

Loyola University Student Historical Journal

**Volume 14
Spring-Fall, 1983
New Orleans, Louisiana**

The Loyola University Student Historical Journal is a yearly publication of the Pi-Chi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society and the Loyola University Student Historical Association (L.U.S.H.A.). The journal is the yearly culmination of the associations' activities. It has served the purposes of encouraging scholarly research on the part of students in the field of history and of making public these investigations since 1966. Printed papers are submitted to a selection committee, which includes Loyola history faculty, Phi Alpha Theta and L.U.S.H.A. officers. Papers are judged by their scholarship and readability, with the best paper receiving the History Department "Best Essay Award." Papers are submitted by Loyola faculty members, but students who wish to submit a paper for the next publication should contact the History Department at Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Preface

The fourteenth volume of this journal was made available through funding by the Student Government Association (S.G.A.). The journal staff would like to thank the Student Government Association for its support.

The Journal Staff would also like to thank the history faculty at Loyola for its cooperation and would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Bernard Cook and Dr. David Moore for their help in preparing the journal and in serving on the selection committee. Also the staff would like to especially thank Phi Alpha Theta's Pi-Chi chapter at Loyola for their assistance.

It would be inappropriate to exclude Ms. Paula Guibault for her assistance in preparing this edition of the journal. Ms. Guibault spent countless hours assisting the journal staff in typesetting. Her time and effort is greatly appreciated.

This volume of the journal was typeset and edited entirely by students at Loyola University, with help from Ms. Guibault. The editorial staff would like to extend our sincere thanks to Thomas Delahaye and Pamela Ferrage who spent a great deal of their time on this journal. Thanks should also be extended to Joe Byrnes and Melissa Bender.

Martin Luther

by Paul Deutsch

In his *Autobiography*, Ignatius of Loyola relates that while he was in Manresa, Spain (1522,23), he was pressed severely by scruples that he had not remembered all his past sins in his general confession. His agony reached such depth that on one occasion he was tempted to kill himself and on another he declared that he would even submit to being taugth by a puppy dog if he could be released from his scruples. The resolution of his scruples flowed out of an experience, or series of experiences, of Christ, evoking a great love and desire to serve Christ. This experience of Ignatius is similar to the agony that Luther underwent with his scruples and to the releasing experience of the mercy of God which led to a sequence of events that began his drive to reform the Church. Luther was a man of great passions, capable of prodigious expenditure of energy (and of long periods of depression) and wholeheartedly centered on God. Was his experience of scruples and of God's mercy similar to the experiences of John Calvin and Henry VIII? If they differed, what drove the other two men to reform Christ's Church on earth? These two questions are the focus of this paper, an attempt to grasp a part of the wellspring of the drive of each man, their similarities and differences.

As mentioned above, Luther underwent a severe case of scruples, and it was the resolution of these scruples that led him to challenge the Church's practice of granting of indulgences. In trying to explain the severity of Luther's scruples, Roland Bainton presented him both as a product of his age and as a man much concerned about his relationship with God.' The most important bequeathal of the age to Luther was the ruling theology of the day — Ockhamism. The two basic tenets of this philosophy were the absolute free will of God and the strong emphasis on man's achievement of his salvation. This emphasis on the free will of God led to the view of an arbitrary God, for a person could not gain heaven by leading a holy life — this would mean that God's will could be swayed by human actions. Paradoxically, the second tenet held that each person played a major role in his own salvation by prayer, fasting and good works.

Effects of these two tenets can be seen in Luther's early life, before his conversion experience in 1516. In response to the view of God as arbitrary was his search for a way to appease God, "to win a gracious God,"² whether it be by prayers to the saints, granting of indulgences or the entering of a religious order. In performing these actions, he then was confronted by the plaguing question of whether he was doing enough and by the doubt as to the efficacy of his efforts, of the ob-

tained indulgences. In joining the Augustinians (after six months of depression³), Luther did not achieve the peace he agonized for; within monastic life, he became caught up in scruples about performing his duties and, even more basically, about how he was measuring up before God the Judge. In 1510, he went to Rome and while there obtained several indulgences by saying Masses, visiting shrines and venerating relics; however, afterwards he wondered if they had really been efficacious.⁴

In the following six to seven years, his scruples continued, sometimes overwhelmingly and other times hardly at all. During this time he was under the spiritual direction of the superior of his order, John Staupitz. Staupitz tried several solutions, but none had the effect of freeing Luther from his vicious cycle. He was attracted to God as the source of the peace he sought, yet he saw himself as impotent and depraved before God the Majestic — this was especially true when he said his first Mass. Luther hated this God; then came the scruples of blasphemy⁵ As a last resort, Staupitz commanded Luther to take the Chair of Holy Scripture at Wittenberg, to preach the word of God and to care for souls.

This decision by Staupitz led to Luther's release in that it was during his lecture on Paul's Letter to the Romans in the years of 1515-17 that he found the key he needed — Romans 1:17. Here he found that truly man could not justify himself before God, but by faith in Christ, God would justify him. It was this that was to form Luther's drive, was to focus his energy toward God and outward to those around him, for he had experienced salvation and wished to share his pearl of great cost. Yet, he found his parishoners being led astray and in danger of eternal damnation because of the abuse of selling indulgences. People were being re-affirmed in their request to appease an arbitrary, angry God, which was the opposite direction from the real solution — faith in God's mercy, which is embodied in his son Jesus Christ. Thus, Luther challenged the practice of preaching indulgences to protect the souls of his parishoners, opening the door to his eventual drive to reform the Church.

By the time John Calvin wrote his *Institutes of Christian Religion* (1536) and became acknowledged as one of the top leaders in the Protestant reform movement, Luther was already on the sidelines, though he would live ten more years. Thus, Calvin is seen as a second generation reformer; and yet, despite the difference in years, he bore several similarities to Luther. Both were very religious men who dreaded the public life (Luther at least at the very beginning); they overcame their timidity by the drive within themselves. Both had a negative view of man's nature — that it was depraved and impotent, unable to do any good without God's grace. Flowing from this was the insistence that salvation was through faith alone, not through human actions, which Calvin would carry farther in his doctrine of predestination.

In contrast to these similarities, Calvin differed markedly in other areas. "He lacked Luther's passion, humanity, reckless courage and he also lacked his self doubts and extravagances."⁶ Calvin did not experience, as far as is known, scruples or any other internal upheaval; his conversion (1532,33) was of the heart, yes, but more intellectual than Luther's. It could even be said that it was not very interesting psychologically.⁷ Although little is known of the actual experience, the drive within him can be seen in his theology and in his theocracy in Geneva, for his experience brought on a whole-hearted conversion to establish the kingdom of God on earth. For the rest of his life, he entertained little doubt that he was an instrument of God's will.

Being of a less emotional bent, Calvin was able to write a systematic presentation of the Protestant profession, which Luther had not been able to do. The main emphasis of his theology was the sovereignty of God, His omnipotence and omniscience. In basing his theology there, his emphasis was more on Creation and the Fall of man, than in Christ's salvific deed as presented in the New Testament.⁸ Christ played a more important role as the way to knowledge of God. This knowledge of God was important for Calvin; it enabled man to glorify God, which was the sole purpose of man. This emphasis on the majesty of God was in contrast to Luther who centered more on the mercy of God. When this emphasis was combined with his negative view of the nature of man, it led to his view of predestination, to God's awesome decree at the time of Creation which saved or damned each person. Man's sole purpose was to glorify God; therefore, each person should "be willing to be damned for the glory of God."⁹ Man should not worry about his salvation but live out his life in hope.

This purpose of man took concrete form in the theocracy Calvin fashioned in Geneva; the bulk of which was set in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541. The purpose of society was also to give glory to God; and therefore, it was necessary for the Church to oversee the lives of the citizens of Geneva to insure and to encourage that they live moral lives. Calvin was challenged on several features of his theology and nature of man and on his theory of government but was not deterred by it, for how could the depraved and impotent human understanding grasp the divine will, of which he was the mouthpiece. Calvin sought the kingdom of God on earth to the glory of God and did not doubt that he was God's instrument to actualize this.

What to say about Henry VIII?¹⁰ He does not appear to have had a religious conversion or experience that formed a drive behind his reformation as did Calvin and Luther. Similar to Luther in that he could be an emotional and tempestuous man, his emotions were not vulcanized and channeled into purifying the Church as for Luther. He was trained in the humanistic mold and was an amateur theologian,

yet, unlike Calvin, he lacked that transcendental outside of himself to transform radically his perspective.

Although he was anticlerical, Henry was at home with his faith (he was representative of England in this dichotomy). He went to Mass, was pious and had a good grasp of the faith. Five years after his rupture with Rome, he ushered through Parliament the Act of the Six Articles which attempted to maintain an orthodox Catholicism (minus the papacy) in England. Several authors (Elton, Klassen, Belloc and Preserved Smith) point to his desire to divorce Catherine as the first step of England's Reformation, but not the sole end of it. The Reformation continued after Archbishop Cranmer's annulment of the marriage of 1534 and even after the death of Henry in 1547. Yet in the divorce, a thread may be found to the drive behind Henry's Reformation.

The ascension of Henry's father — Henry VII — to the throne marked the end of the War of the Roses. Being so soon from this upheaval, Henry saw it as necessary for the peace of the realm that he have a male heir. Even more basic, or equal in Henry's view, was the strength and prestige of the kingship itself. This can be illustrated by two examples, one of the expansion of the sway of the power of the king and one of the reducing of restrictions on the king's exercising of his office.¹¹ Firstly, Henry claimed as within his care not only the physical well-being of his subjects, but also their spiritual; therefore all allegiance in the realm would be to him. Secondly, in his criticism of the Bishop's Book, around 1537, he crossed out a statement to the effect that a prince was obligated to provide for his subjects; this would have been a limit on his sovereignty. "Henry . . . had a fixed idea of his sovereign right but no plans about how it was to be exercised and only slowly understood all that it involved."¹² He desired to be "master of his own house."¹³

Henry was an opportunist. As mentioned earlier, several of the authors held the divorce as the reason England entered into the Reformation, and thus they believed that if the divorce issue could have been resolved satisfactorily, England would have remained supportive of the papacy. Lacking long range planning, Henry relied on his ministers, as seen in Wilsy and Cromwell. With Cromwell, he found a minister that offered him a solution to legitimizing his annulment and new marriage — rupture with Rome. And when he needed a new source of revenues, Cromwell efficiently dissolved the monasteries, temporarily doubling the royal income.¹⁴

Pope Clement VII desired a satisfactory resolution, yet he saw himself prevented in granting the annulment on two accounts: he did not wish to void a dispensation of an earlier pope and he was intimidated militarily by Emperor Charles V's care and concern for his aunt Catherine. Barring Catherine entering a convent, Clement suggested that Henry take a second wife or recognize an illegitimate

son.¹⁵ This Henry rejected; he wanted legal and moral confirmation of what he saw as necessary for the good of England. To try to force the pope, he intimidated and subjected the English clergy by the Statute of Praemunire in 1530, and he sought the opinions of European universities in the early 1530s. However, neither of these worked. It is with Cromwell that Henry was convinced that he did not need the pope's blessing. In 1534, the Act of Supremacy split England from Rome; by 1535, Henry had acquired the powers of the pope in the realm of England.

Henry as an opportunist seeking to strengthen his rule can be seen in the international negotiations he carried on with the Lutherans, Francis I and Charles V. All these negotiations seemed to be with the ulterior motive of protecting his reign, not reforming the Church in England. The passage of the Act of the Six Articles in 1539 terminated negotiations with the Lutherans; this act was then called off when Henry no longer felt threatened by an alliance between Francis I and Charles V.¹⁶ In 1543,¹⁴ Henry gave Archbishop Cranmer his approval to make various changes, especially in the liturgical books, but he shelved this temporarily in 1546 while carrying on talks with Charles.¹⁷ Therefore, the annulment sought by Henry seems to have been the reason for the beginning of his reform of the Church in England and yet just one example of his opportunistic drive to advance the strength and prestige of his kingship.

It was more difficult for Henry and for Luther to break with Rome, having been raised in the milieu of a united Christendom while Calvin seems to have done so quite easily, having viable options to the Roman Catholic Church in the second generation of the Reformation. Therefore, the triggering events leading to reform for Henry and Luther were more emotionally charged than for Calvin — Henry seeking an annulment for the good of the realm and Luther fighting for the salvation of his parishioners in the aftermath of his release from scruples. Calvin too underwent a trigger moment — his conversion of 1533, which convinced him that he was the instrument of God and led him to re-invigorate the Protestant reform movement.

Thus, all three men share in common that they each had a vision and in a way were "driven" men. However, they differ in the wellsprings of their drives. Luther, experiencing the mercy of God in the resolution of the scruples he had suffered, sought to share his great news with a generation seeking a way to appease an arbitrary and vengeful God, which due to circumstances led to his breaking from Rome. Calvin, a less emotional man than Luther, had a more intellectual conversion, in which he was overwhelmed by God's sovereignty. Seeing himself as the instrument of God to bring about the reign of God on earth, he first began by writing, but then he entered the public and political realms under the pressure of Farel, eventually forming a theocracy in Geneva — to give glory to God.

Henry sought to ensure the peace and stability of England. He needed a son, but Clement VII would not grant an annulment of his marriage with Catherine. Henry broke with Rome. He saw the pressing need as increasing the strength of the king, and therefore, under his reign the Church of England would lean toward Lutheranism, then toward orthodox Catholicism, depending on the needs of the state at the time.

Thus, all three men are similar in that each experienced a "trigger" event that led immediately or eventually to a reform of the Church, yet even in general terms they differ as to their wellsprings. All three did share one thing in common, however: each held an unwavering belief that right was always on his side.

Notes

1 Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), pp. 20, 21.

2 Preserved Smith, *The Age of the Reformation* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p. 65.

3 Bainton, p. 20.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

6 G.R. Elton, *Reformation Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 212, 213.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

9 Georgia Harkness, *John Calvin: Man and His Ethics* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 80.

10 The basic information in this section on Henry VIII comes from: Peter J. Klassen, *Europe in the Reformation* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), pp. 183-9.

11 J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 252-4, 404-6.

12 H. Maynard Smith, *Henry VIII and the Reformation* (London: Macmillan, 1948), p. 226.

13 A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 82.

14 Klassen, p. 187.

15 P. Smith, p. 287.

16 Scarisbrick, pp. 421, 422.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 472.

Woodrow Wilson, the Allies and the Russian Dilemma at Versailles

by Scott McLetchie

In March of 1917 the Tsarist regime in Russia ended with the abdication of Nicholas II and the organization of a democratic Provisional Government. Democracy in Russia lasted for six months; in November the Bolshevik faction dissolved the Provisional Government, seized power in Petrograd (subsequently moving the capitol to Moscow), and proclaimed a supreme Soviet state in Russia. Political factions and nationalist minorities in all sections of Russia began to proclaim their own independence, some of them allied with the Bolshevik regime in Moscow, others opposed to it. Those anti-Bolshevist factions were further subdivided: some desired the restoration of the monarchy, others favored democratic republics, some desired to control all of old Imperial Russia, others were content to let Russia disintegrate into a plethora of autonomous states. Conflict was inevitable as the Bolsheviks were determined to unite Russia under their rule. Thus began the Russian Civil War.

The outcome of this struggle was very important not only to the Russians, but also to the Allied and Central Powers. Many nations intervened in the conflict either directly or indirectly. These included Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, France, Japan, Italy and the United States. The intervention was to have a serious effect on many aspects of world relations, including the outcome of World War I, the negotiated peace which followed, and future relations between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world.

American opinion and action exerted much influence on the course which the Allied intervention would take, just as it did on the Versailles peace talks. Much of this was due to the fact that if anything decisive was going to be done about the Russian situation in terms of direct financial and military assistance to the anti-Bolshevik factions, the burden of cost and manpower would ultimately fall on the United States. The Allied leaders realized this, as did Wilson. In order to understand why the Americans finally did what they did, one must examine the beliefs, policies and goals of the major Allied leaders.

In the time following the November Revolution, the Allies were concerned with one thing: keeping Russia in the war. Since the Bolshevik takeover, the Soviets had repeatedly announced their intentions of withdrawing from the war. Indeed, the Bolshevik promise of peace was one of their major reasons for success in November.² The Allies were horrified when Russia and Germany declared a cease-fire and began planning the Brest-Litovsk peace talks. Conclusion of war

on the Eastern Front would allow Germany to throw all of her troops into a Western Front offensive, possibly crushing the Allies there. Distressed, the Allies called a conference in Paris to discuss what aims to seek to achieve. Unfortunately, the conference established no policy other than that of keeping Russia in the war, and left ambiguous the means by which to obtain this end.⁴ Britain and France decided to contact anti-Bolshevik elements forming in southern Russia under the leadership of General A. M. Kaledin. Both countries agreed to support Kaledin financially and by sending officers to help train troops, and both sent representatives. The U.S. was represented by DeWitt C. Pool, former consul to Moscow. Although Wilson refused to commit the U.S. to any definite action at this time, he did approve of indirect support for Allied actions. In effect, Britain and France would finance Kaledin, and the U. S. would lend them the money to do so.⁵

By the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviets lost Poland, the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Finland and much of Belorussia. Lenin gave these concessions (amounting to 1,300,000 square miles and 62 million people) because he expected the speedy overthrow of the German government by Communist revolution, in which case Lenin's government would no longer have to honor Brest-Litovsk. However, this was not to be.⁶ While it was true that the terms of Brest-Litovsk would be shattered, it would be because of the German armistice with the Allies in November of 1918 and the ensuing Paris Peace Conference from January through June of 1919. It was here that the Allies were forced to make definite decisions regarding their policies toward Russia.

Woodrow Wilson was very much opposed to the Bolsheviks and their regime in Russia. Wilson differed in outlook from the Bolsheviks in almost every possible fashion. He believed in evolution, the gradual changing of things political; the Bolsheviks represented revolution, the sudden and radical change. Wilson was a nationalist; the Bolsheviks' Communism was an international political theory. Wilson was politically minded. He believed society's problems were political in nature and could be solved by political means. The Bolsheviks were economically- and socially-minded, with a Marxist outlook on society's problems. Finally, and perhaps most importantly in understanding the President and his policy, John M. Thompson states that:

Wilson believed in a higher moral authority, of which nations as well as men were the agents. Thus, for Wilson, the principles derived from that authority — justice, equality, the rule of law — were immutable ones which individuals and countries were committed to uphold and which should guide both among and within societies. On this he based his dream of an ordered and peaceful world.⁷

This very moralistic view clashed with the Bolsheviks, who were avowed amoralists. His fervent belief, crusading spirit and self-righteous attitude all combined to lend a messianic quality to his statements and activity.⁸ However, this often proved something of a liability — Wilson was often so convinced of the absolute rightness of his position that he was unable to revise his opinions or conclusions in the light of new evidence. His thought and temperament were more theological than intellectual.⁹

Wilson had welcomed and officially recognized the Provisional Government because he saw it as a step towards democracy for Russia. He did not see the November Revolution in the same light. It was directed against democracy, and therefore he did not recognize Lenin's government.¹⁰ (Neither did the Allied governments.) Nonetheless, opposed as he was to the Soviets, he was also opposed to direct military intervention as the solution to Russia's problems. He was completely dedicated to the principle of self-determination of nations, and military intervention was in direct opposition to this.

Going into the Paris Peace Conference, the official U.S. policy towards Russia consisted of three points. The first was non-recognition of the Soviet government. This policy was based on the fact that the Soviets did not, in Wilson's view, represent the entire Russian people. (If they did, there would be no Civil War.) The second point was non-intervention in Russia's internal affairs, and the third was the preservation of Russia's territorial integrity. These reflected Wilson's belief in the self-determination of Russia's own affairs.¹¹ Not all of the Allies agreed with Wilson's policies.

David Lloyd George felt that Bolshevism was the prevalent opinion in Russia and was prepared himself to deal with the Soviets as the de facto government of Russia.¹² However, no one else was, so he proposed an alternative: invite all the warring factions in Russia to send delegates to Paris where their differences would be worked out during a cessation of hostilities. Unfortunately, Clemenceau vetoed this idea.¹³ Lloyd George believed (rightly) that no lasting peace would be attainable without the representation of the Russians.¹⁴ In addition, he was skeptical of the practicality of military intervention; he shared Wilson's view of self-determination, and he feared that intervention would serve only to antagonize the Soviets. However, his opinions often shifted with the prevailing political wind, and he later justified British aid to the anti-Bolsheviks by stating that they also had the right of self-determination and should be given an equal chance to exercise it. It was often difficult to tell which side of the question Lloyd George would be on at any given time.¹⁵ In any event, the official British policy going into Paris was intervention and aid to the anti-Bolsheviks and the advancement of British strategic and military objectives, a policy as vague and ambiguous as Lloyd George himself could be.¹⁶

Unlike Lloyd George, Clemenceau presented a single, strong policy

toward Bolshevism and the Soviet government: opposition. He was totally against Bolshevism and Bolshevik representation at Paris. In his view, the important issue was the World War, specifically France's conflict with Germany. Russia, in withdrawing from the war, had betrayed France and the Allies and given up her right to be represented at the peace negotiations.¹⁷ Throughout the conference, Clemenceau advocated military intervention to stamp out the Bolsheviks; unfortunately, France had neither the money nor the manpower to pursue this policy independently, and the Allies were unwilling to back France to such an extreme extent. Consequently, Clemenceau altered his policy to one of creating a series of buffer states in Eastern Europe closely allied with France, which would serve as a check to both German and Russian expansion.¹⁸

When the talks opened, the Allies were faced with a double dilemma regarding the Russians. The first, the question of Russian representation at Versailles, has already been discussed briefly. The second was the presence of many Allied troops in Russia and what to do with them. Located in the north at Murmansk and Archangelsk, in Siberia and Southern Russia, and a few in Vladivostock, they had been sent during the last part of the war to serve two purposes: to protect Allied war supplies at Murmansk and Archangelsk, and to reinstitute the Eastern Front. They were to aid anti-Bolshevik forces, and eventually the forces in the north would join with the forces on the south.¹⁹ (If they happened to crush the Soviets in the process, well that would be nice too.) In fact, the Bolsheviks had removed the supplies before the Allies got there, and now that the war was over there was no need to establish a front.²⁰

In January, Wilson picked up on Lloyd George's proposal of mediating the Russian dispute. Since Clemenceau refused to have any Bolsheviks in Paris, Wilson proposed that the talks be held in the island of Prinkipo in the Sea of Marmara. That way the Russians would not have to travel through any third country. Clemenceau still did not like the idea, but he agreed to it for the sake of unity.²¹ The proposal was due in part to comments made by a Bolshevik representative in Stockholm, Maxim Litvinov. George A. Brinkley states that "the Bolsheviks, Litvinov reportedly declared, were 'prepared to compromise on all points,' including amnesty for their opponents, renunciation of 'imperialistic designs' on Finland, Poland, and the Ukraine, and acceptance of a reasonable solution to the questions of the Russian state debt and foreign economic interest in Russia."²²

Wilson drafted the invitation which went out on January 22. Each conflicting group was to send no more than three representatives. The talks would begin February 15 on the condition that all hostilities cease among the parties invited.²³ The invitation was open and general, released through the media. No formal invitation was

brought to any of the governments because the Allies did not wish formal invitation to be misconstrued as formal recognition. Georgi Chicherin, Commissar of Foreign Affairs for Lenin's government, complained in a note to Wilson that although the Soviets had heard of the peace conference, they had received no formal or official invitation. Lloyd George replied with some annoyance that Chicherin "had received his notice like everybody else."²⁴

Even so, the Soviets willingly accepted by February 4. They were ready to recognize their financial obligations and debts, grant territorial concessions, and limit their propaganda and interference in other governments. A few non-Moscow Soviet governments, including those of Latvia, the Ukraine and the Crimea, also accepted.

Among the anti-Bolshevik governments, only that of Nikolai Chaikovsky in the north accepted. Those of Siberia and South Russia, under Kolchak and Denikin, refused to have any meeting with the Bolsheviks. Kolchak believed that the mere thought of negotiating with the Reds undermined the White cause.²⁵ The White refusal was largely due to French interference. They convinced the Whites not to accept, something which did not help Clemenceau's Russian aims in the eyes of Wilson and Lloyd George.²⁶ Ultimately no conference took place.

Wilson and Lloyd George then decided to send a secret mission to Moscow to talk to Lenin and possibly open formal negotiations. William Bullitt and Lincoln Steffens were sent to Moscow in March. They were well-received by Lenin and had many talks with him and other prominent Soviet leaders.²⁷ They persuaded Chicherin and Litvinov that the Americans and the British were truly willing to reach a settlement; if an understanding could be reached, the French would ultimately go along.²⁸ Both Bullitt and Steffens were favorably impressed by the Soviets and genuinely believed they wanted to see a swift end to the Civil War.

Lenin was, in fact, quite willing to negotiate. He was determined to save the revolution and was willing to make enormous concessions because he believed that any advantages the capitalist West might gain would be short-term only, and he firmly believed that revolution would soon sweep the industrial world.²⁹ Bullitt and Lenin came up with the draft of a proposal which Lenin guaranteed the Soviets would accept if the Allies proposed it by April 10. While Bullitt was very proud of himself, he made the mistake of leaving the Allies no latitude with which to negotiate. Any alteration of the proposal the Soviets could negate and refuse to ratify. However, Lenin's proposals gave very advantageous concessions to the Allies; it was unfortunate that they never seriously considered the proposal.³⁰

Lenin basically proposed the following: de facto recognition of all existing governments in Russia, Red and White; the lifting of the Allied blockade and normalization of relations between the Allies and

Russia; mutual general amnesty of political opponents and prisoners; withdrawal of Allied forces and cessation of Allied military assistance to the Whites; joint recognition by the Soviet and other governments.³¹ In addition, the proposal had to be made by April 10, and the Allies had to make it to the Soviets; Lenin did not want to appear to be begging.³²

When Bullitt and Steffens returned to Moscow, they were in for disappointment. Wilson refused to see Bullitt, complaining of a headache. This was not a cop-out, it appears; Bullitt had arrived during the time when discussions over Germany were most heated and most important, and Wilson had only a few days before suffered a nervous and physical collapse. Wilson passed Bullitt on to House, who in turn passed him on to some subordinates who were totally opposed to Bullitt's ideas. Bullitt did talk with Lloyd George who seemed sympathetic; however, British public opinion was against negotiating with the Soviets at the moment, and he doubted that anyone would believe Bullitt anyway. Bullitt obviously could not appeal to Clemenceau; officially the French knew nothing of the mission at all. April 10 came and went without any Allied reaction. If anything were to be done, it would have to be completely re-negotiated.³³

The Bullitt mission marked the last serious effort to deal with the Soviets and the Russian problem at Versailles. One of the reasons Bullitt got shoved aside was Colonel House's infatuation with a plan developed by Herbert Hoover to send food to Russia and thereby gain control of Russia; we would only give the food if hostilities ceased and the Soviets turned over all means of transportation to the food relief commission (for the purposes of distributing the food, of course). Needless to say, the Soviets were not taken in by so naive a proposal.³⁴ Also, the British and the French were still hopeful that Kolchak could keep the Bolsheviks on the run militarily; actually, by early May, Kolchak was in retreat and there was no hope of his continuing to provide a military assistance, assistance that Wilson was not willing to provide to a losing general.³⁵ The Paris Peace Conference ultimately decided and/or accomplished nothing positive with regard to Russia. By the beginning of 1920, the foreign troops were withdrawn from Russian soil with great embarrassment on the part of the Allies, and Lenin's government had won the Russian Civil War.

George Kennan blames Wilson's inability to act partly on the fact that he had to try to get three other nations to agree with his policies, while at the same time the other nations were trying to convince each other to follow their own policies. There was, as he put it, "a shocking lack of unity or intimacy of approach among the various Allied governments They had been fighting for different things and pretending, in an endless flow of beautiful phrases, that what they were fighting for was the same thing. Their confrontation with the

Russian problem tore the mask off a great deal of this equivocation and hypocrisy."³⁶ John M. Thompson blames the lack of effect largely on Wilson's inability to settle in his own mind on a clear-cut and precise policy towards Russia.³⁷ Certainly the course taken by the Allies, half-hearted intervention and aid to the anti-Bolsheviks, did nothing to enhance future relations between Russia and the West. Donald Treadgold notes that "if the Allies wished the Whites to win the Civil War, they should either have given them much more assistance or none at all. In any event, the Communist were able to undermine White support by using the slogan of defense of the homeland against foreigners, while the Whites received no decisive aid to offset that psychological disadvantage."³⁸

Notes

- 1 John M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 39.
- 2 Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 13.
- 3 George A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 25.
- 4 Brinkley, p. 26.
- 5 Brinkley, pp. 27-28.
- 6 Donald W. Treadgold, *Twentieth Century Russia* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1959), p. 154.
- 7 Thompson, p. 40.
- 8 Thompson, p. 41.
- 9 Charles L. Mee, Jr., *The End of Order: Versailles 1919* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980), p. 147.
- 10 Thompson, p. 41.
- 11 George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin* (1960; Rpt. New York: New American Library, 1961), p. 120.
- 13 Kennan, p. 122.
- 14 Mee, p. 116.
- 15 Thompson, pp. 50-52.
- 16 Thompson, p. 53.
- 17 Kennan, p. 120.
- 18 Thompson, p. 57.
- 19 David Footman, *Civil War in Russia* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1962), p. 168.
- 20 Footman, p. 167.
- 21 Kennan, p. 122.
- 22 Brinkley, p. 108.
- 23 John Albert White, *The Siberian Intervention* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 334.
- 24 David Lloyd George, quoted by Thompson, p. 112.
- 25 White, p. 335.
- 26 Brinkley, p. 110.
- 27 Kennan, pp. 126-27.
- 28 Mee, p. 117.
- 29 Thompson, pp. 165-66.
- 30 Kennan, p. 127.
- 31 Thompson, p. 170.
- 32 Mee, p. 118.
- 33 Kennan, pp. 128-29.
- 34 Kennan, pp. 132-34.
- 35 Kennan, pp. 138-40.
- 36 Kennan, p. 141.
- 37 Thompson, pp. 39-40.
- 38 Treadgold, p. 171.

River Speed Supremacy on the Mississippi

by Brent J. Pagan

B. W. Gould, the noted steamboat historian, stated the following several years ago:

Nothing so much interests the average American as rapid motion, and it is not confined to our nationality altogether either. The fastest sailing vessel, even a merchantman, always got the preference in the early days if known to excel in speed. Then followed the clipper ships which excited the admiration of the civilized world because of their speed. Steam had no sooner been applied to navigation than the genius of the best mechanical skill was challenged to produce the best results in speed from a combination of steam power and model vessel. And antedating all these was the ancient custom of trials of speed in foot-racing, horse-racing . . .¹

No one is really sure when the first steamboat race took place, but, as Gould suggests, this need to be the fastest was perhaps present from the time the very first steamer was launched. There is no doubt, however, as to when the culmination of steamboat racing occurred: it was the contest between the *Natchez* and the *Robert E. Lee*. Racing continues today, but no contest will ever come near to matching this most famous race of 1870. Although much could be written on the subject of racing, I would like to limit myself to a discussion of the general reasons for steamboat racing, the conflict between Captain Thomas P. Leathers of the *Natchez* and Captain John W. Cannon of the *Robert E. Lee*, and a brief account of the race between the *Lee* and the *Natchez*.

Faced with the necessity of passing the time on a river trip, the avoidance of boredom became something of a problem. This was especially true for frequent passengers. However, for the traveler on his first trip, there was no lack of interesting things to see. Most interesting of all, probably, was the other steamboat passengers themselves with all their diversity. These passengers were from different classes of society, different sections of the country, and different parts of the world. "It was traditional that, despite wide differences in wealth and position, all who travelled in the cabin should mingle on equal terms, sometimes to the displeasure of the traveler from abroad repelled by western uncouthness."² Apart from social interaction the diversions of steamboat life were few. Some passengers enjoyed the passing scenery while others preferred to observe the Negro deck crews since the Negroes offered distinct impressions of river life.³ The more influential passengers were admitted to the pilot

house to witness its activities. Some steamboats even boasted of a library of a few hundred volumes.

Nevertheless, racing was, of course, the most spectacular and exciting of the diversions of steamboat life. "It was one phase of steamboat life which few literary travelers failed to record. Perhaps because of the inadequacy of words to convey the exciting quality of this experience, narrators were prone to magnify racing on the quantitative side until one is almost led to believe that it was performed as regularly as wooding."⁴ Mark Twain himself provides an interesting example of this:

People, people everywhere; the shores, the house-tops, the steamboats, the ships, are packed with them, and you know that the borders of the broad Mississippi are going to be fringed with humanity thence northward twelve hundred miles to welcome these racers. In the flush times of steamboating, a race between two notoriously fleet steamers was an event of vast importance. The date was set for it several weeks in advance, and from that time forward the whole Mississippi Valley was in a state of consuming excitement. Politics and the weather were dropped, and people talked only of the coming race. Those boats will never halt a moment between New Orleans and St. Louis, except for a second or two at large towns . . . Two nicely-matched steamers will stay in sight of each other day after day. They might even stay side by side, but for the fact that pilots are not all alike, and the smartest pilots will win the race.⁵

It is somewhat disappointing that Mark Twain would mislead his readers with such an exaggerated story since he was himself a knowledgeable and experienced river pilot. Although Twain's description would be accurate for the *Lee-Natchez* contest, "staged races over long distances in the *Lee-Natchez* manner were few in number, but impromptu brushes attended by excitement and thrills were many indeed."⁶ Although racing did not approach the gigantic proportions pictured by Twain, it was certainly a characteristic feature of the steamboat scene. It was rare for formal challenges to be tendered and accepted. Thus, Twain's colorful description is not accurate with respect to the vast majority of races that took place.

The interest in racing was not merely confined to the passengers and crews of the steamboats concerned. It was shared in varying degrees by the public in the towns and communities along the river. A race gave passengers thrills, much distinction if their boat won, and plenty to talk about. It also helped to relieve the monotony. Nevertheless, some passengers became alarmed at the possibility of explosions and occasionally attempted to persuade the captain to withdraw from or avoid a race. More commonly, however, they seem to have even urged the captain and crew to continue. In actuality, as Mark Twain suggests, there were very few accidents or explosions during a race because the excitement created caused all members of the crew,

especially the engineer, to be extremely alert with respect to their duties.⁷

Those passengers who failed to share the general enthusiasm for racing usually found it difficult to protest. Although most racing was of an impromptu character, there was a serious business undertone because racing was often practiced deliberately as a means of obtaining publicity. Pride of ownership and association usually played some part in these contests. Frequently, business and profits were at stake since the boat in the lead would get first crack at the freight and passengers waiting at the landing on the way. Many races, among other reasons, originated in the effort of a newcomer to break into trade by "running out" one of the boats already well established or in the owner's desire to make his new boat known quickly and favorably on the river.

Often times, steamboats running in the same trade would by chance or intention start off at about the same time from the riverfront or would come together on the river and their striving for a fast trip would then quickly develop into a race for victory. In some cases, even though the two steamers were bound for different ports and were not competing rivals for business, they would engage in a race as a result of the efforts of one steamer trying to get ahead of the other. An impromptu contest of this kind would most likely be continued only to the next bend in the river or to the next woodyard. In rare instances the contest might continue for several days. As Gould seems to suggest, one of the things for which steamboats will always be remembered is racing. Yet, this concept of racing was certainly not created by steamboats: it was merely a tradition being carried on further.

The origins and reason behind the *Natchez-Robert E. Lee* contest were truly unique and just as fascinating as the race itself. The duel was born not just as a race for speed supremacy, but it was also the culmination of a lengthy and intense rivalry (and hatred) between two of the most popular, most admired, and most well-known steamboat captains of their time: Captain Thomas P. Leathers, Master of the *Natchez* and Captain John W. Cannon, Master of the *Robert E. Lee*.⁸ Leathers was an arrogant Kentuckian, but he had a solid reputation which was based on high personal integrity, his deep concern for the safety of his passengers, and his skill as a steamboatman. On the other hand, Cannon was a Kentuckian who was gentle in manner. In addition, Cannon's business savvy was well-known among rivermen. The rivalry between the two commenced in 1854 when Cannon shifted his steamer business over to the profitable cotton and passenger trade between Vicksburg and New Orleans. The business maneuver placed him into direct competition with Leathers. Leathers was outraged at this high-handedness on the part of Cannon since he (Leathers) had always considered that the New Orleans-Vicksburg run was his alone.

As their business rivalry intensified, their personal dislike of one another increased as well. In fact, in 1868 the two river captains engaged one another in a fist fight on a New Orleans street corner while arguing over freight rates. Although the fourth *Natchez* was in good condition, the rivalry caused Leathers to surpass Cannon in 1859 with a newer and more powerful fifth *Natchez*. This new steamer had cost Leathers the mighty sum of \$200,000, but all was lost a couple of years later when Union forces seized his vessel. Although he lost one of his steamers to the Confederates, the resourceful and clever Cannon guided his other steamer, the *General Quitman*, deep into Red River country. He effectively managed to hide her for the duration of the Civil War, and, in addition, he purchased as much cotton as his finances would allow and stored it on board. At the end of the conflict, Cannon brought the *Quitman* out of seclusion and made tremendous profits by selling the cotton and by having one of the few steamers engaging in commerce. These excellent profits allowed Cannon to rub Leathers' nose in the dirt by enabling him to construct the swift and elegant *Robert E. Lee* in late 1866.

The name given to his vessel was a clever marketing tactic on Cannon's part since he knew that the name would cause Southern businessmen to react favorably toward him. Leathers, who was heavily in debt because of his lost *Natchez*, had his pride considerably reduced when he was forced to purchase a 50 percent interest in Cannon's *Quitman* and become the vessel's pilot. Nevertheless, Leathers, proving himself to be as resourceful as Cannon, settled his debts and in 1869 the sixth *Natchez* was under construction in Cincinnati. Leathers' reputation alone was sufficient to raise the necessary construction capital.⁹

Around the middle of 1870, the two captains (independent of each other's actions) extended the length of their runs further north. The *Natchez* was now steaming as far as St. Louis and the *Lee* went as far as Louisville. Each boat ran the identical course as far as Cairo, Illinois, but they left New Orleans on different days. The *Lee* pulled out of New Orleans every Thursday and the *Natchez* did likewise every Saturday.¹⁰ On June 18, 1870, the *Natchez* departed New Orleans and triumphantly steamed into St. Louis 3 days, 21 hours, and 58 minutes later. The proud Leathers had beaten by 1 hour and 11 minutes a record that had existed since 1844.

Cannon was cruising down the Ohio River when a message concerning Leathers' triumph reached him. He was somewhat alarmed at the additional news that on her next foray up the Mississippi, the *Natchez* would be leaving New Orleans on June 30 (a Thursday) instead of her customary Saturday departure. Cannon now realized that Leathers was issuing an informal challenge to race him for speed supremacy. Unfortunately, having been in constant use for several months, the *Lee* was in no condition for a long distance race, and in fact, she was in dire need of a complete overhaul. Nevertheless, Cannon knew that he would lose a great deal of prestige and respect

(as well as business) if he refused this unspoken and informal challenge. As a compromise measure, Cannon docked at Mound City, Illinois, and removed all unnecessary exterior objects which produced wind resistance.¹¹

The recently triumphant Leathers was beaming with confidence and did little to prepare for the race. Oddly enough, each captain placed an ad in the local New Orleans newspaper (the *Daily Picayune*) insisting that he was definitely not going to race with any other steamer that happened to leave at the same time he did. Each ad was a blatant falsehood. Thus, the impending 1200 mile duel was born out of the hatred (both personal and professional) between two river captains and, in some small measure, the passionate desire for river speed supremacy. Because each captain had a reputation as "large as life," the race had been expected for quite some time. With incredible speed, the news of the coming race began to spread down the Mississippi River, across America, and even to the European nations. Wellman has stated: "It had been in the papers everywhere. All up and down the Mississippi and in regions more remote, people talked and argued and wagered. Nobody doubted but that one of these two boats was the fastest on the river, and that the other was second fastest."¹²

Most historical accounts agree that June 30, 1870, was unbearably hot for the ten thousand or so people crowded on the waterfront, especially at Canal Street. The *Natchez* was docked at what is today the Poydras Street Wharf while the *Lee* was docked at what is now known as the Bienville Street Wharf. Both steamers were preparing for their customary five o'clock departure while the captains acknowledged cheers from the crowd.¹³ Earlier, Cannon had cut his passenger list to seventy and had positively refused all freight. In addition, he had informed these seventy that this was strictly a "non-stop" trip. The *Lee* was not to stop until she reached St. Louis. On the other hand, Leathers had accepted ninety passengers and took plenty of freight for delivery. At 4:56 p.m., the *Lee* severed her mooring lines and was on her 1200 mile odyssey to the north. Leathers was caught completely by surprise and immediately ordered lines cast off, but, because the two steamers were docked so closely together, he had to wait until the *Lee* had cleared his stern. The *Lee* had already gained about a mile by the time the *Natchez* started her pursuit. The first lap of the race was the journey to Baton Rouge. However, a small crisis developed on the *Lee* only 30 minutes after departure: a hot water pipe had become disjointed. Chief Engineer William Perkins effected the necessary (but dangerous) repairs. Nevertheless, the *Natchez* had gained valuable time and passed Baton Rouge in 8 hours and 24 minutes.

The levees from New Orleans to Baton Rouge were jammed with cheering people, and, as darkness fell, bonfires could be seen from both banks. Not long after passing Baton Rouge a second crisis developed when Chief Perkins discovered a dangerous leak from the fourth boiler was causing the steam pressure in all eight boilers to rise

to uncomfortably high levels. The Lee's mechanical difficulties were due in large measure to her need for an extensive overhaul of her machinery and equipment. Once again, however, Perkins solved the problem and she continued to push ahead of the *Natchez*. At 10:15 the next morning (Friday, July 1), the *Lee* passed Natchez, Mississippi but did not stop. The band that was waiting on the wharf for the first steamer to arrive refused to play for the *Lee* because they were angry since they had naturally expected the *Natchez* to arrive first.

At all of his refueling stops, Cannon had arranged for the mid-stream transfer of coal so that he would not have to lose any valuable time. When the *Natchez* arrived at 10:23, she was forced to stop for additional fuel and the loading and unloading of freight. After Leathers departed Natchez, his steamer began to pick up some time against Cannon and he was only 4 minutes behind at Vicksburg. However, at a place known as Milliken's Bend, *Natchez* Chief Engineer Andy Pauley sent a message to Leathers that the cold water pump (which sucks water from the river into the boilers) was malfunctioning. The angry captain was forced to slacken speed and eventually stop for 33 precious minutes at the wooded bank while his engineers took care of the problem.

Then, on Saturday, July 2, occurred the most controversial aspect of the entire race. The controversy was taken so seriously that many *Natchez* betters claimed that all bets were off.¹⁴ As part of his refueling strategy, Cannon had arranged for the *Frank Pargoud*, which was considered by many to be the third fastest boat on all the Mississippi, to meet the *Lee* in midstream to transfer coal and pine knots. The dispute centered around the fact that when the two steamers were lashed together, the *Pargoud* added her own steam power to that of the *Lee* and enabled Cannon to significantly increase his speed. In a race where a few minutes could determine victory or defeat, the lashing together of the two boats provoked much discussion. This tainted Cannon's eventual victory in the eyes of many.

As July 2 was drawing to a close, tension was mounting late that evening in Memphis because of a telegraph breakdown. Memphians had a gigantic fireworks celebration prepared and when they heard a steam whistle in the distance, they assumed it was one of the racers and the party began. Unfortunately, the vessel was the *Thompson Dean*. By the time the *Lee* had passed Memphis (2 days, 6 hours and 9 minutes out of New Orleans), the fireworks supply was depleted. Even after all her mechanical problems, the *Natchez* was only 57 minutes behind. Her time was not so bad when her numerous delays in exchanging passengers and freight are also taken into account. After leaving Memphis, Cannon stated that "the trick is piloting, not speed."¹⁵ This was true since navigational difficulties grew progressively worse after Memphis.

At Cairo, Illinois, the ingenious Cannon had two fresh river pilots waiting to guide him to St. Louis because they were familiar with these

waters. The *Natchez*, even after hundreds of miles, was a mere 68 minutes behind. In addition, Leathers managed to make a significant dent in Cannon's time when the *Lee* struck a sand bar just out of Cairo. As the race began to draw to its epic finish, Mother Nature helped determine the outcome. At Cape Girardeau, Missouri, the *Lee* encountered unbelievably thick fog because of a sudden drop in temperature. Cannon cut his speed considerably and contemplated stopping, but he knew that, before long, the *Natchez* would be steaming neck and neck with him because the *Natchez* had not yet encountered the fog. Against his better judgement, Cannon ordered his pilots to keep moving, however slow, since he believed the *Natchez* would do likewise as soon as she came into contact with the fog. On the other hand, Leathers calculated that Cannon would not be foolish enough to risk going through the fog and ordered his pilot to tie up along the bank.

At approximately 2 a.m. on July 4, the daring Cannon had outrun the fog and at 11:35 a.m. the *Robert E. Lee* steamed proudly into St. Louis 3 days, 18 hours, 14 minutes and 1200 miles from New Orleans. A crowd estimated at around 60,000 joined Cannon in celebrating his incredible victory. Poor Captain Leathers had lost a little over 5 hours in the fog and when he learned that Cannon had emerged from the fog several hours earlier, he knew the race was over. Captain Leathers and his *Natchez* arrived in St. Louis at 6:30 p.m., 4 days, 47 minutes and 1200 miles out of New Orleans. Leathers had not only lost this particular race but was discouraged to learn that the *Lee* had defeated the record Leathers had established in the middle of June by 3 hours and 44 minutes. The *Robert E. Lee's* legendary victory is a speed record which still stands today, but unfortunately for the steamboat era, this was the last great race ever run because "by autumn of that year the day of the riverboat was almost past, and the day of the railroad moved toward high noon."¹⁶ Although racing was very enjoyable to the crew and to the passengers, it often called for the neglect of business and the expense of extra fuel. Racing had seen its better days because the increasing view was that it was an expensive luxury.

As a final thought, it might be worthwhile to mention a few of the steamboat races that still continue even today. The most well-known race is probably the Kentucky Derby Great Steamboat Race held in Louisville each year. There are usually three, sometimes four, authentic steamers participating in this event. Another race is the annual Great Steamboat Race between the *Delta Queen* and the *Mississippi Queen*. This racing event began in 1976 but is, unfortunately, more of a public relations gimmick rather than a legitimate race. Locally, the *Natchez* and the *President* have been racing each other each Labor Day since 1981. When one considers that only a handful of authentic steamers still exist, it is surprising that modern racing continues to the extent that it does. I find this personally gratifying. Modern steamboat racing certainly does not

capture that special magic of our earlier steamboat era, but at least it manages to bring part of our nation's colorful past back to life. No longer can there be heard the rhythmic hissing and stroking of the giant engines on the first deck as they turn their massive wheels. These are just a few of the sentimental losses that must be accepted. Gould's suggestions were certainly on the mark. Even if only two steamers were left, there would still be that desire to achieve river speed supremacy on the Mississippi.

Notes

1 E.W. Gould, *Fifty Years on the Mississippi; Gould's History of River Navigation* (Columbus, Ohio: Long's College Book Co., 1951), p. 526.

2 Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 403.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 404.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 405.

5 Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1906), pp. 143-144.

6 Hunter, p. 405.

7 Twain, p. 143.

8 Ray Samuel et al., *Tales of the Mississippi* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1960), p. 100.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

10 Harry S. Drago, *The Steamboaters: From the Early Sidewheelers to the Big Packets* (New York: Bramhall House, 1972), p. 42.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

12 Manly Wade Wellman, *Fastest on the River* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1957), p. 4.

13 Samuel et al., p. 95.

14 Wellman, p. 67.

15 Samuel et al., p. 98.

16 Wellman, p. 147.

“To Hell with Habeas Corpus” The Japanese American Internment During World War II

by Thomas Delahaye

History Department “Best Essay Award 1983”

America is a country composed of many different nationalities. People have come from nations across the globe to settle in the United States and take part in the American dream. These immigrants were proud of their heritage, yet they have strived for what President Franklin Roosevelt called Americanism. Roosevelt expressed the immigrants' feelings, stating:

... Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; ... Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy.¹

Since these new citizens came from various parts of the globe, their customs were not always understood by Americans. Americans' misunderstanding of the newcomers has fostered prejudice in this great melting pot which often led to hatred and discrimination.

The Japanese, like many of the nationalities who settled in America, were subject to such hatred and discrimination. They were ostracized by society because people did not always understand their Oriental culture. The Japanese Americans were profoundly affected by these misconceptions when the Empire of Japan attacked United States naval forces at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. In the book, *Prejudice: Japanese Americans: Symbol of Racial Intolerance*, author Carey McWilliams explains the result of the attack on Pearl Harbor:

The attack on Pearl Harbor was more than a jar: it was a thunderous blow, an earthquake, that sent tremors throughout the entire Pacific area. The resident Japanese were the victims of this social earthquake. This is the root fact, the basic social fact, which precipitated the mass evacuation of the West Coast Japanese—“the largest single forced migration in American history,” in the words of Dr. Paul S. Taylor.²

“White” Americans reacted unfavorably towards the Japanese Americans after the Pearl Harbor attack. The Japanese Americans realized the implications of the attack. They had always been subject to some prejudice, but this turn of events made their future as

Americans uncertain. Authors Robert Wilson and Bill Hosokawa in *East to America: A History of the Japanese in the United States* express the plight of the Japanese Americans by stating:

Thus while the events of Sunday, December 7, 1941, came as a tremendous shock to the American people, the most shaken of all were the Japanese Americans and their immigrant parents. Abruptly, they faced a new and unknown dimension in their relationships with those around them. Not only war itself, but also the manner of its coming, produced for them special problems.⁹

Their uncertainty about their future as Americans was settled by the war hysteria and the prejudice that existed in years past. The government, acting under the pressure of the people, forced the Japanese Americans to "relocate." The relocation, based on prejudice and fear, was an unprecedented move in "which race alone determined whether an American would remain free or become incarcerated."⁴

Japanese immigration to the United States started around 1890. The Japanese immigrants were preceded by the Chinese, who suffered years of mistreatment. The Japanese, like the Chinese, settled in Washington, Oregon and mainly California. Americans, already in these states, associated the Japanese with the Chinese. The association made the Japanese subject to the same prejudice and discrimination experienced by the Chinese. J. D. Phelan, mayor of San Francisco, expressed the feelings of many when he said:

The Japanese are starting the same tide of immigration which we thought we had checked twenty years ago The Chinese and Japanese are not bona fide citizens. They are not the stuff of which American citizens can be made.⁵

The Japanese immigrants found work chiefly as laborers. In *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, author Bill Hosokawa says "that in the summer of 1909 there were some 39,000 Japanese working in some phase of farming — which would account for more than half of all the Japanese in the United States."⁶ These Japanese farm laborers had the "ability and willingness to work long hours on piece-work basis" which "resulted in good pay."⁷ Since the Japanese were hard workers, their economic status increased, which in turn caused them more problems.

The problems that the Japanese encountered were based on the fact that their new economic status threatened other citizens. Professor E. A. Ross of Stanford University expressed his feelings on the matter. He "denied any racism and insisted that his opposition to the Japanese was purely an economic matter. Making an analogy that restrictionists of all kinds were to use for a quarter-century, he

compared immigration to the tariff: 'We keep out pauper-made goods but let in the pauper A restrictive policy devised in the true interest of labor would think first of keeping out the foreigner, and then keeping out his product.'"⁸ Dillon S. Meyer, author of *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority During World War II*, agrees somewhat with Professor Ross. The author maintains that:

California and other West Coast farmers resented having their field laborers suddenly become competing farm operators. This resentment was economic rather than racist, but the racists saw in this transition from day laborer to operator another threat to white supremacy.⁹

No matter how one approaches the problem, or attempts to label it as economic, the root cause was prejudice.

The evolving prejudice forced the "White" Americans to take action. The Chinese Exclusion Act was up for renewal, and some called for the exclusion of the Japanese as well.¹⁰ Japanese spoke out against this action with counter-demonstrations. In *Executive Order 9066: The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans*, Maisie and Richard Conrat write that:

In a half-century of abuse the Chinese had never done anything like that. This self-assertive response was not forgotten, and came to serve anti-Japanese forces as yet another example of the Japanese "threat."¹¹

The Japanese, faced with prejudice, now had the stigma of being a threat.

"White" Americans were no longer satisfied with enlargement of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Their belief that the Japanese were a threat led to the emergence of three important actions: The "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1908, the Alien Land Law of 1913, and the Japanese Exclusion Act of 1924.¹² These laws can now be seen as symbols of the prejudice and discrimination inflicted upon the Japanese Americans in the years before Pearl Harbor.

Prejudice toward these American citizens was well entrenched before December 7, 1941. Maisie and Richard Conrat claim that "Americans had spent a century learning to hate and fear the Japanese, and after the catastrophe of Pearl Harbor they lashed out — half in habit, and half in frustration — at the only available enemy."¹³

The Americans did "lash out" and in a very cruel manner. There were immediate calls for the evacuation and relocation of anyone of Japanese descent. "Leading the demand for the removal of the Japanese was the California Joint Immigration Committee."¹⁴ It could be noted that the California Joint Immigration Committee

“considered the granting of citizenship to Negroes after the Civil War a ‘grave mistake.’”¹⁵

The Joint Committee was not alone in its calls for relocation. Some influential Americans indirectly aided those who supported relocation by adding to the fears of the fellow countrymen. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox claimed that the disaster at Pearl Harbor was due to espionage work done by Hawaii’s Japanese population. He said, “I think the most effective fifth column work of the entire war was done in Hawaii, with the possible exception of Norway.”¹⁶ Columnist Walter Lippman also added to the growing hysteria in a column he wrote from San Francisco. He claimed:

... The Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and without. . . . It is (true) . . . that since the outbreak of the Japanese war there had been no important sabotage on the Pacific coast. From what we know about the fifth-column in Europe, this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect¹⁷

Not only were influential Americans aiding the war hysteria, but “Reports of enemy submarine activity off the coast of California added to the mounting sense of panic.”¹⁸ Congressman John H. Tolan declared that “they tell me back in Washington that it is not only possible but probable that the Pacific Coast will be bombed.”¹⁹ With the fear of attack from “within and without,” “citizens on the West Coast demanded strong precautionary measures.”²⁰

Influential Americans not only played on the fears, but on the prejudices of many natives. General John L. DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command said:

A Jap’s a Jap. They are a dangerous element There is no way to determine their loyalty It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen; theoretically he is still a Japanese, and you can’t change him You can’t change him by giving him a piece of paper²¹

Radio commentator John B. Hughes also inflamed the prejudices of Americans in “a series of almost daily broadcasts, the gists of which was that 90 percent or more of American-born Japanese were ‘primarily loyal to Japan.’”²² The very shocking statement made by Westbrook Pegler, a Scripps-Howard columnist, proved that some of the comments were irresponsible. He wrote that “The Japanese in California should be under guard to the last man and woman right now and to hell with habeas corpus until the danger is over.”²³ Unfortunately, Mr. Pegler was taken literally by the United States government.

Wise politicians, such as Franklin Roosevelt, usually bend to

pressures. He was pressured from all sides to act on the Japanese problem. “Off the cuff” remarks by news commentators and pressures from the public could be contained for awhile, but political threats by congressmen had to be taken seriously. Congressman Sheppard used a threat of Congressional investigation to force Roosevelt to act. Sheppard said:

I serve notice upon the Attorney-General that if something is not done rapidly to correct the hazards that everyone who has any degree of intelligence knows exist on the Pacific Coast with regard to the Japanese question, I am going to introduce a resolution to investigate the activities of his office for the protection of the white citizens of my state.²⁴

Sheppard made those remarks on February 18, 1942. Roosevelt acted formally on February 19, 1942. He “signed Executive Order No. 9066 authorizing the Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson or any military commander designated by the Secretary to establish ‘military areas’ and exclude therefrom ‘any or all persons.’”²⁵ The effect of the order was the “evacuation of ‘Japanese and other subversive persons’ from the West Coast area.”²⁶

Executive Order No. 9066 was a blind bureaucratic act based on prejudice and without any foresight or planning. The Japanese American citizens were forced to leave their homes with little or no notice. Maisie and Richard Conrat write that:

The Japanese Americans also suffered almost incalculable economic losses as a result of relocation. Forced to settle their affairs in a matter of days or weeks between notification and actual evacuation, they fell victim to financial opportunists who bought their property and possessions at prices far below market value.²⁷

Most of the Japanese who were loyal American citizens complied with Executive Order No. 9066. Some even expressed their loyalty and cooperation in a telegram to President Roosevelt after Pearl Harbor. They said, “In this solemn hour we pledge our fullest cooperation to you, Mr. President, and to our country.”²⁸

A few of the Japanese claimed that Executive Order No. 9066 was a violation of their civil rights. They were prepared to take defensive measures against relocation. Gordon K. Hirabayashi, a student at the University of Washington and a member of the Quaker faith, felt strongly enough to defy the evacuation orders.²⁹ Hirabayashi took his case to the Supreme Court, but they refused to hear it. Roger Daniels, in *Concentration Camps U. S. A.: Japanese Americans and World War II*, comments on the Supreme Court’s action in the Hirabayashi case. He writes:

Thus spoke the Roosevelt Court. Its majority consistently refused to inhibit the broad war and police powers of the federal government in the interest of civil liberty, especially when it involved the civil liberties of nonwhites.³⁰

The Japanese Americans, left with no other recourse, were herded like cattle into camps called "relocation centers" and were forced to remain there for the duration of the war. Author Bill Hosokawa explains the sudden change of events and the plight faced by the Japanese Americans. He writes:

One day these Japanese Americans were free citizens and residents of communities, law-abiding, productive, proud. The next, they were inmates of cramped crowded American-style concentration camps, under armed guard fed like prisoners in mess hall lines, deprived of privacy and dignity, shorn of all their rights.³¹

Camps were set up in several states across the country. A total of 110,000 Japanese Americans were interned in these camps.³² The "relocation centers" that the Japanese Americans were herded into "were inadequate in size, sanitation, and protection from the elements for the minimum standards of human comfort."³³

There were some Americans who did care about their fellow citizens even though it seemed that many of them were little concerned about the violation of the Japanese Americans' civil rights. "Everyday" Americans voiced their opinions in opposition to the incarceration and pointed out obvious flaws in the mentality that supported relocation. In an article written for a magazine, one writer claimed that:

The weakest section of the report was that which stressed the differences between the Japanese on one hand, and the Germans and Italians on the other . . . The committee found "two important differences:" the German and Italian groups have lost their "community" identity . . . It is concluded, therefore, that these groups have become Americanized while the Japanese have not.³⁴

The truth of the matter is, of course, that nationality is an utterly unreliable guide in determining friend from foe in this war. So is race. Already there is evidence that this evacuation is being used by the Axis powers as still further "proof" that this is a race war.³⁵

The point the author was trying to stress was that the United States was at war with Germany and Italy, as well as Japan. If Japanese Americans were to be incarcerated, why not German and Italian Americans? The author concludes his point by writing that:

Influential Americans were also opposed to the relocation of the Japanese Americans. The Secretary of War, the Attorney General, the

Director of the Budget Bureau and the Secretary of State had agreed by 1944 that "it was time to act regarding revocation of the exclusion orders."³⁶ Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes expressed the same sentiments in a letter written to President Roosevelt on June 2, 1944. He wrote:

I will not comment at this time on the justification or lack thereof for the original evacuation order. But I do say that the continued retention of these innocent people in the relocation centers would be a blot upon the history of this country.³⁷

American citizen groups spoke out against the relocation of the Japanese. The American Civil Liberties Union recognized "the fact that there were some disloyal persons among the Japanese."³⁸ They added that this fact "should not be used as a pretext to justify the wholesale eviction of thousands of American citizens from their home solely because of their racial origin."³⁹ These cries for civil rights were too often drowned out by the uncontrollable war hysteria. Moreover, when the cries were heard, those making the noise were often accused of being disloyal and disruptive to the war effort. The Japanese internment in the "relocation centers" now seemed to be at the mercy of the length of the war.

The release of the Japanese Americans began at a slow pace towards the end of the war. These Americans were set free, but often with no future. They were victims of a crime that has no end: prejudice. Their losses were incalculable. They endured psychological stress, "the embarrassment and humiliation of being regarded as traitors to their country, and the inescapable fear that their ancestry rather than their action would always determine how they would be treated."⁴⁰

The monetary losses were also staggering. The Federal Reserve Bank estimated "that the Japanese American community suffered a loss of at least \$400 million worth of property as a direct result of internment."⁴¹ Payments may never equal the losses suffered by the Japanese Americans. In 1948, the United States government repaid \$38.5 million to the people.⁴² The 1948 payment may serve as a barrier for future compensation.

Although there was the initial compensation to the Japanese Americans, there have been recent attempts to reimburse them at a more reasonable rate. Representative Mike Lowry has introduced a bill calling for the payment of \$15,000 to each person interned, plus \$15 for each day of internment.⁴³ Congress also has established the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.⁴⁴ One internee commented on the recent attempts to compensate Japanese. He comments that:

Of course no monetary compensation could possibly pay for the hardships we endured. But the most important thing, I think, is that the government should not do this ever again to its people.⁴⁵

Franklin Roosevelt said that “Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry.”⁴⁶ Still, the fact remains clear. Americans were interned during World War II because other Americans were blinded by hysteria and prejudices. A nation, founded on the democratic ideals that all men are created equal and guaranteed due process under the law, can never again let such an undemocratic act reoccur. Loyal Americans who are true to the “creed of liberty and democracy” can never allow an incident to transpire like that which A.E. Houseman writes about in his poem:⁴⁷

Oh who is that young sinner with
the handcuffs on his wrists?
And what has he been after that
they groan and shake their
fists?
And wherefore is he wearing such
a conscience-stricken air?
Oh they're taking him to prison
for the colour of his hair.⁴⁸

Additional Poems, 18.

Notes

1 Robert Hosokawa, “An American with a Japanese Face” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 22, 1943, p. 3.

2 Carey McWilliams, *Prejudice: Japanese Americans: Symbol of Racial Intolerance* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), p. 106.

3 Robert A. Wilson and Bill Hosokawa, *East to America: A History of the Japanese in the United States* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1980), p. 188.

4 Martin Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed: Politics and the Japanese Evacuation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), p.1.

5 Maisie and Richard Conrat, *Executive Order 9066: The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans* (Los Angeles, California Historical Society, 1972), p. 18.

6 Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 59.

7 Dillon S. Meyer, *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II* (Tucson: The University of Arizona, 1971), p. 10.

8 Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 22.

9 Meyer, p. 17.

10 Conrat, p. 18.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 19.

13 Ibid., p. 21.

14 Edward H. Spicer et al, *Impounded People: Japanese Americans in the Relocation Centers* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1969), p. 40.

15 Leonard J. Arrington, *The Price of Prejudice: The Japanese-American Relocation in Utah during World War II* (Logan: The Faculty Association-Utah State University, 1962), p. 4.

18 Arrington, p. 4.

19 Hosokawa, p. 258.

20 Arrington, p. 4.

21 Hosokawa, p. 260.

22 Ibid., p. 264.

23 Ibid., p. 265.

24 Grodzins, p. 82.

25 Meyer, p. XXIV.

26 Ibid.

27 Conrat, p. 22.

28 Grodzins, p. 185.

29 Hosokawa, p. 312.

30 Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps U.S.A.: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p. 142.

31 Hosokawa, p. 329.

32 Ibid., p. 334.

33 Conrat, p. 22.

34 Carey McWilliams, “Japanese Out of California” *The New Republic*, April 6, 1942, pp. 456-7.

35 Ibid., p. 457.

36 Meyer, p. 178.

37 Ibid., p. 179.

38 Grodzins, p. 183.

39 Ibid.

40 Hosokawa, p. 23.

41 Zina Klapper, “Remembering and Redressing” *Mother Jones*, June 1980, p. 6.

42 Jane O'Reilly, “The Burden of Shame,” *Time*, August 17, 1981, p. 32.

43 Klapper, p. 6.

44 O'Reilly, p. 32.

45 Murray Polner, “A Tangible Gesture,” *Commonweal*, October 23, 1981, p. 581.

46 Robert Hosokawa, p. 3.

47 Ibid.

48 Allan R. Bosworth, *America's Concentration Camps* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1967), p. 76.

**Loyola University
Student Historical Association**

Virginia Hoffmeier President
Arturo Riera Vice President
Melissa Bender Secretary-Treasurer
Dr. David Moore Advisor

Phi Alpha Theta

Thomas Delahaye President
Pamela Ferrage Vice President
Matthew Kochanski Secretary-Treasurer
Dr. David Moore Advisor