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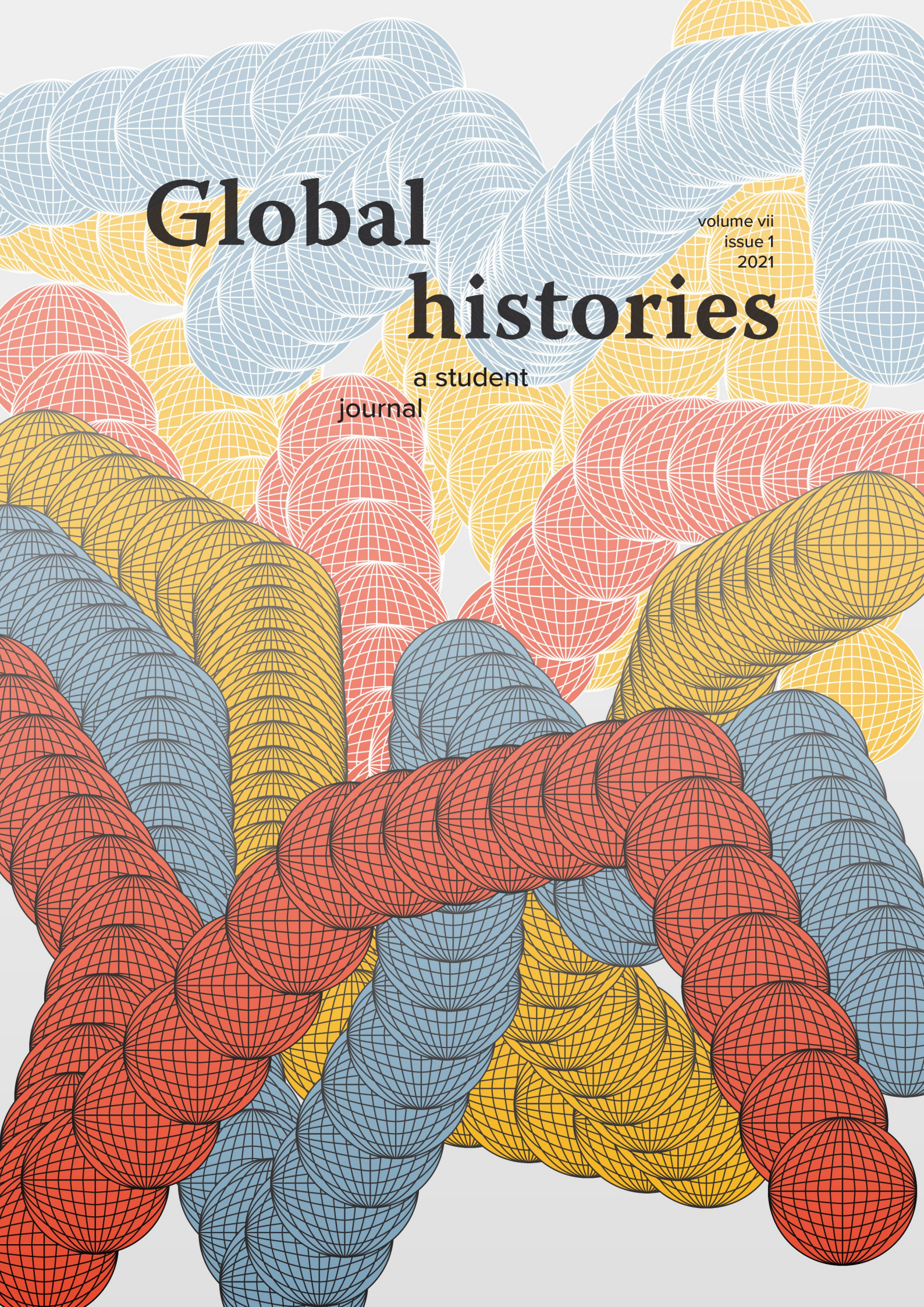

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Ruby Guyot

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SCOPE AND PURPOSE

In response to the increasing interest in the 'global' as a field of inquiry, a perspective, and an approach, Global Histories: A Student Journal aims to offer a platform for debate, discussion, and intellectual exchange for a new generation of scholars with diverse research interests. Global history can provide an opportunity to move beyond disciplinary boundaries and methodological centrisms, both in time and space. As students of global history at Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, our interest lies not in prescribing what global history is and what it is not, but to encourage collaboration, cooperation, and discourse among students seeking to explore new intellectual frontiers.

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This issue was published in May 2021.

PEER REVIEW STATUS AND ETHICS

This journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. All articles which appear in this issue, with the exception of editorial content, were subject to peer review.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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1 Research articles

2 Book Reviews

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Dear reader,

At present, the world remains in a state of great instability. Having passed the milestone of one year of COVID-19—and the rather tragic marker of over 3 million reported deaths from the virus worldwide—most of us remain touched by the pandemic. Even with the gradual rollout of the vaccination campaign, the effort to inoculate and prevent further infections has exposed global inequalities in financing vaccines and in maintaining medical supply lines. Information campaigns questioning the science of vaccination have also proliferated globally, through vast online networks which infiltrate even the smallest of local communities. The impact of the virus thus continues to be felt by all, regardless of one's place in the world.

What does the pandemic's continuation and evolution mean for those of us at work to understand the global? For academics all over, the continuation of home office and the restricted access of spaces such as libraries and archives have meant readjusting one's expectations and goals. In our Global History MA program here in Berlin, this is no different: a hard lockdown in Germany has been in place since December 2020, with the universities having been closed since March of that same year. For the new cohort of students who arrived—some of whom are now members of our editorial team—they have been unable to experience the same type of education in global history. Rather, they, like many others, have experimented with putting the global in digital perspective. They have participated actively in video seminars, which have come with the unexpected benefit of increased accessibility that in-person events did not always entertain; they have engaged tenfold with digital archives, considering at great length what it means to be a historian in an increasingly-digitized age; and, perhaps most importantly, they have practiced creating global communities from the safety (and occasional boredom) of their homes, demonstrating how solidarity can form even amongst conditions of isolation.

For our editorial team, the continuation of the pandemic has brought a similar reckoning with the benefits and limitations of working digitally. While the challenges of 2021 forced us to once again cancel

the annual Global History Student Conference, our journal continues in full form. This issue features seven outstanding pieces of research from students of global history, inquiring in topics ranging from colonial settlements to global labor dynamics to cultural transfusions. Marie Keulen begins by examining the role of the Moravian mission to Berbice, interrogating how the Dutch colonial officials, the Moravian missionaries, and the Indigenous populations co-existed in the eighteenth-century Atlantic. Jan Becker follows with a study of German medical missionaries to twentieth-century Java, exploring agency and power relations with intricate nuance. Omri Polatsek uses an agricultural industry as a jumping off point to explore the global nature of the Synthetic Age in British-ruled Palestine, along with the effects of local actors in establishing economic nationhood. Bella Ruhl turns colonial dynamics around by looking at the life of an Egyptian feminist activist in the early twentieth century, disentangling narratives of Western feminism from Orientalist assumptions. José Bento de Oliveira Camassa compares and contrasts the travel accounts of two Latin American writers to analyze the colonial discourses of regions absorbed into Argentina and Brazil at the turn of the twentieth century. Last but certainly not least, Suchintan Das, using an abundance of vibrant source material, takes a closer look at the lives of American G.I.s stationed in World War Two Calcutta, illustrating the differences between soldiers and locals, as well as white and Black soldiers, in extensive detail. And in addition to these research articles, this issue includes several book reviews, where Simone Steadman-Gantous, Chi Ho Kiang, Charles Brophy, Lara Wankel, and Alina Rodríguez provide valuable commentary on four recently published texts relevant for the field of global history.

While we, as many others, remain saddened by the limitations imposed on our ability to engage with the world—both academically and otherwise—we remain hopeful that a return to a safer, happier future is soon on the horizon. Even through the latest round of lockdown blues, we have still found the energy, resolve, and determination to come together, as authors, team members, and readers, to

put together a strong, salient collection of global histories. We hope you take some of that strength with you while perusing this issue.

With best regards,
Ruby Guyot
Editor-in-chief

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the interest and work of all students who submitted an article, essay, or review during the last call for papers. We are especially grateful to the authors published in this issue, for both their fruitful contributions and efforts in revision. These authors include Marie Keulen, Jan Becker, Omri Polatsek, Bella Ruhl, José Bento de Oliveira Camassa, Suchintan Das, Simone Steadman-Gantous, Chi Ho Kiang, Charles Brophy, Lara Wankel, and Alina Rodríguez. Their dedication to their pieces and excellent work in revision shines through in this issue.

In addition, we would like to extend our immense gratitude to the students on the Global Histories journal team, particularly those who devoted extensive time and effort to reviewing and editing the published pieces. These members include Lukas Jung, Daniel Hinchey, Aditya Sah, Sylvia N Roper, Diego Dannemiller, Patrick Graves, Simone Steadman-Gantous, Joshua Rossetti, Daniela Greca, Charlotte Bracklo, Anna Nesterova, Henrique Pimento Gomes, Shayna Allen, Phoebe Ka Laam Ng, and Alec Carver. The attention and dedication these members provided towards the pieces they worked on, even during highly hectic periods in our master's studies, was fundamental in the editorial process for this issue. The design work of Natasha Klimenko, in addition, made for yet another beautiful and accessible issue, and her work on the journal's layouts has been highly valued by our team.

Finally, we are grateful for the continued support and assistance for this project by the Freie Universität Berlin, particularly the Global History faculty, chaired by Prof. Dr. Sebastian Conrad, and the Online Journal Systems team at CeDiS. In March 2021, our website and journal platform was upgraded by the Online Journal Systems team, and we are particularly grateful to Carola Fanselow for her help in facilitating the set-up of the new system.

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“Attracting all Indians under the Pretext of Religion”: Dutch-Indigenous Relations and the Moravian Mission in Berbice (1738–1763)

by
MARIE KEULEN

ABSTRACT

In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the Dutch colony Berbice on the northern coast of South America formed the stage of the short but successful mission of the Moravian Church among the Indigenous people of the region. Whereas from the perspective of the Moravians this religious mission was part of their numerous missionary activities in the Atlantic world from the 1730s onwards, for the governor, council, planters, and various Amerindian groups living in Berbice the arrival of the missionaries was something new. This article brings together the historiographical fields of Moravian missions in the Atlantic world on the one hand and Dutch-Indigenous relations on the other hand. Examining the reaction of the local and metropolitan colonial authorities to the Moravian community and the missionaries' interaction with different Indigenous population groups inhabiting the region, this article argues that the history of the Moravian community in Berbice opens a window through which Dutch-Indigenous relations can be investigated. From the perspective of the Dutch colonial authorities, the alliances with the Amerindian peoples were of vital importance for oppressing the majority enslaved population, and the interactions between their much needed-allies and the Moravian missionaries were seen as a threat. Using colonial archival material on the conflicts and confrontations between missionaries and authorities, this article shows that their relationship was primarily defined by the (desired) interactions of both parties with the Amerindian populations. It shows the colonial perspective on the interactions between European missionaries and Indigenous groups while revealing the metropolitan and local authority's priorities, limits, and fears.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marie Keulen is a Research MA student in *Colonial and Global History* at Leiden University. Her research interests include the interplay of global, regional, and local dynamics within colonial societies. She is particularly interested in the interactions, confrontations, and connections between the different social and cultural groups inhabiting the Atlantic and Caribbean region.

INTRODUCTION

In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the Dutch colony Berbice on the northern coast of South America formed the stage of the short but successful mission of the Moravian Church among the Indigenous people of the region.[1] From 1738 until the slave revolt in 1763, the Moravians established a small Christian settlement in Berbice from where they maintained contact with various Amerindian groups, of whom several people were baptized and lived among the Moravian missionaries. This was a striking event, given the fact that in Dutch Atlantic historiography the absence of missionary work has often been mentioned as characteristic of Dutch colonialism in the region, and as characteristic of Dutch-Indigenous relations in particular.[2] From the perspective of the Moravian Church, the mission in Berbice was part of their numerous missionary activities from the 1730s onwards in the Atlantic world, including the Danish West Indies, Suriname, Jamaica, and several places in North America. In both German and English, these Moravian missions have been discussed extensively, with a particular focus on the lives and beliefs of the missionaries as well as their interactions with the enslaved and Indigenous populations.[3] With their missions, the Moravians established a global community with a shared Christian identity.[4] Within the Moravian religious community, which was founded by Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf in 1722, missionary activities were considered fundamental for their unconditional commitment to the expansion of the kingdom of God. The missionaries, seen as the chosen warriors for the Saviour's service, had a special place within the Moravian congregation and were in close contact with the home front. Whereas the activities and attitudes of the missionaries within the colonies of the Atlantic world have been widely examined, however, the reaction and attitude towards the missionaries from the perspective of the colonial society

1 I would like to thank Michiel van Groesen for his insightful comments. I also wish to thank the editors of *Global Histories: A Student Journal* for their comments and suggestions.

2 Recently, Danny Noorlander has challenged this view of missionary work in the Dutch Atlantic: see Danny L. Noorlander, *Heaven's Wrath: The Protestant Reformation and the Dutch West India Company in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2019).

3 Hartmut Beck, *Brüder in Vielen Völkern: 250 Jahre Mission Der Brüdergemeine* (Erlangen: Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 1981); Gisela Mettele, *Weltbürgertum Oder Gottesreich: Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine Als Globale Gemeinschaft 1727-1857* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009); Michele Gillespie and Robert Beachy, eds., *Pious Pursuits: German Moravians in the Atlantic World* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

4 Mettele, *Weltbürgertum Oder Gottesreich*.

have been less widely investigated.

In Berbice, a small and sparsely populated Dutch colony centred around the Berbice River on the Caribbean coast of South America, the presence of the Moravian missionaries led to tensions between them and the local and metropolitan colonial authorities. The colony was owned by the Society of Berbice, a company that operated under the sovereignty of the Dutch Republic. The company directors were based in Amsterdam and the local colonial administration consisted of an appointed governor who had to protect the interests of the company. Conflicts and confrontations about the oath of allegiance, participation in the civil militia, and payment of capitation taxes eventually led to a hostile situation in which the directors and the Society of Berbice's governor decided not to allow more Moravians to settle in their colony. This differs from the attitude of the local colonial authorities in Suriname, where the Moravian missionaries were seen as less of a threat. In her article, Jessica Cronshagen shows that in the second half of the eighteenth century, the governor of Suriname was satisfied with the Moravian missionaries forming a "European frontier" between the plantations and Maroon communities.[5] This different reaction to the same religious community makes the hostile attitude of the Society of Berbice even more interesting. Although the Moravian community in Berbice is the central subject of this article, the main interest lies not in the community itself, but in how their environment – in particular the colonial authorities – reacted to their presence. This way, the story of the Moravian missionaries could tell us more about the colony of Berbice.

A central and recurring concern of the directors and the governor of Berbice was the large number of Amerindian people living with and, according to them, influenced by the Moravian missionaries. In the entire Guianas, an area stretching from the Orinoco river to the Amazone river, a large, multi-ethnic Indigenous population inhabited the region. These various Indigenous peoples – in the Dutch Guianas the Arawaks (Lonoko), the Caribs (Kari'na), the Waraos, and the Akawaios – lived in their own settlements outside the colonial society. In Berbice, the Arawaks and Waraos lived closest to the plantations, whereas the Caribs and Akawaios lived more inland, away from the colonial society.[6] The

5 Jessica Cronshagen, ""A Loyal Heart to God and the Governor": Missions and Colonial Policy in the Surinamese Saramaccan Mission (c. 1750–1813)," *Journal of Moravian History* 19, no. 1 (2019): 9, https://doi.org/10.5325/jmorahist.19.1.0001.

6 Marjoleine Kars, ""Cleansing the Land": Dutch-Amerindian Cooperation in the Suppression of the 1763 Slave Rebellion in Dutch Guiana," in *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, ed. Wayne E.

constant focus on the Amerindian populations by the colonial authorities was no coincidence, given the dependency of the latter on the various Indigenous groups living in and around the colony of Berbice. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Dutch-Indigenous encounters and relationships played an important role on the northern coast of South America, in particular in the Dutch Guianas.[7] At the beginning of the seventeenth century, those Dutch-Indigenous relations were primarily defined by trade. Over time, as the Dutch colonies developed into plantation colonies with an enslaved African majority, the military role in suppressing slave revolts and capturing runaway slaves became more important.

Although an important characteristic of the colonial society of Berbice, this topic of Dutch-Indigenous cooperation has not yet been the subject of a focused historical study.[8] This article argues that the existence of the Moravian community in Berbice during the middle decades of the eighteenth century, and more importantly, the reaction of the colonial authorities to their interaction with the valuable allies of the Society of Berbice, forms an interesting window through which this topic could be investigated. In answering the question of how the Moravian missionaries and the local and metropolitan colonial authorities interacted with each other during the existence of the Moravian community in Berbice (1738-1763), I hope to get a better understanding of social and political relations between the four different groups involved – the Amerindians, the Moravian missionaries, and the metropolitan and local authorities of Berbice – with special attention to the position of the Indigenous peoples in the colony. This brings together the two historiographical fields of Moravian missions on the one hand and Dutch-Indigenous relations on the other.

This new approach to the subject matter of the Moravian missions in early modern Atlantic colonies also calls for a new focus

Lee (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 253, 262; Lodewijk Hulsman, "Nederlands Amazonia. Handel met Indianen tussen 1580 en 1680" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2009), 1–2.

7 For the seventeenth century see Hulsman, "Nederlands Amazonia"; Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch-Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595-1674* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); for the eighteenth century see Neil Lancelot Whitehead, "Carib Ethnic Soldiering in Venezuela, the Guianas, and the Antilles, 1492-1820," *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 4 (1990): 357–385, https://doi.org/10.2307/482860; Bram Hoonhout, *Borderless Empire: Dutch Guiana in the Atlantic World, 1750-1800* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2020).

8 The exception is an article by Marjoleine Kars on the Dutch-Indigenous military cooperation during the slave revolt of Berbice in 1763: Kars, ""Cleansing the Land"".

concerning source material. Until now, the extensive and very well-preserved correspondence network of the Moravian missionaries has been the main source for historians working on Moravian missions. Keeping contact with both the religious communities in Europe and North America, letters were frequently sent back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean.[9] Nowadays, the traces of this exchange can be found in several archives.[10] The mission in Berbice, most recently discussed by the historian H. Weiss in 1921, has only been investigated based on those Moravian sources.[11] The same is true for the more extensively researched missions in Suriname.[12] Even the article by Cronshagen, in which she discusses the position and the role of Moravian missionaries in the colonial politics of Suriname, only uses Moravian sources.[13] Although occasionally using those Moravian letters and reports, this article primarily focuses on a different type of source material: the colonial archival material of the Society of Berbice preserved in the Dutch National Archives in The Hague.[14] This consists of both documentation written by the directors of the Society of Berbice in Amsterdam and documentation written for the directors by the colonial officials in Berbice. The governor of the colony was supposed to inform the directors as accurately as possible on his actions, which resulted in letters, minutes of the council, and financial books being sent to the Dutch Republic. This article draws on documents from both the directors and the colonial officials identified

9 From 1747 onwards the administration of the Moravian Church was divided between a European and an American front. The American and Caribbean missions, including the mission in Berbice, were under the administration of Bethlehem. However, after 1747 still, many letters were also sent from and to Europe.

10 The Unity Archives in Herrnhut, the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem Pennsylvania, and the correspondence of the Zeist Mission Society held in the Utrecht Archives. For the missions in Suriname and Berbice specifically, many of the personal letters and official reports are available through the source publication of Friedrich Staehelin: see Friedrich Staehelin, *Die Mission Der Brüdergemeine in Suriname Und Berbice Im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert. Eine Missionsgeschichte Hauptsächlich in Auszügen Aus Briefen Und Originalberichten* (Hernnhut: Missionsbuchhandlung, 1914).

11 H. Weiss, "De Zending Der Herrnhutters Onder de Indianen in Berbice En Suriname 1738-1816," *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 2, no. 1 (1921): 36–44, 109–12, 113–21, 181–97, 249–64, https://doi.org/10.1163/22134360-90001820.

12 Weiss, "De Zending Der Herrnhutters"; Maria Lenders, *Strijders Voor Het Lam: Leven En Werk van Herrnhutter Broeders En -Zusters in Suriname, 1735-1900* (Leiden: KITLV, 1996).

13 Cronshagen, ""A Loyal Heart to God and the Governor"".

14 National Archives, The Hague (NL-HaNA), Sociëteit van Berbice, 1.05.05.

by searching the Handwritten Text Recognition data of the Dutch National Archives.[15]

The first section examines the emergence and growth of the Moravian community in Berbice. Arriving in the colony in 1738, the Moravian community consisted of two missionaries living and working at several plantations. In those early years, the cooperative relationship between the governor, council, and missionaries made it possible for the Moravians to peacefully establish a growing religious community. This, however, changed with the arrival of the new Governor Jan Frederik Colier in 1749. The conflicts and confrontations that arose during his term form the subject of the second section. Several times, Moravian missionaries had to appear at a meeting of the council where the civil status of the Moravians was questioned. Both the governor and the directors of the Society of Berbice expressed their concerns regarding the missionaries' contact with the Amerindians. This attitude of the colonial authorities – and the central role of the Amerindians in their worries – is explicitly examined in the third and last section of this article. Comparing this to the situation in Suriname, it becomes clear that the reaction of the metropolitan and local colonial authorities of Berbice to the Moravian missionaries in their colony had everything to do with their strong dependency on the Amerindian populations.

THE EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF THE MORAVIAN COMMUNITY IN BERBICE

The beginning of the Moravian mission in Berbice can be traced back to Amsterdam in 1736 when the founder of the

15 Liesbeth Keijser, "6000 Ground Truth of VOC and Notarial Deeds 3.000.000 HTR of VOC, WIC and Notarial Deeds" (Zenodo, 21 January 2020), https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.4159268. The HTR-data of the archive of the Society of Berbice was obtained by the Dutch National Archives in the context of their project 'De IJsberg' using the Transkribus HTR platform. They used both documents from the Dutch East-Asia Company (VOC) and the Noord-Hollands Archief to create a trained Transkribus HTR+ model called 'IJsberg'. This model was used for the HTR-data of the archive of the Society of Berbice. Because the HTR-data of the Society of Berbice has a relatively high fault rate, I used several spelling possibilities when searching the keywords 'moravische' and 'herrnhutters' in Voyant Tools (mora*, morav*, herr*, hern*, herrn*) <https://voyant-tools.org/>. Searching all inventory numbers of the archive of the Society of Berbice between 1738 and 1763 (with the exception of the payment books), I found 400 pages on which one of those terms was used. The limitations of this approach, in particular the limited quality of the HTR-data, mean that the set of documents is unlikely to be complete. Yet, the use of text-mining tools does enable historians to identify documents in large corpora relatively quickly and is, therefore, a valuable way of exploring the available source material.

Moravian Church, Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, was asked by Jan Nicolaas van Eys to send some missionaries to his plantation to teach his slaves the Evangelical religion.[16] Zinzendorf agreed, and in the spring of 1738, he found Johannes Güttner and Ludwig Christoph Dehne, two men willing to go to Berbice. It was from that moment onwards that the Moravian community shifted their attention from Suriname to Berbice. Already between 1735 and 1738, several attempts had been made to establish a missionary community in Suriname without success. In total, eleven Moravian 'brothers' and 'sisters' were sent to Suriname, but they all either died, came back to Europe, or joined their fellow brothers and sisters in Berbice.[17] Only more than ten years later, in the 1750s, were the missionary activities in Suriname successfully continued. From the perspective of the Moravian community, the missions in Suriname and Berbice could be seen as part of the same story, often with the same actors. Several missionaries spent time in both colonies and regularly travelled between the two. From the perspective of the Amerindians, planters, governor, and council in Berbice, on the other hand, the arrival of the two Moravian missionaries was something new.

In the first two years of the mission in Berbice, Güttner and Dehne were the only Moravians in the colony. For one year they lived at one of the plantations of Van Eys, from where they would work at several plantations in the region to earn enough money for their livelihood.[18] In November 1739, both Güttner and Dehne wrote several letters to the Moravian community in Herrnhutt, in which they wrote that they had moved to another plantation called Johanna at the invitation of its owner Erhard Arthing.[19] Already several months earlier, Güttner wrote about their plans of leaving Groot-Poelgeest because of the "wicked lifestyle" at the dining table of the plantation's director and, more importantly, the remote location of the plantation, with the consequence that "not many Indians come here".[20] Although the Moravians had initially come to Berbice to convert plantation slaves, they had soon shifted their focus to the Amerindian populations of the region, more specifically the groups of Arawak people they encountered during their first year in Berbice.

16 Staehelin, *Die Mission Der Brüdergemeine*, Teil II. Erster Abschnitt: Anfang der Mission in Berbice 1738-1748, 3–5; Weiss, "De Zending Der Herrnhutters," 41.

17 Cronshagen, ""A Loyal Heart to God and the Governor"," 6; H. Weiss, "Het Zendingswerk Der Herrnhutters in de Oerwouden van de Boven-Suriname," *De West-Indische Gids* 1 (1919): 102–3, https://doi.org/10.1163/22134360-90001942.

18 Staehelin, *Die Mission Der Brüdergemeine,* Teil II. Erster Abschnitt, 3, 7–25; Weiss, "De Zending Der Herrnhutters," 41.

19 Staehelin, 25–27.

20 Staehelin, 23.

Having had good contact with the "wild heathens", Güttner writes, the missionaries had more hope to spread their Christian messages among the Indigenous peoples than among the enslaved African people.[21] This became even more apparent in July 1740, when Güttner and Dehne were accompanied by Heinrich Beutel and his wife Elisabeth Beutel, who brought with them a letter by Zinzendorf, which ordered Güttner and Dehne to live among the Amerindians and to learn their language.[22]

Regarding these early years of the mission in Berbice, there seem to be no (preserved) records from the Society of Berbice that mention the Moravian presence. It is only from the documentation of the missionaries themselves that we know that there was contact between the Moravians and the colonial authorities in the first two years. In his journal on their voyage to Berbice, Dehne described an encounter between him and Güttner and the council of governance during the first days of their presence in the colony. As head of the council, Governor Bernhardt Waterham explained to the missionaries the laws of the colony, including the obligation to take the civil oath of allegiance. The missionaries, however, refused to do so, stating that it would be against their belief to take a secular oath. Although the governor and the council were not happy about this, Dehne writes that they were dismissed once they declared to be loyal citizens.[23] In the years after their arrival, Dehne and Güttner described their contact with the local authorities as cooperative. Plantation owner Arthing, with whom the Moravians worked and lived for one year, was a member of the council, and helped the missionaries to get a small estate to build their own house called 'Pilgerhut'.[24] The successor of Waterham, Governor Jan Andries Lossner, was also favourably disposed towards the missionaries. It was under his rule that the decision was made in autumn 1740 to grant the Moravians a ten-acre plot of land along the creek Wieronje. In a later report about the mission in Berbice, written by missionaries in 1753, Governor Lossner was praised for this decision, stating that during his "Government of 9 years the Brothers had an opportunity of establishing themselv's in stillness & our savior begun to gather the rewards of his Pain & Labour from among the Heathen here".[25]

It was half a year after the settlement of the Moravian missionaries in Pilgerhut that the first preserved mention of the missionaries in the documentation of the Society of Berbice was written.

21 Staehelin, 24.
22 Staehelin, 31–33.
23 Staehelin, 10–11.
24 Staehelin, 33–36.
25 Moravian Archives, Bethlehem Pennsylvania (MA), MissSur Suriname Papers, inventory number 2, 'Report of the mission at Berbice, Suriname, 1738-1752', p. 29.

In April 1741, pastor Johann Christian Frauendorff wrote an alarming letter on behalf of the Church Council of the Protestant Church in Berbice about the Moravian missionaries to the governor and the council.[26] Given the fact that the Moravian Church was not a privileged religion, the Protestant Church Council felt obligated to report the baptism of the child of Heinrich and Elisabeth Beutel, a religious act they regarded as illegitimate. In his letter, pastor Frauendorff made a clear distinction between the civil and religious status of the Moravians. While he saw the latter as problematic and illegitimate, Frauendorff, on the other hand, characterized the missionaries as "free citizens" who were allowed to live in the colony of Berbice,

> [W]hich could not be denied to them, as they subject themselves to the laws of the country as obedient subjects to their rulers, neither has one received the slightest complaints about them, while in silence and peace they earn their bread, and are a burden to no one.[27]

The problem pastor Frauendorff reported to the local authorities was thus not the presence of the Moravian missionaries as such, but the religious act of baptism he regarded as illegitimate. The solution, he wrote to the governor and the council, was a redoing of the baptism by the Protestant Church.

Not knowing how to handle the matter, the governor decided to forward the issue to the directors of the Society of Berbice in Amsterdam. In a brief letter, the directors responded by stating that they did not have any knowledge of the presence of the so-called "herrenhutters" in the colony. Concerning the issue of baptism, the directors did not think that the Moravian missionaries would agree to the pastor performing their sacraments.[28] Eventually, at the end of that same year, the council of Berbice decided in line with the Church Council that the baptism performed by Moravians was illegitimate. However, the council did not insist on a redoing of the religious act, as suggested by Frauendorff. Instead, they let the Moravians continue their practice, with the only consequence being the acknowledgement that the sacraments performed by them were regarded as illegitimate. The directors approved of this decision made by the council and explicitly emphasised that this religious issue was not a matter of the "High

26 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 80, p. 178–189.

27 Idem. Citation in Dutch: "konde haar sulxs niet gewijgert worden als deselve sig de wetten van het land, als gehoorsaame onderdaanen aan hunne overheden onderwerpen, men heeft ook tot hiertoe niet de minste klagte over deselve tevoezen, terwijl in stilheijd ende vrede haar brood winnen, ende niemand tot last zijn".

28 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 14, p. 278.

Government".[29] Thus, although the baptism of Heinrich and Elisabeth Beutel's child by their fellow Moravian missionary Güttner led to several letters back and forth between the Church Council, pastor Frauendorff, the governor, the council, and the directors, the matter had no major consequences for the Moravian community in Berbice and their relationship with the local colonial authorities.[30] This can also be seen from how the Moravian missionaries themselves described this issue. In a letter to the Moravian community in Herrnhut, Güttner briefly mentioned that he had to appear for the council to answer questions on the baptism of Beutel's child. According to Güttner the council "was very friendly" and afterwards "[he] felt good in [his] heart and was happy and went back to [his] Brothers".[31]

In the years after this religious matter, relations between the missionaries and Governor Lossner continued on the same cooperative footing. In addition to the plot of land that was given to the missionaries in the year 1740, Lossner granted them some additional land in 1745.[32] In the meantime, the Pilgerhut community expanded during the 1740s. Firstly, several Moravians from Europe, North America, and Suriname came to Berbice. In the year 1745, the community grew from four to ten missionaries, and in subsequent years, several more people joined the Pilgerhut community.[33] The most significant change in the 1740s, however, was the growing number of Amerindian people that settled in or next to Pilgerhut. According to the reports written by the missionaries, by the year 1748, around 60 Amerindians lived with the Moravians, of which 41 people were baptised.[34] The Amerindian people living closest to the colonial settlements, including the Moravian community, were the Arawaks, whom the Moravians explicitly and repeatedly mentioned in their reports. Occasionally, the missionaries also mentioned the presence of Carib people, who lived

29 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 15, p. 8–13.

30 I found four letters from the directors and five incoming letters from the colony to the directors related to this matter. Respectively: NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 14, p. 278; inv. no. 15, p. 8–13; inv. no. 15, p. 21–28; inv. no. 15, p. 39–44; inv. no. 80, p. 178–189; inv. no. 83, p. 117–121; inv. no. 83, p. 123; inv. no. 83, p. 126–128; inv. no. 83, p. 212–217.

31 Staehelin, 39–40. Citation in German: "Sie haben mich im Rath weiter um nichts gefragt und waren sehr freundlich und hiessen mich wieder gehen. Es war mir wohl in meinem Herzen und ward vergnügt und ging wieder zu meinen Brüdern."

32 MA, MissSur, inv. no. 43, 'Land patent for land in Berbice, Suriname, November 18, 1745'; NL-HaNA, Digital duplicates of the 'Dutch Series' of the National Archives of Guyana, 1.05.21, inv. no. AZ.1.7, p. 120–121.

33 Staehelin, 3–4; Staehelin, *Die Mission Der Brüdergemeine*, Teil II. Zweiter Abschnitt: Blütezeit der Indianermission in Berbice 1748-1755, 3–4.

34 MA, MissSur, inv. no. 2, 'Report of the mission at Berbice, Suriname, 1738-1752', p. 32.

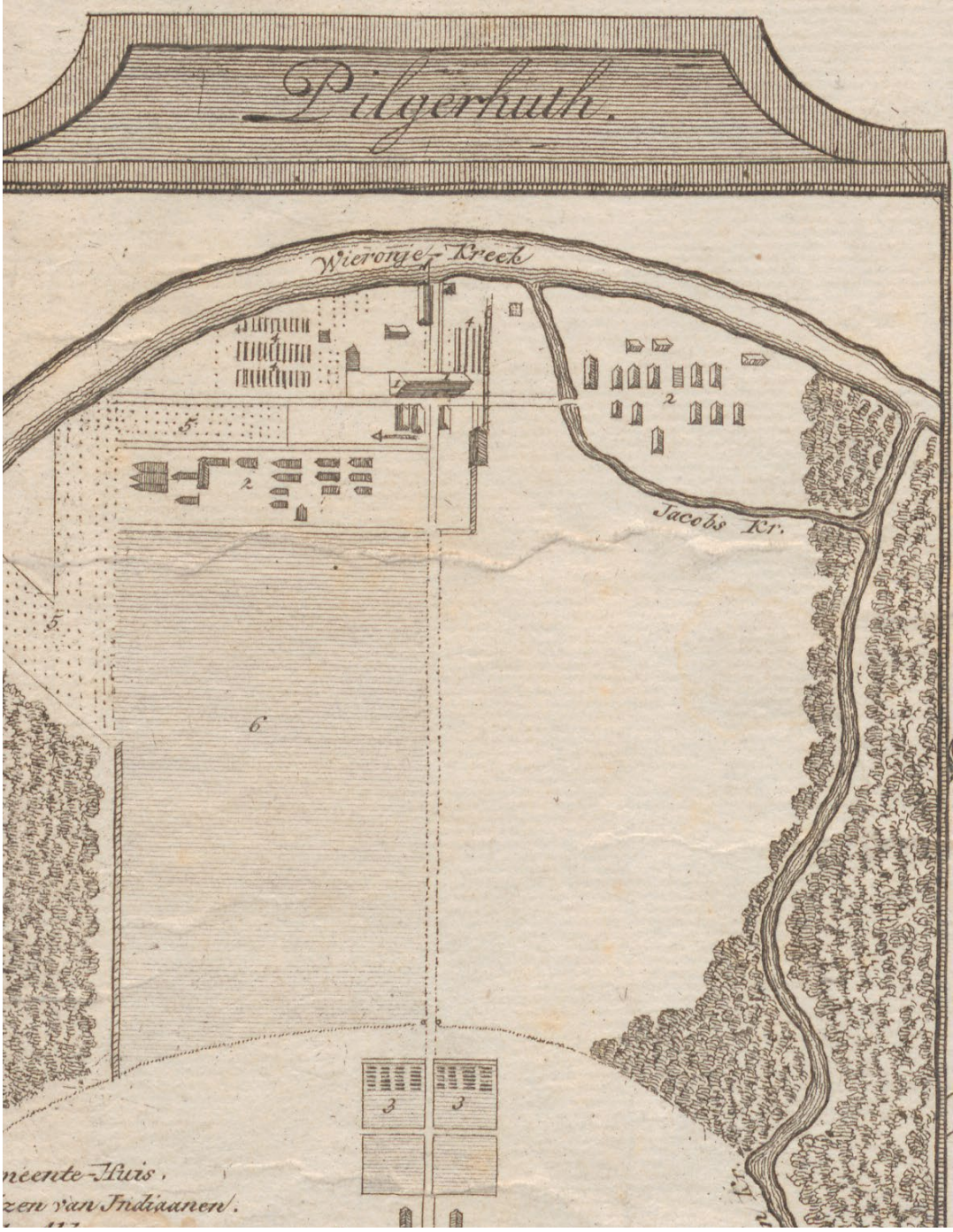

FIGURE 1. Printed inset map of the Pilgerhut community at the Wieronje Creek. This inset map is portrayed on (Figure 2): Leiden University Special Collections (LUSC), Bodel Nijenhuis Collection (COLLBN) Port 63 N 52, 'Berbice en Suriname Gelegen in Zuid-America 6 Gr. benoorden de Aequinoctiaal linie'.

farther away from the colonial society. This seems to suggest that the Moravian missionaries were able to differentiate between different groups of Indigenous peoples. However, it is unclear to what extent they were able to do so correctly.

The portrayal of a significant Amerindian community in Pilgerhut can also be found on a printed inset map of Pilgerhut, made during or after the existence of the Moravian community in Berbice (Figure 1). On this map, more than forty houses are categorised as "Huizen van Indiaanen" (houses of Indians), of which the majority are located around the central "Gemeente-Huis" (community home). To what extent this is a trustworthy representation

of the actual Pilgerhut is difficult to say. Strikingly, when the missionaries wrote about the number of Amerindian people living at Pilgerhut, they also briefly mentioned the fact that Governor Lossner was very happy with the converts. In the archive of the Society of Berbice, however, I did not find any notice of this. It is plausible that if Lossner was indeed pleased with the Amerindian community at Pilgerhut, he did not communicate this to the directors in Amsterdam.

Yet this growth of the Moravian community did not go unnoticed. When a ship with passengers would arrive in the colony of Berbice, it was customary for the governor to report this in the minutes of the council meeting, which would be sent to the directors in Amsterdam. This way, the latter was notified that on the 24th of October 1748, several passengers, of which some were Moravian missionaries, had arrived in the colony. The minutes of the council say that the passengers had sworn the oath of allegiance. However, regarding the newly-arrived Moravian passengers, the council wrote that they were exempt from swearing the oath: "according to custom, no oath of allegiance is required, but their word that they will behave as a faithful citizen and inhabitant here".[35] Reacting to the minutes of the council, on the 13th of May 1749, the directors wrote that they did not understand why the oath was not demanded from the Moravian missionaries; everyone except the Mennonites (whose exceptional position dated from the early years of the Dutch Revolt), they stressed, should take the oath.[36] Clearly, the directors were not aware of, and not happy with, the position that the Moravians had gained in their colony and the arrangements Governor Lossner had made. The cooperative relationship between the governor, council, and missionaries made it possible for the latter to obtain their own plot of land and to peacefully establish a growing religious community. This, however, was about to change with the arrival of a new governor.

ARISING CONFLICTS AND CONFRONTATIONS

Several days before the directors wrote their critical message on the actions of the council, they had fired the incumbent Governor Lossner due to his repeated disagreements with the superintendent general of the Company's plantations, appointing

35 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 99, p. 20. Dutch citation: "van dewelke volgens het gebruyk geen Eed van getrouwigheijd word gevergd, maer op hun lieder woord van sich als getrouwe burger ende inwoonders alhier te sullen gedraagen".

36 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 1, p. 15–20; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, p. 26–31; NL-HaNA, 1.05.21, inv. no. AG.1.1, p. 157.

Jan Frederik Colier as his successor. Accompanied with detailed instructions, Governor Colier arrived in Berbice on the 28th of September to inform Lossner of his dismissal. Apparently, the directors, who had been dissatisfied with Lossner's policy, were afraid the former governor would flee from the colony, as they explicitly instructed Colier to ensure Lossner would be held accountable in Holland, "if necessary by placing him under arrest".[37] The arrival of Colier in Berbice had significant consequences for the relationship between the local and metropolitan colonial authorities and the Moravian missionaries, with the latter being increasingly confronted with suspicion, hostility, and restrictions. The above-mentioned resolution from the directors, written on the 13th of May 1749, could be seen as a turning point after which local colonial authorities in Berbice spent increasing time and effort on the Moravian community at Pilgerhut. By far most of the preserved documents from the Society of Berbice on the Moravians – both from the directors and the local colonial officials – were written during the years of Colier's term as governor of Berbice.[38] Especially in the first months after his arrival, Colier wrote extensively on the missionaries and his actions against them, while referring several times to the resolution of the directors issued a couple of days after his appointment.

The central issue in the conflict between Governor Colier and the Moravian community was the demand by the local and metropolitan authorities that the latter had to fulfil their civil duties. This meant taking the oath of allegiance, paying capitation for both themselves and the Amerindians living at Pilgerhut, and participating in the civil militia, which included carrying weapons. Whereas under the government of both Waterham and Lossner the local authorities were satisfied with the promise of the Moravians to be loyal citizens, both Governor Colier and the directors in Amsterdam did not allow for the Moravians to be an exception to the rule. Interestingly, such a privilege was granted to the Moravian missionaries in Suriname. In 1740, after negotiating with Moravian representatives, the directors of the Society of Suriname decided that concerning both the oath and the civil militia, the Moravians would be treated in the same manner as the Mennonites – something explicitly turned down by the directors of the

37 Plakaatboek Guyana (PG), 1670-1816, Huygens Institute, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/guyana>, the 3rd of June 1749, 'Instructie voor Gouverneur Colier.'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv no. 16, p. 64–86.

38 Of the 400 pages I found containing either a variation of "moravische" or "hernhutters", at least 226 are to be found in the 'records from the officials in Berbice to the directors in Amsterdam' in the period of Colier's term.

Society of Berbice.[39] Whereas the civil status of the Moravian missionaries was undisputed in the first eleven years of their presence in Berbice, it had now become a reason for Colier and his council to repeatedly summon Moravian missionaries to the council meeting and demand their obedience.

The first confrontation between the Moravian community and Governor Colier occurred only a couple of days after the latter arrived in Berbice. In his first letter to the directors, Colier stated that he had "instructed the bailiff to immediately go to all Moravian brothers who are in the colony" and to tell them in the name of the council and the directors "to appear here on the next Tuesday, being the 7th of October, at the ordinary meeting to take the Oath of Allegiance".[40] It is striking that only two days after his arrival in the colony Colier summoned the Moravian missionaries before the council meeting. This strongly suggests that was he instructed to do so by the directors in Amsterdam, who were unhappy with the agreements made between the missionaries and Colier's predecessors. As instructed, six of the now twelve missionaries living at Pilgerhut appeared at the council meeting, where they were expected to swear the oath. However, the minutes of the meeting reveal that the missionaries were not willing to do so, referring to the customary practice under Governor Lossner and stressing the fact that they had lived peacefully in the colony for eleven years now.[41] When the council made clear that the order came from the directors in Amsterdam, whose message they read aloud, the missionaries requested "to be considered and treated as the Moravian Brothers who are in Suriname, and regarding the arms trade to be allowed to be considered as the Mennonites".[42] For the Moravians, this reference to the situation in Suriname was a very logical one, as the missions in both colonies were very much interrelated: several missionaries who came to Pilgerhut in the second half of the 1740s were coming from Suriname. This perspective is also visible on a printed map of the eighteenth-century Moravian missions in Berbice and Suriname (Figure 2). The

39 Staehelin, *Die Mission Der Brüdergemeine*, Teil I.: Erste Missions- und Kolonisationsversuche in Suriname 1735-1745, 108–9.

40 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 102, p. 101–102; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 104, p. 19–22.

41 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 102, p. 102–107; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 104, p. 22–28. The same event is also mentioned in a missionary 'diary from Pilgerhut', which describes a similar course of the event: Staehelin, Teil II. Zweiter Abschnitt, 30–36.

42 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 102, p. 102–107; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 104, p. 22–28. Dutch citation: "versoekende soo aangesien en gehandeld te worden als de Moravische Gebroeders die te Suriname zijn, en aangaande Wapenhandel te moogen werden geconsidereerd als de menoniten".

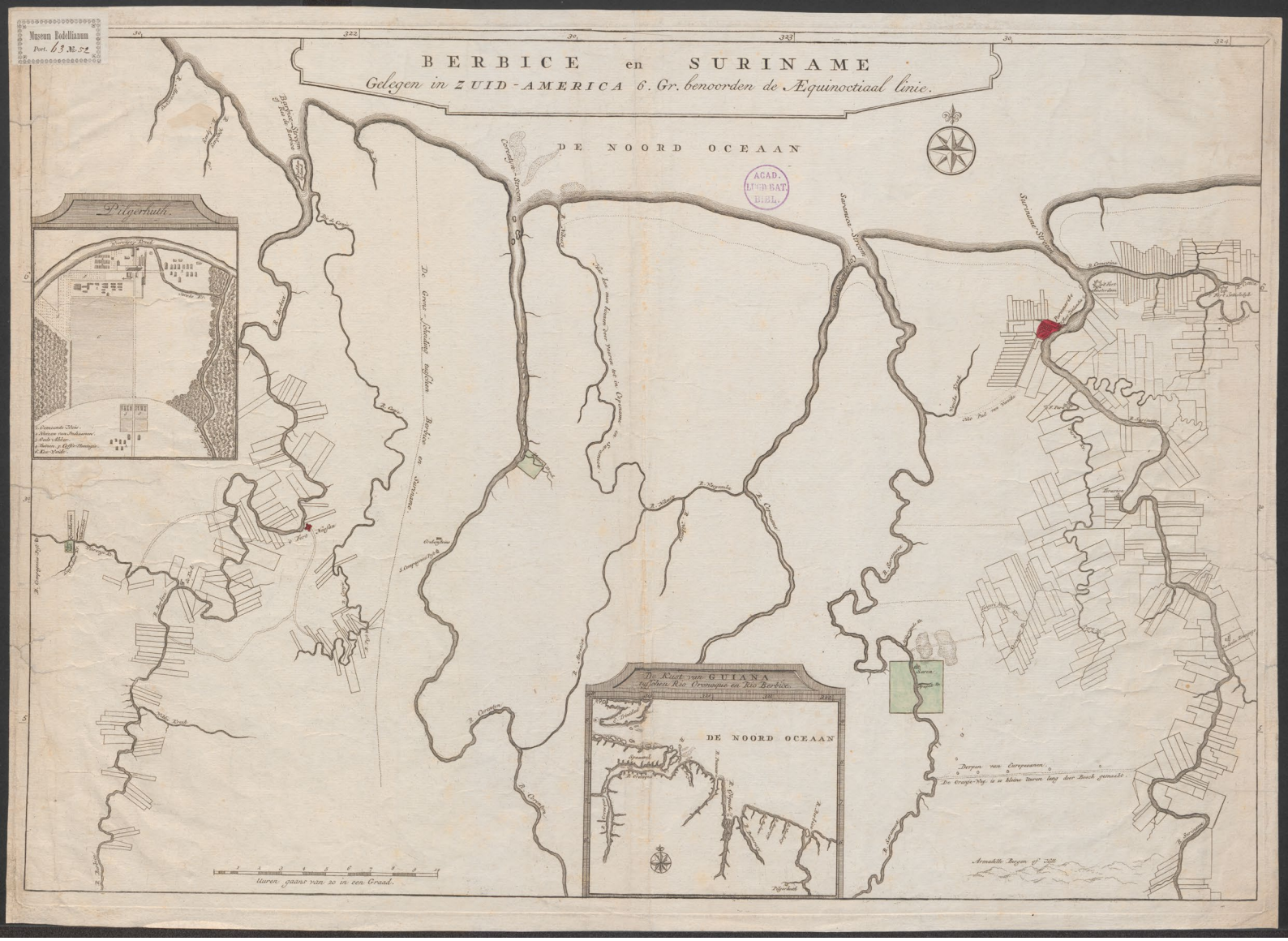

FIGURE 2. Printed map of the three Moravian missions in Berbice and Suriname (marked green), from left to right: the Pilgerhut community below the inset map of Pilgerhut (see Figure 1), the mission along the Corentyne river, and the mission along the Saron river. The government buildings Fort Nassau and Fort Zeelandia of Berbice and Suriname respectively are marked red. LUSC, COLLBN Port 63 N 52, 'Berbice en Suriname Gelegen in Zuid-America 6 Gr. benoorden de Aequinoctiaal linie'. Copies of the same map can also be found in the Moravian Archives: MA, DP Collection of Drawings and Prints, inv. no. f.051.1.a–b.

missionary communities, all three of them highlighted in green, were literally part of the same picture.

The directors in Amsterdam, the governor, and the council in Berbice, however, thought differently; they did not regard the relationship between the Society of Suriname and the Moravian missionaries as a point of reference for their own policy, and they persisted in their demands. As the six missionaries were still refusing to take the oath, they were temporarily brought outside, for the council to deliberate on the situation. The governor used this moment to

bring up a new, but according to him related issue: the influence of the missionaries on the Amerindians living in the colony.

> The Lord Governor told the Council to have been told that by some practice they people are holding up the Indians of this country, which is detrimental to the colony and the private persons because of the service which those Indians are required to do.[43]

Next, the bailiff was asked how many Amerindians he had seen at the residence of the missionaries, to which he replied that he had seen several white persons and Amerindians, both men and women, who preached and sang together. At the end of the meeting, Colier decided that he would inform the directors about this and ask them whether the Moravians were allowed to continue to live in Berbice. In the meantime, he prohibited them to "hold meetings" and to "delay Indians who owe any service".[44] Whereas the contact and interactions between the Moravian missionaries and the Indigenous population were never perceived as a problem before the directors had sent Colier to the colony, this had now suddenly become an issue of careful attention for the governor, who shared his worries with his superiors in the Dutch Republic.

In subsequent years, the issue of the oath – and the civil duties in general – remained a subject of conflict. Only after Governor Colier promulgated a resolution in 1752 stating that all missionaries had to swear the oath and that they would be banned from the colony if they refused to do so, the majority of the missionaries took the oath.[45] The obligation to pay the capitation money seemed to be less a matter of contention, given that already at the beginning of the year 1750 the Moravians paid their dues over the year 1749.[46] This was not the case with the requirement to participate in the civil militia, which prompted the captain of the civil militia, Joseph Dietzscholt, to write a letter of complaint to the governor and the council in 1751. Although the "Moravian brothers [...] have themselves answered 'we will behave like obedient citizens'", Dietzscholt

43 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 102, p. 102–107; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 104, p. 22–28. Dutch citation: "Den Heere Gouverneur aan den Hove gesegt ter hoore gekomen te zijn dat zij lieden door eenige practijcque d'indiane van dit land op houden, 't geene naadeel geeft aan de colonie en particulieren door den dienst dewelke die Indianen sich hebben verplicht te doen".

44 Idem. Dutch citation: "onder verbod van geene vergaderige te mogen houden ende geen indianen den elke dienst schuldig sijn oponthoud te verleenen".

45 Staehelin, Teil II. Zweiter Abschnitt, 4; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no 1, p. 242–244; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, 195–197.

46 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 110, p. 369–374.

wrote, no weapons and ammunition were found with them during his inspection – something that was considered part of participating in the civil militia.[47] The importance of the issue of the civil militia is remarkable, as even in the sparsely populated colony of Berbice the Moravian missionaries would not make a significant contribution in terms of manpower. Why, then, had the strict enforcement of the Moravian missionaries' civil duties become such an issue for both the local and metropolitan colonial authorities?

From the resolution of the 13th of May 1749 onwards, the directors of the Society of Berbice played a significant part in the evolving conflict with the Moravians. This was, for one reason, because of their contact with the local colonial authorities and their influence on how they – especially the governor – reacted to the presence of the Moravian missionaries in the colony of Berbice. In a resolution from November 1750, at a moment when the conflict on the issue of the oath was still unsolved, the directors made it clear to the governor and the council that they still wanted the resolution from the 13th of May 1749 to be implemented. Otherwise, they stressed, "our authority will be greatly weakened".[48] Whereas in 1741 the directors had never heard of the presence of the missionaries in the colony, leaving a lot of room for the former governors Waterham and Lossner to make agreements with the Moravians, they had now taken an active role in the colonial relationship with the Moravian community. In the same year, one of the directors, Jacob Boulé, was sent to Berbice "to bring the mentioned Colony on a better footing".[49] In 1751, after having received letters from Boulé saying that the "so-called Moravian brothers are trying to back out on their duties", the directors repeated their call for the implementation of their earlier resolution.[50] Furthermore, the directors themselves had contact with the Moravian missionaries, when the latter directed their request for a treatment similar to the situation in Suriname to the directors. The request, signed by Anth. Buyn

47 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 110, p. 80–81. Dutch citation: "Moravische broeders [...] hebben deselve tot andwoord gegeeven wij sullen ons gedraagen als gehoorzame burgers". For the regulation considering the mandatory armament of civilians see: PG, the 9th of July 1750, 'Controle van de verplichte bewapening van burgers door officieren van de burgerij op alle plantages in hun divisie'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 219, p. 93.

48 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, 102–106. Dutch citation: "onse authoriteit zeer word verswakt".

49 PG, the 2nd of September 1750, 'Jacob Boulé wordt naar Berbice gezonden als gedeputeerde van de Staten-Generaal'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 219, p. 153–156.

50 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, p. 108–116; NL-HaNa, 1.05.05, inv. no. 1, p. 131–141. Dutch citation: "zogenaamde Moravische broeders zig aan de verschuldigde pligten op de colonie tragten te onttrekken".

and Lodewijk Wijs[51], addressed all three mentioned aspects of the civil duties: the oath of allegiance, the capitation, and the participation in the civil militia with the obligation to carry weapons. Discussing the request in their meeting, the directors decided not to grant an exemption on all three points – a decision they communicated to the local authorities in Berbice.[52]

As was the case in 1748, the arrival of two Moravians in the colony in 1751 led to renewed colonial attention for the position of the missionaries in the colony. The arriving Moravians, Dehne and Beutel, had already been in Berbice from 1738 and 1740 respectively, but both went to Europe for several years in 1747, after which they then returned to Berbice. Governor Colier mentioned their arrival in a letter to the directors, in which he also stated that the missionaries were expected to take the oath of allegiance at the next meeting of the council. However, Colier added, "I have already noticed that they will not want to do this" – expecting yet another confrontation.[53] Although Dehne and Beutel were already told by directors in Amsterdam, who granted them their passports, that they were obliged to take the oath, Dehne and Beutel themselves thought that they could continue on the same footing as when they left the colony in 1747. The two missionaries, having missed the previous conflicts and confrontations with the governor, had a different understanding of what it meant to take the oath. In contrast to the first confrontation between Moravian missionaries and Governor Colier at a meeting of the council, this time, the latter was not willing to let the Moravians go easily. When Dehne and Beutel refused to fulfil Colier's demands, the council decided "that they must leave this colony at the first opportunity, no later than with the first from here departing ship".[54]

Shortly before this decision was made, while Dehne and Beutel were waiting outside, another group was also summoned at the council meeting: thirty-three Amerindian captains were called to account for the actions of some Amerindians providing shelter and help to runaway slaves, while they were supposed to hand them over directly to their owners. Directly after the Amerindian captains left the meeting, the bailiff was asked by the governor whether he had seen many Amerindians with the Moravians, to which he answered that "there were about three hundred

51 Sometimes also spelled as 'Weiss'.

52 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 1, 150–153; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, 126–129; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 1, 157–159; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, 130–132.

53 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 108, p. 26–30. Dutch citation: "dog heb ik al gemerkt dat sij deselve niet sullen willen doen".

54 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 109, p. 152–157. Dutch citation: "dat zij met de eerste geleegentheijd uijt deese colonie moeten vertrecken, en dat ten uijttersten, met het eerste van hier vertreckende schip".

Indians there".[55] Likely, the fact that those issues were discussed after one another at the same meeting was no coincidence. For Colier, the concerns regarding the presence of the Moravian missionaries in his colony on the one hand, and the importance of the Amerindian groups for the oppression of the majority enslaved population, on the other hand, were very much connected. Already when Colier mentioned the arrival of Dehne and Beutel in the colony, he ended his message for the directors by saying that "it was to be wished that those people had never come to this colony, attracting all Indians under the Pretext of Religion".[56]

"I FEAR WE WILL LOSE ALL INDIANS"

From the very first moment he arrived in Berbice until the very last moment he wrote to the directors on the situation in the colony, Colier expressed his worries about the interactions between the Moravian missionaries and the various Amerindian groups living at or visiting Pilgerhut. It is clear that he, as well as his superiors in the Dutch Republic, did not regard these interactions as beneficial for the colonial administration. The colonial relationships with Amerindian populations, and especially the Arawaks, were of great importance for the Dutch. Instead of regarding the contacts of the Moravian community with those groups as a possible contribution to the Dutch cause, Colier and his superiors worried that the influence of the missionaries would be at the expense of their own desired influence over the Indigenous peoples. During both confrontations at the council meeting, Colier asked the bailiff to provide him with more information on the missionary community. According to the bailiff's remarks and the documentation of the missionaries themselves, the Pilgerhut community attracted many Amerindian people – as visitors, residents, and Christians. A Moravian diary even describes a visit from a delegation of Amerindian people coming all the way from the Orinoco river in Spanish colonial territory west of Essequibo.[57] This influx of different Amerindian groups visiting the Pilgerhut community must have been a striking event for the local colonial authorities as well as the planters living near the missionaries. As the alliances with the Indigenous populations were vital for the colonial society of Berbice, in particular for the maintenance of the institution of slavery, Governor Colier did not lose sight of the events taking place at the Moravian community.

55 Idem. Dutch citation: "dat wel omtrend drie hondert indiaenen daer waeren".

56 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 108, p. 26–30. Dutch citation: "'t waare te wenschen dat die luyden nooit in deese colonie waaren gekoomen, trekkende sij onder Pretext van Religie alle de Indiaanen naar zig".

57 Staehelin, Teil II. Zweiter Abschnitt, 38.

Even when, years later, a new governor had arrived in the colony, who came to be on much friendlier terms with the Moravian missionaries, their relationship with and influence on the Amerindian populations remained a very important concern.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as a consequence of increasing European colonisation, the various Amerindian groups living in the region of the Guianas – the Arawaks, the Caribs, the Waraos, and the Akawaios – became more intertwined with European powers both through trade relationships and military alliances.[58] Although both Europeans and Amerindians became more and more dependent on each other as the centuries progressed, it was especially the former that was highly dependent on the military aid of the latter – both concerning their rival European powers and the majority enslaved population. In the eighteenth century, this was certainly true for the Dutch colonies of Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara. In Suriname on the other hand, after the seventeenth century, Amerindian groups remained largely at the margins of the colony – both politically and geographically.[59] In Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara, only when the institution of slavery came to an end under British rule in 1833, and when the military aid of the Indigenous populations was no longer needed, did this dependency cease to exist, and the Amerindians then retreated away from the colonial societies.[60]

The strong position of the Caribs and Arawaks in Berbice is visible through their easy access to gifts and guns. Faced with their dependency on Amerindian allies and times of European competition over Amerindian favours, the Dutch needed to enlarge their investment in the indigenous alliances.[61] This included reaffirming the alliances with gifts and guns. Moreover, in threatening to lay down their agreed-upon tasks such as capturing runaways, the Amerindians strengthened their bargaining position. Not all inhabitants of the colony, however, treated the Indigenous populations as important actors who needed to be kept as friends, something the metropolitan and local colonial authorities tried to prevent by issuing several ordinances and instructions to protect the position of their Amerindian allies.[62]

58 Neil Lancelot Whitehead, "Ethnic Transformation and Historical Discontinuity in Native Amazonia and Guayana, 1500-1900," *L'Homme* 126/128 (1993): 292, 297–98, http://dx.doi.org/10.3406%2Fhom.1993.369641.

59 Gert Oostindie and Wim Klooster, *Realm between Empires: The Second Dutch Atlantic, 1680-1815* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2018), 143.

60 Hoonhout, *Borderless Empire*, 42.

61 Hoonhout, 37; Kars, 267.

62 PG, the 20th of October 1736, 'Waarschuwing de Amerindianen met rust te laten'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 219, p. 32–33; PG, the 3th of June 1749, 'Instructie voor Gouverneur Colier', second instruction point 12;

It is also important to note that not all Indigenous people were seen as important or valuable allies that needed to be pleased with gifts or protected against the violence of planters: Amerindian slavery was part of the colonial slave society of Berbice and the so-called 'red slaves' were frequently bought from Carib or Arawak groups. The colonial officers, however, trying to avoid provoking a conflict, always attempted to make sure no people of allied groups were bought as slaves.[63]

This concern for the relationship with their much-needed allies played a central role in the position and attitude of the local colonial authorities towards the Moravian missionaries. Noticing that the Pilgerhut community attracted a significant number of Amerindian people, Colier and his council repeatedly expressed their worries to the directors in Amsterdam. On the one hand, there was a general feeling of unease concerning the mere fact that the few Moravian missionaries attracted and converted tens or hundreds of Amerindian people. Because the aid of the Indigenous allies was a necessity for the colonial authorities, and because most of the time cooperation "was by no means a forgone conclusion", this interaction was seen as a threat for the colony.[64] The Amerindians, they feared, were influenced by the Moravians. On the other hand, there was a more specific concern regarding those Amerindian people who were part of the Pilgerhut community, namely that they would not carry out their agreed-upon duties. While "keeping a watchful eye on their behaviour", Colier and the council did not fail to report all the possible "evil consequences of the so-called conversion of the Indians by the Moravian brothers".[65]

In Suriname, where the Indigenous populations were not as important for the colonial society as in its neighbouring Dutch colonies, the local colonial authorities had a very different attitude towards the Moravian missionaries living in their colony. Besides the earlier mentioned privileged status of the Moravian Church in Suriname regarding the

NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, p. 64–86; PG, the 7th of October 1760, 'Verbod de Amerindianen lastig te vallen'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 130, p. 23; PG, the 3th of September 1764, 'Instructie voor Gouverneur Heyliger', point 26; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 18, p. 218–224.

63 PG, the 21th of April 1746, 'Verplichting van Amerindianen om voor ze Amerindiaanse slaven aanbieden die aan de Gouverneur te tonen'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 219 p. 105–106; PG, the 7th of January 1751, 'Verplichte registratie van gekochte Amerindiaanse slaven'; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 219, p. 166–167.

64 Kars, 266–67.

65 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 111, p. 27–30. Dutch citation: "een wakend oogh over hun gedragh te houwden", "de kwaade gevolgen dewelke de soogenaamde bekeeringe der Indiaanen door de Moravische gebroeders [...] souwde konne te weege brengen".

oath of allegiance and the civil militia, in the 1750s and 1760s, the Moravians received permission to settle in different parts of the colony for their missionary work. A couple of years after missionary Dehne was banished from Berbice, he was sent to Paramaribo to revive the mission in Suriname.[66] Interestingly, the old Governor of Berbice Lossner was involved in the negotiations between the missionaries and the Governor of Suriname, Pieter Albert van der Meer, by emphasizing the positive influence of the Moravian missionaries in the colony.[67] This view of the Moravians as an added value for the colony was fundamental for the attitude of Governor Van der Meer – as well as his successors – towards the Moravian community in Suriname. As Cronshagen shows in her article, the local colonial authorities were satisfied with the missionaries forming a "European frontier" between their plantations and the Maroon communities by fulfilling a diplomatic role for the colonial government.[68] Several years after the Society of Suriname had granted permission for settlement, the role of the Moravians as colonial agents became even more explicit as the then Governor Crommelin asked the missionaries to establish a community near the Maroons in Saramacca. In return, they would receive "a church, houses, and even a salary".[69] Because the Maroons in Suriname had a very different role in the colonial society than the Amerindians in Berbice – they were a threat rather than a vital ally – the presence of Moravian missionaries and their interaction with the Maroons was welcomed.

When Colier had left the colony of Berbice and was replaced by the new Governor Hendrik Jan van Rijswijk in 1756, the issue of the relationship and interaction between the Moravians and the various groups of Amerindians did not disappear from the colonial mind. Once back in the Dutch Republic, Colier wrote the directors of the Society of Berbice a memoir on how to bring the colony into a "more flourishing state".[70] One of the points he mentioned was the presence of the Moravians in the colony and their relationship with the Amerindian populations. The "Indians", he wrote, "must be kept under subordination". They must be told that "the mentioned Herrenhutters are not their chiefs", but that the Government had always retained power over them and the missionaries.[71] According

66 Weiss, "De Zending Der Herrnhutters," 187–88.
67 Weiss, 188; Cronshagen, '"A Loyal Heart to God and the Governor"," 7–8.
68 Cronshagen, 9.
69 Cronshagen, 10.
70 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no 223. Dutch citation: "in een bloeyender staat te brengen".
71 Idem. Dutch citation: "moeten ook wel onder subordinatie gehouden worden, en haar wel in te prenten dat de gemelde Herrenhutters [...] egter hunnen opperhoofden niet zij maar dat het Gouvernement altoos deselve magt over hen behoude als te vooren,

to Colier, who acknowledged the importance of good understandings with the Indigenous populations, the missionaries were standing between the colonial administration and their allies. He clearly had the feeling of a need for a restoration of the power relations between the colonial authorities, the Moravians and the Amerindians. Given the strong dependency of the colony on the Indigenous populations, however, it is highly questionable whether his view of the balance of power was close to reality.

With the memoir and all other previous letters from Colier in mind, the directors of the Society of Berbice continued their distrustful attitude regarding the Moravian community, which they saw as an undesirable presence in their colony. Thus, when the new Governor Rijswijk reported in one of his first letters to the directors on his pleasant visit to the Moravian missionaries at Pilgerhut who, according to him, "seem to live there very quietly and simply", the directors rapidly replied that they were not to be trusted.[72] At the same time, they made sure no more Moravian people were admitted into Berbice, stating that "more than too many of those men were found on the colony".[73]

For the missionaries at Pilgerhut, this refusal of granting passports to their fellow Moravians was a final push to redirect their focus on the new missions in Suriname. Not only would the newly arriving people from Europe and North America go to Suriname instead of Berbice, but at the end of the 1750s the Pilgerhut community itself – both missionaries and baptized Amerindians – largely resettled in Suriname territory. After two decades of successful missionary activities in Berbice, the conflicting relationship with the colonial authorities together with the increasing social unrest at the plantations of the colony drove the Moravian missionaries to leave for Suriname.

In contrast to the directors, Governor Rijswijk received the news about the plans of the missionaries to leave the colony as bad news. Being aware of the close relationship between the Moravians and some groups of Amerindians, Rijswijk wrote to the directors that if it were true that the missionaries would leave for Suriname, "I fear we will lose All Indians, at least two-thirds, which would cause irreparable damage, to Your Honourable and to the whole colony".[74] Although the new

en dat de Herrenhutters daar aan selfs onderdanig zijn".

72 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 124, p. 22–31. Dutch citation; "die mijn voorkomen daar seer stil en eenvoudig te leven"; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 2, p. 219–221.

73 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 16, p. 214–221; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 17, p. 11–13; NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 2, 157–158. Dutch citation: "dat bereyds meer dan teveel van die luyden op de colonie werden gevonden".

74 NL-HaNA, 1.05.05, inv. no. 125, p. 675–677. Dutch citation: "ik dat wij Alle de Indianen zullen verliesen, ten minsten twee derde, dat een inreparable schade zoude verwecken,

governor had a different view on the Moravian missionaries than both his predecessor and his superiors – he did not see how "those people could cause us the slightest hindrance"[75] – he did have a similar concern for the much-needed allies of the Society of Berbice. This time, however, it was not the presence of the Moravians that caused a threat to the colony, but their plans to leave. In both cases, the reaction of the colonial authorities to the missionaries, and their strong focus on the Indigenous groups interacting with the missionaries, tell us something about their own priorities, limits, and fears.

CONCLUSION

The Moravian mission in Berbice came to a final end when the last missionaries living at Pilgerhut fled the colony during the major slave revolt of 1763. During this revolt, in which the colonial authorities were on the edge of defeat, it was the Amerindian military cooperation that played a central role. Without their help, "the Dutch colonial power likely would have failed" to suppress the enslaved resistance.[76] The case of the Moravian mission in Berbice shows that this important characteristic of the Berbice slave revolt – and the colonial society in general – was already visible in the decades before 1763. In their reaction to the presence (or absence) of the Moravian missionaries and the interactions they had with various Amerindian groups, the metropolitan and local colonial authorities were constantly focused on their much-needed allies. For the colonial society of Berbice, maintaining access to the cooperation of Indigenous groups was of vital importance. Instead of solely examining the Moravian missions in the Atlantic as either being part of a Moravian global community or as missionary events in itself, the history of the mission in Berbice shows that it is also part of the bigger story on the interactions and entanglements between Europeans, Africans, and Americans in the early modern Atlantic world. Using the colonial archival material on the Moravian community in Berbice, this article has opened a new window through which this history can be investigated. It shows the colonial perspective on the interactions between European missionaries and Indigenous groups while revealing the metropolitan and local authority's priorities, limits, and fears.

During the two and a half decades of the Moravian mission in Berbice, the relationship between missionaries and authorities was primarily defined by the (desired) interactions of both parties with the Amerindian populations. Whereas in the beginning, this relationship was cooperative, which enabled the

aan UWelEd Agtb en aande heele colonie".

75 Idem. Dutch citation: "ik kan niet sien die mensche ons de minste hindernisse kunnen toebrengen".

76 Kars, 251.

missionaries to establish a growing religious community, from the arrival of Governor Colier onwards, this had given way to conflicts and confrontations. Because the Moravians had religious objections to the demands of the metropolitan and local authorities and thus refused to fulfil the civil duties, some missionaries were banned from the colony. More importantly, explicitly calling them a threat to the colony, the decision was made to stop admitting new Moravian people into Berbice. In Suriname, there was the opposite situation, where the Moravian missionaries were part of the solution to the threat rather than the threat itself: they could keep the dangerous Maroon communities at a safer distance from the colonial plantations, the governor reasoned. The attitudes of the colonial authorities in Berbice and Suriname to the Moravian missions were thus very much influenced by their relationships with the Amerindian and Maroon populations respectively. It is in this way that the complexities of the colonial society of Berbice are reflected in the story of the short but successful mission of the Moravian Church on the northern coast of South America.

Mission, Medicine, and Agency: Power-Structures in Medical Missionary Encounters

by
JAN BECKER

ABSTRACT

In conducting a global microhistory on Soetjipto, a Javanese student in one of the German Bethel Mission's schools in the Dutch East Indies, this paper analyses the power-relations in missionary encounters. Not only were Javanese intermediaries–nurses, students, and teachers–an integral part of the missionary medical and educational work, the missionaries were outright dependent on their collaboration. For indigenous actors, the missionary project could provide attractive opportunities, such as medical service and Western education. These opportunities, however, had to be negotiated with the indigenous actors' own social network. In following Soetjpto's trajectory from student to missionary evangelist, it becomes apparent that some aspects of the missionary project were irreconcilable with local culture. Soetjipto's decision to convert despite his family's objection demands for a reappreciation of the most basic aspect of mission history: faith.

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INTRODUCTION

On Christmas Eve 1927, Soetjipto was baptised in Central Java by missionaries of the Bethel Mission. In the weeks prior to his conversion, he had endured severe fever and sickness, even being on the edge of death. But Soetjipto's decision to convert to Christianity had far-reaching consequences. His family, who belonged to the *Priyayi*, the highest social class of the Dutch East Indies, abandoned him. Why, then, did Soetjipto consecrate his life to God?

In the early 1920s, the Bielefeld-based German Bethel Mission began a short intermezzo in its long history of missionary work. Traditionally, the Bethel Mission had been active in East Africa, particularly in modern-day Tanzania and Rwanda. For around a decade, however, Walther Trittelvitz, the Bethel Mission's head, sent out seven missionaries to Central Java.[1] At that time, Java was part of the Dutch East Indies. After the dissolution of the United East India Company in 1799, parts of the Indonesian archipelago became a Dutch colony in 1800. When the Bethel Mission's missionaries arrived in Java in 1922, the archipelago had been under Dutch influence for centuries. Similarly, the predominantly Muslim Javanese had experienced decades of European missionary work.

The Bethel Mission did not build up entirely new missionary structures. Rather, Walther Trittelvitz provided personnel for existing missionary educational and medical structures of the Neukirchener Mission. The Neukirchener Mission was a previously rivalling German mission that ran hospitals and schools in Poerwordadi and Goeboeg–both close to Semarang.[2] Its establishment in Java originated in a relief campaign following a famine in the early 1900s. The Dutch physician Dr. van der Ley founded a hospital in Poerwodadi which developed into a branch of the Neukirchener Mission called Salatiga Mission.[3] The seven German missionaries of the Bethel Mission thus participated in an interorganisational, transnational missionary project. Their focus lay on

1 The Bethel Mission has so far not been subject to extensive research. For its activities in East Africa, see: Edward N. Snyder, "Work Not Alms: The Bethel Mission to East Africa and German Protestant Debates over Eugenics, 1880–1933" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2013); Frigga Tiletschke, "'Afrika Müssen Wir Auch Haben!' Die Bethel-Mission in Ostafrika 1885–1970" (PhD diss., Universität Bielefeld, 2020). To my knowledge, the Bethel Mission's work on Java remains so far unresearched.

2 For the purpose of consistency with its sources, this paper uses the German/Dutch transliteration of -oe- instead of the current spellings in Bahasa Indonesia that use -u- (Poerwodadi/Purwodadi, Goeboeg/Gubug, Soetjipto/Sutjipto).

3 Otto Sickinger, Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 141–142.

educational and medical missionary work. With Dr. Otto Sickinger, the Bethel Mission sent out an approbated physician. The remaining six missionaries were teachers and nurses.

The Bethel Mission's archival documents are currently stored in Wuppertal, Germany. In 1971, the Bethel Mission merged with the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft to the Vereinte Evangelische Mission (VEM). Nowadays, the Bethel Mission's archive is subsumed in the Archiv- und Museumsstiftung der VEM (AMS). The Bethel Mission's archive mainly includes sources on their work in East Africa. Seven files, however, derive from their missionary work in Java. These are organised by author and comprise sources on the seven missionaries: Elfriede Krieg, Dr. Otto Sickinger, Marie Eglin, Agnes Püschel, Käthe Klarenbeck, Elise Kuckel, and Käthe Weiß. The files contain primarily circular and personal letters between the missionaries and Walther Trittelvitz in Bielefeld.[4]

This essay explores the medical missionary work of the Bethel Mission in Java between 1922 and 1937, with a focus on indigenous agency. Soetjipto's case of conversion serves as a micro-historical thread that illuminates the power-structures as well as the self-determination that led to his and other indigenous actors' conversion. The paper challenges oversimplistic concepts of power-relations in arguing that power-relations in medical missionary encounters were manifold, ubiquitous, overlapping, and reciprocal.

The Bethel Mission was primarily a medical mission. Its headquarters in Bielefeld were the von Bodelschwinghschen Anstalten Bethel, a diaconal psychiatric hospital that was founded in 1867 and exists to date. The medical focus was, therefore, at the core of the Bethel Mission.[5]

Analyses of medical missions traditionally engage with the historiographic debates on religion and empire, religion and medicine, and religion and orientalism. In analysing medical missionaries in India, David Hardiman argues that "the 'medicine' provided by the missionaries encompassed far more than just treatment for physical illness. What they were providing, rather, was an all-round therapy that was designed to 'civilise' the supposedly 'primitive' *Bhils*, bringing them into the light of a Christian modernity".[6] Hardiman

4 Research at the AMS in Wuppertal was conducted in October and November 2020. I thank the AMS's archivist Christian Froese for his support and his insights into the history of the Bethel Mission.

5 Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *Ärzte in der Anstalt Bethel: 1870–1945* (Bielefeld: Bethel Verlag, 1998).

6 David Hardiman, *Missionaries and Their Medicine: A Christian Modernity for Tribal India*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), 5. Emphasis added.

conceptualises missionary medicine as a distinct field of medicine and thereby repudiates purely Foucauldian analyses of colonial medicine. Contrarily, David Arnold's *Colonizing the Body* argues that Western medicine served primarily one power when applied outside Europe: the colonial state.[7] Both of these accounts, however, neglect the role of indigenous actors in medical missionary encounters. Waltraud Ernst's call for a shift away from universal theory and towards the social reality and the lived intricacy of medicine(s) remains topical to date.[8] There have been some attempts to focus on indigenous actors and their medicine. In *Nurturing Indonesia,* Hans Pols argues that colonial structures inimical to indigenous medical actors spurred a medical nationalism among indigenous physicians.[9] He does not, however, consider religion a decisive factor in his analysis of indigenous medical actors.

This paper will fill in this gap by analysing the implications medical missions had on indigenous agency and indigenous actors' faith. The first section outlines the role scholars have conceded to indigenous agency in recent historiography. Subsequently, sections two to four will provide a global microhistory that narrates local intermediary Soetjipto's entanglements with the Bethel Mission. In particular, section two focuses on personal indigenous-missionary hierarchies. Section three examines the missionaries' deployment of medicine to restrict indigenous agency. Finally, section four analyses missionary and indigenous medical epistemes and their implications for indigenous agency.

I. AGENCY, FOCUS, AND SCALE

Historiography on religion-making and the production of scholarly and missionary knowledge in colonial situations has always defined certain actors. Religion-*making*, by definition, requires active construction; it requires *makers*. (Nation-) States, institutions, officials, scholars, and colonial, missionary, and indigenous private individuals participated in the construction of both religion and knowledge. Whom, then, is one supposed to focus on? And whom have scholars in the past focused on?

Historians have frequently shifted their approaches and subsequently the actors they

7 David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

8 Waltraud Ernst, "Beyond East and West. From the History of Colonial Medicine to a Social History of Medicine(s) in South Asia," *Social History of Medicine* 20, no. 3 (2007): 505–24, https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hkm077.

9 Hans Pols, *Nurturing Indonesia: Medicine and Decolonisation in the Dutch East Indies*, Global Health Histories (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

conceded agency to. Benedict Anderson, in his 1983 work *Imagined Communities,* argues that colonial powers unconsciously promoted the emergence of nationalisms through censuses, maps, and museums.[10] This structural approach and its somewhat unintuitive findings analyse religion-making in regard to nationalism and define the colonial state as the primary actor that set religious categorisations for its censuses. Anderson's focus on the nation-state has strong implications for agency on subaltern levels. As he argues for a construction of colonial nationalism from the exterior, his account neglects local agency. His focus on colonial powers and the nation-state leaves no room for the active participation of locals.

If one wants to include local agency, a shift from national to transnational foci, however, does not necessarily pose a solution. In her work on the repercussions of narratives of a culturally homogeneous 'Greater India', Marieke Bloembergen warns "against pitfalls of the new transnational approaches that focus on cultural flows, as these may exaggerate the region's cultural unity and reify [...] moral geographies [...]."[11] Rather than shifting one's focus within a structural approach, scholars have to include local actors in their works, she claims. In doing so, Bloembergen enters a historiographic tradition that developed in contrast to Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Published in 1978, Said's *Orientalism* would become the pivotal work for area studies, religious studies, and, more generally, scholarly fields related to the 'East.'[12] Influenced by Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, Said's chef-d'œuvre applies discourse analysis to nineteenth and twentieth-century scholarly works in the field of Orientalism. Said presents Western knowledge production on the Orient as imperial intellectualism. Western scholars, intentionally or unintentionally, constructed an inferior East in contrast to a superior West. Said thus considered Western colonial scholars as primarily potent to construct religion. His account does not leave room for the influence of local intellectuals, let alone religious practitioners.

Therefore, a post-*Orientalism* current has emerged. Focusing on local knowledge production and regimes has become one way of differentiating Said's seemingly ineluctable power-relations. Michael

10 Benedict Anderson, "Census, Map, Museum," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 163–185.

11 Marieke Bloembergen, "Borobudur in the Light of Asia. Scholars, Pilgrims, and Knowledge Networks of Greater India," in *Belonging across the Bay of Bengal. Religious Rites, Colonial Migrations, National Rights*, ed. Michael Laffan (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 49.

12 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

Laffan, for example, applied local knowledge production to religion-making. In regard to Indonesia, he examines "how Islam was interpreted and fashioned by the region's diverse actors [...]."[13] Further criticism of Said's concept of Orientalism has been brought forward by Marieke Bloembergen and Martijn Eickhoff.[14] Knowledge production and heritage formation in Southeast Asia started earlier, not with the advent of colonial powers. Indeed, foreigners never gained epistemological access without the aid of locals. Their book demands a stronger appreciation of these local knowledges that were interdependent with colonial knowledge.

Focusing on direct encounters between locals and colonists, recent historiography pays particular emphasis to the self-determined manoeuvring of locals. Raymond Corbey, for example, analyses mass-conversions at Raja Ampat. Corbey sees these conversions as an autonomous local means of coping with forms of modernity.[15] Similarly, Alicia Turner argues that "we need to not only pay attention to the ways in which the colonial state engaged religious projects for the ends of governmentality, but also be attentive to the ways in which some actors may have participated with very different, and perhaps contradictory, goals in mind."[16]

Following Turner's argument, this paper claims that agency is a twofold concept. It is conceded by the historian's narrative which is related to a choice of scale and focus, but also depends on the potentialities of historical actors and their self-determination. This paper addresses both issues by conducting a global microhistory on the Indonesian student Soetjipto. His case serves as a means to illuminate the complex web of dependencies and power-relations that covered the medical missionary project in Central Java.

Global microhistory is a comparatively new methodological field in historical scholarship. In 2010, Tonio Andrade called for a stronger appreciation of historical actors traditionally underrepresented

13 Michael Laffan, "Preface," in *The Makings of Indonesian Islam. Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), XI–XIV, here XII.

14 Marieke Bloembergen and Martjin Eickhoff, "Great Sacred Majapahit. Biographies of a Javanese Site in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Politics of Heritage in Indonesia. A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 97–128.

15 Raymond Corbey, "F.C. Kamma. A Missionary's Efforts (1930s)," in *Raja Ampat Ritual Art: Spirit Priests and Ancestor Cults in New Guinea's Far West* (Leiden: C. Zwartenkot Art Books, 2017), 90–109.

16 Alicia Turner, "Pali Scholarship 'in Its Truest Sense' in Burma. The Multiple Trajectories in Colonial Deployments of Religion," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 123–138, here 136, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911817001292.

in works of global history.[17] Global microhistory is thus not merely a stylistic choice. Rather, microhistory challenges traditional foci on national, imperial, and structural approaches.[18] Accordingly, it has often been linked to subaltern studies.[19] This link, however, is misleading, as it implies a one-directional power hierarchy that views the respective subject of the microhistory at the bottom. Soetjipto's case indicates a more intricate net of overlapping and reciprocal power-relations. The Bethel Mission's missionaries were as much woven into this net as Soetjipto, the other local students, and the medical personnel.

Global microhistory, evidently, has its drawbacks. As it is an approach specifically designed to analyse the non-analysable–those actors that only hazily appear in the sources– global microhistory relies on purposeful speculation.[20] In reconstructing Soetjipto's personal experiences, the continuous use of the 'perhaps' may thus be legitimised not only by Fernand Braudel's high praise for historical imagination,[21] but also by an ancient appreciation and anticipation of micro-historical methodology: „On me faict hayr les choses vray-semblables quand on me les plante pour infallibles. J'ayme ces mots, qui amollissent et moderent la temerité de nos propositions : A l'avanture, Aucunement, Quelque, On dict, Je pense, et semblables. [sic!]"[22]

17 Tonio Andrade, "A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord. Toward a Global Microhistory," *Journal of World History* 21, no. 4 (2010): 573–591, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41060851.

18 For a methodology of global microhistory, see: John-Paul A. Ghobrial, "Introduction. Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," *Past & Present* 242, no. 14 (2019): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz046.

19 Henrique Espada Lima, *A micro-história italiana. Escalas, indícios e singularidades* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2006); Alf Lüdtke, "Introduction. What is the History of Everyday Life and who are its Practitioners?" in *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3–40.

20 Microhistory has faced criticism for its use of speculation since its early methodological advances. On the purposefulness of speculation and its merits as a methodological tool, see Carlo Ginzburg, "Beweise und Möglichkeiten. Randbemerkungen zur Wahrhaftigen Geschichte von der Wiederkehr des Martin Guerre," in *Die wahrhaftige Geschichte von der Wiederkehr des Martin Guerre*, Natalie Zemon Davis (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer TB, 1989), 185–213. Ginzburg's afterword is not included in the original French version of Le Retour de Martin Guerre.

21 See Andrade, "A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord," 591.

22 Michel de Montaigne, "Des boyteux," in *Essais*, Michel de Montaigne, Tome III, Chapitre XI, 1595. Cited after: Pierre Villey and Verdun Louis Saulnier, eds., *Les essais de Michel de Montaigne*, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965), 456. Author's translation to English: „My aversion to the most probable sentences is raised when they are presented to me as infallible. I like

II. RECIPROCAL POWER-RELATIONS

Probably born around 1910, Soetjipto belonged to a *Priyayi*-family, the highest class among the local elites. His intricate relationship with Javanese elites as well as with European medical and missionary personnel situate him in the centre of European-indigenous missionary contacts. He appears in the sources for the first time in April 1927. Elfriede Krieg, one of the Bethel Mission's missionary sisters, mentioned Soetjipto in her circular letter of Palm Sunday 1927 and described him as one of her former students at the *Zendingsschool* (missionary school) in Poerwodadi.[23] Soetjipto's family, the letters revealed, was among the most influential of Java. Soetjipto's grandfather, as Krieg stated, was Javanese romanticist painter Raden Saleh.[24] Saleh was a protégé of the Dutch colonial government and travelled to Europe to receive artistic training in 1829. His celebrated work earned him invitations to European courts, such as Ernest of Saxe-Coburg's court in Coburg, Germany.[25] Narrations of his grandfather's experiences were most likely passed on in the family. As Raden Saleh converted to Christianity in Europe, Soetjipto had a family tie to European colonial-political, religious, and cultural structures from birth.[26]

Instead of visiting a Javanese, Chinese, or Dutch school, Soetjipto's parents decided to have him educated by Elfriede Krieg in the Bethel Mission's *Zendingsschool* in Poerwodadi. Their decision displays a traditional conceptualisation of power-relations between indigenous and European actors: as the colonial state privileged Western education over traditional local forms of education, locals that could afford it had a vivid interest in complying with colonial educational demands. Yet, Soetjipto's parents' choice of school arguably was no surrender to these demands.

Although there was a top-down colonial power-relation that preferred locals who underwent European forms of education in official employments, there were nevertheless ways of self-determined manoeuvring–particularly for the

to have such words that soften and diminish the boldness of our assertions: perhaps, to a certain extent, in part, people say, I believe, and such like."

23 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 10 April 1927, AMS M 428, 73–74.

24 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 12 August 1927, AMS M 428, 66.

25 For Raden Saleh's inflictions with the Dutch, see Marie-Odette Scalliet, "Raden Saleh et les Hollandais : Artiste protégé ou otage politique ?" *Archipel* 69, no. 1 (2005): 151–258, https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2005.3933. Unfortunately, Soetjipto is generally omitted in works on Raden Saleh.

26 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 12 August 1927, 67.

indigenous elites. As the family presumably had ties to Europe, Soetjipto could have studied abroad in the Netherlands. Numerous Indo-Dutch children did so, as Evert van Imhoff and Gijs Beets have shown.[27] It would be misleading, however, to portray Soetjipto's family's choice as a way of coping with this colonial hierarchy. The reason for Soetjipto's family to choose the missionary school was not due to a power-relation that had them positioned at the bottom. The Bethel Mission–and missionary societies in general–had a vivid interest in reaching local elites in their missionary work. The consideration was at all times the same: converting a people worked most efficiently in a top-down manner, and local elites were well aware of this missionary approach.[28]

The Bethel Mission's interest in families such as Soetjipto's, however, exceeded the urge to Christianise them as a kick-off for mass-conversions. The Bethel Mission was, rather, downright dependent on the local elites. When missionary physician Dr. Otto Sickinger wrote to his colleague Dr. Samuel Müller in East Africa in 1927 to share his experience with missionary work, he advised him to comply with local elites' wishes. When conceiving a new missionary hospital, Sickinger claimed, one should include a separate ward for the *Priyayis*. Otherwise, they would avoid the hospital.[29] That would render medical missionary work futile, as it "promotes our relationship with the better-off of the different races, which in turn can serve our missionary task."[30] For one, the missionaries knew about their dependence on the *Priyayis* as local intermediaries that could spur sympathy for their project among the indigenous population. Furthermore, in many instances the Bethel Mission also relied economically on local goodwill. In 1933, Sickinger had to persuade the local *Regentschap* (indigenous regents) to donate a new building to the hospital. At

27 Evert van Imhoff and Gijs Beets, "Education at home: The age-specific pattern of migration between the Netherlands and the former Dutch East Indies around 1930," *Demographic Research* 11 (2004): 335–356, https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2004.11.12.

28 Most famously, see Alan Strathern, *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

29 Otto Sickinger, Missionsärztlicher Bericht an Samuel Müller, Blora, 1 February 1927, AMS M 318, 121. Sickinger and Müller upheld a lively conversation. They exchanged medical knowledge from their respective missionary locus. There is a research gap on transnational and transregional networks of missionary medical knowledge production.

30 Otto Sickinger, Jahresbericht des Missionskrankenhauses in Blora über das Jahr 1924, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 171. In the original: "[…] fördert unsere Beziehung zu den besser Gestellten der verschiedenen Rassen, was wiederum unserer Missionsaufgabe dienen kann."

that point, "dangerous mentally ill people" had to go to prison, as the hospital was not equipped to accommodate them.[31] This treatment was an intolerable condition in the medical missionaries' eyes. Another example for financial dependence were the Christmas celebrations of 1927 that had to be funded jointly by the Salatiga Mission and the local *Regentschap*.[32] The Bethel Mission was an unsustainable model without local pecuniary sources.

Aware of this missionary dependence, Soetjipto's parents most likely chose the *Zendingsschool* as a space that was to a certain extent open to their creative participation. Missionary education combined European knowledge transmission with a comparatively beneficial hierarchical position for local elites, demonstrating a reciprocal power dependence. As much as Soetjipto's parents had a vivid interest in having their son educated at a Christian, European school, Elfriede Krieg and her missionary peers were just as dependent upon the local *Regentschap's* good will, sympathy, and financial assistance.

After having graduated from the *Zendingsschool*, Soetjipto, as well as numerous other former students, kept in close touch with Elfriede Krieg. Although Krieg–together with the *Zendingsschool*–had left Poerwodadi for Goeboeg in November 1926, multiple former students would make trips from Poerwodadi and even Yogyakarta to visit Krieg in her new environment. Two of the former students, Kasiran and Soetjipto, stood out through their particularly close continuing relationships with Krieg. Not only did they uphold amicable ties with her, they also engaged with her work; in Goeboeg, they both aided Krieg with her teaching and even taught new students themselves.[33]

This direct engagement of indigenous intermediaries in processes of knowledge production, knowledge transmission, and missionary work spurred ambiguous reactions on the side of the Bethel mission. On the one hand, there was a deep appreciation of local knowledge, local culture, and intermediary work. Dr. Otto Sickinger repeatedly expressed his sympathy:

> We are grateful that we have such people in whom Christ has taken shape, so that they can independently process the Christian truths as Javanese and proclaim them to their people in Javanese–not European–form.[34]

31 Otto Sickinger, Letter to Walther Trittelvitz, Blora, 29 January 1933, AMS M 318, 70r. In the original: "Gefährliche Geisteskranke".

32 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 24 December 1927, AMS M 428, 61.

33 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 10 April 1927, AMS M 428, 73–74.

34 Otto Sickinger, Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java, s.l.,

Sickinger did not consider it sufficient to have the Bible translated linguistically into Javanese. Indigenous Christians, according to Sickinger, would have to culturally translate it as well.[35] This is precisely what Soetjipto, Kasiran, and other locals did. The group of intermediaries was further not confined to former students. Elfriede Krieg, for instance, initiated a literary circle with local women. One of them, whom Krieg considered highly educated, would also eventually teach at the *Zendingsschool*.[36]

The appreciation of local intermediaries resulted from a concept of temporariness inherent to the missionary project. In both evangelical as well as medical terms, the primary objective of missionaries was, according to Sickinger, to make oneself dispensable. Missionary sisters' main task, for instance, was not nursing, but instructing local nurses. These local nurses were to be educated rather strictly, but under no circumstances, however, were they to become "Europeanised."[37] Another example for missionary temporariness was Elfriede Krieg's approach to reaching the indigenous youth. In 1926, she initiated the journal *Jeugdbeweging* that she contrived as a tool for local intermediaries. After an initiatory phase under Dr. Otto Sickinger's direction, the journal was to be handed over so that the Javanese youth could convert their peers.[38] The *Priyayis* were aware of the long-term objective of missionary societies and acted accordingly, for instance, in sending Soetjipto to a missionary school already in the anticipation of the missionaries' exodus.

Whereas the Bethel missionaries did repeatedly express gratitude for the intermediaries' work, they did not consider it a dependency on their side, despite the fact that this dependency was mutual. In regard to indigenous intermediaries, the missionaries entered a contested field between appreciation, gratitude, and dependence. Soetjipto's parents

s.d., AMS M 318, 163. In the original: „Wir sind dankbar, dass wir solche Leute haben, in denen Christus Gestalt gewonnen hat, so dass sie die christlichen Wahrheiten selbstständig als Javanen verarbeiten, und ihren Volksgenossen in javanischer – und nicht europäischer – Form verkündigen können."

35 Otto Sickinger, Letter to Walther Trittelvitz, Blora, 1 March 1925, AMS M 318, 179.

36 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 6 March 1927, AMS M 428, 77–78; Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, s.l., 1 January 1927, AMS M 428, 80–81.

37 Otto Sickinger, Missionsärztlicher Bericht an Samuel Müller, Blora, 1 February 1927, AMS M 318, 122; Racial considerations played a decisive part in aversions against alleged "Europeanisations": see Diana Miryong Natermann, *Pursuing Whiteness in the Colonies: Private Memories from the Congo Free State and German East Africa (1884–1914)* (Münster and New York: Waxmann, 2018).

38 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 4 November 1926, AMS M 428, 88–89.

were aware of that. They were also aware of the missionaries' plan to stay only temporarily. With the gradual emergence of nationalist thought in the Dutch East Indies, considerations about the future in a decolonised Indonesian nation-state were already virulent among the well-connected *Priyayis*.[39] Sending Soetjipto to the *Zendingsschool* was thus a gamble for a post-colonial and post-missionary future.

III. CURE, COERCION, AND CONVERSION

Apart from running *Zendingsschols*, the Bethel Mission was primarily a medical mission. It sought to actively use 'modern Western' medical knowledge to spur conversion. In his book *Missionaries and their Medicine*, David Hardiman argues that missionaries benefitted from scientific advances that gave them an aura of superiority.[40] Hardiman thus creates an epistemic hierarchy in favour of the 'modern Western' medical episteme. Hardiman's case study on North-East India is in parts applicable to the Javanese case. However, a cure was no prerequisite for conversion. Medical knowledge was applied in multiple ways by the missionaries. Apart from curing indigenous people, missionaries employed diagnoses, the limits of medical knowledge, and drugs in their attempt to oppress religious agency.

In 1927, Soetjipto had already been in contact with the Bethel Mission, and Elfriede Krieg in particular, for approximately five years. The missionary efforts towards his conversion were sustained and periodical. They are tangible in Krieg's letters back home, to very different degrees throughout the years. In 1927, however, Krieg accelerated her conversion attempts. In July 1927, Krieg confronted Soetjipto with the alleged omnipresence of tropical disease and the resulting ever-threatening possibility of a sudden death.[41] To be on the safe side, she urged Soetjipto to decide for conversion in a timely manner.[42] Her advances constitute a profound conceptional intersection of disease, death, and conversion. Contrasting to Hardiman's analysis that focuses on cures of tropical diseases, Krieg omitted the potentialities of Western medicine. Her focus, by contrast, lay in the dangers of disease.

39 Michael Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below the Winds* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

40 Hardiman, *Missionaries and their Medicine*.

41 For the long tradition of European perceptions of tropical disease and of the Orient as a disease-ridden locus, see Hugh Cagle, *Assembling the Tropics. Science and Medicine in Portugal's Empire, 1450–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

42 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 12 August 1927, AMS M 428, 66.

Indeed, Soetjipto soon experienced illness and death directly. At the young age of approximately twenty years, his best friend Kasiran died from typhus on 29 October 1927.[43] Soetjipto had a strong personal relation to Kasiran. Kasiran was considered the school's best student and was funded in his studies by missionary sister Agnes Püschel.[44] He was the first person out of Soetjipto's immediate entourage to convert to Christianity.[45] Most likely, he was something of a role model to Soetjipto. Apart from the indigenous-missionary relationship Soetjipto had with Elfriede Krieg, Agnes Püschel, and other members of the Bethel Mission, the strong personal tie between Soetjipto and his best friend Kasiran had profound implications for his stance towards Christianity. According to Elfriede Krieg, Kasiran professed to God on his death bed.[46] True or not, Kasiran's conversion and his early death had twofold consequences. On the one hand, they arguably made Soetjipto more receptive to the religious aspect of the missionary project. On the other hand, they served the missionaries as a means of further pushing Soetjipto towards baptism.

Admittedly, the Bethel Mission also spurred conversions that had clearer ties to traditional power-relations. Elfriede Krieg's personal assistant, for instance, worked for her due to severe pecuniary problems. Krieg was aware of this, yet she expected her assistant to convert to Christianity if she wanted to continue working for her.[47] Another example of subtle power-relations in conversion is the case of seven-year-old Chinese girl Lien, whose parents sent her to live with Elfriede Krieg and get a European education. To facilitate Lien's acclimatisation and to keep her from crying for her family, Krieg employed "strong medicine".[48] This technique of coerced conversion constitutes another challenge to Hardiman's argument. Missionaries used 'Western' medicine in other ways than allopathically. Pharmaceuticals occasionally also served to oppress indigenous people mentally in a far more simplistic way.

In December 1927, Soetjipto endured a fortnight of severe illness. Strikingly, the preliminary missionary diagnosis was identical with Kasiran's cause of death: typhus.[49] For the Bethel Mission's missionaries, death

43 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 30 October 1927, AMS M 428, 63–64.
44 Agnes Püschel, Circular letter, Koppeng [sic!], 4 July 1925, AMS M 429, 47.
45 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 27 June 1927, AMS M 428, 70.
46 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 30 October 1927, AMS M 428, 63–64.
47 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 24 December 1927, AMS M 428, 62.
48 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 29 March 1929, AMS M 428, 38–38r.
49 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 24 December 1927, AMS M 428, 60.

played a pivotal role in conversion. After all, the missionaries claimed that eternal life in heaven was unattainable without earthly devotion to God. When Raden Yuwono, a friend of Kasiran's, was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis, Krieg continuously urged him to convert:

> I told him seriously that, according to the doctor, he did not have a long life ahead of him. He was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. Oh, he was doing quite well, he said. I stood by my statement and urged him, driven by inner determination, to devote the perhaps short time on earth to God, to consecrate his life to God [...].[50]

Missionaries not only used the potentiality of successful allopathic treatment for their purpose. They also used diagnoses in an expedient way. Conveying the certainty of imminent death was, at least in the eyes of the missionaries, a reasonable way of spurring conversion, entailing a profound urgency. Diagnoses thus had implications that exceeded the medical sphere. Does Soejtipto's survival, then, prove that these diagnoses were missionary rather than medical diagnoses? Not necessarily; what was missionary rather than medical were the implications that followed once a diagnosis had been made.

Medicine, then, served as a means of conversion in multiple ways. On the one hand, Lien's case reflects its use as a maker of compliance. On the other hand, David Hardiman's notion of medicine as a creator of a superior aura shows in the Javanese case as well. According to Dr. Sickinger, Salvarsan, a drug that proved efficient against the widespread skin disease Framboesia, was the primary enticement that drew locals to the missionary hospitals.[51] More striking, however, is the fact that 'modern Western' medicine did not necessarily have to work in order to have its desired effect, at least from the missionaries' perspective. Soetjipto witnessed Kasiran's death, which was a clear demonstration of the limits of the missionaries' medical knowledge. Typhus, after all, was not Framboesia. Yet, he turned to the missionary hospital when he experienced sickness himself.

Soetjipto was finally baptised on Christmas Eve 1927, while still convalescent.[52] Whereas some

50 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 25 February 1929, AMS M 428, 49. In the original: "Daß er nach ärztlichem Ausspruch kein langes Leben vor sich habe, sagte ich ihm ernst. Er litt an Lungentuberkulose. O, es ginge ihm ganz gut, gab er zurück. Ich blieb bei meiner Behauptung und forderte ihn auf, innerlich getrieben, die vielleicht noch so kurze Erdenzeit Got [sic!] ganz hinzugeben, sein Leben Gott zu weihen [...]."

51 Otto Sickinger, Jahresbericht des Missionskrankenhauses in Blora über das Jahr 1924, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 174.

52 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter,

personal ties discouraged Soetjipto from this form of religious dedication towards Christianity–namely his family–Kasiran's death and Soetjipto's amicable ties to Elfriede Krieg encouraged him. In regard to personal power-relations, Soetjipto was torn between two parties, but eventually he gradually shifted away from his family. Analysing indigenous actors' manoeuvring of missionary and local behavioural demands in regard to medical epistemes can thus illuminate the process that led towards Soetjipto's conversion. Indigenous actors employed behavioural approaches of reconciliation to cope with contradictory power-relations. Only rarely did they decide for one party, for the consequences were severe. Adhering to a middle ground avoided social exclusion from either side.

IV. MEDICAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL HIERARCHIES

In their classic works, David Arnold and Wolfgang Eckart grouped medical missions as a subsection of colonial medicine. Medical missionaries were a means of advancing the colonial project.[53] This conceptualisation of missionary medicine is not expedient, however, for the study of indigenous agency. Local actors perceived missionary medicine as profoundly religious. Consequentially, they generally had strong reluctances to use missionary medicine. According to Otto Sickinger, locals would try all other forms of medical treatment available before consulting the missionary hospital:[54]

> In general, we see that most people come to the doctor late, often only when his help can no longer be used effectively. First, all sorts of different, mostly useless remedies, often based on superstition, are always used.[55]

As much as locals tried to avoid missionary medicine, medical missionaries tried to hinder locals from consulting indigenous practices of treatment and healing.

In the summer of 1927, a most obvious clash of medical epistemes took place in Poerwodadi,

Goeboeg, 24 December 1927, AMS M 428, 60.

53 Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*; Wolfgang Eckart, *Medizin und Kolonialimperialismus. Deutschland 1884–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997).

54 Elfriede Krieg, Letter to Pastor Gleiß, Poerwodadi, 4 April 1923, AMS M 428, 366r.

55 Otto Sickinger, Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 149. In the original: „Im Allgemeinen sehen wir, dass die meisten erst spät zum Arzt kommen, oft erst dann, wenn seine Hilfe nicht mehr wirkungsvoll einsetzen kann. Erst werden immer alle möglichen, meist nutzlosen, oft nur auf Aberglauben beruhenden Mittel benutzt."

as missionary sister Agnes Püschel reported:

> The other day there was a Javanese miracle doctor, who is said to have healed some people; all of Poerwodadi and the surrounding area was on its feet. Old people, who one does not see otherwise, were brought to him. Even Chinese people, who normally do not want to know anything about Javanese, called him! Satan's power is great! I have never seen our streets as busy as they were then. Even more developed Javanese, such as the Regent, support such a thing. These were difficult days also for our doctors. It was simply said: 'Whoever goes to the miracle doctor and comes back afterwards will not be admitted'. That helped with some.[56]

Dr. Sickinger and his medical missionary colleagues, similarly to indigenous people, conceptualised medicine and healing practices in a religious way. For the indigenous actors, missionary medicine stood synecdochically for Christianity. For the missionaries, traditional local practices were born out of superstition and impiousness. The intersections of medical and religious epistemes resulted in a contested field of indigenous agency.

Restrictions to medical care were issued by both missionary and indigenous actors. Whereas medical missionaries tried to hinder locals from consulting 'miracle doctors', locals willing to use missionary medicine faced opposition from family members. In his report *Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java*, Dr. Sickinger provides an example. When a Chinese patient wanted to have his kidney stones removed, he considered it most purposeful to consult Dr. Sickinger. However, his mother, whom he was living with, was strongly opposed to missionary medicine. The man thus had to wait for his mother to leave town to visit his brother before he could have the surgery. His cousin, in turn, had the same condition, but did not want to have surgery before awaiting his cousin's surgery's outcome.[57] Apart

56 Agnes Püschel, Circular letter, Poerwodadi, 12 June 1927, AMS M 429, 15. In the original: „Neulich war hier ein jav. Wunderdoktor, der angeblich manche gesund gemacht hat; ganz Poerwodadi und Umgegend war auf den Beinen. Alte, die man sonst nicht sieht, wurden zu ihm gebracht. Sogar Chinesen, die sonst von Javanen nichts wissen wollen, riefen ihn! Satans Macht ist gross! Ich habe noch niemals unsre Strassen so belebt gesehen, wie damals. Selbst mehr entwickelte Javanen, z.B. der Regent, unterstützen so etwas. Es waren schwere Tage auch für unsere Aerzte. Da wurde einfach gesagt: ‚Wer zu dem Wunderdoktor geht und nachher zurückkommt, wird nicht aufgenommen.' Das half bei manchen."

57 Otto Sickinger, Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 147.

from indicating locals' ways of non-compliance with their community, this example shows that the reluctance of locals to consult one of the missionary physicians derived from their respective social communities.

On the other hand, local actors' reluctance to consult local medical knowledge stemmed from the hegemony of missionary and colonial medicine as well as direct missionary attempts to discourage locals to use local medical structures. Thus, indigenous actors found themselves torn by a complex network of power-relations. Whom was one supposed to give priority? Most indigenous actors sought a way in between. They tried to reconcile both medical and religious epistemes. This argument of epistemic reconciliation illuminates the local actors' accumulative medical approaches. Only after all local treatments failed would many indigenous actors afflicted by diseases turn to Western forms of medicine.[58]

This concept of reconciliation is also applicable to Soetjipto and transcends the medical sphere. After his conversion, Soetjipto moved to Salatiga, where he received training to become an evangelist.[59] In the meantime, Soetjipto had become fully immersed in the missionary project. Instead of playing the continuous game of reconciliation, Soetjipto had chosen one edge of the net of power-relations. Consequently, Soetjipto's family broke off contact with him.[60] The gamble for Soetjipto's status in between these spheres ultimately came at a risk and having sent Soetjipto to the missionary school backfired.

Soetjipto's choice to engage ever more closely with the mission through time might well be due to his conviction of their missionary project. Conceding agency to indigenous actors should not be misconstrued as imposing the idea of resistance on their every action. After all, the concept of indigenous agency also includes the self-determined cooperation with colonial and missionary powers that were traditionally seen as hierarchically superior. Raymond Corbey recently argued that conversion served indigenous people as a self-determined way of coping with inescapable intrusions of modernity.[61] What he omits, however, is the religious aspect of conversion. Soetjipto most likely developed not only practical but also spiritual-

58 On the indigenous perception of colonial medicine and the perceived sameness of medicine and colonialism see Frantz Fanon, "Medicine and Colonialism," in *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1994 [1959]), 121–45. Fanon's argument also holds true for missionary medicine.

59 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Kopeng, 27 June 1928, AMS M 428, 57–58.

60 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 8 October 1928, AMS M 428, 55.

61 Corbey, "F.C. Kamma. A Missionary's Efforts (1930s)."

religious interests in the missionary project. After completing his training as an evangelist in Salatiga, he took up work at the missionary hospital in Poerwodadi. The final notion on Soetjipto traceable in the Bethel Mission's archive is that he had already conducted several baptisms in his new role.[62]

CONCLUSION

Agency is a twofold concept. It is conceded by the historian's narrative, but it also depends on local power-relations. In conducting a global microhistory, the historian concedes as much agency as narratively possible. What emerges is an account torn between possibilities–the inclusion of traditionally underrepresented actors–and restrictions–the silence of colonial archives–as much as its protagonist. Soetjipto attended the Bethel Mission's *Zendingsschool* in Poerwodadi. After graduating, he remained in close ties with his former missionary teacher Elfriede Krieg. On Christmas Eve 1927, finally, he was baptised. His family broke off contact with him and he went on to become an evangelist. At first glance, Soetjipto's engagement with the Bethel Mission appears like a missionary victory all along the line.

The perspective of a missionary success, however, implies a general indigenous aversion against the mission. Traditional scholarship has argued that power-structures were favourable for missionary societies in missionary-indigenous encounters. Indigenous agency was understood as a manoeuvring of locals through inimical, superior power-structures. This paper, contrarily, has shown that power-relations in indigenous-missionary encounters were not one-sided, and neither was there a missionary hegemony. Rather, indigenous actors as well as medical missionaries found themselves in a net of overlapping and reciprocal power-relations. Oftentimes, indigenous actors were situated above missionary personnel.

To analyse indigenous agency in medical missionary encounters, this paper proposes an analytical trichotomy of power-relations: personal, religious, and medical hierarchies. These power-relations often stood in contrast to each other, resulting in two extreme positions of behavioural demands. Indigenous actors coped with the resulting net of power-relations in two ways: they either chose a reconciliatory path in between or they decided for one edge of the net.

In regard to treatment and medicine, most indigenous actors

62 Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 1 May 1933, AMS M 428, 16; Elfriede Krieg, Circular letter, Goeboeg, 28 August 1932, AMS M 428, 20.

FIGURE 1: Photography of Women's Ward, taken by Dr. Otto Sickinger, 1933. Otto Sickinger, AMS M 318, 69. The backside reads: "Blick in neuen Krankensaal. Frauensaal, Aerztin mit europ[äischen] u[nd] eingeb[orenen] Schwestern". English: "View into the new hospital ward. Women's hall, doctor with European and local nurses". Courtesy of the Archiv- und Museumsstiftung der Vereinten Evangelischen Mission, Wuppertal.

sought to reconcile local and Western epistemes and behavioural demands. They would first consult local medical actors before eventually turning to Western medical actors such as the Bethel Mission's hospitals. In personal and religious terms, reconciliation proves to have been less feasible. When Soetjipto found himself torn between his family's expectations and the missionary project's perceived spiritual attractivity, he chose the latter. His family ties disintegrated over his decision. The irony lies in the fact that it was his parents who sent him to

the *Zendingsschool* in the first place. As Alicia Turner put it, in regard to religious projects, "some actors may have participated with very different, and perhaps contradictory, goals in mind."[63] These contradictions showed even in close personal circles such as Soetjipto's family.

The primary reason for Soetjipto to convert to Christianity was a veritable religious conviction. Over time, he most likely developed a faith in Christianity that outweighed his family ties. In arguing for spiritual-religious factors in cases of indigenous conversion, this paper thus challenges predominant notions of secular-modern historical scholarship. One ought to seriously consider and reappreciate the most obvious aspect of missionary history: faith.

Soetjipto's family background and his commitment to the missionary project makes him the archetype of a local intermediary. Apart from participating in knowledge transmission and knowledge production at the intersection of Europeans and locals, Soetjipto also served as an indigenous actor in religion-making. He taught at the *Zendingsschool* in Goeboeg, worked as an evangelist at the missionary hospital in Poerwodadi, and conducted baptisms. For future research, however, the implied strict distinction between indigenous and missionary actors is misleading.

The personnel of the Bethel Mission's hospital in Blora comprised three European physicians, two European nurses, and 42 indigenous nurses.[64] In Blora, the indigenous preponderance was even stronger: two European physicians, three European nurses, and 51 indigenous nurses.[65]

The above picture, taken by Dr. Otto Sickinger, shows that five out of six of the present nurses were indigenous. What implications for the concept of intermediaries does this entail? If indigenous actors like Soetjipto were an integral and essential part of the missionary project, is the concept of an intermediary then pejorative? Future scholarship on knowledge production, knowledge transmission, and religion-making will have to reconsider the role of indigenous actors in medical missions.

Current research pushes the boundaries of Orientalist tradition. Foci have shifted from the nation-state, colonial institutions, and colonial scholars towards local individual agency. Conceding too much agency, however, runs the risk of neglecting power-relations. Whereas indigenous actors had profound potentialities of self-determined action, they nevertheless acted within power regimes and

63 Turner, "Pali Scholarship 'in Its Truest Sense' in Burma," 136.

64 Otto Sickinger, Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 141–142.

65 Otto Sickinger, Aus der missionsärztlichen Arbeit der Neukirchner Mission auf Java, s.l., s.d., AMS M 318, 144.

power hierarchies. Traditionally, Europeans were seen at the top of these hierarchies more often than not. However, Europeans and particularly missionaries depended on the aid of local intermediaries that were accustomed to local cultures and vernaculars. If one considers this dependence, a multiplicity of hierarchies emerges. Power-relations do not solely rest on political, economic, or military factors. In medical missionary encounters, these power-relations were overlapping and reciprocal, working constantly in more than one direction.

Envisioning (In)dependent Filastin: Agrochemicals and the Synthetic Age in British-Ruled Palestine

by
OMRI POLATSEK

ABSTRACT

By reconstructing the history of Imperial Chemical Industries Levant activities and examining Husni al-Miqdadi's writings (one of ICI Levant's agents), this article explores the crystallization of the Synthetic Age in British-ruled Palestine. As ICI Levant was the leading local importer of agrochemicals to Palestine, it held a significant position for Zionist-Jews and Arab-Palestinians, both seeking to transform the economic basis of the land in order to materialize a future national economy that would be based on agriculture. After describing the interdependence between the Synthetic Age and British Imperialism in the first section, the article depicts the company's local and regional activity and explores Arab-Palestinians reaction to its expansion in the second and third sections. In the last section, it studies the activities and writings of one of the company's agents, Husni al-Miqdadi (المقدادي). Reconstructing al-Miqdadi's work vis-à-vis ICI's local and regional activity reveals the material and social entanglements between the national-local and imperial-global, resulting from the new 'chemical possibilities' generated by British Imperialism. This article argues that al-Miqdadi's specific expertise as a fertilizer expert was a product of a substantial change that took place during the interwar period– the rising flow of synthetic agrochemicals to Palestine and the Middle East. As the Synthetic Age was set into motion by imperial infrastructure and colonial mindsets, its material and conceptual aspects shaped the interactions between local and imperial actors and enabled experts like al-Miqdadi to join in and expand the discourse of Arab-Palestinian *nahda*.

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INTRODUCTION

On an early morning in January 1946, eight armed men and women broke into the offices of Imperial Chemical Industries Levant at Salame Road, Tel Aviv. The single guard was no match for this trained group. As he was chloroformed and tied, other team members spread pepper across the floor in order to prevent the police dogs from tracing their scent. The group quickly left, carrying ten tons of sodium nitrate in two unidentified trucks.[1] This meticulously planned robbery was not the only one taking place after the Second World War in British-ruled Palestine, however. A more peculiar case happened a few months earlier at Haifa, when in November 1945, an unknown man arrived at the warehouses of Imperial Chemical Industries Levant enquiring about goods he claimed he had to transport. After presenting himself as a representative of Hebron municipality and showing the guard his certificates, the local official gave him five tons of sodium nitrate.[2]

"How is it possible?" wondered a correspondent from *Filastin*, a Jaffa based Arab-Palestinian newspaper, that "the agent of the department gave this huge quantity [of sodium nitrate] to this Jewish man, while [previously] he did not want to give the officials from Hebron Municipality 150 kilograms of sodium nitrate without a police escort?"[3] Typically, the transportation of hazardous chemical substances in Palestine was accompanied by police or army forces. The writer explained that previously, when representatives of Hebron municipality picked up sodium nitrate from the harbor, they had to wait until the arrival of 11 armed soldiers to escort them back to Hebron. The *Filastin* correspondent was dumbfounded by the company's naiveté and speculated whether there were any other motives beyond it.[4]

This article will set out to explore Imperial Chemical Industries Levant, the company that lost dozens of synthetic chemicals in 1946, and one of its Arab-Palestinian agents.[5] During the interwar period, Imperial Chemical Industries was working on a global scale, setting up branches all over the British empire and selling its products worldwide.[6] In the Middle East, the company's main branches were in British-ruled Palestine. The

1 "Jews Raid Store," *The Scotsman*, 16 January 1946; "Shod 10 ton natran hankati" ["Ten Tons of Sodium Nitrate Stolen"] *Ha'aretz*, 16 January 1946.

2 "5 ton homrey-nefets huts'au bemirma?" ["Five Tons of Explosives Taken in Deceit?"] *Ha'aretz*, 03 December 1945; "Mehapsim 5 ton homrey-nefets" ["Searching for Five Tons of Explosives"] *LaHayal*, 04 December 1945.

3 "Al-'irhabyun al-yahud yakhtalasun 5 atnan mutafajjirat" ["The Jewish Terrorist Stole Five Tons of Explosives"] *Filastin,* 02 December 1945.

4 *Filastin,* 02 December 1945.

5 Hereafter: ICI Levant.

6 Hereafter: ICI (referring to the mother company in London).

company's personnel, products, and ideas were prevalent in Palestine during a specific historical moment when synthetic chemicals became common both for domestic and industrial usages. In the agricultural realm, this moment during the interwar period marked a shift towards a mounting application of synthetically made fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.[7]

As this article will seek to demonstrate, Husni al-Miqdadi (المقدادي), who was working for the company as a consultant and sales agent, was well-aware of the possibilities generated from ICI's chemical products. As a fertilizer specialist, he was informed of the potential for agrochemicals to enhance the economic value extracted from orange cultivation—Palestine's most lucrative export crop. From his 'expert' position, al-Miqdadi sought to contribute to the prevalent national economic-awakening discourse. By focusing on al-Miqdadi's work vis-à-vis the company's regional activity, this study will highlight the material and social entanglements between the national-local and imperial-global, which resulted from the new 'chemical possibilities' generated by British imperialism between both world wars.

While in the case of these two robberies, the synthetic fertilizers were most likely used by the Jewish anti-imperial forces to blow up British infrastructure, their original role was to nourish various fields and orchards in Palestine. In 1946, at the time of these robberies, synthetic fertilizers were often employed in intensive 'modern' agriculture schemes and used in various cultivation fields in British-ruled Palestine, the British empire, and around the world.[8] While the consumption of synthetic agrochemicals outside of Europe and North America was gradually spreading through the interwar period, the history of this agricultural-industrial transformation remains unresearched. Historical accounts on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are centered around North America and Western Europe.[9]

7 Edward Melillo, "The First Green Revolution: Debt Peonage and the Making of the Nitrogen Fertilizers Trade, 1840-1930," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 4 (2012): 1053-56, https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/117.4.1028; Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53-73.

8 Corey Ross, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire: Europe and the Transformation of the Tropical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

9 Vaclav Smil, *Enriching the Earth: Fritz Haber, Carl Bosch, and the Transformation of World Food Production* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000); David Kinkela, *DDT & The American Century: Global Health, Environmental Politics and the Pesticide that Change the World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Russell, *War and Nature*. Historical scholarship on

Likewise, conventional histories of chemical infrastructure were written solemnly through nation-centered and comparative national history paradigms, dealing primarily with industries located in the Euro-American metropoles.[10] As a result, while the emerging ties between imperial states and chemical companies during the interwar period has been accounted for, the consequences of this collaboration overseas has been completely neglected.[11] The historiography on chemical companies and synthetic agrochemicals do not consider the fact that the global change in production, circulation, and usages of synthetic substances was also based on imperial infrastructure and colonial networks. Who were the actors behind the flow of agrochemicals from the laboratory to the field and from the factory to the orchard? How did chemical companies interweave their overseas activities into the imperial apparatus? How did the possibilities generated by synthetic chemicals and imperial infrastructure shape local agents' visions and imaginations? This article will attempt to fill this historiographical gap by answering these questions, focusing on ICI Levant's operations and personnel in British-ruled Palestine.

organic fertilizers focuses on Latin America. For example, see Melillo, "The First Green Revolution"; Gregory Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World: A Global Ecological History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

10 Monica J. Casper, "Introduction: Chemical Matters," in *Synthetic Planet: Chemical Politics and the Hazards of Modern* Life (New York: Routledge, 2003), xv-xvi; on the chemical industry in North America and its relations to nationalism see Kathryn Steen, *The American Synthetic Organic Chemicals Industry: War and Politics, 1910-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); on the German chemical industry and its relationship with the state (and to two world wars) see Diarmuid Jeffreys, *Hell's Cartel: IG Farben and the Making of Hitler's War Machine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009); for the British government's close ties with the chemical industry see Arnaud Page, "'The Greatest Victory which the Chemist had Won in the Fight (...) Against Nature': Nitrogenous Fertilizers in Great Britain and the British Empire, 1910s-1950s," *History of Science*, 54, no. 4 (2016): 383-398, https://doi.org/10.1177/0073275316681801; on the British chemical industry see W.J. Reader, *Imperial Chemical Industries: A History Vol. II* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 32-46, 318-364. Middle East historians who research chemical industries are mostly focused on oil. For example, see Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Katayoun Shafiee, *Machineries of Oil: An Infrastructural History of BP in Iran (*Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018*);* Timothy Mitchell*, Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (New York: Verso, 2011).

11 For examples in Germany and the British Empire, see Jeffreys, *Hell's Cartel*; Page, "Nitrogenous Fertilizers in Great Britain and the British Empire".

Starting from the 1920s, Western experts had started to address this industrial transformation and applauded the potential of 'unlimited' usage of man-made chemical substances by articulating their current era as the *Synthetic Age*.[12] This expression has been used in the context of various interactions between humans and synthetics ever since.[13] Recently, the term has been remodeled by Mortiz von Brescius as a conceptual framework. He employs the term to explore the expectations and anticipations stimulated by chemical science and synthetic substances from the 1830s onwards.[14] Exploring al-Miqdadi's professional life and writings, this article will extend von Brescius' conceptualization of the Synthetic Age, not in time but in space, in order to include non-Western "horizons of expectations" conceived from the new potentials of synthetic chemistry.[15] Furthermore, this spatial sway from previous and contemporary articulations of the Synthetic Age will allow me to inject it with new analytical vigor. As a structural framework it will also serve here as a first step to revealing the synthetic-chemical dependent agricultural-industrial transformation that was taking place in Palestine during the interwar period more broadly. Thus, the Synthetic Age will point to the cross-fertilization between the intellectual and material dimensions of the mass production, circulation, and usages of synthetic chemicals around the British empire. By focusing on ICI as an 'intermediate' between the local and the global, this article intends to demonstrate that the Synthetic Age was gradually materializing outside of the 'West' as it was set into motion by imperial infrastructure and colonial mindsets. In this historical moment, the company took an active part in the industrial-agricultural transformation in British-ruled Palestine. The material and conceptual aspects of the Synthetic Age enabled experts like al-Miqdadi to join in and expand the discourse of national economic Arab-Palestinian independence.

This article has four sections. In the first part, I will provide an account of the Synthetic Age's global dimensions and highlight the British empire's role in setting the Synthetic Age into motion outside of Europe and North America. Against this structural backdrop, the second section will demonstrate that Imperial Chemical Industries Levant, ICI's regional sub-company, served as an intermediate by connecting British chemical factories and laboratories to Palestinian and regional cultivation

12 Edward D. Melillo, "Global Entomologies: Insects, Empires, and the 'Synthetic Age' in World History," *Past and Present* 223 (May 2014): 257-260, https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtt026.

13 Melillo, "Global Entomologies," 257-260.

14 Universität Bern, Historisches Institut, Dr. Moritz von Brescius, accessed 03 May 2021, https://www.hist.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/von_brescius_moritz/index_ger.html.

15 This term is taken from von Brescius.

fields. By focusing on the company's activity, I suggest that the Synthetic Age materialized in relation to, and as a consequence of, British imperialism in the Middle East. In the third section, I will zoom in on the relationship between ICI Levant and the Arab-Palestinian middle-class by analyzing newspaper coverage on the company's activities. In doing so, I will demonstrate that this conversation was part of a broader discussion taking place in British-ruled Palestine about 'economy-making' and national independence. In the fourth and last section, I will focus on al-Miqdadi's work. As mentioned before, al-Miqdadi sought to contribute to the prevalent discourse of Arab-Palestinian 'economy-making' with his specific chemical-agricultural expertise. Furthermore, his writings reveal another aspect of this economic vision, as they were part of a broader intellectual discourse which sought to animate an Arab economic *nahda* (النهضة).

THE SYNTHETIC AGE OUTSIDE OF THE 'WEST'

In hindsight, one cannot think about synthetic chemicals without addressing the hazardous aftermaths generated by their mass production and worldwide usage. The global environmental movement, which materialized during the 1960s, led to historical research scrutinizing the dangerous outcomes of mass application of synthetic chemicals. Nonetheless, those works, which mainly focus on pesticides and other toxic chemicals, are limited chronologically to the 1960s onwards. As Timothy Mitchell has shown, the excessive consumption of synthetics had caused troubles much earlier. In Mitchell's famous account *Can the Mosquito Speak?*, the mosquitoes were only one aspect leading to the death of tens of thousands of Egyptians in 1944.[16] As the Nile Valley could not quench its thirst for ammonium nitrate, the dependence of Egypt's agricultural cultivation on synthetic fertilizers caused a major food crisis when the import of these fertilizers came to a halt during World War II.[17] This 'chemical addiction' was a symptom of a growing dependency on synthetic chemicals outside of Europe and North America. This points to the spatial expansion of the global Synthetic Age outside of the chemical metropolises, which were located in the US, Britain, and Germany.

Since the interwar period, the mass-production of synthetic chemical substances[18] came to play a major role in the making of economies and nations.[19] As

16 Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 19-53.
17 Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, 25.
18 Pharmaceuticals, dyes, fertilizers, and explosives.
19 David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History since 1900* (London: Profile Books, 2006), 119-122.

noted earlier, the emerging ties between imperial states and chemical companies led to the growing importance of chemists and chemistry as a part of the state apparatus.[20] From an imperial perspective, establishing various chemical industries outside of the British islands was considered a project equally as crucial as other infrastructural schemes of 'high-modernism', such as ports, train rails, dams, and electrical systems.[21] As the Synthetic Age took shape in the colonial space, functioning (Petro-) chemical industries increasingly became an imperative for executing British development policy around the empire.

The Synthetic Age overseas, however, was not limited to the establishment of new chemical factories alone. As the colonial spaces served as a captive market for British manufactured goods, British-made chemicals flowed throughout the globe, arriving at the various colonies and protectorates. Outside of the British isles, the British empire's infrastructure and its preferential tariffs contributed to the circulation of synthetic chemicals. New industrial technologies developed during the First World War had made chemical substances available and necessary to various industrial mass-productions.[22] In the colonial space, this translated both to a growing dependency on synthetic (agro) chemicals and the establishment of chemical factories. For example, the two main development projects of British rule in Palestine, the Haifa Harbor and the Dead Sea industries, were, in fact, dependent on imported chemical substances. The explosives that were reshaping the harbor were ignited by chemicals made in Britain, and the mass production of potash, bromine, and other chemical substances at the Dead Sea was dependent on the importation of other chemicals.[23] Furthermore,

20 In this context Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch, the German chemists and industrialists, come to mind. Their mutual work on nitrogen fixation led to the mass production of ammonia during WWI. This chemical technique is mostly known today as the Haber-Bosch process. After the war, industrialists and chemists were in a close relationship with the state, which culminated once again with IG Farben's intimate collaboration with the Nazi regime. In the British-Jewish context, Alfred Mond and Chaim Weizmann, who will be introduced in the next sections, were both chemists and industrialists. Both also held prominent social and economic positions between London and Jerusalem.

21 Robert Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt (*Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 78-80; Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905-1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 100-110, 139-142.

22 Roy MacLeod and Jeffrey Johnson, eds., *Frontline and Factory: Comparative Perspectives on the Chemical Industry at War 1914- 1924* (New York: Springer, 2006).

23 For the British manufactured

during the interwar period, the continuous distribution of synthetic chemicals was fundamental to the mechanization and industrialization of the colonized states (cultivating more crops, fighting pesticides, producing minerals).[24] Therefore, there is reason to argue that the global history of the Synthetic Age was set into motion by imperial infrastructure and colonial mindsets.

British-ruled Palestine provides a suitable case for this local unfolding of a global phenomenon. During this period British policymakers, Arab-Palestinian capitalists, and Jewish experts sought to transform the economic basis of the land and to 'develop' the Palestinian economy via agriculture, industry, and commerce. While the British colonial administrators were guided by imperial economic interests, the Arab-Palestinians and Zionist-Jews strove to create and bolster their own national economies while linking them to the regional and imperial markets based on the empire's infrastructure.[25] For these various actors, Palestine offered an economy that would be based on agriculture and minerals.[26] As

explosives, see letter from Chillik Weizmann to Chaim Weizmann, 28/01/1930, 14-1363, Weizmann Archives (hereafter: WA); the Chemical industry at the Dead Sea imported chlorine from France and Britain until the eruption of WWI. It was used for bromine production, which had strategic importance for the British during the war. See Moshe Novomeysky, "Palestine Potash LTD: A Potential Producer of Some Chemicals Needed by Palestine, Dominions, and/or The U.K.", ת-5061/16, Israel State Archives (hereafter: ISA). During the war chlorine was produced at a new factory, which was funded by the British government, at the Dead Sea industrial complex. Most of the sulfur used for chlorine production came from Gaza sulfur quarries. The massive production of chlorine during the war might have caused the depletion of the sulfur from Gaza, as the 'Gaza Quarries Ltd' did not last long after the war had ended. In addition, as Moshe Novomeysky, entrepreneur of the Dead Sea industries, mentioned in the memorandum quoted above, the chlorine could be used as 'military poison gas'. While usually WWI is remembered as the war where chemical warfare was most prevalent in the battlefield, articles from that period mention a "British poison gas made in Palestine" that was used to attack Nazi soldiers. See "British Poison Gas Made in Palestine," *The Sunday Post*, 17 December 1939.

24 Ross, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire,* 282-291.

25 For British interest in Palestine see Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress*; Sherene Seikaly's 'men of capital' used their economic journal to conceptualize a regional economy. Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); for the Jewish articulation of regional economy see the many issues of *Palestine and Middle East: Economic Magazine*, Tel Aviv, Mishar veta'asia co., 1926-1945.

26 This conception was shared by the British, Zionist-Jews, and Arab-Palestinians, and also by other

agrochemicals became synonymous with 'modern agriculture,'[27] and chemical industries became an imperative in the colonies, global chemical companies thus used the novel global order after World War I to expand their operations.[28]

A CHEMICAL IMPERIAL INDUSTRY IN BRITISH-RULED PALESTINE

One major chemical actor, operating both on local and global scales, was Imperial Chemical Industries. The company was established in Great Britain in 1926, when four British chemical companies joined their business operations with the support of the British government in order to establish synthetic nitrogen factories.[29] Through the years, ICI absorbed other chemical companies and expanded its production to various chemical products. The infrastructure of the British empire and its preferential tariffs helped the company to expand its operations to most of the British colonies overseas.[30] If Barclays Bank was the bank of the empire, supplying capital for undertakings in the colonies, then ICI can be conceptualized as the chemical company of the empire, supplying various industries overseas with synthetic and organic chemical substances. In fact, ICI was one of the biggest companies for chemicals on earth until it began to sell its assets in the late 1990s to early 2000s, and was finally taken over by another major chemical company in 2008.[31]

Following the British occupation of new territories after World War I, and after the formation and ratification of the mandates system, the company established several branches in the Middle East. For this purpose, two sub-companies were founded– ICI Egypt and ICI Levant. Whereas the first branch operated only in Egypt, the second, which was established in 1928, administered the company's activities in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, and Cyprus.[32] These

commentators. For an American example see Frank Adams, "Palestine Agriculture," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 164 (1932): 72-83, https://doi.org/10.1177/000271623216400111.

27 Edward Melillo, "The First Green Revolution," 1031-1034.

28 W.J. Reader, *Imperial Chemical Industries: A History. Vol. I: The Forerunners 1870-1926* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 317-328, 394-413.

29 Reader, *Imperial Chemical Industries: A History. Vol. II*, 1-12.

30 D.W.F Hardie, *A History of the Modern British Chemical Industry* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966), 300.

31 "Unsticking ICI," *The Economist*, 11 August 2007, accessed: 03 May 2021, https://www.economist.com/business/2007/08/09/unsticking-ici.

32 Page, "Nitrogenous Fertilizers in Great Britain and the British Empire," 391; on the Egyptian branch see Robert Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,

branches worked together under the mother company of ICI in London.[33] By 1931, the Jewish press celebrated the company's early success both in Palestine and throughout the region, and highlighted Chillik Weizmann's crucial role in it.[34] Yechiel (Chillik) Weizmann was the first manager of ICI Levant and the younger brother of Chaim Weizmann, who headed the World Zionist Organization.[35] In Palestine, Chillik Weizmann was the trusted right hand man for Alfred Mond, who was himself the head of ICI's mother branch in London.

Weizmann was replaced in 1936 by J. B. Mackie. At his inauguration ceremony, Mackie gave a speech in which he articulated the newly local industrial dependence on the flow of global chemical substances to Palestine. While it is safe to assume that he was advocating for the usage of his own company's products, Mackie was also pinpointing the transformation in the global industrial consumption of synthetic chemical substances:

> "It is a truism that chemicals form the foundation of modern industry. There is scarcely any form of industrial activity that is not dependent on a very large extent in an assured supply of chemicals on whose quality and reliability complete confidence can be placed."[36]

This change was also noticed a few years before. In 1933, the *Sheffield Independent*, a northern England daily newspaper, was astonished by the 'striking development' of Palestine's industries, linking it to ICI's products and to the British chemical colonial enterprise.[37] Reporting from ICI Levant's pavilion at the Anglo-Palestinian Expo at Tel Aviv, the paper elaborated on the local usages of British manufactured chemicals:

> "There are shown specimens of wheat grown with English

1995), 78-80. Vitalis reviews the Egyptian government and Egyptian capitalists' negotiations with ICI on the establishment of a new hydroelectrical powerplant which would produce fertilizers.

33 Letter from I. Melamed to Chief Secretary, Government of Palestine, 'Telephone Facilities – Baghdad and Cairo', 22 December 1942, ת-114/32, ISA.

34 "I.C.I Be'erets-israel" ["ICI in Eretz Israel"] *Doar Hayom*, 01 May 1931.

35 Like Alfred Mond, who will be introduced shortly, Chaim Weizmann was also an industrial chemist. He gained his fame and capital helping the British during WWI with the mass production of war chemicals from starch. One American-Jewish newspaper even remarked that "[t]he 1917 Balfour Declaration derived partly from Weizmann's science." See "A Scientist-Statesman," *The Reform Advocate,* 26 January 1940. This goes to further highlight the role of chemists in the service of the state/imperial apparatus during the interwar period.

36 "British Chemicals in Our Industry," *The Palestine Post*, 29 May 1936.

37 "Striking Example of I.C.I.'s Enterprise," *Sheffield Independent*, 09 June 1933.

FIGURE 1: CI Levant's brochure at the Levant Fair (between 1932-36). "Levant Fair. Official Publications," V 3090/43, The National Library of Israel.

FIGURE 2: "Great Britain consumes 85% percent of your oranges- buy British fertilizers." "Be sure that the British fertilizers are the finest." *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya I*(14), 15 July 1935. Jrayed Collection: Arabic Newspapers of Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, jrayed.nli.org.il, founded by the National Library of Israel.

> fertilizers by Syrian Sheiks; the King David Hotel at Jerusalem decorated with the paints made at Slough; different qualities of soap made in Palestine with English chemicals [...]; buses in Tel Aviv upholstered in Rexine; where, also, baking powder is already being made from English ingredients."[38]

Three years later at the Levant Fair (another commercial exhibition), *Palestine Post's* correspondent also pointed to the many usages of British chemicals in the local economy as he was reporting from the ICI Levant pavilion. From his account, the large degree to which chemical substances played a crucial role in agricultural and industrial schemes is evident. As he described:

38 Ibid.

> "A striking colored chart in the center of the exhibit shows the industrial uses to which ICI chemicals are put in Palestine. They play a prominent part in the making of food, drink, tabaco products, textiles, metals, engineering and electrical equipment, leather, chemicals and dyes, paint and paper, bricks, pottery and glass, and oils and soap, as well as in agricultural production."[39]

Right from its onset, ICI Levant published commercials in Hebrew, English, and Arabic, urging readers to buy the company's products.[40] In addition to plain text boxes describing its wares as shown in Figure 1, other lively advertisements displayed the new relationship between British synthetic chemicals and the agriculture of Palestine. Figure 2 is taken from the front page of *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya* (The Arab Economic Journal), an Arab-Palestinian economic periodical. Portrayed on the left side is the British industrialist who loads the ship with British fertilizers, which travel to Haifa's harbor. Returning to the British isles are marching boxes marked with dollar signs. While they are not visible, we can speculate that these boxes are filled with packed oranges.[41] This advertisement hints at the novelty of synthetic chemicals in Palestine, as it captures a historical moment in which the Synthetic Age came into materialization in the Middle East and vividly illustrates the imperial flow of synthetic chemicals. Here ICI Levant serves as an 'intermediate,' which drew British-ruled Palestine into global-imperial chemical networks.

In addition to the products mentioned above, ICI Levant sold other chemical novelties. During the 1930s, the company was importing various chemical substances to Palestine, including different kinds of fertilizers, weapons, explosives, and dyes.[42] In the early 1940s, one could find ICI Levant's pesticides and herbicides at various Arab-Palestinian dealers in Haifa, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Gaza, Jenin, Acre, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jaffa, and Tiberias and Tulkarem.[43] In addition, during the Second World War, the Palestinian government appointed it almost exclusively to be in charge of the importation of chemical fertilizers to the country,[44] thus making the

39 "At the Levant Fair," *The Palestine Post* 01 June 1936.

40 For English, see *The Palestine Post*, 10 January 1945; *The Palestine Post*, 21 June 1935; *Al-Carmel*, 31 August 1932; *Al-Carmel*, 11 November 1933. And many more in the following newspapers: *Filastin*, *Al-Sirat*, *Al-Carmel*, *Al-Jami'a al-'arabiyya* and *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya*.

41 *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya* I (14), 15 July 1935.

42 Ta'asiyot Himi'yot Mamlahti'yot (Levant ba'am), Yafo: Dfus M. Shoham, unknown year.

43 Plant Protection Services, Jerusalem, 02 March 1942, ג-634/9, ISA.

44 Letter from Controller of Agricultural Production to Chief Secretary, Government of Palestine, 24/02/1945,

company the largest importer of agrochemicals to Palestine.[45]

ICI Levant did not only sell various chemical substances– its experts were also involved with the local field of agricultural experimentation. Fertilizers produced by ICI were used in various agricultural stations all over Palestine, and its synthetic pesticides were used to control different pests. For instance, Jewish farmers reported back to ICI Levant on the results of their fumigation efforts against black scales and hornets,[46] and locust attacks in Palestine were pushed back with synthetic pesticides produced by ICI.[47] The massive campaign against locusts held all over the Middle East during the Second World War was dependent on a new pesticide, Gammaxene, which was invented in ICI laboratories in England.[48] In short, whether in the field experiment station or during a committee meeting discussing plant protection,[49] the company held intimate ties with both Jewish and British agricultural experts.

Since synthetic fertilizers and other chemicals were relatively new and were in constant development, ICI Levant took it upon itself to 'educate' local farmers on using its products. As mentioned in its brochure, it was in fact the company's trademark to provide free expert assistance.[50] For example, experts sent by the company to Tulkarem in 1930 had demonstrated to the local farmers how to use the fertilizers.[51] Furthermore, one of the first actions taken by the company right after hiring sales representatives was to schedule expert lectures, as indicated by its agent visit to Jenin in 1931.[52] ICI Levant's agrarian methods in Palestine corresponded with similar attempts of ICI's Indian branch to 'educate' farmers in the provinces of Bombay, Bihar, and Sind on synthetic

ת-68.44, ISA.

45 'Agricultural Chemicals and Fertilizers-Monthly Report of Stocks,' 1942, ת-4894/3, ISA.

46 See various letters in folder number J15-13330-3, Zionist Archives.

47 'Locust Campaign – 1947: Situation, Measures Taken and Preparations in Hand,' 17/02/1947. ת-18/37 ,ISA.

48 *The Palestine Post*, 19/10/1945; an ICI publication about its chemical inventions that took place in Jealott's Hill in North England mentioned Gammaxene together with DDT as sharing the same "credit for the dawn of a new era of insect control in agriculture, horticulture, stored products, timber preservations and public health." F. C. Peacock, *Jealott's Hill: Fifty Years of Agricultural Research, 1928-1978* (Bracknell: Imperial Chemical Industries, Plant Protection Division, 1978), 6.

49 Minutes of the 11th Meeting of the Plant Protection Committee held on 13 April 1938. ת-664/6, ISA.

50 Ta'asiyot Himi'yot Mamlahti'yot (Levant ba'am), Yafo: Dfus M. Shoham, unknown year.

51 "Al-sana'at al-kimawiyya al-'imbartaturiyya w'al-da'wa al-sahyunyya" ["Imperial Chemical Industries and the Zionist Propaganda"] *Filastin*, 30 December 1930.

52 "Asabi'a miltshit fi jenin" ["The Fingers of Meltchett in Jenin"] *Filastin*, 14 January 1931.

chemical usages.[53] These agricultural policies reflect the close relationship between the imperial apparatus and the empire's chemical industries. In the case of agrochemicals, British imperial initiatives to 'develop' the indigenous rural community via modern agricultural schemes, and private (imperial) business aiming at selling its products, were animating each other. Thus, the Synthetic Age cannot be understood without both forces, which attempted to provoke a global change in synthetic agrochemical consumption.

The links between colonial agricultural policies and ICI activities in the field of agriculture reveal a staggering connectivity between chemical industries, imperial infrastructure, and colonial-agricultural science.[54] Exposing these connections, however, is only possible by focusing on the company and its chemical substances. Unpacking the cross-fertilization between synthetic chemicals and colonial spaces reveals the close ties between chemical industries and colonial sovereignty in a historical moment that was characterized by the rise of synthetic chemicals. Under the global context of the Synthetic Age, ICI Levant's imperial activity can be seen as a catalyst for the spread of synthetic chemicals into colonial spaces. In Palestine, the Synthetic Age materialized in relation to, and as a consequence of, British imperialism in the Middle East.

VISIONS OF A ROUND GOLDEN FUTURE

At the start of 1930, Isa Al-Isa, the editor in chief of *Filastin*, was sued by ICI Levant managers and the Palestinian government for "slanderous and false accusations."[55] The paper accused the company of smuggling weapons. More specifically, the paper proclaimed that "[s]ince ICI handed over the business of explosives to Chillik Weizmann [...], the Zionists are well supplied with bombs and the government does nothing to control it."[56] While in this specific case, the company was accused of arming Zionist-Jews, usually the allegations against ICI Levant were set towards what (some of) the Arab-Palestinian writers believed to be its key ambition–the "extension of the Jewish colonization."[57] The following

53 Page, "Nitrogenous Fertilizers in Great Britain and the British Empire," 392.

54 For colonial efforts around the empire see Ross, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire*; for British efforts in British-ruled Palestine see Roza El-Eini, *Mandated Landscapes: British Imperial Rule in Palestine 1929-1948* (London: Routledge, 2006).

55 "Mishpatam shel itonim aravim hane'aeshamim be'hafatsat diba" ["The Trail of Arab Newspapers which are Accused of Defamation"] *Doar Hayom*, 05 March 1930.

56 Letter from Chillik Weizmann to Chaim Weizmann, 28 January 1930, 14-1316, WA.

57 "Al-lurd miltshit w'aghradhu" ["Lord Meltchett and his Goals"] *Filastin*, 12 December 1930.

section will explore the Arab-Palestinian public debate regarding ICI Levant's position in Palestine and will describe the unique role the company had in supporting or hampering the perceived economic-national development.

As two prominent Jewish figures and the leaders of ICI in Britain and Palestine, Chillik Weizmann and Alfred Mond were often targeted by the press. The media was concerned that Mond and his son, Henry Mond (the second Lord Meltchett) would assist the "Zionist colonialization" as they held close connections to British circles in Jerusalem and London.[58] Thus, the press established a link between the Monds' other economic endeavors in Palestine with ICI Levant's undertakings in the region. Consequently, the articles warned against "the economic Jewish colonialization"[59] of Palestine and the company's place in it. Under this light, the company's expansion attempts via its agents to other parts of Palestine and east of the Jordan were observed under suspicion.[60] For instance, the *Filastin* correspondent noted that "[t]he company opened branches in Syria [...] despite the presence of a local Arab agent, who have been conducting business with other British companies."[61] Arriving at the heart of the matter, the writer warned that "if we will not pay attention to [ICI Levant's] broad and extensive operations, which are taking place around us according to their economic plan, they will take over the economy and the industries. Thus, our financial and economic life, which are the basis for our independence, will be under their influence; by not being aware [of their activities], we will help to create the national Jewish homeland unintentionally."[62]

Another theme that emerged from these articles was the lack of ICI Levant's Arab agents and officials in its operations. "If the company's wishes to serve the country and its commerce were true," wrote *Filastin* in 1930, "it would have appointed Arab officials; however, its actions [in the local market] are testifying for its [real intentions]."[63] The newspapers saw the lack of 'Arab hands' in the company lines as another indicator of its "real purposes" mentioned before. While in the aforementioned trial, the company's representative

58 "Al-sana'at al-kimawiyya al-'imbartaturiyya: shariqa yusaytiru alayha al-sahyunyyun " ["Imperial Chemical Industries: A Company Controlled by Zionists"] *Al-Sirat*, 23 November 1930.

59 "Al-sana'at al-kimawiyya al-'imbartaturiyya w'shariqat shel: radd w'bayan" ["Imperial Chemical Industries and Shell Company: Response and Clarification"] *Filastin*, 25 December 1930.

60 *Filastin*, 12 December 1930; *Filastin,* 14 January 1931.

61 "Al-sana'at al-kimawiyya al-'imbartaturiyya: shariqa yusaytiru alayha al-sahyunyyun II " ["Imperial Chemical Industries: A Company Controlled by Zionists II "] *Filastin,* 29 Novermber 1930.

62 Ibid.

63 *Filastin*, 25 December 1930.

testified that "half of the company's officials in Palestine and Syria are Arabs,"[64] other documents from that period attest differently. In a private correspondence between Chaim and Chillik Weizmann in the same year, the latter informed his brother: "Since ICI had established in Palestine all work, sales, agencies, etc. have been done by Jews and through Jews only and it is, therefore, that to all intents and purposes, ICI in Palestine acts like a Jewish Company."[65] It remains unclear whom Chillik Weizmann preferred to deceive: his unrelenting brother, or the British court. However, the rest of this correspondence demonstrates that with Chillik Weizmann as its manager, the company preferred Jewish labor.[66]

The broader context to these accusations must be understood in light of British economic policy in Palestine, which hindered non-Jews.[67] Like the British and the Zionists, the Arab-Palestinians envisioned the economic potential of the land and debated about the means to 'unlock' it. In addition to agricultural transformation, during the age of colonial development, infrastructural projects were considered significant economic benefits.[68] For example, the importance of the new electricity grid and the Dead Sea mineral potential received much media attention and was popularized by newspapers and by national leaders, both in Arabic and Hebrew.[69] However, British colonial administrators, viewing Jews as agents of development, gave them the most infrastructural concessions, leaving Arab-Palestinians mostly empty-handed. As early as 1923, the young Jamal Al-Husseini, then the secretray to the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress, addressed the High Commissioner of Palestine, lamenting on the Arab loss of economic opportunities by referring to the governmental 'favoritism' for giving various concessions to Zionist-Jews.[70] Although some of Al-Husseini's arguments were inaccurate, it nevertheless demonstrates the economic importance of these

64 *Doar Hayom*, 05 March 1930.
65 Letter from Chillik Weizmann to Chaim Weizmann, 28 January 1930, 14-1316, WA.
66 This notion was part of a broader ideological movement of Jewish-Zionist actors, who called for the 'conquest of labor' (*kibush ha'avoda*). See Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 47-48.
67 Barbara Smith, *The Roots of Separation in Palestine: British Economic Policy, 1920-1929* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1993).
68 Norris, *Land of Progress*, 5-18.
69 Norris, 181; Fredrick Meiton, *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 81-82.
70 "Report on the State of Palestine Submitted to his Excellency the High Commissioner for Palestine by the Executive Committee Palestine Arab Congress," 13 October 1923, ג-4908/24, ISA.

development projects for Arab-Palestinians as well. Thus, the criticism of ICI Levant must be understood in light of these historical events and the continuous Arab-Palestinian dissatisfaction with the British (colonial) development policy in Palestine.[71]

Nevertheless, not all of the articles about ICI Levant were negative. Other articles celebrated the company and its activities in the local agricultural field. [72] During the British rule in Palestine, the black and red scale pest were a constant threat to Arab-Palestinian and Jewish orange cultivation.[73] In 1933, the Jerusalem based newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* published an article praising ICI Levant's help and specifically its head, Chillik Weizmann, in fighting this bug in the northern district.[74] The article began by describing the problem, emphasizing the government's insufficient help and inadequate solutions to exterminating the pest.[75] It then introduced the company and Weizmann, explaining the company's potential in offering solutions to the agricultural problems of Palestine using pesticides and fertilizers. More importantly, the writer emphasized the neutral character of the company's activities by referring to the activity of Weizmann as 'apolitical' and emphasizing the mutual gains of Arabs and Jews from the company's success in Palestine. The article concluded by paraphrasing the words of Weizmann himself, and connected the future of ICI Levant with the future of Palestine's economy and agriculture:

> "The manager [Weizmann] was right when he said: 'The future of ICI is the future of Palestine,' and what is the future of Palestine if not the future of its orange trees; the future of the orange trees is the extermination of the harming diseases."[76]

As noted before, orange cultivation was, until the Second World War, Palestine's most lucrative industry. According to government records, the orange export grew from 830,959 boxes in 1920-21 to 2,590,861 boxes in 1929-30 and further expanded to 13,055,770 boxes in 1938-39. The Second World War marked a stop to the orange industry's prosperity, as the number of exported boxes had dropped by half.[77] Due to financial difficulties and

71 Norris, Land of Progress, 168-204; Meiton, *Electrical Palestine,* 81-82.
72 For example, *Al-Sirat*, 15 December 1930; *Al-Difa'*, 20 February 1936.
73 Roza El-Eini, *Mandated Landscapes*, 144-145.
74 "Majhudat sharikat al-sana'at al-kimawiyya" ["The Endeavors of the Chemical Industries Company"] *Mir'at al-Sharq*, 23 September 1933.
75 These included uprooting unyielding trees and introducing a 'black scale tax' on orange cultivators. Both moves encountered vast opposition. *The Palestine Post*, 03 March 1933; *The Palestine Post*, 22 December 1932.
76 *Mir'at al-Sharq*, 23 September 1933.
77 *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-*

lack of pesticides, orange growers witnessed the black scale returning to their cultivation plots during the war.[78] In contrast to the plague of the 1930s, which was mainly limited to northern Palestine, the black scale had now spread west and south, threatening the entire "citrus belt."[79] In 1944 the number of orchards infected by the black scale had reached between a quarter and a fifth of the total orange cultivation area in the country.[80] Like *Mir'at Al-Sharq's* reporter ten years before, the Palestine Joint Citrus Growers Committee realized the threats on the prominent place the orange economy had in Palestine. Sending an urgent warning to the government, the committee alerted, "we wish herewith respectively to call to your attention the most serious and pressing problem that is now facing the Palestine citrus industry, namely, the black scale, and to request that immediate steps be taken by the government to help save the industry from this threat to its existence."[81]

As such, just as during the 1930s, ICI Levant again assisted the government and the orange growers with its personnel and chemical substances.[82]

The interaction between ICI Levant and the Arab-Palestinian press thus reveals a complicated relationship. While critics perceived the company as an extension of Jewish colonization, other articles sought to neutralize the company's role in Palestine and to emphasize its benefits to the local cultivation plots and orchards. Seemingly, these two sets of opinions hold contrary explanations for ICI Levant's goals in Palestine and its means to achieve them. However, the epistemological world in which these writers and their interactions with the company existed was in relation to their economic future. In other words, they both criticized or praised ICI Levant as a part of a discourse that envisioned a national economy upon which the future nation would be based. At this specific historical moment, the company's strength and capital based on imperial reach, as well as its 'chemical agency,' which generated a global flow of expert knowledge and synthetic chemicals, were negotiated in the public arena. Here ICI Levant had a unique position in assisting or hindering the arrival

American Committee of Inquiry: Volume I (Palestine: Government Printer, 1946), 341-344.

78 Palestine Joint Citrus Growers Committee to Chief Secretary, "Black Scale on Citrus," 26/04/1944. ת-669.5, ISA.

79 G. E. Bodkin, "The Fumigation of Citrus Trees in Palestine," *Bulletin of Entomological Research* 16 no.2 (1925): 143-149.

80 Palestine Joint Citrus Growers Committee to Chief Secretary, "Black Scale on Citrus," 26/04/1944. ת-669.5, ISA.

81 Palestine Joint Citrus Growers Committee to Chief Secretary, "Black Scale on Citrus".

82 For example, see A. Baroai to Acting Chief Plant Protection Officer, "Government Grant for Black Scale Control," 21 March 1947. ת-679.23, ISA.

of the transformation of agricultural and industrial production. As the Synthetic Age was crystalizing in British-ruled Palestine, the means to establish the economy and the national space were, in this case, anchored in an imperial context, in which ICI Levant, as a chemical company, played a prominent part.

AGENT ORANGE: AN ARAB-PALESTINIAN EXPERT IN THE SYNTHETIC AGE

ICI Levant had a complex and multifaceted relationship with Arab-Palestinians in British-ruled Palestine. At the heart of this relationship stood the notion of Palestine's economic potential and the company's role in enhancing or hampering its materialization. In this section, one of the advocates for Palestine's economic potential, Husni al-Miqdadi, who was working for ICI Levant in Palestine and the region, will be introduced. As al-Miqdadi participated in this public discussion, he contributed to it from his own field of expertise as a 'citrus expert.' Furthermore, al-Miqdadi's writing reveals his vision of 'economy-making' in Palestine as a part of a broader contemporaneous vision of an Arabic awakening (*nahda* – النهضة). Al-Miqdadi's vision of economic *nahda* was entangled with British imperial-chemical networks and infrastructures in the Middle East and was profoundly related to the ongoing transformation brought by the Synthetic Age in the region.

Husni al-Miqdadi (حسني المقدادي) was born in 1903 in Tulkarem (طولكرم) in Ottoman-ruled Palestine. As a native of the city, al-Miqdadi was educated in the local primary school. Later, he received his middle school and high school education in Jerusalem. In 1921, al-Miqdadi joined the Land Surveying Department of the British administration in Palestine, and after two years of governmental service moved to study agricultural engineering in France. In 1926, he returned to Palestine and served as the principal of the agricultural school in his hometown of Tulkarem, which was one of the dozen educational centers of British agricultural policy in Palestine. The last stop in his documented career was as a company official for ICI Levant. Starting from 1928, he travelled between its regional branches in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq.[83]

Throughout his career, al-Miqdadi published many articles and essays on various subjects. As an agriculture expert, he mostly wrote about different modes of fruit tree cultivation, plant diseases, and various fertilization methods. By 1930 he published a book entitled "The Fertilizers and Their Usages" (الأسمدة واستعمالها), presenting himself on the cover as an advisor to ICI Levant and thanking some of its officials for their help in publishing the book.[84]

83 Y'aqub al-'awdat, *Min A'alam Al-fikr w'al-'adb fi Filastin* (Al-Quds: Dar al-asraa', 1992), 33-34.

84 Husni al-Miqdadi, *Al-'asmida w'isti'amalha w'fiha fusul w'idahat*

FIGURE 3: Fumigation efforts at Jaffa aimed at exterminating citrus pests. The Orange Trees our covered in tarpaulins. Approximately 1930-1933. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

Reviewing his writings, it is obvious that al-Miqdadi's area of expertise was citrus cultivation. For example, during the 1930s-1940s, he translated for *Filastin* several lectures about citrus and other fruit trees' fertilization methods, and published with another Jaffa based newspaper, *Al-Difa',* articles about citrus tree fertilizations and pests, in addition to other accounts on citrus diseases and how to prevent them.[85] As Palestine's

'an al-nabat w'al-turba w'an al-zibl w'isti'amalhu (Tulkarm: Maktab suriya w'filastin, 1930), 3-4.

85 *Filastin*, 25 October 1931; *Filastin*, 07

FIGURE 4: Measuring the quantities of cyanide and acid before the fumigation of the trees. In the center stands the government Entomologist. Around him are other foremen and laborers. Approximately 1922-1925. In later years, ICI Levant imported hydrogen cyanide and employed its agent to help the local orange cultivators. G. E. Bodkin, "The Fumigation of Citrus Trees in Palestine," *Bulletin of Entomological Research* 16 no.2 (1925): 153. Cambridge University Press.

most significant export until 1939 was oranges, it becomes clear why al-Miqdadi chose to specialize in citrus cultivation and their fertilization modes.

Al-Miqdadi also edited two agricultural journals, one based in Lebanon and the other in Palestine. The Palestinian journal was published by ICI Levant and distributed locally and regionally. In *Al-Majalla al-zira'iyya al-'arabiyya* (Journal of Arab Agriculture), the expertise of al-Miqdadi with citrus trees and fertilizers, and the company's interests in assisting to the agricultural transformation with its chemical products, interlaced as the journal published scientific

October 1931; *Filastin*, 13 June 1931; *Al-Difa'*, 02 March 1938; *Al-Difa', 02 December 1942; Al-Difa', 01 August 1945.*

agricultural articles by Arab and foreign experts. As a citrus expert, al-Miqdadi contributed articles on fruit tree fertilization and orange tree diseases. In addition, the journal published other economic-agricultural news, a 'questions to the editor' section, where agriculturalists from Palestine and the region would send their inquiries to the journal, and an agricultural calendar, which advised the readers of the proper times for fertilization and watering.[86]

When al-Miqdadi wrote about different modes of cultivation and various types of fertilizers, he wrote from his field of expertise. As the previously mentioned writings are mostly technical, they provide little historical access to al-Miqdadi's world of thought. Luckily, al-Miqdadi left other writings, giving a better picture of how he understood himself in relation to current-day issues, how he imagined the past, and how he envisioned the future. In the remaining part of this section, al-Miqdadi's additional writings will be explored in order to position him in the context of Arab-Palestinian *nahda* discourse in British-ruled Palestine.

In her remarkable research on economy-making in British-ruled Palestine, Sherene Seikaly describes a group of men that articulated their own vision of national economy. Over the pages of their journal *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya*, these 'men of capital' drew from diverse philosophies to craft economic thought and envisioned an economic *nahda* as part of a broader Arabic enlightenment project.[87] *Nahda*, meaning awakening, resurgence, or revival, is a distinct term for Arab cultural or intellectual 'revival' that first appeared at the onset of the nineteenth century, popularized somewhere in the last third of the same century.[88] During the interwar period, the *nahda* linked a nationally specific and a broader pan-Arab framework together. In addition, it served to bridge an historical gap between the past of the 'Arab civilization' and modern-day issues and concerns. As Peter Hill notes, the *nahda* must be understood vis-á-vis the contemporary changes and projects that its advocates lived through.[89] The British rule in Palestine was a period of empire-building and national crafting in the Middle East. Thus, creating an adequate economic basis was a crucial concern for people who sought to animate the future state. As noted before, Arab-Palestinians understood the economic potential of Palestine as derived from infrastructure projects and crop cultivation.

Al-Miqdadi realized the economic potential of Palestine as well. In his essay "The Economic Development of Palestine" (**الإصلاح الاقتصادي في فلسطين**), he explored the

86 *Al-Majalla al-zira'iyya al-'arabiyya,* 01 April 1947, 01 July 1947, 01 January 1948.

87 Seikaly, *Men of Capital*.

88 Peter Hill, *Utopia and Civilization in the Arab Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 3.

89 Hill, *Utopia and Civilization*, 3.

economic conditions of the Arab world and Palestine's place in it. Similar to other Arab writers and authors during the interwar period, al-Miqdadi called for an 'Arab awakening' or *nahda*. Unlike many who advocated for the renaissance of the political and cultural spheres, however, al-Miqdadi insisted that this awakening must first be grounded on a firm economic basis:

> "The value of the civilized nation is depended on the value of its wealth. [Therefore], we must take care of our economy to our best extent since the progress of the nation is based on its capital development methods and on the wealth of its individuals."[90]

Situating himself and his epistemological world on a linear path of historical progress, al-Miqdadi was concerned that "most of the eastern nations had neglected this issue [economy-making] to such a degree that currently they are unable to progress along with the other civilized nations."[91] According to him, a proper economic revival would not take place by the "chattering of politicians" but by the practical education of youth about "economic and industrial issues."[92] The future of the nation was founded not only on material economic potential, but also on the proper education of the youth to think economically and rationally: "In order to improve we are in a dire need for a strong foundation upon which we will build our national awakening that will disperse this blessed economic spirit to our sons (الروح الاقتصادية المباركة)."[93]

The science of the economy was vital to this awakening project. "It is miserable that our daily newspapers are not interested in economic researches," lamented al-Miqdadi, "as they were and still are the best way to establish the strongest of civilizations."[94] Here, he echoes the rationale of *Al-Jami'a al-'arabiyya's* editor to publish al-Miqdadi's "valuable and useful [research] topic for the economic revival of the country."[95] Later in the article, al-Miqdadi moved to review the economic potential of Palestine based on a categorization of the 'five primary industries'– production (استخراجية); manufacturing (تحويلية); agriculture (زراعية); transport (نقلية); and commerce (تجارية). In these sections, he elaborated on the various minerals found in Palestine and the region, the new transportation road from Palestine to Iraq, and the new commerce opportunities from Haifa's harbor. Here, al-Miqdadi's account on the future economic potential of Palestine was firmly based on (re)

90 "Al-'islah *al-iqtisadi fi filastin*" ["The Economic Development of Palestine"] *Al-Jamia al-'arabiyya*, 15 September 1927.
91 *Al-Jamia al-'arabiyya*, 15 September 1927.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.

new(ed) imperial infrastructure designed to produce, extract, and deliver 'raw materials' in and out of the region.

The agricultural industry remained the last to be reviewed due to its fundamental importance to Palestine, "the foundation upon which we must build our economic regime (نظامنا الاقتصادي) is the agriculture since our country was always an agrarian country, which exported wheat, olives, cotton, wines and figs for the last 3000 years."[96] However, al-Miqdadi understood this *longue durée* of 'agrarian expertise' as not exclusive to Palestinians. In another essay, he highlighted the Arab civilization's specific experience and proficiency as agriculturalists, which went back to Middle Ages Spain. According to al-Miqdadi, "it will not be an overstatement to say that some of the European countries are basing their agricultural progress on the knowledge of the Arab agriculturalists in Andalusia."[97] Like Seikaly's 'men of capital,' al-Miqdadi followed the *nahda* narrative structure to reveal another "Arab civilizational secret."[98] Here he returned to the Andalusian past to harmonize the Arab-Palestinians' 'civilizational' skills with the new economic potentials of the interwar period in the region.

Like other *nahda* writers, al-Miqdadi understood himself as a part of the Arab civilization, which was trying to march forward on the track of 'progress.'[99] Simultaneously, he used his knowledge to design a local economic *nahda* with his own professional expertise.[100] In a later article, al-Miqdadi wrote at length on his vision for the future of citrus cultivation in Palestine. He started by emphasizing the essential place of orange cultivation for the economy of Palestine: "Most of the people know that the citrus agriculture is tremendously important in Palestine. There is no doubt that this agriculture concerns every individual from the inhabitants of the country, as the general economy of the state is based in its essence on the success or failure of this agriculture."[101] Al-Miqdadi continued by reviewing the past expansion of the cultivation area and the yearly export of orange boxes. As he preached ten years ago, and as a part of the scientific research endeavors the 'men of capital' advocated and praised, al-Miqdadi continued to offer his predictions on future agricultural-economic citrus trends based on the

96 ↑ "Al-'islah *al-iqtisadi fi filastin: II*" ["The Economic Development of Palestine: II"] *Al-Jamia al-'arabiyya*, 19 September 1927.

97 *Al-Jamia al-'arabiyya*, 19 September 1927.

98 Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 45-48.

99 Ibid.

100 Seikaly argues that the economic *nahda* can only be fully understood in the relations between its local manifestations and its broader ideological logic. Ibid, 21.

101 "Mustaqbal zira'at al-'athmar al-hamdiyya" ["The Future of Fruit Tree Cultivation"] *Al-Difa'*, 25 December 1938.

numbers he examined beforehand.[102]

It is no wonder, then, to find an article about the economic potential of oranges in Palestine, written by al-Miqdadi, in the first published issue of *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya*, which was advocating an economic *nahda* project.[103] With this article and other writings, al-Miqdadi thus united economic achievement with national independence. More specifically, he used his particular expertise as an agriculturalist to contribute to the discourse of economic *nahda* in Palestine, and to articulate the economic foundations of the national future: "Our economic life (**حياتنا الاقتصادية**) and our financial activities (**نشاطنا المالي**) are both founded to a certain extent on orange cultivation. That is to say that the future of the country is tied to the future of this agriculture."[104]

Simultaneous to publishing his writings, al-Miqdadi worked as a selling agent and consultant to ICI Levant. As a fertilizer expert, al-Miqdadi's specific expertise was a product of a substantial change that was happening during the onset of the Synthetic Age and the rising flow of synthetic agrochemicals to Palestine and the Middle East. During the 1930s-1940s, chemical substances and chemical industries were becoming prevalent in the region. As an agent of the company, specializing in chemical fertilizers and pesticides, he was writing both on the technical side of his vision and on its political aspects. The orange growing industry in Palestine stood at the core of his future plans for the economy of Palestine. This vision was informed by his intellectual roots embedded in the interwar *nahda* movement and by his practical chemical expertise, which was itself a product of a structural shift towards an agricultural industrial dependency on chemical substances. As mentioned before, ICI Levant had a significant impact on this process in British-ruled Palestine.

Finally, examining ICI Levant's journal can provide further insight into the entanglements between the Synthetic Age as a global phenomenon and the local Palestinian agency inscribed in al-Miqdadi's economic *nahda* vision. Like other agents of the company, al-Miqdadi was traveling between ICI Levant's branches in Palestine and the area.[105] The spatial boundaries of these regional travels could be possibly traced back by considering Figure 5, taken from the *Al-Majalla al-zira'iyya al-'arabiyya*. An ICI Levant publication edited by al-Miqdadi himself, this journal advocated for the company's products all around the region. On the journal's front pages, the agricultural-economical space was assembled according to ICI Levant's operations in the region (ICI Egypt was a different sub-company). As its name

102 Seikaly, 42-44; *Al-Difa'*, 25 December 1938.

103 *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya* I(1), 01 January 1935.

104 *Al-Difa'*, 25 December 1938.

105 Letter from District Commissioner, Lydda District to Chief Secretary, 24 April 1947, ת-248/43, ISA.

suggests, it highlighted the region's agricultural aspects that were best suited to consume the company's products. Consequently, the dates of Basra, the grain fields of East Jordan, and the oranges of Palestine are prominently displayed as the main attractions on the cover page.[106]

During the interwar period, this spatial reorganization of the region was, of course, not only conceptualized by ICI Levant and al-Miqdadi. In an area that later became known as the Middle East, various colonial development policies encouraged British administrations to (re)establish communications, travel, and trade infrastructure in the region. Jacob Norris shows how this infrastructure, economic development, and the extraction of resources played a significant role in constructing British-ruled Palestine as physically and conceptually linked to the Mashriq.[107] Thus, from their vantage point in Palestine, al-Miqdadi and the other 'men of capital' conceptualized their local economic nahda vis-à-vis the region's spatial metamorphosis.

Juxtaposing the *Al-Majalla* front cover with Seikaly's 'men of capital' journal, *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya*, reveals the similar geo-economic logic behind the Arab economic *nahda*. In Figure 6, Palestine is characterized by its oranges. The Arab region is illustrated with its religious features (Mecca and Jerusalem) but mainly through its economical-agricultural-industrial prospects. One can see, for example, the oil field in Iraq (right side) and the sugar cane factory in Egypt (left side). Connecting these nation-state economies with the infrastructure of the British empire, the harbors of Haifa and Alexandria serve as the main entry and leaving points for commodities, while trains, trucks, and airplanes highlight non-maritime trade routes.[108]

This comparison reveals the entanglements between the intellectual aspects of the Palestinian-Arabic *nahda* and the material dimensions of British imperial-chemical networks. The economy envisioned and advocated by the 'men of capital' was to be based on various economic enterprises, as al-Miqdadi eloquently articulated above. Cash-crop cultivation and raw material extraction were major pillars in this scheme. As Norris and Seikaly show, these 'economic potentials' drove British actions and Arab-Palestinian intellectual thought in the region.[109] What both miss, however, is what al-Miqdadi's agency and his position with ICI make it possible for us to see–during the interwar period, and especially during the 1930s-1940s, a subtle transformation emerged. Agricultural and industrial production was becoming ever more dependent on the mass-production

106 *Al-Majalla al-ziraiyya al-'arabiyya*, 01 April 1947.
107 Norris, Land of Progress.
108 *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya* I(2), 15 January 1935.
109 Norris, *Land of Progress*; Seikaly, *Men of Capital.*

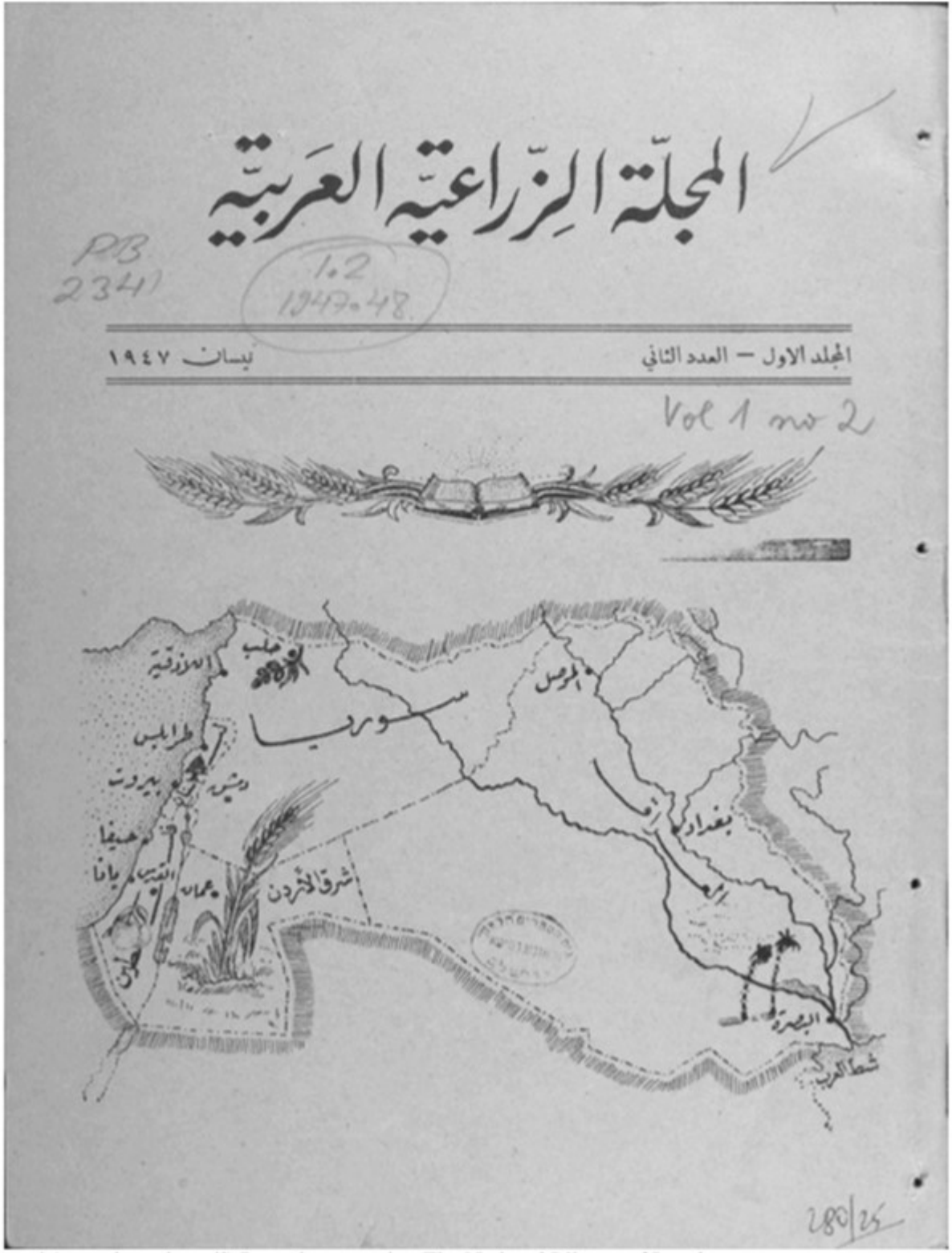

FIGURE 5: Cover page of *Al-Majalla al-ziraiyya al-'arabiyya*, 01 April 1947. Jrayed Collection: Arabic Newspapers of Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, jrayed.nli.org.il, founded by the National Library of Israel.

and circulation of chemical substances.

In British-ruled Palestine, Arab-Palestinians envisioned an economic development that would culminate in national independence. However, this economic *nahda* was not limited spatially to the colonial states, as it was in constant relationship with a broader intellectual world of an Arab 'civilizational' awakening. Writers like al-Miqdadi devoted themselves to the agricultural-economical aspects of this project. Al-Miqdadi's specific expertise revolved around Palestine's most lucrative agricultural crop, oranges, and was informed by the potential to enhance its economic value with British agrochemicals. From his 'expert' position, al-Miqdadi contributed to the prevalent discourse of national economic awakening. As the two front pages of the journals exhibit, this agricultural-economic transformation depended on British imperial regional infrastructure and imperial goods. Al-Miqdadi's national vision was intrinsically based on the new possibilities generated by British imperial networks, and more specifically, on the potential of applying agrochemicals (produced by the British Empire) in the materialization of this economic *nahda*. His world of thought reveals the historical traces of the Synthetic Age outside of the 'West.' Thus, his account shows that the social and material prospects inscribed in the global Synthetic Age met local forces which were inspired to use them in order to materialize their national economies.

CONCLUSION

By reconstructing the history of ICI Levant activities and examining Husni al-Miqdadi's writings, this article has sought to explore the crystallization of the Synthetic Age in British-ruled Palestine. In the first section, the global dimensions of the Synthetic Age were outlined, demonstrating how imperial infrastructure and colonial mindsets played a crucial role in its manifestation outside of Europe and North America. Analyzing the various activities of ICI Levant and its relations to the swelling global flow of chemicals, the infrastructure of synthetics circulation was further illuminated, contributing to an understanding of the company as one of the 'intermediaries' between the global Synthetic Age and local actors in British-ruled Palestine. Arriving in the British colony, the company drew close links with prominent Zionist figures and other local agents. The company also worked intimately with the British government and with Jewish research institutes to assist them in their scientific endeavors. This was a part of an imperial effort, as ICI operated in other colonies with similar methods.

As a giant global chemical company, ICI Levant's products were necessary for executing the various colonial development

FIGURE 6: Cover page of *Al-Iqtisadat al-'arabiyya* I(2), 15 January 1935. Jrayed Collection: Arabic Newspapers of Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, jrayed.nli.org.il, founded by the National Library of Israel.

projects around the British empire. In Palestine, as the major local importer of agrochemicals, it held a significant position for Zionist-Jews and Arab-Palestinians, both seeking to transform the economic basis of the land in order to materialize a future national economy that would be based on agriculture. The company had a complex relationship with the Arab-Palestinian middle-class, which either argued against the company or celebrated its agrarian contributions. This multifaceted interaction was part of a broader discussion taking place in British-ruled Palestine about economy-making and national independence. Together with infrastructural projects, the economic potential of Palestine was conceived through its agricultural prospects. ICI Levant had a significant role, as its chemical products were used by capitalists and agricultural experts to support different visions to 'develop' Palestine.

One of these visionaries was Husni al-Miqdadi, who, with his own expertise as a citrus authority and as an agrochemical expert, was able to 'join in' on the conversation of economic awakening in Palestine. As al-Miqdadi was working for ICI Levant, he sought to promote its 'addictive' agrochemicals. Simultaneously, he was also advocating for a national independence based on local industry, commerce, and modern agriculture. Al-Miqdadi's vision of a national economic Arab *nahda* was entangled with British imperial-chemical networks and infrastructures in the Middle East and was fundamentally related to the changes brought by the Synthetic Age. Thus, al-Miqdadi's case shows how the Synthetic Age and the prospected potential inscribed in its ideas and materials met local forces that sought to use them for their own advantage.

Following al-Miqdadi's historical agency, the realization of national independence in Palestine during the interwar period was conditioned on the imperial flow of agrochemicals that would materialize it. However, this notion holds within it a sharp contrast, as the aspiration to achieve independence from Britain created a dependence on its products. This seeming paradox can leave us with more potential inquiries about the interdependencies between agrochemicals, imperial industries, and colonial spaces.

More importantly, it highlights the role of British imperialism in setting into motion the Synthetic Age—an historical process that contributed to our contemporary global 'addiction' to synthetic chemicals. Modern industrial agriculture, which relies heavily on synthetic chemicals, is playing a significant role in our current predicament of ecological crises while functioning as a catalyst to global warming.[110] In addition to

110 As of 2014, it generates about 14 percent of the world's greenhouse emissions. Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report, IPPC 2014, 88, accessed 03 May 2021, https://www.

interferences with biochemical cycles, industrialized agriculture's intensive usage of pesticides and herbicides have become an environmental hazard, which pollutes waters, soils, and living organisms.[111]

In light of our current global cascading disaster, conceptualizations of victorious (Western) innovation overcoming Malthusian future nightmares are not sufficient in explaining the origins of our global chemical addiction.[112] Nor do accounts of Green Revolution(s) and nitrogen and phosphorus cycles help us reveal the deep and entangled historical roots of our chemical dependencies.[113] Revealing the entanglements between al-Miqdadi's vision, ICI Levant's actions in British-ruled Palestine and British imperialism in the Middle East might help us to start unpacking the history of our synthetic chemical obsession.

ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/SYR_AR5_FINAL_full.pdf.

111 Sharma, A., Kumar, V., Shahzad, B. *et al.* Worldwide Pesticide Usage and its Impacts on Ecosystem. *SN Appl. Sci.* **1,** no. 1446 (2019), accessed 03 May 2021: https://doi.org/10.1007/s42452-019-1485-1.

112 Melillo, "The First Green Revolution," 1056-1060.

113 Ibid; Smil, *Enriching the Earth*; Dana Cordell, Jan-Olof Drangert and Stuart White, "The Story of Phosphorus: Global Food Security and Food for Thought," *Global Environmental Change* 19 (2009): 292-305, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2008.10.009.

Contesting Imperial Feminisms: The Life of an Early Twentieth Century Egyptian Activist

by
BELLA RUHL

ABSTRACT

In “Contesting Imperial Feminisms: The Life of an Early Twentieth Century Egyptian Activist,” I make the argument that first-wave Egyptian feminism was inextricably bound to nationalist discourses, and was both produced whole-cloth and adapted from European models by Egyptian activists in response to changing economic and political conditions. Using the life and political work of Huda Sha'arawi, a women’s rights activist and nationalist who lived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I complicate the euro-centric view that feminism in Egypt was the result of western intervention and was uncritically adopted by colonized women. Instead I try to draw attention to the ways in which Sha'arawi and her comrades formulated a feminism predicated on decolonial liberation and indigenous values, while navigating the political realities of British colonialism and industrialized modernity. A microhistorical study with far-reaching implications, this article analyzes Sha'arawi’s rhetoric and actions, including her performative political unveiling, to gain a deeper understanding of the political contributions of early twentieth century Egyptian feminism. My objective is to return some agency to intersectional actors whose politics have been unjustly framed within the historiography as derivative of (white, European) feminist and (patriarchal) nationalist frameworks.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In support of her husband's declaration of retribution against the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks in New York City, then-First Lady of the United States Laura Bush made a speech on live radio. Framing the invasion of Afghanistan as a protection of human rights, she claimed that "[t]he fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women."[1] The implication of this sentence, and the perspective it articulates, have been analyzed in depth by Islamic feminist scholars in the intervening years. The most notable example was an article published by the anthropologist and theorist Lila Abu-Lughod in 2002, where she posed the question, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?"[2] In her sharply articulated analysis, Abu-Lughod situated Bush's seemingly humanitarian rhetoric within a long history of feminist discourse mobilized towards imperial domination in the Middle East.

The idea that it is in the best interest of Arab women to be rescued by a white savior from the reputedly oppressive gender-segregated culture of the Islamic Middle East is a component of Orientalism—a system of representation that systematically depicts Eastern culture as hyper-sexualized, violent, and primitive.[3] The particular gendered malignment of the Arabic world established a tradition of justifying colonial interventions into the cultural practices of Middle Eastern Muslims as a necessary humanitarian act.[4] A potent example lies in the fact that the British controller-general Lord Cromwell, who acted as the head colonial agent in late nineteenth century Egypt, "opposed feminism in…England, [yet] espoused in the colonial context a rhetoric of feminism that attacked Egyptian men for upholding practices that degraded their women."[5] The effects of this particular mobilization have had a lasting negative impact on the social perception of women's activism within the Middle East. As historian and theorist Leila Ahmed explains, the use of feminism by colonizers to enforce hegemonic cultural norms and undermine indigenous social structures "has…imparted to feminism in non-Western societies the taint of having served as an instrument of colonial domination."[6]

1 Laura Bush, "Radio Address by Mrs. Bush," *The White House Radio Address Archives*, November 17, 2001, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011117.html.

2 Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (September 2002), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3567256.

3 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

4 Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?," 785.

5 Fadwa El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 1 (1999): 67, DOI: 10.2752/136270499779165626.

6 Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University

Historically, it was not only white Westerners who engaged with discourses that framed Eastern "backwardness" in gender relations and societal organization in contrast to the "progressive" West. Middle Easterners with a stake in the hegemonic colonial project participated in this endeavour as well. The upper middle class Egyptian social reformer Qasim Amin, for example, wrote a book in 1899 entitled *The Liberation of Women* (*Tahrir al mara'a*) that sparked controversy in Egypt over veiling practices and segregation. The book criticized Egyptian familial structures and, in particular, the system of segregation as contributing to its economic "backwardness" in comparison to Europe. In his effort to Europeanize Arab culture, Amin framed the veil as "a huge barrier between women and their elevation, and consequently a barrier between the nation and its advancement."[7] Instead of seeking women's liberation for the sake of equality and opportunity for women, he drew upon imperialist modernization discourses, which classified civilizations according to a racialized hierarchy and a linear model of development. Grounded in the epistemologically violent discourses of scientific rationality, the earliest calls for women's rights were fundamentally misogynistic and framed women in terms of nationalist motherhood, rather than as equals to men.

Today a radical effort is being made among Middle Eastern feminists to formulate an indigenous articulation of women's rights and protections, grounded not in the post-Enlightenment ideologies of Western Europe, but in the particular cultural traditions and beliefs of the southern and eastern Mediterranean and surrounding regions. Islamic Feminism, which seeks to translate, interrogate, and reinterpret the holy Islamic texts apart from the influence of patriarchal norms, is one such intellectual initiative. Leila Ahmed and other scholars of Middle Eastern women's history, such as Fatima Mernessi, have identified historical periods in which women enjoyed relative autonomy and legal protection.[8] While there is no doubt that patriarchy has played just as dominant a role in social formation and the regulation of reproduction in the Middle East as in Europe, there is an effort underway to define the deconstruction or transformation

Press, 1992), 167.

7 Qasim Amin, *Tahrir Al Mara'a*. (1899) 45, cited in Guindi, "Veiling Resistance", 61.

8 For two examples, see Fatima Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); and Huda Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-Century Cairene Women: Female Anarchy versus Male Shar'i Order in Muslim Prescriptive Treatises," in *Women in Middle Eastern History*, ed. Nikki Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 99-121.

of these systems as a response to actual locations, situations, and historical contexts, rather than as a legacy of colonial intervention.

In the early twentieth century, however, this approach was in its infancy. It was not until the 1980s that postcolonial theory and second-wave feminism combined to produce the discursive resources foundational to its ascendancy. That is not to say that all aspects of Middle Eastern women's rights activism before the late twentieth century were intrinsically foreign, colonialist, and formulated with little regard to the actualities of women's lives. Indeed, women's rights discourses were highly contested, adapted, and rejected by indigenous feminists from the beginning. Even before Qasim Amin published his call for women's education, for example, salons, literary correspondence, and small-scale publications were exchanged among growing circles of educated middle- and upper-class Egyptian women.[9] These platforms functioned as consciousness-raising initiatives, allowing women to critically analyze their position in relation to social structures and dominant discourses.[10] While European feminist activism, strategies, and principles were one resource to which Middle Eastern women's rights activists looked for inspiration, they were also nonetheless "committed to constructing an indigenous movement that would be both modern and authentic."[11] Rapidly changing social and economic conditions throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries autonomously raised questions and produced solutions rooted in local beliefs and values.

In order to gain a better understanding of the ways in which Middle Eastern women in the early twentieth century engaged with feminist discourses and responded to the increased pressures on traditional gender systems, I undertake here a contextualized microhistorical analysis of an individual woman – the Egyptian activist Huda Sha'arawi. As a member of the privileged elite classes of Cairo, Sha'arawi's experience was by no means representative. Her publications, however, offer a great deal of historical insight into the channels along which feminist ideas emerged and circulated, and the ways in which these ideas were integrated and reformulated within the particular context of local, national,

9 Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society, and the Press* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 188.

10 Nabila Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution: From Feminist Awakening to Nationalist Political Activism," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 14, no. 2 (March 2013): 40, https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol14/iss2/5.

11 Mary Ann Fay, "Introduction," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies Special Issue: Early Twentieth-Century Middle Eastern Feminisms, Nationalisms, and Transnationalisms* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 5, doi:10.2979/mew.2008.4.1.1.

and regional culture and politics. Sha'arawi's position as a leader in the struggle for women's rights under the British imperial protectorate and the newly formed Egyptian nation, as well as her reputation as a relatively liberal, Westernized figure, make her an interesting starting point in seeking to make sense of these dialectal conduits. Her life also offers insight into the lives and ideas of her more radical peers.

Through an analysis of Sha'arawi's published writings, it is possible to gain an understanding of early twentieth century feminist activism as it emerged in response to colonial and industrializing conditions, global discourses, and the individual experiences of influential figures. The sources reveal sites of resistance to the imposition of European hegemony, even among the more Western-oriented and socially sequestered, such as the elite Sha'arawi. Two of these sites, namely nationalist feminisms and politicized veiling practices, offer considerable insight into the dialectic exchange between indigenous and hegemonic modalities. It becomes clear through a close reading of Sha'arawi's rhetorical work that the formulation of early twentieth century Middle Eastern feminism was critical, contestory, and anticolonial in its engagement with liberatory politics, and was actively resistant to imperialist mobilizations of feminist discourses. Nonetheless, Middle Eastern feminists' experiences were situated within a colonial context, and they responded to their surroundings as pragmatic political strategists.

II. A TELLING EXAMPLE

The principal source on Sha'arawi's life is a memoir that she wrote in her later years, which was translated and published posthumously by the American historian Margot Badran in 1987. As part of her editing process, Badran arranged and abridged Sha'arawi's manuscript, included photographs alongside the text, and provided contextual information and explanations which make the text more accessible to a Western reader. Reading along the grain of these at times heavy-handed interventions requires a multilayered assessment of the text that acknowledged its position as a historiographical interjection into the late twentieth century debate over women's history in the Middle East. At the same time, it is necessary to approach the work as a detailed first-person account of Sha'arawi's childhood and a rhetorical document – a didactic and pathos-heavy articulation of feminist principles, written by Sha'arawi as a mature woman in her fifties. The memoir describes her childhood within the harem, as part of the last generation to be raised in this spatial and cultural context, and the particular observations and experiences which shaped her feminist consciousness. She very intentionally highlights the particular inequalities and limitations which marked her gendered experience, including her more limited access to education and her early marriage. Although she intended to publish her

memoir for an Egyptian audience, it was left incomplete at the time of her death.

Born in 1879 to a wealthy family in Cairo, Sha'arawi's childhood world was circumscribed by architectural and social constraints, yet characterized by a rich social and intellectual exchange.[12] Her father was a regional governor in the rural province of Mina, where he amassed so much land and political influence that he was referred to as "the king of upper Egypt."[13] Like many increasingly powerful provincial administrators, he set up a household in the Egyptian capital as part of an influx of families to Cairo and Alexandria.[14] At the same time, the modernization program initiated by Muhammad Ali in the early nineteenth century was encouraging rural to urban migration, and fostering a growing class of white-collar bureaucrats and an increasingly complex administrative mechanism. As in other regions worldwide, these changes created unprecedented opportunities for mobility, destabilizing deeply rooted social systems.

To a young Sha'arawi, growing up within the vestigial household structure of the Ottoman Empire, these shifts were peripheral to the realities of daily life. Her memoirs describe a childhood fixated on the closed internal relations within her home; her competitive relationship with her brother, her education, and her relationships with family friends, many of them foreigners, dominate recollections of her youth. Unlike many young women at the time, Sha'arawi was encouraged to memorize the Quran alongside her brother, a feat she accomplished at the age of nine. Beyond this, however, she was not encouraged to venture into knowledge of Arabic, and despite her pleas to the eunuch who oversaw her care and education within the harem, Said Agha did not permit her to continue to study the language. In a typical metareferential passage, which returns the reader to an awareness of the text's rhetorical purpose, Sha'arawi recollects "hating being a girl because it kept [her] from the education [she] sought."[15] Characterizing her privileged childhood from a distance of years, Sha'arawi emphasized the feelings of deprivation that arose from the limitations placed on her education, in an effort to promote equal access to education for girls and women. She grounded this argument not in colonialist civilizational terms, as Amin had, but rather by drawing on

12 Sania Sharawi Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil: The Life of Huda Shaarawi, Egypt's First Feminist* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 1.

13 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil,* 1.

14 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 8.

15 Huda Shaarawi, *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1986), 40. She further expresses an early awareness that "being a female became a barrier between [her] and the freedom for which [she] yearned."

her own lived experiences, framing the debate in terms of the emotional and internal experiences of a young woman kept from her desire to learn.[16]

Similarly, Sha'arawi mobilises her biographical experiences with marriage to support her mature political position. Married at age thirteen to a cousin twenty-six years her senior in order to retain familial control of her extensive inheritance, Sha'arawi became a strong advocate for a legally codified minimum marriage age for women and for limitations on polygyny. Her description of her lavish wedding and spousal responsibilities are contrasted with her childlike daydreams, love of reading, and playful activities, painting a dissonant picture of her youth. Rather than making the claim that such cultural practices were "backward" or indicative of a societal deprivation, as Orientalist commentators argued, Sha'arawi grounded her desire for social change in her lived experiences. She describes in detail her feelings of marginalization and neglect caused by her husband's previous relationship with a concubine, to draw attention to the interpersonal challenges that her unwanted marriage had on her early life. When Sha'arawi's husband returned to his first wife after just two years, however, the teenager was elated to have the opportunity to continue her life and education undisturbed.[17]

Instead of Arabic, Sha'arawi studied French, piano, and other Europeanized skills considered necessary for a girl of her social class. Her companions were often Europeans, and these women also proved influential on her feminist thought as she grew. Among Sha'arawi's friends and ideological influences was Eugénie Le Brun, a Frenchwoman who had married an Egyptian politician. Le Brun's transnational experiences led her to write two books on the subject of women in Egyptian culture, for a predominantly Western audience. The first of these texts, entitled *Harem et les musulmanes* (*The Harem and Muslim Women*) was written "to describe the life of the Egyptian woman, as it really is, to enlighten Europeans."[18] Her aim in writing it was to counter Orientalist presuppositions about the harem and the women among Europeans, and she was able to bring many European readers to the conclusion that "Egyptians seemed not unlike

16 To interpret her position as a proponent of education as an imported feminist principle is to render invisible the rich history of Islamic and Egyptian scholarship and knowledge production. Though these sectors had generally been inaccessible to women, there was also a precedent of female intellectuals and itinerary figures embedded in Egyptian, Islamic, and Ottoman traditions. See Mernessi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*.

17 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil,* 21.

18 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 80.

themselves."[19] Despite this step towards cross-cultural understanding, some among Le Brun's female readership in Egypt felt that she was criticizing their condition, and expressed this to her frankly.[20] Well-aware that through Western eyes they appeared powerless and exploited, Egyptian women resisted this characterization, asserting their active role within the household and their extensive reach into matters of social and political relevance. Their critical awareness of the ways in which they and their culture was represented thus reveals a contesting relationship between Egyptian women and European feminist discourse, even if the latter was well-meaning.

Despite these criticisms, Le Brun can be understood as having had a relatively nuanced view which contradicted many of the colonialist discourses on women that her fellow Europeans espoused. She was a convert to Islam, and defended the religion in feminist terms, arguing that "Islam…has granted women greater justice than previous religions."[21] This claim extended to Islamic law, which she identified as ultimately just, though corrupted by patriarchal tradition.[22] While it is clear that she was in no way producing a radical alternative to colonial feminist discourses, it also appears that she was invested in moving the conversation away from one-dimensional, Orientalist depictions. Le Brun's more nuanced perspective left a lasting impression on Sha'arawi and was far more attractive to the young activist than the views of other European women she encountered, who bought fully into discourses which patronized and othered Middle Eastern women.[23]

At the weekly salon for women which Le Brun hosted in the mid-1890s, Sha'arawi had the opportunity to discuss a variety of topics with both European and Arab women, including social practices such as veiling and seclusion.[24] It was in this context that she first encountered European anti-veiling rhetoric. A guest in the salon expressed the Orientalist perspective that "Egyptian women could camouflage disreputable deeds behind a mask," and that the behaviour of European women was better because their faces were uncovered.[25] Le Brun defended Sha'arawi against this malignment, but later confessed to her younger friend that "although she admired the dress of Egyptian women, she thought the veil stood in the way of their advancement."[26] The precise impacts of these statements

19 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 80.
20 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 80.
21 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 81.
22 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 81.
23 Leila Ahmed, "Between Two Worlds: The Formation of a Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian Feminist," in *Life/Lines: Theorising Women's Autobiography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 171.
24 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 78.
25 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 78.
26 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 80.

on Sha'arawi's ideology was not immediately clear, but she continued to cover her face in public for more than a decade after, indicating that her later decision to unveil publicly was influenced by far more complex factors than solely Orientalist rhetoric.

Despite the fact that many of her friends were European, her social language was interspersed with French loan words, and the interior decor of her home was "a melange of oriental and western styles," Sha'arawi recounted many instances of staunch resistance to the Westernizing forces which surrounded her.[27] One such instance from a similar period of time involved an acquaintance inviting her to tea in a commercial shop "which accorded neither with [her] preferences nor [Egyptian] customary behavior" as the tea shop was patronized by both men and women.[28] She further refused to attend the same woman's mixed-sex parties as a married woman attending without her husband.[29] This selective and critical adoption of Westernizing mores remained a theme throughout Sha'arawi's life.

Clothing, in particular, proved demonstrative of this resistant stance. Though Sha'arawi loved European styles and, as a leading lady of Egypt, found it her duty to be consistently in the height of fashion, she balanced these needs with an immutable sense of decorum grounded in Islamic morality. The veil (then and still a potent political symbol in struggles over female agency and national identity) was a key site of Sha'arawi's political action. In a profile of Sha'arawi written in 1927 for the American feminist periodical *The Woman Citizen,* journalist Anne Hard made a point of contrasting the Egyptian's modest and high-necked dress with the décolletage of her European guests.[30] The picture accompanying the profile depicted Sha'arawi in a chic head covering and long-sleeved black gown. Her adherence to Egyptian standards of moral rectitude was a reputation she leveraged throughout her life, both as part of her cultural identity and as a form of nationalist activism against the encroachment of European cultural hegemony.

III. NATIONALISM AS FEMINISM

Sha'arawi's nationalist activism extended far beyond her public appearance, however. Participation in the nationalist movement, precipitated by her husband's involvement in the newly formed Wafd party, became

27 Margot Badran, "Introduction," in *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist*; El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 59.

28 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 79.

29 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 79.

30 Anne Hard, "Madame Hoda Charaoui: A Modern Woman of Egypt," *The Woman Citizen*. 12, no. 4 (September 1927). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EHWNAL819703162/NCCO?u=uarizona_main&sid=NCCO&xid=3dae96b5.

Sha'arawi's first major experience with political activism. Among Egyptian feminists it was widely accepted that before women could assert their political agency within an Egyptian state, such a state had to be formed. Nationalism, itself a contested concept with origins in the West, became a "vehicle for feminist demands," in that it was understood as the only viable avenue towards political autonomy and potential political agency.[31]

For colonized women, the feminist fight was not against their own men, but alongside them, against Western oppression. Imperialist feminisms sought to insert a white savior between the colonized man and woman, working on the premise that Islam was inherently more sexist than Christianity, and that it was not possible for communities in the Global South to negotiate gender and modernity legibly within an indigenous cultural framework. By allying with their countrymen against Western oppression, colonized women exerted their political power and demanded enfranchisement on their own terms, not on terms set by white Western oppressors. This came with the understanding that alongside liberation from colonial control existed the potential for women's rights to be encoded in new government systems. It was through the anticolonial struggle that Egyptian women asserted their political voice and demanded autonomy. When historian Mary Ann Fay remarked that "[t]he women's groups that emerged in the early twentieth century were liberal reformist in their goals and strategies, that is, they were not revolutionary,"[32] she entirely neglected the fact that these women *were* revolutionaries. They were actively involved as participants in the Egyptian Revolution of 1919, and their institutionally-aligned advocacy was premised on the fight for the formation of new national institutions. Women's rights movements grounded in nationalist liberation sought to break away from colonial imperatives and establish new and independent political structures in which feminist utopian ideals could be manifested.

Though both feminism and nationalism had ideological ties to the oppressor, nationalism *as* feminism was intrinsically resistant to imperialist discourses. It stood in opposition to colonial forces, which enabled a highly patriarchal order in which colonized men were incentivised to utilize European patriarchal tools to contribute to the further oppression of colonized women.[33] Unfortunately, despite women's active involvement in many global nationalist and anti-imperialist movements, they were frequently left out of newly established postcolonial governments.[34] Nevertheless, an

31 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 39.

32 Fay, "Introduction," 2.

33 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 43.

34 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 40.

understanding of the connections that women in Egypt made between their oppression as colonized subjects and their oppression as women marks a critical point of departure from the hegemonic norms of imperialist feminisms.

More immediately, however, the nationalist movement gave Egyptian women an opportunity to establish themselves as political agents with influence and a direct relationship to the state. In 1919, following the rejection of the Wafdist petition for national liberation from the British, Sha'arawi and her compatriots organized a march in protest of the occupation.[35] The "Ladies March", as it came to be referred to in the press, was an unprecedented expression of women's collective political agency in modern Egypt, and marked an interesting turn in self-conception among its proponents. Women from all social classes and walks of life participated, from elite harem women in cars to unveiled prostitutes marching on foot.[36] In demonstrating publicly for an Egyptian state, these women were declaring a political influence on the governing body, as citizens and as individuals with bearing beyond that of their husbands and households. The march was, in short, both a nationalist and feminist demonstration, as women asserted their demands for both a state and political agency in relation to that state. Among leaders of the nationalist movement, the action was praised for its symbolic potency. In the context of the anti-imperialist revolution, "[w]omen's unprecedented acts were welcomed and justified by national needs."[37]

According to historian Fadwa El Guindi, "Egyptian women, Muslim and Christian, [positioned] their liberation vis-à-vis the simultaneously rising nationalism that grew up in response to colonial intervention."[38] The two movements were inextricably linked in both ideological and organizational terms. Unable to participate alongside her husband in the nationalist Wafd party, Sha'arawi founded a women's auxiliary, the Wafdist Women's Central Committee, in 1920.[39] Like the party itself, the WWCC was open to people of all faiths and social classes. Under Sha'arawi's leadership, the Committee "consciously set out to be if anything even more comprehensive" in its diverse participation than the Nationalist party was.[40] This diversity translated to the makeup of the Egyptian Feminist Union, which Sha'arawi formed in 1923 as a feminist splinter organization of the WWCC. The overlapping membership of the two organizations underscores the intrinsic interrelation between nationalism and feminist activism

35 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 45.
36 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 46.
37 Shaarawi, *Harem Years,* 112.
38 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 60.
39 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil,* 73.
40 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 74.

that characterized women's early twentieth century political engagement in Egypt, as in other parts of the colonized world.[41]

Established in preparation for the 1923 conference of the International Women Suffrage Association in Rome, the EFU selectively and critically incorporated Western strategies into its agenda according to a discriminant ideological framework. Feminist Hanifa Khuri, "in recounting the work of the Egyptian Feminist Union, asserted that Huda Sha'arawi had always urged the adoption of European customs 'that are suitable for Muslims' and the rejection of those that are 'reprehensible.'"[42] Reflecting principles "previously formulated by Malak Hifni Nasif," the EFU defined its goals as "social, political, legal and moral equality with men,...the right to higher education for girls, [the prohibition of] polygamy and divorce without the woman's consent, [an increase to] the age for marriage to sixteen, and [the promotion of] public health and hygiene in Egypt."[43] Of these, education and marriage reform emerged as the most immediate priorities, and translated to activism in the form of petitions, protests, and editorial journalism.

The EFU also remained engaged in the nationalist fight, seeing political sovereignty as a precondition for the furthering of their agenda. The relevance of this connection became even more apparent when it was recognized that "the British [had] sought to limit the activity of Egyptians by actually closing down schools," stinting the possibility of free public education for girls, and putting new hurdles in the path of activists.[44] In fact, as Ahmed points out, "[t]he British occupation in fact retarded women's education in a number of ways."[45] Once again, the struggle against British imperialism was synonymous with advocacy for women's rights, and feminist nationalism marked a site of resistance to imperialist interventions.

Feminists campaigning on both fronts were quick to point out the ways in which colonialism and the economic developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought changes which negatively affected women's rights. Middle-class feminist Nabawiya Musa, in her address to the International Women Suffrage Alliance in 1923, made it very clear that a historical precedent for gender equality existed within the Islamic Middle East that equaled or surpassed that of Western Europe.[46]

41 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 40.
42 Charlotte Weber, "Between Nationalism and Feminism: The Eastern Women's Congresses of 1930 and 1932," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 98, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/mew.2008.4.1.83.
43 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 104-105.
44 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 123.
45 Ahmed, "Between Two Worlds," 157.
46 International Women's Suffrage Alliance, *Report of the Ninth*

Yet foreign intervention, particularly the economic and social influence of Britain and France, had imposed a specific, Western-oriented version of modernity on the developing state. Economic and religious suppression, along with the suppression of education, had had lasting effects, and were inextricable from women's rights issues and the agenda of the EFU. Just as he had cut budgets for education and specifically limited the education of girls and women, the British controller-general Lord Cromer "had actively discouraged industry in Egypt" in order to maintain a trade imbalance and "preserve Egypt as a market" for processed British goods.[47]

Grounded in the economic principle of mercantilism, and prototyped in British India, this strategic obstruction of economic development established imperial domains as a constant supply of raw materials and a market for finished products. This had had a massively detrimental impact on the Egyptian economy and on development, which had stagnated since British officials, following the Urabi Revolt of 1879, halted Muhammad Ali's industrialization plan. Production and consumption remained critical arenas in the anticolonial struggle, and nationalist agitation remained rhetorically and practically tied to the advancement of women's rights and political agency within the new state. In 1924, as part of a further push to dislodge British intervention in the Egyptian economy, Sha'arawi launched a nationalist boycott of British goods, patterned off the nonviolent resistance movement in India.[48] Since women in Egypt, as elsewhere, were the primary consumers for their households, a strike against British economic hegemony became simultaneously an exercise of Egyptian women's political and economic power.[49]

Such expressions of women's political agency marked the nationalist struggle as a turning point in the women's rights movement in Egypt which effectively made it a public political movement, rather than a cultural debate taking place privately in harems and literary circles. It also meant that a coalition was formed of women from diverse backgrounds, who were involved in both nationalist and feminist activism. This coalition spanned generations, classes, and religious faiths, and found common ground in its hopes for an Egyptian nation designed to facilitate and protect the needs of women. Emphasis was placed on institutional reform, and the diversity of the movement required a certain inclusivity of language.

This became particularly apparent in the issue of secularism.

Congress: Rome, Italy, May 12th to 19th 1923 (Dresden, Saxony: B. G. Teubner, 1923, accessed via Alexander Street "Women and Social Movements, International" database), 170. (hereafter IWSA, *Report of the Ninth Congress).*

47 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 123.

48 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 113.

49 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 114.

For Ahmed, "[t]he dominant voice of feminism," which she equates with Sha'arawi, was secular in nature, and, by extension, the product of European cultural imperialism (secularist humanism being the underlying ideology on which European feminism was based).[50] An alternative interpretation of the relative absence of religious appeals in the publications of the Egyptian feminist movement mainstream, however, is taking into account the diversity and plurality of the movement itself. Egypt in the early twentieth century was a religiously diverse region, which had been incorporated repeatedly into multiethnic land-based empires. In 1919 the region was inhabited by indigenous, Arabic, and Turco-Circassian Muslims; Coptic and European Christians; and a small but politically active and long-established urban Jewish population.[51]

Among the earliest and most sustaining participants of both the nationalist and feminist movements in Egypt were Coptic Christians.[52] One concrete example of this alliance is the flag flown at the 1919 women's march and displayed by the delegation to the conference of the International Women Suffrage Association in 1923. The flag consisted of a "white crescent and crosses against a green background, replacing the stars of the national flag," symbolizing the unity of Christians and Muslims in pursuit of the nationalist cause.[53] While Sha'arawi was confessionally Muslim, her political rhetoric was largely free of appeals to Islamic thought or spirituality. This was likely as much a result of the multireligious makeup of her audience and fellow activists and a desire to appeal to a large constituency as it was an interest in secularism.

Despite her strategic rhetorical neutrality when addressing a mixed-faith audience, the nationalist-feminist vision Sha'arawi articulated was firmly grounded in Arab and Islamic tradition. According to her cousin and biographer, Sania Sharawi Lafrancha, the activist defended both cultural and religious Islam, as well as Islamic law. These assertions are affirmed by archival speeches and articles which Sha'arawi published in *l'Egyptienne*, the francophone journal of the EFU.[54] In these sources she is recorded arguing in support of the implementation of Islamic law (rather than a law code based on European models) in the new Egyptian state, seeing the *Sharia*, the corpus of Islamic religious law, as the only acceptable basis for productive legal and civil reform in Arab-majority

50 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 156.

51 The Jewish population of Egypt was almost completely eradicated in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of deportations and popular hostility in the wake of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War.

52 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 46.

53 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 95.

54 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 102.

nations. In a 1944 speech to the Arab Feminist Conference, for example, in support of a bourgeoning pan-Arab feminist movement, Sha'arawi demanded that Arab women have "restored her political rights, rights granted to her by the *Sharia*" and by the Quran.[55] Framing religious texts in terms of their utilization for the modern state, she pointed to the fact that "Islam [grants women] the right to vote for the ruler and has allowed [them] to give opinions on questions of jurisprudence and religion."[56] These claims illustrate her advocacy for a reinterpretation of Islam that returned to the original sources to address the needs of the present, a perspective resonant with the aims of the Islamic Modernism movement, or Salafism, which had emerged in the previous century. In framing both her anti-imperialist and feminist points, Sha'arawi drew on Egyptian traditions and genealogies, articulating a feminism which was not simply imported, but critical, globally informed, and locally situated.

Yet Sha'arawi's politics remained marked by discursive relations of inequality. It would be remiss to neglect the fact that her speeches leveraged the colonial terminology of "backwardness" and expressed a desire to "[raise] the level of the whole country" through women's education and a modernization of Islamic law.[57] The pervasiveness of this type of imperialist rhetoric, found mixed into much of the public literature produced by colonial and anticolonial agents alike, makes it nearly impossible to untangle the "indigenous" from the "imperialist." It reaffirms the impossibility of a clean distinction between the two in the conceptual history of anti- and post-colonialism. Despite attempts to return agency and generativity to the rhetoric of colonized peoples, there is no way to fully escape the fact that the discursive field in which these debates took place was already marked by the violent epistemologies of imperialism, articulated with a vocabulary circumscribed by the oppressor.

IV. DISCOURSES OF THE VEIL

The issue at hand–that is, the contested nature of feminist discourse in the colonial context –is a pertinent illustration of the complexity of this phenomenon of discursive inequality. Because industrial development in Egypt occurred in tandem with colonial intervention, distinguishing which calls for changes in women's status were caused by practical necessity in response to economic conditions and which were imported from Europe

55 Huda Shaarawi, "The Opening Speech," in *Opening the Gates: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing*, ed. Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke (Indianapolis, IL: Indiana University Press, 1990), 338.

56 Shaarawi, "The Opening Speech," 338.

57 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 102.

as a product of cultural hegemony is rife with difficulty. This is, however, an important distinction, and one that has a critical bearing on present debates. It is most clearly elucidated in the following passage from *Women in Islam:*

> "The dominant voice of feminism, which affiliated itself, albeit discreetly, with the westernizing, secularizing tendencies of society...assured the desirability of progress towards western-style societies. The alternative...searched for a way to articulate female subjectivity and affirmation within a native, vernacular, Islamic discourse- typically in terms of a general social, cultural, and religious renovation."[58]

In this passage, Ahmed attempts to draw a clear line between the imported and the indigenous, claiming that twentieth-century feminism in Egypt could be empirically divided into camps which aligned themselves with each tendency. In subsequent paragraphs, she explicitly associates Sha'arawi with the former group, and compares her ideology extensively with the perspectives of a lesser-known contemporary, Malak Hifni Nassef, who, despite dying young, produced an extensive body of feminist work which was deeply rooted in Arab Islamic culture.

El Guindi summarizes Ahmed's thesis succinctly: "[h]ad Nasif lived longer...it is very likely that two parallel (organized) feminisms would have developed—one grounded in Arabo-Islamic culture, the other in European culture and feminism."[59] Instead, in Ahmed's telling, the Arab-Islamic strand remained dormant after Nasssef's premature death, while the liberal Westernized strand dominated the subsequent half-century. The postcolonial turn in feminism, she claims, laid the groundwork for vital new intellectual approaches and a return to indigenous feminisms. Writing in the late 1990s, Ahmed had a strong stake in locating and uplifting indigenous feminisms, but in her effort to legitimize the budding field, she creates an overly binary and un-nuanced distinction. More strikingly, she fails to acknowledge the ways in which Sha'arawi utilized and adapted extant discourses to accomplish tangible assets for Egyptian women, including greater access to education and healthcare. Her assertion fails to take into account the complicated navigation of colonized power structures that characterized colonized Egypt and overdetermined the vectors of possible political action and utopian ideology available to early twentieth century feminists. Sha'arawi's feminism did in fact arise from a particularly Egyptian context and did not buy into European feminist

58 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 156.

59 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 67.

ideology whole-cloth. However, she was limited by the fact that national liberation and anti-colonialism were necessary preconditions to feminist advancement.

As usual, it appears, the most potent heuristic remains the veil. Unlike Nassef, who remained publicly veiled until her premature death in 1918, Sha'arawi chose to publicly unveil as a performative political act in 1923. Upon her return from the Conference of the International Women Suffrage Alliance in Rome, she removed her face covering in the Cairo train station in front of a crowd of supporters, journalists, and onlookers. This action is one of her most enduring legacies, and one of the most controversial. It is used within the historiography as a shorthand for the depiction of Sha'arawi, along with most of the participants of the early twentieth century Egyptian feminist movement, as passively receptive to hegemonic European feminisms. In fact, the historiographical discussion has been influenced by an overly simplistic political logic which has pervaded the discourse of the veil and ties it back to imperialist mentalities.[60] This formulation equates veiling with Islam, conservatism, anticolonial nationalism, and Arab identity, and unveiling with Westernization, imperialism, and the violent cultural hegemony of humanist secularism. The reality is far more complex and deserves closer analysis.

To gain a broader understanding of the considerations at play in this debate, and to respectfully complicate Ahmed's strategic essentialism, some historical context is necessary. Veiling was a common practice throughout the Mediterranean world since ancient times. It communicated status and modesty, was principally reserved for free (non-enslaved) women, and was worn as a protection from the sun in many pre-Islamic cultures.[61] Veiling and seclusion, though not unambiguously mandated by the Islamic holy texts, were, along with many other wide-ranging cultural practices, enshrined in religious law and codified, particularly during the intensely patriarchal Abbasid period, as a means of controlling reproduction.[62] Gender segregation practices were used by the elite classes, in the Islamic world as in Europe, to ensure patrilineal bloodlines and to communicate a family's wealth and status. This was limited to the wealthy and privileged classes, while the majority of women were forced by necessity to work outside the home in the marketplace, as laborers, traders, or servants.

Until industrialization began to precipitate wide-ranging economic and social change, strict segregation remained accessible only to those who could afford the luxury and expense of maintaining a separate

60 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 58.

61 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 56.

62 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 79-80.

architectural space in the home for women and children, who did not have to engage in productive labor, and who were served, guarded, and accompanied by specialized and often highly-educated enslaved individuals.[63] Despite its connotations to contemporary Western viewers, veiling is not a practice unique to Islam, and in Sha'arawi's youth was practiced by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Egyptians alike. Indeed, for most of its history, veiling "was an urban phenomenon associated mostly with the upper classes."[64] As urbanization and social mobility increased, however, so did the prevalence and visibility of segregation. Once accessible only to the most privileged, practices of segregation were increasingly utilized as a means of communicating an aspirational and upwardly mobile social status among the emerging urban bourgeois classes. It also became more common to see women from the upper and middle classes out on the streets, engaging in commerce, attending schools, and undertaking philanthropic or paid work.[65] Economic and social change starting in the nineteenth century made the practice of segregation more accessible to a larger number of people, but at the same time persistently tested and eroded its boundaries and reformulated its cultural significance.

While veiling was not a strictly religious practice, for many it increasingly stood for a respected cultural identity, including religious and sexual values, threatened both by economic and demographic change and by European influence. The European attack on segregation practices, as well as other aspects of Islamic Egyptian culture, "strengthened the attachment to the veil as a national and cultural symbol and gave it a new vitality."[66] Veiling and segregation thus became nationalist issues, symbolic of Middle Eastern cultural norms, *in response to* European imperialism and industrialization. Among those invested in the future of the country – pundits, politicians, clergy, journalists, social commentators, and many others who contributed their thoughts to the public debate playing out in the newspapers, pulpits, lecterns, and around dinner tables – the veil became a symbol of progress versus tradition, or modernization versus cultural preservation. It was invested with religious and political meaning and stood, synecdochally, for the entirety of the nationalist struggle and the divisions within it.

Yet, by one estimation, only

63 Adult women in nineteenth-century harems were themselves often enslaved, concubines imported from the Caucuses to be the highly refined and well-educated mothers of the ruling class.

64 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 62.

65 Beth Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt: Practical and Symbolic Considerations," *Middle Eastern Studies,* 25, no. 3 (July 1989), 378, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4283318.

66 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance".

16% of Egyptian women veiled in 1919, and many of those who went about unveiled had never veiled to begin with.[67] Rural peasant women covered their heads but not their faces, as it would have been impracticable to do so given the hard labor that they performed on a daily basis.[68] In urban centers, "[p]oorer women had always been visible in the streets, often unveiled," and historical accounts from as early as the sixteenth century attest to a persistent presence of unveiled women in the public spaces of Cairo and the infeasibility of enforcing veiling upon them.[69] The debate over veiling was largely symbolic, and a manifestation of larger ideological conflicts between conservative and progressive forces played out across women's bodies. For most, it had little to do with women's individual choices, but instead was a societal decision, to be enforced or allowed as it was perceived to be expeditious on a national and geopolitical level. Only a few feminists articulated a stance which emphasized choice and personal freedom, among them Nassef, who, despite her own choice to remain veiled, "[approved] of unveiling *for those who want it.*"[70]

In contrast to the middle-class Nassef, for whom veiling symbolized cultural identity, a recently achieved social status, and a reaffirmation of Egyptian nationalist norms, Sha'arawi's personal and gendered agency came from an escape of the traditional boundaries placed upon upper class women by segregation. Nationalist political activism should be understood as an assertion of women's political agency, a relationship to the state, and a disavowal of external (imperialist) intervention. Likewise, by exercising her right to unveil (as a parallel right to that of taking up the veil), a politically active woman in the context of an urbanizing, industrializing society should be understood as articulating a demand for individual political rights and representation, and for citizenship in relation to the newly-formed nationalist state.[71] The act of unveiling also indicated a desire to move out of the cloistered harem space and engage with a changing economic landscape, one certainly marked by imperialism, but also one of contested modernity, and a desire for social change after centuries of Ottoman, and then British, imperial control. The emergent feminist consciousness had "evolved out of women's changing everyday lives in a country that had experienced overwhelming socio-economic transformation."[72] Unveiling was,

67 Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt," 382.
68 Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt," 382.
69 Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt," 376.
70 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 64. Italics mine.
71 Badran, "Introduction," 20-21.
72 Margot Badran, "The Feminist Vision in the Writings of Three Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian Women," *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern*

for many women, an expression of a desire for and commitment to "increased freedom of movement to go out to schools, shops, and other places," in order to engage with the new opportunities that Egyptian modernity provided.[73]

Furthermore, Sha'arawi, at least, saw the veil as a foreign innovation, "imposed on the women of the upper classes of Egypt under the Ottoman Empire," and therefore never truly representative of indigenous cultural tradition.[74] While the veil had of course already existed in Egypt since before even the introduction of Islam, segregation ossified within Egyptian social practice as a tool of the Ottoman Turko-Cisserian elites to distinguish themselves from the Arab and indigenous Egyptian population.[75] The system of veiling and seclusion had always been as much about class as it was about gender, and served as a potent visual signifier which marked women from different classes as separate from each other. Classed dress also signified divisions in behaviour and respectability, as elite women were associated with virtue, modesty, and hygiene, while working class women, particularly sex workers or single mothers, faced stigmatization as unclean, immodest, and sexually available.[76] As strict veiling was also impossible for these women, the garment served as a heuristic signifier of individual character.

The inherently classed nature of the veil proved prohibitive to direct engagement across socio-economic levels, as Sha'arawi discovered when attempting to provide aid to the peasants at her husband's properties at Minya.[77] "As the lady of the manor, she was impeded by social tenets, and found it hard to approach…the rural poor," whose lives she sought to improve.[78] On a less drastic level, presumptions of seclusion also complicated the unity of the women's movement, which was represented both by elite and middle-class women. In fact, since the nineteenth century, "middle-class women… were at the forefront of the feminist cause."[79] Many of Sha'arawi's closest allies, including Nabawiya Musa, were highly educated middle-class women, some of whom had chosen to unveil on ideological grounds. By seeking to break down boundaries and create cross-class alliances in pursuit of nationalist and feminist aims, "[e]arly Egyptian feminism not only challenged the patriarchal order but…superseded class."[80] In this context, unveiling was an act of class

Studies 15, no. 1/2 (1988): 11, https://www.jstor.org/stable/195212.

73 Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt," 382.

74 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 102.

75 Badran, "Introduction," 17.

76 Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt," 380.

77 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 33.

78 Lanfranchi, *Casting off the Veil*, 33.

79 Ramdani, "Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution," 41.

80 Badran, "Introduction," 21.

solidarity, defying the distinctions that had for so long vertically divided women from coming together to advocate for their rights.

The implications of class, culture, and nation were elaborated on by Musa in a speech to the IWSA conference, which she attended as a delegate alongside Sha'arawi. In this speech Musa argued that, rather than looking to European women as a model for desirable gender relations, Egyptian women should look to the peasant classes of Egypt, who "[go] out with [their faces] uncovered, [participate in their] husband's purchases and sales, [and have a clear] idea of agricultural affairs."[81] Musa's framework was more than just a particular vision for the future of Egyptian feminism – it was an intentional effort to produce an indigenous model for Egyptian gender relations. It was also noteworthy in that it explicitly transcended class and reversed the structurally defined order which placed the secluded, veiled woman at the pinnacle of aspiration.

In her speech, Musa was careful to distinguish patriarchal "custom" from religious "law" in an effort to establish both a field for viable reform and one of fundamental cultural significance. The perspective articulated here is one which has been mentioned previously: that Islam and the original laws derived from the Quran and Hadith afforded women extensive rights and protections which patriarchal custom had denied them. Addressing the IWSA audience, Musa argued that the Egyptian feminists' "struggle is only aimed at the customs which nothing sanctions or justifies, and [claims] a right sanctioned by religion and our social law."[82] Likewise, in an address to the Arab Feminist Conference in 1944, Sha'arawi explained that patriarchal interpretations and innovative customs (*bid'ah*) had taken from women the rights that Islam had granted them. She went on to connect feminism and nationalism yet again, arguing that "the Arab man who demands that the others give him back his usurped rights would… give the woman back her own lawful rights, all the more so since he himself has tasted the bitterness of deprivation and usurped rights."[83]

This distinction was an important component in understanding the rhetorical significance of Sha'arawi's historic unveiling. El Guindi further offers a critical piece of information: "[i]n her speech at the Feminist conference in Rome, Sha'arawi specified the face veil [a garment referred to as the *burqu'* at the time, contemporarily referred to as a *niqāb*,] not the head covering, as a barrier to women's advancement."[84] These traditional veils were often made of a long rectangular panel of white fabric

81 IWSA, *Report of the Ninth Congress,* 171.

82 IWSA, *Report of the Ninth Congress,* 169.

83 Shaarawi, "The Opening Speech," 339.

84 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 63.

which was pinned to the head covering and concealed the wearer's face below the eyes. It was this garment that Sha'arawi removed, retaining the *hijab* "in the manner that finds support in Islamic sources."[85] Sha'arawi's unveiling (*al-sufur*) fit into a larger effort to strip back the elements of "custom" which limited women's ability to engage actively in daily life, while retaining and upholding Islamic law and practice.

Within the historiography, particularly among those theorists who seek to establish an Islamic feminist tradition purified of imperialist influence, there is a tendency to interpret Sha'arawi's actions as an act of compliance with imperialist imperatives, as rooted fundamentally in a desire to modernize and Westernize Egypt at the expense of Egyptian culture. While her ideological perspective was certainly the product of many convergent influences, including the hegemonic and imperialist, Sha'arawi's unveiling was not a blind, European-oriented rejection of Arab-Egyptian cultural tradition. It was, if the evidence offered above is accepted, an act of religious revisionism, of cross-class solidarity, and of progressivist nationalism. It was representative of her efforts to navigate the conflictual political field of the colonized nation, and to retain both individual and cultural agency in the formation of a specific vision of modernity.

Debates over ideology and ownership, and agency and innovation, are not simply ink-bound wranglings over technicalities of the past. They are political, activist claims which take on a life of their own and can be wielded with powerful influence. Without a doubt, Sha'arawi's performative unveiling "has entered the lore on women's liberation and, as lore, is alive and is continually embellished."[86]

V. CONCLUSION

As questions of cultural imperialism, feminist ideology, and veiling practices remain politically salient, the histories of these debates become both critically relevant and politically useful. Identifying the origins of native Middle Eastern feminisms has high stakes in issues of geopolitical policy and individual, national, ethnic, cultural, and religious self-determination. By looking back at the histories of these contemporary debates, and the ways in which they evolved and ossified in the modern period, it may be possible to devise new strategies for the future. More importantly, such a historical perspective helps to undermine assumptions upon which structural power hierarchies such as patriarchy and colonialism have been naturalized.

The initial inquiry that this text sought to unravel was the question

85 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 64.

86 El Guindi, "Veiling Resistance," 64.

of how colonized women, with Sha'arawi as a key point of reference, were able to articulate an indigenous perspective while navigating a complex and interconnected discursive field in which the indigenous and the colonial are not only inextricable, but also mutually constitutive. Above, I have tried to complicate the perception that ideology formation was a process of intellectual transfer from north to south, indicating that the existence of this perception robs early twentieth-century feminists of their agency and reinforces imperialist worldviews. The adaptation, contestation, and selective incorporation of certain elements of European ideology is presented as a form of anticolonial resistance, as well as a measured and realistic response to actual social and economic conditions. A primary objective of this reading, which belongs to a larger trend in global conceptual history, is to emphasize the agency of non-Western women's rights activists. At the same time, I attempt to complicate a binary and politicized construction of imperialist and indigenous feminist potentialities, articulated in the context of contemporary debates, which makes claims to a purified historical Islamic feminism while erasing the multiconfessional and transnational history of the Middle East. Instead, I traced the dynamic interchange of ideas and the highly selective formulation of independent ideologies, influenced both by the conceptions of Westerners and by a complicated matrix of preexisting ideologies, cultural propensities, regional interests, localized conditions, and personal concerns.

Making Patagonia an "Australian Argentina" and Making the Amazon Tightly Brazilian: Depictions and Political Projects in Roberto Payró's and Euclides da Cunha's Travel Writings (1898, 1904-1905)

by
JOSÉ BENTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMASSA

ABSTRACT

The Patagonia and Acre territories were not part of Argentina and Brazil respectively by the time of their independences in the early nineteenth century. Instead, they were annexed during the Latin American Belle Époque, when both countries ascended economically and geopolitically and bore frontier impulses. Therefore, the incorporation of these territories was founded upon broader endeavors of national expansion and development. With these aspirations in their luggage, the Argentine journalist Roberto Payró traveled to Patagonia in 1898, while the Brazilian essayist Euclides da Cunha journeyed to Acre and the West Amazon in 1904-1905. Using a comparative history approach, this article shows how their travel writings debated modernizing and territorial integration projects and echoed similar plans, as both regions faced resemblant challenges. It also demonstrates how Payró's and Cunha's beliefs about race and national identity contrasted, a point that is linked to different mainstream ideas in Argentine and Brazilian intellectual debates, entailing dissonant points of view over which groups of people should ultimately populate Patagonia and Acre.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Latin American Belle Époque, many capital cities, including Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, witnessed immense changes, from the outset of industrialization to the execution of urban reforms inspired by Baron Haussmann's Paris. One of these transformations was the blossoming of new spaces for intellectual sociability, including cafés, theaters, bookstores, and publishing houses. Many newspapers and magazines were established, and the press experienced a modernizing effort, as well as an incipient professionalization.[1] New opportunities for journalists and writers emerged, notedly in the 1890s and the 1900s.

One of those possibilities consisted in the publishing of travel writings in the press. Many Latin American intellectuals of that period seized the opportunity and wrote about places they had travelled to, communicating points of view about local cultures and political or economic issues. Travel writing was established as a journalistic genre, which was mastered, among several others, by two remarkable South American essayists: the Argentine journalist, dramatist, and novelist Roberto Jorge Payró (1867-1928) and the Brazilian engineer and writer Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909). Considering the importance of both authors in their countries' Belle Époque press and literature, this research article aims to analyze and to compare two pieces of travel writing composed by Payró and Euclides[2] about Patagonia and the Amazon respectively.

Initially, the article scrutinizes the similarities concerning the (geo) political and intellectual contexts of their journeys. Then, it investigates the depictions and policy propositions each author embraced in their travel writing. In doing so, the affinity of both authors' general modernizing aspirations is highlighted. Finally, as a counterpoint, this paper verifies and explains the discrepancies between the way Euclides da Cunha conceived

1 Two important works about the series of transformations mentioned in the paragraph are, regarding Brazil and Argentina respectively: Nicolau Sevcenko, *Literatura como Missão: Tensões sociais e criação cultural na Primeira República* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003); Alejandra Laera, "Cronistas, novelistas: la prensa periódica como espacio de profesionalización en la Argentina (1880-1910)," in *Historia de los intelectuales en América Latina I. La ciudad letrada, de la conquista al modernismo*, ed. Carlos Altamirano (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2008).

2 Since his tragic murder in 1909, Euclides da Cunha has been so well-known and revered among Brazilian scholars that he is usually referred to by his first name. This article follows that convention, referring to him by his forename, which has already been done in English. See: Barbara Celarent [pseud.]., review of *Rebellion in the Backlands* by Euclides da Cunha, trans. Samuel Putnam, *American Journal of Sociology* 118, no. 2 (September 2012): 536-542, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/668402.

of the settlement of the West Amazon and how Payró imagined the same process in southern Argentina. Ultimately, this paper explores how Payró's and Euclides's points of view about the regions they visited were related to their personal, national, professional, and political identities.

In close years, both writers traveled to peripheral regions in their countries, areas that faced social conditions vastly different from the metropoles. Payró went to Argentina's Patagonian Coast in 1898 as a reporter from *La Nación*, one of the largest newspapers in Buenos Aires. In the same year, he published *La Australia argentina (The Argentine Australia),*[3] a compilation of his Patagonian reports and narratives. Between 1904 and 1905, Euclides made a journey to the territory of Acre in the Brazilian West Amazon. He wrote several essays about the Amazon, most of them posthumously collected in *À margem da História (The Amazon: land without history)* (1909),[4] a book that includes texts about diverse subjects.

Working for the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Baron of Rio Branco's tenure as Minister (1902-1912), Euclides was the head of a commission in charge of the geographical exploration of the Amazonian area of Upper Purús, as a part of border negotiations with Peru. He had been celebrated as one of Brazil's great essayists since his *Os Sertões (Rebellion in the Backlands)* (1902),[5] a book that recounted the War of Canudos (1896-1897) in the Brazilian Northeastern backlands (more precisely in the state of Bahia's countryside), which described its environment and reflected on its people. In 1904, the conflict with Peru seemed to escalate. After writing about it in the press, the then-unemployed Euclides was invited to join the team of the above-mentioned commission.[6]

3 Roberto Jorge Payró, *La Australia argentina: excursión periodística a las costas patagonicas, Tierra del Fuego e Isla de los Estados* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta La Nación, 1898).

4 Euclides da Cunha, *À margem da História*, ed. Leopoldo M. Bernucci, Francisco Foot Hardman and Felipe Pereira Rissato (São Paulo: Editora da Unesp, 2019). The essays published in *À margem da História* have been republished in *Um Paraíso Perdido* [*A Paradise Lost*], a book that includes more articles and letters Euclides wrote about the Amazon. In this article, I will quote the second book: Euclides da Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido: reunião de ensaios amazônicos*, ed. Hildon Rocha (Brasília: Conselho Editorial do Senado Federal, 2000). Euclides's Amazonian essays were translated to English in 2006: Euclides da Cunha, *The Amazon: land without history*, trans. Ronald W. Sousa and Lúcia Sá (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

5 Euclides da Cunha, *Os Sertões* (São Paulo: Ubu Editora; São Paulo: Edições Sesc São Paulo, 2016). The book has been translated into several languages, including English. See: Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, trans. Samuel Putnam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

6 Susanna B. Hecht, *The scramble for*

Although Payró was not directly involved with his own country's diplomatic issues, they were a crucial background that influenced his decision to travel to Patagonia. The region was at the center of an old litigation between Argentina and Chile that resurged in 1896-1898,[7] which drove *La Nación* to publish news and stories about the area's social and economic conditions, as well as about its people and their everyday life. As a correspondent reporter who had already travelled to Chile in 1895 and to different Argentine provinces (such as Santiago del Estero, Corrientes, Córdoba, and Santa Fe), Payró took the job.[8]

The unstable national border situation was not the only similarity between the two regions. Acre and Patagonia were annexed by their countries in a similar context of national ascent and territorial consolidation. Likewise, both areas embodied analogous social and geographical challenges to Brazil and Argentina in the years following their conquest.

By defining this scope of analysis, this article uses both comparative and global history approaches that extend beyond the national framework of the two countries. The two selected cases involve the extremities of South America, encompassing huge distances and deeply differing geographies. The global historian Sebastian Conrad reminds us that global history does not necessarily imply worldwide coverage; the fact that the regions are in the same subcontinent cannot be disregarded as a global scale for historical research.[9] In addition to examining wider South American intellectual debates, this text also discusses how Euclides da Cunha and Roberto Payró interpreted the global affairs of their time, connecting events occurring in India, Australia, and the United States to their South American homelands.

The authors investigated by this text also shared resonant enthusiasm for the development of the Amazon and Patagonia. Both writers fashioned themselves as experts and political thinkers, as opposed to mere tourists that travelled for leisure. Still, there remain substantial distinctions between the political perspectives in their travel writing. It is a purpose of this paper to try to explain how these differences echoed disparities in ideas about race and national identity

the Amazon and the "Lost Paradise" of Euclides da Cunha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 199.

7 Susana Bandieri, *Historia de la Patagonia* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2014), 146, 266.

8 Martín Servelli, "A través de la República: La emergencia del reporterismo viajero en la prensa porteña de entresiglos (XIX-XX)" (PhD diss., Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2014), 52, http://repositorio.filo.uba.ar/handle/filodigital/6156.

9 Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 8-10.

in Brazilian and Argentine intellectual circles during the Belle Époque, despite sharing the same Eurocentric common ground.

THE ROLE OF TRAVEL WRITING AS ESSAY IN THE LATIN AMERICAN BELLE ÉPOQUE

In the late nineteenth century, the growth of the hotel market and major international events such as the Universal Exhibitions gave way to the rise of tourism as a way of traveling.[10] The embryonic popularization of tourism challenged Latin American economic and intellectual elites, insofar as traveling to Europe was an old symbol of power and high culture. Authors with literary pretense tried to distinguish their travelogues or travel books from simple travel guides for middle-class tourists.[11] The French-Argentine writer Paul Groussac (1848-1929), for example, made the appeal that traveling should be a stimulus for intellectual reflection. On this kind of travel, which he called *viaje intelectual* (intellectual travel), Groussac advised that travel writing should be understood as essays, which were meant to open new paths of thinking.[12]

As the Argentine literary critic Beatriz Colombi argues, this type of travel enjoyed great prestige in Hispanic-American literary networks between the decades of 1890-1910. It conferred considerable discursive authority on the figure of the traveling intellectual, who came to occupy a prominent place in the Hispanic-American press.[13] For instance, Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (1867-1919) and Guatemalan Enrique Gómez Carillo (1873-1927) worked as foreign correspondents in Europe and received big highlight features in Argentine papers, and as a result, their texts seized larger readership and generated frequent intellectual debates.[14] Travel essays were among the few signed articles in Latin American newspapers, an indication of their authors' renown.[15] As can be gleaned from Darío's examination of local cultures, Groussac's sociological approach, and Manuel Ugarte's (1875-1951) anti-imperialist overtures, travel writing became a journalistic genre and was frequently used for voicing different concerns.[16]

Euclides da Cunha and Roberto Payró were travelers of this genre. Subscribing to Groussac's

10 Cristobal Pera, "De viajeros y turistas: reflexiones sobre el turismo en la literatura hispanoamericana," *Revista Iberoamericana* 64, no. 184-185 (July-December 1998): 512, https://doi.org/10.5195/reviberoamer.1998.6124.

11 Graciela Montaldo, "Prólogo," in Rubén Darío, *Viajes de um cosmopolita extremo*, ed. Graciela Montaldo (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2013), 22.

12 Beatriz Colombi, *Viaje intelectual: migraciones y desplazamientos en América Latina, 1880-1915* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2004), 72.

13 Colombi, *Viaje intelectual*, 13-17.

14 Ibid, 13-17.

15 Servelli, "A través," 6-8.

16 Colombi, *Viaje intelectual*, 13-17.

aforesaid conception of travel writing as an intellectual and political tool, both strove to influence public opinion by debating certain issues related to the Amazon and Patagonia.[17] To better understand what these issues were, a further historicization of the settings of these regions between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries is needed.

PATAGONIA AND ACRE AS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BATTLEGROUNDS

In the late nineteenth century, both Patagonia and Acre were what Mary Louise Pratt visualized as *contact zones*, or "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."[18] These regions were focuses of what Walter Nugent conceived as a frontier impulse,[19] that is, a national expansionist drive towards "extensive 'free' lands within their own borders"[20], aiming to combat native peoples and to colonize the interior. Despite not constituting empires, then-recently emancipated countries such as Brazil and Argentina also sought to enlarge their territories in the age of the Second Industrial Revolution, marked by a progressively integrated global economy.[21] As they were massive world commodity suppliers, broader territories meant the possibility of deeper wealth. That condition was not exclusive for Brazil and Argentina in South America. In fact, it was the main issue in the Pacific War (1879-1884), in which Chile (another South American power) managed to defeat Peru and Bolivia to annex areas like Antofagasta, rich in guano and saltpeter that provided nitrates, a valuable product at the time.[22]

The Argentine impulse towards Patagonia was related to the desire to expand its areas for agriculture and livestock, its major export for international markets in the late nineteenth century.[23] In the case of Brazil, Acre was enticing because of its rubber tree areas. Before the introduction of rubber species to Britain's South Asian colonies in the 1910s, the Amazon and the Congo were the most important world suppliers of rubber, as its vegetal

17 Ibid, 16.
18 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 4.
19 Walter Nugent, "Frontiers and Empires in Late Nineteenth Century," in *The American West: the reader,* ed. Walter Nugent and Martin Ridge (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 40.
20 Nugent, "Frontiers and Empires", 45.
21 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *A era dos Impérios, 1875-1914*, trans. Sieni Maria Campos and Yolanda Steidel de Toledo (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1988), 95.
22 Hobsbawm, *A era dos Impérios*, 113.
23 Ibid, 65, 79, 111; David Rock, *El radicalismo argentino, 1890-1930*, trans. Leandro Wolfson (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu editores, 2001), 13.

sources were rare, available only in certain equatorial zones.[24]

By the time of Payró's and Euclides's travels, Patagonia and Acre had just been annexed by Argentina and Brazil respectively. Emerging as victors of the Paraguayan War (1864-1870, also known as the War of the Triple Alliance), these two South American powers used their military and geopolitical strength to annex the aforementioned areas.[25] Even so, the means for these accomplishments were different in each case.

The incorporation of the far southern territories by Argentina was a martial enterprise. The southernmost region of the Americas had theoretically belonged to the Spanish Empire in previous centuries. Nevertheless, from the beginning of Hispanic-American national independence movements in the 1810s to the end of the nineteenth century, the area had not yet been formally incorporated by Chile on the Pacific side, nor by Argentina on the Atlantic side. According to international law, the area was *terra nullius,*[26] even though it was the homeland of many Amerindian peoples, some of them Trans-Andean, such as the Mapuche. The Argentine authorities and landowners' experience shifted between varying degrees of negotiation and bellicosity with the Indigenous groups on its border.[27]

Argentine elites, however, also claimed that geographical zone (which included a part of the Pampas) as their legitimate territory inherited from Spain, longing to attack its Indigenous societies and occupy the area. This plan became viable and was launched in 1878, under the presidency of Nicolás Avellaneda and Julio Argentino Roca's administration in the Ministry of War. The ensuing military offensives—the so-called "Conquest of Desert"—lasted until 1885, when Roca served as President. The consequence of that process was the murder of more than 12,000 Indigenous individuals, the breakdown of their societies, and the beginning of Argentine rule over the region.[28]

On the other hand, the incorporation of Acre by the Brazilian government was a result of insurgencies upheld by Brazilian *seringueiros* (tappers that extracted latex from *Hevea brasiliensis*, a tree known as *seringueira*) in the area and subsequent diplomatic

24 Barbara Weinstein, *The Amazon rubber boom, 1850-1920* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983).

25 David Viñas, *Indios, ejército y frontera* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 1982), 16.

26 Ana Carollina Gutierrez Pompeu, "A construção da Patagônia argentina" (master's thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2012), 111, https://repositorio.unb.br/handle/10482/10816.

27 Gabriel Passetti, *Indígenas e criollos: política, guerra e traição nas lutas no sul da Argentina (1852-1885)* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2012).

28 Carlos Martínez Sarasola, *Nuestros Paisanos los índios* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2005).

negotiations. Until 1903, Acre had been a peripheral part of Bolivian territory and was mostly inhabited by Brazilian migrants.[29] Since the 1870s, there was an ongoing migratory wave of Brazilian people to the Amazon. The migrants were mostly escaping draughts in the Brazilian Northeastern backlands (especially from the state of Ceará).[30] Simultaneously, as Susanna Hecht writes, "by the 1880s, Acre was becoming one of the most commercially desirable areas on earth": rubber held the promise of material wealth or, at the very least, survival.[31]

The Bolivian government had not yet occupied Acre until the arrival of Brazilian immigrants. The country tried to recover its sovereignty over the area in April 1899. As the attempt failed, the country discussed a deal with the United States to receive American diplomatic and military support to exercise Bolivian rights over Acre. When the news of the forthcoming deal circulated, Brazilian settlers rebelled and declared the Acre Independent State, which was not recognized by Brazilian authorities. Later, in 1901, Bolivia signed a contract that would lease most of the Acre territory to the Bolivian Trading Company (an American chartered company also known as the "Bolivian Syndicate") for a period of thirty years.[32] Tensions quickly escalated, and although the United States Department of State denied it, the lease posed a clear risk of future American interference in the Brazilian Amazon.[33]

In 1902, Acre witnessed a new uprising of Brazilian settlers led by Plácido de Castro (1873-1908) against Bolivia, backed by the government of the Brazilian state of Amazonas.[34] This time Brazil formally supported the movement, as the government believed that the "Bolivian Syndicate" would pose a threat to its hegemony in the Amazon. A war was about to explode in the beginning of 1903 but eventually, Castro's military success made Bolivia give up the plan of recovering Acre. The Baron of Rio Branco, who had taken office at the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December of the previous year, managed to conciliate with Bolivia and incorporate Acre with Brazil through the Treaty of Petrópolis (1903). The Treaty stipulated the payment of 2 million pounds for Bolivia and the pledge of constructing a railway (which would be called Madeira-Mamoré) to improve the transportation of Bolivian products through the Amazon Basin.[35]

With this agreement, Acre

29 Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira, "O Barão de Rothschild e a questão do Acre," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 43, no. 2 (December 2000): 150-169, https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-73292000000200007.
30 Hecht, *The scramble*, 181.
31 Ibid, 96.
32 Ibid, 172-173.
33 Bandeira, "O Barão de Rotschild," 155.
34 Ibid, 155.
35 Hecht, *The scramble*, 181.

was finally a part of Brazilian territory. But another international dispute was impending, this time with Peru. Brazil and Peru had not signed a border treaty since the respective independences of both countries. Lima also had not recognized Acre as legitimate Bolivian territory, arguing that during Spanish colonization it had belonged to the Viceroyalty of Peru. Besides this, the Peruvian government wanted to annex Acre due to the presence of Peruvian *caucheros* (who extracted latex from *Castilla ulei*, known as *caucho*) in the region.[36] Another war seemed imminent, but the conflict was solved by diplomatic means, leading to the formation of the Joint Commission for the Reconnaissance of the Upper Purús, integrated by Peruvian and Brazilian members to cooperate on the demarcation of borders. Euclides da Cunha was nominated head of the Brazilian delegation.[37]

Acre and Argentine Patagonia were thus outcomes of different national endeavors. These areas were key pieces in the puzzle of expanding territories, which made nations feel more powerful. Nonetheless, Patagonia and the West Amazon were still too far from their national capital cities. Their environments were so divergent that they were often considered foreign territories within their own countries.[38] They had not yet been integrated into Brazilian and Argentine national imagined communities,[39] popularized by literature and widespread civic symbols throughout the nineteenth century. Patagonia and Acre were products of a "territorial fiction that sought to legitimize the expansion of the Republics."[40] The immediacy of their incorporation demonstrates the artifice of the concept of national territory as a supposed traditionally shared geographic land by one people.

In short, as Alberto Harambour-Ross stated about Patagonia, "Patagonia as a national frontier refers to its paradoxical location as ideologically central and materially marginal at the same time."[41] According to Leopoldo M. Bernucci, Acre typified an identical ambiguity for Brazil in the 1900s.[42] These conditions entailed the problems Euclides and Payró tackled in their writings.

36 Hecht, *The scramble*, 187-195.
37 Ibid, 216.
38 Claudia Torre, *Literatura en tránsito. La narrativa expedicionaria de la conquista del desierto* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2010).
39 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).
40 Alberto Harambour-Ross, "Borderland Sovereignties. Postcolonial Colonialism and State Making in Patagonia. Argentina and Chile, 1840s-1922" (PhD diss., Stony Brook University, 2012), 79, http://hdl.handle.net/1951/59684.
41 Harambour-Ross, "Borderland Sovereignties," 78.
42 Leopoldo M. Bernucci, "Imagens utópicas e distópicas do deserto e da floresta em Euclides da Cunha," *Signótica* 23, no. 1 (2011): 114, https://doi.org/10.5216/sig.v23i1.16148.

DEPICTING PATAGONIA AND THE AMAZON: DENYING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES

The portrayals of Patagonia in Payró's writings and of Acre in those of Euclides's have two dimensions. Payró and Euclides indeed described the regions' faults, such as a shortage of transportation infrastructure, an absence of public facilities, poverty, abysmal economic inequality, and weak enforcement of the rule of law. Nevertheless, both authors remained hopeful about the future of the Amazon and Patagonia. How was that possible?

These writers did not view these problems as inherent in both areas. Unlike previous authors, they tried to disconnect the regions' problems from their natural features. Of course, as metropolitan men, Euclides and Payró were astonished by their peculiar landscapes and perceived them as indomitable at first glance. Still, as their writings illustrated, this depiction of the zones as ill-fated wild places was not solidified.

In *La Australia argentina*, Payró intended to relativize the coldness imputed to the Argentine South Coast. Presenting statistics, he related Tierra del Fuego's weather to Dublin's, an important European city.[43] By making that comparison, the author argued that Patagonian climate was not an obstacle to develop both settlements and the economy. Moreover, upon arriving in Buenos Aires, Payró said that he had not caught a cold on his trip, contrary to what was expected.[44] He also reported no tribulation in his boat on the Magellan Strait, famous for its harsh conditions for navigation.[45] The icebergs, alpine snow slides on the seashore, and channels of Tierra del Fuego did not seem quite so frightening to Payró as much as beautiful. The journalist even suggested that the region became a tourist destination for summer vacations.[46] He characterized its landscape as "spectacular": "We were astounded by the spectacle of a snow mountain [...] whose snow almost reached the sea, with bluish smooth shades, really delicate, that highlighted the nearly absolute whiteness of the snow in the top, contrasting with the leaden sky."[47] Another negative stereotype minimized by Payró was the Patagonian "curse of sterility" mentioned in Charles Darwin's Beagle diary.[48] Payró

43 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 311.

44 Ibid, 418.

45 Ibid, 117.

46 Ibid, 168-169.

47 Own translation. Original quotation: "[N]os sorprendió el espectáculo de uno de los ventisqueros [...] cuya nieve llegaba hasta el mar, con tonos azulados suaves y tenues, muy finos, que hacían resaltar más la blancura casi absoluta de la nieve en la cima, destacada á su vez sobre el fondo plomizo del cielo." Ibid, 172

48 Charles Darwin, *Charles Darwin's Beagle diary*, ed. R. D. Keynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 253.

argued that shortages of drinkable water could be easily prevented through the creation of cisterns. But most Patagonian areas did not face this issue; they were suitable for agriculture and cattle grazing, which made Payró optimistic about the region's future.

In Euclides's writings, there was also a refutation of some prejudices about the Amazon. He refused to see affluents of the Amazon River as eternal natural obstacles for navigation. For him, the navigational difficulties were not predetermined by nature, but by the absence of relatively simple improvements to riverbeds.[49] As an engineer, Euclides believed that water engineering could easily cope with the complexities in fluvial transportation in the Amazon Basin.

Euclides also refuted preconceptions about Acre in particular. He strongly opposed the idea that the territory had an unhealthy climate: "The exaggeration is clear. Territory of Acre and generally the Amazonian plains perhaps have that absolutely common mortality in every new settlement area. But it is substantially narrow."[50]

Mentioning "every new settlement area," Euclides accentuated that the strains with Acre and the Amazon were derived from the recent process of integration of these regions into Brazilian, more central and developed areas. Euclides also asserted that all Amazonian problems would disappear "as soon as that kidnapped society [*the Amazon*] is incorporated to its country [*Brazil*]."[51]

Euclides and Payró made an argument for the fitness of the Amazon and Patagonia for Western modern and scientific social patterns, which they believed were paradigms of civilization. The alleged shortcomings which both essayists noticed in those areas had more to do with political and social matters. Payró and Euclides were among the authors that first wrote about Patagonia and the Amazon from a political and social approach rather than the naturalistic, traditional one that characterized early European colonization. Thus, in their point of view, political, social, and economic solutions were available for developing both regions and installing a "civilizing routine" onto them. [52]

49 Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido*, 140.

50 Own translation. Original quotation: "O exagero é palmar. O Acre, ou, em geral, as planuras amazônicas [...] tem talvez a letalidade vulgaríssima em todos os lugares recém-abertos ao povoamento. Mas consideravelmente reduzida." Ibid, 145.

51 Own translation. Original quotation: "desde que se incorpore a sociedade seqüestrada ao resto do país." Euclides da Cunha, *Obra completa*, ed. Afrânio Coutinho (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Aguilar, 1995), 802.

52 Jens Andermann, "Reporters en la frontera Periodismo de viaje e imaginación progresista en Payró y Arlt," *El Rodaballo* 10 (Summer 2000): 76.

IMAGINING PATAGONIA AND THE AMAZON: STRESSING POSSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

As demonstrated, both authors presented many possibilities of modernizing and deepening the exploitation of the regions they wrote about. As a priority, better transportation networks were absolute necessities. Payró noted that the complaint about transportation was unanimous among Patagonian settlers, an ineffectiveness that undermined trade and supply networks.[53]

In 1898 only Transporte Nacional Villarino, a steam cargo ship from the Argentine Navy, connected the region with Buenos Aires by sea. As much as it reached some of the main points of the Argentine South Coast, Villarino still did not stop in Camarones, Puerto Deseado, Puerto San Julián, and the entire east coast of Tierra del Fuego.[54] Villarino's conditions for transporting people were far from ideal, as stated by Payró, himself one of its passengers: "And some people even dare to say that this shipping line, that makes its route once a month, really pursues the Patagonian development!"[55] Payró envied the plentiful nature of shipping transportation in Punta Arenas, in the Chilean Patagonia.[56] The reporter proposed that the Argentine state should offer aid to private sea routes to integrate its national Patagonian territories.[57]

Payró also stressed the importance of the creation of railways and the installation of telegraphs for the Argentine South Coast. Telegraph lines were being installed by the Army, and there was a prospect of a new railroad in the Patagonian Territory of Chubut to be constructed by a private company.[58] That territory was already served by the Ferrocarril Central del Chubut railway since 1888.[59] The railroad was a typical emblem of the nineteenth-century aspiration for technology and progress.[60] It also appeared in Euclides's propositions for Acre. Apart from his ideas of improving navigation in Amazonian rivers, Euclides planned a Trans-Acrean railway, which was his greatest

53 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 256.
54 Ibid, 10-11.
55 Own translation. Original quotation: "¡Y dicen que esta línea de transportes que hace un viaje al mes, tiene por objeto el desarollo de aquellas regiones!" Ibid, 9.
56 Payró regarded Punta Arenas as an example to be followed by Argentina, considering that the Chilean government had allegedly often executed public works projects to upgrade the harbor and urban infrastructure in the town. See: Ibid, 134, 144.
57 Ibid, 11.
58 Ibid, 28.
59 Colin M. Lewis, *British Railways in Argentina 1857-1914: A Case Study of Foreign Investment* (London: Athlone Press, 1983).
60 Marshall Berman, *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 18, 74, 92, 194.

project for the Amazon.[61] This initiative would have been associated with the grand Madeira-Mamoré railway project, whose construction would start in 1907. The connection between the two railroads would have allowed Acre to have a greater connection with the current Brazilian state of Rondônia.

Euclides da Cunha had a positivistic and evolutionist background, which made him a devotee to the sciences and technology. He also carefully observed international political happenings, particularly the imperial policies of European powers. Having in mind the British Empire and its technological feats in Asia, Euclides said that "Here, as in India, there were a plenty of professionals frightened of geographic and climate difficulties – professionals that forgot that Engineering precisely exists for overcoming them."[62]

Euclides knew about American infrastructure successes as well. Evoking a railway that integrated the First Transcontinental Railroad, completed in 1869, he idealized that "just as the Union Pacific Railway did, the Trans-Acrean railroad will not suit a present traffic once it does not yet exist. Instead, it will create that traffic."[63]

This quotation reveals a core belief Euclides and Payró had: increasing the population in the Amazon and in Patagonia was not only a way to maximize the economic exploitation of the regions, but was part of a process of creating fairer, new societies in them. Both authors' political plans regarding the regions envisioned the promotion of settlement not just as a demographic issue, but as a tactic to establish certain social conditions and to overcome deprivation.

Payró considered that a main source for the plights of Patagonia was its unequal landowning policies. The largest part of rural area belonged to absentee landlords, interested in country estate speculation. This had two effects: first, it decreased the chance of settlers, peasants, and shepherds having their own lands or renting a small rural estate. Second, it also contributed to keeping Argentine Patagonia uncultivated and underdeveloped. Most of the Patagonian National Territory of Chubut was unoccupied and, in the fraction that was indeed occupied, the sheep population prevailed over the human one, something Harambour-Ross conceived as a sheep sovereignty.[64] According to Payró, this was due to legal

61 Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido*, 195-208.

62 Own translation. Original quotation: "[n]a Índia, como entre nós, não faltaram profissionais apavorados ante as dificuldades naturais – esquecidos de que a engenharia existe precisamente para vencê-las." Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido*, 201.

63 Own translation. Original quotation: "a linha acriana, a exemplo da Union Pacific Railway, não vai satisfazer um tráfego, que não existe, senão criar o que deve existir." Ibid, 201-202.

64 Harambour-Ross, "Borderland Sovereignties," 133-143.

proceedings that filibustered small land renting, which he deemed "disgusting."[65]

Payró fashioned himself as an ally of Patagonian pioneers, characterizing them as self-made men harmed by the Argentine government and its corrupt favoring bias towards the *terrateniente* (landholder) elite. The writer regretted how that scenario undermined the possibility of development, framing country land speculation as a parasitism that blocked development.[66]

Those ideas were linked to Payró's political positions beyond Patagonia. He was a political rival of *roquistas* gathered in PAN, or the *Partido Autonomista Nacional* (National Autonomous Party), the group that had governed Argentina's federal government since 1874 until 1916 and had Julio Roca as its longstanding leader. As a young journalist in Bahía Blanca, Payró supported the *Revolución del Parque* (Revolution of the Park) (1890), a civic-military movement led by the opposition group *Unión Cívica* (Civic Union) against President Miguel Juárez Celman (1886-1890). The movement criticized the corruption and the electoral fraud under PAN's political hegemony.[67]

The political mobilization caused Celman's resignation, a remarkable achievement, despite PAN remaining the ruling party. A prominent leader of Unión Cívica was Bartolomé Mitre, former Argentine President (1861-1868) and owner of *La Nación*, the political pamphlet of that movement. Because of their convergence in *antirroquismo* (opposition to Roca and his followers), Mitre and Payró became close and the latter started to write in *La Nación* in the mid-1890s. Mitre would even sign the foreword of Payró's *La Australia argentina*.[68] Hence, Payró's criticism towards the Argentine government's policy on Patagonian issues was a political weapon against PAN and its administration.

The fact that the journalist represented himself as a passionate Patagonian spokesperson against that government and the landowner elites is also affined to his links with early Argentine socialism. Payró founded the Socialist Party in Argentina in 1896 with writers and compatriots,[69] such as José Ingenieros (1877-1925) and Juan B. Justo (1865-1928). Passages of *La Australia argentina* indicate a concern about the harsh life conditions of the urban working class in Buenos Aires. Payró mentions that jobless men from the capital city migrated to Patagonia and tried to make a living through high-risk and illegal work, such as gold panning

65 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 40-41.
66 Ibid, 68.
67 Natalio R. Botana, *El orden conservador: la política argentina entre 1880 y 1916* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986), 164-174.
68 Botana, *El orden conservador*, v-viii.
69 Eduardo González Lanuza, *Genio y figura de Roberto J. Payró* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1965), 54.

and wolf hunting.[70] As opposed to that, agriculture and livestock in Patagonia were highly attractive alternatives for subsistence, insofar as they were safer and more profitable activities.

These elements may have been what lured Payró to the region. In 1894, the first edition of *La Vanguardia* (a Socialist paper based in Buenos Aires) stated that in modern Argentina, impoverished people's possibility of subsistence became increasingly constrained to selling their labor and being exploited for their surplus value.[71] The newspaper nostalgically remembered a past in which the production of the means of subsistence was freer in the country, something Payró thought rural Patagonia could offer in the future.

Small farming was an ongoing possibility of subsistence in Patagonia that could be invigorated, but it had practically not yet begun in Euclides's Acre. Acre's settlers were almost exclusively occupied as rubber extractors, as that was the sole extractive economic activity in the region. This had catastrophic consequences for the *seringueiros*' work conditions. Euclides was horrified by what he witnessed in Upper Purús's *seringais* (rubber tree plantations). He described that form of work as a cruel, unfree labor: "the most villainous division of labor, which also created the most shameless selfishness [...] Tappers perform a terrific anomaly: they work to slave themselves."[72] This economic bondage involved a series of ruthless contracts imposed on tappers and made them endlessly indebted to *seringalistas* (owners of *seringais*), which Euclides compared to feudalism.[73] The denunciation of these horrors resembled the tone of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), a book that described how European colonizers, just as its ignominious character Kurtz, tyrannized people on the African continent. Conrad's classic novella was inspired by the Belgian colonization of the Congo Free State.[74] Euclides's approach also

70 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 310.

71 Gonzalo Adrián Rojas, "Os socialistas na Argentina (1880-1980) – um século de ação política" (PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2006), 275, https://doi.org/10.11606/T.8.2006.tde-25052007-151218.

72 Own translation. Original quotation: "a mais criminosa organização do trabalho que ainda engenhou o mais desaçamado egoísmo. [...] [O] seringueiro realiza uma tremenda anomalia: é o homem que trabalha para escravizar-se." Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido*, 127.

73 Ibid, 128.

74 There is a long literary and academic debate about Conrad's relationship with imperialism. In a public lecture, the Nigerian novelist and professor Chinua Achebe argued that Conrad's racist representation of African peoples contributed decisively to the imperial project. On the other hand, the Palestinian literary critic Edward Said reasoned that Conrad should be regarded both as an imperialist (due to his refutation of the idea that Africa and South America could

resembles José Eustasio Rivera's *La Vorágine* (*The Vortex*) (1924), a novel about exploitation in the Colombian Amazon, and Roger Casement's *Blue Book on the Putumayo* (1912), a work that investigated the enslavement and extermination of Native people by the Peruvian Amazon Rubber Company, a British corporation.

Euclides thought the dependence on latex extraction was poor for the economy in the long term as well. As a predatory activity, it did not deliver foundations for further development. This intuition was dreadfully confirmed in the early 1910s,[75] not long after Euclides's writings were published and the author's death in 1909, as the Brazilian rubber boom did not manage to endure. Though it had been a source of tremendous wealth for Brazilian Northern oligarchies (as evidenced by Manaus's sumptuous Belle Époque architecture), it did not leave a legacy of welfare in Amazonian inlands such as Acre. As Euclides warned, due to the lack of alternative activities, rubber tapping was producing a poor and nomadic society. It suppressed population growth and geographic occupation, which remained stuck to the river margins in Acre, especially in Upper Purús and Upper Juruá.

Euclides da Cunha's Trans-Acrean railway project devised to transform that situation, insofar as it intended to disperse the population throughout the whole of Acre. The engineer claimed that unoccupied areas in that territory could afford colonizers the possibility of having small farms and properties and being released from the fate of oppression they suffered as *seringueiros*. In the regions to be populated, a less unequal society could emerge, which could facilitate the presence of public institutions, absent where *seringalistas* ruled.

Payró and Euclides were unsuccessful in their propositions because they were not embraced and enabled by national administrations. In the years following *La Australia argentina*, PAN's government attempted to advance some improvements in Patagonian infrastructure, but continued to favor big landowners and country estate speculation, contrary to Payró's anti-oligarchic position.[76] Euclides's Trans-Acrean railroad, meanwhile, inspired some projects and plans in the National Congress of Brazil in the 1910s. However, none of them were approved and they were gradually forgotten as time passed.[77]

have independent cultures and histories) and as an anti-imperialist (he criticized the "corruption of overseas domination"). See: Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa," *Research in African Literatures* 9, no. 2 (1978), 11-15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3818468; Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), xviii.

75 Weinstein, *The Amazon rubber boom*.

76 Pedro Navarro-Floria, "La mirada del reformismo liberal sobre los Territorios del Sur argentino, 1898-1916," *Quinto Sol* 13 (2009): 78, https://doi.org/10.19137/qs.v13i0.3.

77 André Vasques Vital, "Política e

Beyond this common defeat, both writers clearly shared expectations and held many similar propositions for Patagonia and the Amazon. Nevertheless, one topic on which they had quite contrasting views was the racial and national identity that should reign in the region each one visited.

PAYRÓ'S PATAGONIAN UTOPIA: EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND ANGLOPHILIA

Payró strongly advocated for Patagonia to be populated mainly by European immigrants, particularly of Anglo-Saxon descent. Although the writer did not want to expel Argentine people from their own freshly conquered national territory, he believed that British colonists were the most capable of developing the South Argentine Coast and positively influencing the native Argentines in the process. This Anglophile opinion was derived from several factors.

First, Payró's views stemmed from a repudiation of the Spanish colonization and its heritage. Payró not only thought that the colonial past was a burden for Argentine development, but he understood that Patagonia's late integration in Argentina was due to Spanish neglect across centuries. That is, having inherited from Spain a lack of colonizing abilities, Argentina lingered to seize Patagonia while England was sending its own explorers there.[78] Since the mid-nineteenth-century, there had been British settlers in Patagonia and its surroundings, most notably in the Falkland Islands. Anglican missionaries had been in Tierra del Fuego since the 1830s, and Welsh farmers had been in Chubut since 1865.[79] For Payró, the British could take credit for all the trade, towns, and livestock the region had already achieved. Thus, in order to grow, Payró believed Patagonia should not expel the British community, but instrumentalize it.

Additionally, during most of the nineteenth century, Argentine pundits were almost consensually fascinated by European immigration as an alleged path to civilization. This point of view was shared both by PAN and its rivals, even though each administration had its own policy for attracting European settlers.[80] Article

Saúde Pública no cativeiro dos rios: a integração nacional do território federal do Acre (Alto Purus, 1904-1920)" (PhD diss., Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, 2016), 203-212, https://www.arca.fiocruz.br/handle/icict/16345.

78 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 287.

79 Bandieri, *História de la Patagonia*, 158-165.

80 Alejandro Fernández, "La inmigración subsidiada en la Argentina y la crisis económica de 1890," *História Unisinos* 22, no. 2 (2018): 158-162, 167-169, https://doi.org/10.4013/htu.2018.222.01. According to Fernández, until 1886, Argentine national and provincial governments promoted immigration by providing European settlers with provisional accommodation, job offer information, and favorable land renting and

25 of the Argentine Constitution of 1853 established the official promotion of European immigration as an essential state responsibility.[81] Since the generation of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888) and Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-1884), Argentine intellectuals and politicians had hoped that European immigrants would bring a better workforce and a superior culture.[82] Reverberating those ideas in 1898, Payró stood within an Argentine mainstream intellectual tradition. He described male and female Anglo-Saxon Patagonian settlers (like Charles Ross and "Mary X", characters of *La Australia argentina*) as prototypes of virtues supposedly associated with Protestantism, like willpower, abnegation, and industriousness.[83] Evoking racial evolutionism, Payró even wished for miscegenation between British settlers and Argentines, which he saw as a way of purportedly improving the latter.[84]

Another reason for Payró's Patagonian Anglophilia was his admiration towards the British Empire's power[85] and to the astonishing economic ascent of Anglo-Saxon countries and colonies like the United States and Australia. Payró repeatedly mentioned national and colonial Anglo-Saxon frontier spaces like the American West,[86] South Africa, and Australia as models for Patagonian administration and development. He yearned for Patagonia to imitate the ethnic

acquisition conditions. Nevertheless, the state had not yet subsidized transatlantic tickets for immigrants. In 1887-1890, despite the fact that rates of immigration to Argentina were already consistently growing, Juarez Celman's government started a program to subsidize immigrants' transportation and advertise Argentina as an immigrant destination in Europe. This policy was too expensive, however, and ultimately failed. In addition to the political and economic crisis, this resulted in a sudden retreat of European immigration to Argentina in the early 1890s. That conjuncture probably influenced Payró's criticism towards PAN's immigration policies in Patagonia, which he called inefficient.

81 Fernández, "La inmigración subsidiada en la Argentina y la crisis económica de 1890," 158.

82 Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Para qué la inmigración. Ideología y política inmigratoria y acelaración del proceso modernizador: el caso argentino (1810-1914)," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 13 (1976): 437, https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/jbla.1976.13.issue-1/issue-files/jbla.1976.13.issue-1.xml.

83 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 80-91.

84 Ibid, 82; Harambour-Ross, "Borderland Sovereignties," 85.

85 Alan Knight, "Britain and Latin America," in Andrew Porter and Alaine Low, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. 3, *The nineteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 122-142.

86 Before Payró, Argentine essayists, such as Groussac, had already compared their country's territorial expansion process to the American Western experience in the form of manifest destiny. Groussac himself had visited California and Utah in the early 1890s. See: Paul Groussac, *Del Plata al Niágara* (Buenos Aires: Administración de la Biblioteca, 1897).

melting pot and civil and economic freedoms of white pioneers in the American Far West.[87] Payró also desired for Patagonia to become as affluent as Australia,[88] especially since one of its key products, cattle, was also an important Argentine commodity, whose production could be increased with Patagonian lands. Similarly, Payró exalted the prosperity the Falkland Islands had attained and claimed that if Patagonia were under British colonization, it would have a better administration.[89]

The fact that Payró titled his Patagonian book *La Australia argentina* not only referred to the southern, *austral*, location of the region, but also glorified the Oceanian colony, which served as a synecdoche of the Anglophone world. It is curious that Payró gave such praise to Anglo-Saxons in a moment when great Hispanic-American writers like Paul Groussac, Rubén Darío, and José Enrique Rodó (1872-1917) defended the alignment of Hispanic-American nations and celebrated their Latin cultural ties given by Spanish colonization.[90] This point of view was a reaction to the Spanish-American War (1898), in which the United States defeated the Spanish Empire.[91] While some essayists were afraid of the United States' power in the Americas, Payró realized that the future of the continent was Anglo-Saxon. As a result of that supposition, Payró assumed that, in order to keep rising, Argentina should uproot its Iberian legacy and, in its place, implant Anglo-Saxon features. Patagonia, in his view, could be a vital part in that process.

ASSURING THE AMAZON WOULD REMAIN BRAZILIAN: EUCLIDES'S PROJECT FOR THE BRAZILIAN WEST AMAZON

On the other hand, Euclides undoubtedly thought Acre should be populated by national people rather than immigrants. For him, the process of demographic densification of these spaces had to be an *endogenous* process, whereas Payró conceived of populating Patagonia as an

87 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" [First published in 1893] in John Mack Faragher, ed., *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), 31-60.

88 Robert Vincent Jackson, *Australian economic development in the nineteenth century* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977), 4-11.

89 Payró, *La Australia argentina*, 447.

90 José Luis Bendicho Beired, "Hispanismo e latinismo no debate intelectual ibero-americano," *Varia Historia* 30, no. 54 (2014): 637-639, https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-87752014000300003.

91 Mónica Quijada, "Latinos y anglosajones: el 98 en el fin de siglo sudamericano," *Hispania* 57, no. 196 (1997): 596-604, https://doi.org/10.3989/hispania.1997.v57.i196.687.

exogenous phenomenon, with Anglo-Saxons at its center. Why, then, was there such a difference in approach?

To argue that it was due to a lack of late nineteenth-century European immigration to the Amazon is a mistake. By the time of Euclides's journey to Acre, there were already many European and Middle Eastern immigrants in the regions of Purús and Juruá,[92] which Euclides certainly noticed.[93] During the 1890s, Pará, a Brazilian Amazonian state, became a destination for significant waves of Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian immigrants.[94] Therefore, if Euclides perceived immigration as the best alternative for the Amazon, he could have plainly championed it. Instead, Euclides argued that the people from Ceará who had been living in Acre since the 1870s had already done a great job, even if they were not assisted by any government aid. Euclides rebuked the fact that the Brazilian state subsidized Italian migrants to settle in the opulent state of São Paulo[95] whereas it disregarded its own national people, who, despite degrading conditions, were vigorously developing a brand-new Brazilian territory.[96]

Euclides da Cunha's position can be properly contextualized by a set of personal and intellectual factors. Euclides traveled as a state worker of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, so he had a nationalist civic duty, unlike Payró's rivalry with PAN in the Argentine Presidency. In private reports and letters to the Baron of Rio Branco, he displayed a sharp national pride and registered his disguised distrust towards the Peruvian authorities he had to work with in the Joint Commission.[97] Beyond that, since his pre-Commission articles, Euclides had always been a champion of retaining Acre in Brazil.

That concern was linked to the ambition of maintaining and reinforcing Brazilian hegemony over the Amazon region. Euclides followed an intellectual tradition that was preached since the times of the national monarchy (1822-1889): a celebration of Brazil's hegemony

92 Márcio Souza, *História da Amazônia: do período pré-colombiano aos desafios do século XXI* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2019), 259-260.

93 Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido*, 156.

94 Marília Ferreira Emmi, *Um século de imigrações internacionais na Amazônia brasileira (1850-1950)* (Belém: Editora do Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos da Universidade Federal do Pará, 2013).

95 Similar to their Argentine counterparts, Brazilian elites favored European immigration, which they conceived as the path to supposed civilization. In 1870-1900, the country received approximately 1,850,000 immigrants (mainly concentrated in the state of São Paulo), a considerable figure even though it was a smaller quantity than immigration to Argentina in the same time (nearly 2.5 million people). See: Thomas Skidmore, *Preto no branco: raça e nacionalidade no pensamento brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976), 154-162.

96 Cunha, *Um paraíso perdido*, 152-153.

97 Euclides da Cunha, *Obra completa*, 1: 583.

and exceptionalism over the other South American countries due to its great territory and supposed political stability.[98] The West Amazon interested Euclides not so much because of its precious natural resources, but as a means of bolstering Brazilian territorial dominion. Brazilian settlers were indispensable for making Brazil's sovereignty over the region more legitimate and ensuring Acre would not be dominated by neighboring or imperial countries. Promoting systematic European immigration to Acre would symbolically loosen Brazilian rule there, which could be perilous.

Euclides recognized the consolidation and the occupation of the national territory as a main national priority, more important than increasing GDP. He conceived of it as the natural conclusion of a historic mission initiated by *bandeirantes* (adventurers and slavers who explored remote Brazilian inlands, including the Amazon) in the sixteenth century.[99]

For Euclides, this Brazilian manifest destiny would be materialized by the constitution of a professedly ethnically fit people, masters of environments that were different from Europe. Notwithstanding his early theoretical reservations towards miscegenation, in his view, this people had to be a racially mixed one, with both Amerindian and Portuguese ancestry.[100] As he praised Amazonian *seringueiros*, Euclides had already lauded *sertanejos* (people that lived in the backlands such as cowboys) in *Rebellion in the Backlands* for their courage and resilient adaptation to inhospitable biomes like the dry Caatinga in Brazil's Northeast. *Sertanejos* did not have exclusive European ancestry: they had accentuated Indigenous roots, so their ethnic profile was far away from European-descended elites.

Euclides was among the national writers that proclaimed miscegenation as the most distinctive feature of Brazil. Sílvio Romero (1851-1914) and Capistrano de Abreu (1853-1927), both authors of the influential 1870 Brazilian intellectual generation, advocated that idea through their sociological and historical works. Though Euclides, Romero, and Abreu supported Eurocentric and racist worldviews, they denied any possibility that Brazil could become homogeneously and predominantly white anytime soon. In fact, Romero believed that Brazil would ultimately

98 Leonardo Vieira de Oliveira, "Da 'planta exótica' ao excepcionalismo brasileiro: a missão Carneiro Leão ao Prata e a identidade internacional saquarema (1851-1852)" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2018), 31, https://www.historia.uff.br/stricto/td/2213.pdf.

99 Danilo José Zioni Ferretti, "Euclides da Cunha historiador: a reinvenção do bandeirante em *Os sertões*," *Revista de História* 160 (2009): 270-282, https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9141.v0i160p261-284.

100 Thomas Skidmore, *Preto no branco*, 126.

go through a deep whitening process, albeit he emphasized that it would be a dilatory one, lasting for centuries.[101] In the meantime, the writer thought that Brazil should embrace miscegenation (which could even favor whitening) and recognize itself as *mestiço* (*mestizo*). In light of that assumption, the great literary critic Antonio Candido (1918-2017) said that Romero annihilated the Brazilian "illusion of whiteness."[102]

Nineteenth-century Argentine essayists, on the other hand, seemed to nurture that illusion for their nation. Argentina's government had managed to spread the conception that it was already an all-white country. This belief relied on the Amerindian ethnocide, economic and cultural marginalization of African Argentines, and the enormous waves of European immigration into the country.[103] Argentine late nineteenth-century censuses were symbolic mechanisms that reinforced that notion. Not only did they register a real and huge decrease of the proportion of Indigenous and African Argentines in the total population, but, as historian George Reid Andrews argued, they also probably heavily overstated it.[104] In 1887, only 1.8 percent of Buenos Aires' population were Afro-Argentine, according to the city's municipal census.[105] The national census of 1895 estimated that the Indigenous population declined from 93,138 in 1869 to about thirty thousand in 1895, which represented less than 1 percent of the country's population.[106] This background allowed Payró to dream of not just a white Argentine Patagonia, but rather a British Patagonia—that is, an even more "Europeanized" region.

Euclides did not, nor could he, project a similar horizon for the Amazon or for Brazil. After all, the official census conducted in 1890 indicated that 44% of Brazilians were white,[107] which (in spite of being 6% more than registered in the national census of 1872),[108] was

101 Ibid, 86.
102 Antonio Candido, *Sílvio Romero: Teoria, crítica e história literária* (Rio de Janeiro: LTC; São Paulo: Edusp, 1978), xxi.
103 George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires (1800-1900)* (Madison, WI and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 4-9.
104 Andrews, The Afro-Argentines, 106-112.
105 Ibid, 66.
106 Comisión Directiva, *Segundo censo de la República Argentina: Mayo 10 de 1895*, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires: Taller tipográfico de la penitenciaría nacional 1898), 2: I, http://www.estadistica.ec.gba.gov.ar/dpe/Estadistica/censos/C1895-T2.pdf.
107 República dos Estados Unidos do Brazil (Ministerio da Industria, viação e Obras Públicas. Directoria Geral de Estatistica), *Sexo, raça e estado civil, nacionalidade, filiação culto e analphabetismo da população recenseada em 31 de dezembro de 1890* (Rio de Janeiro: Officina da Estatistica, 1898), 2, https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv25487.pdf.
108 Núcleo de Pesquisa em História

still not the majority. Euclides and his colleagues had to cope with the certainty that Brazilian national and racial identities were in some way original and dissimilar from European ones. This clarifies why Euclides's settler heroes were racially mixed *sertanejos* and *caboclos* (Amazonian backwoodsmen), while Payró's heroes were British.

CONCLUSION: *HERMANOS, PERO NO MUCHO*

This article examined how Roberto Payró's and Euclides da Cunha's travel writings had deep underlying geopolitical and economic roots. Brazilians tend to think of Acre only as a specific chapter of their national history[109] and presumably Argentines do the same when it comes to Patagonia. A comparative approach to history writing demonstrates that this traditional point of view may not be as encompassing as an historical perspective concerned with connections and similarities between countries.[110] Euclides and Payró may have never heard of one another, but the reasons why they made their journeys to their countries' furthest regions are ultimately connected. They were bonded to the same global context of territorial expansion that South American leading countries such as Brazil and Argentina attempted to join.

Because of their condition as brand-new territories, Acre and Patagonia faced similar problems during the Belle Époque. Thus, Euclides and Payró championed similar plans for infrastructure and territorial integration based on technological integration and settlement. Reflecting on Acre's future, Euclides resorted to examples such as important railroads in the United States and the British Empire's technological achievements in India. Imagining a forthcoming Patagonia, Payró appealed to the example of Chilean Punta Arenas's infrastructure and the cases of economic development in Australia and the Falkland Islands. Studying each writer's propositions alone might give them the appearance of exoticism or brilliance. On the other hand, this comparative study suggests they shared a fairly widespread modernizing international repertoire, which characterized the late long nineteenth century.[111]

Econômica e Demográfica, *Publicação crítica do Recenseamento Geral do Império do Brasil de 1872* (Belo Horizonte: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2012), 40.

109 Leandro Tocantins, *Formação histórica do Acre* (Brasília: Senado Federal, 2001).

110 Marc Bloch, "Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes," *Revue de synthèse historique* 46 (1928): 17-19, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k101615j; Jürgen Kocka, "Comparison and beyond," *History and Theory* 42, no. 1 (February 2003): 43-44, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3590801.

111 Hobsbawm, *A era dos Impérios*, 96.

Stating that Payró and Euclides were just the same, however, would also be unsatisfying. The relations each writer had with their governments were decisively different. That justifies why the Argentine wished to develop Patagonia without relying much on the state, while the Brazilian considered the national state as the leading actor in improving Acre. Euclides and Payró were also on different sides regarding ethnic and national identity matters, which illustrates the state of divergence of racial theory in nineteenth-century South America. In popular culture, Brazil and Argentina are usually referred to as *hermanos* in Spanish and *irmãos* in Portuguese, both meaning "brothers." One can say Payró and Euclides were somewhat brothers...*pero no mucho* (but not that much).

The Amazon and Patagonia are perhaps the most contrasting natural landscapes on Earth. If they came together...well, maybe there would be a crack because of the thermal shock. But another result would surely be a better historical understanding of South American history: not only the parallels between nations, but also the discrepancies between them. It is a strong hope that examining the global or continental contexts of different cases of travel writing can henceforth lead in that direction.

In An Alien City: American Soldiers in Wartime Calcutta (1942-1946)

by
SUCHINTAN DAS

ABSTRACT

Calcutta had emerged as one of the most important fulcrums for coordinating the movement of men, material, and money during the Second World War. The advent of US troops in the city from 1942 onwards led to an unprecedented cultural encounter. This paper argues that the actual lived experiences of the American soldiers in Calcutta provided a stark contrast to their prescribed norms of conduct. This paper further contends that with their arrival, civilian-military relations were substantially reconfigured and the image of the British Empire was considerably damaged. An attempt has been made to set in relief the divergent experiences of the White American and African American troops besides mapping their experiences of and responses to the Bengal Famine. Lastly, this paper seeks to interrogate the globalizing nature of the Second World War by looking at Calcutta as a site of spontaneous and uneven cultural exchange where the US soldiers functioned as national emissaries and wartime cultural conduits.

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> "The last time when war had broken out...prices had gone up; food grains had become costlier. But it was nothing like the ominous possibility that looms large this time. Calcutta is being bombed, aircrafts keep flying over our heads, everything seems to be so different now." — *Narayan Gangopadhyay, Upanibesh*[1]

> "If you come here with an open mind you will find Calcutta is "Teek-Hai" (Okay). Of course, it's just like visiting any big city back home: you can have a good time, or a bad time, depending on how well you take care of yourself." — *Brig. Gen. R.R. Neyland, The Calcutta Key*[2]

INTRODUCTION: G.I. JOE IN THE CITY OF JOY

Death had been made "a part and parcel of everyday life", reflected the author Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay, when describing the grim realities of the Second World War in Calcutta.[3] It was during this time, the author Manindra Gupta recounted in his memoirs, that "American soldiers of both races—white and black—with their plentiful equipment, appeared like aliens from another planet in the city."[4] Calcutta was a major city of the British Indian Empire—the erstwhile capital—which had become uniquely vulnerable to Japanese aggression after the fall of Singapore in February 1942. Defence of India in general, and Calcutta in particular, was of paramount strategic importance for ensuring an Allied victory. Apart from being the nerve centre of logistics and communications in eastern India, Calcutta was the major British port overlooking the Bay of Bengal, and was also the closest Indian city to Burma and China.[5] Moreover, as Yasmin Khan notes, even though it was neither a home front nor a war zone, "India was nevertheless critical to the war effort as a source

1 Narayan Gangopadhyay, *Narayan Gangopadhyay Rachanabali (Vol. III)*, eds. Asha Devi and Arijit Gangopadhyay (Kolkata: Mitra & Ghosh, 1980), 94. All translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

2 *The Calcutta Key* (Guidebook for US Military Personnel in Calcutta, Prepared by Services of Supply Base Section Two Information and Education Branch United States Army Forces in India-Burma, 1945), http://cbi-theater.com/calcuttakey/calcutta_key.html.

3 Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay, *Sharadindu Omnibus (Vol. II)*, ed. Pratul Chandra Gupta (Kolkata: Ananda, 1971), 1.

4 Manindra Gupta, *Akshay Mulberry (Complete)* (Kolkata: Ababhas, 2009), 194.

5 Director of the Service, Supply, and Procurement Division War Department General Staff. *Logistics in World War II: Final Report of the Army Service Forces (A Report to the Under Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff)* (Center of Military History, United States Army: Washington D.C., 1993), 46-47.

of military manpower and industrial production."[6] It was in this context that Calcutta emerged as one of the most important fulcrums for coordinating the movement of men, material, and money in the China-Burma-India theater (hereinafter CBI). The city doubled as a necessary transit point for Allied troops pouring into Assam and Burma from across the subcontinent, and more importantly as a centre of rest and recreation for troops returning from assignments at the front. The arrival of American troops (popularly known as G.I.s) from February 15, 1942 onwards set in motion a series of administrative, economic, and demographic changes in Calcutta.[7] With this influx, the cosmopolitan character of the city was heightened and the stage was set for an unprecedented cultural encounter that took many forms and had many faces. Calcutta, its urbanscapes, amenities, people, and the alien US troops were the primary protagonists in this encounter.

The normative experience of an average American G.I. in Calcutta was sought to be shaped by the guidelines issued and restrictions enforced by the US Military Command, the British Colonial Government, and the American Red Cross (hereinafter ARC). Needless to say, their actual lived experiences in wartime Calcutta differed substantially. The first section of this paper aims to contextualize and juxtapose these varied experiences, as recorded (penned and photographed) and remembered by the American troops. In the second section, their perceptions of Calcutta and interactions with its people will be examined to understand to what extent and how civilian-military relations were sought to be reconfigured. The policy of racial segregation in the US military will be treated as an important fault-line to find out if there was a discernible divergence in the experiences of White and African American troops stationed in the city in the third section. An endeavour will be made to gauge how far the American soldiers were aware of the Bengal Famine and how they responded to it in the fourth section. Lastly, by way of a conclusion, this paper will try to interrogate the 'globalizing' nature of the Second World War, by looking at Calcutta as a site of spontaneous cultural exchange where US soldiers functioned as national emissaries and wartime cultural conduits.

6 Yasmin Khan, "Sex in an Imperial War Zone: Transnational Encounters in Second World War India," *History Workshop Journal* 76 (Spring 2012): 241, https://doi.org/ 10.1093/hwj/dbr026.

7 Yasmin Khan, *India At War: The Subcontinent and the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 324.

FIGURE 1: "The American Red Cross Burra Club, leave center for GI's and recreation spot for all enlisted men. The unpretentious façade belies an interior complete with dormitory, snack bar, restaurant, music room, games room, lounge, barber and tailor shops, wrapping service department, and post exchange." Photograph and caption by Clyde Waddell. (Available in the public domain and free of known copyright restrictions: https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscoll802.html)

THUS SPOKE UNCLE SAM: PRESCRIPTIONS, PROSCRIPTIONS, AND TRANSGRESSIONS

From 1942 onwards, more American soldiers came to India "than would actually see fighting on the fronts of Burma."[8] Some 150,000 G.I.s poured into India between 1942 and 1945 with the veritable goal of 'saving China', large parts of which

8 Khan, *India At War,* 142.

were under Japanese occupation.[9] They were to be stationed in India with the primary tasks of airlifting war material and food aid into China, besides constructing a land supply route through Burma—the Ledo Road—so as to relieve the beleaguered Chinese.[10] In doing so, the American G.I.s "found themselves in alien and unknown landscapes, dealing with Indian traders, merchants and craftsmen, trying to thrash out a war plan in a densely populated, and unfamiliar, part of the world."[11] As Ian Stephens recounted, by 1943, Calcutta:

> was a great war-base… a vortex of humanity into which men doing war-jobs from all over the world, uniformed or not, were being sucked… American forces started arriving; and with their high living standards and total ignorance of India probably felt most alien of all.[12]

All of a sudden, metropolitan cities in the subcontinent were flooded with American troops, who were disconcerted by the stark realities of Indian life that were thrust upon them. In the words of Sergeant Burton Lester Cochran, "I found one thing—a very poor travel position. The—them seats on the—on the—we were using were, I think, about third class. You see, they class everything over there [in India]."[13] Calcutta was no exception. It was described by Sergeant Lowell H. Russell as "the debarking center for the United States for practically all of the military in India. One can imagine the crowded conditions and hyper."[14]

Bewilderment inflected the average US soldier's first impression of India. As Yasmin Khan put it, "The 'real' India was a contrast to the jolly, sanitised newsreels which troops had been shown prior to their departure, in which they had been promised tropical fruits, constant sunshine and cheap shopping."[15] This reaction was anticipated well by the US Military Command. Together with the American Red Cross in India and the British Colonial Administration, they sought to mitigate the shock and decisively shape the experience of the American troops in India.[16]

9 Ibid, 267.
10 Ibid, 259-260.
11 Ibid, 142.
12 Ian Stephens, *Monsoon Morning* (London: Benn, 1966), 102-103.
13 Burton Lester Cochran Collection (AFC/2001/001/26839), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.26839/.
14 Lowell H. Russell Collection (AFC/2001/001/10225), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.10225/.
15 Khan, *India At War*, 144.
16 One of the ways in which this was sought to be done was by deploying female Red Cross workers to provide much-needed care, camaraderie, and entertainment for the benefit of war-weary and homesick soldiers. Virginia Allen was one such 'G.I. Jill' stationed in Calcutta, who served as a radio

For this purpose, they came up with pocket guides, written in a manner of providing friendly advice, and containing norms of conduct the G.I.s were supposed to adhere to, during their stay in India. These guides were quite detailed, providing extensive information about almost everything that the American soldiers in India needed to know—ranging from commentaries on the Indian caste system to locations of nearby departmental stores. Needless to say, there were pocket guides for Calcutta as well, one of which, called *The Calcutta Key*, listed out the following prescriptions which deserve to be quoted in full:

> TRY THESE "DO'S" FOR SIZE:
> 1. Avoid political discussions.
> 2. Act here with the same common courtesy you use at home.
> 3. Guide the other fellow's conduct; 'breaks' reflect on all.
> 4. Replace "Hey you!" with "Bhai!" or "Brother!"
> 5. Discuss Indian customs out of their sight and hearing.
> 6. You're in Rome. Keep your ways; let the Romans have theirs.
> 7. Keep your temper; the Indian will keep his.
> 8. An attitude of respect leads to 'breaks' being forgiven.
> 9. Take pictures only of the laboring classes (and then only if they consent); upper-class Indians don't like to be photographed.
> 10. Look at passing British and Indian women without tossing remarks at them. Four out of five women over here are offended by "yoo-hoos."[17]

Political neutrality, courteous manners, appreciation of difference, respect for societal norms, and tolerance in conversations were recommended. Yet, Uncle Sam's prescriptions and proscriptions went far beyond these recommendations, which were not always upheld.

Incidences of transgression were not infrequent and can be examined under four diagnostic rubrics—politics, shopping, delinquency, and prostitution.[18] *A Pocket Guide to India* declared, "India is a complex country, difficult for people like ourselves to understand. It is a country whose people are going through a far-reaching political upheaval. They, as we did over 160 years ago, seek to gain political independence."[19] Notwithstanding

personality and performed in plays all over India, from 1944 to 1946. See Sara K. Eskridge, "G.I. Jinny," *W&M* 83, no. 3 (Spring 2018), https://magazine.wm.edu/issue/2018-spring/index.php. I am grateful to Shayna Allen for drawing my attention to this.

17 *The Calcutta Key*.

18 This is not to suggest that the incidences of transgression were limited to these domains.

19 *A Pocket Guide to India* (For use of US Military Personnel in India, Prepared by Special Service Division, Army Service Forces of United States Army), https://cbi-theater.com/booklet/

this obvious parallel, American troops were expected to steer clear of Indian politics. Political discussions on the Indian situation were outright discouraged. According to one guide:

> Americans are in India to fight the Axis. You should stick to that and not try to settle the Indian political problem. What we want is to cooperate with both the British and Indians to beat the Japanese. Your place is to keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut.[20]

Another handbook cautioned, "The political situation in India is not easily understood and a short stay in India is not long enough to be informed about it."[21] One of the prime reasons why the top brass of the US military desired the G.I.s' political ignorance was the sheer complexity of Indian politics of the time, which they perceived to be too deeply enmeshed in religion.[22] For the British Colonial Government, while the presence of American soldiers was reassuring on the one hand, their possible undesirable involvement in local politics was a matter of concern on the other.[23] Yet, the American troops were hardly insulated from the undercurrents of Indian politics.

The Indian nationalist leader Jayaprakash Narayan appealed to these "soldiers of freedom" to "understand and appreciate the [Indians'] fight for freedom" and to let "[their] countrymen, [their] leaders and [their] government know the truth about India."[24] The truth, however, was not always conveyed to the G.I.s by the US Military Command. For example, they were told that "Indians want us to win. No group in this country has any love for the axis."[25] At this time, one of the most prominent Indian political figures, Subhas Chandra Bose, was parleying with the German government in Berlin, and his speeches from the Azad Hind Radio Centre were regularly reaching his followers in India, who did not necessarily desire an Allied victory. Moreover, American soldiers did talk politics with the local people, when the need arose. In his memoirs, veteran G.I. Malcolm Harvey Stilson recounted conversing for long periods on war, peace, business, art, politics, and more while purchasing gems from a Calcutta jeweller.[26]

guide-to-india.html.

20 Ibid.

21 Khan, *India At War*, 146.

22 *A Pocket Guide to India.*

23 Tathagata Niyogi, "Wartime Calcutta: Walking a Gut-Wrenching Disaster," *The Calcutta Blog*, https://medium.com/the-calcutta-blog/wartime-calcutta-walking-a-gut-wrenching-disaster-b12e9d04b3aa.

24 Srinath Raghavan, *The Most Dangerous Place*, 113.

25 'Know Your India', *C.B.I. Roundup* I, no. 9, November 12, 1942, http://cbitheater.com/roundup/roundup111242.html.

26 Malcolm Harvey Stilson Collection (AFC/2001/001/02056), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.02056/.

FIGURE 2: "The GI tourist here ponders the purchase of a 'rare gem' --- a typical camera study of life on Chowringhee during the war. Firpo's famous restaurant is in the background, and dhoti-clad Indians and a British officer in shorts lend a bit of atmosphere." Photograph and caption by Clyde Waddell. (Available in the public domain and free of known copyright restrictions: https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscoll802.html).

Politics, though officially proscribed in discussions, did percolate through occasional banter, often while shopping.

Calcutta, with its attractive marketplaces, offered ample opportunities for the stationed soldiers to shop for their daily needs and also to indulge themselves with the occasional souvenir. *The Calcutta Key* (hereinafter the *Key*) warned the G.I.s about the perils of bargaining. In fact, it was quite categorical in its suggestion:

> In all the other stores and in the markets or bazars a deliberately high price is quoted to you for an article, and it is then

> up to you to argue the price down to somewhere within reason - without in the process losing your reason. You seldom win. If you leave any shop in India confident that you out-smarted the salesman, then be sure of this: YOU DIDN'T! You can profit by the experience (paid for) of other American soldiers. Buy sound products in reliable stores at fixed prices.[27]

According to the *Key*, that the Americans would inevitably be fooled was a foregone conclusion. Nonetheless, the G.I.s continued to indulge in bargaining and did make purchases from shops in Calcutta other than those officially recommended. So much so, that the *Key* went on to add:

> In partial contradiction of foregoing advice, and advocated as a part of your adventures in India, don't neglect to try bargaining (in a small way) as the accepted minor sport east of Suez. But in doing so, avoid street peddlers and side-street stalls and instead, visit the New Market where you will find a real interest in the bazar itself as well as get a kick out of horse trading with the salesman over their great variety of wares.[28]

The lure of the 'oriental' market was too strong to resist. Haggling had to be tacitly accepted as a rather innocuous wartime distraction.

In spite of repeated reminders to the American troops in Calcutta to put their best foot forward, occasional delinquent behaviour on their part had the possibility of heralding ominous repercussions. For instance, Benod Behari Basu (younger brother of the Bengali revolutionary Benoy Krishna Basu and later known as the Father of Boxing in Bihar), remembered having knocked out an American G.I. with a sharp blow to the chin, for passing objectionable comments about a few Indian women at Esplanade. A crowd gathered quickly, and the fellow American soldiers left the site with their injured mate, without confronting Mr. Basu.[29] Such incidences were hardly rare. As Yasmin Khan notes, "[p]etty conflict between soldiers, local townsmen, and villagers featured routinely in newspapers by 1944, and was particularly noted as a problem in Bengal and Assam."[30] Incidences of serious crimes were not absent either. When an Anglo-Indian boy, Eglind Roze, attempted to steal an American military-vehicle parked near the ARC Burra Club at Dalhousie Square, he was shot to death by a few American soldiers. His family had to be immediately compensated to avoid a public embarrassment of the

27 *The Calcutta Key.*
28 *The Calcutta Key*.
29 Personal correspondence with Prof. Amit Dey (to whom Mr. Basu had narrated this anecdote in the late 1970s) on June 28, 2020.
30 Khan, *India At War*, 274-275.

US Military Forces.[31]

One of the leading faces of Hindu belligerents in the Calcutta Riots of 1946, Gopal Mukhopadhyay, later claimed to have procured two American pistols and a few grenades from American G.I.s, back in 1945: "If you paid two hundred and fifty rupees or bought them a bottle of whiskey, the soldiers would give you a .45 and a hundred cartridges."[32] Illegal sale of arms and ammunition was certainly not approved of by the US military command. At least a few American soldiers were involved in this practice nevertheless. In Calcutta, the docklands, which were considered absolutely essential in the war effort, emerged as the prime centre of contraband and conflicts. As a policeman stationed in that area later recounted:

> the docks boiled with activity (and crime) as vast amounts of military ordinance poured in, and the Burma front and Nationalist China (via the Ledo Road) were kept supplied by troop and 'military special' trains through the Herculean efforts of the East Bengal and Assam-Bengal Railways. Soldiers, sailors and airmen from all the Allied nations wandered the streets in search of "rest & recreation" which usually consisted of a feed, a fight and sex (in any order) inevitably necessitating much police intervention.[33]

Prostitution also required much policing in wartime Calcutta. In the words of Peter R. Moore, "The Calcutta police were responsible for interning aliens from the Axis nations—including foreign sex workers from the European brothels in Karaya and the Japanese bordello in Watgunge."[34] Needless to say, none of these locales fell within the area which was "in bounds" for the American troops, i.e. the "area which, in general, [lay] south of Bow Bazar Street and west of Lower Circular Road up to its intersection with Bow Bazar Street."[35] The *Key* warned G.I.s about the possibility of contracting venereal diseases in its characteristically inimitable manner:

> As in any port city in the Orient, Calcutta is riddled with venereal diseases. Studies show that professional prostitutes are 150% infected (half have one and the other half have two). Even in the native population

31 Ibid.

32 Debjani Sengupta, "'A City Feeding on Itself': Testimonies, Histories, and Literature on 'Direct Action Day', Calcutta, 1946", 17, https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/18707/6/06_chapter%201.pdf.

33 Janam Mukherjee, "Hungry Bengal: War, Famine, Riots, and the End of Empire 1939-1946," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2011), 226.

34 Peter R. Moore, "Calcutta's War Police", *The Telegraph*, March 21, 2010, https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/west-bengal/calcutta-s-war-police/cid/1269986.

35 *The Calcutta Key*.

> the rate is well over 50%. That good-looking amateur whom you think you convinced by your personal charm may be just the baby to hand you a gift package—unwrapped.[36]

This, however, was advice that fell on deaf ears. In fact, the language of this guide was simply not found to be proscriptive enough. On the contrary, visiting the brothel was perceived as something that was tacitly condoned by even the top brass. The colonial administration considered the levels of venereal diseases to be "appallingly high" in Bengal and took cognizance of the widespread publicity of prostitution in Calcutta. The fear of racial miscegenation also lead to political ferment and the development of anti-G.I. feelings among the Indian populace of the city.[37] Yasmin Khan provides some idea about the increase in policing demand that these 'forbidden' brothel-visits necessitated: "[t]wo hundred extra Military Police were recruited in Calcutta at a time of extreme manpower shortage to patrol brothels and unusually the military invested in civilian clinics."[38] According to India Command's consultant venereologist, Eric Prebble,

> [T]he Military Police was 'completely inadequate to deal with the situation' and the local police shied away from disciplining foreign soldiers. 'Pimps and touts abounded wherever the troops were stationed or on leave', and taxi and rickshaw drivers and men employed in the cantonments acted as local middlemen.[39]

As a consequence of these transgressions, by the end of the war, Calcutta would have one of the highest rates of venereal diseases in the world, more than many cities which were actually located in war fronts.[40]

THE CITY OF DI(STINK) TION: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PERCEPTIONS

Calcutta was not just a centre for coordinating war efforts in eastern India, as it also offered many wartime distractions for G.I.s who were stationed in the city. The sights, smells, and sounds that the American soldiers came across here shaped their perceptions of the city to a great extent. They came in frequent contact with civilians and often developed friendly relations with them.[41] While the British troops

36 *The Calcutta Key*.
37 Khan, *India At War*, 150.
38 Ibid, 241.
39 E.E. Prebble, 'Venereal Diseases in India,' *Sexually Transmitted Infections* 22, no. 2 (June 1946): 55-62, https://doi.org/10.1136/sti.22.2.55.
40 Khan, *India At War*, 149.
41 For understanding the discernible divergence in the experiences of White and African American troops stationed in the city due to the US military's policy of racial

were more reserved in their dealings with Indians, American G.I.s were much more easy-going and tended to blend in better with the local populace. The *Key* offered some sound advice in this regard:

> You do see that the Indian is different from yourself. Granted. But - do you see that that difference between the two of you does not give you a reason to criticize the Indian?...To repeat, yes, the Indian is different. But instead of merely noticing that difference and judging it hastily, suppose we take a good long second look and attempt to understand the fellow's customs and ways of living. Remember, it is an age-old failure to laugh at things that you do not understand.[42]

This sermon, however, did not always prevent the G.I.s from having a little fun at the expense of their Indian acquaintances. In spite of this, or perhaps because of this informality that characterized American-Indian interactions in wartime Calcutta, military-civilian relationships underwent a reconfiguration. While on the one hand, British troops were more squarely identified as part of the 'occupying forces', American soldiers were perceived to have much more of a 'touristy' air about them. This becomes amply clear from the fact that the ARC Burra Club organized free tours of Calcutta for the American G.I.s, whose photographs documented the urbanscapes of and life in the city in a very tourist-like fashion.

The street-life of Calcutta was effectively captured in photographs by many G.I.s.[43] The tram, the double decker bus, the ubiquitous stray cow, carts drawn by oxen, the hand-pulled rickshaw, barbers and vendors, mendicants and urchins, and bootblacks and washermen featured prominently in John H. Smith's photographs of Calcutta.[44] His collection also contained pictures of one 'Mr. Nunday', presumably an Indian friend, whose daughter accompanied them on a visit to the Jain Temple of Calcutta. The 'exotic' snake charmers had a pride of place in most American photo albums. However, nobody

segregation, see Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in United States and India* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2012), and Gerald Horne, *The End of Empires: African Americans and India* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).

42 *The Calcutta Key*.

43 See "Bob Fagelson's Images of India," *China-Burma-India: Remembering the Forgotten Theater of World War II*, http://cbi-theater.com/bf-india/india.html; "Glenn Garrelt's India," *China-Burma-India: Remembering the Forgotten Theater of World War II*, http://cbi-theater.com/glenn/india.html.

44 John H. Smith, "Images of India: 1944-1946," in *China-Burma-India: Remembering the Forgotten Theater of World War II,* http://cbi-theater.com/164th/164th.html.

FIGURE 3: "A Group of GI's take a close look at the snake-wallah's hooded cobra. Both the snake and his master are good specimens. The fangs of course have been removed so the reptile can strike at will, scaring no one." Photograph and caption by Clyde Waddell. (Available in the public domain and free of known copyright restrictions: https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscoll802.html).

documented G.I. life in Calcutta better than the military photographer (and later Press Attaché to Lord Mountbatten) Clyde Waddell. Some of his photographs were elegant aerial shots of the city. Many featured the American soldiers manoeuvring their way through the streets. Most depicted scenes from regular Indian life with remarkable honesty and somewhat of an 'Orientalist' tinge—but more importantly, all were accompanied by his idiosyncratic annotations.[45] It is from Waddell that

45 Clyde Waddell, *A Yank's Memories of Calcutta* (Houston: Self-published, 1947), http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/

one gets to know that a co-pilot had to accompany a taxi-driver (almost always a Sikh) in Calcutta from 1944 onwards, "following an affray in which a soldier knifed a driver."[46] Another photograph featured two Indian movie actresses, Binota Bose and Rekha Mullick, both of whom were "well educated and prefer[red] American books, pictures."[47] Waddell captured the contradictions of urban life seamlessly. His collection featured temples and burning ghats, street performers and Indian women clad in sarees, the chaotic stock exchange and "patty-cake annies",[48] addicts of the Chinatown opium dens and G.I.s bargaining with the "red street lassies".[49]

The commotion and filth of the city hardly went unnoticed. The first thing that the American troops registered upon their arrival in Calcutta was the din of the railway station. In the words of Malcolm H. Stilson, "The station is a cavernous place in which thousands of people literally dwell, and where everything from coition to childbirth takes place."[50] The absence of sanitary conditions in Calcutta annoyed the G.I.s, who found the clean gurudwara to be a welcome respite, and developed much admiration for the Sikhs. This sentiment was so strong that Stilson went to the extent of calling Calcutta "a city of di(stink) tion" in his memoirs. One of his poems captured this emotion quite effectively:

> Dawn walks the streets of Calcutta
> Swathed in a grey swirling cloak
> Frightening the cockroach
> Into his crack.[51]

This was corroborated by Waddell in the caption of one of his photographs:

> One of the commonest street vendors is the Paan wallah, or betel nut vendor. One tenth of the world chews the mixture of leaf, spices, nut and other variable ingredients. Chief by-product of the habit is a reddish splatter of stain, indiscriminately spat upon walls and sidewalks in Calcutta by carefree chewers.[52]

Lack of hygiene was not the only cause of worry for the American soldiers in Calcutta. The tropical weather added to their woes, so much so that *CBI Roundup* ('weekly newspaper published by and for the men of the United States Army Forces in China, Burma, and India') ran a hilarious weather report about

medren/9949134203503681.

46 Waddell, *A Yank's Memories of Calcutta*.

47 Ibid.

48 Nickname given by G.I.s to women who dried dung-cakes to later use them as fuel.

49 Waddell, *A Yank's Memories of Calcutta*.

50 Malcolm Harvey Stilson Collection (AFC/2001/001/02056).

51 Ibid.

52 Waddell, *A Yank's Memories of Calcutta*.

snowfall in Indian cities in the middle of July.[53]

One crucial axis along which American-Indian interactions took place in wartime Calcutta was that of providing and receiving service. According to Yasmin Khan, "American soldiers and airmen in India often had their own 'native bearers', locally recruited manservants who swept, dusted, polished shoes and, fetched and carried tea and snacks, thus helping, as one GI magazine joked, 'make a perfectly lazy man out of a soldier'."[54] More often than not, these bearers were christened with 'comical' nicknames, and the G.I.s joked about their mannerisms and unsuccessful attempts to pick up a few English expressions in a bid to secure greater wartime opportunities and camaraderie from the relatively friendlier Americans:

> Our bearer's name is "Smokey." We've forgotten why we call him that, but there are no objections, since his real name is "Pabitra Mondel." Aside from his regular duties, Smokey spends most of his time learning GI ways..."Sahib – Bird, Sahib – Cow, Sahib – House, Sahib – ABCDEFY," and so it goes all day. Smokey is learning English. Things have changed in our barracks. No longer does Smokey roam around picking up Cigarette butts and trash. No longer does Smokey sweep the porch. Smokey is learning English.[55]

The British soldiers were envious of the fact that their better-paid American counterparts could afford to have personal bearers and would often make pointed remarks at what they perceived as a juvenile American dependence on their Indian manservants. A member of the *CBI Roundup*'s staff noted this rather sportily in a report written for *Life* magazine: "Hullo, dear. Did your bearer brush your teeth and tuck you in last night? So far no one has found any better answer than the simple 'Yes, he did.' After all, he might have."[56]

The soldier-bearer relationships often grew mutually paternalistic. According to Yasmin Khan:

> Sometimes soldiers were invited back to local homes and introduced to families, or the soldiers helped pay for the cost of weddings or for the education of young children. For most of the people who worked as servants on airfields, at barracks and bases, the job gave them opportunities to

53 'Weather SOARS ABOVE ZERO', *CBI Roundup* I, no. 44, July 15, 1943, http://cbi-theater.com/roundup/roundup071543.html.

54 Khan, *India At War*, 148.

55 Jack Shelton, 'Smokey Takes A Furlough', *Hellbird Herald* I, no. 2, February 20, 1945, http://cbi-theater.com/superfort/hellbird_022045.html.

56 'Dear Mom, I Got A Valet', *Life*, November 30, 1942, http://cbi-theater.com/life-roundup/life-roundup.html.

> learn some English and to earn inflated wages. For the most entrepreneurial, contact with the bases was even more lucrative: an opportunity to act as guide, procurer of alcohol and women, interpreter and general right-hand man.[57]

However, the potential for conflict was not entirely absent either. American soldiers could not always comprehend the prevalent segregation of labour on the basis of caste and often ended up misunderstanding the refusal on part of their bearers to perform certain duties:

> One American officer fired his bearer when that worthy refused to remove a small piece of lint from the floor. "Am I a donkey, horse, nothing?" the bearer heatedly demanded... Righteously angry at what he considered the "snobbishness" of the bearer, the officer refused to give him a letter of reference and thereby incurred the enmity of his and all other bearers in the neighborhood...[who] formed a tight little union and no one would work for the offender until he wrote the chit.[58]

Another domain in which Americans often brushed shoulders with Indians was that of sports. The *CBI Roundup* ran a story on how the American tennis star (and a Special Service Officer in the CBI) Lt. Hal Surface defended his East Indian Lawn Tennis Championship title by defeating the top seeded Indian player, Ghaus Mohammed, in the finals.[59] Another top wartime sporting attraction of Calcutta was the All Allied Boxing Crowns, involving service boxers from the American, British, and Indian forces fighting to attain the annual glory.[60] In addition, boxing offered an avenue for civilians to come in close contact with the American troops. Mr. Asaf Ali, a Calcutta University Blue (who later worked in Air India), practiced boxing with the American G.I.s and improved his English by frequently conversing with them.[61]

Another prominent site for wartime distraction and American-Indian interaction in Calcutta was The Grand Hotel. The destination provided a space where the soldiers could "'Forget the War!', with Teddy Weatherford on the piano in the American Cocktail Bar, Chinese jugglers, raffles, quizzes, and 'hand-picked dance hostesses'."[62] As

57 Khan, *India At War*, 148-149.
58 'Dear Mom, I Got A Valet', *Life*, November 30, 1942.
59 'Surface Defends Indian Net Title', *CBI Roundup* II, no. 17, January 6, 1944, http://cbi-theater.com/roundup/roundup010644.html.
60 'Ringside at Calcutta', *Yank* (The US Army Weekly) CBI Edition, June 2, 1945, http://cbi-theater.com/yankcbi/yank_cbi_5.html#RINGSIDE.
61 Personal correspondence with Prof. Amit Dey (Mr. Ali's nephew) on June 17, 2020.
62 Khan, *India At War*, 156.

mentioned earlier, the American soldiers provided a stark contrast to their British counterparts, both within and beyond the city. Among other places of elite colonial recreation, "[i]n the clubs of Simla, the rumours of increasing American designs on South Asia, the strength of American imports and the sexual irresistibility of American men all mingled together to create profound wariness about the new allies."[63] Some G.I.s even got married to Jewish women in Calcutta.[64] Yasmin Khan has rightly argued that "[t]he purchasing power and superhero stature of the American GIs made much of the Raj look fossilised and diminished."[65] This metaphor can be pushed a bit further to claim that the dynamism and affability of the American soldiers in their interactions with the Indians made much of the Raj appear rather debilitated and overtly paranoid. Through their varied interactions with the local Indian populace in Calcutta, the American soldiers ended up substantially reconfiguring civilian-military relationships—undermining the unmitigable distance and inescapable hierarchy that existed between the colonial officers who commanded the British Indian Army and the ordinary Indian people.

63 Khan, *India At War*, 151.
64 "List of Calcutta Jewish women who married American and British Servicemen: Compiled by Nancy Pine and Flower Silliman," *Recalling Jewish Calcutta,* http://www.jewishcalcutta.in/items/show/1400.
65 Khan, *India At War*, 151.

JIM CROW IN CALCUTTA: TWO ARMIES OR ONE?

Out of about 150,000 American troops who were stationed in India during the Second World War, 22,000 were African Americans.[66] Given the volatile political situation in India, the British Colonial Government had apprehensions about the reception that these troops were likely to receive in the subcontinent. The problem, however, was entrenched in the structure of the US Military Forces. According to Nico Slate:

> [T]here was not one but two American armies in India—one white and one Black. From the day they registered for duty, African American soldiers faced racial discrimination, both official and unofficial. Jim Crow followed African American soldiers abroad, where they often traveled on segregated ships, ate in segregated mess halls, slept in segregated tents, and labored and fought in segregated platoons.[67]

In Calcutta, African American G.I.s had a segregated ARC Club at Dalhousie Square called the Cosmos Club, with canteens staffed exclusively by African American women.[68] While White American troops were billeted in camps

66 Ibid, 267.
67 Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 152.
68 Khan, *India At War*, 267.

(Karnani Estates and Camp Knox) and hotels within the city, Joseph E. Davies remembered African American contingents being allotted accommodation far from the city, often opposite the river Hooghly, thereby limiting their access to and scope for wartime recreation.[69]

In 1945, a swimming pool for US servicemen was opened on a segregated basis. In reality, it was reserved for White Americans almost all the time. Racial stereotypes such as the supposed greater adaptability of African Americans to the tropical climate were cited to justify this:

> When Black soldiers were excluded from a Fourth of July celebration at the pool sponsored by the Red Cross, nearly the entire staff of the Cosmos Club, the Black Red Cross club, signed a letter of protest sent to Red Cross headquarters. Several of the volunteers, including Geraldine Smith, a teacher from Chicago and the assistant director of the Cosmos Club, resigned in protest. On its part, the army's report presented the segregation of the pool as equitable, adding, "Complaining of segregation, however, Negroes have completely boycotted the pool."[70]

In the internal reports of the US Military in India, African American troops were consistently portrayed as the archetypical 'deviant', or more prone to disobedience. This was supposedly borne out by the frequency with which they got into trouble with Indian labourers and Indian women, and were consequently reported by the Military Police (MP).[71] Consistent protests regarding discriminatory treatment by military police led to positions for Black MPs being created near the end of the war. Protests also led the military to find a new rest camp site near Calcutta for Black troops.[72]

African American soldiers in Calcutta were perceived as naturally delinquent by the colonial administration. As Janam Mukherjee notes, "[the]disparagement of American black soldiers may have been a recurrent theme in explaining the chaos on the docks."[73] In their report on an incidence of shelling at the Calcutta Dockyards, the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta noted that the "behavior of the American Negro troop… was disgraceful."[74] The trope of the 'fiendish black man'—slovenly and cowardly in their demeanour—loomed large in the British colonial imagination. Crimes, real and imagined, were more frequently attributed to the African American soldiers:

69 Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 152.
70 Ibid, 154.
71 Ibid, 156.
72 Ibid, 153.
73 Mukherjee, "Hungry Bengal," 235.
74 Ibid.

> In Calcutta a handful of incidents occurred in which Black soldiers seriously wounded Indian taxi drivers, although there is no evidence that race played a factor in these assaults. Bengali anti-black prejudice was revealed in rumors that black soldiers kidnapped children and, according to at least one confiscated letter, ate them.[75]

Contrary to the expectations of the colonial administration, however, interactions between the African American G.I.s and the local populace were not underwritten by racial tensions or latent hostility. As Corporal Charles Pitman recollected, "The Indian people were cool to us at first but once they found we were not like the lies told about us they became friendly."[76]

On the contrary, their relations were largely characterised by mutual respect and amity. According to one officer, "Negroes frequently are invited to attend native civilian parties to which White troops are not invited."[77] Others reported that Black troops were "invited to the best Indian homes." Nico Slate went so far as to suggest that "African American soldiers and Indians were able to forge solidarities, based in part on colored cosmopolitanism and a shared opposition to racial oppression."[78] According to Gerald Horne, the official history of the CBI also noted that the African American troops 'mingled more frequently with the Indians than did their white comrades.'[79] Yasmin Khan put this very succinctly:

> Black troops and Indians found common cause contrary to imperial expectations. Local people chatted and traded with the troops, striking up friendships even in the marketplace and the streets. Banned from using some of the facilities allocated for white soldiers and housed initially in the densely populated area of Howrah in Calcutta, black GIs spent more time in local markets and backstreets…As a consequence, black soldiers made new friends, received invitations to local parties and dances and were more likely to have an Indian or Anglo-Indian lover.[80]

In spite of facing blatant racial discrimination within the military due to segregated amenities, poor living conditions, second-class medical treatment, and disproportionately incurring the wrath of the Military Police, the experience of African American G.I.s in wartime Calcutta was not a complete nightmare. This was not because the colonial administration was more considerate, but because Black soldiers were

75 Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*, 156.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid, 157.
78 Ibid.
79 Horne, *The End of Empires*, 166.
80 Khan, *India At War*, 268.

able to forge amicable relationships with the local Indian populace even amidst a global conflict.

HARD TIMES: SCARCITY, STARVATION, AND THE SOLDIERS

Besides opportunities for such cultural contacts, the war also brought immense hardship in its wake. Apprehensive of an impending Japanese invasion, the colonial administration of Bengal undertook a 'denial scheme' and adopted a scorched earth policy at a time of war-induced food shortage. Black marketeering and hoarding added to people's miseries. Author Manindra Gupta witnessed truckloads of food grains procured from different districts of Bengal by the colonial government and the Ispahani Merchant Company being stored with the cosmetic protection of tarpaulins in the Botanical Garden at Shibpur. Heaps of these undistributed food grains became infested with fungi during the early monsoons of 1943 and were consequently rendered inedible—worse than even animal feed.[81] Freehand military requisitioning greatly aggravated this scarcity. As Yasmin Khan notes, "Initially, American quartermasters in India dealt directly with food suppliers, negotiating prices and buying directly, with dire consequences for some local markets."[82] Janam Mukherjee provides an example of this:

> The high demand for ice by military personnel [particularly by the Americans] put a further strain on fish markets (which depended on ice for preservation during transport), thus denying a primary source of protein to middle-class residents of Bengal. In some districts, fishermen, already crippled by "boat denial" were forced to throw away as much as a third of their catch due to a lack of ice.[83]

The price of rice increased from $1.60/maund before 1941 to $10/maund by 1943.[84] The *CBI Roundup* even ran an unabashedly self-seeking story to this end titled "Sky-High Prices in India Justify Wages of G.I.'s".[85] Urban panic gripped the residents of Calcutta. Fear of Japanese bombardment triggered a mass exodus from the city to the countryside. Meanwhile, snowballed by the factors listed above, the Bengal Famine sparked off a humongous displacement of hungry, famished people, from the agrarian hinterlands to the metropolis of Calcutta.[86]

81 Gupta, *Akshay Mulberry*, 208.

82 Khan, *India At War*, 202.

83 Mukherjee, *Hungry Bengal*, 163.

84 1 maund = 80 pounds (approximately).

85 'Sky-High Prices in India Justify Wages of G.I.'s, U.P. Man Writes', *CBI Roundup* I, no. 38, June 3, 1943, http://cbi-theater.com/roundup/roundup060343.html.

86 See Chittaprosad, *Hungry Bengal:*

The unfolding of this unfathomable human tragedy did not go unnoticed by the American troops in the city. The *Key*'s description of the omnipresent 'homeless man' personified suffering on the streets and alleys of Calcutta:

> At some time or other while you are here you will witness the sight of a crowd of men, women, and children who seem to move together like a herd of sheep. They huddle together, or they rush across the street in a mob, or they gather in a group shouting and jabbering - they are new arrivals in the city. Driven here by the famine, by flood, drought, or other causes, they come from Bengal itself, from Bihar, Orissa, or Assam. Homeless, helpless, hopeless when they reach Calcutta, they fare as men have always fared, in that the able-bodied and the strong among them as usual survive and soon find their way into the immense labor corps around the city - the rest, they soon vanish - some die in the epidemics, others just disappear.[87]

Clyde Waddell photographed the human figures and faces of this tragedy and took note of the prevalent public apathy:

> Death - a way of life? The indifference of the passer-by on this downtown Calcutta street to the plight of the dying woman in the foreground is considered commonplace. During the famine of 1943, cases like this were to be seen in almost every block, and though less frequent now, the hardened public reaction seems to have endured.[88]

The ordinary American G.I.s frequently came across people driven to destitution by the famine and expressed astonishment at their miserable conditions: "The unutterable filth and dirt of the Indian beggar is really astonishing...in spite of all I had read about it. I half way expected it, but even then, I was surprised."[89]

Corpses piled up on the streets of Calcutta and the Municipal Corporation was overburdened, which caused the US Military Forces to step in at this juncture. In the

A Tour Through Midnapur District, by Chittaprosad, in November, 1943 (Bombay: New Age, 1943); Famine Inquiry Commission of India, *Report on Bengal* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1945); Tarashankar Das, *Bengal Famine (1943) as Revealed in a Survey of the Destitutes in Calcutta* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1949); Paul Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal, The Famine of 1943-44* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

87 *The Calcutta Key*.
88 Waddell, *A Yank's Memories of Calcutta*.
89 Malcolm Harvey Stilson Collection (AFC/2001/001/02056).

words of Kermit A. Bushur:

> [W]hen I was in Calcutta, not having any company commander or anything like that, I was getting all the dirty details. And the dirtiest they had at that time was going into town and picking up the dead. See, the country was in a famine and they were starving people, they were elderly people, but they came to Calcutta so they could bathe in the River Ganges. To their religion they'd have to bathe in the River Ganges to be saved. Well, then they went going into town. They'd unroll their little bamboo roll that they had. They'd lie down there and go to sleep and sometimes they didn't wake up. So, every day there had to be a truck go through the entire city and pick up the dead. And then we would take them down to the river, put them on a big pile of wood and burn them. That became very, very disheartening and very sad to see that happening. And I was catching that detail every day, every day.[90]

Although Roosevelt ignored the question of channelling UNRRA food aid to Bengal, so as not to offend Churchill, the US troops in Calcutta did not passively observe the unmitigated escalation of this humanitarian crisis.[91] They responded effectively, as they had after the cyclone of October 1942, by raising funds to provide relief to the distressed districts of coastal Bengal.[92] As Yasmin Khan has pointed out, "[s]oldiers of all nationalities felt disturbed by what they saw in Bengal in 1943 and many, deeply moved by their inability to alleviate suffering, did what they could, offering up their own rations and helping children to welfare centres."[93] This has been further corroborated by Tathagata Niyogi:

> It also appears that the US Army in India started a voluntary food donation scheme by saving from their weekly rations of canned food. It was some of these cans that kept my family in Metiaburuz fed during the war. Also, quite intriguingly, it appears that the British Government in Calcutta tried its best to conceal the gravity of the famine from the

90 Kermit A. Bushur Collection (AFC/2001/001/29937), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.29937/.

91 For a detailed account of how the UNRRA food aid to Bengal was blocked, see Manish Sinha, "The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the Question of Food Aid During the Bengal Famine of 1943," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 73 (2012), 1042-1052.

92 'Bengal Relief Funds Still Trickle Through', *CBI Roundup* I, no. 12, December 3, 1942, http://cbi-theater.com/roundup/roundup120342.html.

93 Khan, *India At War*, 213-214.

> American troops in the city by regularly transporting the starving urban poor into food-camps in or outside the city.[94]

This paranoia of the colonial government stemmed from deep political insecurity. The British Raj was growing senile day by day while fissures within the Indian body politic were widening to the point of a rupture. The American soldiers had arrived in Calcutta when the country was going through a great political turmoil. They were leaving Calcutta when the city was gripped by a dangerous religious conflict. Thomas Ray Foltz recounted his experience of witnessing these riots:

> On February 29, 1946, several thousand G.I.'s and I packed our duffel bags and boarded a truck convoy which drove us down to the King George Docks to board the *U.S.S. General Hodges*. By that time the Indian people of Calcutta were rioting against the British in their quest for independence. Our convoy had to travel through very hazardous areas and the trucks were pelted with stones and other debris thrown by rioting Indians. The trucks were covered by canvas to help protect us from the objects being thrown. Luckily, I was not hit. To make matters worse in Bengal, Moslems and Hindus were at each other's throats, fighting to become independent states. Mass killings were becoming a way of life.[95]

This saga of bloodshed was punctuated with incidents that still evoked some hope. Golam Kutubuddin, a cloth merchant for generations, and his family took refuge at the American military barracks by the lake, when his house in a Hindu-majority neighbourhood was besieged by a rioting mob.[96] Shortly after the outbreak of these communal hostilities at the end of the war, the American soldiers were issued instructions to return to the US. They did not stay back to witness the worsening whirlpool of violence that would engulf the city during the Great Calcutta Killings of August 1946.[97] The last issue of the *IBT Roundup* came out on April 11, 1946, following which a smaller weekly news sheet called the *Chota Roundup* continued to be published until May 16, indicative of the increasingly dwindling presence of the American contingent in India. By the 31st of May, almost all the

94 Niyogi, 'Wartime Calcutta: Walking a Gut-Wrenching Disaster'.

95 Thomas Ray Foltz, "My Life As A G.I. Joe in World War II," http://cbi-theater.com/gijoe/gijoe.html.

96 Mukherjee, *Hungry Bengal*, 339.

97 For a detailed treatment of this theme of exacerbating communal violence during the 1940s, see Anwesha Roy, *Making Peace, Making Riots: Communalism and Communal Violence, Bengal 1940-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

American troopships had departed from the port of Calcutta. Only a handful of "G.I. Joes" remained in this city of the India-Burma Theater thereafter.

CONCLUSION: 'GLOBALIZING' EFFECTS OF A GLOBAL WAR?

There is no doubt that the Second World War was a global conflict. It was fought across continents with supply chains stretching across different theaters of war, and its conclusion was followed by a substantial restructuring of the international geopolitical order. Much light has been shed on this dimension of the war, to the extent that that other important aspects have frequently been eclipsed.[98] As Tarak Barkawi has argued, "War and armed conflict very often have been the leading edge of transregional interconnectedness."[99] The Second World War exemplified this. It was a war involving peripatetic armies fighting far away from their home fronts. These troops came face to face with people from very different cultural backgrounds, with whom they had to communicate on a regular basis, in alien cities during a protracted global conflict. Perceptions of a mutual cultural otherness permeated their mundane interactions under extraordinary circumstances. The situation of American soldiers in wartime Calcutta was no different. *A Pocket Guide to India* tendered some advice in this regard:

> As you see more of the Indian people, you will encounter many customs that are strange and new to Americans. A large number of them have grown out of the religions of the country and are therefore most sacred. You should respect them as you would wish your own beliefs and ways of living respected by strangers.[100]

In spite of such cautioning, misunderstandings were not a rarity. The experience of an ordinary G.I. in the city was usually characterized by 'fascination' and 'bewilderment'. Malcolm H. Stilson, for example, even noted the aggression with which a priest at the Kalighat Temple had stopped a fellow G.I. from photographing a customary goat sacrifice.[101]

98 See Jeremy Black, *World War Two: A Military History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); David Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt and the International History of the 1940s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Thomas U. Berger, *War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

99 Tarak Barkawi, "Connection and Constitution: Locating War and Culture in Globalization Studies," *Globalizations* 1, no. 2 (December 2004): 168, https://doi.org/10.1080/14774730420003085 32.

100 *A Pocket Guide to India.*

101 Malcolm Harvey Stilson Collection

However, these interactions were not underwritten by cultural anxiety and suspicion alone. These were opportunities for forging lasting cultural contacts and often provided impetus for coming to terms with otherwise incomprehensible cultural differences. An intriguing parallel drawn by Stilson while recounting his visit to the Kalighat Temple will illustrate this point further:

> This is the mother side of the great, many armed Kali, goddess of childbirth. And I think back to the cathedral in San Antonio, Texas, where the Catholic women prayed to the statue of the virgin Mary to grant them children.[102]

The American soldiers were constantly reminded that they had a purpose beyond fighting in a foreign country. They were also supposed to don the hats of envoys representing the goodwill of the United States.[103] No matter how annoyed they were with "Indian children ranging from two to seventy years old" bickering after them for "Baksheesh", they had to remember this sermon:[104]

> What you may not have stopped to realize is that after the war, in any permanent plan for peace that includes (and must include) Southeast Asia, India must and will assume a prominent role. You are a practical person from a practical nation. You can see that it makes common sense for anyone to cultivate a lasting friendship with India. Go to it, then. YOU - you're the one who is going to do it. It is part of YOUR JOB.[105]

In a global war such as this, soldiers were not merely combatants. They were links between cultures which were literally oceans apart. In spite of the uneven nature of their interactions with local inhabitants across different theaters, they functioned as wartime conduits for the flows of ideas and information, cultural traits and habits, and perceptions regarding peoples, places, and nations. Notwithstanding the diversity in their experiences, these soldiers had one thing in common. They brought back stories of their military lives in alien cities, loan-words from alien tongues, and more importantly, they transmitted hybrid cultural motifs.[106] Very few documents can testify to this better than Warren Weidenburner's 1944

(AFC/2001/001/02056).

102 Ibid.

103 *A Pocket Guide to India.*

104 Kennison Cook, 'Revised List of "Things We Can Do Without"', *CBI Roundup* I, no. 20, January 28, 1943, http://cbi-theater.com/roundup/roundup012843.html.

105 *The Calcutta Key*.

106 See Eugene B. Vest, "Native Words Learned by American Soldiers in India and Burma in World War II," *American Speech* 23, no. 3/4 (Oct.-Dec., 1948), https://www.jstor.com/stable/486923.

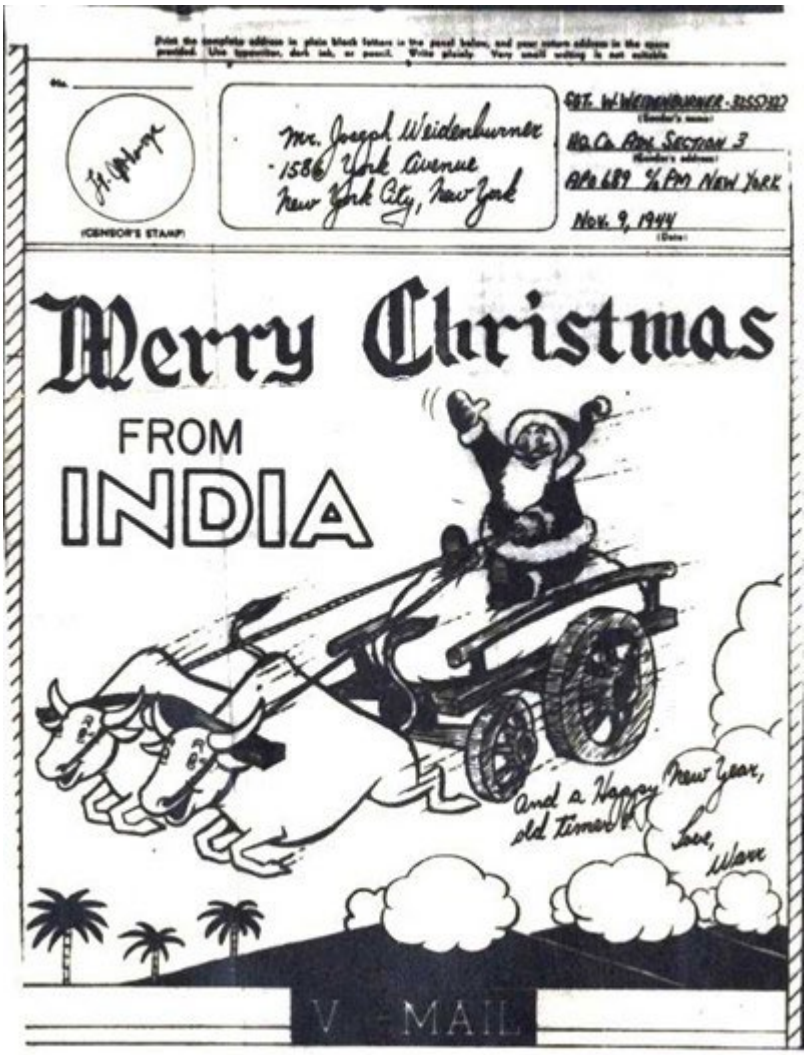

FIGURE 4: Warren Weidenburner's 1944 Christmas V-Mail to his father Joseph, depicting Santa Claus riding a sledge-cart drawn by a pair of excited Indian oxen. (Courtesy: Carl W. Weidenburner)

Christmas V-Mail to his father Joseph, depicting Santa Claus riding a sledge-cart drawn by a pair of excited Indian oxen.[107]

The Second World War was not just a global war; it was a

107 Carl W. Weidenburner, 'China-Burma-India Christmas,' in *China-Burma-India: Remembering the Forgotten Theater of World War II,* http://cbi-theater.com/christmas/cbixmas.html.

globalizing phenomenon in many respects. Cities like Calcutta became wartime sites of spontaneous cultural exchange among participants who operated within contrasting contexts and under varied constraints. The kaleidoscopic experiences of American G.I.s stationed there bore this out again and again. While their encounters with the local inhabitants were framed in terms of military obligation, possibility of adventure, wartime recreation and cultural immersion, the experiences of these encounters for the people of Calcutta were put into sharp relief by war-induced economic hardship, colonial coercion, subversive politics, and communal violence. A city which was starved and bombed for most of the war years and was greatly unfamiliar could still be “Teek-Hai” for soldiers engaged in an unprecedented and uneven global conflict, far from their homeland.

2

Book

Re

eviews

The Global Bourgeoisie, The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire. By Christof Dejung, David Motadel and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Hardcover: $99.95, Pp. 396, ISBN 9780691195834.

Review by
SIMONE STEADMAN-GANTOUS

Ever since the New Social History of the 1960s brought the study of the working class to the fore, historians have devoted ample time to examining the cultural and social mores of the global "lower" classes. But does the middle class have a similarly global history? This is the claim that editors Christof Dejung, David Motadel, and Jürgen Osterhammel make in *The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise and Fall of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire*. Through a collection of essays whose histories span the globe, this work positions itself as the first truly global history of the rise of the middle class during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Using the methodology of "Global Social History," the writers endeavor to "reemphasize the importance of class and social stratification in global history."[1] This work, therefore, takes a comparative approach to examining the emergence of middle classes across the globe, as well as the influences, entanglements, and networks through which they were connected.[2]

In their introduction, the editors suggest that the modern period "saw transformations of class hierarchies across the globe that were remarkably similar."[3] Forged in a period of increasing globalization, the middle class grew within and between national boundaries, often sharing the same values and lifestyles. The authors refute past theories that traditional bourgeois ideals spread from Europe to the rest of the world. Rather, the emergence of the middle class in every continent was closely tied to the rapid socioeconomic change of the nineteenth century, characterized by the formation of new transnational and trans-imperial structures. Working with a variety of sources, including state records, legal proceedings, newspapers, and cookbooks, the authors in this collection are able to make a convincing argument for the emergence of comparable middle classes across diverse locales.

The book's fifteen essays are grouped into four categories: state and class, colonialism and class, capitalism and class, religion and the betterment of the world, failures and fringes, and global social history. Each author defines the middle class differently, although a few key features are made clear. The middle class shared "particular forms of sociability and associational life, taking place in coffeehouses, social clubs, and cultural organizations."[4] Their values included "the control of emotions, the veneration of education and individual achievement, the development of an individual personality and pursuit

1 Christof Dejung, David Motadel and Jürgen Osterhammel, "Worlds of the Bourgeoisie," in *The Global Bourgeoisie, The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 6.

2 Dejung, Motadel, and Osterhammel, 12.

3 Ibid, 4.

4 Ibid, 9.

of self-perfection, a particular work ethic, a belief in progress, and a distinct understanding of science, politics, and religion."[5] In the private sphere, the middle class had "distinct forms of domesticity, family relations, and gender roles."[6] While none of these features were universal, the authors argue that there existed quite a significant similarity in the lifestyles, sociability, and aspirations of the global middle class.

The collection dates the emergence of the global middle class as ranging from between the 1850s to 1950s. The authors write that this was a time when global development intensified, arguing that by the 1880s, "clusters of bourgeois classes could be found in the densely populated parts of every continent, and by the 1920s, they had matured almost everywhere."[7] Although most of the narratives presented end with the decline of European imperialism following World War II, others feature more general overviews that extend into the period of decolonization.

The first three sections of the book illuminate the ways in which the linked processes of state formation, colonization, and capitalism shaped and were shaped by the emerging bourgeoisie. A strength of this work is that each author strives to explain both the global and local context for the success of specific groups. For example, Marcus Gräser discusses the rise of the middle class in the United States, where the lack of a centralized government and traditional aristocracy meant that it was the American bourgeoisie who created the first charitable and cultural institutions. Others demonstrated how the bourgeoisie born out of colonial processes often "merged European middle class culture with their own distinct forms of colonial middle-class culture."[8] Emma Hunter's chapter discusses the way in which the economically-marginalized East African colonial middle class asserted themselves as part of a global bourgeoisie, through appealing to shared middle class values and lifestyles. Colonialism and empire also had a profound effect on the middle class living in the metropole, whose lives were intertwined with European imperialism and expansion into global markets.

It was the need for ever-expanding markets that drove the emergence of the economic bourgeoisie—characterized by their ownership over the modes of production—to create global linkages of finance, trade, and industry. The role of local middle class actors who brokered and facilitated larger capitalist networks is explored by Kris Manjapra in chapter 9. Manjapra outlines the emergence of a "global regime of imperial capitalism,"[9]

5 Ibid, 10.
6 Ibid, 11.
7 Dejung, Motadel, and Osterhammel, 11.
8 Ibid, 25.
9 Kris Manjapra, "The Semi peripheral Hand: Middle Class Service Professionals of Imperial Capitalism,"

and with it, a highly mobile class of service providers. This mobile bourgeoisie facilitated the expansion of capitalist regimes of knowledge, information, and control into previously unknown frontiers. The authors in these chapters show how incredibly connected the growth of a global middle class was to the advent of colonialism and imperial capitalism.

The fourth section covers the role of religion and the "betterment of the world" in the formation of middle class identities. The authors contend that religion made up a central component of the middle class worldview. This was especially true in the case of charity, as middle classes across the globe tended to use membership in philanthropic clubs, salons, and organizations to help construct their own identities, values, and respectability in the public sphere. In chapter 10, Adam Mestyan discusses the Muslim bourgeoisie in the late Ottoman empire, who used charities and philanthropic institutions to create new avenues for class sociability. Similarly, in chapter 12, Christof Dejung writes about the European and non-European bourgeoisie's push to establish philanthropic organizations that would conduct civilizing missions across Empire. Based on a fear of social degeneration among the colonies and underclasses, these forms of philanthropy were influenced by a belief in "social action as a fundamental marker of Christian lay religious practice and middle class identity."[10] These chapters therefore show how the middle class used religion to fashion themselves as a group, and to relate to the rapidly globalizing world around them.

The next section, entitled "Failures and Fringes", is comprised of cases in which the formation of a successful middle class reputedly failed. In these locations, "the claim of European and North American middle classes to be the epitome of modernity led to a sense of deficiency among the emerging middle classes."[11] In chapters 13 and 14, the authors David S. Parker and Alison K. Smith use the case studies of South America and Russia to reassess this narrative and other global myths surrounding the bourgeoisie. The absences and discontinuities in this section make clear the ineffectuality of attempting to evaluate all class formations against their counterparts in Europe and North America.

The central thesis of the book is fleshed out in greater detail in the final chapter, written by Richard Drayton. Drayton argues that the history of the middle class should be studied through "connective"

in Dejung, Motadel, and Osterhammel, *The Global Bourgeoisie,* 184.

10 Christof Dejung, "From Global Civilizing Missions to Racial Warfare: Class Conflicts and the Representation of the Colonial World in European Middle Class Thought," in Dejung, Motadel, and Osterhammel, *The Global Bourgeoisie,* 257.

11 Dejung, Motadel, and Osterhammel. 33.

rather than comparative history. He constructs the emergence of a global middle class as part and parcel of globalization, and the violent integration of worldwide markets under a Western capitalist hegemony. These processes required the formation of a new class of mediators, thus creating a global middle class. It was in this process of "integration, standardization, and simplification that race, class, and culture became [...] critical axes of status identity and group dynamics in international society."[12] The question for global historians of the middle class lies in how social differentiation was transformed globally, without assuming that the European middle class was impervious to outside influences.

The goals of this collection are relatively ambitious, which can work to its detriment. While claiming to create a global history that makes room for local specificities, the general overview provided by many of the chapters are necessarily lacking in detail. Furthermore, most of the authors spend a considerable amount of space discussing what exactly constitutes the middle class, which can become repetitive. However, this work serves as an excellent jumping-off point for this new field in global social history. When viewed as the start of a new realm of historiography, *The Global Bourgeoisie* makes a convincing case for the interconnected and transnational nature of the rise of the middle class across time and space.

The Global Bourgeoisie puts forth a clear framework for the future study of the global rise of the middle class. By arguing for a comparative as well as connective historical survey of the middle class, this work challenges the prevailing notions of bourgeois modernity as emanating solely from Europe. Presenting narratives from around the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe, each author is able to expertly decenter the history of the bourgeoisie during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Whether they were known as *compradors*, *porteños*, or *effendi*, after reading this work there can no doubt that the rise of the middle class was indeed global.

12 Richard Drayton, "Race, Culture and Class: European Hegemony and Global Class Formation, circa 1800-1950," in Dejung, Motadel and Osterhammel, *The Global Bourgeoisie,* 345.

Manchurian Memories in Postwar Japan (戦後日本の満洲記憶). By Satou Ryou, Kano Tomohiro, Yukawa Makie, eds. (佐藤量, 菅野智博, 湯川真樹江編), Tokyo, Toho Shoten (東方書店), 2020. Pp. 368, ISBN 9784497220042.

Review by
CHI HO KIANG

Before the post-WWII dissolution of the Japanese Empire, the empire's subjects had been settling in China for several decades. Most of them contributed, directly or indirectly, to Japan's expansionist project and modernist agenda. Peter Duus, professor of Japanese imperialism at Stanford University, suggests that the Japanese presence in China had a profound impact on modern Japanese History in the early twentieth century.[1] However, what cannot be disputed is that Japanese colonial settlers' experiences living in China played a constitutive role in their lives. How they formed, rationalized, and "reframed" historical memories and their own identities in postwar Japan is a question seldom explored. Drawing mainly from the "Newsletters" (会報) issued by former Manchukuo settlers' groups, the contributors of Manchurian Memories in Postwar Japan（戦後日本の満洲記憶, mostly young scholars from Japan in History and Memory Studies, provide a fresh perspective on the post-war experiences of former imperial settlers in Manchukuo by embedding it into the history of post-war Japan's politics and society.

In a total of 11 articles, organized into the three sections entitled "Memory of War", "Conflict Memory," and "Peripheral Memory", the contributors illuminate the ever-changing historical memory of these former settlers. They scrutinize how the narrative resonated with and was reframed by the ups and downs in Sino-Japanese relations and Japan's internal politics. One shared theme amongst these articles is the struggle between identity and memory, the constant interaction between personally held memories of experience and larger memory narratives. Given that settlers were regarded as notorious "invaders" and primarily excluded from the foreign property compensation scheme and the pension scheme, it is hardly surprising that they were highly motivated, both emotionally and financially, to redeem their reputation by highlighting their contribution to the empire, to the community, and to the welfare of the Chinese people. Stories and memories about Manchukuo selected by respective leaders were published in the aforementioned newsletters to emphasize settlers' contributions. The "past" was deliberately and purposefully engineered. These articles offer intriguing insights into this engineering, demonstrating how Manchukuo historical memory was reframed due to several non-historical reasons deeply embedded in post-war Japanese politics and international dynamics. In its entirety, this book captures the uncertain relationship between historical events, experience, and myth.

Impressively, most contributors demonstrate an ability to connect personal identity and historical memory with postwar

1 Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), xi.

geopolitical developments, while also successfully illustrating the complexity of the colonial experience. For instance, Kano Tomohiro（菅野智博）in his article "Narrated Andong History"（語られる「安東史」——一九五〇～一九七〇年代初期における『ありなれ』を中心に）reveals that officials and merchants had noticeably different attitudes towards the South Manchurian Railway Company, the empire, and the city itself. Take manufacturing as an example: for the officers, the introduction of new manufacturing technology, the establishment of the new harbor, and the building of a hydroelectric power station were mainly regarded as part of the imperial efforts. On the other hand, settlers took these achievements as evidence of Andong's advantages or characteristics to compare against other major cities in Manchukuo and emphasized how the local community could benefit. Nevertheless, Kano underlines that this more or less contradicted local narrative was eventually subsumed into an imperialistic narrative. It is convenient to characterize all Japanese in Manchukuo as "imperialists" or, on the other hand, to over-emphasize the independent "settlers" that departed from the imperial agenda. Instead, Kano stresses that their variant agendas and interests were inherently intertwined with the imperial structure.

The book deserves a further compliment for offering a new take on post-war East Asian relations. The legacy of the Japanese Empire has often been underestimated. Japan, the former empire, lost much of its influence in the formal diplomatic world for several years after World War II. In this circumstance, students of the dead empire could be "re-activated" to advance the national interest. For instance, Japanese and Taiwanese students who graduated from the Daido Gakuin, a training institute for colonial officials in Manchukuo, played an underestimated role in Asian geopolitics in the post-war period. According to Lin Chih-hung's（林志弘）article "Daido Gakuin Alumni Association under the Cold War System"（冷戦体制下における大同学院同窓会––日本と台湾の場合, these once empire-trained students played a role in maintaining non-governmental relations between Taiwan and Japan. In a sense, these state-builders-to-be fulfilled their mission at last – to facilitate communication between Tokyo and East Asia.

It is worth noting that the overwhelming majority of this book is related to Manchukuo's historical memory. However, the articles do not draw much from literature on memory studies and cultural memory. Looking at concepts such as "transnational memory" and "multidirectional memory" could further problematize these articles. Another issue comes from the focus on the collective: taking full advantage of the settlers' "Newsletters". Most authors accentuate how these groups operated as a cohesive organization in post-war society, while little

attention is devoted to how this memory affected the everyday experiences of the individuals who belonged to these groups.

Manchurian Memories in Postwar Japan is an excellent addition to the study of imperial history in East Asia that connects empirical analysis with geopolitical dynamics. Researchers of postwar Japan will also find this book appealing. The voices of the "Manchukuo settlers", including the merchants, residents, students, and women subordinated in contemporary Japanese society, have finally been made intelligible to the public.

Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912. By Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz, New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. Hardcover: $140.00, Pp. 264, ISBN 9780231192149.

Review by
CHARLES BROPHY

In *Asian Place, Filipino Nation*, Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz sets out to write the history of the Philippine Revolution beyond the nationalist and imperial historiography which has hitherto dominated its narration. In doing so, Aboitiz gives focus to the Philippine Revolution as part of a "global moment" in which its unfolding emerged not through a dichotomy between imperial centre and periphery, but also through interactions between peripheries. With this perspective, she renders the experience of the Revolution as not only a national one, but as regional and global as well.

In studying the Revolution beyond a dichotomy between imperial centre and periphery, Aboitiz turns to the place of the Revolution within Pan-Asianist thought, as a site of inter-Asian imaginaries. Yet, in giving focus to the importance of Pan-Asianism for the Revolution, Aboitiz highlights another centre-periphery dynamic, one within the historiography of Pan-Asianism itself. The historiography of Pan-Asianism is dominated by a focus on the concept as emanating from Japan, with peripheral Southeast Asian countries seen as pursuing a derivative Pan-Asianism. Against this, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation* gives an account of the Philippine Revolution which expands its intellectual horizons, highlighting the Revolution's Asian scope, whilst situating Filipino political thinkers as generative of Pan-Asianist thought. In doing so Aboitiz's book calls for a focus on the study of global political thought through interactions within the periphery, which gives renewed focus to the other foundations of the modern nation-state system in Southeast Asia.

Central to this is Aboitiz's reading of the Philippine Revolution through an emerging field of global intellectual history. In doing so, Aboitiz builds upon transnational anti-colonial thought in the work of Partha Chatterjee, Erez Manela and Cemil Aydin,[1] and roots the emergence of the nationalist Philippine Revolution in a "transnational transmission of ideas",[2] highlighting the way in which Filipino nationalist thought emerged within a global intellectual space. Where Aboitiz's work further contributes to this literature is in its greater concern with how Filipino nationalists moved from global and universalist concerns towards local and national demands. The text is particularly concerned with how Filipino thinkers moved from a global and Pan-Asianist consciousness to a

1 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Erez Manela,. *The Wilsonian Moment: Self Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

2 Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 3.

sense of Filipino identity—localising the global.

Here Aboitiz's work turns to the concept of place. The standard account of anti-colonial nationalism has centred around the work of Partha Chatterjee. He argued that nationalism emerged in the colonial world through an appropriation of the universalism of Western modernity, yet in a way which asserted the national difference of the colonised. In *The Nation and its Fragments* Chatterjee has argued that reacting to the Western modern, anti-colonial nationalists first asserted their national sovereignty within the 'spiritual domain' of religion and culture, marking a difference between the spirituality of the nation and the materialism of Western modernity.[3] In Aboitiz's work this distinction emerges as a division between the transnational flows of global thought and the embeddedness and locality of place as a "non-universal plane" of particularity: national, ethnic, and geographic.

As Aboitiz recounts, whilst European empires asserted sovereignty over their colonies through reliance upon a regulative idea (Christianity in the case of the Spanish Empire, technological improvement in the case of the British) it was through a juxtaposition between this idea and the colony's place that nationalist movements emerged, challenging the universality of claims to imperial rule within particular, or national, claims of difference. Yet where Aboitiz's account diverges from Chatterjee's is in its insistence that this assertion of difference and of place did not take the form of a detachment from a global and regional space. Rather, Aboitiz argues that the Filipino assertion of place occurred *within* a regional and global space. In this sense Aboitiz's account resonates with the work of Andrew Sartori on the global history of Bengali culturalism, in which—critiquing Chatterjee's assumption of anti-colonial nationalism as occurring through an opposition between fixed pre-modern notions of community and the colonial state—Sartori seeks to highlight the global space within which such culturalism was constituted.[4]

To highlight this dynamic, Aboitiz turns to the way in which Filipino nationalists thought through questions of race, with particular attention to the newspaper *La Solidaridad*. As Aboitiz outlines, Filipino nationalists mixed pre-colonial forms of identity with European thinking around race and Social Darwinism to assert a Malay racial identity as a basis for a future Filipino national identity. Yet in keeping with her arguments around place, this identity was not subordinated to a narrow nationalism.

3 Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*.

4 Andrew Sartori, *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

On the one hand it linked up to broader ideas of Malayness and Pan-Malay sentiments, linking Filipino nationalists to questions of national belonging in Indonesia and British Malaya. On the other hand, it asserted Malayness as a broader category capable of including a wider array of Asian populations, particularly the Japanese. Thus, while Japan provided a future model of a non-colonial Philippines, it was through a sense of geographic and racial brotherhood that early nationalists could imagine forms of cooperation outside of colonialism.

In Chapter 3 Aboitiz then traces the development of the Filipino revolution from the nationalist thought of Rizal to the formation of the Katipunan under Bonifacio. Aboitiz argues that the turn to a more direct political nationalism did not shrink away from earlier Pan-Asian visions of the Filipino Revolution, but remained transnational in its scope. The Katipunan vision was neither a nativist reaction to an earlier cosmopolitan intellectual culture, nor a proletarian corrective to bourgeois liberalism, and remained caught up within the transnational intellectual history of the Propaganda movement: adopting the language of liberty, equality, fraternity, progress, and enlightenment; cheering on the rebels in Cuba; following the Japanese victory in 1895; and forging transnational connections and bases across Asia. Here Aboitiz highlights the role of cities like Hong Kong and Yokohama as "safety valves" and as "cosmopolitan cities in which Asian subversives could act with greater political freedom as well as cities in which they imagined richer alternative lives counter to their colonial conditions".[5] In doing so, she echoes Tim Harper's recent work on the Asian underground, as transnational spaces in which Asian revolutionaries organised against colonial regimes.[6]

The importance of such transnational networks is further explored in Chapter 4 where Aboitiz turns to the figure of Mariano Ponce, who handled the "international desk" for *La Solidaridad* and became an ambassador of the Filipino Revolution. As Aboitiz highlights, this role wasn't merely the expression of a national revolution reaching out for regional or international solidarity, but was rooted in Ponce's own Pan-Asianist thought—thought that was manifest in his earlier scholarship on regional folklore and his comparative accounts of colonial Southeast Asia, as well as his reflections on the rise of Japan. It is by studying Ponce's meetings with other Asianists such as Kang-Yu Wei, Sun Yat-Sen, as well as Japanese Pan-Asianists such as Hirata Hyobei and Fukushima Yasumasa, that Aboitiz highlights the "affective ties" which brought Asian nationalists and revolutionaries together in a shared sense of destiny and struggle.

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5 Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation*, 92.

6 Tim Harper, *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2020).

It is in reference to Ponce that Aboitiz highlights how her understanding of the Filipino Revolution's transnationalism differs from that of earlier scholars. Whereas Sven Matthiesson has argued that – while Ponce and others had a sense of inter-Asian solidarity – it would be "far-fetched" to refer to them as Pan-Asianists, against Matthiesson, Aboitiz argues that if a pure Pan-Asianism untainted by geopolitical and nationalist considerations did not emerge in the period, Pan-Asianism remains central in spite of its impurity. As Aboitiz argues: "for the colonized, an unmitigated idealism in the negotiation of fields of power was simply impractical and unrealistic. As such, there was basically no 'true' Pan-Asianism among the colonized or in Southeast Asia… because during this colonial era in Southeast Asia essentially no activist political thinker was untouched by priorities of self-determination and geopolitical realism".[7] Yet as she continues, "It is important, however, to recover the Pan-Asianism of the 'periphery' and to understand the ways in which it interacted with that of the center, rather than merely dismissing or occluding to its existence for failure to conform to the center".[8] The important methodological consideration which needs to be further addressed is how we are to separate out Pan-Asianist thought from concrete political and geopolitical considerations.

In the final chapter Aboitiz builds upon such concerns by turning to the afterlives of the Filipino Revolution, and the way this peripheral Pan-Asianism came to subsequently influence political movements in China, Indonesia, and the broader Malay World. She argues that the Pan-Asian legacy was continued in the Philippines in the later thought of Artemio Ricarte, Benigno Ramos, and President Jose P. Laurel, building upon earlier racialised and Darwinian understandings of Asianism— which in the case of Jose P. Laurel could justify the Japanese Occupation. Finally, Aboitiz turns to post-war projects of Pan-Malay unity, ones which in transgressing imperial borders highlighted the potential for an Asianism from the periphery, in the form of an Indonesia Raya or Melayu Raya, or in Diosdado Macapagal's later Maphilindo (an amalgamation of Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia), uniting the peoples of the Malay World within a confederation of states.

It is then in highlighting such alternative geopolitical imaginings that Aboitiz's project encourages us to study political thought beyond the hegemonic projects of the imperial centre. And in giving emphasis to the globality and transnationality of these peripheral imaginings of place, nation, and region, Aboitiz's work should— more generally— encourage a greater focus on the global dimensions of Southeast Asian political thought.

7 Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation,* 132.

8 Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation*, 132.

Distributive Struggle and the Self in the Early Modern Iberian World. Historamericana 44. Edited by Nikolaus Böttcher, Stefan Rinke, and Nino Vallen. Stuttgart: Heinz, 2019. Pp. 294. ISBN: 9783880997134.

Review by
LARA WANKEL & ALINA RODRÍGUEZ

The edited volume *Distributive Struggle and the Self in the Early Modern Iberian World* by Nikolaus Böttcher, Stefan Rinke and Nino Vallen is an important contribution to a growing body of scholarship on early modern "self-fashioning" within the globalizing/globalized Iberian empire. It presents a wide variety of case studies about processes of self-fashioning within the complex system of assessment and remuneration in a manifold of regions in the Iberian world. The ten contributions in the book cover a broad temporal as well as geographical scope, presenting case studies from both the Spanish and Portuguese empires, focusing on a broad range of actors (men and women, *conversos*, creoles, *indios*, and Hindu merchants) on regions outside the Iberian Peninsula: in Africa, Asia, and the Americas from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Out of the ten chapters, six are written in English and four in Spanish.

The main issue that the volume tackles derives from the question of distributive struggle in the Iberian empires. As the Crowns administered a distribution system of privileges and rewards, individuals under the regal rule of the Iberian empires had to present themselves as worthy of such remunerations. To accomplish this, they had to create an individual narrative that made them worthy in the eyes of the Crown. The selves that these individuals crafted did not appear spontaneously, nor were they just the pure expression of an inner conscious. The different types of sources chosen for the case studies are, in one way or another, all documents in which individuals presented ("fashioned") themselves to the request they were placing. This "particular form of an early modern autobiographical culture" (p.11) spread throughout the Iberian empire, producing a great volume of documentation that, however, did become standardized to an extent. Given the vastness of the Iberian world and the relative uniformity in procedural action it achieved, the edited volume thus speaks to the historiography on the globality and entanglements of the early modern world, as well as to studies on the changing conceptions of self- and personhood in the early modern era.

The reasoning behind the order of the chapters remains unclear, and is decidedly different from the structure of the 2017 workshop this volume originated in. On the one hand, this (dis)order and decentralized approach emphasizes the main thesis of the volume on the ubiquity of certain self-fashioning strategies within the Iberian empire. On the other hand, it hinders the perception of a coherent temporal or geographical narrative.

The differing contributions orbit around several topics. Chapters 3 and 4 by Richard Herzog and Jose Cáceres Mardones respectively deal with indigenous self-fashioning in the Americas. Cáceres Mardones grapples with questions of a decolonization of Peru's history, Andean historicity, and temporality

within Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's writings. Cáceres Mardones' starting point is *pacha*, understood in the Andean cosmovision as time and space. Guaman Poma's self-fashioning takes place within this concept. By fashioning himself as "the epitome of the 'Indians'" (p. 134), as old and living in poverty, he justifies his proposal for a remaking of the Andean world in favour of its indigenous population —while still accepting the authority of the King. Herzog takes the life and work of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl as an entry point to study broader questions of the self-conceptions of native authors within the political and legal system of New Spain. For Alva Ixtlilxochitl, fashioning a deserving self meant drawing on and embellishing his lineage and knowledge, and incorporating and highlighting indigenous political concepts. Herzog's chapter fits in well with the contributions of Stefan Rinke and Cáceres Mardones, as all three deal not only with individual but also group identities, in which *space* plays an important role.

Through a combination of visual as well as textual sources, Rinke aims to show the "creolization" of the concept and space of America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He argues that the formations of a creole identity were closely tied to space. Creoles began to perceive "America" positively in its own right, as a nexus between the "Old" and the "New" and as an identity-defining element, sometimes in opposition to Iberian ideas and policies.

The contributions by Nino Vallen, Delphine Tempère, and Noelle Richardson reflect the core of the volume. Researching a creole author in New Spain, Spanish agents in the Philippines, and Hindu merchants in the Portuguese Estado da Índia respectively, these contributions present paradigmatic examples of the ways in which imperial subjects fashioned a deserving self for/within the system of assessment and remuneration. In his analysis of Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza's case, Vallen highlights the "inherently relational nature of personhood" (p.165) in the early modern era. Dorantes de Carranza, as a creole, situated himself within a grid of various collectives present in the Americas while exalting himself due to his personal merits. His statements on the inherent nature of the creoles potentially give further insight into a developing creole identity. Mobility emerges as the focal point in Tempère's analysis of legal records produced by Spaniards who were or had been in the Philippines. She shows how these agents of empire highlighted their administrative, military, or religious expertise, and above all their global mobility, to present themselves as subjects protecting a Spanish empire vulnerable at its limits, and therefore deserving of privileges. The article by Richardson strikes a similar note, showcasing how Hindu merchants made use of the legal framework of the Portuguese empire as a crucial element of their commercial strategy. Members of the mercantile

class in the Estado da Índia inserted themselves into the Portuguese colonial distribution system for economic gain, as well as for social positioning and mobility upwards. A picture of mutual dependencies and reciprocities between these merchants and the Crown emerged.

Ingrid Simson's contribution presents similar strategies of the fashioning of a deserving self, albeit in a more unusual type of source: epic poetry. Simson's literary perspective highlights rare examples of the creation of a "deserving self" through non-procedural documents.

Through the use of inquisitorial documentation, Nikolaus Böttcher researched the lives of several *conversos* who constantly moved across confessional lines. These highly mobile individuals were not crafting autobiographies to obtain privileges or royal favors, but did so in a hostile environment, trying to survive religious persecution. This case study is a noticeable exception in the volume, as the individuals in question were not voluntarily tailoring a self as part of the "distributive struggle," but for survival.

(Global) mobility is, unsurprisingly, one of the overarching themes throughout many of the volume's contributions. For (global) historians of the early modern period, this does not come as a major surprise. For those who have not yet plunged themselves into early modern global history, however, there might still be a surprising element in just how mobile some of the early modern biographies were and how the reception of such a trait could be an asset (Tempère) or arise suspicion (Böttcher). The fashioning of a deserving self could also be tied to specific weaknesses, a point which comes up in the contribution by Herzog and is made evident by Agata Bloch's contribution on Portuguese widows in the empire's colonies in Africa, Brazil, and India. Bloch explores how many of these widows portrayed themselves as poor and helpless to evoke the king's pity and receive financial help or special permits.

The remaining chapter by Lilyam Padrón Reyes approaches another long-overlooked group of imperial subjects: *indios* in the Cuban militias. Padrón Reyes studies how these actors used their role in the defense of the empire to try to improve their situation, as they were enduring the hardship of systematic land dispossession. Taking part in the conquest or defense of the empire was an important aspect of the self-fashioning of the imperial subject, as is also touched upon by Simson, Vallen and Tempère.

The framing outlined in the introduction justifies the focus on the fashioning of a deserving self and proposes it can be effectively studied in the context of the negotiations between subject and ruler. The majority of the case studies present a variation on the following mechanism: an imperial subject aspired to obtain a royal favor in the form of financial benefits, titles, and privileges. To back their claim, the actors crafted a narrative where

they had behaved righteously and/or unjustly landed in a challenging situation. The self that they crafted during this act of narration was tailored to maximize their chances of gaining a royal benefit. Furthermore, the narrative served to establish and strengthen their position within society. The structural similarities of the articles strengthen the thesis outlined in the introduction. However, the conclusions do —to an extent— resemble each other. This can (especially when read one after the other, which, admittedly, is not necessarily the way an anthology such as this is usually read) seem repetitive. The actors significatively vary and to a lesser degree the types of source do as well, but the scheme remains. One of the reasons behind this is most likely related to sources. If the procedure was uniform, then the main differences in the cases would probably come from the reaction of the Crown to each petition, and in many cases the documents regarding the fates of the petitions are lost.

Nevertheless, the contributions consistently depict how the struggles to obtain benefits had a lasting impact on the creation of the self. They offer a glimpse on how certain ideas born from the interactions with the Crown poured outside the realm of administrative procedures and diffused in broader intellectual frames. This facet, the question on how the works were received (in cases with broad audiences), will need to be explored by further scholarship. A history of reception would be key to understanding how the fashioning of the self had a lasting impact on the Iberian world, beyond the discussion on the limits of the agency of the subjects.

There are indeed cases where the conclusions interpret the act of crafting a self as a gesture of assertiveness in itself, despite the fact that the documents can only show a fabricated version of a self. Some contributions include a profound discussion of the inherent difficulties of working with official (legal) sources, whereas others do not. It is likely that such a discussion would have exceeded the length of some of these contributions—yet, it could have prevented an over-emphasis on measuring the extent of self-assertion and agency.

Overall, it is remarkable that this single volume is able to gather so many perspectives from various regions distant from each other and spanning three centuries. By reading the whole volume, the reader gets a glimpse on the multiplicity of the early modern Iberian world. Considering the global nature of this Iberian sphere, it is unfortunate that such approach is still not as common. Combining contributions on the Spanish and Portuguese empires into a single volume is another strength of this book. The union between these empires from 1580 to 1640, and the strong entanglements between them overall, should be reason enough to analyze them in conjunction more often.

The volume is a rich overview for scholars interested in the history

of the formation and negotiation of the self during the early modern period, and more specifically in the Spanish and Portuguese empires. The case studies brought together clearly illustrate the thesis that a particular kind of self-fashioning employed by diverse actors in their struggles for distributive justice spread throughout the Iberian world. It is thus a good example of a work that can expand the existent historiography to be more truly global, through showcasing the similarities in procedures between distant, diverse places.