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Rethinking Yale’s History Major

Steven Pincus, Bradford Durfee Professor of History, Director of Undergraduate Studies for History, Chair of the European Studies Council

We live in exciting times. Events in the past decade have pointed to vast challenges that will face tomorrow’s citizens and leaders. But, none of these developments – issues of climate change, the ‘Arab Spring’, the European Debt Crisis and beyond – are unique or unprecedented developments in human history. They are developments with long trajectories. Only by studying history, by understanding the long-term causes of today’s crises, can we hope to diagnose solutions to the problems of today and tomorrow. The study of history provides its aficionados with the best tools to analyze today’s bewildering world.

Yale’s History Department, as documented by the Yale Daily News, has suffered a decline in majors. This, to me, indicates a decline not in the relevance of history but in the fact that Yale’s History Major was designed to cater to the needs of students in the 1980s and 1990s. It is time for a change. But in our view the change need not be cataclysmic. The History Department has been adjusting to new needs under the radar. We offer a much wider range of courses on international history, environmental history, economic history and the history of gender and sexuality than we ever have before. We have also increased our geographical range, as we recently hired a historian of southern Africa as well as a historian of the Middle East; in addition, we are currently searching for two historians of South Asia and a historian of the contemporary Middle East. The problem, then, is to ensure that these new resources are available to undergraduates in a systematic, coherent and easily legible way.

In November, the History Department discussed and approved a variety of changes to the major. Most significantly, we decided to re-organize the major in terms of thematic pathways. At present, students are told that they have to take 12 history courses, a certain number of which have to fulfill various distribution requirements. Instead, we will offer a menu of thematic pathways to help students select courses that best represent their interests. We envisage pathways
in environmental history, intellectual history, international history, the history of capitalism, the
history of gender and sexuality, the history of religion, the history of empires, the history of
revolutions and social movements, the history of war and violence and many others. Each of
these pathways will have its own webpage that will list relevant courses, faculty members with
similar interests as well as various events on campus relevant to that pathway. We hope that this
new structure will allow students to select distributional courses that best match their interests,
give them a better sense of potential senior essay advisers and, during their sophomore and
junior years, match those in the major with a history adviser who can help them select courses
that most closely meet their intellectual goals. In sum, we hope to provide a more fulfilling and
coherent academic experience within the history major.

Yale’s History Department remains one of the jewels of Yale College and is arguably the
best history department in North America. There are many good reasons for undergraduates to
major in a department with such a long tradition of teaching excellence. Additionally, we feel
that the history major is an ideal place to prepare Yale students to lead the world in facing the
challenges of the new century.

The study of history has changed significantly in the past two decades. Whereas
historians in the third quarter of the twentieth century focused on local studies and national
developments, historians have since widened their gaze to emphasize global and comparative
trends. This change is a reaction to the problems of the twenty-first century, which after all are
global, not local, in scale. Concerns about environmental degradation, terrorist attacks, the crisis
of capitalism, rapidly developing social and political revolutions, and health pandemics all
demand a broad global and historical perspective. Yale’s History Department not only reflects
this new direction in academic thinking, but also sits on the cutting edge of these developments.
As a result, students who are interested in explaining the origins of the European debt crisis can
do no better than examine the rise of government borrowing in the context of state formation
and revolutionary change. Students who wish to grapple with the grave environmental problems
that face today’s leaders would be well-served by studying the development of the range of
human relations with the natural world through our strong offerings in environmental history.
Students concerned about the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring can explore their
context through our wide variety of classes on revolutions and social movements, our
proliferating range of courses on the Middle East and perhaps even through our strengths in the
history of religion. On top of this, we hope students will pursue coursework in many of these
fields, as a broad education in history equips our students with the tools to address not only the
past and the present, but also the future.

Being a History major at Yale offers the best of all possible worlds. Yale’s History
department trains students to think and write through a series of challenging courses taught by
excellent and dedicated teachers. History trains Yale students to use the past to think creatively
about the future.
During their junior year, history majors complete at least two seminars covering history from two different geographical regions. In this paper, junior Economics major Jacob Effron takes us back to Yale in the early 1950s, when anti-communism gripped the country and indicted universities for fostering radical thought. It was during this period of paranoia that Alfred Whitney Griswold began his tenure as president of the University in 1951. He was able to craft a doctrine that neither antagonized the government nor isolated his faculty. Here, Effron provides a comprehensive exploration of the late president's approach and the circumstances that allowed him to successfully navigate these tumultuous years while still maintaining his loyalty to the lofty tenets of academic freedom.
Introduction: Yale as a Defender of Freedom

In 1948, the Chicago Tribune declared that universities were “infested with the pedagogic termites of communism.”¹ In a country gripped by fear of internal communist subversion, universities found themselves indicted as unpatriotic when they retained professors who were publicly accused of supporting the Communist Party. This environment of paranoia presented university administrators with a dilemma. While dismissing these professors placated public outcry, doing so also posed a grave threat to academic freedom. Alfred Whitney Griswold, the president of Yale University from 1951 to 1963, was remarkably successful in crafting a doctrine that both quelled complaints and defended academic freedom, appealing both to staunch defenders of the accused professors and to those who denounced them. Griswold's on-campus success allowed him to advocate a similar doctrine on behalf of all the nation’s universities by heading the 1953 Association of American Universities’ report on academic freedom. At a contentious time when many universities had failed to protect academic freedom, this report defended universities in a way that did not alienate mainstream society. Griswold was ultimately able to lead this nationwide coalition and reaffirm the university’s position in society because he was never forced to make a difficult political decision that would have divided the coalition.

Background to the Attack on Universities and the Environment Yale Faced

The Tribune’s accusation carried serious weight in 1949, with the Soviet Union’s unexpected and rapid development of the atomic bomb and the victory of Mao Zedong and the Chinese communists after years of civil war. Many Americans believed a worldwide communist conspiracy had infiltrated the American government.² The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) launched hearings to eradicate the threat of domestic communists and quickly turned their attention to American universities, declaring communists in colleges were a “deadly danger,” as controlling the education system was essential for spreading the uniform ideology necessary for a communist takeover.³ According to former HUAC chief investigator J.B. Matthews, America had reason to be worried about its universities, asserting that for nearly two decades, American communists “ha[d] been remarkably successful” in infiltrating the teaching profession.⁴ Congressmen accused professors of working for front organizations whose true purpose was to further the Communist Party. Concerned citizens joined in making these accusations. Around a fifth of witnesses in these trials were university professors or graduate students. Politicians capitalized on these investigations in order to both criticize universities and question the purpose of higher education in general.⁵

³ United States. House Un-American Activities Committee. 100 Things You Should Know About Communism and Education. 1953. [n.p.]
⁵ Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 10.
Yale was one of many universities that faced harsh scrutiny from Congress and the public. Accusations flooded in against many members of the most controversial law faculty in the country.\textsuperscript{6} *Counterattack*, a magazine trusted by many and edited by former FBI members with access to up-to-date FBI and congressional committee records, published a five-part series in November and December of 1952 under the headline: “Who are the Men who Teach Law at Yale?”\textsuperscript{7} In this series, the magazine condemned Professors Fowler Harper, Thomas Emerson, Donald Haber, Fred Rodell, Vern Countryman, and Filmer Northrop for their association with and support of organizations they deemed Communist fronts. The law school professors were adamant in standing up to what they perceived as unfair abuses of the rights of suspected communists and thus frequently spoke out to the press; Emerson, Harper, and Countryman went so far as to defend communists indicted under the Smith Act.\textsuperscript{8} Today, it is clear that none of these men were or ever had been Communists, but many deemed them guilty because of their defense of Communism in and out of court. Professor Emerson was particularly vulnerable to these allegations, since he served as the President of the National Lawyers Guild, the left-wing alternative of the American Bar Association, which the HUAC denounced as the “Legal Bulwark of the Communist Party.”\textsuperscript{9} Emerson was even accused of being a communist by Fordham Professor Louis Budenz, an ex-communist and major government witness, in his testimony before the HUAC.

Universities nationwide faced pressure to depose similarly accused faculty members, and many administrators responded to anti-communist political and social pressures by investigating and dismissing professors who had not officially broken any laws.\textsuperscript{10} The University of Vermont and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute dismissed professors who invoked the Fifth Amendment before the HUAC.\textsuperscript{11} Princeton suspended David Bohm after he pleaded the Fifth before the HUAC and ultimately chose not to re-hire him.\textsuperscript{12} Under pressure from the press, Rutgers fired Professors M.I. Finley and Simon Heimlich for refusing to testify before the HUAC, although Heimlich had indicated his reasoning was that he didn’t want to legitimize the committee’s proceedings because he disagreed with them intellectually.\textsuperscript{13} There was no question that public image was at stake in these decisions.\textsuperscript{14} The University of California took the attack on radicals a bit further, imposing a loyalty oath on its professors and dismissing thirty faculty-members who refused to sign. As commentators noted, a true communist would have no problem lying and

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 251.
\textsuperscript{7} John Richardson to A. Whitney Griswold, 9 December 1952, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 2, folder 13, Yale University Library.
\textsuperscript{8} The Smith Act made it illegal to advocate the violent overthrow of the federal government.
\textsuperscript{9} New York Guild Lawyer Volume 11 No. 10, December 1953: 1.
\textsuperscript{10} Lewis, *Cold War on Campus*, 2.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{12} “Dodds Drops Indicted Professor From Faculty,” *Yale Daily News*, December 7, 1950: 1.
\textsuperscript{13} Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 173.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 178.
signing the loyalty oath to further indoctrinate students. Thus the events’ true purpose seems to lie more in a statement of patriotism and the fact that many of the more radical faculty members whose pronouncements hurt the university would be intellectually opposed to signing a loyalty oath. Unable to explain their defense of academic freedom in a way that lifted the burden of being labeled unpatriotic, these universities either acquiesced to popular demands or remained defiant.

Yale alumni and concerned citizens pressured Griswold to take similar decisive action against controversial members of the Yale faculty who had broken no laws. Future Secretary of the Army and alumnus Robert Stevens wrote Griswold that the publicity around Emerson “is so bad for Yale that some kind of action needs to be taken.”15 Others believed the university’s protection of communist-aiding faculty was despicably un-American. “They may be just a little pink. To my mind that is like the woman who was ‘just a teeny bit pregnant.’ They are either for our country and what it stands for or they are not,” wrote one alumnus.16 Alumni found the University’s protection of its faculty particularly egregious given that young men were sacrificing their lives to fight communism abroad in the ongoing Korean War. One particularly poignant letter simply circled two stories: one that featured a photo of a dead teenage soldier and another that featured the declaration of Emerson’s Lawyers Guild as subversive by the HUAC.17 Many letter-writers thought Yale had lost its way and “departed far from [its] Christian [charter].”18 Yale had a public relations problem; Representative John Taber said that he hated to see his alma mater in “the situation it is with a large portion of the public.”19

This problem extended into Yale’s ability to solicit donations. Taber pointed to Emerson’s presence on the faculty as an explanation for his decision to terminate donations to the school, arguing that aiding the university financially could not “help but be a baneful influence upon the student body and I cannot longer be a party to encouraging that kind of approach.”20 In 1952, an Advisory Committee established by Griswold wrote that, “A few Yale graduates have stopped their contributions to the Alumni Fund because they fear that Yale is harboring in its faculty persons who are working for the destruction of our democratic society.”21 In addition to explicit refusals, Griswold received threats of the discontinuation of substantial gifts.22 The uneasy

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19 John Taber to A. Whitney Griswold, 6 June 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1, folder 3, Yale University Library.
20 Ibid.
21 Yale University. President’s Advisory Committee on Intellectual and Spiritual Welfare of the University, Its Students and Its Faculty. 1952. [n.p.]
feelings toward Yale’s faculty also posed a threat to future enrollment. One letter to Griswold described that in a discussion of ten of the author’s friends, only one would consider sending their son to the Yale Law School.  

Confronting pressures similar to those faced by other universities around the country, Griswold was forced to make a difficult decision: should he acquiesce or remain defiant? Griswold devoted significant time to navigating these issues. He had to mediate public relations problems from the Law School on a daily basis, and even had to deal with HUAC investigator Donald T. Appell coming to campus to track down the educational backgrounds of graduates being investigated. To best craft Yale’s response, Griswold sought a full picture of the faculty’s actions by privately issuing orders to investigate the controversial organizations they were affiliated with. To stay on top of political affairs, Yale hired lawyer Sturgis Warner to obtain “direct first-hand information as to investigations by Congress.” Griswold had a press release template ready so that if a big story involving Yale broke, the university would be able to handle it promptly. The nationwide attacks on universities were so strident and charged that Griswold found the “chief effort in American higher education” was to “justify our right to exist.”

**Griswold’s Beliefs, Advocacy and Effect on Yale and Universities Nationwide**

In dealing with issues arising from anti-Communism at Yale and beyond, Griswold developed a doctrine of the university’s purpose and role in society. This doctrine and the decisions Griswold made at Yale positioned him as a critical defender of academic freedom despite his dislike of the actions of controversial faculty-members. Griswold was in fact a staunch anti-Communist, articulating in his correspondence that “Yale abhors Communism as a mortal enemy”; he even hinted privately that the law school professors’ defense of communists implied their sympathy for the ideology. He was a firm believer that Yale had a patriotic duty to aid in the war effort and “train the leaders necessary” to fight Communism. Thus, he believed that the Law School professors were being foolish when they defended Communists because the pressure it put on the entire faculty from bad press harmed the university in a way that was “far

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27 F.H. Wiggins Sturgis Warner, 2 March 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 10, Yale University Library. The press release itself can be found in the same folder.
29 Gaddis Smith, telephone conversation with author, April 29, 2011.
31 See Footnote 29.
more important to the civil rights and liberties” the Law School professors sought to defend. 33 Yet Griswold never took action against the professors he disagreed with, saying of Emerson that he “earnestly wish[ed] he would concentrate on his teaching” and was “trying by patience and example to persuade him of this cause.” Despite Griswold’s personal beliefs, he took no direct action against Emerson’s “frequently highly annoying pronouncements [and] activities.”34

Instead, Griswold defended the professors’ actions. In a nationwide environment of acquiescence to avoid further uproar, Griswold not only stood up for his controversial professors but managed to do so in a way that did not come off as defiant. He found a middle path for defending these professors, one that was grounded in the concept of academic freedom. In his defense Griswold was largely motivated by patriotism, as he sought “to preserve our essential liberties without cultivating in them the seeds of our own destruction.”35 Griswold’s defense was an impassioned argument for making the study of Communist philosophy and criticism of America’s resistance to it an acceptable discussion topic, both in the classroom and around campus. In his Alumni Day speech, Griswold emphasized that any limitation on topics discussed would be a “renunciation of our educational philosophy”36 and a disservice to students as refusing to teach them these issues was an implicit “vote of no confidence”37 in their intellectual capacities. Students should “learn to weigh [opinions] and gain maturity of judgment.”38 Furthermore, Griswold adamantly maintained that government should have no influence on the fate of professors who had not broken the law, arguing that “[t]he university is competent to establish a tribunal to determine the facts and fairly judge the nature” of these cases.39 He spoke out against “discipline on the basis of irresponsible accusations or suspicion.”40

Griswold’s defense was powerful and effective because it was carefully crafted to appeal to those with different views on what should happen to radical professors. This ability to provide a basic framework of agreement that satisfied most of the Yale community was in part due to Griswold’s ability to address these issues while avoiding controversy whenever possible.41 Thus, though many alumni and officials at other universities wrote him asking what he would do in hypothetical situations, he consistently responded, “A given case would have to be determined upon the basis of all its facts and circumstances.”42 Despite numerous requests to condemn

34 Taken from June 11, 1953 letter from Carlos F. Stoddard to Mr. Ives Goddard Griswold Paper Box 1 Folder 3
35 Quoted from September 12, 1951 letter from A. Whitney Griswold to Gilbert H. Scribner; Griswold Papers Box 137 Folder 1246
37 Griswold, Essays on Education, 82.
This report was adopted by the Yale Corporation as Yale’s official policy.
39 Griswold, "November 1953 Report to Alumni."
40 Ibid.
McCarthyism, Griswold was adamant that he would not denounce any Congressional inquiries. Griswold shrewdly defended his right to deal with controversial professors without taking a more extreme position that would antagonize the government. The official Yale position was that it “respected the right of the Congress to inquire as it saw fit” and “would urge any faculty member receiving a subpoena to testify” even though it held the right to determine the consequences for lawful faculty members. Thus, Griswold mitigated the controversial aspects of his defiance by appearing unified with the government in its fight against communism as well. Griswold publicly accommodated FBI investigations on campus. His cooperative actions communicated a fundamental respect for the government; it was important and difficult to create this image when defying the government’s goal of dismissing supposedly un-American professors.

Griswold’s use of patriotic language was essential to making his defiance of the prevailing mood of the nation appear less threatening. Griswold defended the study of Communism with the notion, “To combat them we must know them first.” He insisted that traditional academic freedom was “the true safeguard against the menace of communism.” He acknowledged that “impartial public opinion could wreck our liberties and destroy our schools and colleges,” and that he was acting in the spirit of patriotism to ensure American universities did not descend into the monotony of thought found in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia. Thus Griswold claimed the patriotic high-ground in his refusal to fall prey to an atmosphere of fear. To Griswold, the goal of fighting communism did not conflict with academic freedom; instead, he argued that academic freedom allowed universities to be one of the country’s “most fruitful sources of strength and welfare.” To Griswold, fighting communism and academic freedom were not mutually exclusive, but rather inextricably linked. Griswold never questioned that fighting communism took precedent and in doing so made his stance against controversial professors more acceptable to the general public.

Griswold’s ability to support both the policies of the government and the independence of the university meant that people who disagreed on what should happen to these professors could form a coalition behind him. Supporters of the professors, like Dean William DeVane who believed that “if a university is to be effective it must be free from government interference,” and their detractors, like Development Director Carlos Stoddard who believed Fowler Harper should be “felling trees in Canada,” could agree Griswold was doing a “tremendous job”

46 Griswold, Essays on Education, 83.
47 A. Whitney Griswold to Gano Chance, 8 January 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
48 Griswold, "November 1953 Report to Alumni."
49 Ibid.
handling the situation. Griswold was able to mute criticism expressed by angry letter-writers by articulately defending his views and dispelling misconceptions under the cloak of patriotism. Few spoke out against him; he had successfully stood up against universities that were bowing to national pressure without sounding like “a hard-breaking crusader with a jaded rig.” Griswold could continue to claim Yale was one of the “most patriotic forces in our society” by shrewdly making a potentially controversial position uncontroversial. The acceptability of his defense was evident; a university professor felt comfortable enough to say in jest, “We teach communism in our classes. And in our medical schools we teach syphilis. But we don’t advocate either.” Griswold’s defense of the faculty at Yale was unique in its balanced approach between acquiescence and defiance.

The Yale Student Body During McCarthyism and Its Effect on Griswold’s Advocacy

In the 1950s, Yale’s student body was fiercely patriotic and espoused beliefs that mirrored those of President Griswold. As a result, he was able to successfully convince alumni swept up by the Red Scare to support his moderate policies. Chief among the fears of those who wrote Griswold was that the radical views of faculty members would greatly harm students. Alumnus Percy Winthrop and others feared that the intimacy of the student-teacher relationship would result in the radicalization of students. How the students comported themselves and expressed their views was critically important to the success of Griswold’s policies. If the student body had been particularly radical it would have been devastating for Griswold’s case that retaining these professors was harmless. Simultaneously, Joseph McCarthy was accusing universities of being hotbeds of communist activity, declaring he had heard countless parents “complain their sons and daughters were sent to college as good Americans and returned four years later as wild-eyed radicals” and that something should be done about it. Thus, it appeared a particularly radical campus was vulnerable to congressional investigation. At the same time, a student condemnation of Griswold’s decision to retain controversial professors would have been equally devastating.

Even if the majority of the student body was not conservative, there was certainly pressure on students to avoid any questionable behavior or associations. The FBI had a large presence on campus and would frequently come into the Yale Daily News seeking information on

51 Carlos Stoddard to Ben Holden, 4 June 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
53 A. Whitney Griswold to Jacob Taber, 18 June 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
54 Griswold, "November 1953 Report to Alumni."
55 Ibid.
56 Percy Winthrop to A. Whitney Griswold, 1 January 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 137 folder 1246, Yale University Library.
57 Lewis, Cold War on Campus, 12.
students. In fact, one student reported being asked by an agent if he read *The Nation*. Yale students censored their actions so as not to create any suspicion. In 1952, the *Yale Daily News* considered running an editorial condemning Yale students’ belief that war with the Soviet Union was inevitable but decided not to because of fear of criticism for advocating a position similar to the Soviet Union’s concept of “peaceful co-existence.” That same year, another group of campus leaders, the Yale Political Union, withdrew a speaking invitation to communist Howard Fast. The general sentiments of Yale students led the *Yale Daily News* to bemoan that the “only safe way to conduct a college career is to stay clear of the new, the radical, the unaccepted.” The *Yale Daily News* noted a student felt “constantly that he is being spied on. If he is just a liberal, he has an instinctive feeling that his remarks might be misinterpreted. And so he ceases to think or at least swallows his thoughts.” Given the students’ desire to appear patriotic, they could have pressured Griswold to depose controversial faculty members. This would have brought media attention and destroyed the uncontroversial nature that strengthened Griswold’s doctrine. The potential for a dissident student to start national clamor and debate was made evident in 1951 with William Buckley’s publication of *God and Man at Yale*.

Yet Griswold ultimately did not have to fear either extreme, as the student body reinforced his position by advocating stances similar to his doctrine. Those students who expressed their views unequivocally defended academic freedom. The *Yale Daily News* condemned both the University of California loyalty oaths and the decision by Rutgers to fire the professors who plead the Fifth. The Yale Law School Student Association voted 255 to 68 to condemn congressional investigations into universities and the *Yale Daily News* wrote that they hoped McCarthy would “shut up and let the rest of the country’s universities alone.” The *Yale Daily News* also came down on the Yale Political Union’s withdrawal of its invitation to Howard Fast, believing that the University had to take a stand for academic freedom and if the University did not have the courage, imagination and strength of purpose to do this, it was “no longer worth saving.” Like Griswold, student leaders coupled this defense of academic freedom with affirmations of patriotism to allay fears of government collaboration. The *Yale Daily News* made sure to emphasize that “[i]t is a protection rather than an invasion of academic freedom to

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59 Gaddis Smith, interviewed by Jacob Effron, April 21, 2011.
60 Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 92.
62 Lewis, *Cold War on Campus*, 12.
determine whether teachers are committed to the destructive tools [of communism].”

When the *Crimson* wrote an ominous article about the FBI presence at Yale that angered the FBI, the *Yale Daily News* assumed the allegations were incorrect and planned a meeting so that students could understand the truth from the FBI. They wrote an editorial “Hats Off to the FBI” and accused *The Crimson* of irresponsibility even though investigative reporting would have revealed that the FBI was being untruthful in reporting its activity. Yet Yale students showed no desire to create controversy.

Far from damaging Griswold's doctrine, the student body greatly contributed to its success. The student body’s politically conservative nature greatly aided Griswold in making the case that the university was a patriotic place. Griswold frequently noted that, “In their poll last fall our students gave the Republicans a two to one majority (in my 27 years of life and work at Yale I have never known a student poll to go otherwise),” and the administration distributed student editorials in favor of the government. Thus the student body's views calmed detractors of universities who were concerned about the situation on campuses. Alumni viewed Harvard as “a hotbed of potted pinks and other crackpots,” while believing Yale to be decidedly conservative. This comparison helped to alleviate any complaints they had about the university's faculty. The loyalty and willingness of students to assist the FBI left Griswold comfortable with helping them as well, because he knew “Yale has nothing to fear and nothing to hide.” The student bodies' actions contributed to the sense of Yale as a truly patriotic institution that defended academic freedom, thus allowing Griswold to assume the national stage in defense of all institutions of higher learning.

**Griswold’s Application of His Successful Approach at Yale on the Nation**

Griswold sought to put his successful middle-path onto the national stage and greatly helped universities nationwide in their efforts to maintain academic freedom. After all, the issues Griswold confronted were not unique to Yale. In 1951, the *New York Times* noted that a survey of 72 universities revealed a “subtle creeping paralysis of freedom of thought and speech … limiting both students and faculty” as more and more administrations fell prey to fear and succumbed to the demands of a repressive government. It was unclear when a line would be drawn, or if one ever would. Griswold realized that the nation was facing “a cultural test” to “understand the
fundamental aims and principles of a university.”

Looking back on this period years later, Griswold would reflect that “institutions had failed to instruct their own graduates in the elementary meaning and purposes of academic freedom” and thus these men could not “interpret it to the public.” Griswold recognized the need for a clear mission statement for higher education in general. In March 1953, Griswold chaired the Association of American Universities (AAU) report on academic freedom. Perfectly timed to play a leading role in the nation’s debate over the function and responsibility of the universities, the report was published when the HUAC began to hold its first hearings on higher education.

Griswold was in a unique position to make an impact. He had serious patriotic credentials, and he had written the first American Studies dissertation, a book on the relationship between farming and democracy in which he frequently quoted Jefferson, the Constitution and *The Federalist Papers*. The *Boston Globe* declared there was “no one more American” than Griswold. Given the reputation and prestige of Yale and the earlier success of his decisions and justifications, Griswold was well-suited to be the point-person for a “united stand” against impending investigations. His “tactical and political document” would not “excite those members of society who had been in opposition on numerous national issues during the last twenty years.”

In the 1953 AAU report, Griswold employed the same measured, patriotic language he used in his defense of Yale professors. Griswold “wrote or edited every word of it” and applied the same strategy: fan the flames as little as possible but draw a principled line and defend it. The report was adamant that the ideology of communism and U.S. policies towards it should be taught and discussed and that teachers accused outside courts of law should not face any consequences; to do otherwise would be “damning to the public welfare.” From the beginning of its section on communism, the report emphasized the universities’ loyalty and cooperation in fighting communism: “We share the profound concern of the American people at the existence of an international conspiracy whose goal is the destruction of our cherished institution.” The worldwide communist revolution, its use of deceit and its use of mind control all had to be defeated. To further underline their hatred of communism, the presidents argued that no

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82 The AAU consisted of the presidents of 37 leading North American universities.
85 Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
87 Diamond, *Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities With the Intelligence Community*, 224.
88 Carlos F. Stoddard to Ives Goddard, 11 June 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
89 Griswold, "November 1953 Report to Alumni."
90 Ibid.
professor who was also a member of the Communist Party could possibly be considered a scholar of integrity. In keeping with the communist party-line, this professor would not be exploring truth but rather seeking to indoctrinate his students. Through its universities, the presidents wrote, “American ideals have been strengthened.” They compared the necessity of “free enterprise” in a market economy to that of “free enterprise” in universities.

The vague manner in which the presidents addressed the issue of professors pleading the Fifth Amendment demonstrates that they sought to minimize controversy in the report so as to not dilute its impact. If they had taken a more radical position on these issues, the presidents would have certainly encountered heavy dissent. Instead, the report stated that pleading the Fifth “places upon a professor a heavy burden of proof of his fitness to hold a teaching position and lays upon his university an obligation to reexamine his qualifications for membership in its society.” It is possible to read this statement in different ways. The fact that the universities would determine discipline on a case-by-case basis would appease those who wanted to protect professors. At the same time, hardliners who believed that any suspicious professor should be dismissed would view the report as a precedent for doing so. Since it could be interpreted as a strong anti-communist document encouraging university cooperation or a strong reaffirmation of the right of a university to handle its own affairs, the report was ensured a positive reception from a divided and hostile public.

The AAU report was hugely important because it was a well-received rejection of the growing antagonism between government and universities. The report appealed to the vast majority of citizens. Many, like a Boston Globe editorial writer, believed the document was “one of the landmarks in our nation’s educational history.” Opposition was sporadic. In a glowingly positive ode to the patriotism behind the report, the New York Times wrote that it “makes one’s pulses quick with pride. This is America speaking. This is the expression of the freedom of the scholar in a democracy.” Through the AAU report, universities adopted a stance that allowed them to be both independent and patriotic. After all, as Griswold aptly articulated, freedom of speech, thought, and expression were all bulwarks of American political ideology.

Universities had been struggling to determine procedures for dealing with congressional inquiries and public scrutiny, and the AAU report provided a framework for their response. The document was adopted by the Yale Corporation as official Yale policy, and its influence

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91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Lewis, Cold War on Campus, 190.
94 See Footnote 29.
95 Griswold, “November 1953 Report to Alumni.”
96 See Footnote 29 and Diamond, Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities With the Intelligence Community, 335.
97 Griswold, “1957 Address to the Association of American Colleges.”
98 Lewis, Cold War on Campus, 190.
100 Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 181.
spread throughout the country. When administrators from Boston University, the State
Universities of New York, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology wrote Griswold for
advice, he responded by referring them to the policies laid forth in the AAU report. The AAU
printed and distributed over 50,000 copies of the report, and the Yale-AAU line created a united
front for the formerly disjointed universities to resist McCarthyism in the name of serving the
nation.

A Partial Explanation for Griswold’s Leading National Role

Griswold may have been able to be the champion of this doctrine because of the lack of
a national controversy at Yale. While Harvard also enjoyed national prestige, the administration
was plagued by controversy in the 1950s and was thus unable to join Yale in its implementation
of the AAU doctrine. In 1953, when two Harvard professors admitted to being former
communists but refused to name others, a huge debate over how to respond to their revelation
followed, dividing students and administrators alike. McCarthy said a sizable number of
Harvard faculty-members were communists and called the campus situation “a smelly mess.”

Griswold faced no such challenges. Yale was relatively quiet during the McCarthy era. Its
two most controversial faculty-members, Fowler Harper and Thomas Emerson, were
decidedly not communists. Harper had won a libel suit against a newspaper calling him a
communist, and Emerson had only been accused of being a communist by “remote and
unsubstantiated hearsay … wholly inadmissible in a court of law.” No one would dare denounce
Emerson as a communist in an environment in the face of a lawsuit. Moreover, neither
professor was involved in organizations on the Attorney General’s subversive list, nor did they
ever plead the Fifth in front of the HUAC. When the Senate threatened to launch intensive
probes into specific universities, Yale was not one of the dozen schools to be investigated, while
Harvard was included on the list. Yale’s distance from the uproar against universities was clear
when the Yale Daily News wrote that Congressional investigations “may even warm this rock-
ribbed institution.” Given its “rock-ribbed” status, Yale was able to balance its two loyalties to

101 BU: Walter Muelder to A. Whitney Griswold, 28 February 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 2 folder
13, Yale University Library.
State Universities of New York: John H. Stocum to A. Whitney Griswold, 30 July 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers,
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MIT: Phillips Ketcum to A. Whitney Griswold, 20 February 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3,
Yale University Library.
102 Lewis, Cold War on Campus, 189.
103 Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
104 “Academic Freedom,”
106 Eugene Rostov to Charles O’Hearn, 6 May 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 137 folder 1246, Yale
University Library.
107 See Footnote 109.
the government and to academic freedom; the University’s patriotism on both counts was unassailable.

It is unclear if this united front could have survived a massive controversy at Yale. Potential for fissure certainly existed between those who disliked radical professors and those who supported them. As the events surrounding controversial Law School professor Vern Countryman’s resignation reveal, even the simplest academic decision could polarize these two groups. In 1954, Griswold and Yale Law School Dean Harry Shulman denied full professorship to Countryman, who defended communists, after the Permanent Board of the Law School had unanimously recommended his promotion. Countryman quit and in a front-page article the *New York Times* wrote that, “Professor Countryman was reported to feel that the reversal had been motivated by his legal activities in two court cases.” The decision to fire Countryman pleased one of Yale’s leading fund-raisers in the Northwest and others who had been urging Griswold to get rid of Countryman because of his communist associations. But the seemingly political nature of the decision created a furor among other alumni who were generally “stunned and shocked.” Students too were outraged; the Yale Law School Student Association organized a petition signed by 118 students condemning the event. Law School professor Fred Rodell condemned Griswold’s actions in the *Yale Daily News*. Griswold was forced to mount a vigorous defense of the decision’s non-political nature, writing myriad letters, even to a concerned Senator and Supreme Court justice, to ensure them that the decision was made simply because Countryman was too young and had not produced enough work. To prove that age was the true reason, Griswold calculated the average time difference between Ph. D. and professorship for all of Yale’s schools to support his case. The uproar did not lead to any serious cracks in the support for Griswold’s actions because it appeared Griswold had made the decision on purely academic grounds. If, however, Countryman had pleaded the Fifth in front of Congress about his communist past, Griswold would have been forced into a political decision concerning his employment. A similar defense of Countryman would have been mounted, claiming he should be evaluated on his scholarship and not lawful political activity. Given Griswold’s statements that professors should be able to take lawful action without legal consequences and that the university should help fight communism, both sides could believe he stood for their positions. Whatever decision Griswold made, he would outrage part of his support base. Thus Griswold chose to avoid answering hypothetically, as he would have had to break his coalition.

111 Alfred Whitney Griswold Personal Papers, 1914-1990, box 1 folder 3, Yale University Library.
112 Ibid.
113 Charles F. Clise to A. Whitney Griswold, 27 November 1953, Alfred Whitney Griswold personal papers, 1914-1990, box 2 folder 14, Yale University Library.
114 Smith, “Politics and the Law School: The View from Woodbridge Hall,” 150.
Griswold was ultimately able to have the influential role he did because of the combination of his shrewd political navigation and patriotic reputation and the fortuitous circumstances of his similarly-minded uncontroversial student body and lack of faculty crisis. He was perfectly positioned to draw a line in defense of academic freedom at a time when it seemed there was a slippery slope toward its elimination. Though unsympathetic with the views of criticized professors, it was Griswold who made a powerful contribution to maintaining University freedom in the face of the threats of McCarthyism.

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Each semester, students in Directed Studies – Yale's selective humanities program for freshmen – are required to submit three essays for each of the program's three classes: Literature, Philosophy, and History and Politics. Marissa Dearing, a current sophomore in Berkeley College, wrote this essay for Professor Norma Thompson's spring semester History and Politics seminar, in which students discussed authors ranging from Machiavelli to Arendt. Entitled "The American," the essay examines the political philosophy of Alexis de Tocqueville, a French historian who traveled to the United States in the early 19th century to conduct research for his great work, *Democracy in America*. Today, *Democracy in America* is considered one of the earliest examples of sociology and a prime example of "new political science." In it, Tocqueville explored the effects of the rising equality of social conditions on the individual and the state in western societies, and whether these conditions could be replicated in his native Europe. Marissa's essay traces Tocqueville's idea of "self-interest well understood" and how, in Tocqueville's opinion, American democracy prevents the rise of "the tyranny of the majority."
In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville presents a wealth of observations regarding democracy as he found it in the United States of the 1830s. By outlining the bases, advantages, and dangers of American democracy, he hopes to prepare Europe for the advent of a form of government he considers unavoidable in the trajectory of human history. Yet, Tocqueville never asserts that democracy is the ideal form of government. On the contrary, he emphasizes how the equality of conditions so foundational to American democracy tends to encourage self-absorption, as well as submission to despotism, which together stifle political, civic, and intellectual vitality. For Tocqueville, the strongest safeguard against “unenlightened selfishness” lies in the way American democracy harnesses the individual’s self-interest for the good of the community in accordance with “self-interest well understood.” Tocqueville argues that by instilling this doctrine in its citizens through free institutions and local communities, American democracy simultaneously engenders active civic participation in the affairs of the community and prevents the rise of “individualism,” the tendency to emphasize private interests to the total exclusion of the public good. Tocqueville fears that, left unchecked by local political engagement, this individualism would reduce the free, vital, American individual to one among a discordant, lonely, and tyrannical many.

Tocqueville considers “equality of conditions” the essential characteristic responsible for American self-reliance, deeming it the “generative fact from which each particular fact” of American society stems. By “equality of conditions,” he does not intend literal parity of material possessions, but, rather, the belief that whatever one individual can achieve, any other sufficiently motivated individual can also achieve. The American relies solely “on the individual effort of his reason,” rejecting any “principal arbiter” of beliefs beyond himself (403, 408). He is unwilling to concede that he cannot equal any man through his own efforts, or to accept any tenet he has not grasped in the course of his own ponderings. Encouraged by American democracy, Americans have sought their own, internal standards of belief and behavior, rather than external standards of any kind, creating a “universal leveling” that has made Americans ardently reliant on their own reason and will. This self-reliance colors all aspects of the American experience, from “public spirit” to laws, maxims, habits, and sentiments (5, 3). The American man becomes, for himself, the measure of all things.

For Tocqueville, however, this self-reliance is also a threat to a fiercely independent democratic populace, as it steers citizens into increasingly confined, increasingly private spaces. “Equality of conditions” razes all the rigid classifications that, for example, had united groups of aristocratic citizens in the past. This joint enterprise bound them “to something…outside of them” and “disposed [them] to forget themselves” and take interest in those around them (483). By contrast, the democratic citizen finds himself disconnected from anything outside himself, believing that he neither needs another’s advice, power, or company, nor owes the same to anyone else. Tocqueville identifies this phenomenon as “individualism,” the “disposition to isolate oneself” and retreat into the private and the present interest, “even to the point of abandoning
society at large” (482-83). Perceiving themselves to be “self-sufficient,” democratic citizens fall into “the habit of always considering themselves in isolation,” and so focus entirely on themselves (483-84). Although at first “a reflective and peaceable sentiment,” individualism eventually becomes selfishness, the “passionate and exaggerated love of self that brings man … to prefer himself to everything” (483). For Tocqueville, democracy thereby “constantly leads [the individual] back toward himself alone and threatens finally to confine him wholly in the solitude of his own heart” (484).

As democracy’s increasing equality of conditions removes barriers to material equality, it also erodes any hope of material contentment, further absorbing the individual in selfish sentiments. Without imposed limits of “rank, profession or birth,” the democratic citizen holds onto “the image of an ideal and always fugitive perfection” (427). The pursuit of material success becomes his continual preoccupation, as he “tends ceaselessly toward the immense greatness that he glimpses confusedly” (427). Tocqueville asserts that all Americans are “attached to the enjoyments of material life” and that “love of well-being has become the national and dominant taste” (507-08). Fearful of this materialistic self-absorption, he “reproach[es] equality…for absorbing [Americans] entirely in the search for permitted enjoyments” (509). Thus, left to himself, the American never stops pursuing the seemingly limitless opportunities of life to lift his gaze from his immediate situation and invest his time and energy in those around him.

The consequence of this disinterest in others bred by individualism is Toqueville’s greatest worry. Toward the conclusion of his work, he anxiously envisions “the kind of oppression with which democratic people are threatened” as a vast “crowd of like and equal men” absorbed by “procuring … small and vulgar pleasures” in which each “exists only in himself and for himself alone” (662-63). This despotism is pervasive and subtle, and all the more pernicious for it: the formerly democratic government “little by little steals the very use of free will from each citizen…it doesn’t tyrannize, it hinders, compromises, enervates…and finally reduces [the] nation to … nothing more than a herd of timid and industrious animals … [that] the government … shepherd[s]” (663). Such despotism diminishes the spirited self-reliance of the American to nothing and renders his elective democracy a sham. Individualism, allowed free reign, gives rise to a mindless obedience that is antithetical to the independent and willful rationality of American democracy. Thus, democracy, while denying man the hope of transcending his needs through adherence to supernatural or superhuman standards, may leave him a beast: if the democratic man submits to the tyranny of his own needs, he expresses his individuality at the expense of his humanity.

Tocqueville believes the free and local institutions of American democracy successfully combat this ruinous disinterest by involving the individual in public affairs. These institutions are so essential that he considers a “democracy without provincial institutions [to be without] guarantee against [the] evils” of despotism (91). According to Tocqueville, local institutions succeed in wrenching man from his miasmic self-absorption by enlightening him as to his true
self-interest. By engaging individuals in the consideration and management of community concerns, the township “interests them in the public good and makes them see the need they constantly have for one another in order to produce it” (487). Similarly, the jury, like a free “school” in political virtue, “combats individual selfishness” by placing a group of citizens “on the judge's bench,” and thereby “form[s] the judgment and … the natural enlightenment of the people” (260-262). Active participation in public affairs disabuses the democratic citizen of the “erroneous judgment” that leads to individualism: he recognizes the practical truths that “he is not as independent of [others] as he at first fancies.” The most rational course of action for the democratic citizen, therefore, is to serve the common good, even if he aims primarily to serve his self-interest (482, 486). The democratic man, more rational than intrinsically virtuous, “cooperate[s] for the general prosperity despite [his] vice or errors…produc[ing] good without having any thought of doing so” (224). By engaging the American’s will and enlightening his reason – rather than through altering his nature – the American doctrine of “self-interest well understood” successfully balances equality with freedom.

For Tocqueville, this remedy is the sole, practicable solution to the deleterious form of individualism that threatens democratic societies. Unlike heroic standards of virtue (500-01) or assertions of a divine right to rule (9), which ask man to deny or transcend his basic self-interest, this American remedy acknowledges that man prefers “standing still to marching without independence toward a goal of which he is ignorant” and laws he has “made and from which [he] profit[s]” to laws that are virtuous or “respectable” in themselves (87, 231). Entrenched in his own concerns, man “understands poorly the influence that the destiny of the state can exert on his lot” (87); since only a recognition of this influence will bring the democratic man to act in that greater interest, Tocqueville believes that “perhaps the only [means]…of interesting men in the fate of their native country is to make them participate in its government” (91). American democracy, then, abandons presumptions of higher virtue and duty, and instead turns to man’s individual will, rationality, and self-interest to craft a fully human society, fit for man as he is.

In his extensive survey, Tocqueville presents American democracy as a pragmatic and essentially human, civil framework, which “put[s] into relief the natural greatness of man” (5). American democracy rejects aristocratic standards of virtue and recognizes that man is neither superhuman nor divine; it sheds artificial hierarchies of rank and power and recognizes that every man, while only man, is fully a human. Thus, American democracy accepts man’s self-interest as it exercises and relies on that which is peculiarly, and excellently, human: reason and will. American democracy relinquishes the hope of the individual best, in order to rid society of the very real threat of the worst.

**Bibliography**

Professor Beverly Gage teaches courses on 20th-century U.S. history, focusing on terrorism, communism, anticommunism, American conservatism, and 20th-century American politics. Professor Gage was awarded the Sarai Ribicoff Award for the Encouragement of Teaching in 2009 and is currently writing a biography of former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Her first book, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror*, explored dissent and terrorism surrounding Wall Street in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With growing interest in 20th-century American political history, Professor Gage's scholarship has been in the spotlight, and the staff of the *Yale Historical Review* greatly appreciates her contributions to our publication.
My first question is about J. Edgar Hoover. He is one of those historical figures that still seems to be shrouded in mystery: he was a man with so much power and secrecy surrounding him. In your research of his life, in what ways did your perceptions of him change?

Well, he definitely had imperfections. He is someone who has been portrayed in a very one-dimensional way throughout history. He died in 1972 and most of what has come out since his death has been in the manner of exposé—finding out those things we never knew about when he was alive, or exposing him to the world for the nefarious man that he was. What I want to do with the book is really look at his very long career. He became head of the FBI in 1925 and he died in office in 1972, so he was there for 48 years. I'd like to look at that life, not in an effort to expose all the evil things he did, of which there are many I will write about, but in fact, to look in a more measured way at his influence as an architect of both the American state and the federal government. Hoover had an enormous influence on American political culture, largely a conservative influence. The idea is, on the one hand, to take him seriously as something more than a one-dimensional villain, and also to take advantage of all of the really great material that has come out within the last twenty years that has yet to be examined. He also had his fingers in almost every big case that came along in the 20th century, from Soviet espionage to Watergate, so there are all sorts of bits of information that are coming out now. I also found that I liked him better than I thought I would in terms of just getting to know him as a person. This is always the problem for biographers: what your personal relationship is with your subject in addition to your scholarly relationship. I've mostly been writing about him as a young man at this point, and I found that he could actually crack jokes and show affection, which aren't necessarily things you imagine J. Edgar Hoover doing.

How did you become interested in 20th Century American History?

I was an undergraduate at Yale. When I came to Yale, I originally thought I was going to be a musician. Like many, many Yale undergraduates before me, I abandoned everything I thought I was interested in and I seized on this new area of thought. In some ways, it was part of the intellectual awakening during college, and it was also material that I was interested in. Initially, I thought I would explore these kinds of issues through journalism, so I was a journalist for a few years after graduating and I had no plans to ever go back to school. As I was a journalist, I began to realize that I couldn’t really think about the present world without understanding a little bit more about the past, so I thought going to graduate school in history would make sense, and, here I am.

Historians often have to interpret original sources for an audience. From your own experience, what is the best way to tell a compelling story from the material without sacrificing historical accuracy?

Well, it is a challenge to write books that both speak to scholars and people who have a very detailed and sophisticated knowledge of your subject, and then also speak to a more general
audience who may or may not have a background in your subject. I think J. Edgar Hoover is often a household name, but he is not someone that people know a lot of factual information about. In terms of style, the book is a challenge, but J. Edgar Hoover, for me, is one of those figures who has that perfect intersection. He is well known enough that there is general public interest in him, yet he is also a figure who speaks to the kinds of questions that 20th century political historians are interested in: questions about the evolution of American conservatism in the 20th century and questions about the growth of the federal government in our understanding of the narrative of liberalism and conservatism. Americans have a tendency to think that the growth of the state is an inherently liberal-Left enterprise, and looking at Hoover tells you a very different story about that. It's a challenge but an exciting challenge.

Having been a Yale undergraduate and now working from the other side of the seminar table as a professor, how do you think the study of history has changed over the past 20 years? Are there certain new trends that are exciting or worrisome?

The first thing is that the twentieth century is now history, unlike when I started studying history in 1990. When I was at Yale, we were still at the tail end of the 20th century. The twenty year distance has opened up a lot of new topics and periods for study, including the seventies and eighties. Within the historical profession and the topics that historians are thinking about, when I began to study history in school, cultural and social history were at the forefront of the profession. In the 1970s and 80s, you had a shift away from writing about “presidents and elections” towards looking at grassroots movements and historically excluded groups like African-Americans and women. That transformed the historical profession. When I began to study history in a formal way that was still where a lot of people were doing their work. In the twenty years since then, we have seen something of a return to asking previous questions, without abandoning the new modern set of questions. We are asking questions about “power” and people who hold power, and there has been a resurgence of interest in political history. There has also been a great deal of interest in the history of conservatism. Today, it is a huge field in history.

You wrote a book on the 1920 bombing on Wall Street, do you think an understanding of that story can illuminate our current discussion on Occupy Wall Street? How can history shape the debate?

My first book was about the 1920 bombing on Wall St. which was a terrorist attack on September 16, 1920 that killed 38 people in the financial district and wounded several hundred, and 17 pages in the New York Times were devoted to it the next day. It was a big event, not only in New York history, but in national history. The book is about that event but it is also about the history of dissent against Wall Street in the late 19th century and early 20th century, some of which was expressed through violent acts, and some of which was expressed through much more conventional means from mass protest to political language. I think there are a couple of things that are interesting in terms of the present. The first is just noting that there has been this long
tradition of controversy about Wall Street in American politics, certainly since the mid 19th century. Actually, the period in which most of you came of age and in which Wall Street was celebrated is really kind of the anomalous period. This idea that there is something new in protesting Wall Street is actually only taking into account a 20 or 30-year history, since the rise of Ronald Reagan when Wall Street began to be celebrated. Also, within the context of the history of these debates, they have always been very multifarious, involving lots of different people with lots of different agendas who can come together around these questions of finance and Wall Street. The idea that “Wall Street protesters don’t know what they want”, which is the conventional media narrative, has been true of all of these movements in some sense, and in the past they have had a pretty dramatic influence on American politics.

What would you say to convince an undecided sophomore that history is the right major for them?

I think there are several reasons, both practical and intellectual. I’ll cover the intellectual benefits first. There is sometimes a perception that history is studying “facts about old stuff”, and people struggle to connect what’s going on in their own world to the study of history. I think it is actually much more useful to think of the study of history as a method for answering questions about the world around you. If you see a particular set of problems you are interested in, history is really a way of beginning to approach those problems. History is one of the most time-tested and humanly compelling ways to go about answering those questions. There are much tighter connections between present and past than maybe evident in our vision of history as a “bunch of names and dates”. In terms of the practical, the history major is one way to develop sets of skills you will use for the rest of your lives, particularly if you are going into politics, law, policy, activism or a whole range of future careers. You learn how to do serious research and to go beyond online databases how to go find out things about the world that nobody has ever discovered before. History is also very good at developing writing skills. We try to be systematic in the major about putting you through a process that is about craft and developing your writing. The senior essay is the culmination of that. If you look at what history majors ultimately have done, the Yale history major is a rather history major if you look at what history majors have done. They have become presidents, famous journalists, and policy makers, and it shows that history is a very substantive way for thinking about the world.
This paper examines the evolution of print advertisement of the Kotex sanitary napkin from 1921 to 1937. Launched by the Kimberly-Clark Company after the close of WWI, Kotex was the first publicly marketed feminine hygiene product. Jacqueline Sahlberg, a senior American Studies major, charts the challenges facing Kotex advertising executives at a time when women were gaining suffrage and newfound opportunities outside of the home while female menstruation was still a taboo subject. What is promoted by the ads and what remains tactfully unspoken reveals much about the tension between public scrutiny and private insecurity, Victorian social codes, Depression-era consumer fantasies and even American isolationism.
While the end of the First World War and the enactment of the 19th Amendment for women’s suffrage enabled American women to gain new forms of independence and enjoy greater societal freedoms, female menstruation remained a very taboo topic in the early 20th century. Following World War I, the Kimberly-Clark Company, which had made bandages and surgical dressings for soldiers during the war, created the disposable menstrual pad Kotex. This “breakthrough” product was difficult to market because of the cultural stigma against discussing menstruation. Four Kotex advertisements between 1921 and 1937 chart the Kimberly-Clark Company’s delicate handling of the taboo subject in popular media and the gradual destigmatization of the sanitary napkin. This sixteen-year evolution of advertisements demonstrates the ways in which the Kimberly-Clark Company addressed complicated culture and gender issues in its marketing of feminine hygiene products, and illuminates the larger role that the media has in changing cultural perceptions of medicine.

In the early 20th century, the Kimberly-Clark Company developed Cellucotton in response to the skyrocketing prices of cotton that resulted from emancipation of slaves during the American Civil War. The substitute product was found to be not only much cheaper than cotton, but also considerably more absorbent. The Kimberly-Clark Company began producing Cellucotton surgical dressings and marketing the new product to hospitals. The United States’ entry into World War I in 1917 created an unprecedented demand for surgical dressings, and Kimberly-Clark responded to this demand by selling their Cellucotton product to the US Army and the Red Cross. Following the war, the demand for surgical dressings fell drastically and the Kimberly-Clark Company was left with an abundance of wartime factories that could produce immense amounts of Cellucotton. To cope with the excess Cellucotton and production facilities, executives within the company decided to reconfigure their wartime factories for the peacetime commodities market by producing a new product, the women’s menstrual pad. During the war, female nurses had used Cellucotton surgical dressings as makeshift sanitary napkins. While Kimberly-Clark’s decision to produce a women’s menstrual pad was therefore logical, company executives understood the complicated and controversial nature of their choice. They named their new product Ko-tex for its cotton like structure, a name which allowed the innovative product to be marketed and sold discreetly without referencing the uncomfortable medical issue it addressed. Kimberly-Clark attributed the newly created Kotex product to the “Cellucotton Products Company” in order to protect its reputation; it would not print its name on Kotex boxes or advertisements until the 1950s. Following the trademarking of the name on September 21, 1920, the Kimberly-Clark Company entered unprecedented territory as they worked to create popular demand for a taboo product that could barely even be discussed.

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3 Heinrich and Batchelor, 50.
The first Kotex advertisement was printed in *Ladies Home Journal* in 1921. Like much of the early Kotex marketing campaign, the advertisement plays on themes of patriotism and scientific advancement following World War I, instead of addressing feminine hygiene. Almost half of the advertisement is dedicated to a black and white image of a female nurse attending to two injured male soldiers. The headline of the advertisement directly below the image reads “To Save Men’s Lives Science Discovered Kotex” and the emergent brand name Kotex is bolded, typed in larger font and printed on its own line. In consideration of the headline, the image portrays the role science plays in saving men’s lives rather than the product’s potential to improve women’s lives. Five paragraphs below the headline present the historical patriotic legend of the Cellucotton product. The rhetoric focuses on the uniting themes of patriotism and peace while eliding the controversial discussions of women’s menses. The first paragraph portrays Kimberly-Clark as an archetypal patriot in explaining how the company became involved in the war effort during World War I. The advertisement presents the product as the hero that “save[d] mens lives” during the war and as a product that will continue to be heroic by preserving “permanent peace-time.” The final lines of the paragraphs, printed in much smaller font, provoke the reader to take action by asking for “Kotex” at the drug store. But the nature of the Kotex product is never specified. The advertisement aims to market the Kotex sanitary pad to women, but the advertisement does not use the term “sanitary pad,” does not explain the “new use” of the product and does not explain for whom the product is intended. The only depiction of the new product is a small space in the lower right corner where an image of a Kotex box is printed. The box is quite plain, marked only on the end where the word Kotex is printed twice to form the shape of a cross—a marketing tactic used to establish Kotex as a medical product by visually associating the product with the Red Cross. In the first Kotex advertisement, the cultural taboo against discussing menstruation is clear: science and patriotism play a larger role than menstruation, as Kimberly-Clark works to discreetly market the product and establish the Kotex brand name.

To a modern observer, it may seem that advertising a “breakthrough” product with such extreme discretion would ultimately prohibit the product’s success. But in the face of such a strong cultural taboo, discretion may be exactly what allowed Kimberly-Clark to create a market for feminine hygiene products. While commercial menstruation products had been produced and available through mail-order catalogs since the mid-1880s, the products had fallen out of use by the turn of the century and homemade menstrual pads remained common practice. The companies that had attempted to sell menstrual pads in the 19th century did not endeavor to advertise their products outside of mail-order catalogs, and they quickly went out of business. Consequently, the Kimberly-Clark Company was forced to publicly and cautiously address the taboo about menstruation for the first time in order to sell its product outside the privacy of the

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4 Heinrich and Batchelor, 55.
5 Heinrich and Batchelor, 49.
personal mailbox. In order to avoid offending the American public and surely destroy any hopes of their product’s success, the Kimberly-Clark Company relied on advertisement placement and discreet, tactful rhetoric rather than exacting, specific description to sell their product. The company “enticed women consumers and drew attention to their products through advertisements in women’s magazines.” Kimberly-Clark did not have to directly address women in the inaugural advertisement: the demographics of *Ladies Home Journal* readership ensured that women knew Kotex was intended for feminine use. Tactful rhetoric also enabled the success of the marketing campaign. Much in the same way that 19th century Victorian novels implied sexual encounters through subtle details, the first Kotex advertisements relied on narrative clues to enable the marketing of feminine hygiene products. Directly explaining the product and its intended use was not only unnecessary, but may have even endangered the products success by offending a conservative American public. In explaining that the pads cannot become “uncomfortable” or “unsafe,” detailing that the product is available in “rest rooms” and describing the product as “anatomically correct,” the advertisement communicates menstruation

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without having to say the word. To the contemporary observer these clues may seem quite small, but to an early 20th century reader the little details and strategic placement of the advertisement would have ensured a popular understanding of the product and its intended use.

By the 1927 advertisement, Kimberly-Clark’s marketing strategy had evolved, but the concern for public discretion remained salient. The full-page color advertisement, entitled “This Ends the Worries of Old-Time Hygienic Methods,” is dominated by images of women and focuses heavily on the basic technical information of the product. Unlike the 1921 advertisement, the 1927 advertisement directly addresses women and explains the use of Kotex, using the term “sanitary pad” at least twice. An image of a beautiful, well-dressed woman who appears to be acting in a play or modeling the latest fashions in front of a large crowd emphasizes the modern woman’s connection to the Kotex product. With the social and political developments following World War I and the passage of the 19th Amendment, women in the 1920s began to explore newly found freedoms outside of the home. For example, women had entered the labor market in unprecedented numbers during World War I and many continued to work outside the home in the 1920s. The image of the modern woman demonstrated that Kotex enabled women to explore their newly found freedoms. Through the “technologies of menstrual hygiene” like Kotex, women “were not tethered to the bed for days in a row.” Rather, women were free to flaunt themselves in front of a full theater of people without worry that anyone would know of their menstruation. Kotex also liberated women from the constraints of household chores as the disposable product leaves women with “no laundry.” In the midst of the Roaring Twenties, the Kotex advertisements presented the menstrual pad as more than just a product of national and personal convenience: Kotex was necessary for women to achieve modernity.

The rhetoric of the 1927 advertisement relies on science to establish demand for the product. In the early 20th century, marketers associated women’s hygiene products with science and medicine in advertisements to convince women that the products reliability offered great “security and peace of mind.” Following the extensive death tolls realized by World War I and the number of social changes Americans felt, insecurity was a common sentiment of the 1920s. Late-1920s Kotex advertisements address this insecurity by using science and technical details to establish demand for Kotex. The advertisement reads like a technical pamphlet presenting statistics in numbered bullet-points, such as the fact that “Kotex is five times as absorbent as cotton.” The advertisement capitalizes on women’s insecurity in stating that Kotex is “scientific protection in the full sense of the term,” replacing the “hazards and uncertainties” of previous methods. The bold headline at the top proclaims that Kotex “Ends the Worries” of menstruation by providing “absolute protection.” While the Kimberly-Clark Company had made significant progress in beginning to break down the stigma against women’s menstruation between the 1921

Vostral, 61
advertisement and the 1927 advertisement, the cultural taboo persisted, and Kimberly-Clark remained hesitant to associate its name with the feminine hygiene products. Instead, the company enlisted registered nurse Ellen J. Buckland, a scientific and medical authority, to endorse and thereby validate the product. Buckland’s endorsement is common in late 1920s Kotex advertisements. By relying on the upstanding reputation of medical professionals, appealing to a sense of female solidarity and addressing women’s need for greater security, the advertisement implicitly instructs women to follow the accomplished Buckland’s lead and use Kotex. By 1927, the Kimberly-Clark Company had made enough progress in establishing the Kotex brand that they could focus more on creating popular demand for a product of protection by settling women’s worries with scientific and medical evidence.

Despite addressing women’s insecurities, the advertisement still reflects the uncertain nature of the companies efforts to de-stigmatizing feminine hygiene products. Just like the 1921 advertisement, the 1927 advertisement was printed in magazines like Good Housekeeping and Ladies Home Journal where the readers’ demographic allowed for a more open discussion of menstruation than could have been printed in a publication with a mixed-gender audience. In the 1920s, the cultural taboo about women’s menstruation was so strong that “most retailers initially refused to stock the product” and when they did Kotex was often kept behind the counter or in the back storeroom. This forced women to ask salesclerks, often males, for a box of menstrual pads. Even though the 1927 advertisement was printed in magazines that catered to women, it discourages consumers from asking directly for menstrual products and instead proposes that women ask for Kotex “by name.” The Kotex campaigns of the 1920s were designed to relieve women’s worries and encouraged female consumers to ask sales clerks “for sanitary napkins by demanding the neutral sounding name Kotex” without having to utter the “dreaded term”: menstruation. Thus, while both the 1920 and the 1927 advertisements capitalize on the newly found freedoms of the modern woman by empowering female consumers to take charge of their personal hygiene outside of the privacy of their home, they still reflected the need for public discretion regarding menstruation. While the Kimberly-Clark Company was realizing commercial success with Kotex, the continued tactful advertisement placement and cautious instructions for women purchasing the product emphasize that discretion in marketing and transactions remained a primary concern in the late 1920s.

Kimberly-Clark’s success in weakening the stigma against public mention of menstruation in the 1920s allowed it to pursue more mainstream and direct marketing techniques in the 1930s. In the advertisements of 1930s, the company transitioned away from extremely veiled marketing towards bolder advertisements that openly discuss the uses of the Kotex product and display ever more confident modern women. The technical jargon and scientific statistics prominent in the 1920s marketing campaign are noticeably absent in the 1930s

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9 Heinrich and Batchelor, 50.
10 Heinrich and Batchelor, 49.
advertisements. The advertisements target the female audience through ad copy, not just placement. But the stock market crash of 1929 presented additional challenges as the Kimberly-Clark Company worked to sell their product to increasingly frugal customers. Advertisements in the 1930s worked to “make spending fashionable again” by presenting “reassuring visions” of the American lifestyle.  

Rather than focusing on economic realities of the Great Depression, the Kotex advertisements of the 1930s show prosperous lifestyles that every woman could aspire to achieve. Building off the successful use of images of modern women in the late 1920s, the 1930s advertisements embed Kotex as part of the successful woman’s lifestyle. As the early 20th century feminist movement loosened women’s dress codes and introduced women to new activities such as athletics, convenience and utility became more important in women’s daily lives. Through advertising, the Kimberly-Clark Company positioned Kotex as a product of convenience and utility for the ideal modern woman.

The 1934 advertisement is dominated by images of three women: an athletic woman playing tennis in new-fashioned short-shorts, a business woman working a modern job at a typewriter, and a woman dressed in a sexy, possibly racy, modern formal gown. The advertisement portrays the three women as archetypes of the new modern girl and implies that the reader too can become a “carefree, successful” modern girl simply by purchasing Kotex because, after all, “Kotex is changing women’s lives!” The captions under the images also suggest that Kotex can empower women, making all aspects of life easier; the athletic woman is not just playing tennis, she is winning. The caption below the working woman states that “Business hours aren’t hard,” a likely stand-in for “Menstrual cycles aren’t hard,” implying that Kotex can even make her job easier. In the Kotex advertisements of the 1930s, women are noticeably portrayed outside of their traditional roles within the domestic sphere. Kotex advertisements were unique in women’s magazines in that they “never showed pictures of women doing housework” and sold a product that “helped women live outside the home.”

By focusing on the role Kotex plays in the life of successful modern women, the Kimberly-Clark Company ensured that their product would remain relevant in the face of the Great Depression. These advertisements not only feature the modern woman, but also the upper class woman who can afford to spend leisure time playing tennis and to buy a beautiful gown. Kimberly-Clark had been successful in establishing demand for sanitary pads in the 1920s through scientific advances and now turned to advertising Kotex in the 1930s as part of a lifestyle of luxury to which all women aspire. Kotex is not only presented as a way to become a modern woman, but as a direct catalyst for social mobility in the face of the Great Depression. The message of the images is deliberate: buy Kotex and become the rich, socially mobile woman of high social status that every girl strives to be.

The impact of the Great Depression on 1930s Kotex advertisements can also be seen in the rising aim to settle women’s worries and provide increased safety. Following the First World War, America reverted back to its pre-war isolationist policies. The common sentiment was that the American way was the only way and that anything non-American threatened the freedoms for which our soldiers had fought and died in the war. This isolationist policy was reflected across society. For example, the Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles which included Wilson’s League of Nations, because it threatened American self-determination and isolation. Fear of external danger was the primary driving factor behind the extreme isolationist policy. While this fear was reflected marginally in the 1920s Kotex advertisements that aimed to pacify women’s anxieties over their menstruation, the isolationist sentiment and hope for greater security...
“intensified” in the 1930s following the Great Depression. Whereas Kotex advertisements of the 1920s used patriotism to establish the Kotex brand name and hide their marketing of feminine hygiene products, the advertisements of the 1930s use patriotism to bill Kotex as the “American way to menstruate.” For example, a 1934 advertisement (not printed here) capitalizes on these widespread feelings of vulnerability to foreign determinations and economic instability by warning consumers against choosing other brands and suggesting that Kotex “gives greater safety” than any other sanitary pad. Much as was the case in the first Kotex advertisement, the product is presented as the American hero that can “save” women in “delicate situations.”

Rather than focusing on directly addressing the instability Americans felt during the 1930s, the late 1930s Kotex advertisements portray idealistic images of the lifestyle women could hope to achieve through American patriotism. The 1937 advertisement exemplifies they ways in which Kotex was poised as the American brand. The advertisement entitled “Wondersoft Kotex Meets The Comfort Demands of Modern Women” is composed of an image of two women gossiping under an umbrella with a third woman in the background. One is seated comfortably in a chair, dressed in the seemingly the latest fashions while the other women is confidently standing in modern athletic apparel, including short-shorts, with a tennis racket under her hand. While most of the advertisement is printed in black and white, the large umbrella that dominates the advertisement is printed in patriotic red, white and blue. The umbrella suggests an image of the American flag and celebrates the American way. The women are all dressed in white, a color that cannot be worn during menstruation unless a woman is 100% confident that her menstrual pad provides certain protection. Scientific statistics are again noticeably absent from the 1937 advertisement. Similar to the 1934 advertisement that portrayed modern women, the 1937 advertisement presents women who are participating in the newly available opportunities including athletics, progressive fashion, and wearing white during menstruation. These opportunities are presented as the American way: insecurity and instability are not worries for the women portrayed, and the image implies that these worries don’t have to be part of women’s lives. With Kotex, ideals of American modernity and protection are attainable.

These four Kotex advertisements were part of an “unprecedented marketing campaign that broke cultural norms about menstrual hygiene and helped define new ones.” Kimberly-Clark’s advertisements constituted the first real public acknowledgement of menstruation. Through the advertising campaign, the company was incredibly successful in making a peacetime product of wartime excess and in creating demand for Kotex and a feminine hygiene industry. By 1928, the Kimberly-Clark Company had cornered more than 75% of the sanitary pad market.16

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13 Lears, 124.
14 Strasser, 169.
15 Heinrich and Batchelor, 40.
16 Vostral, 74.
This success led to product diversification in the 1930s when the company began advertising two other sanitary pads in addition to the original. The sixteen-year evolution of the Kimberly-Clark marketing campaign illustrated through these four particular Kotex advertisements demonstrates how the company addressed the complex socio-medical issues around menstruation in the face of strong social taboos in order to change cultural perceptions and de-stigmatize feminine hygiene. However, despite the success, “menstruation in the 1930s was, as it is today, a subject for concealment.”\(^\text{17}\) While the Kimberly-Clark Company made significant progress in de-stigmatizing feminine hygiene in the 20th century, we still live in an era in which publicly discussing menstruation remains taboo.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Delaney, 130.

\(^{18}\) The 21st century taboo is still so pervasive that I hesitated in submitting this paper for publication in a journal that caters to a mixed-gender audience.
Bibliography

Books


Advertisements


In "Bred From Nobler Stock," Mark Goldberg, a student at the University of Virginia, showcases the major significance of foreigners in shaping the West’s most iconic and enduring image: the cowboy. Part adventurer, part businessman, each investor sought to tap into the United States’ seemingly endless grass oceans to raise beef for the exploding industrial working population of late 19th-century Britain. Using period travel journals, corporate records, legal documents, and diaries along with secondary sources, this paper reveals the profound and often ignored footprint left in the Old West by British citizens.
In the summer of 1877 I found myself, like many a better man in England, ‘out of a job’…

- Reginald Aldridge

No image in America’s symbolic library has persisted for as long and as vividly as the cowboy. Lone adventurers, equipped with six-shooters and steeds against hostile men and cruel Nature, traveling the vast open spaces of the American West, cowboys speak to the American character’s innermost yearnings for freedom, independence, and hard work. They traveled dusty alkali trails searching for a saloon where they could kick up their spurs and down a drink. They paid for their whiskey, their bullets, and their saddles from wages given to them in exchange for their labor and expertise driving cattle from pastures to railroad depots. To a greater degree than the common cowboy myth acknowledges, those wages often came from foreign bank accounts and a great number of the managers who paid those dusty, tired cowboys spoke the King’s English. British investors made a tremendous impact on open range cattle ranching between 1870 and 1890, especially in the unfenced prairie country around the Missouri and Powder Rivers on the northern Great Plains. The transplanted Britons who came West brought prodigious capital reserves, Old World management styles, and an alien corporate culture to the open range. They came to a nascent, underdeveloped industry and imposed massive changes on its physical, legal, and corporate landscapes, before flaring out by 1890. They cemented the West’s role in an emerging global economy by linking their ranches to the British imperial trade system, importing meat to England in astronomical quantities. They accelerated already existing business trends such as consolidation, legal protections for business, and fencing in the range; they provided the credit and capital the range needed to kick-start ranching’s development. Their failures and successes, traceable to English or Scottish experiences, tell a valuable, frequently overlooked story about the relation of corporate structure to profitability in foreign countries, the development of industry in the American West, its place in a worldwide economy, and the forces propelling those iconic cowboys along cattle trails.

The wide-open spaces in the prairie country amazed the region’s earliest British visitors. Reginald Aldridge, a young Englishman, traveled to the region in the early 1870s to try his fortune in the cattle industry. He recorded his experiences in a memoir, Life on a Ranch. As one of the first Englishmen to visit the region as a potential investor, he referred to the states of the far West as a “terra incognita.” Coming from the crowded spaces of industrial Britain, he was shocked by Kansas, where “no sign of life would be visible,” where there was “nothing but brown prairie on every side.” Life on a Ranch presented more than an interesting travelogue; Aldridge wrote it to provide investment advice and guidance to readers back in the British Isles.

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2 Ibid., 3
3 Ibid., 6
4 Ibid.
hoping to follow his tracks into Big Sky Country. Throughout the book, Aldridge peppered his adventures with businesslike facts and summaries, including recommendations regarding where to start a good company. Aldridge advocated ranching on the open range, a massive unfenced territory stretching through parts of modern-day Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and the Dakotas. Existing as public domain land, which the federal government never sold, the open range beckoned herders into countless acres filled with free grass ready to be grazed. A businessman only needed to buy the cattle and ship them down a railroad in the spring; nature would fatten them for free on self-growing hay. In Europe, the beef industry required far more investment; no huge swaths of open range existed, so cattlemen had to pay for the land on which their cattle grazed.

Aldridge compared the Southern range in Kansas and the Indian Territory to the Northern one in Montana in terms of cattle, not merely as a traveler’s appreciation for scenery and native customs. Simply, cows calved more frequently in the south and herds survived the milder winters better, but the in the north, steers grew bigger on richer pasture, which translated into more beef on the hoof. More beef on the hoof meant more money, and better advertised the West as a financial opportunity to Aldridge’s readers back home in Great Britain.

Aldridge portrayed more than just big steer and bigger profits. He wrote frankly and informatively about the ranching industry’s development, its hardships, and its challenges to growth. The state and practices of the industry provided valuable context for his readers because American open-range ranching was so different from British cattle-raising on small, enclosed farms. For example, the institution of the roundup existed only in America. Twice a year, all the cattle in the unfenced public-domain land that supported grazing were herded together for branding newborn calves and shipping cattle eastward. Unfortunately, any number of factors - cattle thieves, Indians, or particularly harsh winters - could shrink the herd’s size between roundups. In Aldridge’s earliest years on the range, even simple carelessness resulted in massive losses. After riding away to dine at a nearby farmhouse, Aldridge returned to the creek where he left his herd, only to find a shocking absence of cattle: The herd had simply wandered away, and required days of effort to recover. For British businessmen who were used to investing their capital in physical property, such as factories or railroads, herds represented an alien challenge: vulnerable capital assets that could vanish without warning. As such, cattle was a far less stable investment in the United States than in Britain, where fences and clearly defined property lines kept steer in one place. Without these niceties, the open range forced British businessmen to adapt their strategies. Accounts like Aldridge’s helped educate subsequent investors about how to cope with such deceivingly obvious challenges, which required different business plans to

5 Ibid., 211
7 Ibid., 69
8 Aldridge, Life on A Ranch, 43
In fact, the herds’ mobility evolved into a critically appealing characteristic. An English owner could not dig up a Cornwall mine and move it to Manchester when the miners exhausted the coal seam. Ranchers did precisely that. When Aldridge’s cattle had grazed all the best grass, he drove his cash-on-the-hoof to better pastures. Overgrazing was only one environmental pressure that herd mobility effectively outran. Aldridge admitted that his “departure was hastened by a prairie fire.” He attributed most prairie fires on the open range to human carelessness, including one episode when a rival rancher intentionally set a swath of prairie on fire to drive Aldridge’s herd away from his prime grazing land. Fires killed cattle, and also caused stampedes, a problem utterly unknown in England. English cattle farmers, with limited space and limited land on which to raise their cattle, never experienced the mortal danger of rampaging by a thousand charging animals. For all these reasons—raids and wandering cattle, environmental threats and opportunities, stampedes, and the wily men who supervised these herds—American open range ranching was radically different from any British conception of the livestock industry. The British also had no idea about the tricks of the open range trade, such as singing to the herd at night to prevent a stampede, giving Native American chiefs a few free steers to prevent raiding parties from stealing more, or looking out for muddy water holes in which cattle could drown.

The cowboys investors hired to solve these uniquely Western problems were paid $20-$40 a month, depending on seniority and experience. Cowboys were a more finicky breed of employee than British proletarians; seasonal ranching work empowered cowboys to migrate all over the range when they felt their demands were not met, even keeping the herds to themselves as collateral for unpaid wages (although British litigants eventually ended this practice).

More conventional business practices also changed with the Atlantic crossing. The typical corporate organization for a British ranching company included a board of directors in Britain, who appointed managers (usually the visionary founder of the company) to go to America. Once there, the manager would use the firm’s capital to purchase cattle, hire the cowboys who rode the range, and attend to legal matters. Since the vast distance caused slowed communication, managers were given a good deal of discretionary power so they could act in a crisis if reaching the board in London or Edinburgh would take too long. The managers’ discretionary power

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9 Ibid., 53
10 Ibid., 53
11 Ibid., 54
12 Ibid., 80
13 Ibid., 62
14 Ibid., 132
15 Ibid., 78
16 Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West*, 74
resulted in experimental techniques and an intensively hands-on management style, but it frequently prompted clashes when corporate boards tried to restrict some of the managers’ power. For example, herd sizes were tracked in famously inaccurate “book counts,” which noted how many calves were branded after each roundup. In book counts, cowboys visually sized up the steers that walked passed them bearing their employer’s brand, and those were only the animals that they had been able to find roaming the open range after months. Such practices were wildly inefficient, as usually, only about half of the herd could be found near where they had been released, and so the book count became a subject of major contention between the on-site British managers in the West and their strict, profit-hungry boards of directors in Europe. Still, the book count’s inefficiency barely disturbed the soaring profits beef companies enjoyed once the cattlemen discovered a way to transport meat across the Atlantic Ocean.

Refrigeration technology aboard the steamers that carried the first large-scale commercial fresh meat cargo from the USA to England in the mid-1870s catalyzed the explosion in the British home market demand for American beef. The high demand resulting from refrigerated shipping technology combined with the low operational costs of sustaining a herd on the open range grass generated the massive profits that British investors experienced throughout the decade. Outside of shipping, English investors experimented with “American” frozen storage techniques in London, using underground tunnels along the River Thames’s to funnel wind across blocks of ice and meat. Indeed, “Acklon’s refrigerating waggon [sic]” could move four tons of meat straight from the ship to these tunnels. The wagon’s felt walls kept the internal temperature at around forty-five degrees through evaporation. Such technological advancements in refrigeration techniques helped importers handle the quantity of American meat arriving in port before it thawed. Refrigeration also streamlined processing, cutting costs enough to make selling American meat commercially viable.

Experiments with refrigerated meat presaged the commercial revolution that followed. An Edinburgh newspaper dispatched reporter James MacDonald to research the meat industry in the American West. He was to determine whether American meat would be suitable for British consumption, and what effect, if any, American ranching would have on British beef-raising. Uncovering an approaching sea change, he published his findings in the book *Food from the Far West*. MacDonald argued that the late 1870s were the most important time for British agriculture since the repeal of the Corn Laws, because refrigeration technology meant that Americans could now ship meat the same way they shipped their vast supplies of surplus grain. By 1878, one

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18 Ibid., 68
20 Woods, *British Gentlemen in the Wild West*, 28
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
thousand tons of beef and mutton (both cured and frozen) arrived weekly in Great Britain\(^{25}\) from seven registered New York City export firms specializing in US-grown beef.\(^{26}\) These firms handled a massive business: each week that year, they shipped a combined 10,500 quarters\(^{27}\) of beef (each weighing two hundred pounds) -- a 600 percent increase over shipments in 1876\(^{28}\).

This uptick in demand manifested in previously unheard-of profits for businessmen in London. In 1883, the British-owned Prairie Cattle Company had a 20.5 percent dividend, followed by a 10 percent dividend in 1884 and 1885\(^{29}\); expected returns generally ranged from thirty to fifty percent annually.\(^{30}\) In 1882, a Royal Commission led by the Duke of Richmond, Lennox, and Gordon revealed that capital investment in American ranching in the previous decade averaged 33 percent each year\(^{31}\). Aldridge’s account supports their results; he broke even after a year of being in business.\(^{32}\) He predicted even more growth because the human population of the United States was increasing faster than the population of cattle, an imbalance that seemed likely to create higher demand for his well-bred steer.\(^{33}\) Projections like Aldridge’s and the profits they promised encouraged investors to put huge amounts of resources into the West. Moreton Frewen, the English founder and operator of the Powder River Cattle Company in Montana, “compared his range to the size of Ireland,”\(^{34}\) and the Scottish Prairie Company controlled more than five million acres\(^{35}\).

American beef looked like a godsend to industrializing Britain, which direly needed a protein source to feed its industrial armies. Open range herding had inherent economies of scale that small-scale traditional ranches could not match. Ranchers from the United States outsold English and Scottish cowmen in the British market, as price decreased due to the massive supply of frozen imports; lower prices increased consumption, creating a self-sustaining loop. In fact, American meat greatly benefited the lower classes. Refrigeration technology equalized prices throughout the seasons, keeping lower winter costs year-round,\(^{36}\) since meat distributors could now retain inventory through the summer without concern over spoilage. This phenomenon distressed the British livestock industry, prompting MacDonald to predict that, “Should the American beef importations bring down the price of British beef to the extent of 15 or 20 per cent…in all probability, large numbers of Scotch, English and Irish farmers, especially the

\(^{25}\) Ibid., xii
\(^{26}\) Ibid., 4
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 6
\(^{28}\) Ibid., xii
\(^{29}\) Woods, British Gentlemen in the Wild West, 7.
\(^{30}\) Ibid., 3
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 53
\(^{32}\) Aldridge, Life on a Ranch, 102.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 209.
\(^{34}\) Woods, British Gentlemen in the Wild West, 3.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 103
former, will emigrate to America.”

With respect to capital investment, MacDonald’s prediction came true. As the 1870s progressed, British citizens watched Americans out-compete their own companies and decided to liquidate their holdings in the Kingdom and re-invest that money in the West. Between 1879 and 1900, thirty seven cattle companies with a total capitalization of $34 million were organized in London to operate abroad, and by 1900, 85 percent of the beef eaten in Britain originated in America. Cementing the West’s place in the global economy, British investment, which “excited much more interest among the farmers of the Union than in its large cities and towns,” linked the West’s tremendous resource base with in-depth market knowledge about the tidal wave of demand surging through nineteenth-century Britain. After the foreigners arrived, economic fortunes in the Dakotas and Montana linked up with prices in Liverpool and London. Aldridge’s account provides numerous examples of how personal relationships between ranchers and importers reassured each party and shored up business deals. Without the inroads provided by British investors, American cattle companies would not have been able to crack into the British market to the extent that they did.

The men who formed these relationships were English and Scottish businessmen, who played the leading role in the narrative about British investment in the American cattle industry. Their personalities, backgrounds, management styles, and corporate visions explain a great deal about their corporations’ subsequent successes and failures. Capitalists and managers are not, after all, faceless historical actors, but individuals with vibrantly colorful personal histories that illustrate the trials and tribulations faced by foreign investors. In the end, these personal histories partially highlight why English open range ranches normally folded, while Scottish companies thrived, as they do to the present day.

The Englishmen, almost universally, issued from noble stock. Many were “second sons” of aristocratic families, deprived by traditions of primogeniture from a decent patrimony, or right to the family title. Aldridge’s account reveals the demographic base for foreign investment emanating from Britain. Hoping to attract more money to the region and industry in which he had already blazed a path, Aldridge wrote to the upper class.

Even though he was not an enormously wealthy capitalist or a nobleman, Aldridge routinely described his adventures on the range in upper-class British terms and habits so that others with more money felt comfortable trying to make a start in the unfamiliar territory. For example, he feared Cheyenne Indians finding him “poaching on their preserves,” describing creekside cottonwood beds with a highly specialized feudal term for private property. No one in the American West, least of all Native Americans, used terms like “poaching preserves.”

37 Woods, British Gentlemen in the Wild West, 4.
38 Ibid., 93
39 MacDonald, Food From the Far West, 9
40 Aldridge, Life on A Ranch, 164.
routinely romanticized his adventures across the range, underscoring camaraderie and danger living among cowboys. He shared a paradoxical episode when he sang from *Pirates of Penzance* around an open range campfire with roughshod American cowboys. He wrote that, “A revolver is by no means a necessity nowadays, but a good many cowboys still carry them,” playing directly into the stereotypes of the West held by noble sons. These wealthy young men had access to the money that could grow the industry, and Aldridge knew ranching needed cash. He had found, he wrote, that having “a [business] partner without capital was an unnecessary luxury.”

The most renowned English open range ranchers fit this young, disenfranchised, “second son” noble persona, including the adventurous Moreton Frewen. Aldridge was a commoner and a free-wheeling businessman who came to America in search of employment. The aristocrat Moreton Frewen had no need for the money Aldridge chased; he wanted a nobleman’s glory, and the prestige that came with it back in London. He and the other young men who founded ranches in Montana and Colorado attended Eton, or other high-profile schools, where they were instilled with the principles of ideal British leadership: discipline, restraint, and order, as well as a mandate for personal greatness. Later, this training affected their business style, as they strove for great accomplishments, characteristically experimenting with new business ideas. In less than ten years on the range, Frewen attempted a natural refrigeration scheme to freeze meat at the source, and moved his Powder River Cattle Company herd to Canada to take advantage of duty-free exportation to Britain, or to Lake Michigan, for easier shipping.

These aristocratic cowboys also hoped to cultivate a noble, Eton-bred atmosphere on the prairie by investing, as Moreton Frewen did, in elaborate hunting lodges for entertainment, hundreds of miles from the nearest railroad spur. Their education and high-born backgrounds also explain why these capitalists nearly always chose to organize their companies in London, rather than in New York or Chicago, which would have been more convenient legally: they saw their enterprises as quintessentially British, and being traded on the London stock exchange meant acclaim by London society when their companies earned large profits. By contrast, Aldridge (a commoner) failed to register his corporation legally in any venue until several years after starting his ranch, and never mentioned anything about going to London to do so.

In addition to their shared educational and social backgrounds, all the major British open range ranch owners had access to tremendous pools of capital. Aldridge recommended bringing ten to twenty thousand pounds for start-up money. Most investors took far, far more with them.

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41 Ibid., 159.
42 Ibid., 224.
43 Ibid., 82.
45 Ibid., 32.
46 Ibid., 39.
47 Wilkins 279.
to the range. Herbert Plunkett, an Irish “second son,” founded his Frontier Land and Cattle Company with $1.5 million.\textsuperscript{49} And the original capitalization of the British-owned Swan, Frank, & Anthony Cattle Company was $3 million.\textsuperscript{50}

The ranchers’ common backgrounds also provided ranch managers with large networks of wealthy and powerful former classmates once they started businesses. Significantly, they also leveraged their status into securing Members of Parliament or Lords to run their companies. For example, the Duke of Manchester chaired the Powder River Cattle Company’s board of directors. The Earls of Airlie, Aylesford, and Dunmore, among dozens of other nobles, also put money into range cattle.\textsuperscript{51} In one well-publicized story, Oliver Wallop, a prominent Wyoming cattleman with the Big Horn Cattle Company, renounced his British citizenship to purchase land in America, only to reclaim that citizenship to assume a new position as the Eighth Earl of Portsmouth.\textsuperscript{52}

Well-bred leaders lent their prestige to the corporations they headed, attracting investment even beyond what their own noble pockets held. The joint stock companies organized in London and Edinburgh traded on public stock markets, and everyday citizens followed the nobility’s investment choice. Once taken public, the companies ran on funds from small businessmen, pensioners, widows, and other small investors. So not only was this ranching connection in the interest of a few wealthy Scottish bankers or English nobles, it also benefitted a democratized shareholder base., highlighting the American cattle industry’s integral position in the global economy.

English ranches shared a strict management style, run by distant boards of directors who knew little about actual range conditions. English investors had prior business experience largely in running urban industrial enterprises, where factory procedures could be timed to the second for efficiency. That management style translated poorly to the prairie-fire, cattle-rustler West, where uncertainty was a fact of life. For English nobles who had never seen the Missouri River, financial losses due to screw-fly plagues,\textsuperscript{53} or drought,\textsuperscript{54} looked like lazy managers planning poorly, rather than inherent business risks. Strict factory style procedures, such as harsh inspection visits and fanatical attention to documentation,\textsuperscript{55} which were characteristic of English ranches, could not work on ranches that spanned thousands of acres.

The ranches’ sheer size and geography made any conceptions directors held about English “farms” irrelevant. Smaller land parcels in England historically precluded the need for distance-management techniques, a shortfall that became more and more obvious as time

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 78.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 107.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Brayer, \textit{The Influence of British Capital}, 92.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Aldridge, \textit{Life on A Ranch}, 191.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 135.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 129.
\end{itemize}
progressed. Most English companies’ lack of industry-specific experience in ranching compounded the problem.\textsuperscript{56} Transatlantic distance prevented boards of directors from reacting quickly to crises on their ranches, so they increased the amount of power they delegated to their agents in America. With so much local control, however, ranch foremen and managers chafed when the boards actually tried to force them to do follow a corporate order. Tensions frequently exploded between the foremen and London when the English corporate officers mandated strict production targets, or cutting costs during severe winters.

The London-based boards could not be faulted entirely for their failings in American corporate culture. Their employees, British born ranch managers, such as Moreton Frewen, operated in an unfamiliar business environment. The American business style relied on minimally formal arrangements, especially in the freewheeling conditions on the American range. Aldridge built his herd up to six hundred head through oral contracts and social run-ins at hotel lobbies, farmhouses, and hunting trips.\textsuperscript{57} To guide potential investors, Aldridge advised not to invest immediately,\textsuperscript{58} but rather to travel the countryside making contacts, eventually forming a partnership, as he had done, with an American “supplying the experience and I [Aldridge] the capital”.\textsuperscript{59} Unfortunately, Britons abroad had a terrible reputation for naïveté and wealth. Paul De Rosiers, a French commentator traveling the open range, visited a ranch with a crumbling house, about which the American owner remarked,

\begin{quote}
I must sell it to an Englishman...It is an expression in this country. When we wish to get rid of some encumbrance at a high priced [sic] we cannot count on getting it from Americans, who are too practical and too primitive in their ways of working to risk it; but a young Englishman, newly landed, is inexperienced and has money in his pocket, and will easily believe in the utility of such a thing as he is used to a complicated and advanced agriculture in Europe.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

The casual deals made by ranch managers, especially when frequently cheated by shrewd Americans, understandably frustrated professional industrialists and noblemen, such as the Duke of Manchester, chairing boards back in London. They reacted with unrealistic mandates to preserve English business protocol. Board chairmen tried to demand that ranch hands actually count every animal in a herd, a practice that showed how little the boards understood their labor constraints, since no ranch had enough cowboys to waste days counting thousands of steer.

Experimentation provided one way for distant English boards to compensate for their failings. Foreign owners constantly searched for new and better technology and procedures. When combined with the wide powers delegated to American-based foremen, a pro-innovation atmosphere created many new management techniques. For his Powder River Cattle Company,\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{footnotes}
\item Wilkins, \textit{The Free Standing Company}, 278.
\item Aldridge, \textit{Life on A Ranch}, 51.
\item Ibid., 219.
\item Ibid., 31.
\item Paul de Rosiers, \textit{American Life} (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1892), 42.
\end{footnotes}
for example, Moreton Frewen tried driving range cattle to Lake Superior, where they could be fed easily with Iowan or Nebraskan corn and then shipped to the ocean, and on to the United Kingdom. Only a British-owned company could do that, since the corporation needed blue-blood credentials to circumvent Parliamentary regulations on dead meat importation. Great Britain’s imperial economy protected her citizens abroad, and by shipping through the Dominion of Canada Frewen avoided high tariffs for importing meat to Liverpool. Frewen also attempted other forms of vertical integration, including farming winter feed on his ranch to minimize losses to the cold. He tried using mountaintop winds to create natural refrigeration facilities for freshly slaughtered meat, so he could accumulate a stockpile and release meat to the market year-round to avoid railroads gouging him on the shipping rates twice a year after roundups. Unfortunately, the English companies’ experiments frequently lost money and served little positive benefit.

Nearly all English range cattle companies had one final similarity: they were organized as free-standing companies. The biggest ranches, such as Frewen’s Powder River Cattle Co., the Big Horn Cattle Co., Prairie Cattle Co., Rocking Chair Ranch, XIT Ranch, and Frontier Land & Cattle Co., all formed in London as independent companies to conduct overseas operations, without operational links to any preexisting corporations. By contrast, their American contemporaries usually established overseas offices for the corporations they managed in the United States. The choice to establish free-standing companies meant that British foreign investors could coordinate a great deal of economic activity in a region abroad by serving on boards of directors for companies in multiple industries. They formed loose connections between each free-standing joint stock company, creating a many-armed (but legally separate) force by forming one company for ranching, one for shipping, and a third to provide the other two with financial services.

Capitalist Andrew Whitton served on the boards of three Scottish mortgage companies and two ranching companies, all operating in the American West. While this method facilitated industry-specific decision making, it meant that if the capitalists failed in one industry (for instance, open range cattle ranching), there was no financial backstop to lean against if the company took a hit. Free-standing companies fostered a high-risk, high-return strategy that

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62 Ibid., 205.
63 Ibid., 90.
64 Wilkins, *The Free Standing Company*, 261. A great deal of the figures and statistics on English companies in this section come from Mira Wilkins’ seminal article on the economic history of the free-standing company. British capitalists used this well-documented corporation type in their economic adventures around the world, from India to Africa, as a way to create private gains out of their Empire’s colonial possessions. The form’s flexibility and liquidity made it appealing even in the American West, which was outside Queen Victoria’s dominions.
65 Ibid., 266
66 Ibid., 269
67 W.G. Kerr, *Scottish Capital on the American Credit Frontier* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1976). Page 59. Kerr’s monograph provides an in-depth and extensively researched study of Scottish corporate strategy and analyzes figures from their balance sheets, many of which are reproduced here.
involved putting all the financial eggs in one basket. The winter of 1886-1887 pulled the bottom out of all those baskets.

Spurred by thirty to fifty percent annual returns, the range cattle industry over-expanded in the early 1880s, leading to widespread overgrazing on the open range by 1886, when a harsh winter killed tens of thousands of cattle. The Powder River Company’s herd, for one example, shrunk from 33,000 to 12,000 head that year, and the surviving animals roamed the streets of Cheyenne, Wyoming looking for anything green to eat. Without a home office to prop them up with profits from other domestic businesses, most of the English companies folded, and the adventurous, glory-seeking boys from Eton packed up and sailed home.

When the English left, the Scots stayed. In fact, not one Scottish mortgage company failed during the catastrophic 1886-1887 winter. From the beginning, the Scots approached the western ranching enterprise -- from ownership background to management style to business strategy -- from a radically different angle than the English, one more methodical than risky, and ultimately more sustainable. In 1879, a Royal Commission investigated the American range cattle industry. They found that Scottish companies actually purchased open range land, moving it out of the public domain, while English investors spent all their money on cattle and let the herds roam free. Scottish corporate boards based in Dundee or Edinburgh were composed not of nobles and men from Eton, but of wealthy merchants and bankers from diverse backgrounds, who decided to mortgage ranches instead of owning them outright. Many Scottish corporate officers had prior experience managing pastoral companies located in Australia. These men, such as Murdo MacKenzie, John Clay, and W.K. Bell, and their companies, such as the Texas Land & Mortgage Co., Ltd., and the Scottish American Investment Company, grew into giants on the open range.

The Scots’ sharp business senses and background in pastoral industry (both lacking in the English noblemen) led to a more hands-on management style. English ranches were managed sporadically, with control alternating between a broadly empowered foreman and the harsh sanctions coming from London. The corporate directors could not envision leaving London, where their wealth let them live comfortably. Scottish corporations refused to let absentee ownership stand in the way of success, and many Scots in higher management positions moved to the West. They saw with their own eyes, in ways the English did not, the troubling onset of

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69 Ibid., 168
70 Kerr, *Scottish Capital on the American Credit Frontier*, 195.
72 Kerr, *Scottish Capital on the American Credit Frontier*, 64.
74 Kerr, *Scottish Capital on the American Credit Frontier*, 51.
75 Ibid., 57.
overgrazing and decided to pre-empt the problem by changing their strategy.\textsuperscript{76} The Scots used the capital earned with ranching’s windfall profits to invest in more secure sectors in the West, ones not vulnerable to severe winters, or other weather issues. They invested in the land itself, using their banking know-how to provide the underdeveloped West with a valuable source of credit.

These English and Scottish strangers on the open range left an indelible impression on the West’s history and institutions. Current historiography exploring British investments in the open-range cattle industry highlights various change wrought by the investors, but fails to provide a holistic account. The seminal pieces of history in the field are case studies and biographies of men’s lives, such as Lawrence Woods’ excellent retelling of the life and times of Moreton Frewen, the archetypal gentleman rancher, in \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}. Even in more thematic accounts, such as James Kerr’s \textit{Scottish Capital on the American Credit Frontier}, historians focus on the men who made the industry, rather than on how the industry remade the West. Valuable for their data, many works like Woods’ and Kerr’s also reveal the impact that one individual, or a handful of companies, had. They do not, however, explore the length and breadth of range history to uncover the overall effects of British investment outside of this biographical focus. The most glaring gap in extant historical writing about British capitalists in the American West is in legal history. While many authors note the foreigners’ fraudulent activities as colorful anecdotes, none delineate the far-reaching effects of frauds such as those evidenced in \textit{Underwood v. Birdsell}, frequently cited case within the confines of the legal profession as an example of territorial jurisprudence prior to statehood, as well as relating the expansion of the mechanic’s lien from its origins on the Atlantic seaboard. Despite the case’s substantial legal pedigree, no secondary sources marshal it to analyze or explain British behavior on the American West.

The clearest effects of English and Scottish involvement in American cattle ranching were visible to the naked eye in the quality of livestock they herded and the physical development on the range. In the mid-1870s, when the first Britons arrived in America looking to invest in ranching, most steers raised issued from ancient Mexican stock descended from cattle brought with the Spanish conquistadors. Small cattle that produced tough beef, Texas steers needed improvement. Britain’s long and proud cattle breeding tradition provided Hereford, Angus, and shorthorn strands that foreign ranchers brought with them from the Kingdom to dilute Texas stock and produce bigger, better-tasting animals.\textsuperscript{77} In \textit{Food from the Far West}, James MacDonald commented that the best step to making a profit was the “procuring of really good sires.”\textsuperscript{78} In fact, the XIT Ranch, a British-owned operation, became one of the biggest ranches in history due to the higher quality beef it produced from breeding hardy Texas cattle with tastier British

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 56.
\textsuperscript{77} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 120.
\textsuperscript{78} MacDonald, \textit{Food From the Far West}, 97.
bloodlines.\textsuperscript{79} Reginald Aldridge took credit for introducing the first Scotch polled bulls onto the open range in a bid to give his ranch’s cattle a leg up in the meat market.\textsuperscript{80} After completing his Western tour, MacDonald, commented that crossbreeding “showed a decided improvement on the native cattle,”\textsuperscript{81} and if ranchers wanted to sell their cattle to British customers, their meat needed to fit British tastes. Without British investment in the American range cattle industry, and the trade links to Britain that they forged, the range’s stock quality probably would not have changed. The open range’s herds would have remained almost entirely Texas longhorns, since American owners had no access to finer British stock lines. When British companies liquidated, they sold their breeding stock to competitors, including prize bulls imported from their home country, and those lines continued deep into American-owned herds, resulting in heavier, healthier steers.

British companies also led the charge in physically developing the West. The management’s propensity for experimentation introduced many new technologies to the region. In 1882, Moreton Frewen installed Wyoming’s first telephone at his ranch house, allowing communication with the railroad two hundred miles away.\textsuperscript{82} The free-standing company’s structure, which enabled corporate officers to sit on many boards of directors for corporations in disparate economic sectors, encouraged other kinds of development. The earliest British investors in America, before the ranches, put their money in railroads.\textsuperscript{83} Cattle company management (while sitting on boards of non-cattle companies) kept up that strategy by leading the pack to invest in Western railroads and electricity companies, which gave their ranches better access to Eastern markets.\textsuperscript{84} Finally, and most significantly, British concerns over preserving their well-bred stock’s integrity spurred the single most important development in American ranching history—the fencing debate.

British ranches needed to prevent their Angus or Hereford lines from breeding with inferior, American-owned livestock during the winter when cattle from all ranches roamed the open range freely.\textsuperscript{85} England underwent its own enclosure of public lands into private plots decades before, and British investors in American ranches happily jumped on the trend, transforming the West into something a little more understandable to English agricultural businessmen. Although they were certainly not the only group calling for fencing in the open range, British investors played a crucial role in circumscribing the western land, especially in Montana, where they laid the first and most extensive fences.

In the same way that the British presence on the range accelerated fencing, it also

\textsuperscript{79} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 120.
\textsuperscript{80} Aldridge, \textit{Life on A Ranch}, 200.
\textsuperscript{81} MacDonald, \textit{Food From the Far West}, 53.
\textsuperscript{82} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 5.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{85} Brayer, \textit{The Influence of British Capital}, 96.
facilitated many nascent legal changes. The British took advantage of the 1862 Homestead Act to stake claims on public domain land. Unfortunately for them, the act dictates that to acquire land under its provisions, the settler must be a citizen of the United States, “or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws of the United States Government.” To put teeth into the statute, thirteen states prohibited land purchases by aliens; Congress also banned them in a separate statute.

Of course, the litigious British exploited a loophole in the law by organizing an American corporation, purchasing the land as the legal “person” of that corporation, and naming their foreign company as the beneficiary. This practice was soon outlawed, but the British companies turned to other questionable methods to procure land, including making deals with their cowboys to file claims on the land, hold it for the necessary three years, and then transfer ownership to their employer. In the meantime, they would make the legally mandated “improvements” to the homestead by placing barrels of water at each of the claim’s corners and assert that they had conveyed water to the entire property. Moreton Freven thought of the twenty-five cent filing fee on a homestead claim as a cheap three-year rent, to be repaid if any government official threatened the land patent’s sanctity (which almost no official ever did). In fact, Reginald Aldridge advised his readers in a published work to do the same thing- encourage one’s American employees to stake claims and then buy up their patents. Many American ranchers committed the same fraud to circumvent the legal 160-acre limit on homesteads, but not on the scale that British foremen did to get around citizenship requirements. Through such schemes, the British presence enhanced and supported the lawless atmosphere surrounding homesteading.

The courtroom witnessed the greatest changes made by British cattlemen to American law. Throughout the nineteenth century, American jurisprudence consistently favored economic progress by way of legal instrumentalist doctrine. Simply put, this doctrine meant that courts preserved property rights and sanctity of contracts in ways that frequently favored the capitalist endeavor. British litigators benefited from this inviting legal environment. One of their court cases, *Underwood v. Birdsell* (1886), *de facto* abolished herders’ liens in Montana, creating a seemingly limitless pro-management shelter for ranching in that territory. Herders’ liens, established by the territorial legislature, essentially enabled cowboys to hold a herd hostage as collateral if they felt their wages had not been paid, and to sell a portion of the herd to make up for their lost wages. At issue in *Underwood* was a herd of cattle bought in Texas by the Anglo-

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88 Ibid., 24.
89 Ibid., 22.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 23
American Cattle Company, driven by a group of men to Montana under contract with the company’s agent, a man named Groom. Upon arrival, the men were not paid full wages, so each man claimed a herder’s lien under Montana law. The Supreme Court of Montana territory denied standing to the men, saying that they could not sue jointly for contracts made individually, but it did not throw the case out on this technicality. Instead, the Court went on to resolve the underlying issue in an instrumentalist decision. The Court ruled that Groom, the agent who hired the herders, never surrendered control of the herd in the eyes of the law. As an agent of the principal (the Anglo American Cattle Company), Groom lacked the ability to create or delegate to another agent of his own volition. Legally, therefore, the suing herders and Groom were the same person. Additionally, the contract at issue never mentioned “keeping” the cattle, which was legally required under Montana law (the contract had been written in Texas) to generate a right to a herder’s lien. In the Court’s own words, the “confidential relation of principal and agent cannot be handed around and sold and transferred by the agent to any other person.”

*Underwood v. Birdsell* was an important case because cattle herds did not come from Montana; all the herds had been started with Texas stock, and driven north. American legal instrumentalism endorsed the principal-agent distinction for determining liability and mandated that as autonomous actors, parties to a contract had equal power to delineate that contract’s terms. This meant that because the herders knew they were going to be driving cattle to Montana, they should have specified that the contract include a clause for keeping the cattle in the event of a wage dispute, thus permitting them to generate a lien. But even if they had, the court’s ruling on the principal-agent relationship still benefited corporations, because the officers of a corporation almost never would be present to make contracts for herding and thus to generate agency in the herders. Plainly, corporate officers did business hundreds of miles away, in New York or London. *Underwood v. Birdsell* therefore effectively did away with herder’s liens in Montana, guaranteeing that all cattle driven into the territory would remain under corporate ownership. The opinion created a pro-business haven where ranchers felt secure in the property rights to their cattle. The case would not have emerged had it not been for the Anglo-American Cattle Company and its British owners, educated in a corporate culture fanatical about documentation that provided the clearly worded contract with the “keeping of cattle” clause omitted.

Finally, aside from changes to the range’s physical and legal landscape, British investors also radically altered its corporate landscape. They provided credit and capital to a region starved of both, and accelerated trends toward consolidation. Scottish credit infused from abroad further

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93 Underwood v. Birdsell, 6 Mont. 142, 9 P. 922, 1886 Mont. LEXIS 38 (Mont. 1886). Page 143.
94 Ibid., 144.
95 Ibid., 145.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 146.
facilitated Western development in an absolutely critical way.\textsuperscript{98} Scottish mortgage companies, with large international financial resources, eased the economic difficulties of starting businesses on the frontier. They provided entrepreneurs with an opportunity for a long range financial plan. Prior to Scottish credit, businesses had to hope they could grow fast enough to sustain business operations across the rampant boom and bust cycles that plagued the West due to nature. Similarly, the English injected capital into the underdeveloped region, even though they only owned the herds.\textsuperscript{99} All told, British ranchers put approximately $45 million into their Western enterprises.\textsuperscript{100} In fact, they brought so many pounds sterling into the region that they inflated prices locally, making business’ profits look better than they actually were.\textsuperscript{101} Even when British firms folded, disappointing their shareholders, liquidation still resulted in a net capital gain for Americans who purchased the corporations’ assets.

British firms also helped to accelerate consolidation on the open range. Aldridge commented that, “the general tendency of the cattle business in the United States is to fall more and more into the hands of large corporations and a few wealthy individuals,”\textsuperscript{102} while MacDonald plainly stated that, “Monopolies are the order of the day in America.”\textsuperscript{103} Upon their arrival in America, English agents had great power due to the distance from their superiors in London. They had a lot of capital at their disposal and were free to invest it by experimenting (as Frewen did), or by moving operations north (as did Aldridge and Groom, the foreman in Underwood). This power accelerated ranch consolidation, since their control over more capital let them buy up smaller, competing ranches, especially on the informal basis Aldridge recounts in his memoir. Following the 1886 winter, however, larger American ranches swallowed failing English firms; these lucky Americans capitalized on hard work performed by Moreton Frewen, Horace Plunkett, and others, by incorporating better livestock and large land claims into the strategies of their own companies. British cattle companies’ failure en masse spurred a feeding frenzy that ended with only the largest, most competitive American firms remaining in business.

British investors in the United States range cattle industry did more than commit a few frauds and breed fancy cows. They helped start the movement to enclose the range, to protect businesses in Montana and across the Great Plains through instrumentalist jurisprudence, and grew the Western economy with Scottish credit as fertilizer. The tale of British investors in the American West is historically relevant because they transformed a national backwater into a global colossus of meat production. The beef they raised fed Britain’s industrial workforce, and the assets they left behind gave the West a head start on joining the rest of America in a progressive, economically integrated, industrialized twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{98} Kerr, \textit{Scottish Capital on the American Credit Frontier}, 196.
\textsuperscript{99} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 8.
\textsuperscript{100} Woods, \textit{British Gentlemen in the Wild West}, 189.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 87.
\textsuperscript{102} Aldridge, \textit{Life on A Ranch}, 215.
\textsuperscript{103} MacDonald, \textit{Food From the Far West}, 44.
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Monumental Reconciliation’s Failure at Andersonville

Robert Young, SY ’14
Written for The Memory of the Civil War, Samuel Schaffer, Fall 2010
Faculty Advisor: Professor David Blight
Edited by Jacob Anbinder and Caitlin Radford

Opened in early 1864, Andersonville Prison in Georgia housed approximately 45,000 Union soldiers during its yearlong existence. In the decades following Lee's surrender at Appomattox, many Northern states constructed monuments at Andersonville to commemorate the 13,000 soldiers who died during their imprisonment. In his final paper for the residential college seminar "The Memory of the Civil War," current sophomore Robert Young argues that the Andersonville monuments did not facilitate national reunification but instead represented competing sectional memories of the Civil War.
It is a little peculiar that the people of the North can put up their fine monuments in the South, right under our noses, falsifying history, and think it is all right, but the Southern people must say nothing.

- J. R. Gibbons, Confederate Veteran, 1908

On December 7, 1905, a contingent of Pennsylvania politicians and Civil War veterans gathered in Andersonville, Georgia, to dedicate a monument to the 1,849 soldiers of their state who had died during their captivity at Camp Sumter, the Confederate prisoner-of-war camp better known as Andersonville Prison. Their speeches were solemn in tone, befitting the horrors endured by the Union captives, of whom more than a quarter died. Despite their condemnation of the South’s crimes, however, the Northern dignitaries were not overtly recriminatory. On the contrary, declared General Thomas Stewart, “Today the people North and South have their faces turned towards the coming days, a reunited nation.” Speaking to an audience that included his former Southern enemies, Stewart made a point of highlighting the glory that Yankees and Rebels could share in the dedication of the monument as a tribute to soldiers’ valor.

Stewart’s message of conciliation clashed sharply with that of a Macon Telegraph article published just three years earlier. The article proudly detailed how its state’s congressional representative had upheld the South’s honor in the face of Northern Republicans, who had justified the ongoing conflict in the Philippines by favorably comparing its scandals to Confederate cruelties at Andersonville. The Georgia congressman responded passionately, claiming that the Civil War’s imprisoned Southerners actually suffered more than Northerners. The debate quickly deteriorated, and lasted through the session, past the recess, and well into the night. Democrats objected to the “besmirch[ing] of the South,” while Republicans boasted of the un tarnished honor of the “boys in blue.” That such divisiveness could disrupt congressional proceedings nearly four decades after Appomattox calls into question Stewart’s assertion that the ceremony at Andersonville symbolized a successful postwar reconciliation. How could it, when the mere mention of the prison set off verbal riots between Northern and Southern legislators?

Opened in early 1864, Andersonville Prison housed approximately 45,000 Northern soldiers during its yearlong existence, 13,000 of whom perished in captivity. Such cruelty was limited neither to Andersonville nor the Confederacy—the malnutrition, disease, exposure, overcrowding, and general negligence endured by prisoners of both sides brought about the deaths of 30,000 Union and 26,000 Confederate soldiers. The horrors that took place at Andersonville, however, were widely regarded in the North as particularly monstrous.

“Andersonville,” thundered James Garfield in 1879, “has never had its parallel for atrocity in the civilized world … we can forgive and forget all other things before we can forgive and forget

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1 Benjamin G. Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 106.
3 “Mr. Bartlett Strong in South’s Defense,” The Macon Telegraph, June 24, 1902.
4 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 11.
this.” In the years since the war, Northerners and Southerners had often come together to commemorate their battlegrounds as places of shared glory, but Andersonville’s unique stigma prevented it from ever truly being remembered in this way. Though Andersonville hosted several memorial ceremonies that awkwardly tried to capture a spirit of mutual patriotism, these attempts were ultimately hypocritical. True reconciliation could not exist at a prison site where monuments nominally dedicated to American honor served instead as reminders of competing sectional memories.

Following the Civil War, the victorious North moved to memorialize the sufferings of its soldiers for posterity. Originally, local African-Americans held Memorial Day celebrations of emancipation at Andersonville. But by the 1890s, these events were overshadowed by larger Northern ceremonies aimed at consecrating the prison site as “sacred ground.” In 1899, New Jersey constructed a $2,000 granite monument at Andersonville, making it the first state to commemorate the “true character...[of its fallen] heroes” at the prison. Within a decade, the former prison camp had become as much of a “forest of marble and granite, iron and bronze” as its better-known and more celebrated cousin, Gettysburg. Out of respect to the dead, Northern architects shied away from overly grandiose designs, instead raising monuments that memorialized the valor of the prisoners with modest stateliness. This stark minimalism emphasized the honor the Northern soldiers gained from their suffering, rather than the sorrow of Andersonville itself. Northern monuments extolled idealized Union virtue and patriotism over more accurate depictions of prison misery.

Unlike other Civil War sites recognized by Northern memorialization, commemorations of Andersonville were uniquely founded on bittersweet sacrifice. While battlefield monuments celebrated military triumph, Andersonville memorials focused on soldiers’ undying honor. Maine’s monument, for instance, was dedicated “to [the Andersonville prisoners’] lasting memory and imperishable fame … their courage was so great, and their loyalty so strong and steadfast, that they preferred death to dishonor.” In contrast, Maine’s memorial at Gettysburg was erected “in memory of our brave comrades, who gave their lives in defense of this position, whose names are not only engraved in the monument but in our hearts and in history.” The reference at Andersonville to “death before dishonor” draws a notable distinction between the

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5 Ibid., 56-57.
7 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 85.
9 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 86.
memorials. At Gettysburg, the Maine men won their glory by gallantly repelling the enemy’s attack. At Andersonville, however, they proved their honor by persevering in captivity. Victory was not a prerequisite for veneration; instead, Northerners celebrated the strength of character exhibited by their courageous soldiers who had endured overpowering misery.

The North’s desire to consecrate Andersonville as a symbol of the deceased’s nobility represents what historian David Blight terms the “cult of the fallen soldier.” Following the conflict, both Northerns and Southerners found it easier to believe in the glory gained by the thousands of Yankee and Confederate dead than to confront the unresolved ideological consequences of the war. At Andersonville, where monuments dedicated to the prisoners’ perseverance, bravery, and valor took precedence over the prison’s horrors, this notion found fertile ground. By accepting the legitimacy of the Northern soldiers’ bravery, Southerners simultaneously promoted the virtue and courage of their own troops, and absolved themselves of responsibility for the prison disaster.

Yet reconciliation depended on Northerners forgetting, if not forgiving, Southern wartime wrongdoing and hatred. Initially, Northern dignitaries at Andersonville were willing to ignore the injustices that had occurred there, in the interest of restoring sectional harmony. As Rufus Bullock, a New Yorker who served as Georgia’s governor during Reconstruction, cautioned in 1891, “It is not wise for us to speculate as to where the fault lay. No matter where the wrong was the fact still remains, a shameful fact, that a large number of brave men … lie buried before us in the fertile soil of Georgia. … I lament this fact and trust the like will never again be written in the history of our country.” Following his remarks, the Confederate Veterans of America, whom the Northerners referred to as “brother[s] of the blue,” decorated Andersonville graves with flowers. More brazen were the remarks of ex-Confederate General Lewis of Atlanta, who declared, “How proper, too, is it for you, who wore the gray … now recognizing that [Northern] bravery, and forgiving, not forgetting, the deeds of the past … should come here to show your appreciation of their services to their country.” Lewis either failed to remember or ignored the fact that the North, not the South, had the privilege, to “forgive and forget.” The cult of the fallen soldier transformed what would have been praise of Northern courage into praise of American valor. This focus on mutual virtue allowed Southerners to wash their hands of culpability for the atrocities at Andersonville, and instead celebrate their reunited nation. The dishonor associated with running a prison camp at which 15,000 Americans had died undermined the memorials commemorating Andersonville as a site of shared glory. To say anything less was insulting to the Northern dead, and the prison held a uniquely hated position in

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13 Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity*, 86.
15 Ibid.
16 Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity*, 84.
Northern political memory that ensured this charade would not continue indefinitely. When Congress’s 1869 Report on the Treatment of Prisoners of War by the Rebel Authorities declared that Andersonville “should live in history as... an example to which the eyes of future generations may revert with shame and detestation,” it officially approved the central tenet of Northern Civil War memory. During the war, Andersonville had helped the Union win “the moral high ground in the prisoner debate,” its connotations of cruelty reminding Northerners of the righteousness of their cause. Northerners continued to “wave the bloody shirt” in the postwar era. Venerating the Andersonville prisoners—and demonizing their Southern captors—became one of the hallmarks of Northern postwar patriotism. The 1866 trial and execution of Andersonville director Henry Wirz, demonized as the personification of Confederate cruelty, sparked interest in Andersonville survivor accounts. These memoirs fueled Northern rage against the South’s prison record by sensationaly describing the abuse suffered by the “ragged, scurvy, filthy, vermin-eaten wretches” of prisoners, at the hands of “vindictive, depraved, and fiendish” Southerners. While commemorations at Andersonville stressed that there was glory enough for all, the ratio of Union to Confederate graves at the prison showed which side was providing the moral capital for reconciliation.

The monuments themselves underlined the unspoken realities of Andersonville as well. Whereas the recognition of the North and South’s mutual honor led to the installation of national memorials at battlefields like Gettysburg, no such tributes existed at Andersonville. Although the ideal of the “cult of the fallen soldier” allowed Southerners to participate in Northern ceremonies, the ubiquity of the Union monuments made it impossible for any visitor to forget that the North’s cooperation had allowed for reconciliation to occur at all. When the editors of Harper’s Weekly mused in 1866 that “whatever relates to the Andersonville dead is not likely soon to become void of interest, at least not to the loyal North,” they correctly predicted the recriminatory way in which Northerners would remember Andersonville for decades to come. Inflammatory pieces of propaganda, such as an 1880 Cincinnati newspaper article entitled “Andersonville Prison: The Noted Rebel Prison and Slaughter Pen Revisited” (with a subtitle that screamed “Shall We Not ‘Highly Resolve That These Dead Shall Not Have Died in Vain?’”), urged Northerners to honor their fallen soldiers by continuing to fight against Southern immorality. Regardless of what was said of soldiers’ common valor at monument dedication

18 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 23.
19 Ibid., 59.
ceremonies, Northerners would always remember Andersonville as emblematic of Southern depravity, a place where the cult of the fallen soldier could never provide Northern honor with a Southern equal.

Yet the South, too, played a role in dooming reconciliation at Andersonville. Because the North’s postwar superiority precluded outright denial of Andersonville’s horrors, the Southern counter-memory to the prison saga was defensive in nature, attacking the North’s “warped sense of justice” by portraying Northern prisons as worse than their Southern counterparts.23 Such deflective memory was first outlined by the Confederate government itself, which in 1865 published The Report of the Joint Select Committee of the Confederate Congress, Appointed to Investigate the Condition and Treatment of Prisoners of War.24 Of Andersonville, nothing more is said than, “We are satisfied that privation, suffering and mortality, to an extent much to be regretted, did prevail among the prisoners there, but they were not the result of neglect, still less of design on the part of the Confederate Government.”25 In contrast, the report slammed Northern prisons as “ignominious, cruel and barbarous” and further accused the Union government of hiding its own failures through a smokescreen of propagandist investigations designed “to represent the South as acting under the dominion of a spirit of cruelty, inhumanity, and interested malice, and thus to vilify her people in the eyes of all.”26 If the South was forced to acknowledge its share of the blame, the report concluded, then the North, too, should be made to stand before the “enlightened judgment of the world” and “the righteous arbitration of Heaven” for its double record of wickedness and hypocrisy.27

In order to put their historical memory on a truly equal footing with the North’s, however, Southerners realized that they needed to counter the Union memorials with monuments of their own. In 1905, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) initiated plans to challenge Northern singular virtue by erecting a monument to Henry Wirz at Andersonville.28 Sarah Hull, president of the UDC’s Georgia Division, wrote:

We have nothing there to refute the lies and slanders proclaimed in marble on all sides, nothing to bear witness to the Truth, and to the brave testimony of Wirtz [sic] and the men who died with him. What greater work is there for us... than to turn our attention to this, and so proclaim to the world in the simple, straightforward language of Truth, which needs no adornment, the facts of that prison at Andersonville. Awful they were, we know, but no more so than the prisons in which our own men were held; and we had this

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23 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 36.
24 Ibid., 48.
25 Confederate States of America Congress, Report Appointed to Investigate the Condition and Treatment of Prisoners of War, 16.
26 Ibid., 2.
27 Ibid., 17.
28 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 107.
palliation: Our government did the best it could, and the prisoners fared as well as our soldiers in the field.29

Southerners were euphoric in their praise of the planned Wirz monument and the historical “truth” it represented. The Northern domination of Andersonville, wrote one Texan, had made “the blood of all true Southerners…surge in indignation.” 30 The Wirz monument, declared Columbia, South Carolina’s The State, would “render an important service to the memory of that maligned officer [Wirz] as well as to the ultimate truth of history.”31 Such support reveals the resentment Southerners felt at the marginalization of their memory of the prison. Unchallenged Northern monuments had physically demonstrated which section held the stronger claim to the memory of Andersonville. The Wirz monument restored what Southerners saw as historical accuracy to a site long-dominated by Northern singular virtue. Thus, advancing the “truth” had taken precedence over national reconciliation. By erecting their own monument, Southerners demonstrated that they, too, had a memory of Civil War prisons equal to that of the North.

Though Northern reactions to the announcement of the Wirz monument ranged from fury to disgust, all shared a common element of astonishment. Those who had believed in Southern acceptance of reconciliation at Andersonville were mystified that Southerners would seek to reignite wartime tensions with such gross insensitivity and recklessness. In The Philadelphia Inquirer’s view, the crimes at Andersonville were not “a matter of opinion, of sentiment or prejudice,” but were indisputable facts known “as well as anything in history.” That Southerners could venerate Wirz, a man whom the newspaper termed “one of the worst of inhuman monsters,” was dismissed as the “perverted patriotism” clung to by “irreconcilable women.”32 The idea that the Wirz monument represented the Southern counter-memory to Andersonville eluded Northerners’ comprehension. “One would think Andersonville itself a sufficient monument for Captain Wirz, without any additional dishonor,” editorialized the Inquirer. The paper failed to note the irony in the fact that the monument was an effort to change the Southern shame at Andersonville into honor, just as the Union monuments there had transformed Northern suffering to triumph.33

Sectional bickering delayed the installation of the Wirz monument until 1909, when it was unveiled in the town center of Andersonville. This location represented something of a compromise, for the UDC had envisioned the monument as standing in the prison cemetery itself, and only later altered its plans, due to strong pressure from disgusted Northerners. Carved

into the monument’s base as tribute were the words of Jefferson Davis: “When time shall have softened passion and prejudice, when reason shall have stripped the mask of misrepresentation, then justice, holding even her scales, will require much of past censure and praise to change places.” Whatever the UDC meant by this quotation, the political storm unleashed by the monument proved that such a time was unlikely to come soon. “Prison horror, and the hatreds it fostered in both sections,” notes Blight, “infested social memories of the war...as nothing else did.” Disputes over Andersonville’s place in the American historical conscience thus could not be settled by speeches and stones alone. Though the Union monuments were not explicitly dedicated with the aim of condemning the Confederacy, their embodiment of Northern righteousness prompted Southern resentment. The Wirz monument was the South’s response to the Northern narrative that dominated Andersonville’s “reconciliation.” Ultimately, though, the divisiveness of the competition over memorials proved that any reconciliation at Andersonville would be at best superficial, and that neither side could ever forget or forgive its memory of the Civil War prison disaster.

34 Cloyd, Haunted by Atrocity, 107.
35 Blight, Race and Reunion,152.
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Unwavering Patriots: Sacrifice, Coercion, and the Contested Legacy of the FLN Soccer Team

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Submitted in Spring 2011
Faculty Advisor: Bruno Cabanes
Edited by Jack Bisceglia

The Senior Essay serves as the culmination of a Yale History major’s academic work. As a year-long project, the essay allows seniors to work one-on-one with a member of the faculty on a topic that interests them. Seniors rely on Yale’s extensive archival resources and often travel all over the world to gather research for their project. This essay explores the role of the FLN soccer team in the Algerian independence movement. Merriman’s interviews with players provide a close personal inspection of his topic. His essay received both the Andrew D. White European Prize and the Robert D. Gries Prize for rest of the world essays.
The idea for this essay came from a course in the French Department I took with Professor Alice Kaplan on Albert Camus and the Algerian War of Independence last year. In that class, Professor Kaplan mentioned the fact that the FLN had formed its own soccer team during the revolution. I had already been interested in writing my senior essay on the intersection of sports and politics, and had written a paper on that topic for Professor Gilbert Joseph’s junior seminar on Cold War Latin America. I was intrigued by the fact that a group had intentionally used sports to fulfill political goals (sports usually only took on political meaning symbolically in what I had read on the subject) and I knew that writing on the Algerian War of Independence would allow me to use my knowledge of French to consult primary sources as well as a wider range of secondary sources.

I began by consulting the work in which Professor Kaplan had first learned about the FLN soccer team, Laurent Dubois’ Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France, which included a seven-page history of the team. More importantly, the sources used in Soccer Empire provided me with a starting point for my research by listing several history articles that mentioned the team as well as one of the three books devoted to the team, Michel Nait-Challal’s 2008 book Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance. With help from my advisors, Professor Kaplan and History Professor Bruno Cabanes, I also began visiting Sterling Memorial Library’s Microfilm room to look through contemporary French newspaper accounts of the team. Knowing that the creation of the FLN soccer team was meant to shift public opinion in France in favor of the independence movement, I hoped that accounts from major French newspapers such as Le Monde, Le Figaro and L’Humanité would give me a sense of the extent to which the FLN’s plan succeeded. Around that same time, I obtained a copy of another history of the team, Rabah Saadallah and Djamel Benfars’ 1985 book La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN. It was upon reading this book that I started to realize that accounts of the history of the FLN soccer team differed in certain regards, especially with respect to the extent that the FLN was inserted into the team’s story. La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, with its archaic cover, detailed conversations said to have taken place in 1958 to 1962, and an abundance of quotations from anonymous members of the FLN not usually mentioned in conjunction with the FLN soccer team seemed a clear piece of FLN propaganda. I was wary of its truthfulness, especially compared to the slick recently-published Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance. I did not see differences between the two books’ versions of the FLN team’s story as a central issue worth exploring until meeting Algerian professor Youcef Fatès, a professor at the Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, who has written extensively on sports and politics in Algeria.

After e-mailing countless professors who had worked on French soccer, I eventually received Professor Fatès’ name only to realize that he was exactly the sort of specialist I had been looking for. I met with Professor Fatès twice in Paris over winter break. Before that, though, I was able to meet with Rachid Mekhloufi, who would turn out to be one of the central figures
surrounding the current debate over the FLN team (I had obtained Rachid Mekhloufi’s contact information rather improbably after contacting world soccer governing body FIFA, where I inquired about archives they had on the FLN team in their headquarters in Geneva; they probably mentioned Mekhloufi because he has been one of the most active former players to talk about the team). My interview with Mekhloufi introduced me to some of the current disagreements between former members of the FLN team, but it was not until my first meeting with Professor Fatès that this issue was clearly laid out for me.

Our first meeting was extremely helpful in providing a clear research plan and problem to explore. Professor Fatès told me that despite romanticized versions of the FLN team’s legacy found in most works, there were currently disagreements between players that had largely been hushed up. He encouraged me to contact Mohamed Maouche and Dahman Defnoun to get a perspective on the team different than that which I had gotten during the interview with Mekhloufi. Professor Fatès also gave me the name of Stanislas Frenkiel, a French post-graduate student who had written articles on the team. I was able to obtain a copy of his article “Les footballeurs du FLN: des patriotes entre deux rives,” which details the ambivalent feelings that members of the FLN soccer team expressed toward France as citizens from the French departments of Algeria, who had benefited from French colonialism by playing professional soccer in the métropole, from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. Frenkiel frustratingly would not respond to my requests for a copy of his thesis, which he had not yet made public while hoping to have it published, yet I later realized that it was more a general work detailing Algerian soccer players in France than a specific study of the FLN soccer team. The article written by Frenkiel that I was able to read was important in that it collected 10 interviews the author conducted with former members of the FLN team, and got me to begin thinking about the team in an academic way, as opposed to most of the uncritical biographies of the team that I had been reading. That said, I would rely less and less on Frenkiel’s insights as I developed my own separate polemic later on in the process. Lastly, although I worried about Fatès’ potential bias – it was clear he believed Maouche’s side of the story and I would later learn from Maouche that the two were friends – he encouraged me to visit the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris to consult documents that would definitively show whose side of the story was right, saying that this represented the necessary historical work to be done on the team.

My visit to the archives produced some very interesting material, yet there sadly was not enough of it. The archives contained a separate folder devoted to the FLN soccer team, but it only contained three documents: a request for a police investigation by the Defense Minister following the players’ disappearance from France and a response from the préfet de police, with an attached report chronicling information gathered by the police investigation. The report contained valuable information that I would end up using in my thesis, but it left many questions unanswered and did not prove as valuable as Fatès had made it seem. I left the archives discouraged and with a lingering suspicion that I had not been able to see all the available...
documents due to rules surrounding the amount of time that needed to pass before documents can be delivered to the public.

I left Paris discouraged about the prospects for my essay after failing to find the documents I had hoped to discover. My thesis advisers were extremely helpful in boosting my morale and encouraging me to make do with what I had. I began writing a draft upon return from winter break, and received comments back two weeks before spring break, when I returned to Paris to do more research. A major part of my advisers’ comments involved the need for broader historical context of the Algerian War of Independence to complement the FLN soccer team’s story, so I spent much of the break reading background works on the war including Benjamin Stora’s La Gangrène et l’oubli and Histoire de la guerre d’algérie, Sylvie Thénault’s Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne and Linda Amiri’s La bataille de France. I had checked out these works early on during my work, but it was only once I had done a considerable amount of research on the FLN team that these works became valuable, as I knew exactly what I was looking to find. Thus, I was able to find relevant sections of these works into which I could insert the specific case of the FLN soccer team. I was also able to interview Mohamed Maouche and Dahman Defnoun, which was crucial if I were to have a balanced view of the disagreements regarding the team. Lastly, I was able to view Jean Pierre Védel’s 2002 documentary Le Onze de l’Indépendance, one of the only works on the FLN team that hints at any sort of disagreement between former players, at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

I began seriously re-writing my draft upon my return to the United States, adding the material I had obtained in France as well as the historical context from the books I had consulted. As I did this, I truly began to consider the nature of the disagreements on the legacy of the FLN team in order to understand what it said about the War of Independence and the current state of politics and memory in Algeria.

Dealing with conflicting sources has been an important issue for me over the course of writing this essay – one that was, in fact, central to my paper’s thesis. With two often-conflicting versions of the FLN team’s legacy – both in works published on the team and accounts from former players – I faced a challenge in narrating the team’s history. As I wrote my paper, I remembered former player’s Mohamed Maouche’s words on how his teammates should stick to telling their own stories as opposed to involving themselves with the stories of others. To that end, I used a particular person’s own words when telling his story, interjecting it with conflicting accounts from other people or works as an afterthought. In this way, I believe I have succeeded in refraining from taking a side or making judgments as to which side is right, except for when documents suggested that one side or the other was being untruthful.
Introduction

On April 12, 2008, the Algerian government honored the anniversary of the creation of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) soccer team during the Algerian War of Independence.\(^1\) Fifty years earlier, 10 Algerian soccer players competing at the highest level of French professional soccer abruptly fled the métropole to form a team in the name of the Front de Libération Nationale in Tunis.\(^2\) Members of the Fédération de France, the FLN branch operating in France, created the team in hopes of legitimizing the independence movement in the eyes of the French public. The rationale of the Fédération de France was that if the French public saw well-known\(^3\) soccer players of Algerian descent “join the revolution,” they would finally see the FLN-led struggle for independence as representing the will of the Algerian people rather than just a minority of violent anti-colonial thugs, or fellaghas.\(^4\) The creation of the team occurred at a trying time for both the FLN and the Fédération de France. Although the FLN had, to a large extent, cemented its position as leader of the Algerian independence movement by 1958,\(^5\) it lacked legitimacy. It had begun with little popular support upon its creation, when founding members attacked French troops in November 1954, and it existed in little more than name until the Congress of Soummam in August 1956.\(^6\) At the same time, the FLN faced mounting military defeats at the hands of the French military during the “Battle of Algiers,”\(^7\) while the French media disproportionately covered atrocities the FLN had committed against its rival, the Mouvement Nationale Algérien (MNA).\(^8\) Simultaneously, the Fédération de France was in the process of re-organizing itself after French police had arrested several of its leaders in February 1957.\(^9\) Omar Boudaoud assumed control of the organization in June 1957, with


\(^{2}\) The FLN re-located its headquarters to Tunis in the spring of 1957, to escape the French military presence in Algeria: Sylvie Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne (Paris: Editions Flammarion, 2005), 79.

\(^{3}\) Of the 10 players who would go on to form the first FLN soccer team in April 1958, seven played for teams that had finished among the top three in the top French professional soccer league over the previous three seasons. Rachid Mekhloufi had been a star on one of France’s most storied clubs, A.S. St. Etienne, which had won the title during the 1956-7 season. Four players, Mustapha Zituni, Abderrahmane Boubekre, Kaddour Bekhlouf and Abdelaziz Ben Tifour, had been members of another notable club, A.S. Monaco. Five of the ten players had also been selected to represent the French national team, including Mekhloufi and Zitouni, who were both considered likely candidates to represent France at the 1958 World Cup that summer in Sweden. Michel Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance. L’incroyable histoire de l’équipe de football du FL algérien (Paris: Editions Prolongations, 2008), 18; 50; “Ligue 1 (ex-D1 jusqu’en 2001-2002),” http://www.lfl.fr/palmares/2126.shtml, accessed April 2, 2011.

\(^{4}\) Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 16.

\(^{5}\) By the August 20, 1956 Congress of Soummam, the FLN had absorbed all its political rivals except for the Mouvement National Algérien (MNA). Benjamin Stora describes the FLN as having obtained a “hegemony” over Algerian society by 1958, as sole representative of the people’s will. Benjamin Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d’Algérie (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 1991), 138; 161-2.

\(^{6}\) Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 87.


\(^{8}\) Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 146. In May, 1957, for example, the FLN massacred 303 suspected MNA supporters in the village of Melouza.

instructions from FLN leadership to destroy the MNA, increase the amount of money being collected from citizens of Algerian descent living in France to fund the independence movement, open a second front in the métropole and convince the French public that the Algerian people truly wanted independence. The FLN soccer team was created with this last goal in mind. After shocking France upon its creation in April, 1958, the team went on to tour 14 countries, including the People’s Republic of China, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia over the course of four years, amassing 57 wins compared to only 12 losses and 14 draws. On an emblematic level, the FLN soccer team provided a space for some of the first symbols of the incipient Algerian nation to be displayed – the team played its matches on the condition that the Algerian national anthem would be played and the flag waved. Former president of the provisional Algerian government (GPRA) Ferhat Abbas cemented the team’s place among the pantheon of revolutionary heroes by saying that the team had advanced the cause of Algerian independence by 10 years. Over half a century after its creation, the FLN soccer team retains a place in Algerian collective memory of the War of Independence.

As if to reaffirm the status of the “team of liberty” alongside those who took up arms in the struggle against French colonialism, the 2008 anniversary ceremony took place at the “circle of the army” in the Algiers suburb of Beni-Messous and was organized with help from the Algerian government, especially the Minister of Defense. The anniversary celebration included a symbolic friendly match between women’s teams from France.

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10 Meynier, Histoire intérieure du FLN, 532.
11 As with so many things concerning the FLN team, sources differ as to the team’s record. The record listed above comes from Michel Nait-Challal’s Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance. Another work on the team, La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, lists the team’s overall record as 65 victories, 13 draws and 13 losses. Rabah Saadallah and Djamel Benfars, Le football algérien à la conquête des continents avec La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN (Alger: ENAL, 1985), 394. This discrepancy might be explained by the sources possibly using different criteria for determining whether a match counted as an official contest or simply as a practice.
12 Interview with former member of the FLN soccer team Mohamed Maouche, conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
13 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 8. Although Abbas’s quote is often cited in works on the FLN soccer team, it is unclear exactly when Abbas made this statement. Mohamed Maouche says Abbas did so at least twice, once to the team in 1960, and again after independence. He also said Abbas mentioned the team in one of his books, but there does not seem to be any mention of the FLN team in the most relevant work, Autopsie d’une guerre (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1980).
15 Gilbert Meynier has made the connection between those who took up arms against the French military and members of the FLN soccer team, arguing that the latter embodied the same masculine virtues, such as selflessness, courage, and sacrifice, as the glorified mujahid. Meynier, Histoire intérieure du FLN, 222.
Behind the planning of the festivities stood a foundation composed of former members of the FLN team that has been active in preserving the team’s memory. Maintaining the memory of the team remains especially important today, at a time when many former players are either deceased or have little recollection of their time spent with the team. To that end, the organization has founded several soccer academies devoted to coaching talented Algerian youth soccer players, with the help of government funding.

The 50th anniversary also saw the publication of two works on the team: Kader Abderrahim’s L’Indépendence Comme Seul But and Michel Nait-Challal’s Dribbleurs de l’Indépendence. Together, these sources present a romantic vision of a group of patriots who unflinchingly gave up their careers as professional soccer players for the sake of the independence movement. The works barely hint at fundamental disputes pertaining to the level of FLN party involvement with the team and the circumstances surrounding players’ departures from France. Histories of the team, all written by journalists, differ in several particulars and offer little evidence to back up their claims. For example, Rabah Saadallah and Djamal Benfars’ La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, the first and only other full work written about the team, goes so far as to imagine detailed dialogue among players from 1958 to 1962. Little historical scholarship has been done on the team. The recent work of post-graduate student Stanislas Frenkiel represents the only comprehensive scholarship devoted to the team, particularly his 2008 article “Les footballeurs du FLN: des patriotes entre deux rives.”

Other historians have briefly mentioned the team in more general works on sports, soccer and Algeria. Prominent historians of the Algerian War of Independence, such as Benjamin Stora, Sylvie Thénault and Matthew Connelly, meanwhile, make no mention of the team.

This essay addresses for the first time disputes among former players and discrepancies among works devoted to the team while extending scholarship to include contemporary

18 Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
newspapers, archival documents and the broader collection of historical work on the Algerian War of Independence. In doing so, it reveals that disagreements among former players concerning certain aspects of the FLN soccer team’s legacy and the team’s relationship with the FLN remain, to a large extent, silenced in a country where the glorified memory of the revolution remains fundamental to the current regime’s legitimacy. As a result, the story of the FLN soccer team shows the extent to which studying the Algerian War of Independence through memories of participants remains problematic today, almost 50 years after the birth of the Algerian nation.

The Beginning

At the center of the contested legacy of the FLN soccer team are two former members, Rachid Mekhloufi and Mohamed Maouche. Mekhloufi and Maouche share similar career trajectories yet have very different accounts of the FLN team, their involvement with it and the team’s ties to the FLN. Both offensive center midfielders, Mekhloufi and Maouche served in the French military and played on the soccer team that won the 1957 World Military Championship in Buenos Aires. They were each likely contenders to be selected to compete for France in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, and both continued their professional soccer careers in Europe following the FLN soccer team’s dissolution in 1962. Both Mekhloufi and Maouche, like most former members of the FLN soccer team, went on to enjoy lengthy careers as high-level soccer coaches in Algeria. Current members of the team’s foundation and consistent presences in documentaries chronicling the team’s story, the two figures differ in one very important regard: their stated involvement with the FLN. This difference informs their conflicting accounts of the team and its relationship with the FLN while also serving as a lens through which to view current debate surrounding the legacy of the FLN soccer team.

Disagreement over the legacy of the FLN soccer team largely centers on the FLN’s level of involvement. Before addressing these conflicting accounts, though, it is necessary to note that much of the information concerning the team’s legacy was obtained through private interviews with former players. Just as important, all of the information was gathered decades after the team’s dissolution and the end of the War of Independence. On the one hand, Mohamed Maouche, a self-declared former member of the FLN and the Fédération de France, stresses close ties between the FLN and its soccer team, both in the time leading up to the team’s creation and after the first wave of players had arrived in Tunis. Maouche’s story reflects, to a large

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23 Frenkkel is also in the process of writing an article, “L’équipe algérienne du “Front de Libération Nationale” (1958-1962) : au-delà du mythe,” Les Cahiers de géopolitique, on the contested legacy of the FLN team. This article had not been published by the time this thesis was written.

24 Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli, 7.

25 Saadallah and Benfers, La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, 164; 171.

26 Ibid.

27 Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris; interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
degree, the story told in Rabah Saadallah and Djamal Benfars’ La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, a work Maouche endorses. On the other hand, Rachid Mekhloufi minimizes the FLN’s level of involvement with the team, claiming that players joined of their own volition and that the team retained a considerable amount of independence once in Tunis. He endorses Michel Nait-Challal’s Dribbleurs de l’Indépendence, a work for which he provided the preface. Both Maouche and Mekhloufi agreed on one fact during interviews with the author: the identity of the man responsible for the team’s creation.

Born in the city of El-Asnam in 1912, Mohamed Boumezrag was playing soccer in the métropole before most of the future members of the FLN soccer team were teenagers. After ending his professional career in 1946, Boumezrag went on to spend 12 years as a coach in the métropole. During this time, he became involved with the Fédération de France. Boummezrag descended from a long line of activists – his grandfather El-Mokrani Ahmed Boumezrag had taken up arms against French colonists during the Algerian insurrection of 1871, led by Boumezrag’s brother Hadj Mohamed El-Mokrani. After just over 40 years of French occupation in Algeria, El-Mokrani, a nobleman from the north of the country, declared war on the French on March 14, 1871. Eight hundred thousand people representing different, often feuding tribes ended up joining the rebellion, but French troops prevailed after seven months of fighting. El-Mokrani was killed during the fighting and Boumezrag spent 23 years in prison before his death in 1905. In the summer of 1957, Mohamed Boumezrag coached a team of amateur players at a tournament held as a part of the leftist World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow, to which the FLN sent a delegation. Upon his return from Moscow, Boumezrag thought back to a charity match held in his hometown in 1954 to honor the victims of an earthquake that had hit the city of Orléansville that same year. The match had pitted a team of French players against a team composed of players of North African descent, and Boumezrag wondered if it would be possible to create an official Algerian team comprising professional players from the départements français d’Algérie, who had been playing

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28 Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
29 Now named Chlef.
30 Saadallah and Benfars, La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, 381.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
34 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendence, 77.
35 That match had included future members of the FLN soccer team playing for both the French and North African teams. The North African selection triumphed, by a score of 3 goals to 1: Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendence, 77.
professionally in France. Over the next year, Boumezrag met with other Algerian soccer players and began secretly recruiting players to join the team.

Both Rachid Mekhloufi and Mohamed Maouche were among the 12 professional soccer players of Algerian descent who attempted to flee France on April 13, 1958. The two men would leave France under very different circumstances, but only one would arrive safely in Tunis later that month to become one of the original 10 members of the FLN soccer team. The second would end up in prison as a result of circumstances surrounding the first’s departure.

As a child growing up in the city of Sétif, Rachid Mekhloufi had witnessed an event that in many ways laid the groundwork for the War of Independence. Mekhloufi was only eight years old on May 8, 1945, when post-war celebrations in his hometown turned violent after a young man named Saal Bouzid was shot dead by police with an Algerian flag in his hands. The previously peaceful crowd took its rage out on the city’s European community in a bloody fury, and French police matched the violence with a repression that caused, by some estimates, up to 45,000 deaths. By 1958, though, Mekhloufi was a jovial-looking 22-year old with a wide smile matching his black mustache. Fresh off a world championship as a member of France’s military team in 1957, he was a member of one of France’s most storied soccer teams, A.S. St-Etienne, where he had been the second-highest scorer in the French league with 21 goals during the 1955-56 season.

Despite his traumatic memories of the Sétif massacre, Mekhloufi claims he did not pay much attention to political issues, and was not pro-FLN so much as in favor of Algerian independence. As Mekhloufi’s attitude reveals, even if the FLN had become the face of the independence movement by 1958, support for Algerian independence did not necessarily

36 Nait-Challal, *Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance*, 77. *La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN* does not mention the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow as having helped Boumezrag think up the idea of creating an Algerian national soccer team. Instead, the book inserts the creation of the team into a wider framework of action taken by the FLN to publicize the independence movement. *Glorieuse Equipe* describes the existence of a previous Algerian soccer team, which was created in the spring of 1957 and featured only amateur players. This team was not seen as having had enough of an impact on a global level, which prompted FLN leadership to assign Boumezrag with the task of recruiting professional players from the métropole. The fact that Mohamed Maouche corroborates the version of the team’s creation from *Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance*, that sees Boumezrag as having birthed the idea by himself, suggests that the version presented *La Glorieuse Equipe* is inaccurate. It is also crucial to note that Mohamed Boumezrag died in 1969, meaning that he was probably not consulted during the writing of either book. Why such a fuss over whether Boumezrag thought up the idea of creating an FLN soccer team by himself? (After all, he was a member of the Fédération de France, which we know had been hoping to convince the French public of the legitimacy of the Algerian independence movement.) Insisting that Boumezrag acted on his own provides members of the FLN team with a considerable amount of agency vis-à-vis the FLN, especially considering suspicions regarding the extent to which players were forced by the FLN to flee France, which have existed since before the team’s creation.

37 Regardless of whether Boumezrag thought up the idea of creating an Algerian soccer team by himself or was influenced by the FLN, it is widely agreed that he was the main person to have contacted the first group of players.


39 Ibid., 41-2.


41 Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
translate to support for the FLN. Mekhloufi recalls participating in the paying of the revolutionary tax, a process known as cotisation. Cotisation began in 1958 and was collected by the Fédération de France from citizens living in the départements français d’Algérie to aid “the cause of the revolution. Less than a week before it was announced that he would be one of the lucky two-dozen players selected to represent France at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, though, Mekhloufi’s life would become forever linked to political action after a game on April 13, in which he sustained a head injury. Mekhloufi spent the night in a St. Etienne hospital with a bandage around his head before leaving the building the following morning with two older soccer players from Sétif: Hamid Kermali and Mokhtar Arribi. On their way by car to the safety of Switzerland, Kermali and Arribi told Mekhloufi of the plan to create an FLN team in Tunis that would compete against teams from around the world. Three days earlier, Kermali and Arribi had approached the young player in the streets of St. Etienne. Mekhloufi says Kermali and Arribi did not mention anything about the FLN team for the sake of secrecy, but told him he had to leave France for Tunis very soon despite the fact that as a member of the French military, he could be tried for desertion if captured. In a 2010 interview with this author, Mekhloufi recalled that he accepted without a second’s thought, citing the Algerian tradition of respect for one’s elders. “They told me, ‘Tomorrow, you play your game and then we leave.’ “Where are we going?” ’To Tunis.’ And I said, ‘Yes.’ Without hesitation.” Mekhloufi’s head injury delayed the group’s departure by a day, and news of another group of players escaping from France was already circulating around the soccer world. Luckily for the three men from Sétif, newspapers had not yet printed the story, and although the radio station France Inter announced the group’s disappearance at 7 p.m. that evening, Mekhloufi, Kermali and Arribi had little difficulty passing

42 Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 89.
43 Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris. Money collected by the Fédération de France would end up funding much of the provisional Algerian government, or Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne (GPRA), which was created in September, 1958. Critics viewed this process as a form of racketeering by the FLN, with members of the FLN and some present-day historians describing it as a sort of early tax on the incipient Algerian state. The amount Algerians had to pay increased from year to year, with storekeepers said to have paid more. Linda Amiri, La bataille de France: la guerre d’Algérie en métropole (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 2004), 11-12; 14-15; 52-3. It seems likely that professional soccer players were asked to pay more than others. Mohamed Maouche estimated that soccer players were asked to contribute 5,000 anciens francs, or about $10 U.S. dollars per month. Vedel, Le Onze de l’Indépendance, Documentary, VM Group, 2002.
44 Le Monde April 18, 1958.
45 Nait-Challal, Dribleurs de l’Indépendance, 18.
46 Nait-Challal, Dribleurs de l’Indépendance, 18. 34-year old Arribi was already coaching in 1958 after first beginning his soccer career in the métropole in 1946. Kermali was 26 years old in 1958 and still playing professionally for Olympique Lyonnais.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 21.
50 Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
51 Ibid. Mekhloufi credits the Fédération de France for thinking that he would not be able to disobey orders from his idols Arribi and Kermali, who had both been local soccer legends during his childhood in Sétif.
52 Nait-Challal, Dribleurs de l’Indépendance, 19.
French border patrol guards and into the safety of Switzerland on their way to Lausanne.\textsuperscript{53} The border patrol guards, who were soccer fans, recognized the French league stars and allowed the three Frenchmen of North African descent to pass by without so much as a second glance\textsuperscript{54}.

Glorieuse Equipe du FLN presents a different account of the way Mekhloufi learned about the plan to flee France. This work states that Mohamed Maouche informed Mekhloufi of the plan while the two were staying at the Bataillon de Joinville, a training center for high-level athletes in the French military in Paris, although it does not specify when.\textsuperscript{55} Documents concerning the FLN soccer team obtained at the police archives in Paris (Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris) suggest that the version presented by Glorieuse Equipe du FLN might be the more accurate one. A report written by police prefect (préfet de police) J. Gervais following an investigation concerning the players’ disappearance from France on April 13 lists Mokhtar Arribi as having stayed at a hotel in Paris from April 9 to 13. During that time, the document says Arribi made four phone calls to unknown people at different addresses in Paris on April 10, 1958, in addition to attempting to contact Mohamed Maouche and Rachid Mekhloufi at the Bataillon de Joinville. Arribi’s presence in Paris between April 9 and 13 seems to contradict Mekhloufi’s claim that he had been approached by Arribi and Kermali about joining the FLN team in the streets of St. Etienne on April 10, unless the two men had taken the train 500 kilometers from Paris to St. Etienne on April 10 before returning to Paris that same day. Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, however, does present a version similar to that of Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance concerning the departure of Kermali, Arribi and Mekhloufi from St. Etienne on April 14.

Maouche too was a rising star in French professional soccer at the time of the FLN soccer team’s creation. After scoring four goals in only three matches for his club Stade de Reims during the 1956-57 season,\textsuperscript{56} and winning the world championship for military teams as a member of the same French national team as Mekhloufi in 1957,\textsuperscript{57} the playmaker was also in contention to make France’s World Cup team in 1958.\textsuperscript{58} At the same time, however, Maouche says he was involved with the Fédération de France.\textsuperscript{59} Maouche had begun running errands for the FLN in his hometown of Algiers through his friend and future brother-in-law Hamden Abderrahmane, a locksmith who made bombs for the FLN.\textsuperscript{60} He says his notoriety as a soccer player in Algiers made it easier for him to sneak items past French officers for the FLN, similar to the way

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{53} Ibid., 23.
\bibitem{54} Ibid.
\bibitem{55} Saadallah and Benfars, \textit{La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN}, 79.
\bibitem{56} Ibid., 371.
\bibitem{57} Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
\bibitem{58} Saadallah and Benfars, \textit{La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN}, 371.
\bibitem{59} Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
\bibitem{60} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
Mekhloufi, Kermali and Arribi’s fame had facilitated their crossing into Switzerland.\textsuperscript{61} After joining Stade de Reims in 1956, Maouche says he was eventually contacted in the greatest secrecy by members of Fédération de France.\textsuperscript{62} He says he was informed of the plan to create the FLN team by Boumezrag in 1956,\textsuperscript{63} and met up with him and Arribi in a hotel near the Louvre museum days before the scheduled departure date of April 13.\textsuperscript{64} According to plans, Maouche traveled by train to the French border with Switzerland on April 13 in his own, separate car to avoid suspicion.\textsuperscript{65} Yet, upon finding no other teammates at the scheduled rendez-vous in Lausanne, Maouche assumed the plan had been called off and returned by train to Paris.\textsuperscript{66} Unbeknownst to him, the players he was supposed to meet in Lausanne – Mekhloufi, Arribi and Kermali – arrived on April 14 just as Maouche was leaving, having been delayed due to Mekhloufi’s head injury. Once in France, Maouche read about the other players’ disappearance from France in newspapers and took the first train back to Switzerland.\textsuperscript{67} He was later apprehended by border patrol in the town of Saint-Louis on the Franco-Swiss border.\textsuperscript{68} Maouche would spend 45 days at a prison in Versailles before eventually rejoining Stade de Reims.\textsuperscript{69} Mekhloufi questioned whether Maouche ever spent time in prison, but documents concerning the FLN soccer team obtained at the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris confirm that Maouche was transferred to a prison in Versailles for a sentence of 60 days. It is unclear, however, why his sentence would have been shortened to 45 days. Mekhloufi argues that, as a 22-year old in 1958, Maouche would have been much too young to have any responsibility in the Fédération de France.\textsuperscript{70} He also questions why Maouche would have gone all the way to Switzerland only to turn around come back, further contesting Maouche’s claim that he told his club coach before fleeing France, which none of the other members of the FLN team did.\textsuperscript{71} Maouche finally joined the FLN team in November 1960 after organizing players’ departure from France.\textsuperscript{72}

With Maouche and another player\textsuperscript{73} captured while trying to flee France on April 13,\textsuperscript{74} only 10 players arrived in Tunis in April 1958. Players had traveled in two separate groups of five. The first group, which included defender Mustapha Zitouni – a member of A.S. Monaco

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Kamel Yamine, Interview with Mohamed Maouche, \textit{El Watan} April 9, 2008.
\textsuperscript{64} Vedel, \textit{Le Onze de l’Indépendance}, 2002.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
\textsuperscript{70} Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Hacène Chabri of A.S. Monaco.
\textsuperscript{74} Chabri was captured on the Franco-Italian border on the night of April 13, 1958: Nait-Challal, \textit{Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance}, 16.
who was widely projected to start for the French national team in that summer’s World Cup in Sweden— and his club teammate Abdelaziz Ben Tifour – who had been the first Frenchman of Algerian descent to compete for France in a World Cup in 1954— took the train to Italy before arriving in Tunis on the night of April 14. Members of that group initially received a cold welcome upon their arrival at FLN headquarters. The organization’s leadership, it turns out, had not been informed by the Fédération de France of the team’s imminent arrival for the sake of secrecy, and players retreated to the Majestic, a grand four-story cream-colored hotel in Art Nouveau style that still stands in Tunis today, after being told to leave FLN headquarters. Players only met FLN leadership after a horde of journalists and photographers had arrived at the hotel in the early hours of the following day to speak to them. Meanwhile, the second group, which included Mekhloufi, Kermali, Arribi and F.C. Toulouse, said Brahimi and Abdelhamid Bouchouk, who had each been selected to French national teams in 1957, arrived in Lausanne. With journalists already hot on their trail, these players fended off questions until arriving in Tunis on April 20. As news of their arrival trickled into France, newspapers immediately tied the events to the Algerian War of Independence. An examination of contemporary reports reveals that the abrupt intrusion of sports into the political sphere was seen as a significant event during what would become a turning point in the war.

“Amazement in the Sporting World”

Historians often cite 1958 as a turning point in the Algerian War of Independence. Four years earlier, attacks on French command posts across the départements français d’Algérie had signaled the start of the conflict on November 1, 1954, the date generally given for the creation of the FLN. The French government had attempted to hush news of the “events” occurring in North Africa through a law allowing for government censorship in order to “ensure control of the media” during the state of emergency declared on March 31, 1955. Yet France found itself in a full-out military conflict by the end of 1956 with over 300,000 soldiers – including a large

75 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 51.
76 Ibid., 64.
77 Ibid., 82; 86.
78 Ibid., 88. Glorieuse Equipe du FLN does not mention the early mix-up between FLN leadership and the soccer team, only noting that the Fédération de France’s secrecy prevented a welcome “that lived up to the grandeur of the moment” : “Saadallah and Benfars, La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, 68.
79 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 87.
80 Saadallah and Benfars, La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN, 135.
81 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 74.
82 Ibid., 22.
83 Ibid., 95.
84 Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli, 14.
85 Ibid., 25.
84
percentage of conscripts—deployed in the départements français d’Algérie. Despite the French army’s successful overpowering of the Armée de Libération Nationale (ALN), which was leading the military struggle against French armed forces, and its eventual triumph at the “Battle of Algiers” that took place the following year, the French government found itself increasingly losing its grip on the “Algerian question” at the beginning of 1958. Historians point to the growing awareness in France of ongoing atrocities by the French military—Sylvie Thénault describes 1957 as a year of a “collective realization” (“prise de conscience collective”) in the métropole, and considers the internationalization of the conflict as the main reasons why the Algerian conflict was becoming increasingly unwinnable for the French government, who was winning the military conflict at the time. The FLN attempted to internationalize the War of Independence early on through active diplomacy, but international opinion truly began to mount against French occupation of North Africa in 1958. That year, the international community learned with outrage of the bombing by the French military of the Tunisian village Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef (suspected to have been a storehouse for ALN munitions). At the same time, the United States and Great Britain began to involve themselves in negotiations to resolve the conflict. Criticism of Félix Gaillard government’s weakness in the face of pressure from its allies spurred a parliamentary crisis in April 1958. On May 13, former soldiers protested in Algiers in honor of those who had been killed by Algerian rebels. At the same time, Pierre Pflimlin, who had announced his intention to negotiate with the FLN, was sworn in to replace Gaillard as Prime Minister in the métropole. After protesters began attacking the headquarters of the French government, top-ranking members of the military seized control and demanded the return of General Charles de Gaulle. The result was the dissolution of the Fourth French Republic, which paved the way for de Gaulle’s return to power two months later.

The departure of the first wave of the FLN soccer team on April 13, 1958 must be viewed within the context of the crisis of the French government and the public’s growing awareness of the realities of the war in Algeria. The impact of the creation of Boumezrag’s FLN

86 Benjamin Stora estimates there having been 350,000 troops in the départements français d’Algérie by the end of 1956 while Charles-Robert Ageron puts the number at 400,000: Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 22; Ageron, Modern Algeria, 112.
87 Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 22; 34.
89 Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 13.
90 The FLN sent delegates to the Bandung Conference of Asian and African states in April 1955 and sent delegations to countries such as China, the United States, Great Britain and East Germany the following year. Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 151; Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 18.
91 Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 47.
92 Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 153.
93 Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 49.
94 Ageron, Modern Algeria, 117.
team, after all, hinged on the way the players’ disappearance from France affected French public opinion. Boumezrag and the Fédération de France were banking on the players’ notoriety – especially that of those expected to compete for France in that summer’s World Cup – to convince the French public that the independence movement represented a majority of the Algerian people. It is difficult to gauge what French public opinion toward the Algerian independence movement might have been before and after the team’s creation, but an analysis of three contemporary newspapers’ accounts of the events shows the extent to which the team’s creation succeeded in making news that might have impacted the French public.

The utter shock newspapers describe in response to the players’ disappearance attests to the unprecedented nature of the gesture. An April 15 article from the French Communist Party organ L’Humanité describes “bewilderment in the sporting world,” while center-left newspaper Le Monde wrote on April 17 that the soccer public had learned about the players’ disappearance with an astonishment that would not soon dissipate. Under front-page headlines describing the players’ disappearance, journalists predicted the impact the gesture would have on the French public’s view of the Algerian independence movement. An April 16 article from Le Monde judged the impact of the events in the context of the broader topic of France’s role in Algeria: “On the eve of a serious parliamentary debate [following the dissolution of the Félix Gaillard government due in large part to the “Algerian question”] devoted to North Africa, the public, more attentive to sporting feats than parliamentary discussions, learned that nine of 25 professional Algerian Muslims playing in the métropole had disappeared.” L’Humanité predicted the resounding significance the event would have on millions of French citizens, even those without opinions on the “Algerian question,” while right-wing newspaper Le Figaro described the events in an article from April 16 as “a maneuver orchestrated by the FLN destined to strike public opinion, notably the opinion of those ill-informed about political issues.” These articles all emphasize that this political act was deeply meaningful to a segment of the population: French sports fans, who were likely uninterested in political matters such as France’s continued occupation of the départements français d’Algérie. Such assumptions fit the commonly held belief that sports are separate, even immune, from political issues. In fact, an April 16 editorial from L’Humanité described sports as a domain often considered “apolitical,”

95 “Stupéfaction dans le monde sportif.”
96 “Grave.”
97 Le Monde was apparently unaware of the disappearance of a tenth player.
98 Le Monde, April 16, 1958.
99 “Signification éclatante.”
and Le Monde featured an entire editorial the same day on the unprecedented intersection of sport and politics.

The extent of the FLN’s involvement in pressuring players to leave France emerged as the most controversial aspect of the players’ disappearance, especially considering the fact that players refused to speak to the media until April 16, three days after they first went missing. In the meantime, newspapers were left to speculate about the circumstances leading up to the players’ disappearance. The assumptions that different newspapers insinuated before hearing from the players says much about each newspapers’ political agenda as well as the general political climate surrounding the Algerian independence movement at that time.

Le Figaro suspected that the decision to leave players with pro-French sentiments had been influenced by menaces from “fellaghas,” and called the circumstances surrounding the players’ departure “troubling.” Still, at the same time, the newspaper recognized a level of consent on the part of players. It showed surprise at the defection of players such as Mustapha Zitouni, who had recently said how much playing for the French national team meant to him, and at the attitude of players like Rachid Mekhloufi and Mohamed Maouche, who each regularly ate breakfast with their coaches “without worry.” Le Figaro also guessed that Abdelaziz Ben Tifour, embittered by his eviction from the French national team, or the former college student Abdelhamid Bouchouk, would have been more open to influence from harmful propaganda. For Le Figaro, the Algerian players could have come to support the FLN only through exposure to propaganda or a negative experience such as losing a spot on a national team. Being instinctively in favor of Algerian independence was inconceivable. Meanwhile, the paper was shocked that players with positive experiences in France would support Algerian independence. Le Figaro went so far as to criticize players for turning their backs on France in fleeing to Tunis; an article from April 15 describes the players as “quick to forget what they owed France, or at least what they owed the French sporting public.”

Besides betraying a soccer team’s devoted fans, this criticism raises the issue of members of the FLN team benefiting from French colonialism. As people of mostly modest means who grew up in the départements français d’Algérie, there is no doubt that these players benefited

101 Newspaper articles from April 17 are the first to feature quotes from official press conferences with the players in Tunis, although scant quotes from when one group of the players stopped in Switzerland on their way to Tunis appeared in newspapers such as L’Humanité.

102 The term fellagha originally signified a local bandit in North African dialects of Arabic. The term went on to mean any North African fighter who took up arms against French colonial occupation. A term of honor among rebels, the use of the word by Le Figaro carries with it a negative connotation. Ageron, Modern Algeria, 107. As we will later see, some soccer players of North African descent competing in France were derogatively called fellaghas by fans. See note 107.

103 Le Figaro April 15, 1958.

104 Ibid.

105 An April 16 piece from L’Humanité mocked Le Figaro’s claim that Bouchouk was more likely to have supported the FLN as a former college student, saying the conservative newspaper assumed the nature of his studies automatically made him “un intellectual quoi!”

from playing professional soccer in the métropole. This criticism thus appears to fit with the idea that colonialism benefited natives of the colonies. L’Humanité, meanwhile, dismissed the idea of pressure from the FLN, calling the players’ actions a “manifestation of solidarity with their fellow Algerians” as well as a confirmation of the “cancerous war” in Algeria. For L’Humanité, the players’ successes in French professional soccer only increased the significance of their act.

While the opinions of the overtly right and left-wing publications come as little surprise, center-left Le Monde’s take on the events lends credibility to the FLN’s belief that the French public viewed independence as something wanted by only a minority of citizens in the départements français d’Algérie in 1958. Basing its judgment on the views of “people known to have been close to the players,” the newspaper presumes that the players, notably Zitouni, who was slated to play in a friendly match against Switzerland that month, had been forced by the FLN to leave France against his own will. And similar to Le Figaro, Le Monde expresses shock considering the players’ camaraderie with their teammates and their popularity in France. The newspaper also notes that, with the exception of Ben Tifour, most players had never expressed any political views. Le Monde assumed that only those who explicitly showed political support for the Algerian independence movement were in favor of independence. Supporting independence was thus seen as a political engagement, more than a feeling someone could naturally have.

Furthermore, even after players spoke about their reasons for leaving France, newspapers described their moods in a way that fit with their own ideological stance on Algerian independence. While L’Humanité, in favor of the FLN team, reported that one member of the team was happy, smiling and full of life, Le Monde described players’ “gloomy” nature as proof that they had not spontaneously chosen liberty. Similarly, Le Figaro correspondent Roland Mesmeur stated that the “fugitives” were “cordial but reticent” in an April 16 article.

The first group of players to arrive in Tunis finally spoke to journalists on April 16, but not before the FLN had published a communiqué reprinted in the April 17 issues of Le Monde and Le Figaro:

“The FLN has the satisfaction of announcing that a certain number of Algerian professional athletes have just left France to respond to the call of Algeria … Our brothers showed their joy of having joined us. They told us at length that at a moment when France made merciless war on their people and on their country, they refused to participate in French sports. Like all Algerians, they had to suffer through a racist anti-

107 Ibid., 137-8.
108 Le Monde, April 17, 1958.
109 Rachid Mekhloufi agreed with the statement that he and his teammates fully supported Algerian independence despite the lack of a political conscience. He also said soccer clubs forbade their players from talking about politics and that although Algerian players would talk about the war for independence amongst themselves, he never talked politics with his non-Algerian teammates: Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
North African and anti-Muslim climate that had rapidly developed in France to the point of manifesting itself in stadiums. Unwavering patriots placing their country’s independence above all else, our soccer players have provided the youth of Algeria with proof of courage, uprightness and selflessness.”

It is worth noting the extent to which the FLN attempts to distance itself from organizing the team at a time when newspapers across the board speculated on what must have been a carefully planned operation. The FLN tries to convince readers that 10 soccer players contacted each other one day, fled France and arrived unannounced at FLN headquarters in Tunis. The material from this communiqué must be considered within the context of FLN ideology, since its release coincided with the organization’s attempt to portray itself as a unified movement representing the Algerian people, instead of as a political party. Benjamin Stora describes this phenomenon as “one hero, the people.” The FLN, he says, was a monolithic entity centered on one goal – independence – that had absorbed all other political parties and replaced them. To that end, it is unsurprising that renowned post-colonialist theorist and former FLN member Franz Fanon described anti-colonial activism as an “instinct of rebellion” and rural masses as “spontaneously” erasing their individuality for the sake of the community. Whereas political involvement was something one did, nationalist feelings for Algerian independence were something one felt. In light of this, it is noteworthy to recall the way Le Figaro and Le Monde assumed that members of the FLN soccer team had been turned onto the cause of Algerian independence through political propaganda and manipulation, as opposed to instinctively supporting independence. While it remains unclear whether the newspapers were responding to FLN ideology when reporting the story of the players’ disappearance from France, the assumptions they make suggest what the FLN was trying to avoid by employing such ideology.

The most controversial section of the release lay in the claim that in addition to showing solidarity for the Algerian independence movement, players fled France to escape a “racist climate of anti-North African and Muslim sentiment in France.” This claim was especially problematic, as many newspaper reports described players as seeming at ease in France. Several players on the team had also married French women, most of whom had made the trip to Tunis with their spouses. Dribbleurs says players were asked to respond to the

110 “Patriotes consequents.”
111 Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli, 150.
112 Franz Fanon, Les Damnés de la terre (Paris, Maspero, 1961) 96; 69 as cited in Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli, 162.
113 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 93.
114 Moreover, Rachid Mekhloufi noted that most of the journalists who made their way down to Tunis to cover the story of the players’ departure had interacted a great deal with these players during their reporting, so they would have likely known if players had ever hinted at allegations of racism in the past: Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
communiqué’s allegations during their first day of practice on Wednesday, April 16. According to Dribbleurs, Ben Tifour, one of the only members of the Fédération de France on the team, assumed the role of team spokesman. He deflected the communiqué’s claims by saying that frequent police raids had forced him to shut down his bar in Nice, presumably because he was Arab. There is no doubt that citizens of North African descent living in the départements français d’Algérie, a society rife with social and political inequality, were often subject to racism. Rachid Mekhloufi, for example, recounts facing racial discrimination as a child while attending the school for native Algerians in Sétif, and bitterly recalls being excluded from many of the same public spaces as dogs. The discrimination and social inequality players experienced in North Africa made the transformation to living as celebrities and professional soccer players in the métropole all the more remarkable. For Mekhloufi, living in the motherland offered him very different interactions with French people than he had been used to in Algeria: “[I was] enormously touched upon my arrival in Lyon by plane. Already, I saw people who didn’t look like me, who were extremely kind compared to the French in Algeria. Extraordinary people, they were polite, they called me ‘Mister,’ etc.” Most players interviewed by Frenkiel in the lead-up to the publication of his 2007 article “Les footballeurs du FLN: des patriotes entre deux rives” said they did not experience racism while playing in France. Players said their success, both individually and as a member of the team, kept fans happy. In one case, a player described his teammates defending him amid racist chants from opposing fans. One of the 10 players interviewed by Frenkiel did say he was singled out by teammates and fans, who called him a “fellagha” that had killed their parents. Ultimately, it seems fans were happy as long as the players of North African descent and their teams performed well. As before, though, it is necessary to note that Frenkiel interviewed players decades after the fact.

Despite Ben Tifour and the FLN’s allegations of racism in the métropole, players universally stressed the fact that their actions supported a free Algeria and were not intended as an indictment of the French people. Ben Tifour, for one, said, “People may think what they want, 

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115 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 93. La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN does not mention any awkward questions for players on racism in the métropole from journalists and does not spend much time talking about players’ interviews with journalists in Tunis.
116 Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 93; Le Monde April 17, 1958.
117 For example, citizens of North African descent the départements français d’Algérie voted in a separate electoral college with the same amount of influence as that of Europeans, despite their large numerical advantage. Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 31. Thénault also describes a “ruling minority” of Europeans ruling over the “indigenous society.” Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 34.
118 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 24.
120 Ibid., 133.
121 Abdelkrim Kerroum, who would join the FLN team in 1960, for example, described how fans from his club team E.S. Troyes would call him a “fellagha,” saying that he had killed their parents: Frenkiel, “Les footballeurs du FLN : des patriotes entre deux rives,” 134.
122 Ibid., 133.
but we are not anti-French.”123 Le Monde summed up the players’ general attitude by writing, “[The players] added that they remained friends with their teammates at French clubs and that they were not fighting France.”124 Instead, players framed their decision to leave France as a duty to their homeland and to their people that they could no longer avoid. One of the most striking examples of the players’ motives came from Mustapha Zitouni in an article from L’Humanité describing journalists’ first sit-down with the players. The newspaper wrote, “What surprises the majority of journalists is the surprise shown by [Zitouni] and his teammates when asked for an explanation to their act. ‘Well it’s for Algeria,’ Zitouni said simply.”125 Attempts by players to dismiss their actions as anti-French at a time at when the French government was at war with Algerian militants fits into Stanislas Frenkiel’s observation of the ambivalent feelings that former members of the FLN continue to show toward France.126 Although Frenkiel interviewed players decades after their involvement with the FLN team, this idea of ambivalence is worth exploring. It seems problematic for players to stress positive feelings toward France while simultaneously joining the movement that was leading the fight against that same country. Players, however, differentiated between the French government, which represented the colonial system that relegated them to second-class citizens in the départements français d’Algérie,127 and citizens of the métropole, who had treated them with kindness and adulation as members of top French professional soccer teams. Players may have also hoped to return eventually to France to play professionally, which some ended up doing, although this is difficult to know.

“The Brown Diamonds”

In his 2010 book Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France,128 historian Laurent Dubois offers an intriguing idea about the potential power of sports. After describing sport’s political potential as something capable of mobilizing people around a common identity,129 he wonders if sports can precede politics: “If sports is politics it also creates a sphere in which a different imagination of community, of the foundation for politics, is possible.”130 The FLN soccer team’s first official match provides a clear example of Dubois’ idea. Still a French

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123 Nait-Challal, Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance, 93.
124 Le Monde April 17, 1958.
125 “Mais c’est pour l’Algérie.”
128 Laurent Dubois, Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
129 Soccer has always provided a clear space for nationalism to manifest itself, beginning at the first FIFA World Cup in Uruguay in 1930. A soccer match between the hosts and neighboring Argentina offered Uruguayan fans a chance to show national pride against the country to which their homeland had previously belonged. Georges Vigarello, “Les premières coupes du monde ou l’installation du sport moderne,” Vingtième siècle 26 (April-June 1990): 8-9.
130 Dubois, Soccer Empire, 22.
colony that was attempting to build a veritable nation during a struggle for independence, the yet-to-be-formed Algerian nation nonetheless found itself fielding a national team on May 9, 1958 in the most symbolic of circumstances. Less than a month after players had fled France, the FLN soccer team competed against the Moroccan national team at the Zouiten stadium in Tunis, in the opening match of a tournament in honor of Djamila Bouhired. An Algerian militant who had been captured by the French, Bouhired had been subjected to torture before receiving the death sentence in a controversial trial that received international attention.\textsuperscript{131} In the stands, the singing of the incipient Algerian national hymn, which includes lines such as “so we have taken the noise of gunpowder as our rhythm / And the sound of machine guns as our melody / We are determined that Algeria should live / So be our witness – be our witness – be our witness!”\textsuperscript{132} by thousands of armed ALN soldiers attained a particularly poignant significance.\textsuperscript{133} The FLN team went on to win the match by a score of 2-1, and would win the tournament two days later, after defeating the Tunisian national team by a devastating score of 6 goals to 1.\textsuperscript{134}

The FLN team embarked on a tour of the Maghreb to face local clubs that summer as the French national team competed at the World Cup in Sweden.\textsuperscript{135} Even if the Fédération de France no longer benefited from the element of surprise, six more players managed to escape France and join the team in early August.\textsuperscript{136} The team traveled to the Middle East early in 1959, visiting Jordan and Iraq, which offered the FLN two billion dirhams to support the independence movement. That summer, the team toured Eastern Europe for four months, visiting Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Poland.\textsuperscript{137} Highlights of the trip included a 1-0 victory over internationally renowned Romanian club Rapid Bucharest on May 28.\textsuperscript{138} The Romanian press was so smitten with the team that it nicknamed them the “Brown Diamonds,” and the Romanian soccer federation received thousands of phone calls from fans requesting the opportunity to watch the FLN team play again. Fans got their wish when the FLN team faced Romanian league leaders Petrolul Bucarest on June 1 in front of a crowd of 90,000

\textsuperscript{131} Bouhired’s trial, in which French lawyer Jacques Vergès represented the defense, received international attention. Bouhired’s sentence was eventually overturned due in large part to pressure from Vergès. Bouhired was freed in 1962, later marrying Vergès. Stora, \textit{La gangrène et l’oubli}, 56.


\textsuperscript{133} As if to reinforce the extent to which the FLN soccer team was symbolically important to the Algerian War of Independence, the FLN granted ALN soldiers special permission to attend the match, weapons in hand. Nait-Challal, \textit{Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance}, 108. Mohamed Maouche and Rachid Mekhloufi both describe the way the FLN soccer team boosted the morale of ALN troops fighting French armed forces, saying that former soldiers thanked them after the end of the war. Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris; Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.

\textsuperscript{134} Nait-Challal, \textit{Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance}, 110.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 114.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 119.

\textsuperscript{137} Nait-Challal, \textit{Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance}, 140-153. The FLN had set up bureaus in several countries, which would have facilitated tours to foreign countries: Meynier, \textit{Histoire intérieure du FLN}, 692. That said, not much is known on the way the FLN team contacted governments of foreign countries to set up trips.

\textsuperscript{138} Saadallah and Benfars, \textit{La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN}, 393.
spectators. In the fall of 1959, the group visited the People’s Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In North Vietnam, the team met Ho Chi Minh, who had led North Vietnam to independence from the French in 1954. Players also traveled to a town populated by Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians who had deserted the French army in Vietnam to fight for Vietnamese independence. In China, the team visited the Forbidden City palace complex in Beijing and the Great Wall, and spent three days teaching students at the National Institute of Sports in Beijing. The FLN team saw four more players join its ranks in the summer of 1960, and again traveled to Eastern Europe in the spring of 1961, playing 21 matches in four countries on what would be its final tour.

The Final Whistle

The signing of the Evian Accords on March 19, 1962 put an end to the Algerian War of Independence and set the stage for a landslide referendum on July 3 of that year, which officially granted Algeria independence from France. With independence came the gradual dissolution of the FLN soccer team. Their duties to the FLN team complete, younger members of the team revived their professional careers while most other players began coaching in Algeria. Rachid Mekhloufi was the first player to leave, moving to the Swiss Club Servette Genève in June, 1962, a month before independence had officially been achieved. Mohamed Maouche spent a year as a player-coach in Switzerland before returning to Algeria, where he would begin a lengthy career as a coach.

Independence also allowed the newly formed Algerian state to field an official national team that could compete in internationally sanctioned competitions, such as the World Cup. Soon after its formation, the FLN had applied to the world soccer governing body, FIFA, for recognition as an official national team; but, the team was rejected on the grounds that Algeria was not an officially recognized state and that France already had a national team. Algeria’s soccer federation was later accepted into FIFA in 1964, and former members of the FLN team, including Rachid Mekhloufi and Mohamed Maouche, went on to play for the Algerian

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139 Nait-Challal, *Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance*, 147.
140 Saadallah and Benfars, *La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN*, 392.
142 Ibid. 159; 162.
143 Ibid., 166.
144 Saadallah and Benfars, *La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN*, 393.
147 Saadallah and Benfars, *La Glorieuse Equipe du FLN*, 371.
national team during the 1960s.\textsuperscript{150} Mekhloufi and Maouche would later become high-level coaches in Algeria following their retirement from professional soccer. Mekhloufi coached the national military team for six months in 1971, and the national team four years later, a tenure highlighted by a dramatic come-from-behind victory over France in the final of the 1975 Mediterranean Games.\textsuperscript{151} He brought many of his teammates from the FLN team with him, but resigned in protest after Hamid Kermali was ousted as coach of the national youth team by Minister of Sport Djamel Houhou, who had been appointed following a shift of power in 1978.\textsuperscript{152} Houhou had accused Kermali of not being “sérieux,” despite his considerable success.\textsuperscript{153} Mohamed Maouche became coach of the national team in 1980 and led the team to qualify for the 1982 World Cup. He quit just before the World Cup was held due to meddling from the government, which had tried to place its supporters in high levels of coaching.\textsuperscript{154} Both Mekhloufi and Maouche gave up prestigious positions in Algerian soccer because of what they viewed as ill-placed involvement by government officials. The FLN’s incursion into the running of its national soccer team fits into a wider process of what Algerian historian Youcef Fatès describes as the state’s “confiscation of sports” by the “all-powerful Algerian state run by the FLN.”\textsuperscript{155} Despite both Mekhloufi and Maouche’s unceremonious resignations from Algeria’s national sports administration, their support of the FLN remains steady in public, with only private discussions providing any indication of their bitter feelings. The fact that neither player has anything negative to say about the FLN in public provides one indication of its continued presence in Algerian politics.

**Conflicting Versions**

Mohamed Maouche and Rachid Mekhloufi provide a starting point for understanding the contested legacy of the FLN soccer team, both through their words and the works they endorse – Glorieuse Équipe for Maouche and Dribbleurs for Mekhloufi. As previously stated, Maouche, who says he was active in the FLN and the Fédération de France, stresses the FLN team’s ties to these organizations. Meanwhile, Mekhloufi, who says he supported Algerian independence more than the FLN, stresses the team’s independence from the FLN.

Similarly, Maouche and Mekhloufi’s stories differ as to the extent the FLN pressured players into leaving France. Mekhloufi says players voluntarily left France in support of the independence movement after the FLN offered them the choice to stay or to leave.\textsuperscript{156} He cites the

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\textsuperscript{150} Saadallah and Benfars, *La Glorieuse Équipe du FLN*, 364; 371.
\textsuperscript{151} Nait-Challal, *Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance*, 222.
\textsuperscript{152} Kermali led the youth national team to qualify for the 1979 youth World Cup in Tokyo. Nait-Challal, *Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance*, 222.
\textsuperscript{153} Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
\textsuperscript{154} Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
\textsuperscript{156} Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
\end{flushleft}
refusal of several players to leave France as evidence that he and his former teammates were not coerced into leaving.\textsuperscript{157} Maouche claims that although the FLN would not physically hurt players, players who refused to flee France to join the FLN would have faced financial sanctions.\textsuperscript{158}

The two men also disagree about the FLN’s level of involvement with the team once it had been assembled in Tunis. Mekhloufi says that besides receiving money from the FLN while living in Tunis,\textsuperscript{159} the team was largely independent from the FLN.\textsuperscript{160} “We depended on the FLN, which paid us and sent us with [organization] leadership while on tour. [But] the FLN didn’t need to supervise (encadrer) us. It saw that we had left … and that meant that we were committed to all of the FLN’s acts.”\textsuperscript{161} He added that most players joined the team with little or no political conscience, and they used their own experiences of French racism in the départements français d’Algérie, rather than information given to them by the FLN, when speaking to fans about life under French colonialism.\textsuperscript{162} Maouche, meanwhile, described the team as being supervised (encadrée) by the FLN.\textsuperscript{163} While Maouche remained vague regarding the team’s actual interactions with the FLN while on tour, material from a 2002 documentary Le Onze de l’Indépendance by Jean Pierre Vedel offers a revealing glimpse at what FLN involvement with the team might have been like. In the documentary, the FLN team’s political advisor (responsable politique) Mohamed Allem\textsuperscript{164} says that, in addition to telling spectators at the team’s games about the Algerian War of Independence, it was his job to discipline the team.\textsuperscript{165} A document read by Allem during the documentary shows how players were sanctioned. “Brother [Rachid] Mekhloufi arrived 50 minutes late to the dinner that began at noon. This brother will have to deposit a fine of 2,000 francs [$40 U.S. Dollars] to the organization’s fund. This decision was taken in the presence of all the members of the team during an organic meeting.”\textsuperscript{166} Regardless of the extent to which players formally met, the FLN seems to have felt the need to ensure the team was penalized for bad behavior. And, as one former player noted in a 2010 interview with the author,\textsuperscript{167} the organization considered it essential to maintain a respectable image of the team’s players both on and off the field since the team represented the image of the incipient Algerian nation during its travels across the world.\textsuperscript{168} This emphasis on players’

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{158} Vedel, \textit{Le Onze de l’Indépendance}, 2002.
  \item\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance} and \textit{Glorieuse Equipe du FLN} both agree that the FLN paid members of its soccer team.
  \item\textsuperscript{160} Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.
  \item\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{163} Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.
  \item\textsuperscript{164} Allem is described as having held the same position for the team in \textit{Dribbleurs de l’Indépendance} and \textit{Glorieuse Equipe du FLN}.
  \item\textsuperscript{165} Vedel, \textit{Le Onze de l’Indépendance}, 2002.
  \item\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{167} Amar Rouai, one of the original 10 members of the FLN team.
  \item\textsuperscript{168} Interview with original member of the FLN soccer team Amar Rouai conducted December 28, 2010 in Annemasse, France.
\end{itemize}
respectability resembles moves taken by the Fédération de France in the métropole to maintain the respectability of migrants from the départements français d’Algérie. After describing hygiene committees (comité d’hygiène)\textsuperscript{169} set up by the FLN in the métropole in her 2004 book La bataille de France, historian Linda Amiri writes, “The FLN considers that the Algerian migrant must be the most respectable possible since he represents the future independent Algerian state.”\textsuperscript{170}

The players' opinions also differ as to who has the right to tell the story of the FLN team. Dribbleurs de l’Indépendence focuses almost solely on the original 10 members of the FLN soccer team, while Glorieuse Equipe gives equal voice to the later three waves of players who joined. “Either you interview everyone or you interview no one,” Maouche said in reference to Dribbleurs de l’Indépendence.\textsuperscript{171} Mekhloufi, meanwhile, alleges that Maouche has tried to incorporate himself into the creation of the FLN team because he is “hung-up” with the fact that he joined the team so late in its existence.\textsuperscript{172}

Despite the extent to which Mekhloufi and Maouche criticized each other in private interviews conducted by the author, they agree publicly on many issues. Mekhloufi was much more critical of the current state of the FLN party in Algeria than Maouche, who admits there are good and bad sides of the government of the nascent Algerian republic.\textsuperscript{173} Yet, they both endorse the romantic notion of the FLN soccer team as a key part of the Algerian War of Independence. Seemingly a sign of the hold the memory of the Algerian revolution retains in the country today, both the overtly pro-FLN Maouche and the more apolitical Mekhloufi glorify – or feel the need to publicly glorify – the memory of the FLN team. Genuinely or not, both men stress the fact that they joined the FLN soccer team out of their own volition.

In order to better understand their relatively harmonious perspectives, it is necessary to reconsider their lives following the dissolution of the FLN team. Both Maouche and Mekhloufi became involved in coaching Algerian soccer during the 1970s and 80s. Despite describing the way they unceremoniously quit their positions due to what they viewed as counter-productive meddling from members of the government, the two are currently active members of the FLN team’s foundation, which receives government funding to support the soccer academies it runs in the team’s memory. Both players continue to live in Algeria, a country in which the FLN was the only political party – until the aftermath of riots that rocked the nation in early October 1988 – and remains the largest party today.\textsuperscript{174} Moreover, the memory of the War of Independence remains a central part of present-day Algeria and represents the essence of the current

\textsuperscript{169} Comités d’hygiène encompassed much more than the hygiene of Algerian citizens living in the métropole. Its generally task was to ensure that citizens maintained a respectable image. Amiri, La bataille de france.

\textsuperscript{170} Amiri, La bataille de france, 54.

\textsuperscript{171} Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.

\textsuperscript{172} Interview with Rachid Mekhloufi conducted December 21, 2010 in Paris.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid; Interview with Mohamed Maouche conducted March 22, 2011 via Skype.

\textsuperscript{174} Benjamin Stora, Histoire de l’Algérie depuis l’indépendance (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1994), 82.
government’s continued legitimacy.\textsuperscript{175} Thus, it is unsurprising that both Mekhloufi and Maouche honor the legacy of the FLN soccer team as members of an organization devoted to preserving the team’s memory as a contributor to the independence movement, and that neither criticizes the government, which funds the organization. In a way, preserving the memory of the FLN soccer team offered both Mekhloufi and Maouche a new career after they left their positions as coaches of Algerian national teams. Participating in the team’s foundation has also allowed Mekhloufi and Maouche to retain their status as high-profile citizens in Algeria. Few former members have openly criticized the team, and the only one to do so no longer lives in Algeria.

Dahman Defnoun, who joined the FLN team in the summer of 1960, has publicly challenged the romanticized version of the story, in which “unwavering patriots” willingly left France for the good of the independence movement. Defnoun’s wife, Monique, has explicitly claimed that the FLN forced players to join the team, while Dahman simply hints at it. In Jean Pierre V edel’s 2002 documentary Le Onze de l’Indépendance, Defnoun unemotionally describes how his rising career as a soccer player competing for French first division club SCO Angers was abruptly cut short when he was told to join the FLN team in Tunis in the summer of 1960. He said, “I had a name, I had everything. I start to establish myself and all of a sudden, I’m called to quit France to rejoin the FLN. There were officials [from the Fédération de France] that approached us, and we left.”\textsuperscript{176} Immediately after Defnoun’s statement, the documentary shifts to a shot in which his wife claims her husband and the rest of the FLN team had no choice but to leave France, out of fear of the FLN. “You didn’t joke around with the FLN,” she says.\textsuperscript{177} Monique Defnoun added in a March 2011 interview with this author that her husband will not admit to being forced into leaving France when he is in Algeria. “They say, ‘We left with pleasure.’ While in reality, they left because they were afraid. They practically forced them to leave. They live in Algeria, we live in France … They left because [they were afraid], even my husband won’t admit it,” she says, adding that it is a matter of “pride” for players to have said that they left out of their own volition.\textsuperscript{178} Dahman and Monique Defnoun are certainly in a better position to criticize the idealized vision of the FLN soccer team, having definitively left Algeria for France in 1967.\textsuperscript{179} Yet, the influence of the FLN and the history of the Algerian War of Independence is such that, while visiting Algeria, Dahman Defnoun refuses to admit that he was forced to flee France. Even in France, he is hesitant to discuss what his non-Arab wife so freely acknowledges.

\textsuperscript{175} Stora, \textit{La gangrène et l’oubli}, 13.
\textsuperscript{176} V edel, \textit{Le Onze de l’Indépendance}, 2002.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., “\textit{Avec le FLN il ne fallait pas plaisanter}.”
\textsuperscript{178} Interview with Dahman and Monique Defnoun conducted via telephone March 8, 2011.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
Judging the Team’s Legacy

Ferhat Abbas, former president of the provisional Algerian government (GPRA), immortalized the FLN soccer team’s contribution to the Algerian War of Independence when he said that the team had advanced the cause of Algerian independence by 10 years. Works celebrating the team’s history, however, cite Abbas without supporting the validity of his statement in the overall context of the struggle for Algerian independence. While Abbas’s quote certainly seems to exaggerate the role the team played in the independence movement, it is useful to consider the FLN soccer team within wider, more general historical scholarship on the War of Independence. Books such as Benjamin Stora’s Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, Sylvie Thénault’s Histoire de la guerre d’Indépendance Algérienne or Matthew Connelly’s A Diplomatic Revolution do not so much as mention the team’s creation in their histories of the war.

Still, it is reasonable to argue that the story of the FLN team fits with some of the broader trends historians have pointed to as influencing the outcome of the war. In his seminal 1991 work La Gangrène et l’Oubli, Stora presents the Algerian War of Independence as a hidden conflict in France as it was occurring, one that has remained unknown within public discourse or misunderstood since Algerian independence. In addition to the French government’s censorship and its refusal to admit the existence of a war in the départements français d’Algérie – the French instead referred to “events” (“événements”) – Stora argues that a majority of the French population either refused to recognize the fact that a war was going on across the Mediterranean or remained indifferent. Stora attributes this sentiment to the geographic distance that separated the French public from the conflict, as well as the lingering and traumatic memories of the horrors of two world wars and the prosperity of post-Occupation France. In this light, the departure of French professional soccer players of North African descent from the métropole challenged the comfort and luxury of post-Occupation France. Historians have often pointed to involvement from intellectuals such as Pierre-Henri Simon and Henri Alleg, who published works denouncing the French military’s use of torture in the départements français d’Algérie in 1957 and 1958, respectively. Yet as Benjamin Stora points out, the “Algerian question” ranked only sixth among preoccupations of the French public in a poll conducted by the Institut français d’opinion publique (IFOP) in February 1958. In questioning the extent of the role intellectuals played in drawing attention to the “Algerian question” and in criticizing France’s continued involvement in the départements français d’Algérie, Stora cites French historian Jean-François Sirinelli. In his 1988 work, La Guerre d’Algérie et les Intellectuels français, Sirinelli asks, “Does the shock of the photos in Paris-Match, with its readership of eight million French, not weigh

180 Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli, 13; 26.
181 Ibid., 72.
182 Stora, La gangrène et l’oubli, 72; Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 72.
184 Stora, Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie, 66.
more than the weight of the words of intellectuals?” While it is difficult to judge realistically the impact of this singular event on the trajectory of the war of independence, the FLN soccer team certainly deserves to be recognized for its role in the evolution of public opinion. From February 1958, when the French public considered seeing five issues as more important than the “Algerian question,” to the January 8, 1961 referendum, when they voted 75 percent in favor of self-determination for the départements français d’Algérie, a major shift took place. As previously noted, historians of the Algerian War of Independence often cite the FLN’s internationalization of the conflict and diplomatic pressure from countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as general public opinion across the globe, as factors that pressured General Charles de Gaulle into eventually moving toward a vote on “the Algerian question.” The FLN team, which raised awareness of the Algerian independence movement during its four-year tour to 14 countries, fits this broader narrative, yet the team’s impact on the global currents that pressured France into granting Algeria independence should not be exaggerated. The FLN team visited countries such as China, Yugoslavia and the U.S.S.R., countries with which the FLN already had and could continue to have diplomatic relations as members of the Non-Aligned Movement. It did not tour countries such as the United States and Great Britain, which held much larger influence in pressuring France into granting Algeria independence.

Regardless of the FLN soccer team’s actual impact on the Algerian War of Independence, there is no doubt that the team has retained its place in the Algerian collective memory, evidenced through works written about the team and ceremonies such as the 50th anniversary of the team’s creation. Yet, as the legacy of the War of Independence remains a unifying factor for a current regime still largely dominated by FLN elements, the FLN soccer team’s story has been simplified to correspond to a romantic notion of patriots who willingly left their lives as professional soccer players for the sake of the revolution. The problematic nature of this storyline emerged in contemporary newspaper accounts of the team’s creation, but recent works devoted to the team and public interviews from former players mask the conflicted legacy of the FLN soccer team. Amid disputes about the team’s legacy, the unequivocal glorification of the former FLN by players such as Mohamed Maouche and Rachid Mekhloufi shows the extent to which the memory of the War of Independence remains a central aspect of present-day Algerian society – a memory that eschews divergent points of view in favor of a uniformly idealized storyline at the service of a regime that continues to use events that took place half a century ago to legitimize its rule.

185 Ibid., 70.
186 Thénault, Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne, 253.
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