

# FAIRMOUNT FOLIO

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CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor.....	4
<b>Unburied Hatchet: The Creek Struggle for Neutrality During the American Revolution</b>	
Jason Herbert.....	5
<b>The Evolution of Venereal Disease Policy of the U.S. Armed Forces</b>	
John Skelton.....	19
<b>The "Memel Problem:" German Memelland in the History World War II with an Aim to its Proper Placement</b>	
Nathaniel Lutke.....	42
<b>Enduring Casualties of War: Delayed Treatment of Combat Stress in World War II Veterans</b>	
Sarah Lavalley.....	82
<b>The Fight Against the Present Darkness: The Mennonite Reaction to the Vietnam War</b>	
Angela Sager.....	119
<b>Wichita's Gay Rights Ordinance No. 35-242: Opposition and Activism</b>	
Tyler Thornton.....	140

## From the Editor

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to present the fourteenth edition of the *Fairmount Folio*. This year we present works from both undergraduate and graduate students in Wichita State University's history department. Each of these essays was chosen for its content and overall quality by the Editorial Board and carefully edited by myself and Dr. Helen Hundley to provide the reader with the highest caliber of scholarship.

This issue, all of our entries deal with war: the reaction to war, war itself, the effects of war, and war of a different kind in our own society. An unattributed quote my mother often told me growing up was, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting their own battle." This has resonated throughout the editing of this volume. As I encountered American Indian relations in the American Revolution with Jason Herbert's work, John Skelton's work about venereal disease among soldiers, the oft-looked over Memel problem in Nathaniel Lutke's essay, Sarah Lavalley's work on post-traumatic stress disorder among soldiers, Angela Sager's writing on the Mennonite reaction to the Vietnam War, and Tyler Thornton's work on local battles in the fight for rights of Wichita's homosexual community, I realized that battles are fought in every aspect of life; including editing, writing, and college level studentship in general. By analyzing these topics as they do, the student writers allow us to realize the effects of battles on everyday people fighting both militaristic wars and wars in society.

I must thank Dr. Helen Hundley for her supreme leadership role, kindness, and keen eye in the editing process. The *Folio*, as always, is indebted to the Editorial Board: Dr. Robert Weems, Dr. Jay Price, and student editor Jason Herbert. Lastly, a thank you to Denise Burns is necessary, who has helped students who do not have the insight in word processors that she does format their papers for our use.

Enjoy.

## Unburied Hatchet: The Creek Struggle for Neutrality During the American Revolution

Jason Herbert

British General Archibald Campbell could not have been happy. Besieged on all sides in the South by Patriot and Spanish forces, he mustered little support from his native allies, the Creek Indians. When he engaged his enemy, few Creeks were present for battle. With the American Revolution rapidly drawing to a close, Campbell experienced the ambivalence of the Creek nation in late 1781. This was especially frustrating and disappointing for British goals of keeping at least the southernmost colonies. That England was not able to ever fully recruit what James Adair referred to as “the most powerful Indian nation we are acquainted with on this continent” may have lost them South Carolina, Georgia, and East and West Florida. As John Alden later wrote, “It was a happy circumstance for the Southern states, suffering as they did from Cherokee onslaughts that the belligerent Creeks never threw their full weight into the war on the Southern frontier.”<sup>1</sup>

Certainly the presence of thousands of powerful, experienced warriors like the Creeks would have been a boon to either side during the confrontation. However, nothing of the sort ever materialized. Instead, roving bands of war parties attacking Whig and Tory alike typified the Creek experience during the American Revolution. Due to factors both internal

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Adair's History of the American Indians* (Johnson City: The Watauga Press, 1930), 275; John Richard Alden, *The South in the Revolution, 1763–1789* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 274.

and external, the Creek nation experienced a struggle for neutrality during the years of 1776–1783 that would lay the frame work for their own civil war just thirty years after the end of the colonial revolt. This paper seeks to analyze those very causes that must have mystified both Patriot and British leaders alike.

No concept is more readily misunderstood by readers than the idea of a Creek “nation.” Historians have long used the word to describe the Creek, or more properly, Muskogee people. It was an attempt to explain the cultural bond that held the group together. However, nationhood, as commonly understood today, implies a certain unification along political boundaries and ideals that simply did not exist within Creek society. Therefore, when considering the Creek political structure, the term “confederacy” is probably best applied. The term “nation” is still applicable when speaking towards the group’s cultural bonds.

The Creek derived their common name from the many streams, rivers and swamps they inhabited in much of present day Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. In 1775, Adair calculated that Creek lands consisted of approximately 50 towns, and consisted of “about 3500 men fit to bear arms.” Recent historical demographic studies have placed the entire Creek population at a number approximating 14,000.<sup>2</sup> According to

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<sup>2</sup> Joshua Piker, “Colonists and Creeks: Rethinking the Pre-Revolutionary Southern Backcountry,” *The Journal of Southern History* 70, No. 3 (August 2004): 511; Williams, *Adair’s History*, 274; Peter H. Wood, “The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview of Race and Region, 1685–1790,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle*, ed. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

their own history, the Creeks had arrived from a location far to the west, conquered the local tribes, and adopted them into their society. Naturalist Bernard Romans noted the mixture of races, stating the Creeks:

were a mixture of the remains of the Cawittas, Talepoosas, Coosas, Apalachias, Conshacs or Coosades, Oakmulgis, Oconis, Okchoys, Alibamons, Natchez, Weetumkus, Pakanas, Taensas, Chacsihoomas, Abekas and some other tribes whose names I do not recollect...call themselves Muscokes and are at present known to us by the general name of Creeks, and divided into upper and lower Creeks; also those they call allies and are a colony from the others living far south in East Florida.<sup>3</sup>

It was difficult to achieve political unity within the confederacy due to the competing and sometimes conflicting loyalties Creeks had with townships and family clans. The confederation was split almost equally in two, with its people being known as either “Upper” or “Lower” Creeks. The Upper Creeks inhabited the valleys of the Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Alabama rivers in central Alabama, situated along a trade route from Charles Town. To the south and east resided the Lower Creeks, living amongst the Chattahoochee, Flint, and Ocmulgee rivers in Georgia.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Louis De Vorse, Jr., *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763–1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 21.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *Powhatan's Mantle*, 83.



The Creek confederation was united by the notion of clans. Interwoven between Upper and Lower towns, members of the society linked themselves to others through these extended families. A Creek warrior, for instance, did not identify himself as “Creek.” Rather, he identified himself as part of the Bear clan or Wind clan. When war parties went on raids, they did not do so because of Creek allegiance; they did so as members of a particular clan. Alexander McGillivray, later a very strong pro-British leader, was able to establish himself because of his mother’s membership in the Wind clan, one of the most powerful within the confederacy.<sup>5</sup>

Clans and townships shared a common delineation: their stance on war and peace. Known as either “red” or “white,” red towns and clans were more aggressive towards foes, while white towns and clans were known to be more peaceful, though they too participated in war. This division created hostility within the Creek world. According to Claudio Saunt, “The tension between red and white towns and between and even within individuals made alliances conditional and negotiable and made persuasion the root of power.”<sup>6</sup>

Further complicating matters for anyone seeking Creek allegiance was the lack of centralized leadership. Alexander McGillivray may have proclaimed himself to be head of the Creek nation before his death in 1793, but in 1775 the people

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<sup>5</sup> John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 5, 62; Charles M. Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 194–195.

<sup>6</sup> Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22.

of the swamps had no supreme ruler. Instead, towns were led by chiefs, called “micos.” These rulers did not have the power to compel any of their followers to do anything. A mico only had the power to persuade his fellow people along a certain path, never holding absolute authority. Towns had complete authority to act independently of one another. This extreme democratization infuriated those dealing with them, notably James Oglethorpe, head of the colony of Georgia in the 1730s, who exclaimed:

...there is no coercive power in any of their nations; their kings can do no more than persuade.... All the power they had is no more than to call their old men and captains together and to propound to them the measures they think proper; and after they have done speaking, all the others have liberty to give their opinions also; and they reason together with great temper and modesty till they have brought each other into some unanimous resolution.”<sup>7</sup>

Politically, the Creeks were unmatched in the South. During the Seven Years’ War, the Creeks played the French, Spanish and English off each other to maintain a strong system of trade and support. Never really choosing any side over another, individual Creeks would favor certain parties and work actively for the benefit of their friends. Creek-on-Creek fighting did not occur, except for the gladiatorial sparring of words in town talks.

The beginning of the American Revolution found the Creek confederacy in an uneasy position. Their grounds were under heavy assault by both white hunters and land speculators. Colonists did little to endear themselves to the native population, especially in the case of one Thomas Fee, a

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 26.; Williams, *Adair’s History*, 459–460.

white settler who murdered the popular Mad Turkey and escaped prosecution.<sup>8</sup>

Overhunting by the settlers on traditional grounds (especially those of the Lower Creeks) devastated the populations of whitetail deer. As the herd numbers diminished, native hunters were forced to target smaller deer. Not only important for means of subsistence, the deer skin trade was vital to Creek livelihood. Creek hunters traded the deerskins for rifles, ammunition, blankets and rum. As elsewhere, American Indians by the late eighteenth century were reliant upon foreign goods to sustain their lifestyle. They did not have the ability to manufacture or repair firearms, leaving them at mercy of colonial traders. Without white munitions, Creek men were unable to provide for their families during the winter months. Therefore, many Creek men operated at a deficit, indebting themselves to traders prior to the winter hunting season before repaying them in the spring. The deerskin to goods exchange rate was eroding, and forced Creek members into huge debts that would eventually be repaid in the form of land cessions. The continual land grabbing by speculators and faltering Creek economy led some, like The Mortar (Yahatastanage), to become openly hostile towards the Colonial newcomers.<sup>9</sup>

The Creeks were also engaged in yet another war with the Choctaws, their longtime rivals to the west. While Adair claimed the Muskogee were “an over-match for the numerous and fickle Choktah,” the war took its toll on the Creek nation,

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<sup>8</sup> *New-York Journal*, May 12, 1774; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet*, May 30, 1774.

<sup>9</sup> Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 153, 161.

depriving it of many capable warriors and leaders, especially The Mortar, who was killed seeking help from the Spanish in 1774.<sup>10</sup>

Heeding James Adair's warning that there was "no sure way to fight them, but in carrying the war into the bowels of their own country, by a superior body of the provincial troops, mixed with regulars," both British and Colonial diplomats initially asked the Creeks to stay out of the war. The Continental Congress on July 13, 1775, delivered a talk to the Six Nations Iroquois meant for all native peoples, comparing the war to a fight between father and son. They asked that Indian nations not attack the British and "keep the hatchet buried deep." At the same time, the Americans sought to explain their position and gain sympathy with Indians by stating that King George's counselors were "proud and wicked men," who had persuaded the king to break his bond with the colonies and were stealing from the colonists. Preying on Indian fears of land loss, the Americans questioned, "If the king's troops take away our property, and destroy us who are of the same blood with themselves, what can you, who are Indians, expect from them afterwards?"<sup>11</sup>

The requests for neutrality did not last long. In a letter dated September 12, 1775, British General Thomas Gates called upon Superintendent of Southern Indian Affairs John Stuart to

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<sup>10</sup> Williams, *Adair's History*, 286; *The New-York Gazette*, January 23, 1775.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.; "Continental Congress to the Indian Nations about the Conflict with the British", July 13, 1775, *Early American Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789: Volume XIV North and South Carolina Treaties, 1756-1775*.

employ Indians to the crown's advantage. This was a task Stuart was loathe to undertake.<sup>12</sup>

By all accounts, Scottish Stuart was a "remarkable man and a worthy and loyal servant of the crown." He owed years of experience with southern Indians to fighting in the Anglo-Cherokee war and had been a prisoner marked for death before being pardoned by Cherokee Chief Attakullakulla (Little Carpenter). He returned from his imprisonment with much prestige, owing to both his wartime heroics and his time spent with the Cherokee. What set him apart from his contemporaries was his understanding of American Indian ways of life and he spent much of his time preventing red/white hostilities in the frontier. He also understood that complete peace in Indian country was unattainable, since Indian boys were not considered men until they had taken a scalp. To wit, he steered hostilities away from white settlers and stunted pan-Indian sentiment by fomenting grievances between the Six Nation Iroquois, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw and Chickasaw peoples, specifically the ongoing Choctaw-Creek war. He grew disillusioned of land cessions by Indians to private organizations and actively opposed the Cherokee-Creek Land Cession of 1773. He feared that a precedent of private acquisitions with the Indians would make frontier government powerless, stating that traders would have the power "to counteract the Measures of Government whenever they may

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<sup>12</sup> "General Thomas Gage to Superintendent Stuart with Authorization to Use Indians Against American Rebels", September 12, 1775, *Early American Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789: Volume XIV North and South Carolina Treaties, 1756-1775*.

happen to clash with their particular Views & Interest, to the total Subversion of all Order and Regularity.”<sup>13</sup>

Stuart, along with his deputy David Taitt, was able to build a lasting friendship with a particularly influential Creek headman named Emistisegu, from the Upper town of Little Tallassee. Emistisegu was able to rally the Upper towns to the side of the British, but was continually rebuffed by the Lower Creeks due to the work of Patriot merchant George Galphin. Like Stuart, Galphin had spent much time in Indian country, particularly the Lower Creek town of Coweta, a red town known for its cunning warriors. Likely the earliest merchant in Creek territory, Galphin was an intelligent man who had made a considerable fortune in the backcountry. He made many friends among the Creeks, most importantly Handsome Fellow of Okfuskee, an Upper town that was decisive in keeping the northern bands inactive for the majority of the war. He differed from Stuart in that he promoted neutrality. Galphin similarly hated the frontier violence but thought that frontier traders could do a better job limiting it. He believed the traders knew the Indians best and that generous gifts would go a long way in ending hostilities. Writing to his friend the Young Lieutenant in 1774, he stated: “I am doing all that is in my Power to keep Peace here with your People and the White People and I hope you will do the same there.... You never shall be poor as long as I live.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John Richard Alden, *A History of the South III: The South in the Revolution 1763–1789* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 124; J. Russell Snapp, *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Southern Frontier* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 121–122.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, *Adair's History*, 288; Snapp, *John Stuart*, 142–143.

The Lower Creeks settled at first onto a stance of neutrality. Writing to John Stuart in late September, 1775, headmen from Coweta, Cussita, and two other towns declared their intentions:

We hear there is some difference between the white People and we are all sorry to hear it.... We are all glad to hear you desire us to keep in friendship with all white men, our friends as we dont want to Concearn in the matter but leave you to settle the matter yourselves and will be glad to hear the difference settled and all at peace again.<sup>15</sup>

A second letter to Stuart on behalf of all the Lower towns except the Eutchies and Hitchitas in March of 1776 reaffirmed this stance. However, both letters also relayed Creek concerns over trade and when it might pick back up. It soon became evident to both Stuart and Galphin that whoever could best supply the Creeks would gain their affection. Both parties promised Upper and Lower towns that supplies would be coming and blamed the other when those goods did not arrive. The tactics of both men varied. Galphin was opposed to directly involving the Indians in the war, and felt it was cruel to both the British and Colonials. His goal was to get the Lower towns (with whom he carried the most influence) to commit to a pledge of neutrality, and knew that that would keep pro-British Upper Creeks inactive on the frontier. Stuart did not want to get Indians involved in the war and feared for the lives of Tories in the backcountry. To offset these concerns, he felt it best to

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<sup>15</sup> "Lower Creek Reply to Superintendent Stuart, Declaring Neutrality", September 29, 1775, *Early American Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789: Volume XII: Georgia and Florida Treaties, 1763-1776*.

hold southern Indians in reserve until they could be used in conjunction with British regular forces landing along the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. He also understood that the ongoing Choctaw–Creek war kept Upper townsmen from committing to a pro–British stance, something that he, and not Galphin, had the ability to affect.

In October, 1776, warriors from the Choctaw nation as well as both Upper and Lower Creek towns met with Stuart in Pensacola to make peace. Both the Choctaws and Upper Creeks strongly pledged allegiance to the English king, while the Lower Creeks present grudgingly agreed to protect St. Augustine from rebel forces.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, another development kept newly loyal warriors out of the conflict for some time. Cherokee families trickled in to Upper Creek towns seeking shelter. Not heeding the advice of Superintendent Stuart, the Cherokee nation quickly jumped into the war under the lead of Dragging Canoe in early 1776. Striking against villages along the frontier, Cherokee forces mercilessly killed many white settlers in Georgia, North and South Carolina, including both patriots and Tories. The Cherokees, however, were unprepared for the American resistance put together by the southern colonies. A force ranging between 5,000 and 6,000 backwoodsmen soon swept through Cherokee country, burning all towns in its path, including the principal town of Chote. Cherokee refugees fled to the lands southwest and told their Creek hosts of the devastation the Americans had brought upon them. Fear of this

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<sup>16</sup> David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier: 1540–1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 300–301.



reprisal would weigh heavily on the minds of Creek warriors until the end of the war.<sup>17</sup>

The neutralist forces within the Creek confederacy were soon undone by the actions of Thomas Fee, the same man who had murdered Mad Turkey in 1774. This time his victim was a Coweta warrior. Both Escochabey and Ishenpoaphe, two respected men who had previously supported neutrality, turned against the Americans, along with the dominant town of the Lower Creeks, Coweta.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the setback, Galphin doubled his efforts to recruit the Creeks to the American cause in 1777. He held a meeting with Handsome Fellow and pro-rebel men from Upper towns Okfuskee, Sugatspoges, and Big Tallassee where they discussed assassinating Emistiseguo, who was actively supporting the British. Galphin and fellow Indian agent Robert Rae met a month later with Handsome Fellow, Opeitley Mico, the Cussita King, and several hundred warriors. They passed out presents in the form of guns, ammunition, and rum and invited the Creeks to view the American war effort in Charlestown.<sup>19</sup>

Galphin's work seemed to be successful. By 1778, the Lower Towns were again firmly in the neutralist camp, even Coweta. However, a Coweta raiding party had not received the message of Fine Bones which recently declared an end to hostilities when they killed three American rangers along the

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<sup>17</sup> James H. O'Donnell III, "The Southern Indians in the War for American Independence, 1775-1783," in *Four Centuries of Southern Indians*, ed. Charles M. Hudson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975)

<sup>18</sup> Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 297-298.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 305-306.

frontier. The flow of American goods into Creek territory promptly evaporated.<sup>20</sup>

With no more goods coming from the Americans, John Stuart was at ease to make overtures once more to the Creeks. The sounds of a reestablished British trade route made them quick to listen. Handsome Fellow was not there to counter Stuart's supporters; he had died of natural causes on the return trip from Charlestown. Neutralist voices within the confederation were slowly drowned out in favor of an anti-American position. They were bolstered by the arrival of Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell and his British troops near Augusta. A new leader of the Upper Creeks named Alexander McGillivray raised a group of warriors to join him. With McGillivray rode away all remaining hope of Creek neutrality. The people of the swamps and rivers would finish the war as allies of the British.<sup>21</sup>

It has been argued by some that the Creeks chose the "wrong side" of the war. This infers that the Creek nation should have allied with the rebels, that the future of the Muskogee people would have been somehow better should their final allegiance have been with the Americans. The inference is unlikely. Americans, boldly empowered after the war, snatched lands from friend and foe alike.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Homer Bast, "Creek Indian Affairs, 1775-1778," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (March 1949): 23.

<sup>21</sup> Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 317-319.

<sup>22</sup> Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 309-325; Joseph T. Glatthaar and James Kirby Martin, *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 289-314

Instead, it is apparent that the combination of natural Creek divisiveness combined with the dueling efforts of John Stuart and George Galphin and the early entry of the Cherokees into the war (the outcome of which greatly hindered any pan-Indian attacks on the colonials) ultimately condemned the Creeks to their later exodus from the region. Before the war, only British authorities had shown interest in restraining the wanton desires of frontier land speculators. Only the British possessed sufficient supplies that Creek hunters so desperately needed. The British also had a government with the intent of having good relations with Indian nations. Unable to decisively unite against a common enemy, the Creeks relinquished control of their post war fates. At the end of the war, the Creeks were forced to cede 800 square miles as reparation for their role in the conflict. What lands that were not ceded soon fell into the laps of American merchants eager to capitalize on Muskogee debts. Within fifty years, the Creeks no longer lay claim to the river valleys that gave them their name.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Alden, *The South in the Revolution*, 360; Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 325.

## **The Evolution of Venereal Disease Policy of the U.S. Armed Forces**

John Skelton

A prostitute calls down to a soldier from a balcony, "Come on up here and I'll give you something you've never had before!" The soldier dryly replies, "What's that, leprosy?"<sup>24</sup>

This joke was passed on from a Korean War veteran who said it was old when he heard it. How old is debatable, but the long association of venereal disease with the common soldier certainly is not. This relationship, mingled with the public's moral perceptions and common fears of standing armies, has proven as difficult an impediment for the Armed Forces to overcome as many of the battles they have fought. Over the

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<sup>24</sup> Jack Jacks, interview by John Skelton. Email interview November 23, 2011.

centuries, few populations have been so empathetic as to consider that their soldiers, drawn from the common essence, were deserving of civil understanding. The litany of double standards, well expressed by Rudyard Kipling in “Tommy,” where the townsfolk cared not a whit for his bad food or loneliness, but inquired, “Tommy, how’s your soul?” was demonstrated by the tolerance of red light districts in most of their municipalities.<sup>25</sup>

Sequestered in these seedy areas were the great vectors of venereal disease—prostitutes. Venereal disease, considered a “social evil” not fit for conversation, was thought by doctors and laymen alike, to remain cordoned in red light districts.<sup>26</sup> Only men of low moral character, such as soldiers or sailors, would deign to visit the brothels and bawdy houses in these warrens of turpitude. Therefore, civilian moral standards tended to merge soldiers and prostitutes together into a singular amoral swash. This was not an entirely inaccurate conclusion; soldiers, generally young men, healthy and unattached, poorly paid, and stationed far from the sobering effects of their homes, naturally gravitated to entertaining places of cheap food, drink, and female companionship.

Since soldiers were deemed indispensable while prostitutes were not, various governments sought to manage the scourge of venereal diseases through the control of prostitution alone. In the fourth century CE, the Eastern Roman

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<sup>25</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Rudyard Kipling's Verse* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 453–454.

<sup>26</sup> Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 80; “Social evil” is an expression found often in venereal disease literature. The concept is explored in Chapter 21 of *Microbes and Morality*.

Empire passed a series of rigorous laws banning prostitution. Lawbreakers were subject to loss of property, flogging, and exile. The severity of such punishments reflects the recalcitrance of the prostitutes, clearly many felt their vocation worth the risks. Similar bans enacted by Charlemagne and others were common place until the thirteenth century when Louis IX, in recognition of their futility, opted for unofficially regulated prostitution rather than proscription.<sup>27</sup> The efficacy of simply regulating prostitution was seriously called into question by the French King Charles VIII's mercenary soldiers returning from their ruinous 1494–95 Italian campaign, which spread syphilis throughout the continent. The disease, new to Europe, became known as the “French Disease,” forever linked not only to France, but to the soldiers who circulated it.<sup>28</sup>

The ever-warring world staggered along, obliged to maintain standing armies but unable to meaningfully impede venereal diseases or curtail prostitution. Uncertain whether to consider the proliferation of venereal disease as a social, moral, medical, or legal issue, attempts to deal with the problem were made in the nineteenth century. The United States lagged somewhat behind its European neighbors, in part because of prudishness, but also because until the Civil War, no meaningful military law had been charted, particularly regarding the conduct and control of troops abroad. Though the earliest of these laws offered nothing specific to venereal disease, the rules themselves formed the foundation of the policies to come.

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<sup>27</sup> Theodor Rosebury, *Microbes and Moral* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), 252–253.

<sup>28</sup> Frederick F. Cartwright and Michael D. Biddiss, *Disease and History* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1972), 58.

This path began with the 157 articles of the 1863 “General Orders 100,” ostensibly designed to standardize military codes of conduct in captured enemy territory. Over time, the General Orders 100 came to provide the foundation for many codes of U.S. military law.<sup>29</sup> Article 4 clarified the so-called chivalric traditions of soldiering as “strictly guided by the principles of justice, honor, and humanity – virtues adorning a soldier even more than other men. . . .” Articles 13 and 14 defined the relationship between civil law and military law in occupied territories, established prime jurisdiction to military commissions and courts-martial, and maintained a regard for existing civil convention. Though not specifically mentioning prostitution, the code made an important correlation between women and the safeguarding of morality in Article 37:

The United States acknowledge and protect, in hostile countries occupied by them, religion and morality; strictly private property; the persons of the inhabitants, especially those of women: and the sacredness of domestic relations. Offenses to the contrary shall be rigorously punished.<sup>30</sup>

These particular articles could be interpreted a number of ways, not only to spell out the differences between rape and consensual sex, but also as a means of morally condoning or

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<sup>29</sup> Frank Freidel, “General Orders 100 and Military Government,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 32, no. 4 (March 1946), 541.

<sup>30</sup> Francis Lieber, “The Avalon Project,” (*Yale Lillian Goldman Law Library*: 2008), Accessed November 27, 2011, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/lieber.asp#art13](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lieber.asp#art13). The Law Library has posted the “General Orders No. 100” by Francis Lieber written for President Lincoln April 24, 1863.

rigorously combating prostitution in occupied areas under martial law. Theoretically, this combination of laws made it possible to extract prostitution from the civil sector and bring it under military control. Doing so meant making adjustments to deal with the civil impressions of the particular situation.

Therefore, the military control of prostitution, including venereal disease mitigation policy, remained mired in the larger civil body of moral interpretation, at least so long as no threat to the military's wellbeing was perceived. As America's urban areas grew the burgeoning urban middle classes became fearful of impure women degrading the moral fiber of men and corrupting impressionable girls. Their agitation gradually redefined the legal standards formerly applied to prostitutes, whose actions were normally ignored, as evinced by most prosecutions for harlotry falling under categories such as "vagrancy." As ministers decried rampant vice and newspapers eagerly wrote bylines, metropolitan city attorneys found themselves forced to make alterations in the time-honored management tactics of civil immorality.<sup>31</sup> Obviously, these progressive steps impacted the military construal of the evils of prostitution as well. The middle-class cry for moral social change reached its apex during the Progressive era of the early twentieth century. Not coincidentally, it is also in this timeframe that military policymakers designed the moral regulations and programs which would be continued, in whole or part, up to the present time.

The growing prestige of Progressive public health advocates, particularly clinicians, spurred a national sense of

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<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey S. Adler. "Streetwalkers, Degraded Outcasts, and Good-for-Nothing Huzzies: . . ." *Journal of Social History* 25, No. 4. (Summer 1992:737-755, 737-738, 740, 745-746.



moral outrage over the incidence of venereal disease among soldiers in the Spanish American War. As many as 161 out of 1000 were infected,<sup>32</sup> and such numbers put serious public pressure on both Congress and the military to act. Congress responded with the Mann Act, designed to federally enforce immigrant and interstate prostitution laws. These laws locked prostitutes into their state of residence, and made immigration for the purposes of prostitution or visitation with prostitutes over state lines into federal crimes. Though a difficult and expensive apparatus to enforce, this powerful tool found use against prostitutes migrating from camp to camp in search of work. Corresponding with the 1912 inauguration of the Mann Act, the military promulgated General Orders 17 that regulated and enforced prophylaxis, inspections, education, and punitive measures.<sup>33</sup> In spite of an overall downturn in venereal disease occurrence, the efficacy of these early laws was called into question by the 1916 Border War with Francisco “Pancho” Villa, when 288 out of every 1000 Texas-based servicemen contracted some form of venereal disease.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. M. J. Exner independently investigated the situation for the then-vigorously Progressive YMCA and published his

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<sup>32</sup> Adam J. Rapalski, "Effects of Population Concentration on the Spread of Syphilis: Military," in *Proceedings of World Forum on Syphilis and Other Treponematoses*, (Atlanta: U.S.

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1962): 136.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas H. Sternberg, Ernest B. Howard, Leonard A. Dewey, and Paul Padget, “Venereal Diseases” in *Preventive Medicine in World War 2*, edited by Jr. John Boyd Coates. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army, 1960), 139.

<sup>34</sup>Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 53–54.

findings in *Social Hygiene*. Although a clinician by trade, Exner's moral views dictated his assessment of the Texas situation so far as to decry the military's mandatory venereal prophylaxis as little better than tacit approval for soldiers to debase themselves. Exner cataloged many other reasons for the susceptibility of the soldiers to vice including youth and vigor, loneliness, and the tendency for young men to give in to "the degrading atmosphere that prevails in promiscuous male groups, such as are found in the average military camp" explaining that "the influences which we have enumerated, which tend to weaken the moral resistance of the soldier, call for a thorough moral sanitation of the environment. . . ." <sup>35</sup> Exner also described the conditions of the surrounding communities as abetting the debauchery. Citing many camp commanders as morally lax, his article averred that serious influence over the men was only brought to bear in high violence districts, the vice districts at best being subject only to bi-weekly health checks for prostitutes by local physicians. Moreover, the local communities "not only failed to cooperate adequately with the military authorities in suppressing prostitution or making it inaccessible to the soldiers, but many of them vigorously opposed such measures on the ground that it would hurt business or for political reasons." Needless to say, Exner's moral condemnation of the state of affairs caused quite a public stir. <sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> M. J. Exner, "Prostitution in its Relation to the Army on the Mexican Border," in *Social Hygiene* III (1916-1917)207-209, 220.

<sup>36</sup> Exner, "Prostitution in its Relation to the Army," 207-209, 220.

In response to Exner's outrageous public allegations, an official investigation led by Raymond B. Fosdick of the Bureau of Social Hygiene was dispatched to Texas. Fosdick's grim assessment, not published at the time, was brought to the attention of Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. Baker, a staunch moralist and the former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, took the Bureau's report very seriously indeed. In a letter to the commander on the border, General Frederick Funston, Baker made it plain "that the time has come when the health of the army must be safeguarded against the weakness that derives from venereal disease and excessive alcohol."<sup>37</sup> However, Baker had much more on his mind than a border squabble with a nearby third-rate revolutionary. The sense of an impending U.S. entry into the ongoing European conflagration further fueled widespread interest in vouchsafing the health and morality of American soldiers. This growing concern, validated with the 1917 declaration of war against Germany and her allies, served as the impetus for the civil and military cooperation necessary to actualize a venereal disease program.

The program called "Fit to Fight" ramped up all of the 1912 and prior efforts and added tweaks to the existing philosophy. Firmly rooted in socially Progressive fears of intemperance, venereal disease, and moral decay, many activists weighed in on the particulars for the movement. Among the most influential was the YMCA which offered to design wholesome activity programs for soldiers both in and out of the camps. Many of the proposals involved Raymond Fosdick's earlier work for the Bureau of Social Hygiene.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 53–56, 58.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

Bureau studies indicated that by ignoring drunken, carousing ways of the soldiers, police departments and military officers were both responsible for the scourge of venereal diseases spreading among the troops.

Casting about for ideas on how to solve the problems, Secretary of War Baker enlisted the help of Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, famous for the expression: "Men must live straight if they would shoot straight."<sup>39</sup> Rounding out the big players on the hygienic and moral reformation team were Exner and Fosdick. Along with a cadre of civil and military bureaucrats, the four set out to reform the traditional chivalric military moral code, with visions of sober, chaste American soldiers marching in their heads. The task that confronted them was difficult for many reasons. As noted, many communities had financial and political interests running counter to the military interests. Moreover, the previous studies demonstrated that curtailing prostitution would not alone stem the vice-ridden ways of soldiers.

The actions taken required a forceful, multilateral approach: the elimination of prostitution and liquor as practicable, regular inspections, application of punitive measures for incorrigible soldiers, and prophylaxis. Measures had been in place for five years prior to America's entry into World War I, but the results were not there. The Conscription Act of 1917 spelled out in Articles 12 and 13 the need for alcohol and vice-free camp surroundings extending a minimum of five miles in all directions and into surrounding

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<sup>39</sup> Josephus Daniels, *The Navy and The Nation* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 56; Walter Clarke, "Social Hygiene and the War" in *Social Hygiene IV* (1918), 277.

communities.<sup>40</sup> Constitutionally barred from acting as a civil police force, the military could not achieve such ambitions without widespread outside support. The expeditious path to achieving this goal was met in part by letters sent to mayors and sheriffs nationwide asking for their help. A letter sent by Baker to the Councils of Defense in states where camps were or soon would be located, politely asked for similar support:

Will you give earnest consideration to this matter in your particular state? I am confident that much can be done to arouse the cities and towns to an appreciation of their responsibility for clean conditions; and I would suggest that through such channels as may present themselves to you, you impress upon these communities their patriotic opportunity in this matter. I would further suggest that as an integral part of the war machinery your Council make itself responsible for seeing that the laws of your State and of Congress in respect to these matters are strictly enforced.<sup>41</sup>

The soldiers needed to be in a wholesome environment if they were expected to be wholesome people. Secretary Daniels explained that this meant more than banning alcohol and prostitutes. The boys also needed “competitive interests to replace the evils we are trying to eliminate.”<sup>42</sup> Baker’s team believed that the missing ingredients were recreation and education, and set out to ameliorate these deficiencies by

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<sup>40</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Fosdick, “The Program of the Commission on Training Camp Activities With Relation to the Problem of Venereal Disease,” in *Social Hygiene* IV (1918), 71–72, 74.

<sup>42</sup> Daniels, *The Navy and The Nation*, 59; Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 59.

forming the Commissions on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) on April 17, 1917.<sup>43</sup> Soon after, Daniels created the Naval CTCA, which unified both programs under the direction of Raymond Fosdick.<sup>44</sup> Enlisting the help of the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus, and the Jewish Board for Welfare Work, \$11 million was spent between August, 1917, and May, 1918. Auditoriums were built for educational purposes. Compulsory personal hygiene and morality lectures were delivered frequently. Tens of thousands of pamphlets were printed and disseminated. Coaches were hired to keep the men active and fit. Even music and singing instructors joined in, extolling the martial virtues of song: "If you have ever heard one of the French regiments marching along the road and singing as it goes, you will know what kind of inspiration comes from that kind of training."<sup>45</sup>

The CTCA organized their campaign on three fronts: inside the camp, outside in the surrounding community, and through the use of both military and local police. In the wider community, the omnipresent YMCA sponsored chaperoned dances. Programs such as "take-the-soldier-home-to-dinner" saw wide public involvement. Athletic clubs and swimming pools were opened to the soldiers.<sup>46</sup> Under the sheltering guidance and uplifting tutelage of the "Y-men," every effort was made to steer the soldiers clear of vice.<sup>47</sup> To further

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<sup>43</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Daniels, *The Navy and The Nation*, 58; "Public No. 77 65th Congress," in *Social Hygiene IV* (1918), 242.

<sup>45</sup> Fosdick, *Social Hygiene Volume IV*, 73.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>47</sup> Soldiers, resentful of the endless preaching, used the expression "Y-man" derisively. Francis Sill Wickware, "National

protect the men, local and state organizations such as the Bureau of Social Hygiene of New York and the Watch and Ward Society of New England kept a sharp lookout for unaccompanied women in the vicinities of the camps, even beyond the five mile range. In numerous letters, Baker called upon local authorities to cooperate in stamping out resorts even five miles outside of camp. Buried in these letters, Baker issued subtle threats to the effect that the zones were easily extendable if necessary.<sup>48</sup> Local politicians and police departments acted quickly to close red light districts and run off prostitutes, hoping to prevent further intrusions into soldiers' affairs.

Between all of the lectures, motion pictures, pamphlets, and posters peppering the soldiers, the family friendly town activities, and the rigorous closings of red light districts, reformers believed their men Fit to Fight. <sup>49</sup> President Woodrow Wilson weighed in on the program declaring,

When the members of the American Expeditionary Forces return to their homes they will come home with no scars except those won in honorable conflict because America has been far-sighted enough, idealistic enough, to undertake to fight an unseen enemy, and win. . . 50

Ensnared beneath the protective wings of civilly and militarily regulated morality, educated on the wages of sin in every

Defense VS. Venereal Disease," *Life*, (October 13, 1941: 128-138), 138.

<sup>48</sup> Fosdick, *Social Hygiene Volume IV*, 74.

<sup>49</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 72-73.

<sup>50</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "The Fight Against Venereal Disease," *The New Republic*, Vol. 17 (August 1918), 134.

conceivable way, some 1.5 million soldiers shipped out for France, a credit to their nation and decent people everywhere.

The Fit to Fight program, unprecedented on so many levels, proved equally unparalleled in its failure. The incidence of reported venereal disease, some 400,000 in all, outstripped the numbers of combat wounded and killed by more than 160,000 men. The equivalent of six infantry divisions out for a year, 7.5 million man-days went into recovery behind the lines.<sup>51</sup> Confronted on arrival by rampant French and English prostitution (some 38,000 prostitutes lived in London alone),<sup>52</sup> European laws, much less American, proved useless. More prostitutes yet swarmed the 1919 Rhineland occupation zone. In spite of medical examinations of the prostitutes, compulsory prophylaxis requirements, and anti-fraternization regulations, efforts at controlling the problem proved wholly ineffective. Finding it difficult to prove that the wanton women were actually prostitutes, authorities fell back on the time honored practices of American police departments, ignoring prostitution as a crime and clearing them out with charges of vagrancy.<sup>53</sup>

As the war ended, the soldiers whether honorably scarred or morally smirched, trailed home and resumed their civilian lives. Obscured by the "Roaring Twenties," the Great

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<sup>51</sup> Francis Sill Wickware, *Life*, 128.

<sup>52</sup> George Riley Scott, *History of Prostitution* (New York: Medical Press of New York, 1954), 124. Scott estimates the number of prostitutes operating in London doubled during the War years and believes that in Paris, boasting less regulation, likely had at least that many too.

<sup>53</sup> The Provost Marshal General's School, *Civil Affairs Studies: Illustrative Cases From Military Occupations, Training Packet No. 8*, (Military Government Department: 1944), 37.



Depression, isolationism, and table-talk taboos, for the next several years, the civil hygiene movement, like the diseases, went into remission. The only influential piece of military hygiene legislation, passed by Congress in May of 1926, reiterated the traditional punitive codes of loss of pay and court-martial, the negative experiences of the war clearly convinced Congress that the rod was a surer deterrent than any moral lecture series.<sup>54</sup> Such maneuvers clearly indicated the influence of tradition on both military and civil jurisprudence; for if nothing else, the point of the Fit to Fight program was that the old measures did not work. A traditional decade of ignoring the problem followed.

In 1937, Dr. Thomas Parran, the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service, shattered the stillness with the publication of his book *Shadow on the Land*. Written for the lay audience, Parran's book caught the public off guard, and fueled the widespread concerns about venereal disease.<sup>55</sup> A personal friend of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the former State Health Commissioner for New York,<sup>56</sup> Parran quickly capitalized on his unexpected celebrity, driving his views home in a series of magazine articles. For the good of all Americans, Parran demanded a concerted effort to eradicate syphilis, "the No. 1 killer andcrippler among preventable diseases."<sup>57</sup> The unprecedented public response made Dr. Parran a household name and brought venereal disease from the shadowy realm of

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<sup>54</sup> Sternberg, et. al., "Venereal Diseases," 140, 143.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 631-632.

<sup>56</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 136.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Parran, "Progress in the War Against Syphilis," *The Reader's Digest* ( August 1940: 109-112), 109.

“social evil” to an issue worthy of open conversation and debate.

Around the same time Dr. Parran began his campaign against syphilis, the 1936 Social Security Act became law. Statistics provided to Congress indicated that half a million Americans contracted syphilis yearly and that \$31 million was spent per annum in caring for syphilitic cases of neural degeneration. Furthermore, Parran asserted that cases of gonorrhea “were several times as prevalent.” Shocked at the numbers and expense, Congress attached public health provisions to the bill, aiming to curb disease-related expenses down the line. Some \$10 million was divided between Federal and State health departments. Though thrilled by the funding, Parran cautioned the hopeful “not to expect too much from the health measures which can be carried out under the present Social Security Act.”<sup>58</sup> Responding to tuberculosis, yellow fever, typhoid, and diphtheria, along with venereal diseases, the \$10 million expenditure was a drop in the bucket compared to the need although it helped establish treatment centers in cities nationwide and disbursed mobile clinics into rural areas.<sup>59</sup>

In 1938, Congress passed the “Venereal Disease Control Act” into law. Publicized as an expansion of the funding measures in the Social Security Act, the avowed intentions of the measure were to eradicate syphilis. However, a cynic might suggest that the timing of the act coincided with growing concerns over the possibility of American involvement in yet another major European war. This threat prompted several meetings between military officials and the U.S. Public Health

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<sup>58</sup> Thomas Parran, “Health Security,” *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* Vol.14, (April 1936), 117.

<sup>59</sup> Parran, “Progress in the War Against Syphilis,” 109–110, 112.

Service. Over the next two years, the groups hashed out a program: “An Agreement by the War and Navy Departments, the Federal Security Agency, and State Health Departments on Measures for the Control of Venereal Diseases in Areas Where Armed Forces or National Defense Employees are Concentrated.” Fortunately, this came to be abbreviated as the “Eight-Point Agreement” and was adopted in May of 1940, officially becoming policy four months later.<sup>60</sup> The military’s venereal policy for WWII, as expected, modeled itself along lines established by previous traditions and laws, the Eight-Point Agreement renewing the War Department’s relationship with the civilian sector.

One slight deviation from the old playbook was the ousting of the moralistic YMCA recreational program for one of military design. Camp canteens sold beer at cost and state-of-the-art gymnasiums and recreation centers were managed on-site. Envisioning a setting where women of “iron-clad respectability” might answer to the soldier’s needs for female companionship, Army Surgeon General James Magee sponsored the creation of the USO. Put in plain words for the American public, *Life* magazine explained that:

...the U.S.O. is not going to try any uplifting. The purpose is to avoid duplicating the YMCA “huts” of the last war where religious tracts were the standard literary offering, and where the price of a hot cup of coffee was a 15-minute talk on the virtues of clean living by an earnest “Y” man. The “Y” men will be in attendance at the U.S.O. Clubs, but they are of a new, changed generation, and no longer specialize in saving souls. <sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Sternberg et. al., “Venereal Diseases,” 140.

<sup>61</sup> Wickware, *Life*, 128, 136, 138

Already successful in his rational appeals to the public, Dr. Parran separated morality from public health in his military efforts too. Approbated by the public, his clinical approach came to dominate the new effort. Anybody could be a vector for venereal disease; thus soldiers from the public likely matched the overall population in venereal disease incidence. Mandatory testing was conducted by the Selective Service.<sup>62</sup> Out of the first million men called, over 60,000 failed the tests.<sup>63</sup> Unacceptable to the military, they were forwarded to public health departments for treatment.<sup>64</sup> Demonstrating that the public were also the soldiers, Dr. Parran was determined to deepen civic involvement in both building the war effort and combating venereal disease. Enlisting the help of the media, he explained to readers of the October, 1941 issue of "Life" magazine that the new soldiers

...are clean to start with and the Army, Navy and Public Health Service are doing in their power to keep them free of disease. But the job cannot be done successfully unless the people of the U.S. realize their responsibility. Every citizen must see to it that his community is cleaned up and kept clean.<sup>65</sup>

Another all-out war on prostitution was launched. Beginning more than a year before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the controlled extra cantonment zones also included

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>63</sup> *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 220, "Organizing for Total War," (March, 1942), 89.

<sup>64</sup> Francis Sill Wickware, "National Defense VS. Venereal Disease," *Life*, (October 13, 1941), 128.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 128.

civilian defense complexes and added numerous industrial centers to the vice-patrolled areas.<sup>66</sup> Many of the older tricks of the trade, such as offering refreshments in the myriad “sandwich shops” springing up around the camps, were swiftly dealt with by health departments’ required venereal checks pending the issuance of food handler’s licenses.<sup>67</sup> However, the anti-prostitution campaigns of WWII suffered from complications not previously experienced by law enforcement. Roused from their haunts near camps and industries, prostitutes blended into their communities, continuing to ply their trade. “Life” magazine noted that “like the army, the modern prostitutes believe in mechanization.” The professionals, deprived of their red light districts, worked their trade from cars and trailers, staying well out of the controlled zones.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, with fewer prostitutes operating close-in, “occasional” prostitutes called “B-girls” and “chippies” entered the market.<sup>69</sup> These women, many of them job holders with private residences, used their anonymity to great success. At all levels, the problem only grew.

By 1941, venereal disease was determined to be the greatest obstacle to combat readiness in the U.S. military. Furthermore, 75% of the infections proved traceable to prostitutes. Having yet to enter the war against the Axis powers, the military was already losing the war on venereal

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<sup>66</sup> *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 220 “Organizing for Total War,” 89.

<sup>67</sup> *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 378.

<sup>68</sup> Wickware, “National Defense VS. Venereal Disease,” *Life*, (October 13, 1941), 130.

<sup>69</sup> *The Science News-Letter*, “Prostitutes Blamed,” (October 31, 1942: 278), 278.

disease and prostitution. Army Surgeon General James C. Magee contended that the largest obstacle was the military's lack of jurisdiction in communities surrounding the camps, and the failure of local authorities to assist in keeping the areas clean. The May Act of 1941, penned by Kentucky Representative Andrew J. May, was designed to deal with these issues forcibly. The May Act essentially reiterated the programs instituted by the Eight-Point Agreement, with one caveat: it was now Federal Law.<sup>70</sup>

The May Act decreed that if a commanding officer received inadequate support from local authorities, he could request an investigation be made by the Federal Security Agency. By demanding a request for a civil investigation, the May Act remained Constitutional as the military never forced its jurisdiction over the citizen population. If the Federal Security Agency investigators found the commander's accusations viable, the FBI responded to the need directly, swarming into a town and arresting prostitutes and pimps on federal charges. In July, 1941, a raid was staged in the area around Camp Forrest, Tennessee. Seventy-five arrests out of an estimated 500 prostitutes (and associates) were made.<sup>71</sup> It remains difficult to ascertain the actual impact of both the May Act and similar, older legislation such as the Mann Act. In the overall picture, the continuity of the problem seemed relatively unaffected. Clearly, it was hoped that by making a few examples like the Tennessee raid, the problem could be brought under control through fear alone, as the legal maneuvers being unwieldy and expensive.

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<sup>70</sup> Sternberg et. al., "Venereal Diseases," 142-143.

<sup>71</sup> J.V Dillon, "Military Police Functions," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, (January, February 1943), 376-377.

In any case, though the home-front war on venereal disease raged on, the events of December 7, 1941, redirected the attention of the U.S. military and Federal Government to larger concerns. The soldiers shipped out, leaving their personal hygiene training films and pamphlets behind, girded with condoms and personal prophylaxis kits.<sup>72</sup> The number of prostitutes awaiting the arrival of the Americans in Europe remains contentious. British efforts at curtailing venereal disease, and thus prostitution, largely revolved around inexpensive treatment at public clinics, but carried no notification requirements. Regulatory proposals like compulsory notification and licensure of prostitutes were hotly debated topics at the time, the public largely opposed to both.<sup>73</sup> It was reported that in many port cities and industrial towns the services of a prostitute could be purchased for as little as a shilling, and a good time in London could be had for around ten.<sup>74</sup> France, where prostitution was regulated, boasted 8,000 card-carrying prostitutes as of 1946. It is likely the actual number was three times as high.<sup>75</sup>

Surprisingly, with temptation seemingly around every corner, the wartime incidence of venereal disease among American soldiers remained relatively static, varying from 35 to

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<sup>72</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 164.

<sup>73</sup> "Legislative Control of Venereal Disease," *The Lancet* (July 1, 1944), 17; George Ryley Scott, *A History of Prostitution From Antiquity to the Present Day*, (New York: Medical Press of New York, 1954), 125–126.

<sup>74</sup> Scott, *A History of Prostitution*, 126–127.

<sup>75</sup>J.G. Mancini, *Prostitutes and their Parasites*, (London, Elek Books: 1962)56.

41 soldiers per one thousand.<sup>76</sup> To a large degree this achievement was brought about by the military medical community's nearly unilateral opposition to the 1926 Congressional Act demanding court-martial for infected soldiers. The doctors believed that large numbers of infected men, afraid of being caught, received incomplete (or poorly administered) treatment from shady civilian doctors, pedaling silence and medication. Eventually, these soldier's infections grew so severe as to incapacitate them. One of the loudest voices for repeal belonged to the Air Surgeon of the Army Air Forces, General David N. W. Grant. The arsenical sulfa treatments used for the infections, well known for causing sensory problems, jeopardized pilots and their expensive equipment. Flyers on such medication were grounded. Fearing the repercussions of getting caught, many opted for clandestine treatments instead. Eventually, one of these men was killed and his autopsy revealed his subterfuge. General Grant, along with many others, finally forced the issue. In September of 1944, Congress officially repealed the court marshal bill.<sup>77</sup>

As the war progressed and more European territory came under Allied control, soldiers were exposed to ever larger civilian populations. Reported incidences of venereal diseases leapt to 60 per one thousand in 1945, peaking at around 117

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<sup>76</sup> Adam J. Rapalski, "Effects of Population Concentration on the Spread of Syphilis: Military," *Proceedings of World Forum on Syphilis and Other Treponematoses*, 136.

<sup>77</sup> Sternberg, et. al., *Venereal Diseases*," 143-144, 146



per one thousand in 1947.<sup>78</sup> One contributing factor was the revocation of punitive measures which served as an impetus for increased numbers of infected soldiers to report for treatment. A more relevant contributor, however, is that soldiers, were also exposed to far more prostitution in occupied Continental Europe than in either America or England.

Given the dire circumstances faced by the civilian populations of occupied Europe, its infrastructure destroyed and food shortages critical, castigations of many women as common harlots belied the truth. Rampant starvation was endemic. A representative of the International Rescue and Relief Committee writing from the United States Zone of Austria reported that "there are no potatoes, no cereals. Meats and fats have been non-existent for the past year ... For the first time in my life, I have seen people die of hunger."<sup>79</sup> Many women found themselves reduced to prostitution simply to survive. Misery and morals aside, venereal disease numbers clearly demonstrated that many American soldiers took advantage of the situation.

Few seemed to notice the post-war proliferation of infection. Penicillin, introduced in 1943, largely obfuscated the spike in venereal diseases at the end of WWII. Even as the disease problematically grew tolerant of the older sulfapyridine regimens, the new antibiotic treatment proved 100% effective against gonorrhea,. Treatments for syphilis proved similarly effective. So influential was penicillin to the war effort that its

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<sup>78</sup> Adam J. Rapalski, "Effects of Population Concentration on the Spread of Syphilis: Military," *Proceedings of World Forum on Syphilis and Other Treponematoses*, 136.

<sup>79</sup> L. Hollingsworth Wood, "Report From Austria," *The Nation* (July 6, 1946), 26.

first history, *Yellow Magic*, was published even as the war continued. Author J. D. Ratcliff exalted that “American doctors aren’t waiting to see if they can tease life back into a nearly dead man. They aren’t waiting until raging infection develops before trying penicillin. They are using it as a prophylactic and as a preventative.”<sup>80</sup> Penicillin proved so effective and affordable in treating venereal diseases that the numbers of infected men simply stopped mattering. As a result, serious developments in military venereal disease policy largely stagnated afterward.

By the time America engaged in the Korean War, the lessons of venereal disease mitigation were largely learned. The 1950 Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) continued limiting punitive actions against infected soldiers, preferring to patch them up with antibiotics and get them back to marching. Since that time, the disciplinary route of the U.S. Armed Forces has only marginally changed. Conversation with the Office of the Judge Advocate at McConnell A.F.B., Kansas, revealed that contraction and infection of venereal disease by a member of the armed forces remains a non-chargeable offense under the current code. However, if a commanding officer opts to pursue such a charge, prosecution under Article 134, the “General Article,” remains possible, even though venereal disease is not specifically listed as a chargeable offence. The Air Force attorney noted that such a case would be difficult to prove, as prosecution would have to establish that the charged person deliberately contracted a debilitating condition to avoid duty or transfer overseas. More pertinent is the inclusion of a

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<sup>80</sup> J. D. Ratcliff, *Yellow Magic* (New York: Random House, 1945), 101–102, 117, 127–128, 134, 159.

numerated charge prohibiting prostitution or the use of a prostitute. Conviction of the prostitution charge can result in dishonorable discharge, imprisonment of one year, and forfeiture of all pay and allowances.<sup>81</sup>

The current UCMJ anti-prostitution measures may serve to reduce venereal disease incidence in foreign or occupied zones where prostitution remains rampant, although the history of soldiers and prostitutes indicates otherwise. Traditionally, military responses to the issue have been driven both by civil agitation such as the 1916 Border War publications of Dr. M. J. Exner and by urgent necessity, such as America's entry into the World Wars. No single arbiter, be they Executive, Legislative, military, or civil have proven able to craft an effectual policy to deal with the proliferation of venereal disease among soldiers. The most effective solution thus far employed has been the introduction of penicillin and other antibiotics answering the problem of disease but ignoring its cause. With newer, incurable infections such as AIDS and antibiotic resistant strains of the more familiar venereal diseases growing ever more threatening, it is difficult to say what steps may be taken next.

**The "Memel Problem:"  
German Memelland in the History of  
World War II with an Aim to its Proper Placement.  
Nathaniel Lutke**

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<sup>81</sup> Interview by John Skelton with Captain Lewis, McAFB JAG Office Telephone interview December 6, 2011.



Source: New York Times, 21 March, 1939, p8.

*The Memel operation and its background though dismissed in a sentence by many historians, is worthy of study –as*

*something of a microcosm of its more celebrated predecessors.*<sup>82</sup>

An integral part of the eastern German and Prussian social and economic landscape for 700 years, the region known as Memel was stripped from direct German rule according to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I. The Memel territory, alternatively known as ‘Memelland’<sup>83</sup> to the Germans and the “Klaipeda Region” to the Lithuanians, included the city of Memel and a swath of surrounding former Prussian territory north of the Niemen River.<sup>84</sup> The fate of the territory and its 141,000 people was initially left to a relatively disorganized and poorly-established council meant to maintain it similar to a Danzig-style League of Nations mandate “free city,” with the objective of providing port access to the port-less and newly-created state of Lithuania.<sup>85</sup> This move, as well as other decisions made by the authors of the Paris Peace agreements, ignited political wrangling and inflamed tensions throughout Europe as a whole in the 1920s and 1930s.

Memel returned on the world stage after the Nazi rise to power in Germany in 1933. As Adolf Hitler chipped away at

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<sup>82</sup> Christopher Thorne, *The Approach of War, 1938–39* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1967), 106. “Predecessors” references the *Anschluß* of Austria in March 1938, and the acquisition of the Sudetenland in September 1938.

<sup>83</sup> My best effort to be consistent in the use of “Memelland” will still result in using that term, “Memel territory” and “Memel” rather interchangeably, except where it is obvious that “Memel” refers to the city.

<sup>84</sup> See map included in Appendix C

<sup>85</sup> Treaty of Versailles, Part XII, Ch. 3.

what he claimed were the restrictions and unjustified aspects of the Treaty of Versailles, he also included Memel as one of the unjustified seizures of territory, labeling it as a "lost province."<sup>86</sup> But in Hitler's early years, Memel was not his priority: he was biding his time while he alternately pursued his other goals of *Anschluß* with Austria and the dismemberment and occupation of Czechoslovakia. Ultimately, through a mix of opportunism and orchestration, the Nazi government intentionally delayed obtaining Memel until they organized a series of major international events, and subsequently issued a hurried ultimatum and transfer of Memelland over the period of five days in March, 1939.

This sequence of events concerning Memel during the Nazi period have been persistently underreported in both contemporary and historical accounts; contemporary English-language documents, articles and news outlets, as well as subsequent historical accounts have paid little attention to Memel other than merely a mention. In contrast to press and academic coverage, debate and discussion previous to 1938–39, the Nazi government's actions then received only the slightest fleeting attention. On the surface this lack of attention may be seen as a result of the muted response of the international community in March, 1939, little consideration has been given to Memel in the historical record as part of the lead up to, and outbreak of war in September 1939. Consequently, Memel and these surrounding events are often slated as rather insignificant and simply another passing example of Hitler's aggression. Yet contrary to this belief these

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<sup>86</sup> Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations, 1932–1945* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 1997), 1595.

events of 1938–39 are of greater significance to the unfolding immediate causes of World War II, providing insight into Hitler's actions and intentions. It is precisely these events that reveal Hitler's calculation and orchestration. Memel became not only a target of re-incorporation, but a vehicle through which to achieve several other of his goals. And it is this orchestration that prompts us to ascribe to Memel better and fairer scholarship by greater inclusion into the war narrative.

Memel was established in 1252 by the Livonian branch of the Order of the Teutonic Knights – a German monastic order of Medieval knights – as part of the Northern Crusades. Originally established as a castle, Memel received the Lübeck Law in 1254 and became an important regional center as a base for the Order, a diocese for the Catholic Church, and the local economic hub.<sup>87</sup> During the wars of the Northern Crusades much of the population fled, was killed or eventually was assimilated as German settlers moved into the new frontier lands. Similar to much of the rest of the coastal Baltic territory conquered and administered by the German crusader knights, the population became predominantly German. The small city that grew up around the castle Memelburg was no exception. Throughout the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods of European history Memel was part of the territory of Prussia in its various states of governance, and was one of most important cities behind the capital, Königsberg.<sup>88</sup>

There are few notable events concerning Memelland in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it was not until the conclusion

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<sup>87</sup> Hienrich A. Kurschat, *Das Buch vom Memelland; Heimatkunde eines deutschen Grenzlandes* (Oldenburg: F. W. Siebert Verlag, 1968), 151–152.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 157–159.

of the First World War that it gained prominence, as a controversy began. This controversy, often referred to as the “Memel Problem,” “Memel Controversy” or “Memel Question” throughout the 1920s and 1930s, began with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles that dealt the Allied peace terms to the new German government in 1919.<sup>89</sup> While Versailles is widely recognized today as being flawed, the authors of the treaty – the major Allied victors of Britain, France, Italy and the USA – could not have entirely foreseen the consequences of their actions. While the Allied representatives came to the Paris Peace Conference with different agendas and goals – some very noble and freeing – their often unjust or arbitrary, and even hypocritical or greedy actions directly and indirectly caused tensions in the post-war world. The peace of World War I was meant to be the “war to end all wars,” yet the decision made by the victors unknowingly ensured that conflict would continue. Memel was one of those decisions.<sup>90</sup>

While there were many aspects of the Treaty that were good, the sheer fact that the phrase “Memel Problem” arose indicated a questionable decision there. Despite the territory’s mixed population of 45 percent Germans, 29 percent “Memellanders” and 26 percent Lithuanians, Articles 28–30, followed by Article 99 of the Treaty exacted new boundaries for East Prussia and Germany’s renunciation of Memelland,

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<sup>89</sup> David Stephens, “The German Problem in Memel,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 14, no. 41 (Jan. 1936): 321; Alfonsas Eidintas and Vytautas Zalys, *Lithuania in European Politics: The Years of the First Republic, 1918–1940* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 322.

<sup>90</sup> Michael J. Lyons, *World War II: A Short History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 14–25.



allocating to it international status.<sup>91</sup> That the Allies went against their stated objectives of national self-determination in this particular situation, and without a stated objective for this action, the dissociation of Memelland from Germany was one of the rather arbitrary and unjust actions of the terms of Versailles.<sup>92</sup>

Consequently Memelland was governed by a League of Nations Commission and French representative. Lithuania had been given special privileged use of the port facilities as Memel was the only established port on the Baltic coast in that vicinity. As such, Memel was of vital economic interest to have as a

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<sup>91</sup> Vyngantas Vareikis, “Memellander/Klaipediskiai Identity and German–Lithuanian Relations in Lithuania Minor in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *Sociologija: Mintis ir Veiksmas* 6 (2001): 63; The ethnic identity of the “Memellander” or “Klaipediskiai” has been the subject of debate since it is not a specific language, but are generally accepted as ethnic Lithuanians who chose neither German nor Lithuanian as their language identity on the censuses of the 1920s and 1930s. Generally the people of this region could and would speak both German and Lithuanian languages, possibly preferring the former as evidenced by the overwhelming support for the German List parties from 1935 onwards (+80percent), with the Lithuanian People’s Party never received more than 22percent of the votes and declined to 12percent by 1938. (Vareikis 54–64; *New York Times*, 13 Dec. 1938).

<sup>92</sup> Clemenceau was a major proponent of giving Memel to Lithuania; Allies offered the region in exchange for Lithuania dropping its claim to Vilnius as its historic capital, and which the newly-recreated Poland had occupied on the basis of its Polish ethnic majority. (Eidintas, *Lithuania*, 87)

Lithuanian possession and the Kaunas government launched a staged revolt of Lithuanians there in early 1923. The territory was then attached to Lithuania in a *fait accompli*.<sup>93</sup> The League's response to this action was to launch an investigation by a special commission – the Davis Commission – and despite the obvious farce of a popularly-supported revolt the League concluded an agreement in May 1924 known as the *Convention Concerning the Territory of Memel*.<sup>94</sup> Within this agreement the League recognized Lithuanian sovereignty of Memelland, while establishing Memellander autonomous self-governance: autonomy in legislative, judicial, administrative and financial affairs.<sup>95</sup> As well, the Memel Statute was to be guaranteed by an oversight committee made up of representatives from Britain, France, Italy and Japan.<sup>96</sup> The fact that this process of creating a framework for Memellander autonomy within Lithuanian sovereignty took more than a year to conclude is evidence that a problem existed and would continue to persist beyond the agreement. Thus was Lithuania's illegal, treaty-breaking seizure of Memelland legitimized.

The inherent weakness of the agreement made in 1924 was that it gave no specific guarantee of Memel's autonomous rights nor its right to have redress of grievances. Furthermore, the statute provided no right to Memellanders to report violations of the agreement, and only members of the League

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<sup>93</sup> Eidintas, *Lithuania*, 90–99; Kurschat, *Memelland*, 166–177.

<sup>94</sup> Also known as the “Memel Statute,” which will be the most commonly used term throughout this essay.

<sup>95</sup> Thorsten Kalijarvi, “The Problem of Memel,” *The American Journal of International Law* 30, no. 2 (April 1936): 207.

<sup>96</sup> Stephens, “German Problem”: 326–329.

of Nations Council could call for an investigation. Memel was therefore unprotected, disadvantaged and robbed of security.<sup>97</sup>

The fact that Memel had to retain autonomy is itself evidence that it was a created problem rather than a natural one. In one sense, Memel was always going to be a larger issue as time marched on. Several outcomes could have been possible. First, that the territory would retain its autonomy and continue as a separate region within Lithuania, thereby generating division. Second, this legal separation could potentially cause the Lithuanian government to eventually disestablish the Memel Statute and fully incorporate the territory into the state, which would again violate international law. Third, the slow and gradual replacement of the majority German population by the forces of education and immigration – which would require, again, a renunciation of the Memel Statute that provided official status to the German language and local government control of education. The Lithuanian government opted for a combination of the violation of the Statute and attempts to Lithuanize the German population. First, following President Antanas Smetona's coup d'état in the capital, Kaunas in 1926, martial law had been declared throughout Lithuania, and including Memelland. The period of 1926–1938 was one of repression for the Memel Germans, who, while not experiencing violence per se, saw their League-protected rights violated on a regular basis.<sup>98</sup> Much academic and official discussion and debate arose over these violations, and Hitler also in 1935 began contributing to the charges

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<sup>97</sup> Kalijarvi, "Problem of Memel": 214–215.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 207–208.

against Lithuania citing that the “Memel Problem” was another evidence of the “crimes of Versailles.”<sup>99</sup>

By the end of 1938 the Memel situation became more fraught and more aligned with happenings in Germany. Protests against the Lithuanian regime cited continued encroachment of Lithuanian Government on Memellander autonomy. As well there was a marked increase in typical Nazi acts, including vandalism of Jewish synagogues, supporters donning the brown shirt Nazi uniform, forming the Hitler Youth and other clubs, and performing the “Heil Hitler” greeting.<sup>100</sup> Support for local Nazi organizations also increased, led by a local doctor-turned-political activist, Ernst Neumann. As a result of the events leading up to the so-called Great Treason Trial of 1935, Neumann had spent 1934–1938 in prison as the Lithuanian government cracked down and imposed martial law across the country and Memel.<sup>101</sup> Upon his release he took up the reins of leadership once again and had frequent contact with Nazi leaders in the Reich, but often found it difficult to effectively control or corral the local Nazi movement.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Domarus, *Hitler*, vol. 2, 673–674, 705, 777. Interestingly enough, Domarus claims that these early speeches aimed at these other ‘crime[s] of Versailles’ were meant to deflect public thought away from the imposition of universal conscription

<sup>100</sup> Sarunas Liekis, *1939: The Year That Changed Everything in Lithuania's History* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 76.

<sup>101</sup> Stephens, “German Problem”: 330.

<sup>102</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945, Series C, Vol. IV* (Washington: United States Government Printing Press, 1962), 476–479, 482–3, 488, 491, 494–495. Hereafter referenced as “*DGFP*”

Recognizing defeat in their policy of assimilation, the government in Kaunas backtracked so as not to offend the German government.<sup>103</sup> Concurrently, Nazi actions in Czechoslovakia, as well as Lithuania's 1938 capitulation to Polish military-backed demands for the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, had convinced Kaunas that its options were limited and that its own form of appeasement was necessary to maintain friendship with its larger, more powerful neighbors. In the election of December 1938 the entire Memelland District voted overwhelmingly for the German parties: 82% in Memel city, and between 85–94% in the rest of the district, resulting in 25 of 29 seats in the Memel Landtag going to German parties, and 4 going to Lithuanian parties.<sup>104</sup> Effectively, Lithuanian government ability to dominate in Memel had ended.

The new Memel set about establishing its government based on national socialist principles, while the Lithuanian government looked on, responding with hope that the new system based on national socialist ideology “can be conducted without conflict to the fundamental interests of the Lithuanian state and the Lithuanian nation, and hopes that autonomous institutions will try to avoid such conflicts.”<sup>105</sup> The German government, however, moved slowly and attempted to control or temper the actions of Memel's Nazi agitators as Hitler did not want to alienate Lithuania over an acquisition of the territory, as well as risk the possibility of heightened

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<sup>103</sup> Liekis, *1939*, 77.

<sup>104</sup> *DGFP*, Series D, Vol. V, 501; “Nazis in Memel Got 87% of the Ballots,” *New York Times*, 13 Dec. 1938.

<sup>105</sup> Liekis, *1939*, 78.

international reaction due to its proximity to Czechoslovak events.<sup>106</sup>

From December 1938 to March, 1939, the European situation had changed drastically; it had changed from a scene of conciliation and understanding to one of disappointment and rising belligerency. Suddenly, amidst a flurry of Nazi territorial grabs in March, 1939, a virtual ultimatum was presented to the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Juozas Urbšys that demanded a settlement of the Memel situation, in which there were two possibilities. If Lithuania replied with a peaceful solution friendly relations could be restored and Germany would grant Lithuania free access to Memel port. Alternatively, a rejection would most likely cause uprising in Memel, at which point "Germany could not idly look on. The Führer would act with lightning speed and the situation would slip from the hands of the politicians and be decided by the military."<sup>107</sup> Urbšys consulted his government, and within two days returned to sign a hurriedly-compiled, relatively short yet open-ended treaty of reunification to the Reich: while the treaty established the transfer of sovereignty it left several economic and legal details to be worked out by later agreements or annexes.<sup>108</sup> Anticipating the signing of this document on March 22, Hitler had made his way to the Baltic and sailed through the night to arrive in Memel by morning to welcome the Memellanders back into the Reich.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 92

<sup>107</sup> *DGFP*, 524–526

<sup>108</sup> *DGFP*, 531–531.

<sup>109</sup> Immediately following the events of March, 1939, two very noteworthy pieces of propaganda were published and circulated throughout Germany commemorating these events: a

Although *early* post-war German-Lithuanian relations had been quite amiable, even very good – as witnessed by steady trade between the two – the sequence of events in the 1920s and 1930s brought on by the Kaunas government's actions brought on a slow but steady deterioration.<sup>110</sup> The obvious violations of the Memel Statute and the abuse of the German population there did not endear Lithuania to Germany. However, neither did it strain relations to a breaking point. Even under the Nazi government relations between the two countries remained relatively peaceful as Hitler bided his time in accomplishing his goals. Hitler understood, in fact, that the Allies' inaction in enforcing the Memel Statute would be useful in propagating claims on the Memel territory, and while paying lip service to the issue and threatening possible action he took none until the opportune moment.

Several articles published in the mid-1930s highlighted the “problem” of Memel. A surge in coverage followed the Lithuanian roundup of German activists of 1935, all giving perspectives and commentary on how the problem arose, why the situation flared up and potential solutions. Most take the perspective that while both sides may be at fault, it was in large part due to Lithuania's flagrant violations of international law, first in 1923 with the seizure of Memel, followed by the persistent infringement of the Memel Statute.

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pamphlet titled “Memel ist Frei!” decried Lithuanian abuses and praised the territory's return to the Reich, and a photo book, *Hitler in Böhmen, Mähren, Memel*, which lauded the gains Germany had made and photo-documented Hitler's travels to these territories.

<sup>110</sup> Gustainis, “The First Twenty Years”: 614–615.

The British journal *The Economist*, one of Europe's premier trade journals, seems to have taken special interest in Memel and Lithuania. It published several short articles in 1935 regarding the precarious internal and international situation created by the roundup of the German activists. In late March, "The Memel Treason Trial" reported on the arrest of 126 Memel Germans being prosecuted in Kaunas for "conspiracy to detach Memel-land from Lithuania by armed insurrection."<sup>111</sup> The article called into question both the lack of evidence of a clear German plot – and if so, it was by sheer provocation – as well as the ability and right of the Kaunas government to prosecute such a trial because of its violations of the various treaties. Using terms as "*coup de main*", "audacious" and "lawless," Lithuania's actions were presented as similar to the flouting of the Paris Peace accords by Poland in its land-grabs in the early 1920s.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, even though the Allies "bowed to a lawlessly achieved *fait accompli*,"<sup>113</sup> future Nazi attempts to retake Memelland by means of force would be no different than what Lithuania had done and would even potentially right the wrong.

In June 1935 *The Economist* featured a short piece, "Memel, Lithuania and the Powers," which placed significant blame on Lithuania – first by creating the problem in 1923 and by continued violation of the terms of the 1924 Memel Statute. Because the Allied Powers had not acted on their behalf, the German population had reacted to Lithuania's constant violation of their law – including meddling in their

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<sup>111</sup> "The Memel Treason Trial," *The Economist* no. 4779 (March 30, 1935): 716.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*



governmental affairs. Most significantly, *The Economist* concluded that if nothing was done by the Allied Powers to secure the genuine observance of the Memel Statute, a German *Putsch* would almost be certain, possibly leading to wider war in the Baltic and beyond. The Allied Powers could avert this possibility if they were “determined to fulfill their duties towards the Germans in Lithuania. A firm attitude now may save Europe much trouble later on.”<sup>114</sup>

In response to these events and Lithuania’s actions, Hitler gave a speech in which he railed that Lithuania had “failed to respect the most primitive laws of human coexistence,” and that the Memel Germans were being “persecuted, tortured and maltreated in the most barbaric way” simply because they were German. However, in his massive compilation and editing of Hitler’s speeches, historian Max Domarus claims that rather than stating a simple claim against Lithuania’s abuses of the Germans in Memel, Hitler used Lithuania as a vehicle to achieve many of his larger goals, and in particular to hide his own violations of international treaties.<sup>115</sup> Using Memelland for his own purposes would be a common tactic of the Führer in many respects in the coming years as Hitler pursued his many other objectives. Hitler knew that Germany’s claim to the territory grew stronger as the Reich grew stronger and the list of Lithuania’s abuses piled up, creating the monster of major opposition amongst the populace.<sup>116</sup> This can be seen by the several references in

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<sup>114</sup> “Memel, Lithuania and the Powers,” *The Economist* no. 4788 (June 1, 1935): 1241.

<sup>115</sup> Domarus, *Hitler*, 673.

<sup>116</sup> Thorne, *Approach of War*, 107.

regards to Memel that Hitler brought forth in speeches during the first few years of his regime.

Despite the relative lack of attention Hitler later paid to Memel, he gave short air to his grievances against Lithuania once again in a speech before the Reichstag on September 15, 1935. In the speech, some two and a half hours long he gave only a brief reference to Memel. This speech was given in advance of the local Memelland election scheduled for September 29. In his address Hitler referred to the theft of the territory from Germany, the legalization of this illegal act by the League of Nations, and the subsequent abuse of the German population by the Kaunas government. Using language similar to family members helplessly watching the violation of another, Hitler stated that all cries for help to the League of Nations had gone unaided, and this refusal to act had resultantly created bitterness toward both League and Lithuania. Then, turning to the election and the autonomy of German Memelland, Hitler issued a veiled threat: "It would be a laudable undertaking were the League of Nations to turn its attention to the respect due to the autonomy of the Memel territory and see to it that it is put into practice, before here, too, the events begin to take on forms which could one day but be regretted by all those involved. The preparations for the election which are now taking place there constitute a mockery of both law and obligation!"<sup>117</sup>

Articles for *The Economist* following in September and October 1935 were written in reference to Memel Territory elections taking place at the end of September. With Hitler's speech in mind, these articles echoed much the same sentiments as those articles published earlier in the year, yet

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<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Domarus, *Hitler*, 704–705.

they brought a warning. This warning was that the Memel elections must be free and fair and observed by the Guarantor Powers of the Memel Statute so that the status quo can be preserved; elections without issue would help clear Lithuania's marred human rights record and give little provocation to any *real* subversive plots to bring Memel back into the Reich. They recognized that Lithuania had a difficult situation with a "Nazified German minority," the government's consistent encroachment in Memel, the "monster" treason trial. New electoral laws had the potential effect of disenfranchising a significant portion of the German populace and *made* Memel ripe for revolt or seizure by the Reich.<sup>118</sup> In fact, one article echoes Hitler's assertion in his Reichstag speech that the elections must go off without a hitch or action by the Reich would almost be a certainty:

Vast mischief will have been done, however, if there is even a colourable pretext for the charge that these Memel elections have been "rigged" with the guarantor Powers' acquiescence. For Germany will then have a pretext for declaring that no remedy remains, except direct action on her part, for righting the wrongs of an oppressed German minority. And, of all places in Europe, the Memelland is, of course, the one place where a German Putsch could be made with a prospect of impunity . . . .<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> "And Now Memel!" *The Economist* no. 4804 (Sept. 21, 1935): 555; "The Memel Elections," *The Economist* no. 4805 (Sept. 28, 1935): 603.

<sup>119</sup> "And Now Memel!" *The Economist* no. 4804 (Sept. 21, 1935): 555. Because the Guarantors of the Memel Statute participated in the election, there was no significant irregularity

In 1936 two journal articles appeared attempting to understand and evaluate the “Memel Problem.” Somewhat different than those of 1935, the authors’ intentions were to elaborate on the “why” of the situation. Although with different intentions, both authors came to the same conclusion that – regardless of the justification of Versailles – the issues in Memel had been perpetuated by the poor structure of the Memel Convention of 1924 and subsequent action – rather, inaction – of the League of Nations.

“The Problem of Memel,” written by Thorsten Kalijarvi, addressed how Memel had been recently cast into the international limelight as a potential flash point, yet so little was known about it. Many questions were being asked about Memel, so the article presented a basic background and an account of the governmental structure within the Memel Statute under Lithuanian sovereignty, including the reasons for its troubles. Following that was a list of abuses by the Lithuanian government, and League of Nations’ inept attempts to deal with the issue, for as issues were discussed they were often submitted to committees that issued non-binding statements.<sup>120</sup> The one major binding statement to come from a complaint before the League had been submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1932. Rather than condemning Lithuania’s overthrow of the local German leader

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other than those few dozen instances of disqualified voters at the polls. The total numbers whose vote was revoked who never went to the polls is unknown.

<sup>120</sup> Thorsten Kalijarvi, “The Problem of Memel,” *The American Journal of International Law* 30, no. 2 (April 1936): 204–210.

of the Directorate, the court instead legitimized Lithuania's ability to dismiss the president of the Directorate in Memel. This decision was interpreted by Kaunas "as a *carte blanche* approval of such acts as she might undertake in Memel."<sup>121</sup> Like the documents of 1935, and with the benefit of a relatively-free election behind him, Kalijarvi concluded that the inherent structure of Memel Statute was unreliable, had created confusion and hardship and threatened to "rob the Memellanders of their last vestige of security."<sup>122</sup> The only action to remedy the Problem of Memel was for the Guarantor Powers to enforce or rebuild the convention.

While Kalijarvi very much followed the track of previous writings on the Memelland's woes, another writer, David Stephens assigned blame to more than simply the Lithuanians. Firstly, he took issue with Hitler's assertion in his Reichstag speech that Memel was stolen from Germany, when, if it was stolen from anyone at all, it would have been the Allies of the World War and, subsequently, the League of Nations in 1923.<sup>123</sup> However, he recognized that while both the Memellanders and the Lithuanian government were somewhat at fault for "the present situation" as the constitutional framework was flawed. Stephens asserted that Lithuania – an authoritarian regime under Antanas Smetona – having neither a democratic government nor a culture or history of democracy, was entirely unable to protect the democratic framework of the Memel territory. Referencing the Memel Statute he asked the question: "how, for instance, could elections in Memel Territory

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>123</sup> Stephens, "The German Problem": 326.

take place 'in conformity with the Lithuanian Electoral Law,' when in Lithuania itself no elections were ever held?"<sup>124</sup>

Evidently, amidst all of the political and economic turmoil that characterized Europe in the 1930s, the "Memel Problem" had elicited interest. Not least of the reasons were Lithuania's flagrant violations of international agreements and abuses of the rights of the Memel population, which, unlike many of the justifications for his other claims, gave Hitler a legitimate claim and justification for reacquiring Memel. However, when the ultimate moment arrived with the overwhelming election of a solid Nazi party bloc in the Memel Landtag in December 1938, and a real potential for a vote to join the Reich became a possible political reality, it had become nearly a non-issue among the larger powers. The Nazi annexation of the territory was met with some press and some diplomatic discussion, but discussion is all that occurred, and it subsequently subsided. This begs another unanswered question: if the "Memel Problem" had existed for so long and was so often a topic of international discussion and scholarship, why was it subsequently so downplayed in 1938-39 and so readily forgotten?

There are several possible reasons why Memelland faded from prominence in news, scholarship and discussion, not the least of which was the aggression and growth of Nazi power. It is obvious that European governments throughout 1938 were treading softly around Hitler, as his rhetoric ramped up and several grabs on territory of the Reich's "lost provinces" ended in embarrassment for the League and the Allies. However, while Lithuania, Poland, France, Czechoslovakia and others certainly did not want to provoke Hitler, this one factor of fear

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

and appeasement – while a major factor – is not the only explanation why Memel suddenly receded from the news right up until the ultimatum to Lithuania in March, 1939. In terms of official communiqués the same was true for much of the communication within the both British and German foreign services, yet much less so in the former.

Several significant reasons for this decline in discussion Memel was, firstly, that Lithuania began to right the wrongs of previous years in regards to the Memel Statute, becoming increasingly tolerant and yielding to the German Memellanders.<sup>125</sup> While this can partly be attributed to fear of Nazi Germany as it expanded and flouted the treaties of the post-war period, it signifies that those greater issues of violations of the Memel Statute and the abuses of individual rights were dwindling, and therefore, the urgency and international disputation was becoming less prominent. Evidence of this can be seen in the Lithuanian government's lifting of martial law in 1938, and the release of the imprisoned rebels of Great Treason Trial of 1935, many of whom would go on to be elected at the end of that year to the Landtag as leaders of the Nazi effort.<sup>126</sup> However, these moves proved problematic for Lithuanian control of Memel, as the pro-Nazi factions wasted no time in exploiting their new freedoms. Furthermore, the government entered into negotiations with Germany about the rights of Memellanders eventually granting a much broader interpretation of the Memel Statute.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Valentine Gustainis, "Lithuania: The First Twenty Years," *The Slavonic & East European Review* 17, no. 51 (April 1939): 616.

<sup>126</sup> Kurschat, *Memelland*, 199–202.

<sup>127</sup> Eidintas, *Lithuania*, 162–3.

A second reason was that after all of the debate and difficulty Germany actually had a legitimate claim to Memelland as a historic and cultural center of East Prussia, unlike many other territories that Hitler claimed were “lost provinces” of the Reich. Memel was the sole acquisition that Hitler made in the pre-war peace that could be categorized as a “province robbed [from the Reich] in 1919.”<sup>128</sup> The fact remains that for all his rhetoric, provocation and saber-rattling Hitler’s claims for reincorporation of Memel as a stolen or “lost” territory had some justification. As previously stated, this was aided by the consistent violation of rights of the German Memellanders, who, in a mark of independent self-determination elected a Nazi government in late 1938, preferring Hitler’s Reich over the

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<sup>128</sup> Domarus, *Hitler*. Vol. 3, p. 2218. Note 495 states: “Hitler’s claim that he had ‘returned to the Reich the provinces robbed in 1919’ had no foundation whatsoever since neither Austria nor the Sudetenland had belonged to the Reich proper in 1919. The Memel territory was the only region he did in truth ‘restore’ to the Reich. The remaining ‘lost provinces’ belonged to the Reich no more in April 1939 than they had twenty years earlier. These provinces were: West Prussia, Poznan, parts of Upper Silesia, Alsace-Lorraine, the area Eupen-Malmédy-Moresnet, and North Schleswig.” While Domarus is technically correct to point this out, this seems rather more semantics about the year 1919, as even though the other two pre-war acquisitions – Austria and the Sudetenland – were never part of what Hitler claimed was the ‘Second Reich,’ the German Empire of 1871–1918, both territories had been part of the First Reich, the Holy Roman Empire, a loose confederation which was headed by the Hapsburg Emperors.



constrictions of martial law.<sup>129</sup> Thirdly the failure of Versailles, the League of Nations and the interwar peace was becoming increasingly apparent. While the Allied powers had hoped to maintain much of the structure of Versailles and the authority of the League of Nations, both institutions had been severely abused, usurped and abandoned as a means of pursuing foreign policy. Hitler's actions furthered this demise, but not just Poland, Italy and Hungary had made agreements outside of these institutions, Britain and France had done so as well: in the pursuit of continued peace and collective security the Allies were willing to sidestep their own systems and conclude various agreements outside of the system that they had created. These agreements were, essentially, the "death" of the League, as Hitler could have his way because of the demise of its authority.<sup>130</sup>

Fourthly, European governments somewhat expected Memel to be annexed by the Reich at some point. The terminology Europe and the U.S. used in referencing the German move on Memel in 1939 is very telling. While certainly referred to as a "seizure," "cession," or "surrender," it was also referred to as "returned" and "reunited."<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, a *New York Times* front-page article on March 22, 1939 titled "Lithuania Yields Memel to Hitler," reported that "the Lithuanian Government has been preparing for the return of Memel to Germany for some time and has even started the construction of a new harbor at Svventojl, at present a fishing village."<sup>132</sup> The

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.; Kurschat, *Memelland*, 200.

<sup>130</sup> Liekis, *1939*, 65.

<sup>131</sup> "Lithuania Yields Memel to Hitler," *New York Times*, 22 March, 1939, 1.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 2.

same could be said for the Polish government, as “the cession of Memel was not altogether unexpected in Poland . . . .”<sup>133</sup> Other evidence shows that the British and the French had previously hoped that Memel would maintain its sovereignty, yet they recognized their inability or unwillingness to stop it if it were to occur.<sup>134</sup> In December 1938, British Foreign Secretary E. F. L. Wood, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Halifax, circulated a draft response to communicate to the German government concerning the unrest of the Nazi groups in Memel due to the new Landtag elections to be held on the eleventh of that month. In principle, the French accepted the text of a proposal for Memel, dated December 10, 1938, but maintained that in their communication with the German government they should merely “mention Memel quite casually amongst other subjects.”<sup>135</sup> In the subsequent joint *note verbale* given to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding Memel, Britain and France asked the German government to “use their influence with the Memellanders to ensure respect for the *status quo*.”<sup>136</sup> The British ambassador to Germany, Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes unconfidently admitted that “whatever action we take about Memel I fear we will receive a rebuff.”<sup>137</sup> A communiqué from Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Minister to France sent to Lord Halifax dated March 22, 1939, sums up

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<sup>133</sup> “Next German Move,” *The Times*. 23 March, 1939, 15.

<sup>134</sup> E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1945*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, Vol. IV (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1951 ), 638–64. Hereafter referenced as “*DBFP*.”

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 644.

<sup>136</sup> *DBFP*, 645.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 645.

both the Allied attitude toward and expectation of the impending annexation of Memelland:

Saying that I was not doing so on instructions, I asked the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs this afternoon whether he could give me an indication of the French Government's views on the subject of Memel. M. Léger said that he could not give me the views of his Government, by whom no decision had been taken so far, but that in his own opinion the seizure of Memel by Germany did not call for action on the part of France and Great Britain. We now found ourselves on the basis of the preservation of the balance in Europe, and it was incumbent upon us to concern ourselves in the first place with matters which definitely affected that balance and, therefore, our vital interests. He did not consider that Memel fell into this category. Its possession by Germany would not materially increase her strength or her capacity to wage war against France and Great Britain. It was because Roumania could supply Germany with the means of carrying on such a war (means which she at present lacked), that it was necessary to protect the country. If the Germans proceeded from Memel into Lithuania, the matter might begin to be a cause for preoccupation. But even then, I gathered, he doubted whether action would be called for. The German seizure of Memel might have some advantage in disquieting Poland and inclining her to take position with the Western Powers.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 493.

Concurrent with these events the British military attaché to Poland, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Sword, wrote a four-page memorandum on the strategic-military assessment of Poland, its allies, neighbors and military, yet only devoted two sentences to Latvia and Lithuania, including one on Memel: "The recent German *coup* in Memelland makes little difference to Poland from a strategic point of view, beyond internally weakening an improbable ally, as no common frontier with Poland is involved."<sup>139</sup> As such, Memel had been abandoned in favor of larger issues, geopolitical considerations and the preservation of a balance of power.

Fifthly, the Nazi government in Berlin downplayed Memel seemingly in pursuit of other objectives. After Dr. Neumann was released from his sentence in July 1938, and once again became the leader of the Memel Nazi Party, he was soon directly instructed to instate stricter control over the younger men who wanted to force reunification immediately.<sup>140</sup> Hitler did not want to waste the goodwill of the international community or upset the delicate balance immediately on Memelland, which he knew he would get back eventually, stating that all that was required was a registered letter to the government of Lithuania.<sup>141</sup> Instead of immediately pursuing Memel, biding his time, he annexed the Sudetenland and Austria. Meanwhile he built the Danzig Nazi movement, extradited economic concessions from Romania, and wrote a number of treaties of friendship and non-aggression. Before and after its 1938 elections Memel, like Danzig, was expected

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 477-481.

<sup>140</sup> Thorne, *Approach of War*, 106-107; Kurschat, *Memelland*, 200.

<sup>141</sup> Hitler, quoted in Thorne, *Approach of War*, 107.

by many in Europe to adopt many Nazi policies and possibly even vote for their own *Anschluß* to the Reich with support from, but little or no direct intervention by, the government in Berlin. Contrary to the desires of the Memel Nazi movement the government in Berlin ordered that nothing move ahead with Memel. In fact, a directive was issued on December 5, 1938, that in the days leading up to the election on December 10, Neumann was to maintain complete silence on the issue of reunification, that Lithuania was to be “kept in the dark” regarding the status of the territory and no progress was to be made, and also that the German press was to avoid discussions regarding the future settlement of the territory.<sup>142</sup>

Despite the overwhelming pro-Nazi and pro-unification results of the election,<sup>143</sup> Hitler according to his long-term plan avoided action on Memel until just the precise moment. He gave instructions to delay convening the Landtag which assuredly would immediately vote for *Anschluß* and to delay any further political developments until given further instructions.<sup>144</sup> Prussian Gauleiter Erich Koch even threatened Neumann that he would be shot if he did not follow the Führer’s orders. Hitler was orchestrating precise conditions in which to finish all of his unfinished business.<sup>145</sup> However he did promise Neumann and the Memel Nazis that “the matter

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<sup>142</sup> *DGFP*, D, Vol. 5, 496–7; Leonidas Hill, “Three Crises, 1938–39,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 no. 1 (Jan. 1968): 124.

<sup>143</sup> The German party list won 25 of 29 seats in the Landtag with 87 percent of the vote. *DGFP*, 501; “Nazis in Memel Got 87% of the Ballots,” *New York Times*, 13 Dec. 1938.

<sup>144</sup> *DGFP*, 519, 515.

<sup>145</sup> *DGFP*, 500–501.

would be settled in that year . . . the end of March or, even better, the middle of April was set as the desired date.”<sup>146</sup>

Finally, with directives from Berlin to push back any action toward unification and to suppress any major unrest or demonstration, Memel became simply sidelined and overshadowed by larger events involving much larger territories and populations across the European stage. While Lithuania–Memellander problems in Memel were diminishing and it was becoming less of an international dispute, obviously made much more so by the Nazi government, many other flash points were cropping up as a result of Hitler’s demands. These well-known and researched events are worthy of study, but the details of each case are less important to this study than *how* each of them influenced or took away from the spotlight or debate on Memelland.

According to testimony given at the Nuremberg Trials in 1946, after he was appointed German Foreign Minister in 1938 Joachim von Ribbentrop was told by Hitler that his main “problems to solve” were Austria, Sudetenland, Memel and Danzig, implying that military force might be necessary.<sup>147</sup> As Hitler set about these goals one by one, beginning with the two largest, and then the easier and more logical of those two, both Memel and Danzi, which had fallen in line with overwhelmingly pro-Nazi governments, became minor issues in the immediate, and were to be settled at later, more convenient dates. Yet time was an issue. Although he had managed to delay the convening of the Memel Landtag by two months, Hitler felt the pressure and understood the potential danger of putting off the Memellanders much longer: if he waited too long and the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 506–507.

<sup>147</sup> Nuremberg Trial Proceedings, Vol. 22, 529.

Landtag forced the issue, once again Memel would be cast into the international limelight, potentially damaging Hitler's other immediate designs.<sup>148</sup> This pot getting ready to boil over very possibly even pushed him to move ahead quickly with his plans with Czecho-Slovakia and Romania.<sup>149</sup> Thus, many major Nazi "acts of aggression" all took place within a week in March, 1939.

The major overshadowing events of March, 1939 began with rumors of a German ultimatum to Romania early in the month, which were eventually confirmed by March 18.<sup>150</sup> The ultimate dismemberment and occupation of the rest of Czecho-Slovakia quickly followed. European reaction to the quick succession of events in Czecho-Slovakia, the declaration of independence of Slovakia from Bohemia and Moravia by Slovak president Jozef Tiso on March 14, and the 'invitation' of both new states to Germany as the protector of both states on March 15 was shock and bitterness.<sup>151</sup> Hitler had broken the hard-won terms of appeasement from just six months before, and his actions threatened to cast Europe into crisis and instability once again. Major world newspapers reported

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<sup>148</sup> *DGFP*, 496–497.

<sup>149</sup> By this point in 1939 developments in Czechoslovakia the previous year had created a pseudo-separated country with two relatively autonomous governments, which therefore had restyled the country as Czecho-Slovakia. This is made it much easier for Hitler to force the events of March 14–15, 1939, and "accept" protectorates on each one individually.

<sup>150</sup> *DGFP*, 360, 400; "Germany & Rumania: Drastic Demands," *The Times*, 18 March, 1939, 12.

<sup>151</sup> "A Shock to France: 'Hideous Drama of Czechs,'" *The Times*, 16 March, 1939, 15.

continuously on these ominous developments with both the subjects receiving steady press through the rest of March.<sup>152</sup> However, while the Lithuanian agreement did receive some attention, it garnered headlines for a mere three days in *The Times* of London – for March 22–24. Even then, with the first announcement of the cession, the title was among five other similar headlines, and one glaring headline announcing the arrival of the French president on a visit to England.<sup>153</sup> Thereafter Memel appeared only in intermittent and short pieces. The *New York Times* announced the treaty with more gusto – as is probably more typical of Americans – with a large headline on March 23, declaring: “Lithuania Yields Memel to Hitler; Britain Presses for 4–Power Action; Fascist Council Backs Reich Policy.”<sup>154</sup> By March 30, Memel was gone from the news headlines, with Japanese actions and battles in China having received even more attention than Memel.<sup>155</sup> Focus in Europe shifted quickly toward strengthening resolve against Axis aggression.

The immediate consequences of March, 1939 were to force Europe to drop consideration of territories already lost, and to focus on preserving the integrity of those states that were left. Small Nazified territories like Memel, according to Hitler’s best intentions and hopes, had become the least of their concerns. For Britain’s part negotiations began immediately on 24 March to determine a potential declaration

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<sup>152</sup> See: *New York Times* and *The Times* of London, March 16–31 March, 1939.

<sup>153</sup> See Appendix B; *The Times*, 22 March, 1939, 14.

<sup>154</sup> *New York Times*, 22 March, 1939, 1.

<sup>155</sup> *Times*, 18–29 March, 1939.



of security or even an alliance with Poland.<sup>156</sup> Appeasement had failed as a policy, and Britain, France and Poland began to move towards protection and self-preservation. By March 31 these three had concluded what has been called the British guarantee to Poland, which was aimed at mutual support and banding together. Revealed in the House of Commons on March 31, the guarantee promised that “any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty’s Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.”<sup>157</sup> France had committed to the same statement, and both were now, in one way or another, attached to the fate of Poland.

Although not yet Prime Minister at the time, an examination of the writings and correspondence of Winston Churchill would seem appropriate. Yet when we get to Churchill’s letters, major speeches, and appearances of March and April of 1939, there is little or no trace of Memelland to be found. What *is* found are numerous references to the failure of Europe to uphold the integrity of an independent Czechoslovakia and the need to uphold the territorial integrity of Poland. Indeed, Churchill was very involved in the attempts to reassure and secure Poland, and was part of the process which produced the British guarantee to Poland. As well, he took the line that the British government must finally take a firm stand against Nazi aggression, with or without major allies. In a speech in mid-April, after the conclusion of the

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<sup>156</sup> *DBFP*, 492–503.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 553.

bond with Poland, Churchill stated that “now that we have embarked on this new policy of alliances of peace-seeking powers, a great peace *bloc* against further aggression, let us give it a fair chance, and go forward with vigour.”<sup>158</sup> With this emphasis it is no surprise that beyond the war itself, in his famous works of history Churchill continued to neglect Memel as a factor in this series of events, becoming part of a trend that minimized the experience and importance of Memelland in leading up to the war.

As if taking a cue from the events of 1938–39, most post-war histories dealing with topics surrounding World War II have simply left Memel out: just as the issue faded quickly from the minds and memories of those involved at the time, so it also has faded from memory or prominence in the historical narrative. Undoubtedly, this is because of the reasons stated previously: events in Memelland were downplayed by the major powers involved, especially by Hitler himself, and it became quickly forgotten. Subsequently it was relegated to the dusty bookshelves of the past.

Although some historians do mention Memel, it is typically just that: mentioned then moved over. Historian Christopher Thorne recognized this in 1967, noticing that “the Memel operation and its background, though dismissed in a sentence by many historians, is worthy of study as something of a microcosm of its more celebrated predecessors.”<sup>159</sup> While correct for the first assertion – noticing this gap in scholarship as early as 1967! – Thorne missed out on the “why” of the

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<sup>158</sup> Robert Rhodes James, *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897–1963*, Vol VI (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974), 6097.

<sup>159</sup> Thorne, *Approach of War*, 106.

issue: Memel was not simply a mini-event compared to Czechoslovakia or Austria, but rather a very intentional and designed acquisition. As well, even within several other works that look specifically at Lithuania, or the Baltics or Memelland itself, the period from 1919–1939 is only a small part of the equation. Furthermore, most of these historians, like Thorne, miss the bigger picture of the Nazi seizure of Memel, consigning it to simply another territory grab, and decidedly missing Hitler's planning and timing of those 10 days in March, 1939. Historian Norman Rich does make the timing connection in *Hitler's War Aims*, but with the same effect of minimizing the intricate path woven to get there. He mentions that the peaceful acquisition of Austria and the Sudetenland strengthened Hitler's and Germany's position, "which undoubtedly had a decisive influence on the Nazi leader's subsequent calculations about the timing and future course of his expansionist policies."<sup>160</sup> Hitler's last bloodless coup was anything but "more of the same," and Memel must be recast into that light; by missing the connection, we not only miss the importance of Memel, but unknowingly fall prey to the deceptive design that Hitler set for the world in 1938–39.

In 1938–39 the Memel Territory, after enjoying some few years in the attentions of the European theater, abruptly exited the stage. Consistent violations of the international agreements concerning Memelland, brought to the attention of the international community by both the Weimar and Nazi governments in the 1920s and 1930s, had been a topic of some debate and discussion throughout the academic world and within intergovernmental organizations. Hitler's Nazi government had made a specific case against Lithuania in its

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<sup>160</sup> Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, 13–14.

violations of the autonomy of the territory, its imposition of martial law since 1926, and the treatment of the German majority there. Ramping up the rhetoric and consistently addressing the “Memel Problem” from 1935 to early 1938, the Nazi government abruptly hit the brakes on Memel. According to Hitler’s own stated objectives it can be determined that he was not dropping the issue and that his government was fully committed to the reacquisition of Memel into the Reich. Hitler, the ultimate opportunist, prioritized his territorial goals in 1938 to the following order: Austria, Sudetenland, Memel then Danzig. He had hoped to cajole each one of these without causing an outbreak of war but would have welcomed it had it arrived.

Memel seems like it certainly would have been the easiest target to pursue for many reasons: it had a long history and connection with Germany, which neither Austria or the Sudetenland had directly. The territory had been rather unjustifiably and arbitrarily dislodged by the Treaty of Versailles despite an obvious super-majority of German population. Furthered by the Lithuanian government’s illegal seizure of the territory in 1923 and the consistent and well-known violations of its obligations and duties, including 12 years of martial law, Hitler had the best, most justifiable claim to Memelland.

By 1938 nearly all governments had even come to expect that the territory would be “returned” to Germany. However, just at this moment of seeming triumph, Memel virtually disappeared from the world stage in 1938. With the exception of a few instances of discussion, Memel was sidelined and overshadowed by the larger events of the next year including the *Anschluss* in Austria, the September Crisis and subsequent invasion of Czechoslovakia. While foreign secretaries did

discuss concerns about and potential outcomes of the December 1938 election in the Memel Landtag, they ultimately relegated Memel a lost cause not worth fighting for. Failure to act on the part fit a pattern which played into Hitler's hands. His intentional sidelining of the Memel issue from 1938 onwards achieved his ambitions toward Memelland without raising international awareness or ire: he masterfully had not only achieved his designs for Austria and Czechoslovakia, but *used them* to divert the attentions of the rest of the world from his designs on Memel. Although seemingly the easiest target and the most justifiable to seize outright, Hitler had pulled off one of history's greatest magic tricks: in spending years creating the right conditions Hitler found the most opportune moment when, within the furor of the other major events of March, 1939 that *he* orchestrated, he made Memel disappear from the view of the world, and of history.

## Appendix A

### Memel Timeline:

1919 – Memelland detached from Germany and internationalized by Article 28 of the Treaty of Versailles.

1923 – Lithuania seizes Memel in a staged ethnic-Lithuanian revolt

1924 – Lithuania and the Guarantor Powers sign the Memel Convention (aka “Memel Statute”) recognizing Lithuanian sovereignty over Memelland while instituting autonomous self-governance for the territory.

1926 – Imposition of martial law in Memelland, and throughout Lithuania, as a result of the centralization of the Smetonas regime

- Complaint lodged with League of Nations

1932 – Lithuanian coup in Directorate: dismissal of Herr Böttcher as President of the Memel Landtag

- Permanent Court of International Justice issues verdict of interpretation on the Memel Statute: the Lithuanian government has right to appoint President of Memel Directorate

1933 – Founding of two National-Socialist parties in Memelland

1934 – Three no-confidence votes on Lithuania-appointed Governors

- Governor adjourns Landtag for 'lack of quorum'; rules directly through Directorate
- Lithuanian crackdown on German agitators: 126 arrested

1935 – Dr. Ernst Neumann & others put on trial for treason: "Great Treason Trial"

- Elections held on September 29: Memel German list gains 24 of 29 seats in the Landtag; remaining 5 are Lithuanian list

1938 – Lithuania eases up constrictions and in July releases Nazi leaders – including Dr. Neumann – imprisoned in 1935.

- Lithuania lifts martial law at the end of October after 12 years.
- Landtag elections are held on December 10, resulting in overwhelming vote for Nazi parties: 87% of the vote, 25 of 29 seats in the Landtag.

1939 – Ultimatum given to Foreign Minister Urbšys on March 20; Kaunas government agrees to cede Memel on March 21.

- Urbšys & Ribbentrop draft a treaty agreeing to the transfer of Sovereignty on March 22.
- Hitler arrives in Memel to welcome the territory back to the Reich on March 23.

## Appendix B



### ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT

#### ROYAL WELCOME TO LONDON

#### MALCOLM SCENE AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

#### STATE BANQUET LAST NIGHT

Important opportunity to see, in the old gothic building which is London by the President of the French Republic and M. Lefevre, are that there was to the King and Queen.

about a republican crowd and several members of the Cabinet, and an official welcome at Dover, St. and West London were met in London by the King and Queen, whose personal greeting was welcomed by the enthusiastic shouts of large crowds in the streets, continuing in a suitable demonstration meeting. Buckingham Palace, which the distinguished welcome through the lobby.

The King and Queen, accompanied by Mrs. and Miss Lefevre, as a State Banquet at Buckingham Palace last night. The Majesty made a speech in preparing a toast to the British and to France, and the President replied in French.

#### LONDON'S FIRST GILBERTING

#### THE KING AND QUEEN AT VICTORIA

At Victoria, a distinguished group of guests, including the King and Queen, were present for the first time. The occasion was a special event, marking a significant moment in the city's history.

The King and Queen, accompanied by their children, were seen in the crowd. The atmosphere was festive and the occasion was well-received by the public.

The event was a success, and the King and Queen were seen to be in excellent spirits. The occasion was a highlight of the week's events in London.

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### BANQUET AT THE PALACE

#### BRIGHT SCENE

#### SPEECHES BY KING AND PRESIDENT

The banquet was a grand affair, with the King and President of France both giving speeches. The atmosphere was one of cordiality and mutual respect.

#### THE KING'S SPEECH

The King's speech was a significant moment, as he addressed the President and the guests. He spoke of the long history of friendship between the two nations.

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### MORE LONDON TALKS

#### M. DONNET SEES LORD MALFAX

#### PLAN FOR 6-POWER CONSULTATION

M. Donnet, French ambassador, was seen in conversation with Lord Malfax. They discussed the current international situation and the possibility of a six-power consultation.

#### THE KING'S SPEECH

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### WEREL FOR GERMANY

#### LTUWANA AGREES TO CEASANT

#### CATEGORICAL DEMANDS

Lituania has agreed to a ceasefire, but the German government has made categorical demands. The situation remains tense as negotiations continue.

#### THE KING'S SPEECH

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### GERMAN ATTACKS ON BRITAIN

#### SUSTAINED PRESS CAMPAIGN

#### FROM THE COMRADES

The German press has launched a sustained campaign against Britain, accusing it of aggression. The British government has responded firmly to these attacks.

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### ITALY AND THE CRISIS

#### ADMISSION TO ARMS REAFFIRMED

#### PARTY COUNCILS ALLEGATIONS

Italy has reaffirmed its admission to arms, and the Party Councils have made allegations. The situation in the Balkans remains a source of concern.

#### THE KING'S SPEECH

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Map showing the location of Lituania in the Baltic region.

#### 1939 POWERS ASKED

The League of Nations has asked the powers to take action against the aggressor. The situation in Europe is becoming increasingly dire.

#### REPLY TO BLESSA

The League of Nations has replied to Blessa's proposal. The decision is a significant one for the future of the organization.

#### PUNISHMENT FOR

The League of Nations has proposed punishment for the aggressor. The proposal is a bold one and has drawn much attention.

#### THE KINGDOMS AND

The League of Nations has discussed the role of the kingdoms. The discussion has been a fruitful one and has led to several important conclusions.

#### BY ELECTION IN

The League of Nations has held an election. The results have been a surprise to many and have led to a new era of leadership.

#### F.R.I. AND GERMANY

The F.R.I. and Germany have reached an agreement. The agreement is a significant one and has led to a new era of cooperation.

#### AGREEMENT

The agreement between the F.R.I. and Germany is a significant one. It has led to a new era of cooperation and has drawn much attention.

#### FRISH EXPANSION

The Frish expansion has led to a new era of growth. The expansion has been a success and has led to a new era of prosperity.

#### FRISH TALKS

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#### BRITAIN ACCUSED

Britain has been accused of aggression. The accusation is a serious one and has led to a new era of concern.

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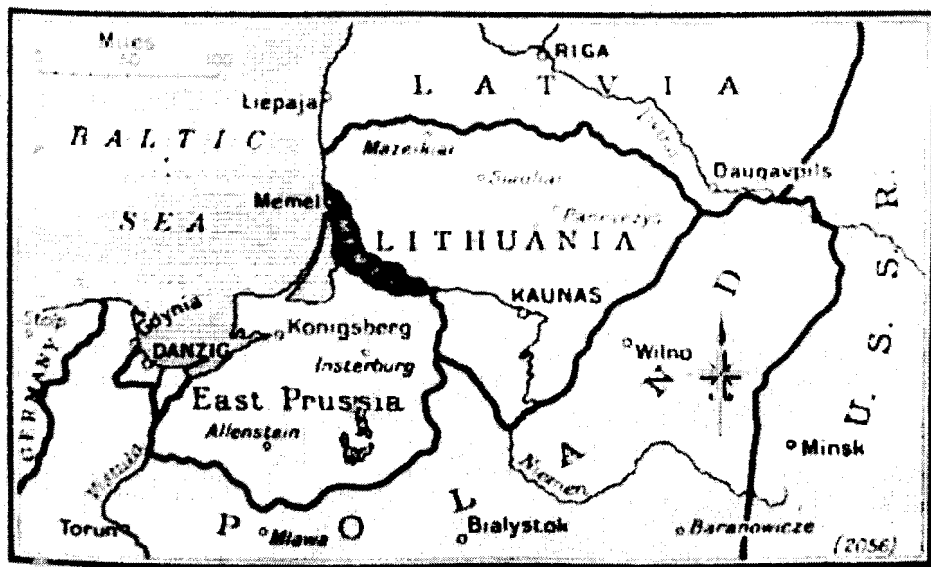
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## Appendix C



"Memel Map," The Times, 23 March, 1939, 15.

## **Enduring Casualties of War: Delayed Treatment of Combat Stress in World War II Veterans**

Sarah Lavallee

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an issue facing veterans today, from the soldiers returning from Iraq to those who fought in previous wars. Although this may seem like a contemporary issue, the discussion occurring now is a reaction to a time when PTSD was ignored. Although behavioral changes in combat veterans were noticed for centuries, initially no resources were available and later psychiatric treatment carried a stigma. The effects of PTSD on soldiers became increasingly clear as the Iraq War progressed; however, as veterans of previous wars are aging the issues surrounding misdiagnosed or untreated psychological disorders are becoming known.

Previously, discussion of PTSD was limited to the medical community. Only recently has PTSD become a part of the popular culture and public dialog with initiatives such as the Wounded Warrior Project. This earlier silence leaves the impression that PTSD did not always exist, which is a matter of perception based on media exposure, and not an actual reflection of history. There is a suggestion that the increase in PTSD is not due to the combat or people, but rather to coverage. Today, the conversation surrounding psychological disorders is widespread; however, during World War II it was commonly believed that only a few men suffered from PTSD and no one wanted that marginalizing stigma.

The contemporary reaction to PTSD is a response to World War II. "Soldiers now returning from war with PTSD have the benefit of a medical community that acknowledges the realities of the condition and a vast body of research that

identifies avenues for healing, something not available to their 'shell-shocked' predecessors."<sup>161</sup>

In the United States, psychological disorders relating from combat experiences were misunderstood and improperly treated for decades surrounding the two World Wars. It was difficult for World War II veterans to explain their wartime involvement to civilians; the lack of understanding, coupled with intense social stigma, resulted in a deficiency of treatment for veterans. Moreover, psychologists were not yet equipped to treat the combat veterans produced by World War I and World War II; as a result many psychological traumas went untreated. The lack of appropriate mental health treatments and understanding made the transition back to civilian life extremely difficult for combat veterans, some of whom are still struggling today.

Historically, psychological issues related to combat have been grossly misunderstood. Symptoms reported by soldiers were hyper-vigilance, nightmares, heart arrhythmia, the inability to emote, and extreme fatigue. Terms such as "shell-shock" or "soldier's heart" were used to describe this unexplained, but common, phenomenon. The social stigma attached to this diagnosis was extreme; soldiers were referred to as cowards if they had to leave the front-lines for a mental-health issue. The British military allowed executions of men as late as World War I for the crimes of "cowardice" or "desertion

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<sup>161</sup>Daryl S. Paulson and Stanley Krippner, *Haunted by Combat: Understanding PTSD in War Veterans*, 1st Rowman & Littlefield ed. (Lanham: Praeger, 2010), xv.

in the face of enemy" which were most likely related to psychological disorders rather than fear.<sup>162</sup>

The American practice in World War I was to treat these shell-shocked soldiers as close as possible to the front-lines in the hopes of quickly returning the men to the battle. During World War I, it was expected that a man would again be fit to fight relatively quickly, which led to a 70 percent return to duty rate. Comparatively, there were a significantly lower number of men returned to duty in World War II.<sup>163</sup>

Charles Myers, a medical officer, coined the term "shell shock" in 1917, but soon began to dislike the name when he recognized that many men suffered the symptoms of shell-shock without experiencing combat. In the early years of World War I, shell-shock was believed to be the result of a physical injury to the nerves. In other words, shell-shock was the result of being buried alive by exploding artillery or exposure to heavy bombardment, both of which could result from a nearby shell.<sup>164</sup>

No single, unanimous definition of shell-shock exists. The South Borough Committee, appointed in 1920 to prevent future shell-shock epidemics, defined the disorder as:

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<sup>162</sup> Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, "Telling Stories of the War: Ageing [sic] Veterans Coping with Their Memories through Narrative," *Oral History* 26, no. 2 (Autumn, 1998): 58.

<sup>163</sup> United States Military, "Combat Stress Control: Medical Field Training,"

[http://www.pdhealth.mil/downloads/AF\\_CSC\\_Slides.pdf](http://www.pdhealth.mil/downloads/AF_CSC_Slides.pdf), November 2, 2011.

<sup>164</sup> Joanna Bourke, "Shell Shock During World War One," BBC [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/shellshock\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/shellshock_01.shtml), October 15, 2011.

"emotional shock, either acute in men with a neuropathic predisposition, or developing as a result of prolonged strain and terrifying experience, the final breakdown being sometimes brought about by some relatively trivial cause. [Or] nervous and mental exhaustion, the result of prolonged strain and hardship."<sup>165</sup> Despite this definition, the actual cause of shell-shock was fiercely debated by psychologists during World War I and World War II. One common idea was that psychological disorders that soldiers faced were the result of a poor diet, stress of living in a foreign environment, or exhaustion.<sup>166</sup> W.H.R. Rivers, a medical anthropologist who worked with men suffering from the disorder, believed the symptoms developed after men were unable to fully repress their experiences. Doctors, such as Rivers, felt shell-shock was "the inevitable result of the sustained and intense stress of combat."<sup>167</sup>

Despite the beliefs of these doctors, not all of their contemporaries agreed. Gordon Holmes, a consulting neurologist to the British Expeditionary Force, thought shell-shock was the trait of a coward. Military commanders felt the disorder was preventable through more thorough screening and training of recruits. Though the cause of shell-shock was debated, the military took steps hoping to prevent future psychological complaints. Recommendations were made, such as removing the term "shell-shock" from official language. Moreover, "no case of psycho-neurosis or of mental

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<sup>165</sup>Edgar Jones, "Historical Approaches to Post-Combat Disorders," *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 361, no. 146 (April, 2006): 537.

<sup>166</sup> Jones, "Historical Approaches," 533.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 537.

breakdown, even when attributed to a shell explosion or the effects thereof, should be classified as a battle casualty any more than sickness or disease is so regarded."<sup>168</sup>

Shell-shock has become synonymous with the trench warfare of World War I. Though it was not widely understood, references were frequently made to its destructive symptoms. Virginia Woolf created a character named Septimus in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. This man was a World War I combat veteran. Septimus witnessed a military comrade die in an explosion, resulting in hallucinations and a complete loss of sensation. His doctors recommended rest and interacting with people instead of isolating himself within his own mind. Septimus faced criticism for "cowardly and strange behavior" and he received more pity and disgust than sympathy and support. Unable to cope with the war memories and hostility from society, Septimus eventually killed himself.<sup>169</sup>

Shell-shock was thought to result from the concussive force of exploding shells, making it a purely physical problem. This belief lead shell-shock treatment to be "governed by existing norms of manhood, which deemed the general anxiety, hypervigilance, night terrors, and other symptoms of PTSD warrant for punishment and scorn." This attitude influenced the public's perception of returning combat veterans. Men, including combat veterans, were "expected to bear his wounds with stolid conviction, and if mental wounds were like bodily wounds, they were to be dealt with in the same way."<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 537.

<sup>169</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 1st Harvest/HBJ ed. (San Diego: Mariner Books, 1990).

<sup>170</sup> Paulson, *Haunted by Combat*, xvi.

If mental breakdown was a "paralysis of the nerves," then massage, rest, dietary regimes and electric shock treatment were thought to be the best treatment options. If a psychological source was indicated, the "talking cure," hypnosis, and rest would speed recovery. The "talking cure" was based on psycho-analysis theories developed by Sigmund Freud. He believed that the cause of mental illness, such as shell-shock, was found in subconscious memories.<sup>171</sup>

The realization that the symptoms associated with shell-shock could vary, but that all related to combat experiences, provided a breakthrough. Hypnosis was a common treatment for World War I veterans as psychologists were drawing heavily from the teachings of Freud and his term "war neurosis." Freud focused on the idea of war neurosis, and the resulting nightmares, as different from his previous theories. He could no longer consider all dreams as a representation of a subconscious desire, but rather began to assume dreams express a repressed feeling or idea. Freud hypothesized that shell-shock was "the consequence of adult trauma" and would require "psychoanalytic treatment" to resolve the issues.<sup>172</sup>

Despite the awareness of Freud and his followers, it does not appear this understanding was universal or accepted. Veterans reported that the military physicians, seemingly unaware of Freud's hypothesis, advised the men to "Go home and get over it."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup>Ted Bogacz, "War Neurosis and Cultural Change in England, 1914–22: The Work of the War Office continued Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock'," *Journal of Contemporary History* 24, no. 2 (April, 1989): 242.

<sup>172</sup> Paulson, *Haunted by Combat*, 9.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.



When a lack of treatment or understanding was encountered, it appears as if veterans turned to self-medication. The most common of which was alcohol. Ira Hayes was a veteran of World War II and had the distinction of being one of the flag raisers on Iwo Jima in 1945. This triumph of the American military in the Pacific followed intense fighting. Back in civilian life, Hayes was "hailed as a hero, but began drinking when he returned to Arizona. . . . He was arrested for drunkenness some 50 times and died at the age of 32; his body was found face down in a pool of water."<sup>174</sup>

Hayes' early death, though tragic, did not appear uncommon. After this event, his neighbor described what appeared to be the predominate feelings of the era, he said: "Back then, people didn't look at alcoholism the way they do now, and the post-traumatic stress treatments didn't exist. You have to wonder what his life would have been like if he had the help that's available today."

Regardless of the treatment method provided, the most common recommendations appear to focus on occupational training and reminders of traditional masculine roles. The medical superintendent at one military hospital in York stated, that although the medical officer must show sympathy, the patient "must be induced to face his illness in a manly way."<sup>175</sup> The American Veterans Administration spent nearly \$1 billion in medical expenses for the estimated 100,000 World War I veterans suffering from shell-shock, but by the mid-1940s some were still in need of extensive care. The military hospitals

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>175</sup> Bourke, "Shell Shock During World War One."

were still treating 11,501 veterans, of which 80 percent were diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder.<sup>176</sup>

It was difficult for veterans to explain the processes, feelings, and impact of prolonged combat to a civilian. This would be an issue faced again in 1945. Americans did not learn from the mistakes of World War I and were unprepared when the combat veterans returned home from the next war. Psychologists and military leaders in World War II realized that soldiers had mentally suffered due to their experiences in the previous war; however, as the cause of shell-shock remained unclear, the treatments were varied and typically ineffective. New systems were implemented, such as the better screening of recruits, but this did not solve the problem, especially when man-power shortages forced the recruitment of men who would have been denied earlier in the conflict.<sup>177</sup>

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States Army had 35 psychiatrists, by the end of the war this number had increased to 2,400. The majority of these psychiatrists were civilians with little understanding of military combat, which hindered their treatment of combat related psychological issues. The civilian psychologists, generally stationed far from the front-lines, were described as "largely innocent of the debilitating impact of combat on the human psyche." This ignorance was in spite of the fact that World War

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<sup>176</sup> Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: a Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 30.

<sup>177</sup> Hunt and Robbins, "Telling Stories of the War": 58.

I had produced thousands of cases of shell-shock or other combat casualties related to psychological traumas.<sup>178</sup>

Many factors contributed to the incidence of shell-shock in World War II, which by that time was more often referred to as "combat stress." New recruits were vulnerable to psychological disorders as they were inexperienced in combat and frequently not given time to adjust to life on the front-lines. Additionally, men entering combat as replacements might not be immediately accepted by the existing unit, thus increasing their risks in battle. However, vulnerability to combat stress was not limited to new recruits. Men who were exposed to frequent or long-term combat became exhausted with "the omnipresent threat of death or serious injury, so-called 'old sergeant syndrome.'<sup>179</sup>

When military psychiatrists traveled to the front-lines, they noted that most combat soldiers shared the same symptoms as the patients they were treating from previous battles. These symptoms included: nightmares, tremors, and anxiety, making this seem like a normal reaction to the stresses of combat. One of the doctors stated the "adjustment to combat. . . means not only adjustment to killing, but also adjustment to danger, to frustration, to uncertainty, to noise and confusion and particularly to the wavering faith in the efficiency or success of one's comrades and command." This statement could have been a reaction to a common belief held

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<sup>178</sup> William C. Menninger, "Psychiatry and the War," *Atlantic Monthly* 176, No. 5 (November, 1945): 108.

<sup>179</sup> Jones, "Historical Approaches to Post-Combat Disorders," 533-534.

by combat veterans, which was that "combat became more, rather than less, frightening the more they saw of it."<sup>180</sup>

G. Kurt Piehler, a twentieth century American historian, described life in the infantry during World War II and its bleak prospects. "To serve in a front-line unit often meant life was short, brutal, and dirty," Piehler said. "The result is that men who served on the front fought until they were killed, severely wounded, or survived to see V-E or V-J Day." These options become all the more frightening when considering the casualty rates for some infantry units. According to Piehler, "It was not uncommon for some infantry regiments to have 100 percent turnover after a few months on the line because of casualties."<sup>181</sup>

Walter Stacey, a World War II veteran, described his combat experiences as "just a job to be done." Stacey continued, stating "sometimes you worry about seeing somebody getting shot up or something like that. Afraid that it might make you feel bad, but when you get over there and see it, it doesn't bother you so much. You just figure it's just tough luck. You're too busy worrying about yourself. I saw some of the fellows that I was in service with killed and shot to pieces, but it didn't bother me much. I thought it would, but it didn't. You've got all you can handle to take care of yourself."<sup>182</sup>

Psychiatrists were torn between servicing the soldiers and meeting the needs of the military. The men would have

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<sup>180</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 31.

<sup>181</sup> Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men*, 1st Bison Books printing. ed. (Lincoln, NE.: Bison Books, 2001), xii.

<sup>182</sup> Robert Havighurst and John Baughman, *The American Veteran Back Home: A Study of Veteran Readjustment* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1951), 190.

benefited most from a permanent removal from the front-lines; however, military guidelines stated that the role of an army psychiatrist was to help the soldiers in a manner so as to return them to combat as quickly as possible. Two major forms of treatment were hypnosis and drug therapy, and only 33 percent returned to combat.<sup>183</sup> By July 1945, nearly half of all medical discharges, 43 percent or 314,500 soldiers, were classified as "neuropsychiatric causes," an additional 130,000 were discharged for "personality defects which made them incapable of fitting into the Army."<sup>184</sup>

Between 1940 and 1945 the War Department rejected approximately 29 percent of men in an attempt to recruit only those most capable to withstand the physical and mental hardships of combat. This rate peaked in 1940 to 1941, when the War Department stressed "quality over quantity," meaning nearly 50 percent of men were rejected. One-fourth of potential recruits were rejected for psychological reasons, though a draftee's interaction with a psychologist before this was determined was extremely brief, only about three minutes. One psychologist reported seeing 512 men in just one day.<sup>185</sup>

Psychologist William C. Menninger, the Director of Neuropsychiatry Consultants Division during World War II, was an experienced physician and recognized the challenges faced

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<sup>183</sup> Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 226–227.

<sup>184</sup> Menninger, "Psychiatry and the War," 109.

<sup>185</sup> Lee Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987), 30.

by doctors examining draftees.<sup>186</sup> He stated, "In the space of from one to five minutes the physician was supposed to do some sort of crystal gazing to determine whether an inductee, strange to him, might fit into an unknown job under unknown leadership with unknown motivation towards doing that job." Draftees were asked questions such as: "What do you think about the war? Do you like girls? Have you ever had a nervous breakdown?" Questions such as this were thought to be adequate to determine which men were mentally fit for service.<sup>187</sup>

Many civilian psychologists had difficulty understanding the major impact a renewed sense of security, rest, and a warm meal could have on a man's state of mind. Captain Emmett Allamon, a regiment surgeon stationed behind the front-lines, said he learned from the Germans that medical aid stations produce the best results if located within a building rather than a tent. This held true even when the available building was a derelict shed. "There is something psychologically comforting about having rigid walls around you in the combat zone," war correspondent Erie Pyle said.<sup>188</sup>

Pvt. Jay Woodrow "Woody" Marsh, who had been part of the Normandy invasion, often wrote home about the "floaters" in his eyes. Marsh believed his eye troubles occurred because he did not receive eye drops at birth; however, this was determined not to be the correct diagnosis. In October 1944 it was eye problems that led to the removal of Marsh from the

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<sup>186</sup> Kansas State Historical Society, "Menninger Family Archives," <http://www.kshs.org/p/menninger-family-archives/13786#william>, November 29, 2011.

<sup>187</sup> Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 199.

<sup>188</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 163.

front-lines. He spent several days in Allied hospitals throughout France while doctors worked to find a diagnosis, and possibly reexamine Marsh's military classification.<sup>189</sup>

In his letters home he wrote about how much he wanted to "fill up those cracks that are now between my ribs" and the "luxury" of a good night's sleep. He had been fighting through Europe for over a year and the physical exhaustion would have taken a dramatic toll on Marsh. He told his family about not having baths or hot water for months at a time, eating no hot meals, sleeping in a foxhole, and having nightly guard duties.<sup>190</sup>

Many combat veterans reported to aid stations with illnesses that could not be diagnosed; often these physical complaints seemed to result more from psychological factors than actual disease. Whether or not Marsh's eyesight had drastically worsened or he was just physically exhausted will not be known. Regardless of the cause, Marsh was sent back to the front-lines to serve out the remainder of the war.<sup>191</sup>

Capt. Allamon had "a theory that the best medicine you can give a wounded man is some warmth and comfort." To accomplish this, he tried to place the aid stations within a building and kept a warm fire burning day and night with coffee at the ready. The majority of the men had spent months in the field without a bath, hot meal, or even a bed. According

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<sup>189</sup> Nancy Marsh Price, *Uncle Sam's Most Reluctant G.I.: When Dad Was Drafted, the Whole Family Went to War. The letters of Jay Woodrow Marsh.* (Charleston, South Carolina, 2010), 168-169.

<sup>190</sup> Price, *Reluctant G.I.*, 168-169.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-169.

to Ernie Pyle, this system of providing warmth and security appeared to work.<sup>192</sup>

Ernie Pyle was a famed war correspondent during World War II. He preferred spending time with the infantrymen and living near the front-lines. He wrote extensively about his travels across Europe with combat divisions and the daily lives and thoughts of the men uniform. Pyle died during the Pacific campaign. In April 1945, Pvt. Marsh wrote back to his family in Michigan that "we will all miss Ernie Pyle and especially the boys in the Infantry. He got that extra ten bucks for us and saw to it that the guys doing the dirtiest work got credit for it. He really was a soldier's correspondent."<sup>193</sup>

One of the millions of men who served in World War II, Pvt. Marsh was from Haslett, Michigan and drafted into the United States Army. He served for a time in the First Division in France, Belgium, and Germany as "a sixty mm mortarman," among other duties.<sup>194</sup> Marsh frequently wrote home while serving overseas. The topics ranged from requests for his mother's home baked cookies, to candy and new fingernail clippers. He especially focused on how much he missed his family and wanted to be reunited with his wife and baby daughter. A great amount of effort was needed for Marsh to maintain a connection to his friends and family back home, which led him to frequently ask for updates on individuals and for additional addresses. Though Marsh wrote of his overseas experiences; his experiences in combat were generally absent.

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<sup>192</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 163.

<sup>193</sup> Price, *Reluctant G.I.*, 293.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.



Marsh shared stories of eating Red Cross doughnuts and searching for a hot shower; however, his role in combat is either ignored or downplayed. On June 14, 1944 he wrote home to his wife Vivian, and young daughter Nancy. He said:

You have probably guessed by now that I'm in France. I'm with a darn good outfit which has seen a lot of action so that should relieve your mind somewhat. Sure I'm scared too, but anyone who isn't, is a liar or a fool. I'm not complaining because some others were not as fortunate as I have been. . . . Please excuse the writing as my mess kit serves as a desk and it wobbles. After living for a while in fox holes or slit trenches, I can see why clean sheets and a bed looked so good. . . . Guess I'll have to dig my way to Berlin. How is little Nancy? I love you both so much that I think of you constantly. Don't worry, I've got to come back to you. Don't expect too many letters from now on, honey, because these are very busy times. . . . Each day over here seems to never end and perhaps that's why a guy does so much thinking. It's funny how much thinking a person can do.<sup>195</sup>

Although he frequently stated he was "pretty busy" and responding to letters would be difficult, Marsh acknowledged the major morale benefits of receiving mail from home. As he was fighting through France, Marsh said "I don't like what I've seen so far but that is the way of war." He never fully divulged his military duties to either his wife or parents; he just kept repeating that they should not worry about him. In a letter to his parents in June, 1944 he told his parents "just because you don't hear from me often, don't start thinking anything serious has happened." Marsh often stated he was busy to explain any

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<sup>195</sup> Price, *Reluctant G.I.*, 90.

delays in writing, though he said little of what he was busy with. That was left for the recipient to infer.<sup>196</sup>

By the outbreak of World War II, the real effects of combat related stress were not fully understood; however, some improvements in treatment had been made. For example, only 10 percent of psychological casualties were returned to combat duty. Unfortunately, this led to casualty rates that could exceed the numbers of new replacements available to fight at the front. Between 30–40 percent of all World War II casualties were related to combat stress.<sup>197</sup>

Pyle described his idea of a typical combat soldier in World War II, stating the front-line men "lived for months like an animal, and was a veteran in the cruel, fierce world of death." Pyle continued, telling of the hardships faced by these soldiers on a daily basis. "Everything was abnormal and unstable in his life. He was filthy dirty, ate if and when, slept on hard ground without cover," Pyle said. "His clothes were greasy and he lived in a constant haze of dust, pestered by flies and heat, moving constantly, deprived of all the things that once meant stability-- things such as walls, chairs, floors, windows, faucets, shelves. . . .The front-line soldier has to harden his inside as well as his outside or he would crack under the strain."<sup>198</sup>

A front-line medic was "touched by what he called the 'mental wreckage' of war-- the men whose spirits break under the unnatural strain and incessant danger of the battlefield." He believed American children had been raised with too much

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>197</sup> United States Military, "Combat Stress Control: Medical Field Training."

<sup>198</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 5.

parental involvement and without enough independence, hindering a man's ability to cope in a combat situation. Pyle said:<sup>199</sup>

Personally, I am sort of on the fence. I hate to think of an America of one hundred thirty million people so hard inside that nothing could touch them. On the other hand, comparatively few men do crack up. The mystery to me is that there is anybody at all, no matter how strong, who can keep his spirit from breaking in the midst of battle.<sup>200</sup>

Combat veterans had a very different reality compared to United State's civilians. They had to rationalize the fact that at any moment they could be killed while at the front-lines. This prompted many men to write letters to be sent home in the event of their death, but also meant that paranoia and anxiety were rampant. Much time was dedicated to examining the possibility of death, which created additional psychological stress on veterans. Frequent issues reported to psychologists included nightmares and an over-whelming sense of mortality.<sup>201</sup>

In 1947 General Samuel L.A. Marshall, an army historian during World War II, published *Men Against Fire*, which was the culmination of nearly 400 interviews conducted by Marshall and

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 164. Note: Author's original emphasis used in quote.

<sup>201</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: the Problem of Battle Command* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 50. His conclusions have recently been criticized by historians as a possible exaggeration of the actual rates of men who do not fire their weapons; however, his research serves a purpose in demonstrating the concerns and actions of combat veterans.

his associates. Infantrymen stationed in both Europe and the Pacific were asked questions relating to their reactions during combat situations. A distressing conclusion was found. Marshall was able to prove that infantrymen either did not fire their rifles, or not as much as needed, while in combat.

This conclusion had been a rumor since the North African campaigns, during which reports were received in which men complained of this lack of activity. However, Marshall had wanted to prove that this was not a rumor or an isolated event. The men accused of not firing their weapons claimed "they couldn't see anything to fire at, that they were afraid of giving away their positions, or that no one had ordered them to fire."<sup>202</sup>

Marshall's interviews alleged that 75 percent of infantrymen would not fire their rifles in combat. This was very problematic as it suggests that a commander could only guarantee 25 percent of his men will fire their weapons when necessary. He stated many commanders refused to believe this was the mentality within their divisions. However, even when outside circumstances such as terrain or visibility were considered, Marshall concluded that approximately 80 percent of the men should have been able to fire with a clear shot.<sup>203</sup>

One infantryman who did fire his rifle explained his feelings after that first shot. He told the researchers that "a man sure feels funny inside the first time he squeezes down on a Kraut." Marshall claimed that the vast majority of men were not firing their rifles, which put the burden on a small percentage within the division. His conclusion was especially

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>203</sup> Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, 56.

troubling because he claimed that in a major strategic battle, such as Omaha Beach on D-Day, statistically only 20 percent of the men would have fired their rifles. This would amount to "a total of perhaps not more than 450 men."<sup>204</sup>

Marshall explained his conclusions by stating that these infantrymen came "from a civilization in which aggression, connected with the taking of life, is prohibited and unacceptable. The teaching and the ideals of that civilization are against killing, against taking advantage." Army psychiatrists concluded that the men were more afraid of killing than being killed, which they credited as the "most common cause of battle failure in the individual." This idea was deemed proven because by not firing their weapons the men are more at risk of being killed; basically they become a sitting target.<sup>205</sup>

A study conducted in 1994 attempted to determine which factors of combat proved the most traumatic for soldiers. Veterans from World War II, the Korean Police Action, and the Vietnam conflict were asked to report which experiences created the strongest impact on them. The study concluded that the "responsibility for killing another human being is the single most pervasive, traumatic experience of war."<sup>206</sup>

The military recognized that the moral code of society was a hindrance on the battlefield and had to be overcome. Marshall wrote an article that appeared in the *Infantry Journal* in 1943. His solution to this issue was an element inherent within the military structure itself. "Not obedience, but duty, is

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>206</sup> Paulson, *Haunted by Combat*, 14.

the strongest and honorable word that can ever be put before a soldier," Marshall wrote. He further stated that another motivation to fight came from "mutual confidence in one another that the ranks of old regiments are able to convert to their esprit into battle discipline."<sup>207</sup>

Several sources agreed with Marshall's assessment that camaraderie motivated men to fight in combat. They developed close relationships with the men in their divisions which created a pressure to perform. The men fought in combat to preserve their honor, prove their manhood, and show respect for their comrades. Camaraderie was cited as a major form of motivation for American troops, which would explain the findings of Gerald Astor. He interviewed veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, leading him to conclude that "during the crunch, nobody advanced under fire with the motivation of striking a blow against tyranny or to preserve the Stars and Stripes." He said religion had a function in the war for some men, but "it was not a motivator for combat."<sup>208</sup> This is likely due to the fact that most mainstream religions, like society, tend to shun the use of violence and the taking of another humans' life.

More recently, psychologists have explained the extreme camaraderie between soldiers not as a reason to fight, but as a means of survival and a response to the extremes of war. The importance of "combat buddies" has been demonstrated throughout psychiatric and military literature as well as in veterans' memoirs. "This buddy, this friend, thus served to assuage anxiety, fear, and abandonment panic because of the

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<sup>207</sup> S.L.A Marshall, "Esprit," *Infantry Journal* 53, no. 3 (September, 1943): 46.

<sup>208</sup> Gerald Astor, *A Blood-Dimmed Tide: The Battle of the Bulge by the Men Who Fought It* (New York: Dell, 1994), 511-513.

magical belief that this buddy-- as long as the soldier stayed physically close to him-- could protect him and love him enough to endure the dangers around him."<sup>209</sup>

Paul Fussell, an infantryman in World War II, described the war as "indescribably cruel and insane." He further stated that "the war seemed so devoid of ideological content that little could be said about its positive purposes that made political or intellectual sense." Fussell said that soldiers were forced to create their own reasons for fighting, which frequently centered on the men struggling alongside them. However, "if loyalty to your unit might even seem an insufficient reason to fight the war, there was always the fall-back reason, which close scrutiny might expose as equally irrational: namely, to go home."<sup>210</sup>

This longing for home was shared by many other soldiers overseas. Pvt. Marsh expressed his homesickness in letters to his wife. "You get more or less used to the horror part of the war and you like to hear that someone cares if you live, die or suffer," Marsh said.<sup>211</sup> He told his wife he wanted to return home "not just to be away from all the noise and hell but for your companionship and love and for the comforts we have always enjoyed." He ended the letter with: "Pray for a speedy victory."<sup>212</sup>

Though the Army had to employ tactics to induce the infantrymen to fire in combat, it never discussed what

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<sup>209</sup> William E. Kelly, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the War Veteran Patient* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1985), 58.

<sup>210</sup> Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 132-133, 136, 141.

<sup>211</sup> Price, *Reluctant G.I.*, 111.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

psychological issues this may create when the war ended. It was necessary that the men learn to shoot-to-kill in combat situations to end the war before the effects of this could be studied. What becomes clear from memoirs published shortly after the war ended was that the transition back to civilian life was extremely difficult for combat veterans.

Ernie Pyle described his experience in combat situations extensively in his many books. He frequently mentioned the terror that large shells instilled within the men, telling about how the large concussions from the explosions would literally shake the ground they lay on. He was present when a gunner battery sent up a hailstorm of fire before the infantry could attack. "Every gun threw up a fiendish flame when it went off, and the black night was pierced like a sieve with the flashes of hundreds of big guns," Pyle said. "Standing there in the midst of it all, I thought it was the most violent and terrifying thing I'd ever been through. Just being on the sending end of it was staggering. I don't know how human sanity could survive on the receiving end."<sup>213</sup>

In World War II, infantrymen encountered some of the worst combat situations, but possessed the lowest skills and education. The Research Branch of the army referred to the infantry as "the dumping ground for men who could pass physical standards but who need not any other test." This attitude was not lost upon the men. A survey was conducted in

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<sup>213</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 125.



which 74 percent of the men stated that "the Infantry gets more than its share of men who aren't good for anything else."<sup>214</sup>

One of the first memoirs published by a combat veteran came out in 1949. Audie Murphy wrote about his experiences in an infantry division while fighting through France, Italy, and Germany. In his autobiography, Murphy described his duties while fighting at the front-lines in Europe and his unlikely rise as a hero in the United States Army.

Murphy was born in Farmersville, Texas in 1925 into extreme poverty. His parents had 12 children and supported the family by working as sharecroppers. His family was even forced at times to live in abandoned railroad cars. Murphy was described as "freckled, shy, and baby-faced, he stood barely five feet five and a half inches tall and weighed 112 pounds." In a move the Marines no doubt later regretted, Murphy was rejected from that branch of service due to his stature, he was considered too small.<sup>215</sup>

His father abandoned the family when Murphy was young, and his mother died by the time he was 16-years-old. Murphy was forced to drop out of school after fifth grade to help support his siblings. In June, 1942, at age 17, he enlisted in the military. He lied about his age in order to enlist early and after several rejections, the United States Army finally accepted him.<sup>216</sup>

Murphy described his feelings after killing his first enemy, stating "I feel no qualms; no pride; no remorse. There is

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<sup>214</sup> Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., *The American Soldier*, v. 1 *Adjustment During Army Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 309.

<sup>215</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 54.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

only a weary indifference that will follow me throughout the war." This callous attitude towards death would have a major impact on veterans, transforming them into unrecognizable beings. Murphy told a story about when he was "quietly moving through the interior of a house looking for Germans when 'suddenly I find myself faced by a terrible looking creature with a tommy gun. His face is black; his eyes are red and glaring." Murphy opened fire, only to realize he was shooting at his reflection in a mirror.<sup>217</sup>

At the start of his tour of Europe, Murphy had 235 men in his company, but at the end only Murphy and a supply sergeant were left. He survived multiple wounds, malaria, and gangrene. During World War II, Murphy rose through the military ranks, earning 33 medals, including a Medal of Honor.<sup>218</sup> He won the Medal of Honor for repelling a German attack, single-handedly, with a machine gun attached to a burning tank destroyer. After this epic battle, Murphy stated he felt "no sense of triumph; no exhilaration at being alive. Even the weariness seems to have passed. Existence has taken on the quality of a dream in which I am detached from all that is present."<sup>219</sup>

Despite his long list of accomplishments, Murphy went on to state that the war "haunted" him. He suffered from nightmares, slept with a loaded pistol under his pillow, and eventually developed a gambling addiction. When he was asked how people survive war, Murphy replied "I don't think they ever

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<sup>217</sup>Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1949), 188.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

do." Murphy died in an airplane crash in 1971; he was 46 years old and was later buried at Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>220</sup>

Murphy displayed symptoms of what would now be classified as PTSD and depression. He was an early advocate for mental health treatment of combat veterans. Additionally, Murphy is credited with asking the United States government for health care benefits for returning combat veterans and more research into the causes and treatment of PTSD.

Another soldier, Paul Fussell, wrote in his memoir about the extremes faced when attempting to survive in combat. When describing the brutal fighting encountered in the French town of St. Die, he remembered men "savaged by machine-gun and mortar fire, crying, calling on Mother." The brutal scenes witnessed by combat veterans had a profound effect on their lives and personality. Fussell stated that to survive combat, a man must psychologically adapt, which required a "severe closing-off of normal human sympathy so that you can look dry-eyed and undisturbed at the most appalling things. For the naturally compassionate, this is profoundly painful, and it changes your life."<sup>221</sup>

Pyle stated that infantry soldiers were frequently exposed to two extremes while in combat: intense fighting interspersed with complete boredom. He believed this led to levels of exhaustion that were absolutely unexplainable to civilians. He said after a certain point, men were unable to recognize their buddies; they performed their duties in a daze, and could not remember such basic things as when they last ate. To illustrate his point, Pyle related a story about the First

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<sup>220</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 56.

<sup>221</sup> Paul Fussell, *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), 112,123.

Division who spent twenty-eight days and nights at the front-lines.<sup>222</sup>

A company runner with the First Division "came slogging up to a certain captain" to report he had "to find Captain Blank right away" as he had an urgent message. The captain replied, "But I am Captain Blank. Don't you recognize me?" Apparently not, because the runner merely repeated his earlier message. "I've got to find Captain Blank right away," he said before running off. The other soldiers had to run to catch him.<sup>223</sup>

Psychologists made a similar observation regarding the effectiveness of American troops after prolonged exposure to combat. They discovered that a month of continuous combat greatly reduced the responsiveness of the soldiers, and after 45 days the men were described as in "a vegetative state." The close proximity to explosions had the worst affect on the mentality of the troops. Psychiatrist John Appel spent six weeks at Monte Cassino and Anzio studying the effects of combat on soldiers. He compared the functionality of a soldier to a truck, stating both wear out after too many miles. Moreover, Appel believes that "practically all men in rifle battalions who were not otherwise disabled ultimately became psychiatric casualties."<sup>224</sup>

"Soldiers become exhausted in mind and in soul as well as physically," Pyle said. "To sum it all up: A man just gets damned sick of it all." The military tried to relieve front-line soldiers by creating a rotation system by which each man could get a few days leave to rest and recuperate in Naples, and also one percent of each outfit was to return home for a month. However, this plan never seemed widely implemented and the

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<sup>222</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 89.

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*, 89–90.

<sup>224</sup> Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 245.

one percent set to go on leave to the United States was reduced by half. Sergeant Jack McCray calculated when he should be expecting his rotations and concluded that he could expect to visit Naples within the year, and he would get to return to America in seventeen years.<sup>225</sup>

Pyle related a story which seems to demonstrate not only the depravity of war, but also show how men must adapt to cope. While talking to some pilots, Pyle said they "told with merriment" about the fate of a German motorcyclist. The pilots were strafing<sup>226</sup> a mountain road and noticed a German motorcyclist "who kept looking back over his shoulder in terror at the approaching planes." The motorcyclist was so intent on avoiding the planes behind him that he accidentally drove his motorcycle off a 400-foot cliff.<sup>227</sup>

While the pilots may have laughed at this accident during combat, it was instances such as this which seemed to haunt veterans for years. Nigel Hunt and Ian Roberts interviewed hundreds of World War II veterans about their experiences in combat. Although the interviews took place in 1994 to 1995, some soldiers still had recurring flashbacks and nightmares relating to specific atrocities.

One man frequently thought of a time when his tank ran over a wounded German. The man was identified only by his initials, BD, to protect his privacy while he continued in his therapy. "The first thing in harbour [sic] at night was you had to clean your tank down," BD said. "Fetching pieces of German officer out of your tracks which wouldn't have been bad if he'd

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<sup>225</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 124.

<sup>226</sup> Strafing is the act of attacking ground troops with machine-gun fire from airplanes.

<sup>227</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 183.

been dead but you realise [sic] you got him. . . . That stuck in my mind, though it is 50 years ago this February when it happened."<sup>228</sup>

Factors that have been directly linked to an increase in the incident of psychological issues in combat veterans included a lack of sleep, length of the conflict and prolonged exposure to combat situations. Additionally, whether the troops were on the offensive or defensive could have a major impact on morale. Offensive attacks created more positive morale, along with the perception that the unit was winning. Other mitigating factors that increased shell-shock included: hunger or dehydration; being hot, cold, or wet; loss of comrades; and fear of separation from family or marital strain.<sup>229</sup> These factors were largely unavoidable or controllable; they were the realities of combat.

"Behind me is a distinguished and unbroken record for being sick in every country I ever visited," Pyle said. "Since Sicily was new terrain for me I figured I might as well get sick right away and get it over with. So on my fifth day ashore they threw me into an ambulance and off we went hunting for a hospital." Pyle suffered from a variety of sicknesses while covering the war abroad; however, none were as confusing as his diagnosis with "battlefield fever."<sup>230</sup>

When a man was brought to the hospital tents his first treatment was typically copious amounts of morphine. This was no different for Pyle, who was kept in a "semicomatose condition" for approximately twenty-four hours. When his

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<sup>228</sup> Hunt and Robbins, "Telling Stories of the War": 60.

<sup>229</sup> United States Military, "Combat Stress Control: Medical Field Training."

<sup>230</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 48.

symptoms did not improve, the doctors "began to get puzzled." Next, malaria was ruled out as a possible cause. This left one other choice for the doctors, which was battlefield fever.<sup>231</sup>

Symptoms of this illness include aches throughout the body and a high temperature. Doctors on the front-lines believed battlefield fever was caused by "a combination of too much dust, bad eating, not enough sleep, exhaustion, and the unconscious nerve tension." All of these factors were not only common at the front, but a universal description of the daily lives of front-line soldiers. While Pyle was recuperating, he stated that several other men received the same diagnosis.<sup>232</sup> As long as societies have gone to war there have been reports of afflictions specific to soldiers. The earliest reference scholars believe to be related to combat stress is in Homer's Iliad. Men have reported a variety of symptoms, ranging from the psychological: exhaustion, combat fatigue, combat stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder, to the physical manifestations such as: soldier's heart, effort syndrome, and shell-shock. The explanations of symptoms and causes for these ailments are as varied as their names. Hypothetical explanations proposed by the medical community included climate, concussion blasts from shells, changes in diet and sleeping habits, or the side effect of vaccines.<sup>233</sup>

Major Ed Adkins was one of Pyle's favorite acquaintances while in Tunisia. He described Adkins as having been very eager to return home and admitted that he was probably very happy to be state-side. However, they joked about what his

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>233</sup> Jones, "Historical Approaches to Post-Combat Disorders," 533.

feelings would be when he read about his men at the front. They thought Adkins would miss the constant movement, listening for shells and bombers in the night, weariness and dust, and after dinner talks in a blacked-out tent.<sup>234</sup>

"They tell me all the soldiers who have been through the mill and have returned to America are like that," Pyle said. "They get an itch for the old miserable life-- a disgusting, illogical yearning to be back again in the place they hated. I'm sure it's true, but I know a lot of soldiers who would like a chance to put that theory to the test."<sup>235</sup>

It was common for books or films to mention to shell-shocked veterans as "not quite right" after returning to civilian life. Passing references were made to men not being able to cope with the things they witnessed, or participated in, during the war. This lack of specific mention could either have arisen from a lack of understanding of mental illness, or because many felt ignoring the behaviors and symptoms was ultimately the best solution. They would basically wait until the veteran recovered, not intervening and avoiding mentioning anything related to the war.

Kyle Jones was an Air Force navigator in World War II. He was shot down over Germany and made a narrow escape from the plane. In the process of bailing out, Jones was able to aid another man but the rest of his crew was killed when the plane exploded. Upon landing, both he and his fellow crewman were captured by the Germans. Jones was a prisoner-of-war for 18 months, upon his release he had lost one-third of his body weight. The memories of this experience plagued him; he developed phobias of fire and feeling confined. For three years

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<sup>234</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 89.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.



after the war, Jones "wandered the streets of his hometown." He hoped to combat his phobias and became a firefighter, at which he was successful; however, his personal life was never able to recover. Jones never married, was estranged from his family, lived alone, and had few friends. He had effectively isolated himself.<sup>236</sup>

Though his experiences in the war had ended 55 years previously, Jones reported he still suffered from nightmares and recurring thoughts about combat. At age 77 he finally sought treatment and discovered his symptoms were "a psychological reaction to extreme trauma, not a result of weakness." This phenomenon frequently affected combat veterans and is now well-known as PTSD. In 1980, PTSD was included in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.<sup>237</sup>

Although not all combat veterans will suffer PTSD, it is estimated that three out of five will display some symptoms of the disorder.<sup>238</sup> After World War II, the civilian public became interested in the long-term effects of combat on a person's mental health. Though this interest was said to be brief, some major advancements were made. People began to recognize that psychological issues relating to war were not linked to the courage of a man but to a treatable mental illness. Moreover, it demonstrated that ignoring symptoms did not cure the problem, as years after the war men were still reporting

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<sup>236</sup> Charles Kaiman, "PTSD in the World War II Combat Veteran," *The American Journal of Nursing* 103, no.11 (Nov., 2003): 32.

<sup>237</sup> Kaiman, "PTSD in the World War II Combat Veteran": 32.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

symptoms. The long-lasting impact of combat on mental health was beginning to be understood.<sup>239</sup>

In the documentary "Let There Be Light," a soldier's struggles are documented as he attempts to reintegrate into civilian life. The film was written and directed by John Huston in 1948, but was not well-received because of its portrayal of mental illness. The documentary was filmed at Mason General Hospital on Long Island, New York and features soldiers coping with their mental illness as well as their sessions with psychiatrists.

Huston demonstrated the extreme psychological impact of combat on the mental health of these men, the terror war induces, and the very real symptoms these men were experiencing. He showed the nervous impulses of these veterans, shaking, whispering, and crying. Their eyes are said to "dart nervously back and forth." He used lengthy interviews interspersed with short answers: "I guess I just got tired of living, you can put it that way . . . I have trouble sleeping, yes, dreaming of combat, you know . . . I just took off because I seen too many of my buddies gone and I figured the next one was for me. A man can just stand so much up there, see?"<sup>240</sup>

It was common for veterans to develop paralysis, blindness, deafness, or speech problems due to combat service. They were challenging to treat because the cause of these issues was mental in nature and not the result of a physical injury. One of the most striking points of the film was when a psychiatrist put a veteran under hypnosis to discover the source of his violent stuttering. The man was a combat

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<sup>239</sup> Hunt and Robbins, "Telling Stories of the War": 58.

<sup>240</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 33.

veteran and served in France. The doctor discovered that the man first began having issues with words starting with "an s sound, which he associated with the hissing sound a German 88 mm. artillery shell makes in the air."<sup>241</sup>

Hypnosis was able to cure this man's stutter and helped many others to deal with the trauma related to combat. The film ended by showing the men as they left the hospital, waving at the camera after their discharge. What they hoped for was to be able to return to a normal civilian life. This documentary was filmed three years after the war and noted that 20 percent of the war casualties were due to psychiatric issues. Huston wanted to use his film to challenge the stigma attached to mental illness in veterans. He stated, "These are the casualties of the spirit, the troubled-in-mind, men who are damaged emotionally. . . . Here are men who tremble, men who cannot sleep, men with pains that are none the less real because they are of mental origin-- men who cannot remember, paralyzed men whose paralysis is dictated by the mind."<sup>242</sup>

This film was highly controversial and not widely shown for 35 years. Huston blamed the War Department, saying they censored his viewpoint. "It was banned because, I believe, the War Department felt it was too strong medicine," Huston said. "What I think was really behind it was that the authorities considered it to be more shocking, embarrassing perhaps, to them, for a man to suffer emotional distress than to lose a leg, or part of his body." However, a critic refuted Huston's statement, saying he "did not get written releases from the soldiers undergoing psychiatric treatment; for years he falsely insisted that the Pentagon had censored his film because it was

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<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

antiwar." Whatever the reason for the film's small release, historian Kenneth Rose still considered it one of the best documentaries from the war.<sup>243</sup>

Many World War II combat veterans reported having physical issues that were later discovered to result from a psychological trauma. A veteran, identified only as 'EL,' participated in the Normandy invasion. During the D-Day attack, a shell fragment entered his face and took out his eye. The last thing he remembered from the Normandy invasion was the bright flash of the shell. He reported having severe migraines, often brought on by bright lights, such as car headlights. His experience demonstrated the connection between psychological traumas manifesting themselves into a physical condition.

The process of having a subconscious reaction to specific stimuli is a conditioned response. This means when the veteran is reminded of the combat trauma they inadvertently react in the same manner, repeatedly. If left untreated veterans will continue the cycle of responding to stimuli as if each were life-threatening.<sup>244</sup>

According to Pyle, the soldiers he spoke to had a variety of reasons for dreaming of returning home; many wished to see and hold their children for the first time. However, one man had different plans for his young son. Most likely reflective of the terrible fighting he was facing in Italy, this man jokingly stated the extremes he would exercise hoping to disqualify his son from any future wars. "As soon as I get home I'm going to put ten-pound weights in his hands and make him jump off the garage roof, to break down his arches," he said. "I'm going to

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<sup>243</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 34.

<sup>244</sup> Hunt and Robbins, "Telling Stories of the War": 59–60.

feed him little ground glass to give him a bad stomach, and I'm going to make him read by candlelight all the time to ruin his eyes. When I get through with him he'll be double-4 double-F."<sup>245</sup>

The psychological effects of combat persisted for some men well after the war ended. Curtiss Martell entered World War II as a self-described "mild, meek, compassionate young man." His time in the military was detrimental, though, and he returned home "hard, callous, mean." Martell suffered lingering psychological issues related to combat which greatly interfered with his life.<sup>246</sup>

"I would jump at the slightest unexpected noise. At night I would lie in bed and cry. I also would have very severe stomach cramps," Martell said. "My immediate family recognized the disorder but hesitated to even mention it for fear of my violent temper." As late as 1982, Martell was still struggling with combat related stresses. At that time, a doctor diagnosed him with having issues specifically related to combat, offering to file a disability claim for him. Martell refused, saying "forget it; it is much too late. I currently take tranquilizers."<sup>247</sup>

Though symptoms relating to combat experiences, such as nightmares and flashbacks, are intrusive in daily life they may serve a biological process to help ensure a person's

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<sup>245</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 160. Note: This soldier was referring to the United States Code of Federal Regulations which categorized men by level of military exemption. Class 1-A was unrestricted military service. Class 4-F would have been disqualified from military service due to mental, moral, or physical standards.

<sup>246</sup> Astor, *A Blood-Dimmed Tide*, 498.

<sup>247</sup> *ibid.*, 498.

survival. In terms of evolution, being able to quickly recall and react in life-threatening situations would have better ensured survival. Surviving one risky event increases a person's chances of escaping the next.

Traumatic memories could help the soldiers survive while in the combat zone, though they are a hindrance once back on the home-front. After the war concludes, the memory is no longer a part of adapting biology; however, men will still perform the same subconscious, automatic reactions. This explains why a combat veteran would avoid fireworks or find cover after hearing a loud explosion. In the battlefield it is likely a deadly shell or gun fire, in civilian interactions it can be as benign as a car backfiring. The men are left with two options, either avoid situations which could possibly harbor triggers, or learn to consciously control their response reactions.<sup>248</sup>

One soldier was interviewed shortly after returning to civilian life. He was clearly suffering from combat related psychological disorders and unable to fully adapt into society. However, he was asked to describe what, if any, challenges he faced while attempting prepare for combat as well as returning to civilian life.

"Hell, yes. What do you think? Look at me now. Jesus Christ, you can't go through that without being influenced, stepping over dead bodies every day of the week, fellows just like me that got it," he said. "What do you think? A fellow should go through that and not be influenced? I can't forget it; I

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<sup>248</sup> Hunt and Robbins, "Telling Stories of the War," 60.

dream about it and see it at night. Christ, what do you expect?"<sup>249</sup>

In 2010, Nancy Marsh Price, the daughter of Pvt. Woody Marsh, published a book of his numerous letters home. The book concludes when her father returns home, she was almost three years old. Nancy wrote that "the war changed everyone to some degree." An example was how her father never again slept in a tent, saying he had spent enough time on the ground. "As he lay dying, mother remarked as she looked at his very swollen feet, 'To think that those feet had carried him all over Europe.' The war was never far from their thoughts and lives."<sup>250</sup>

Participation in combat had a major impact on the mental health of World War II veterans. Psychological disorders related to combat had been reported for hundreds of years and were well-known in society; however, it was nearly impossible to treat these disorders as the causes remained unknown. Further complicating treatment of psychological disorders, such as combat stress, was that most psychologists had no military experience and were unable to relate with the experiences of their patients. Veterans frequently stated it was difficult to explain their feelings to civilians due to a lack of understanding. Since adequate psychological treatment was widely non-existent, most veterans were unable to resolve their mental health issues. Nearly 70 years after the conclusion of World War II, some combat veterans are just now receiving essential psychological treatments.

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<sup>249</sup> Havighurst and Baughman, *The American Veteran Back Home*, 172.

<sup>250</sup> Price, *Reluctant G.I.*, 416.

## **The Fight Against the Present Darkness: The Mennonite Reaction to the Vietnam War**

Angela R. Sager

At the close of the letter to the Ephesians, the quarreling Christian churches of Asia were encouraged with the following, concluding remarks,

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.<sup>251</sup>

Like the recipients of this letter who faced internal divide within their community, the American Mennonites living in the mid-twentieth century were faced with an outbreak of religious schisms within the Anabaptist community due to the war being waged by the United States in Vietnam. However, like the early Christians of Asia, these Mennonites were called to “fight” against the “present darkness” of the Vietnam War through peaceful, Christ-like means. Historically speaking, the Mennonites had intentionally separated themselves from the “secular” world in order to maintain their religious purity. However, throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, war and social unrest forced American Mennonites to leave their quiet communities and become increasingly involved in promoting social justice in the secular sphere.

The central question facing the Mennonite community during the Vietnam War era is one that has perplexed Christian

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<sup>251</sup> Eph. 6:10–13 [Revised Standard Version]



thinkers for centuries: what does the imitation of Christ look like? A good number of Mennonites realized that being a proper follower of Christ involved helping others through some form of missionary work. Nevertheless, this view of proper Christian conduct began to change during the conflict in Vietnam. Many Mennonites were content with simply serving in the alternative service programs set up by the government for conscientious objectors. However, some Mennonites felt that if they were to remain faithful to Christ's teachings, they would have to reject cooperation with the government entirely, and instead opt for a form of protest that could potentially cost them their freedom. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the Mennonite community was forced to reevaluate their non-violent, anti-political viewpoints.

### **Basic Anabaptist History and Theology**

Mennonites can trace their origins back to the Anabaptists of the early-sixteenth century. Initially, the Anabaptists strongly resisted secular power and promoted non-violence in the name of Christ. After several years of persecution and terrible leadership within the community, Anabaptism began to fall apart.<sup>252</sup> However in 1536, a former Catholic priest from the Netherlands named Menno Simons revived Anabaptism by taking a leadership role within this greatly-weakened religious society. Under his guidance, the importance of non-violent resistance and separation from

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<sup>252</sup> Specifically, the disaster in the German city of Münster from 1534–35. Under the corrupt leadership of Jan Matthys and Jan of Leiden, Münster was forcefully seized by the Anabaptists. After Lutheran and Catholic forces reclaimed the city, nearly all the Anabaptist men, women and children involved in the city's take-over were slaughtered.

secular society once again became the focal point for the Anabaptists. According to Menno Simons, Protestants and Catholics had created a false dichotomy between faith and good works. In contrast, Menno Simons believed that when one accepts the divinity of Christ and the salvation he brings to humankind, not only will his/her heart and mind be changed, but also his/her overt actions will bear witness to that inward change. Unlike his predecessors, however, Menno Simons stressed that in order to remain righteous before God a proper Christian community must spiritually cut itself off completely from the secular world, that is, to be in the world but not of it. Menno Simons's followers—the Mennonites—took this last point to heart and for the next four hundred years, Mennonites all over the globe became *Die Stillen im Lande* (German for “the quiet of the land”).<sup>253</sup>

In terms of Christology and theology, Mennonites and other Protestants can find common ground. However, Mennonites can be distinguished from other groups of Christians on two points: their position on violence and cooperation with political power. Although Mennonites have never had a cohesive, ecclesiastical canon, most believe that the Schleitheim Articles, a small epistle drawn up by a former monk named Michael Sattler at a conference in 1527, provides some basic beliefs held by most Anabaptists.<sup>254</sup> On the issues

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<sup>253</sup> De Lamar Jensen, *Reformation Europe: Age of Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1992), 117–18; Robert Lee and Nancy V. Lee, ed. *Making Sense of the Journey: The Geography of Our Faith—Mennonite Stories Integrating Faith and Life and the World of Thought* (Telford: Cascadia Publishing House, 2009), 2.

<sup>254</sup> Jensen, *Reformation*, 110.

of violence and the state, the Schleithem Articles plainly state that a follower of Christ should oppose these two things at all cost. In the sixth article, the violent measures issue is raised:

Now, many who do not recognize what Christ wills for us will ask whether a Christian may also use the sword against evil people for the sake of protecting the good or for the sake of love. Our unanimous answer is as follows: Christ teaches us to learn from him that we should be mild and of humble heart, and in this way we will find rest for our souls.<sup>255</sup>

The Mennonites and other Anabaptists maintain that although Jesus had opportunity and reason to use violence against those who threatened his life, he practiced the radical notion of loving one's neighbor and "turning the other cheek" even if it meant losing his own life. Finally, Sattler sums up the Christian community's relationship with the state and the entire secular world:

[I]t is not fitting for a Christian to be a magistrate for these reasons: the authorities' governance is according to the flesh, but the Christian's is according to the spirit. ...Their citizenship is of this world, but the Christian's is in heaven. Their weapons of conflict and war are carnal and only directed against the flesh, but the Christian's weapons are spiritual and directed against the fortifications of the devil. Worldly people are armed with spikes and iron, but Christians are armed

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<sup>255</sup> Michael Sattler, "The Schleithem Articles: The Brotherly Agreement of Some Children of God Concerning Seven Articles" in *The Radical Reformation*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Baylor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 177.

with the armor of God—with truth, with justice, with peace, faith, and salvation, and with the word of God.<sup>256</sup> Proper Christians, according to Anabaptists, should deliberately distance themselves from anything that is of this world, including all forms of worldly politics.

The contemporary historian Robert Friedmann refers to this deliberate dichotomy between followers of Christ and the rest of the world as “kingdom theology.” In Anabaptist thought, kingdom theology is “a promise not of a ‘yonder’ after death, but of a present possibility.”<sup>257</sup> However, in order for kingdom theology to work, a “Christian [must withdraw] to his island, that is, to what he considers a partly realized kingdom of God, where there is no more hatred and violence but only brotherly sharing and peaceful togetherness.”<sup>258</sup> For centuries, this culture of quiet separation from the rest of the world became the norm of life for Mennonite communities everywhere. Although the Mennonites (unlike the Amish) remained at least physically part of the secular world, their lives revolved around their religious community. For Mennonites living the United States, all of this changed with the advent of world wars in the twentieth century, and the forced conscription into the army that came along with these dangerous conflicts.

### **World War I and the End of Isolation**

The American Mennonites’ quiet separation from the rest of society came to an abrupt end with the forced conscription of all able-bodied men during World War I. As the historian Gerlof D. Homan notes, many Mennonites did not

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<sup>256</sup> Sattler, *The Schleithem Articles*, 178.

<sup>257</sup> Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism: An Interpretation* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 41.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

understand the implications of “modern, total war;” they did not foresee how quickly a world war would “[break] down their semi-isolation and semi-separation.”<sup>259</sup> When Mennonite men resisted conscription on religious grounds, they were sent to camps for non-combatants for the duration of the war. However, these non-combatants endured a great deal of abuse from those who operated the camps; as a result, in desperation, some Mennonites did become combatants.<sup>260</sup>

Because of their experience during World War I, Mennonites after the war began to actively push for exemption from any further military combat. By the time the Vietnam War began, special arrangements had already been set up between the United States government and members of “historic peace churches” on the issue of military conscription. After passing the Selective Service Act of 1940, conscientious objectors (or COs) could either take a non-combatant role in the military (like chaplain or medic) or participate in civilian work for two years. More specifically, Mennonites could work as a volunteer through the church or participate in the I-W or 1-W program, which refers to the classification given to members of historic peace churches. According to the Selective Service Act, participants in the I-W program were paid to contribute “to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest.” Participants often worked in hospitals, took care of the

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<sup>259</sup> Gerlof D. Homan, *American Mennonites and the Great War 1914-1918* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1994), 45.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-67; James C. Juhnke, “World War I,” *The Mennonite Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement*, Vol. 5, A-Z, ed. Cornelius J. Dyck and Dennis D. Martin (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1990), 938-40.

physically and mentally challenged, or took part in some sort of relief organization.<sup>261</sup>

### **The Horrors of War and Christian Service**

Mennonites became more engaged with a dangerous world outside of their religious community. After enduring decades of French imperialism, the Vietminh party led by Ho Chi Minh began to fight for the independence of Vietnam. Fearing the influence of these communist revolutionaries in the northern half of the country, the United States became enmeshed in a complex situation in Southeast Asia as part of the cold war, and was increasingly involved in what will be called the Vietnam War. As the historian John Prados points out, the war in Vietnam would prove to be disastrous: millions of people lost their lives and those who survived suffered physiological and psychological damage in the aftermath of the war. Additionally, the U.S. army eventually began to force the Vietnamese people out of their homes and whole villages were destroyed as a result.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>261</sup>Homan, *American Mennonites*, 166; Melissa Miller and Phil M. Shenk, *The Path of Most Resistance: Stories of Mennonite Conscientious Objectors Who Did Not Cooperate With the Vietnam War Draft* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1982), 13; Jesse Glick, "Functions of the I-W Program," *Gospel Herald*, June 7, 1966; "Conscientious Objectors and the Draft," *Gospel Herald*, June 7, 1966.

<sup>262</sup> Alan Brinkley, *American History: A Survey—Volume II: Since 1865*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 834–834, 841; John Prados, *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945–1975* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), xii, 29.

The Mennonites were not unaware of the miserable conditions in Vietnam; as mentioned above, the Mennonites had become active members in the volatile, secular world they once avoided. In order to help fellow Anabaptists in the Ukraine After the First World War, American and Canadian Mennonites created the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Since this time, the MCC became active in various forms of missionary and relief work all over the world. The MCC officially began their relief work in Vietnam on August 16, 1954, following the Geneva Conference. The MCC and Mennonites who focused primarily on missionary work sought to express not only the “word” but also the “deed” there. Although the MCC strongly opposed any affiliation with the U.S. or South Vietnamese government, both the United States and Ngo Dinh Diem approved of MCC’s involvement in the region.<sup>263</sup>

When MCC began its relief work in Vietnam, it focused on four major tasks: providing material aid, medical services, improved agricultural services, and student services. Like many organizations at the time, the MCC put more of their energy into immediate aid to Vietnamese refugees; they “distributed beef, clothes, Christmas bundles, soap and school supplies—

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<sup>263</sup> Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 29, 225; Larry Kehler, “What is MCC Doing?,” *Gospel Herald* 59, no. 4 (January 25, 1966): 76; Luke S. Martin, “An Evaluation of a Generation of Mennonite Mission, Service and Peacemaking in Vietnam 1954–1976,” July 1977, A Vietnam Study Project commissioned by the Mennonite Central Committee, MCC Peace Section and the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College, North Newton, 3.

U.S. surplus rice, beans, butter, cheese, shortening and cooking oil.” Eventually, the MCC eventually felt that long-term aid would be more beneficial to the Vietnamese and to that end it put less emphasis upon emergency items. In terms of medical aid, the MCC set up various clinics across the region, and was instrumental in treating leprosy. Agricultural aid, however, was not fully implemented: the Vietnamese resisted setting up villages where Westerners could help them improve their agricultural techniques. Finally, the MCC was naturally driven to spread the Gospel. Christian schools were set up for Vietnamese children where they were taught English and Christian values. The schools were abandoned by the MCC in 1959 when the MCC realized the ineffectiveness of the program.<sup>264</sup>

As the years went by and aggression between the United States and the Vietcong intensified, missionary and relief work became increasingly difficult. As the violence escalated, so did the suffering of the Vietnamese people. While participating in relief work in Vietnam in 1966, Mennonite missionaries Atlee and Winifred Beechy noted the increasing despair in the region in their book *Vietnam: Who Cares?* “The tragedy of Vietnam hangs over the world like a persistent fever or a hacking cough which will not go away.”<sup>265</sup> In fact, the Beechys’ small book *Vietnam: Who Cares?* often reads as a litany of horrors. Aside from often lacking the bare necessities, dislocated Vietnamese refugees suffered from tuberculosis, and most of them could simply not remain healthy due to a terrible diet. Another major problem facing the Vietnamese was the break-up of the family.

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<sup>264</sup> Martin, “An Evaluation of a Generation,” 9–13.

<sup>265</sup> Beechy and Beechy, *Vietnam: Who Cares?*, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1968), 9.



Because all able-bodied men were drafted into the army, women were left to fend for themselves and their children resulting in hunger and prostitution. Mothers often gave up their children to orphanages in the hope that these facilities could provide them with food and shelter. In addition to all of these problems, Vietnamese refugees lived in a constant state of fear. Without a stable support system, including the family, the Vietnamese lived wretched lives.<sup>266</sup>

### **Getting the Word Out—The Church's Initial Response**

After information about the situation in Vietnam came back to Mennonites living in the United States, the Mennonite community could not remain silent; it had to respond. The nature of that response, however, continued to be a major problem for the Mennonites throughout the duration of the war. Most Mennonites could agree that their ultimate goal was “one of witness and reconciliation—witness to the love that is in Christ, calling all men to be reconciled to God and to their fellowman.”<sup>267</sup> However, in order to achieve this goal, the Mennonite community as a whole needed to feel free to discuss the Vietnam conflict within their own congregations. In the article “What Can Be Done?,” E. Stanley and Paul Peachey argue that a Mennonite congregation should come to a consensus on how to witness to the state. The authors of this article suggest that the congregation write “letters to public officials, ads in the local paper, [offer] a speakers’ bureau service, panels, TV and radio phone-in programs...[basically] anything that sponsors free discussion.” While this might have been a vital

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 68–70, 99.

<sup>267</sup> R.B., “Voice from Viet Nam,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, February 18, 1965.

step for the Mennonite community, it certainly did not address another serious issue – conscription.<sup>268</sup>

### Alternative Service?

Most Mennonites had no problem complying with the Selective Service Act of 1940. In fact, quite a few saw alternative service as something worthy of pride and honor. According to historian Perry Bush, Mennonites considered the I-W program and other forms of alternative service to be a source of “positive service;” that is, the young Mennonite men who served in these programs helped correct social ills. In light of what soldiers had to endure, these young Mennonites could “easily afford two or three years of voluntary service without real economic hardship.” According to Dr. Richard Keeler, Mennonite men should be thankful for the grace that the U.S. government had shown the Mennonite church. In earlier wars, the U.S. government did not treat COs with kindness.<sup>269</sup>

A good number of Mennonites remained skeptical about the motivation behind a Mennonite’s desire to opt for alternative service. In an article entitled “‘Viet Nam’: Questions, Not Answers,” Mennonite commentator Vincent Harding asks, “Why should we be free from sacrifices when soldiers are sacrificing their lives for an essentially evil cause and civilians are being consumed daily in the conflagration?” Later in the

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<sup>268</sup> Bush, *Two Kingdoms*, 173; Bohn and Peachy, “What Can Be Done?”, *Gospel Herald*, January 25, 1966.

<sup>269</sup> Bush, *Two Kingdoms*, 231; Richard F. Keeler, M.D., “Privilege and Responsibility: Why Choose Voluntary Service?” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, May 30, 1968.

article, Harding continues questioning alternative service by asking:

Is our I-W program a clear enough witness against the war? Is it adequate when it involves only our young men; is it enough when it simply sends them to jobs that are often easy, well-paying, and of such a nature as to free other men for armed service? Should any others of us give up two years of our regular activities—or for at least as long as the war lasts?<sup>270</sup>

In many ways, alternative service gave COs an “opt out;” many of them could serve the States by working as relief workers in unstable countries like Vietnam without risking their lives. Some Mennonites maintained that following Christ had to involve self-sacrifice and suffering. Furthermore, as admirable as it was to serve in an American hospital, such service did not improve the conditions of the Vietnamese people.

### **Rejecting the System Entirely—Draft Dodgers and Peace Protesters**

On August 18, 1969, in Turner, Oregon, a conference was held to discuss the position of Mennonites who simply refused to be drafted into combat or alternative service. The delegates at this conference drafted the “Mennonite Church 1969 Statement on Draft Resistance;” in this statement, the members of the conference clearly outlined their views on cooperation with the government:

A small but growing number of Mennonite young people find the present arrangement with the United States government totally unacceptable. The Vietnam

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<sup>270</sup> Vincent Harding, “Is There No Other Way?—Viet Nam: Questions, Not Answers,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, September 30, 1965.

War and the continued military conscription have prompted us to examine our individual and church relationships with the Selective Service System. By cooperating with this agency we, in effect, are sanctioning its actions.<sup>271</sup>

Many Mennonites of the younger generation felt that by choosing alternative services, one was compromising with the state and essentially acknowledging the authority of non-Christian, political power. "Positive service" was simply not enough; and a Christian in their eyes must openly protest the actions of the state that created the war in the first place.

As a result of their resistance against the draft, many young, Mennonite men became the target of the federal government. In their refusal to join the military or to participate in some acceptable form of alternative service, these young men broke the law. Intimidation from the government and the natural fear of being imprisoned became main concerns. In their book, *The Path of Most Resistance*, Melissa Miller and Phil M. Shank tell the story of Duane Shank, a man who sent a letter at the age of eighteen to the federal government stating his refusal to register. Not long after that letter was mailed, FBI agents were sent to Eastern Mennonite College, the school Shank was attending at the time, in order to pressure Shank to register with the Selective Service. Eventually, Shank was arrested and put through months of hearings and trials until he was sentenced to three years of community service in southern Virginia. Some Mennonite men were not as lucky as Shank; Dennis Koehn, who attended Bethel College at the time of his

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<sup>271</sup> Found in Melissa Miller and Phil M. Shank, *The Path of Most Resistance*, 233.

arrest in 1970, was sentenced to “an indefinite length of time [in prison that would] not exceed six years.”<sup>272</sup>

These radical Mennonites received condemnation from an unlikely source: other Mennonites in their own community. As Miller and Shenk point out in their book, many older Mennonites firmly believed that young Mennonites had been led astray by the beatnik/hippie counterculture movement. In order to illustrate the older generation’s resistance to the younger generation’s more radical agenda, Miller and Shenk recall the story of Doug Baker who helped write the proposal in favor of accepting draft resistance for the Mennonite Church general conference in Turner, Oregon. Interestingly enough, the proposal put forth by the younger Mennonites was opposed by many members of the conference not because of the proposal itself but because of the people who supported it. According to Miller and Shenk:

It soon became clear to the resisters that the way they were dressed was becoming one of major topics of the Turner conference. People would repeatedly say they were concerned about the “hippie” style of dress because it might hinder the resisters’ Christian witness. But it was obvious that people just did not like “hippie” clothing, witness or no witness....[Additionally,] rumors were circulating about the resisters’ personal lifestyles.<sup>273</sup>

Older Mennonites were uncomfortable with the fact that these young resisters bore a physical resemblance to a subgroup of people who promoted drug use, “free love,” and the deconstruction of long-held moral norms. In addition to this

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 21, 27–28, 39, 81.

<sup>273</sup> Miller and Shenk, *The Path of Most Resistance*, 49.

concern, older Mennonites believed that the young draft-dodgers were posing a threat to the compromise between the Mennonite church and the government. If these draft-dodgers resisted participation in alternative service, the government could deny Mennonite men the chance to register in the I-W program. Older Mennonites were appalled by the draft dodgers' willingness to disturb the peaceful separation between the Mennonite community and the state.<sup>274</sup>

Closely related to the issue of draft-dodging was the controversy over peace protests. As in the case of dodging the draft, certain Mennonites criticized the younger generation for falling prey to the "spirit of the age." In a 1965 editorial in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, the nameless author states:

[M]any a discerning observer would say they [the young people] are choosing the wrong spokesman. If they want a serious hearing, it would be greatly to their benefit if they had as their leaders respectable, balanced and persuasive young men or women rather than the beatnik-type characters who in so many cases have been making the most noise.<sup>275</sup>

Many Mennonites worried that the younger generation under the influence of non-religious peace protests going on across the country would become clueless rebels. Once again, the older generation of Mennonites feared the influence of the secular counterculture.

This conflict over peace protests came to a head in November, 1966. In light of the upcoming celebration of Veterans' Day, the Peace Club at the Bethel College in North

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>275</sup> "Our Concerned Students," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, July 8, 1965.

Newton, Kansas, planned a march through the town of Newton. The aim of the march was to peacefully protest the disastrous results of the war and the number people killed as a result of the conflict. Bethel College officially called off the protest because of the sudden public outcry against the march. Nevertheless, a small group of Bethel students led their own protest known as the “Repentance Walk” through North Newton. This smaller protest gained the attention of all the media outlets.<sup>276</sup>

One of the major complaints against Bethel’s Peace Club march focused on how to distinguish Mennonite war protests from “secular” war protests. A day before the Veterans’ Day peace protest was to be held, the *Mennonite Weekly Review* ran an editorial called “What Will Be the Effects On The College” written by a concerned member of the Mennonite community. The writer of the editorial expressed concern over the kind of message the protest would send to the entire community—Mennonite and non-Mennonite:

An editorial in the college student publication, *The Bethel Collegian* [has] raised two vital questions, “What good will the march do?” and “What will be the march’s effects on Bethel College?”....The method of communicating is important, but much more serious is what we communicate and whether one communicates or witnesses at all.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> “Yes or No?,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, November 24, 1966; “Bethel Peace Club Lists Positive Results of Repentance Walk,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, December 1, 1966.

<sup>277</sup> “What Will Be The Effects On the College?,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, November 10, 1966.

To the community, a Mennonite protest should not just express a discontent with the Vietnam War; it should also contribute to a solution. The writer of this editorial feared that a witness to the Peace Club's protest would not see the Christian inspiration behind the activists' disdain for the war.

After the small demonstration on November 11 in North Newton, the Steering Committee at Bethel College responded to the editorial mentioned above in a reader response in the *Mennonite Weekly Review* on December 1. As far as the committee was concerned, the peace protest successfully communicated the concerns of the Mennonite Peace Club:

Since November 11 we [the Bethel College Peace Club] have had opportunity (*sic*) to meet informally with some Newton non-Mennonite church members, including veterans, to discuss our concerns about the war.

These discussions have been rational and amicable; we are planning for more of the same. We believe the genuine confrontation of issues which takes place in such discussions would not have been possible without the Repentance Walk.<sup>278</sup>

By putting on a very public demonstration against the Vietnam War, the Mennonites at Bethel College grabbed the curiosity of non-Mennonites in the community. The Mennonites in the Repentance Walk welcomed debate about the war, and thus broadcasted to non-Mennonites the Christian worldview held by their religious denomination. According to the article, several young supporters of the war sought out the demonstrators eight days later in order to antagonize the Mennonites. However, the Mennonites at Bethel were able to sit

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<sup>278</sup> "Bethel Peace Club," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, December 1, 1966.



down and talk with fourteen of the young men, and eventually these men came to respect the views of the Mennonite demonstrators.<sup>279</sup>

Not every member of the older generation of Mennonites objected to public peace protests. Guy F. Hershberger, a highly-respected Mennonite of the older generation, argued in the article “Protest Against Evil” that shocking protests were not foreign to the holy men of the Bible. According to Hershberger, Jesus expressed his rage towards the moneylenders in the temple by turned over their tables. Nevertheless, Hershberger believed that Mennonites should not always go out of their way to be shocking. Being a peaceful people, Mennonites must protest in a way that would not contradict the loving, non-violent message of Jesus.<sup>280</sup>

### **Using the Opponent’s Method to Fight the Opponent: Mennonites and Political Offices**

Mennonites were a people who insist upon resisting the political powers—that-be. Many Mennonites believed that Satan, the embodiment of evil, had control over the political powers of the world. The only way to resist evil was to cut the entire Mennonite community off from political involvement. During the Vietnam War, this traditional Anabaptist practice came under scrutiny. In an article called “Our Almost Unused Political Power,” James Juhnke describes the powerlessness of a Mennonite trying to witness against the Vietnam War:

Our leaders, including William Snyder executive secretary of the Mennonite Central Committee and William Keeney, chairman of the MCC Peace Section are

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Hershberger, “Protest Against Evil,” *Gospel Herald*, January 3, 1968.

dissatisfied with United States policy in Vietnam and believe that steps to deescalate the war could and should be taken. Relief work is fine, say our workers in Vietnam, but the *war* is the real problem.<sup>281</sup>

In Juhnke's view, volunteering in the relief effort in Vietnam or vocalizing the Mennonite criticism of the war was not enough; the war itself had to be stopped, but that could only occur if the government decided to terminate the military mission in Vietnam.

In another article, Hershberger states what purpose a Mennonite political office would serve:

1. To serve as a listening post...

3. To select with care public moral issues in which there is to be a prophetic Christian witness. These would need to be issues on which the church can speak unitedly (*sic*) in a corporate way, and with a sufficient amount of information to speak with a reasonable degree of competence.<sup>282</sup>

By having a political post in Washington, Mennonites could influence the policies that might lead to wars and international conflicts. Eventually, the MCC decided to create a political office in Washington on January 18, 1968.<sup>283</sup> This reaction to the Vietnam War seemed to be the most radical in that officially broke away from traditional Anabaptism.

### **Epilogue—John Howard Yoder and the Political Message of Jesus**

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<sup>281</sup> Juhnke, "Our Almost Unused Political Power," *Gospel Herald*, January 9, 1968.

<sup>282</sup> Hershberger, "A Mennonite Office in Washington?," *Gospel Herald*, February 27, 1968.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

The Mennonite reaction to the Vietnam War was just as scattered as the national response to the war. From the beginning of the war in 1964 to the fall of Saigon in April of 1975, Mennonites debated over how to behave like Christ in a world governed by “fallen” political powers. One could argue that the very nature of Anabaptism would lead to this kind of response in light of a national crisis. The Anabaptists never had a strict ecclesiastical order and as a result, they never developed a strict dogma like Catholics or other Protestant denominations. Additionally, the Mennonites went against Menno Simons’s strict teaching of the separation of church and state. If the Mennonites had remained isolated from secular culture, perhaps they would have avoided the moral and religious confusion brought about by the war.

The Mennonites could not go back to the kinds of small, peaceful communities they had lived in the sixteenth century. The Mennonites integrated themselves into mainstream, American culture by becoming involved in the Vietnam War. The Mennonites had to find a way to interpret the Gospels in a mainstream context. John Howard Yoder, a prominent Mennonite theologian in the early 1970s, took on this task in his 1972 book *The Politics of Jesus*. The purpose of this book is to ask in reference to the Gospels: “Is there here a social ethic?”<sup>284</sup> In his analysis of the Gospel of Luke, Yoder comes to the conclusion that Jesus does not promote apolitical beliefs. He clarifies this point by saying, “[Jesus] did not say...‘you can have your politics and I shall do something else more important;’ he said, ‘your definition of *polis*, of the social, of

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<sup>284</sup> Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 11.

the wholeness of being human socially is perverted.”<sup>285</sup> The expression of brotherly love to all human beings is Jesus’ alternative to the world’s political ideologies.

The claims made by Yoder in *The Politics of Jesus* are not new to the Mennonite community. However, after years of coming to terms with the social realities of the world, one could argue that the Mennonites needed to seriously review their religious beliefs. In the end, the Mennonites could not find a uniform plan of reaction against the social injustices caused by the Vietnam War. The war allowed the Mennonites to put their faith into action through missionary work and protests against the government and its policies. Although the Vietnam War divided the Mennonite community on proper Christian ethics, it also forced all them together by making them take their faith seriously.

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 107.

## **Wichita's Gay Rights Ordinance No. 35-242: Back in the Closet**

Tyler Thornton

Throughout the 1970s, several jurisdictions in the United States outlawed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. At the same time, a major shift regarding policy in LGBT (Lesbian Bisexual Gay Transgender) issues occurred. On one side there were advocacy groups that sought to formalize the protection of homosexuals against discrimination in housing and employment.<sup>286</sup> There were equally vocal

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<sup>286</sup> One such homosexual advocacy program was formed to alter Wichita's local ballot in July, 1977, when members of the Homophile Alliance of Sedgwick County (HASC) approached the Wichita City Commission to modify its civil rights ordinance.

arguments from those who opposed these anti-discriminatory laws, sometimes resulting in their repeal.

The most widely known example of this repeal movement was in Dade County Florida (Miami) in 1977. The repeal movement found a national spokesperson in Anita Bryant, a Miami Beach resident, popular entertainer, and former Miss America contestant who “was the embodiment of the traditional American wholesomeness and values... [who maintained that] the approval of the law would endanger her children by exposing them to homosexuality.”<sup>287</sup> Not only was Bryant famous for her Florida Orange Juice® advertisements, she was also a pop culture icon easily identifiable at the time. Bryant was ultimately successful in helping facilitate the repeal of the Miami-Dade ordinance in 1977 which sought to eliminate discrimination against homosexuals seeking employment or housing.

The repeal of Miami’s gay ordinance prompted a response in other United States municipal courts that passed similar anti-discriminatory laws. This backlash did not remain isolated or local and Bryant’s anti-homosexual campaign in Miami served as a model for other cities to follow.

On May 9, 1978, a similar situation to that in Florida occurred with the repeal of Wichita’s gay rights ordinance. However, without “Bryant’s media-celebrity aura,” the developments within Wichita received a smaller amount of

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The HASC was a small group of lesbian and gay activists in Wichita, Kansas, that organized this alliance with the hope to enact a local gay rights ordinance.

<sup>287</sup>Fred Fejes, *Gay Rights and the Moral Panic: The Origins of America’s Debate on Homosexuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 262.

national coverage. Both opposition and support groups of the Wichita Gay Rights Ordinance were very active during this period. This raises the question of how the actions in Wichita corresponded with national events going on at relatively the same time, and whether they were effective in facilitating the repeal of Wichita's gay rights ordinance. The opinions of these groups will be assessed and demonstrate the social, civil, and religious lenses used to rationalize the actions of those in opposition and support of Wichita's Ordinance No. 35-242.

The examination of the fight for homosexual civil rights in Wichita suggests that the increase of pro-homosexual sentiment that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s was in contrast with the presentation of the issue in Fred Fejes' work *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality*.<sup>288</sup> Wichita provides a case study for the repeal movement of the 1970s by demonstrating how the issue was complex. Even more significant is how the arguments used to scrutinize homosexuals in the post-World War II era, thought to be outdated depictions of homosexuality, were still present in Wichita throughout the 1970s.

The events in Wichita offer a focused view of a national issue. One of the first monographs to focus on gays and lesbians during the repeal stage of the gay rights ordinances was *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* in 1987. Author Barry D. Adam devotes an entire chapter of his work to the reaction of the New Right, specifically within the Anita Bryant movement that occurred in Florida.<sup>289</sup> Adam's book glosses over the situation that took place in Wichita at around the same

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<sup>288</sup>Fejes, *Panic*, 30-31.

<sup>289</sup>Barry D. Adam, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987).

time, and the only relevant information he posits overlooks the key opposition groups and activists in support of the ordinance. During the 1990s, an increase in the amount of secondary literature dealing with the gay and lesbian movement occurred, much of which continued to overlook the gay rights movement in the Midwest and smaller cities such as Wichita. For example, in the 1995 revised edition of Barry D. Adam's, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement*, he concentrates on the ballot initiatives during the latter half of the 1970s.<sup>290</sup> Like his 1987 monograph, Adam skims the issues that took place in Wichita resulting in a lacuna within the secondary literature.

Robert B. Marks's 1996 book *The Gay and Lesbian Movement: References and Resources* "provides an outline to unify scattered fragments of the social history of local gay and lesbian communities of the United States into a coherent whole."<sup>291</sup> Marks's work dedicates over one thousand pages to the regional gay and lesbian communities and their movements in New York City, Atlanta, Chicago, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Marks' attempts to provide a "coherent whole," but still ignores smaller communities like Wichita, therefore leaving a gap in the literature similar to previous works.

Monographs during the latter part of the 1990s continued to follow the trends of earlier works. Two works published the following year *Gay Rights: Current Controversies* and *Anti-Gay Rights: Assessing Voter Initiatives*, both edited compilations of articles, again concentrated on other regions of the country and excluded Wichita. *Gay Rights: Current*

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<sup>290</sup>Ibid.

<sup>291</sup>Robert B. Marks, *The Gay and Lesbian Movement: References and Resources* (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1996), xi.



*Controversies* explored the question of whether anti-discrimination laws were indeed a necessity.<sup>292</sup> While providing both the opposition's views and those opposed to laws protecting homosexuals, this edition only discusses these arguments surrounding the gay amendment in Colorado, yet another narrow focus. *Anti-Gay Rights: Assessing Voter Initiatives* takes a broader geographical approach addressing the anti-homosexual programs in Oregon, Idaho, Missouri, and Colorado. Yet again the situation in Wichita as well as in a large percentage of the other gay communities throughout the United States that were experiencing the same backlash as the aforementioned areas was ignored.<sup>293</sup> Carl F. Stychin's book *A Nation by Rights: National Cultures, Sexual Identity Politics, and the Discourse of Rights* separates from the gay and lesbian counter-revolutionary movement all together.<sup>294</sup>

More recent scholarship like that of Raymond A. Smith and Donald P. Haider-Markel's 2002 reference handbook *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation* provides an understanding of gay and lesbian participation in protest politics, social movements, and electoral politics but disregards a majority of the communities that were expressive in protest politics. After all, New York and San Francisco are just two

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<sup>292</sup>Bruno Leone, Scott Barbour, Brenda Stalcup, and Tamara L. Roleff, eds., *Gay Rights: Current Controversies* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1997).

<sup>293</sup>Stephanie L. Witt and Suzanne McCorkle, eds., *Anti-Gay Rights: Assessing Voter Initiatives* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997).

<sup>294</sup>Carl F. Stychin, *A Nation by Rights: National Cultures, Sexual Identity Politics, and the Discourse of Rights* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

homosexual communities among many.<sup>295</sup> The following year, a documentary history entitled *Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States* remained partial to the areas which received the most national attention during the American debate on homosexuality.<sup>296</sup> Like the bulk of the literature from the previous decade, the early 2000s were unsatisfactory in delineating the gay and lesbian movement that occurred during the late twentieth century, especially the smaller communities that experienced similar backlash.

Vicki L. Eaklor's 2008 book *Queer America: A GLBT History of the 20th Century* neglects the smaller communities and instead describes the backlash that took place in areas that received the most national observance.<sup>297</sup> However, the same year Fred Fejes monograph *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality* devotes an entire section to the ballot initiative against the gay ordinance in Wichita.<sup>298</sup> Although Fejes provides an adequate analysis of the gay rights movement in America, he allots a large portion of his work to the repeal of the Miami ordinance which leaves the analysis lopsided. One of the most recent books published on this topic by Benjamin Shepard, *Queer Political Performance*

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<sup>295</sup>Raymond A. Smith and Donald P. Haider, *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Denver: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002).

<sup>296</sup>Walter L. Williams and Yolanda Retter, eds., *Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States: A Documentary History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003).

<sup>297</sup>Vicki L. Eaklor, *Queer America: A GLBT History of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008).

<sup>298</sup>Fejes, *Panic*.

*and Protest*,<sup>299</sup> omits the gay rights movements that were representative of the smaller cities across the country neglecting the situation in Wichita and following the trend of the past literature.

Therefore, an omission remains within the secondary sources especially in the smaller gay communities across the United States. Although several of the works provide a better understanding of how politics and society worked against the prospects of the homosexual community, they are geographically limited to the largely populated gay communities across the country like San Francisco, New York City, and Miami. The purpose of this analysis is to help fill the gap that exists in the secondary literature about Wichita. In order to expand on the overall understanding of the gay rights repeal movement of the late 1970s, this work investigates the opposition and activist groups that supported and combated the repeal of lesbian and gay ballot initiatives.

### **Post World War Two Background**

World War II had a social impact that greatly altered American society's beliefs on homosexuality. Following the war, American culture referred back to the more traditional family ideals regarding sex and gender and is often regarded as a time when heterosexual norms and roles went unchallenged. One method used to undermine homosexuals was to label them "perverts" or to suggest their sexual orientation was a result of poor parenting or individual maladjustment. Homosexuality was therefore not innate and one *became* a homosexual. The post-war portrayal of

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<sup>299</sup> Benjamin Shepard, *Queer Political Performance and Protest* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009).

homosexuality was synonymous with a sickness that was immoral as well as threatening to society.<sup>300</sup>

During the 1950s, homosexuality was often linked with crime, described as a disease, and played homosexuals out to be predators. However, this frame of homosexuality as a sickness and a crime began to lose power and credibility as the decade progressed. With the emergence of homosexual publications in the following decade, and the shift in politics for homosexual rights, coming out became a political act. Gay activists during the 1960s saw themselves as relatable to the student-dominated anti-war movement going on at the time.

In the 1970s, governments took reformist outlooks and portrayals of homosexuality as a crime, sickness, and perversion began to wane. But while the media of the 1970s suggested a relatively tolerant attitude towards homosexuality, public opinion did not. By the end of the decade, the future of homosexuality in America gained a tenuous position. This position would soon be put to the test.<sup>301</sup>

### **The Wichita Fight**

Professional homosexuality advocacy programs worked to achieve whatever limited goals they could. One such homosexual advocacy program was formed to alter Wichita's Ordinance No. 35-242. The fight began in July, 1977, when members of the Homophile Alliance of Sedgwick County (HASC) approached the Wichita City Commission to modify its civil right ordinance.<sup>302</sup> The HASC was a small group of lesbian and gay activists in Wichita that organized an alliance with the

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<sup>300</sup>Fejes, *Panic*, 13.

<sup>301</sup>Fejes, *Panic*, 30-1.

<sup>302</sup>Julie Charlip, "Battle Began Last Summer with Change in Ordinance," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 10, 1978, 1F.

hopes of enacting a local gay rights ordinance.<sup>303</sup> During Wichita city elections in April, 1977, the HASC endorsed two candidates who “promised to support a local gay rights law and worked for their election.”<sup>304</sup> After distributing thousands of pieces of campaign literature, the campaigning paid off and two liberal candidates were elected.

In July, representatives from the HASC sought to amend Wichita’s Civil Rights Ordinance. Specifically, the members of the alliance no longer wanted employers, landlords, or proprietors of public accommodations to use marital status and sexual or affectional preference as a means of discrimination against homosexuals.<sup>305</sup> Similar to most of Kansas’s city ordinances, ambiguity of what a “No” and “Yes” vote resulted in was cause for confusion at the polls. If one voted “Yes” it was for the repeal of the ordinance and a withdrawal of one’s civil rights. A “No” vote meant the opposite. By accepting the proposed amendments from the HASC, voters supported the ordinance and therefore supported granting civil rights for homosexuals.

The effort was not without its challenges. Protests from groups like the Concerned Citizens for Community Standards—whose president was Rev. Ron Adrian—believed homosexuality conflicted with the Bible, and city commissioners themselves believed the ordinance might conflict with state sodomy law. Attorney General Curt Schneider ruled the amendment would

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<sup>303</sup>Fejes, *Panic*, 161.

<sup>304</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup>The term “sexual or affectual” refers to the manifestation of an emotional or physical attachment to another willing person(s) or demonstrating a partiality towards the aforementioned behaviors.

not violate state law. Ordinance No. 35-242 passed by a 3-2 vote.<sup>306</sup> The swing vote came from city commissioner Jack Shanahan who stunned both sides with his decision; Shanahan gave an impassioned speech noting that his Christian beliefs recognized that homosexuals were people, who have rights.<sup>307</sup>

One factor that remained unchanged was the use of religion as a means to undermine the ordinance. Opposition groups wasted no time in their efforts to repeal the recently passed amendment and used religion as the basis for their contention. However, not all religious arguments sought to repeal the civil rights amendment and will be noted accordingly against the backdrop of those that were in favor of reversing the ordinance. More importantly, those who used religion in favor of the ordinance demonstrated the complexity of the situation that occurred in Wichita. Wichita was not a monolithic city of “Bible thumpers” that only used religion to attack homosexuality. Many in the religious communities used their religious beliefs to support the concept of individual homosexual rights, and the value of all humans.

A majority of those who wanted a repeal of Wichita’s gay rights ordinance described homosexuality as sinful; justifying homosexuality as an illness rather than a choice was seen as inane. One such individual, Dr. Paul Ackerman, a psychology professor at Wichita State University and a member of the Concerned Citizens for Community Standards, maintained that homosexuality was an illness, and a freely chosen sin that

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<sup>306</sup>Charlip, “Battle Began,” 1F.

<sup>307</sup>Charlip, “Shanahan Surprised Both Sides With Vote,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 10, 1978, 6F.

should be viewed as immoral.<sup>308</sup> Ackerman also upheld the beliefs of Dr. Karl Menninger's book *Whatever Became of Sin?*, confuting homosexuality for sin in general.

The University did not ignore the fight for Wichita's gay rights ordinance. A local newspaper, the *Eagle-Beacon*, reported on the religious arguments on the ordinance at one of Wichita State University's weekly "Saturday Forums." Two of the gay panelists present at the Forum considered themselves to be practicing Christians, confirming that "they found no conflicts between their homosexual lifestyles and their religious/Christian beliefs."<sup>309</sup> Two confessions were insufficient to generalize that all homosexuals balanced their homosexual lifestyle with their religious beliefs as well as the panelists did, but it revealed a recurring theme concerning the gay rights: the private sphere, i.e., one's personal relationship with God, is applied to something that has no bearing on civil rights. Dr. Judith Plaskow, a Wichita State University religion professor, affirmed this: "In using these texts...they elevate minor biblical references above the core of actual New Testament morality."<sup>310</sup> In other words, those who apply biblical references to fight homosexuality use them to the detriment of larger biblical teachings and principles that resonate throughout the Bible and often applying them to the personal lives of others when they have no justification to do so.

Some advertisements that were in the *Eagle-Beacon* around the same time publicized a similar religious message:

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<sup>308</sup>Betty Schountz, "Scope: Gay Rights Ordinance: Two Viewpoints, *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*," May 7, 1978, 1F.

<sup>309</sup>"Homosexuality Topic Of WSU Discussion," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 10, 1978, 2B, Col. 3.

<sup>310</sup>"WSU Discussion," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 2B.

“Homosexuality? Some Call It Human Rights; God Said It Was A Sin.”<sup>311</sup> This advert and others provided a toll-free number to call that connected the caller with a five-minute Bible message that correlated homosexuality with iniquity. However, not every religious advertisement aimed at the sinful nature of homosexuals. Instead, some groups like The Religious Caucus for Human Rights (RCHR) urged a “No” vote against the repeal of the gay ordinance. Their argument was that individual rights are fundamental to our system of democracy and that citizens are entitled to have these rights insured.<sup>312</sup> The ad contained over 250 signatures from representatives of the Wichita Citizens who support human rights and Ordinance No. 35-242 as well as other organizations that called for a “No” vote. There were also paid political announcements funded by such groups as the Concerned Citizens for Community Standards that used the recent exposure that Miami and St. Paul had given to gay rights; with both of their recent gay ordinance repeals the advertisement read “For Three In A Row! Miami, St. Paul, Wichita.”<sup>313</sup> Applying the voices of opposition from Miami and St. Paul to America as a whole, which the advertisement purported, is inconsiderable to the remainder of the American population who might have believed otherwise.

The message conveyed by The Religious Caucus for Human Rights’ advertisement drew support from several other religious groups as well: Metropolitan Community Church,

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<sup>311</sup>“Homosexuality? Some Call It Human Rights; God Said It Was A Sin,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 10, 1978, 6B.

<sup>312</sup>“Because we know that individual human rights are basic to our system of democracy...,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 8, 1978, 4D.

<sup>313</sup>“For Three In A Row!” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 7, 1978, 6F.



Catholic Workers of Wichita, Concord United Church of Christ, Evangelical Outreach Ministries, and United Methodist Urban Ministry. Moreover, these religious activist organizations against the repeal of the gay ordinance helped demonstrate that a religious argument could be effectively maintained by those who supported the amendment. Reverend William Reece, Chairman for the caucus and pastor of Pine Valley Christian Church, reaffirmed this when he referred to the Concerned Citizens for Community Standards' religious stand: "There has been the indication that there is only one religious view, ... [which] simply was not the case."<sup>314</sup> When asked about biblical passages that denounce homosexuality, the reverend further expounded that biblical scriptures can be interpreted in diverse ways.<sup>315</sup>

Although the aforementioned groups were beneficial to the public's acceptance of the gay rights ordinance, there were also nuns, priests, and laypersons that were active in working against the law's repeal. Pro-gay rights activists from all over the country and Canada including cities like Los Angeles, Boston, Baltimore, Kansas City, San Diego, Montreal, and Ottawa, joined the effort as well. Mary Harren, member of a local Catholic Workers chapter, distributed pro-gay rights information pamphlets along with the visiting activists outside Wichita Catholic Churches. Their purpose was to spread the message that Catholics in Wichita and throughout the country

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<sup>314</sup>Julie Charlip, "Religious Caucus Backs Gay Rights," May 6, 1978, *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 1C.

<sup>315</sup>Charlip, "Religious Caucus," 1C.

could still be considered faithful while at the same time demonstrating their support for the gay rights ordinance.<sup>316</sup>

The dioceses were anything but receptive of these activities. According to Sister Jeannine Gramick from Baltimore, Maryland, Catholics were “slightly cold,” often lowered their eyes, and continued to walk past without acknowledgement; one clergyman at St. Mary’s Cathedral refused to shake hands with individuals.<sup>317</sup> Other visitors described more onerous behavior from Wichita lay persons: one claimed they were threatened at a Catholic church in the northeast area of the city, and one recalled being kicked by another. However, many of the visitors were greeted with friendly receptions, like those visiting Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, who were invited in for food.<sup>318</sup> The dichotomy that existed between the visiting and local priests, nuns, and laypersons exacerbated the division in the Catholic ranks. Visiting Rev. Paul Shanley of Boston claimed this division had to do with local Wichita Catholic Bishop Maloney, who was at odds with the rest of the Catholic Church. Shanley and the majority of the national board members disagreed with Maloney’s teachings, claiming that his messages were “gibberish.”<sup>319</sup>

The majority of religious arguments resulting from the passing of Wichita’s gay rights ordinance related directly to the repeal of the amendment, either for or against. Protestant churches tended to act as if the debate would go away. Others

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<sup>316</sup>David Harris, “Priests, Nuns, Work Against Law’s Repeal,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 8, 1978, 1D.

<sup>317</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup>David Harris, “Gay Rights Issue Opens Split in Catholic Ranks,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 8, 1978, 3D.

<sup>319</sup>*Ibid.*

claimed to have taken no position on the matter; Dr. Roger Fredrikson of the First Baptist Church had decided to opt out of the controversy because he wanted to let the people decide for themselves.<sup>320</sup> Similar arguments made by the Rev. John Kenneth of St. James Episcopal Church upheld that the issue was a matter of conscience; as did Rev. Edward Trost who said, "We are not telling...people how to vote, but to vote as the Lord compels their conscience."<sup>321</sup> Likewise, Rev. Everett Mitchell of East Heights United Methodist Church left the decision up to individuals, because such a personal decision represented the democratic system.<sup>322</sup> Other congregations remained undecided like Rev. Donald Schroeder of the First United Presbyterian Church. Members of the United Presbyterian Church agreed with the leader of The Religious Caucus for Human Rights, Rev. William Reece, who affirmed that homosexuals have equal claim with all human beings, and equally deserve the love, acceptance, concern, and pastoral care of the church.<sup>323</sup>

Those who spoke in favor of or against the repealing of Wichita's gay rights Ordinance No. 35-242 often used their religious beliefs as justification; a majority of the opposition correlated the acts of lesbians and gays as sinful in order to undermine homosexuality. Those individuals who were against the repeal of the ordinance spoke of the Bible's ambiguous

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<sup>320</sup> "Some Churches Have Taken No Position," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 8, 1978, 3D.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Bob Latta, "Appeals to Emotion 'Not Helpful:' Many Churches Leave Gay Issue Up to Individual Conscience," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 8, 1978, 1D.

<sup>323</sup> "Presbyterian Stand On Gays Undefined," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon* May 8, 1978, 6F.

anti-homosexual passages. In a decision to keep silent on the matter, some organizations and churches remained inaudible. Others left the decision to his or her conscience. One of the overwhelming contradictions of using religion as the foundation for one's argument was that it challenged the basis for legal discrimination defined in the United States Constitution. The use of the Bible to convey one's argument against and in support of homosexuality was erroneous: "While many people and religions may regard homosexuality as a sin, that belief cannot be the basis for legal discrimination."<sup>324</sup> Ignoring the religious arguments would leave the overall understanding of homosexuality at the time skewed because religion then, as it does today, played an integral role in the minds of the public, especially when it came to their own opinions on whether to vote "No" in opposition of the ordinance's repeal, or "Yes" in favor of it.

Some reverted to the previous notions about homosexuals that were consistent during the post-war era of the 1950s: that was a sickness, crime, and a perversion. In a sense, the progress made by the gay rights movement until 1978 was immediately overturned or was not as strong as assumed. In the three decades ('50s, '60s, and '70s) that work was done to remove these medical, legal, and moral stigmas, Wichita's outlook was unchanged. By linking homosexuals to pedophiles, child molesters, and corruptors of youth, those in favor of the ordinance's repeal found it strategic to demoralize homosexuality on these grounds alone often as a generalization for the entire homosexual community.

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<sup>324</sup>"Pro: Ordinance Protects Rights; Con: Homosexuals Live in Freely Chosen Sin," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 10, 1978, 6F.

An overwhelming generalization was that homosexuals were child molesters and a danger to the youth.<sup>325</sup> A member of the Mulvane community, C.M. Elliot reaffirmed this: "We must either stand up...or stand back and watch the freedom of immorality destroy our children."<sup>326</sup> Similarly, a Eureka resident, R. O. Samuells believed homosexuals were a danger to young people.<sup>327</sup>

Those who believed that homosexuals were corruptors of the youth, mainly through their pedophilic nature, did not go unchallenged. This is similar to the earlier arguments that used religion to undermine homosexuality. Wichita citizen L. Mark, who was against the repealing of Ordinance No. 35-242, applied statistical evidence to disclaim those who maintained homosexuals were child molesters and harmful to children; it is an immoral tactic to apply this to civil rights for homosexuals because ninety percent of child molestation cases were against heterosexual men on young girls.<sup>328</sup> A task force initiated by the Governor of Oregon Robert Straub, found that "ninety percent of cases of child molestation were perpetrated by fathers, stepfathers, foster fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles and mothers' boyfriends—not by homosexuals."<sup>329</sup> The task force also identified child molesting as a pedophilia that

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<sup>325</sup> "Freely Chosen Sin," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 6F.

<sup>326</sup> "Community Will Be Affected by the Way You Vote on Tuesday," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 7, 1978, 2F.

<sup>327</sup> "Gay Rights Ordinance Vote on May 9 Is Debated," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 4, 1978, 3D.

<sup>328</sup> "Vote No: Civil Rights Are for All," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 4, 1978, 3D.

<sup>329</sup> "Vote No for Fairplay, Justice," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 7, 1978, 2F.

was a neurosis or mild psychiatric disorder characterized by anxiety, depression, or hypochondria and quite separate from sexual orientation or preference.<sup>330</sup>

The argument that homosexuals were danger to children and have the effect of turning them into homosexuals by “recruiting” them was also debated. Experts including Dr. John Money of John Hopkins University argued that it was impossible to change one’s sexual orientation once it was established.<sup>331</sup> Homosexuality was not a choice and if heterosexuals claimed the opposite, then heterosexuality was innate as well. Therefore, justifying that one’s sexual orientation could be subject to conversion is ineffective. Charlene Novick of Wichita and some of those who supported the gay rights ordinance were in accord with Dr. John Money and upheld that homophile behavior-patterns in children were set and “recruiting” was, as a result, impossible.<sup>332</sup> Even if children could be “recruited” by homosexuals, repealing the ordinance would not prevent homosexuality. Theoretically, if “recruiting” could occur before the ordinance’s repeal, it could after as well.

One of the overwhelming arguments presented by the opposition was that gay rights for homosexuals were not a civil right, but instead should be treated as a moral issue. A Wichita resident at the time, R. Langton, confirmed this: “This is a moral issue, not a civil rights, issue.”<sup>333</sup> Jacqueline R. Newman, another Wichita resident, said that classifying gay rights as

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<sup>330</sup>“Fairplay,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 2F.

<sup>331</sup> “Freely Chosen Sin,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 6F.

<sup>332</sup> “Community Will Be Affected by the Way You Vote on Tuesday,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 7, 1978, 2F.

<sup>333</sup> “Vote Yes: Morality Is at Stake,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 4, 1978, 3D.

such lost its holding when these rights became a license to carry out homosexual and lesbian actions.<sup>334</sup> Richard E. Bird, also from Wichita, believed that morality was at stake too, and if one chooses to shun these “unnatural” behaviors they should be allowed to.<sup>335</sup> Yet another member of the Wichita community attributed the ordinance to an infringement of one’s morality: “Societies have crumbled in the past because of the decay of their moral fiber.”<sup>336</sup> Although these residents did not have any expertise on the distinction between civil rights and moral issues, their testimonies were important because they demonstrated that gay rights were not going to be earned through the gateway of the legal system but also through society and moral arguments.

Those who based their discrimination of homosexuals on moral ground alone justified this with similar laws that victimized on a moral basis. For example, there were bigamists thrown in jail regularly and laws that prohibited the marriage of cousins, obscenity, prostitution, and massage parlors.<sup>337</sup> Richard E. Bird applied a similar theory; instead he mentioned rape, sodomy, and even public drunkenness to demonstrate that actions perceived as going against “what the great majority of citizens feel [are] beyond the bounds of human freedom”<sup>338</sup> were warranted. If these immoral acts were justification for discrimination, then homosexuality was liable to be as well.

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<sup>334</sup> “Gay Rights’ Not a Civil Right,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May, 4, 1978, 2D.

<sup>335</sup> “Vote Yes,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 3D.

<sup>336</sup> “Gay Rights Should Be Repealed,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 6, 1978, 3C.

<sup>337</sup> “Not a Civil Right,” 2D.

<sup>338</sup> “Vote Yes,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 3D.

Others maintained that homosexuals who compared their current situation to the civil rights movement of African Americans just a decade earlier were wrong in doing so because homosexuality was a behavior that an individual engaged in, whereas “when you are black it sticks.”<sup>339</sup> In other words, the behavior of homosexuals was immoral because it deceived the public into believing that gays should be allowed special rights to engage in what they thought of as morally unethical and a choice; civil rights were therefore inapplicable to homosexuals because their activities were preventable.

Remaining neutral on the debate was nearly impossible; one was either for or against the repeal of Ordinance No. 35–242. Those who maintained that homosexuality was immoral and used it against the enactment of the amendment did not make these claims without resistance. On the opposite end of the argument it was suggested that linking homosexuality with immorality was in itself immoral: “Maybe the voters should do unto themselves what they seem so eager to do unto others—repeal all civil liberties and rights.”<sup>340</sup> To use immorality to undermine homosexuality was disputed, because those in favor of the amendment saw this as dissolute as well. To those in favor of the ordinance, it was the opposition that were infringing on their rights by using immoral tactics to inhibit its success.

Rather than use moral versus immoral characteristics as the basis for one’s argument, some claimed how homosexuals affected society. Richard R. F. Harris made the assertion that homosexuality affected no one but the homosexual; therefore,

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<sup>339</sup> “Not a Civil Right,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 2D.

<sup>340</sup> “Any Discrimination Is Wrong,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 4, 1978, 2D.



if it were a danger it was to the detriment of the individual committing the act.<sup>341</sup> Claiming that homosexuality was unnatural proved to be ineffective as well; man is not a natural creature—money, government, philosophy, art, and scientific research are “not natural.”<sup>342</sup> Ken Nickel believed that anti-homosexual laws were harmful to Wichitans as well as the rest of the country: “Wake up to what is happening here—the lies, the gutter-level campaign; wake up, Wichita...the whole nation...is watching.” Similar to the arguments expressed earlier by other ordinary citizens, these too were effective, in that they made the ordinance resonate in the thoughts of Wichitans. This helped facilitate the path of Wichita’s gay rights ordinance to the questioning of one’s morality.

The president of one Wichita organization, the League of Women Voters, Margalee Wright, also supported the civil rights ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and employment. A “No” vote would ensure the civil liberties for all. This was reminiscent of the League’s goal; to promote social justice, equal rights, and the elimination of discrimination. The League of Women Voters made the argument that keeping the ordinance did not require the endorsement of the lifestyle, beliefs, or actions of homosexuals.<sup>343</sup> This statement provides one of the most effective counter-arguments against the ordinance’s repeal. Thus, using “gutter-level” tactics to undermine homosexuality was effective for persuading the public into characterizing

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<sup>341</sup> “Discrimination Affects All of Us,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 6, 1978, 3C.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> “LMV Urges ‘No’ Vote on May 9,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 4, 1978, 2D.

homosexuality as sinful, unnatural, immoral, etc., but did not mean they in turn had to approve of such a lifestyle. The opposition's clever fabrication of the private nature of homosexuality into the public sphere was instrumental in its disapproval. Statements like those from the League of Women Voters demonstrate that one's personal beliefs or sexual preference can be set aside when basic human rights are being restricted from any individual person or group.<sup>344</sup>

Although a majority of the voters who participated in the May 9, 1978, elections were lost in the referendum, citizens like Robert Lewis, co-chairman of the Homophile Alliance of Sedgwick County, were not completely pessimistic about their situation: "I think our involvement in the city is only going to grow...we obviously have a lot of educating to do."<sup>345</sup> The future was less optimistic for other locals according to one gay rights activist who wept outside the Bus Station Club, a local gay bar, as passing motorists yelled obscenities. However, another gay rights supporter at the Bus Station Club was still optimistic; despite an overwhelming number of votes in favor of the ordinance's repeal, the progress of gay rights activists during the campaigning period had come a long way in a relatively short period.<sup>346</sup> Those opposed to Ordinance No. 35-242 had a stronger influence that reflected public sentiment more; all of the wards that casted their votes during the May 9 elections were in favor of the repeal of Wichita's gay rights ordinance by a ratio of almost five to one.

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<sup>344</sup>"Urges No," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 2D.

<sup>345</sup> John Achterkirchen and L. David Harris, "Most Losers in Referendum Battle Expect to Win War," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May, 10 1978, 10A.

<sup>346</sup>Achterkirchen, "Most Losers," 10A.

By 1978, Wichita had become the third locale in the country in which a gay rights ordinance was repealed.<sup>347</sup> The communities' decision to repeal Ordinance No. 35-242 represented a recent trend that began with the repeal of ordinances in Dade County, (Miami) Florida, followed by St. Paul, Minnesota, and now Wichita, Kansas. This public outcry against homosexuality that started with Anita Bryant in opposition to Miami's gay rights ordinance the previous year had made its way to Wichita and provided further evidence of a backlash against the gay rights laws passed by several other U.S. communities.<sup>348</sup> The Concerned Citizens for Community Standards got their "three in a row" which had been part of their campaign strategy that ran in the Eagle-Beacon leading up to the May 9 vote.

It seems that the campaigning strategies made by those in opposition to Wichita's gay rights ordinance helped produce the drastic results in favor of the amendment's repeal on May 9, 1978. The efforts during the previous three decades that had worked to remove the labeling of homosexuality as a sickness, perversion, and crime were set back by the 1970s. The overwhelming majority who voted against the ordinance revealed that these labels were still largely central to Wichita's perception of homosexuals. Therefore, the oppositions' tactics which aimed at undermining support for homosexual civil rights through the appeal to one's religious beliefs, morality,

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<sup>347</sup>"Wichita Repeal 3<sup>rd</sup> in Year: 38 American Cities Have Gay Ordinances," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, May 10, 1978, 10A.

<sup>348</sup>"Nation: Voting Against Gay Rights," *Time Magazine U.S.*, May 22, 1978.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,919647,00.html>, November 20, 2011.

and conscience or by comparing it to pedophilia and child “recruiting” had a large impact on the way voters cast their ballot on May 9. As previously stated, these appeals were inconsistent with one’s sexual orientation and masked the progress of the ordinance itself: “It seemed more likely that Wichita voters were less interested in restricting the rights of gays than blocking a community-wide endorsement of a practice they abhor.”<sup>349</sup>

Another factor that worked to the detriment of pro-gay rights activists was the ambiguous nature of homosexuality; the public was denied a clear, unmistakable definition of homosexuality. Whether or not the arguments for or against homosexuality made sense or were grounded in evidence like the pedophile argument, these arguments were more potent for some individuals than others. These arguments reveal that claims purported by historian Fred Fejes—that labeling homosexuals as sick, perverted, and criminal had disappeared by the 1970s<sup>350</sup>—were not the case in Wichita. Wichitans often reverted to these labels. Wichita was not a city progressive in its outlook on homosexuals. Instead, unlike the majority of the country, Wichitans were still using the anti-homosexual ideologies that were formed immediately following the Second World War.<sup>351</sup>

Although it looked as if the rest of the nation had become less anti-homosexual in sentiment, Wichita was reactionary. As for the way Wichitans voted at the polls on May 9, their decision to repeal Wichita’s Gay Rights Ordinance was not surprising considering the recent repeals in St. Paul and

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<sup>349</sup> “Voting Against,” *Time Magazine U.S.*

<sup>350</sup> Fejes, *Panic*, 30–31.

<sup>351</sup> Fejes, *Panic*, 13.

Miami. Although the city of Wichita was in accordance to the national wave of things in terms of repeal, the context in which their argument was grounded was not. The situation in Wichita reveals that until the public is ready to set aside their pre-conceived notions about sexuality based on either one's religious beliefs, moral stance, or conscience, they will often apply these opinions to circumstances that have no bearing on the situation, i.e., civil rights. In doing so, they made the public believe they should vote "Yes" to repeal the ordinance by suggesting that if it were passed this would give license for homosexuals to live their immoral and unnatural lifestyles openly and freely without consequence. The public was willing to vote in favor of the ordinance's repeal not because they thought homosexuals were undeserving of fair employment and housing accommodations, but rather because they correlated a "No" vote with the approval of homosexuality.