings from the north. Apart from direct raids on one another, Muslim rulers made additional efforts to further stymie the prosperity of neighboring Taifas. A good example occurred in 1034 when Isma’il Ibn Abbad of Seville attempted to lead a traditional raid on the Christians only to be sabotaged by the Muslim ruler of Badajoz as he passed through his territory. The long term effect of such maneuvers was the massive weakening of the Muslim Taifas to the extent that they were so debilitated that the Christian kings could subdue them with ease.

Admittedly, the debilitating practices of the Muslim rulers in the Taifa period were not the only cause of their downfall. They were aided by the actions of the Christians who worked to bleed the strength of the

---

71 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 146.
72 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 146.
73 Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal, 151.
Muslim communities. This they accomplished through consistent raiding and the enforcement of monetary tributes, or *parias*, from the subjugated Muslims. The Christian count Sisnando Davidiz, who was educated by Muslims in Cordoba, summarized the situation with the comment that

(T)he Christians desire to recover what they have lost by force. This can only be achieved by weakness and encroachment. In the long run, when al-Andalus has neither men nor money, we’ll be able to recover it without any difficulty.  

Ibn ‘Idhari emphasized the economic instability that *parias* brought to the *Taifas*. He noted that “Ferdinand (I of Castile Leon) the enemy of God did not cease to become stronger and the Muslims to become weaker through the payment of tribute (*parias*) to the Christians, until the accursed one descended on Qulumriyya (Coimbra).”

The Muslims were not unaware of the certain outcome of this situation. Ibn ‘Idhari again lamented the situation in his work *al-Bayan*. Therein he wrote

The borders of *al-Andalus* continued to weaken, while the enemy grew stronger as the discord between the rulers of *al-Andalus* blazed fiercely (may God revile them!), so that the enemy eyed them all greedily; he wearied of taking tribute and was only satisfied by the seizure of the country and wrestling it from the grasp of the Muslims.

The borders of *al-Andalus*, about which ‘Idhari wrote, had a relatively unclear frontier. Both sides of the conflict were consistent in their

---


attacks. Despite the lack of a strict physical boundary, one geographic location maintained enormous significance. This was the city of Toledo. It was the former capital of the Visigoths, and thus a city of extreme emotional importance for the Christian kings. Foremost amongst these kings was Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile. It was he who would conquer Toledo and hammer the final nail in the coffin of the Taifas and their Party Kings.

It is the common perception amongst historians that the fall of Toledo, along with the whole of the Taifa kingdoms, was prompted by the greed of the rulers and the lack of proper religious adherence amongst the Muslim community. This is no doubt true, but it could not have been accomplished without an enemy who was willing - as Alfonso clearly was - to partake in an excursion to reclaim the city. According to one historian, “Alfonso (VI of Leon-Castile) cannot really be said to have conquered Toledo, which fell to him by virtue of the incompetence of its ruler…Yahya al-Qadir”77 To the people of Islamic Toledo, Alfonso was a dirty and disgusting man. His mere presence was an insult to the refined Muslims. Ibn Bassam Al-Shantarini, a poet who wrote extensively prior to the coming of the Almohads, detailed the interaction of Toledan dignitaries with Alfonso shortly before the fall of the city. He wrote that

They found him rubbing the sleep from his eyes, with an angry [tousled] head and foul breath. They started to watch him while he ruffled his hoary white head, nor were they oblivious to the stench of his tatty garments and the filth of his fingernails. Then he advanced on them with an ugly face, and with a glance that left them in no doubt that there was evil in him…Then he clapped his hands and fell to the floor and examined between his

77 Melville and Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain, 86.
legs...He said to them, ‘How long have you been hovering around me and wanting to see me? When did you make your agreement with so and so, and where is what you have brought? To Hell with you and to Hell with him.’

This conclusion of Alfonso’s brief speech was made in reference to the Christian king’s disregard for the requests of the Muslims to maintain some level of negotiation. As the author stated, “He desired everything from them...He brought Toledo under his jurisdiction and planted the foot of oppression in its courtyards.” When Alfonso, king of Castile-Leon, rode triumphantly into Toledo on May 25th of 1085 the reality of the Reconquista could no longer be ignored. The remaining Muslim rulers had no choice but to once again call for help from the Berbers of North Africa. The response was positive, in that the Almoravid Berbers agreed to come to the aid of the Taifas. The outcome, however, was not as they had hoped.

In essence, the need for North African Berber intervention in Iberia had been clear since the fall of Barbostro in 1064, if not sooner. However, due directly to the nature of the Taifa leadership, such aid had not been sought. With no other option, the Iberian Muslim rulers sent a coalition to Marrakesh to appeal directly to the Almoravid caliph Yusuf Ibn Tashufin. Upon hearing of their dire situation, he is said to have proclaimed, “I am the first to be entrusted to come to the assistance of this faith, and none other than myself will take charge of the matter!”

The Christian army under Alfonso had moved on to Zaragosa following the fall of Toledo. When Alfonso VI learned of the arrival of the Almoravids in Iberia, he recalled his troops to meet the Berbers in battle. The two sides fought each other in the Battle of Sagragas in late 1086. The battle was also known as the Battle of Zallaqa; which is an Arabic word meaning “slippery ground”, named due to the significant amount of blood spilled on the battlefield.

Unfortunately for Alfonso VI, a high proportion of that blood belonged to Christians. The King of Castile and Leon, despite being at the height of his success, could only muster 2,500 men, including 1,500 cavalry, 750 of which were knights. Opposing Alfonso were the Berbers, and at long last, a united front of the Taifa Party Kings mustered around the Sevillian ruler al-Mu’tamid. This counterforce was provided when, “The kings of the Peninsula reinforced Yusuf and al-Mu’tamid with as many horses, men and arms as they could; the total strength of the Muslims, including volunteers and mercenaries, was about 20,000 men.” Possibly due to the overwhelming forces against him, Alfonso VI planned for a surprised attack. A Muslim source indicated that Alfonso VI had asked for battle to be delayed until Monday, owing to the fact that Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were holy days for the Muslims, Christians, and Jews (of whom many were involved in the battle). However, Alfonso led a cavalry charge that very Friday. In spite of his fall of Toledo, probably gave a more accurate account of the situation due to his location in the East. Therefore, he was free from having to flatter the Almoravids as did contemporary writers.

81 Wasserstein, Rise and Fall, 289.
84 Melville and Ubaydli, Christians and Moors in Spain, 97.
ambitions, the Christian king was defeated, and the reign of the Almoravids’ in *al-Andalus* had begun.

The battle was decisive for the Muslims, and the Party Kings felt that they had done a great thing for themselves. However, by inviting the Almoravids, they had sealed their own doom. As ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Marrakushi stated in regards to the leader of the coalition that had pleaded for the intervention of Caliph Yusuf, “Al-Mu’tamid returned to al-Andalus happy;….he did not know that his destruction lay in this arrangement. He drew a sword that he thought was for him, and did not know that it was against him.”\(^{85}\)

It soon became clear to the Muslim rulers that the resolution of the Almoravids would be to cleanse the wicked ways in which the *Taifa* Party Kings had been ruling *al-Andalus*. It was not until the Muslim lords admitted that they were facing total annihilation by the Christians that they finally allowed themselves to be undone by the Almoravids. No doubt, they maintained a hope that North African intervention would be only temporary and that one day they would be allowed to return to autonomy. ‘Abd Allah ibn Buluggin (1073-1090), in his work, *Tibyan*, noted the Almoravid refusal to continue helping defend Granada after recapturing it from Alfonso VI of Castile-Leon. He stated

> When it came for us to leave Aledo, we asked the Amir of the Muslims (Here he references Almoravid ruler Yusuf ibn Tashufin) to leave troops with us in *al-Andalus* lest the Christian should come down on us in strength and seek revenge for that and other campaigns. [For if he did] we would find ourselves with no troops to defend us. The Amir’s reply was: ‘Mend your ways and you’ll be able to cope with your enemy.’ Accordingly he gave us no troops.\(^{86}\)

\(^{85}\) Melville and Ubaydli, *Christians and Moors in Spain*, 93.  
\(^{86}\) Tibi, *The Tibyān*, 130.
For the Muslim kings the party was now over. Had they been able to recapture Toledo, the Christians might have been demoralized enough to have lost control of their kingdoms. That was not to be the case. Despite the fact that the Almoravids had temporarily saved them from forced payment of the *parias*, they would be constrained by the will of the North Africans and the Christian kings from this time forward. The period of the *Taifa* in *al-Andalus*, marked by infighting and betrayal due to ethnic enmity, had come to an end.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


