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The Pulse

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David Horowitz was an American communist-turned-New Leftist and initially a vocal member in promoting the Movement. He eventually abandoned the Movement and New Left entirely when the young radicals turned toward violence. Horowitz later emerged as a loud voice of condemnation, and now places himself firmly on the Right side of the political spectrum. Though his present, conservative lens may be seen as negatively biased in his retrospective appraisals of the young radicals, David Horowitz nonetheless offers an intimate perspective on the New Left. In considering his present and past views, preserved in the vast array of works he has written throughout his life, I assess the shortfalls of the New Left that led to the Movement's end.

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Hannah's song of praise to Yahweh in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 concerns ideas the narrative has not developed yet, such as kingship. Though some scholars assert that the song is a later pro-monarchic insertion into the text, this paper argues that an editor of the Samuel scroll chose to include this piece in order to introduce and highlight major themes that follow. The dating of the song to an early period of Israelite history contributes to this argument, as does the remarkable ability of the song to cover many themes of 1-2 Samuel, including the holy sovereignty of Yahweh and his reversal of human fortunes.

Hannah's Song as a Strategic Introduction to the Samuel Scroll

Libby Feray

Hannah's song of praise to Yahweh in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 has puzzled biblical scholars for many years. The song is on the lips of a new mother who was once unable to bear children, but only a few phrases of the song seem conducive for her situation, such the proclamation in v.5 that "the barren has borne seven." The other parts of the short song touch on ideas and themes that the narrative has not yet developed or even mentioned, such as victory in battle and kingship. One way to handle this apparent discrepancy is to maintain that Hannah herself composed the song, all the time speaking prophetically. Another way to approach the matter is to attribute the song's selection and placement in the mouth of Hannah to the work of a compiler and editor of the Samuel scroll. As it is, the burst of poetry interrupts an otherwise coherent section of prose, indicating that it is likely a later insertion into the text. The dating of the song also suggests that it was not written at the same time as the original prose. All of

these point to an editor's hand, and I argue that a later editor selected this specific piece in order to frame and highlight major themes that follow in the narrative of the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David. First, I discuss the much-debated textual history of the song and explain that while it is likely a late addition to the Samuel narrative, the song itself may have been composed in an earlier part of Israel's history. This, in turn, has bearing on the strategic selection and placement of the song at the beginning of the Samuel scroll. Next, I examine how the song introduces key themes that will run throughout the book's narratives of its three main characters, namely the holy sovereignty of Yahweh and his reversal of human fortunes. Finally, I propose that the song's concluding verses of 9-10, which include both Deuteronomistic language and the celebration of Yahweh's anointed king, may function as a type of thesis or lens through which to view the scroll of Samuel. Throughout, I demonstrate that an editor chose Hannah's song as a fitting and even strategic introduction to the narrative that follows it.

As mentioned above, it is not likely that Hannah herself composed this song. Though it celebrates that "the barren has borne seven," the song also includes concepts of kingship that have not yet been explored in the narrative. At the beginning of the Samuel scroll, Israel does not even have a king, but instead has been operating under a series of judges. Because the song's mention of Yahweh's anointed king appears to be anachronistic, the temptation for many scholars has been to attribute the song, or at least v.10b, to a later, pro-monarchic author. Indeed, McKenzie notes that the poem "seems to be considerably later than the surrounding context," basing this claim primarily on the mention of a king in v.10b.¹ Tsumura, however, argues that 10b "has correlations with the song and fits the context too well to [be] a simple addition."² For example, the use of the theme verb *rvm* and the term "horn" in 10b form an "envelope construction" with v. 1b that closes the poem neatly. As far as the issue of the mention of a "king" being anachronistic, Willis notes that it is possible the Israelites had been influenced in the idea of a monarchy by their Canaanite neighbors. He concludes that this particular mention of "king" may originally have referred to a regional monarch rather than the ruler of a united Israel.³ Further, McCarter theorizes that the mention of Yahweh's anointed does not necessarily refer to David in its original context, but was composed as "an occasion of royal thanksgiving, quite possibly the birth of an heir to the throne," an assessment with

which Lewis agrees.⁴ Therefore, it is quite probable that 10b is part of the original song and that the song itself is not necessarily contemporary with the compilation of the Samuel scroll, dated by most scholars to the late monarchic, exilic or even postexilic period.⁵

Instead, many scholars have argued that the song was likely composed much earlier in Israel's history. Tsumura notes that the song contains heavy intimations of pure monotheism, which means it "comes probably from the earliest period of Mosaic Yahwism." Similarly, McCarter has argued that it is not a late piece because "it exhibits thematic and prosodic traits characteristic of early Israelite poetry."⁷ McCarter draws on the work of Freedman, who devised a system of dating Hebrew poetry based on their use of divine names and epithets.⁸ Based on his system, Freedman dates the Song of Hannah to the eleventh and tenth centuries. McCarter, however, leans towards the late side of Freedman's dating, preferring to date the song "to the monarchical period, perhaps as early as the ninth or late tenth century."⁹ These estimates still place the composition of the song at an earlier date than the compilation of the Samuel scroll.

Freedman has also examined the song and its relation to Psalm 113.¹⁰ He demonstrates that Hannah's song and the psalm likely share a common poetic ancestor, though a reconstruction of this ancestor is not possible. The similarities between the two passages, as well as Freedman's dating of the song to around the tenth century, indicate that Hannah's song was likely composed separately from and earlier than the final prose narrative of the Samuel scroll. Therefore, its placement at the beginning of the scroll is the work of an editor, perhaps even one of the early compilers of the scroll. The fact that the song was composed earlier than the scroll also suggests that it was not selected by the editor as mere pro-monarchy propaganda. Instead, the editor recognized the relevance of the whole pre-existing poem to the Samuel scroll, particularly its usefulness in highlighting major themes to come. Indeed, Tsumura notes that the song makes a fitting introduction to the establishment of a monarchy in Israel, and McCarter posits that it "sounds a clear keynote for what follows" in terms of thematic material.¹¹

If this is the case, then an examination of 1 and 2 Samuel should reveal themes in line with what Hannah's song outlines. These key themes of Hannah's song include the sovereignty of Yahweh, his reversal of human fortunes, and the establishment of his anointed king.

Tsumura notes all three of these and draws attention to the organization of the song into a rondo form of ABABAC, where the themes of "Yahweh's holy sovereignty" and the "reversal of human fortunes" alternate throughout until they are concluded by the introduction of the new "theme of kingship."¹² All three of these themes of the song also unfold in the narratives that follow.

The theme of Yahweh's reversal of human fortunes is captured in several ways in the song. Regarding the life of Hannah, the most notable example is how Yahweh has "made the barren [to bear] seven." But the song does not stop there; Yahweh also "kills and brings to life," he "brings down to Sheol and raises up," he "brings low and he also exalts," and "lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes." This theme can likewise be traced throughout the Samuel scroll. The chief characters in the narratives that follow all experience an elevation by Yahweh from humble circumstances to places of power and distinction. Samuel's humble beginnings are seen predominantly from his birth narrative in the first chapter of 1 Samuel. His mother is barren before she has him, mocked by her husband's other wife and praying so fervently for children that the high priest believes she is drunk. Yahweh soon reverses this situation, raising up a barren wife to the status of one who bears a son marked out for divine service. It is from these humble beginnings that Samuel comes, but before long, he is Israel's first prophet and has the distinction of anointing and advising the first two kings of Israel.

Because Hannah's song is a direct part of the narrative of her son's life, we are not surprised to find that it traces Samuel's story quite well. But moving further into the Samuel scroll, we see that it also describes both Saul's and David's stories. Though Saul is apparently quite tall and handsome, kingly in appearance (1 Samuel 9:2), other events intimate to the reader that Saul neither expects the kingship nor is wholly suited for it. He first encounters Samuel not through a divine summons but because he happens to be on an errand for his father to recover lost donkeys (9:3-4). When he is subsequently anointed by Samuel, he declines to tell his uncle about the anointing (10:16) and then hides away among the baggage when it comes time for his public unveiling as God's chosen king (10:22). Though Saul's natural abilities and fortunes do not seem to destine him for the

kingship, Yahweh reverses this to make him a mighty ruler, if only for a time. Saul becomes a powerful king, destroying the Ammonites (11:11) and driving back the Philistines.

The theme of Yahweh's reversal of human fortunes finds its fulfillment in the story of David, the shepherd boy who becomes king. The near comical story of David's anointing, when Jesse parades all of his older sons before Samuel only to have each rejected, fleshes out the words of Hannah's song: ". . . for the LORD is a God of knowledge / and by him actions are weighed" (1 Samuel 2:3). Indeed, a verse within that very passage echoes: "for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (16:7). It is with this special knowledge and sight that Yahweh raises the lowly shepherd boy to a place of unprecedented honor, reversing his fortunes forever. As Brueggemann notes, this elevation of David mirrors Yahweh's elevation of Israel itself. Though the Israelites begin the narrative oppressed by the Philistines, "the course of Davidic history is one of exalting, lifting, [and] raising up" Israel as a formidable power.¹³ Under David, the nation experiences a transformation from weakness to great strength and security. Therefore, Hannah's song foreshadows even the reversal of fortune experienced by Israel itself.

The second theme Tsumura notes in the song, that of Yahweh's holy sovereignty, is closely related to his reversal of human fortunes. Several separate instances of this theme, however, deserve special mention. For example, we may examine 1 Samuel 5, when the Philistine's god Dagon is found bowing before the ark of the Lord, even after the Israelites have managed to let it fall into enemy hands. In this comical story, Yahweh's power is demonstrated again and again as the Philistines find their god fallen before the ark and are themselves plagued by tumors. An attentive reader would be ready to understand and receive this theme as a result of the opening lines of Hannah's song, "There is no Holy One like the Lord, there is no one besides you." Similarly, David praises Yahweh for such in 2 Samuel 7:23, "Therefore you are great, O LORD God; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have hear with our ears." The final theme Tsumura highlights, that of the establishment of Yahweh's anointed king, will be discussed presently as part of the concluding two verses of the song.

In conjunction with the themes already discussed, I propose that v.9-10 of the song may function as a type of thesis or lens through which to view the Samuel scroll. Verse 9 crystallizes a key Deuteronomistic idea, namely that God punishes the wicked and blesses the righteous: "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked will be cut off in darkness." This Deuteronomistic perspective makes the verse an excellent lens through which to view the Samuel scroll, as the narrative carries Deuteronomistic phrases and themes throughout. Immediately following Hannah's song, for instance, a prophecy declares that Eli's wicked sons, who have terribly abused their priestly roles, will be punished with death (1 Samuel 2:31-33). It is soon fulfilled, proving that "the wicked will be cut off" (4:10, 2:9). Through this Deuteronomistic lens, a reader will also see Yahweh's rejection of Saul, both at Gilgal (13:13-14) and after he neglects to destroy the Amalekites (15:27-28), as an echo of this theme. It also appears later in the narrative in the striking of Abigail's husband Nabal, a man characterized by foolishness and wickedness (25:38). The Samuel scroll is peppered with these events of Deuteronomistic justice, wherein the wicked are punished by Yahweh for their sins.

On the other side of this Deuteronomistic ideal is the belief that Yahweh blesses the righteous, that he "guards the feet of his faithful ones." Similarly, in v.9c we learn that it is "not by might [that] one [prevails]." Together, these phrases of Hannah's song intimate that Yahweh will bless those faithful to him in a way that despises the supposed strength of man. The most obvious example of this theme is David's victory over Goliath, where a sling and stone prove to be more effective than the strongest man and largest weapon (17:50). As David declares before he goes out to face the giant, "the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give [the Philistines] into our hand" (17:47). Similar deliverance and victory are given to Jonathan in 14:14-15, and to David again in his prolonged conflict against Saul, the subject of the latter part of 1 Samuel. Notably, David does not take the victory over Saul by smiting the king down himself, though he has the opportunity to do so not once but twice (24:4 and 26:12). Though Saul apparently dies by suicide as Philistine forces close in upon him (31:4), someone reading through a Deuteronomistic lens will see this, too, as the punishment of Yahweh on the wicked. It is now common for scholars to regard the Samuel scroll as propaganda for David,¹⁴ a polished

document that conveniently demonstrates how his hands are clean of violence. However, David's trust in Yahweh, refusal to kill Saul, and assumption of the throne only after it has been given to him are also entirely coherent when viewed through the final two verses of Hannah's song. David's circumstances and choices demonstrate in narrative form what v.9-10 have said from the outset: Yahweh will guard his faithful ones, and therefore, it is not by one's own might that one prevails. Theologically, this emphasizes the point that Israel does not need the greatest strength or armies to be victorious over their enemies. They need only Yahweh, who directs human history and establishes his anointed.

In order to understand this lens and narrative key given to us in the final two verse of Hannah's song, we must also consider v.10. No discussion of 1-2 Samuel would be complete without a strong view of the monarchy, and that is exactly what v.10 provides: "The LORD . . . will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed." Though at first this anointed one appears to be Saul, the reader soon realizes that the main emphasis is on David as Yahweh's chosen king. And indeed, most of the narrative of the Samuel scroll centers around how David becomes king and his subsequent reign after the fact. The concluding verses of Hannah's song shape how a reader interprets the events that follow. As Childs puts it, "the focus on God's chosen king, his anointed one, David, appears right at the outset, and reveals the stance from which the whole narrative is being viewed."¹⁵ Because of the introductory promise that "the LORD . . . will exalt the power of his anointed," events that play out in David's life can be seen as being shaped and ordained by Yahweh, even if Yahweh is not readily apparent in every passage. From taking down Goliath to being pursued by Saul in the wilderness, from being established as king to nearly losing his kingdom to his son, the events of David's life are directed by Yahweh, who establishes David's kingdom.

As has been demonstrated, Hannah's song should not be viewed as a simple, pro-monarchic addition to the Samuel scroll. Its early dating and relationship to Psalm 113 suggest that it was composed earlier than the monarchic period, and its envelope structure indicates that even v.10, with its apparently anachronistic mention of a king, should not be attributed to pro-monarchic bias. Instead, Hannah's song should be understood as the work of an editor who sought to frame and highlight major themes that follow in the narrative of the

lives of Samuel, Saul, and David. The song does this primarily by initiating the themes of Yahweh's holy sovereignty and his reversal of human fortunes. Additionally, verses 9-10, with their Deuteronomistic bent and royal promise, provide a lens through which we may view the whole of the Samuel scroll. A reader attentive to the fitting introduction of Hannah's song will see Yahweh's hand everywhere in the Samuel scroll, bringing low the wicked, raising up his faithful ones, and establishing his chosen king over his chosen people. In this way, the reader is prepared to receive the Samuel scroll not as a collection of historical stories, but as an intensely "theocentric" history, one that reveals Yahweh's work among his chosen people.¹⁶

NOTES

- ¹ Stephen McKenzie, "1 Samuel," 402.
- ² David Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 149.
- ³ John Willis, "THE SONG OF HANNAH AND PSALM 113," 149.
- ⁴ Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel*, 73; Theodore Lewis, "The Textual History of the Song of Hannah," 44.
- ⁵ McKenzie, "1 Samuel," 399.
- ⁶ Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 143.
- ⁷ McCarter, *I Samuel*, 75.
- ⁸ David Freedman, "Divine Names and Titles in Early Hebrew Poetry," 55-107.
- ⁹ McCarter, *I Samuel*, 76.
- ¹⁰ David Freedman, "PSALM 113 AND THE SONG OF HANNAH," 56.
- ¹¹ Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 136; McCarter, *I Samuel*, 76.
- ¹² Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 141.
- ¹³ James Flanagan and Walter Brueggemann, "Book of 1-2 Samuel," 971.
- ¹⁴ McKenzie, "1 Samuel," 400.
- ¹⁵ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 273.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*

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This paper examines the origins of an Anglican Episcopate in the Thirteen Colonies and the young United States. An overview of the politics of the Church of England as well as the church culture within the colonies is provided. The author argues that the establishment of Anglican Bishops in the colonies was an issue more political than theological. Thus, the problems that advocates faced were political in nature, with opposition coming from lobbyists and obstruction coming from anti-clerical politicians.

The Lords Spiritual: The Political Matter of an American Episcopate

Jonathan Gay

Introduction

The eighteenth century was a tumultuous period in British history. It was marked by major governmental events happening at the beginning of the century, e.g. the Act of Union in 1707 and the Hanoverian ascension in 1714; major wars such as the Seven Years War and the Jacobite Uprising happening mid-century; and political upheavals like the beginnings of industrialization and the American Revolution occurring towards the end of the century. In this time of struggle, the Church of England also suffered from internal and external negative forces. One of the most heated battlegrounds was in the British colonies in the Americas, and the debate there was over the presence, or rather absence, of an Anglican bishop. English bishops, and even a few Archbishops of Canterbury, seemed to support theologically the idea of having bishops in the colonies, but they worried about potential political upheaval that might ensue. Dissenters in the colonies and England alike ardently opposed the establishment of bishoprics in America, especially around the time of the First Great Awakening, because they likened it to the spread of monar-

chical tyranny. Finally, in the years following the revolution, there were debates over the extent of the authority of Episcopal bishops. During this time, there was a great concern both within and without the church, that bishops, as agents of the British crown, would subvert the new republic. Therefore, early Episcopal conventions in the infant United States sought to limit the powers of their new bishops and eliminate all secular and political authority held by a bishop. Bearing this historical matter in mind, it is argued in this paper that the establishment of Anglican bishops in the Americas was an issue more political than ecclesiastical.

Background: The Metropolitan Bishop of London and the Colonies

Anglicanism has been present in North America since 1607 when the first service of Holy Communion was administered in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer in Jamestown, Virginia.ⁱ Over the next century and a half, the Anglican Church would become the established church in six of the thirteen colonies.ⁱⁱ In the colonies, particularly in New England, the Church existed in an environment quite different from that of England itself. Frequently, the Church operated without the support of the local taxes (something taken for granted across the Atlantic) and with great antagonism from Puritans and other Dissenters (far greater in the colonies than in the Motherland).ⁱⁱⁱ

Within this context, Henry Compton, the Metropolitan Bishop of London, sought to bring some order. Following his translation from the Bishopric of Oxford in 1675, Compton “began almost at once to assert ecclesiastical authority over the Anglican churches in England’s colonies.”^{iv} By what authority he made this assertion has been something of a historical mystery, for while Compton cited a note by the Secretary of Virginia, an Order-in-Council, and the Merchant Adventurer’s Order of 1633, these sources support only a weak claim.^v The note of the Secretary of Virginia did not bear any authority and actually stood in contradiction to the writings of many colonial leaders who desired authority from the See of Canterbury rather than from the See of London. The Order-in-Council has remained elusive for historians for the past two and a half centuries.

Finally, the Merchant Adventure's Order of 1633 gave only the Bishop of London authority over British subjects working in the ports of Delft and Hamburg.

Compton made these claims in the first decade of his tenure as Metropolitan Bishop of London, so, as a new bishop, he faced a situation fraught with difficulties. Recognizing his weak claims, the Lords of Trade opened an investigation into Compton in January 1676.^{vi} However, by February of the same year, the Lords of Trade had opted to confer all authority onto Compton.^{vii} By the next year, Compton was actively exerting that authority, and the Lords of Trade were passively allowing him to carry out ecclesiastical matters.^{viii} The backing by the Lords of Trade rather than by an ecclesiastical body further goes to show the political rather than canonical power behind the investiture of a bishop in the Americas.

Another issue that Compton faced was the desire in Virginia for the establishment of a diocese.^{ix} Emboldened by the backing from the Lords of Trade, Compton squelched this affront to his authority quickly and decisively, thereby showing that "episcopal guidance there must be exercised from England, or not at all."^x Governors in the Leeward Islands and Barbados made similar requests silenced not by Compton, but by the Lords of Trade themselves. With these major conflicts behind him, Compton secured authority in the English overseas colonies until his death in 1713.^{xi}

Compton's successor, John Robinson, made a series of poorly qualified appointments and made enemies of local governors.^{xii} His poor leadership weakened much of the confidence that the colonial leaders and laypeople had in the See of London. This lack of confidence was made fully apparent when the First Great Awakening sparked fire in the hearts of American parishioners.

Congregational Polity in American Churches Prior to an Episcopate

Preceding the First Great Awakening, the absence of a bishop in the American colonies gave rise to a growing importance of vestries, groups of men elected to represent the interests of a parish. Without bishops, Church taxes, and government support, parishes had

to rely on a vestry to function.^{xiii} The New England colonies provide an insightful cross section into how vestries functioned in the New World. In New England, Anglicans were the minority in the midst of many Congregationalists. This minority status gave way to interesting developments in church polity. Converts to the Anglican Church from Congregationalist and other dissenting groups greatly favored the vestry because they were able to acquire a voice similar to the one they exercised in the church they left.^{xiv} But those who remained in the Congregationalist churches were averse to the growth of the Church of England, thus forcing Anglican parishioners to pay taxes and arresting vestry members who protested on behalf of their parishioners.^{xv} Vestry members were so active in civil society that the Massachusetts legislature “acknowledged the wardens and vestrymen as the legal representatives of Episcopal [Anglican] churches.”^{xvi}

Besides advocating for their parishioners, vestries were also obligated to call men to be parish priests, a responsibility held solely by bishops in the British Isles.^{xvii} Initially, this process involved having men become lay readers who read sermons and homilies coinciding with the lectionary readings. However, a number of these men eventually travelled to England for ordination.^{xviii} As religious fervor spread in the First Great Awakening, more men sought Holy Orders, eventually leading to a division between American-born and British-born clergy around the mid-century. Financially independent churches, such as King’s Chapel and Trinity Church in Boston, could choose their own clergy, and, with the Bishop of London’s consent, they worked with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) to obtain British-born clergy.^{xix} However, churches in Newport and New Haven opposed the SPG and demanded the right to elect their own clergy from New England laity.^{xx} Notably, there was near ubiquitous aversion to Irish-born clergymen. For example, when the SPG sent one Rev. Mr. Lyons, an Irish clergyman, to Derby, Connecticut, his congregation formed a secret vestry without his knowledge and attempted to select another priest.^{xxi} Having been deposed in Derby, Lyons was reassigned to Long Island where parishioners stopped attending church until they had an American minister.^{xxii} It is important to note that these vestries were in communication with the See of London during this time.

A Growing Desire for an American Bishop Met with Political Problems

Such was the situation in the colonies in the early and mid-eighteenth century. This form of congregational polity combined with poor oversight by the Bishop of London led many to desire an American episcopate. The growing demands for American priests were hard to meet on account of the long, expensive, and perilous journey to Great Britain for an episcopal ordination.^{xxiii} Many in the colonies felt the need for a bishop on the American continent “to give direction, guidance, and cohesion, to say nothing of the advantage of such a person to ordain fresh recruits and insure an abundant supply of priests and deacons.”^{xxiv} Samuel Johnson of Stratford, Connecticut, championed the cause of the American episcopate, arguing for it from his conversion in 1722 to his death in 1772.^{xxv}

After he left the Congregationalist church for Anglicanism and received Holy Orders in England, Johnson and a few of the Americans ordained with him returned to the colonies “as missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.”^{xxvi} During his time in England, Johnson became friends with various influential figures, from the Duke of Newcastle to Thomas Secker, future Archbishop of Canterbury. Johnson utilized these connections first to attempt to gain a resident bishop in the colonies, and second, when the previous attempts had failed, to gain an itinerant bishop.^{xxvii} The opposition that Johnson faced repeatedly came from Dissenters (in the colonies and Great Britain alike) who lobbied against the installation of any bishop in the American colonies.^{xxviii} Their lobbying so greatly succeeded that even when Johnson’s close friend, Thomas Secker, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1758, the plan to have an American bishop was thoroughly stonewalled.^{xxix}

Dissenters and Puritans had opposed any form of the episcopate from early on in their formation, going so far as to execute the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud in 1645.^{xxx} In Great Britain and in her colonies, the Dissenters’ objections to bishops, although grounded in theology, were mainly political. Bishops, like St. Thomas Becket, Cardinal Wolsey, and Thomas Cranmer, had always played a prominent role in English politics. Although they were excluded from

the political sphere during the interregnum period (30 Jan 1649 – 29 May 1660), the Clergy Act of 1661 allowed them to return, and the Act of Union 1707 solidified their position in the House of Lords.

As such, bishops were regarded as servants not only of God, but also of the Crown. John Potter, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1737 to 1747, wrote a discourse on the Church and the Government, which was adored by those favoring the episcopate, most notably the previously mentioned Rev. Samuel Johnson, but loathed by Dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic.^{xxxvi} In his work, Potter espoused the ancient idea that bishops served as successors to the Apostles, thereby giving unity and order to the church, through having the “chief authority” in the Church.^{xxxvii} Furthermore, Potter argues, in the age following Constantine, the Church and the State were inseparably linked so that where the Lords of State ruled things temporal, the Lords of the Church ruled things spiritual.^{xxxviii}

The involvement of Church leaders in the political sphere can be traced to the years following the Norman Conquest. In this time, the kings of England were closely involved, if not in direct control, of filling episcopal offices.^{xxxix} Although the Freedom of Election Charter, signed by King John in November of 1214, legally vested the power of episcopal election in the cathedral chapters, the nominee of the king almost always was elected.^{xl} As the kings were involved in matters of the Church, the church leaders were involved in matters of state with bishops acting in various government affairs ranging from sitting in the king’s council to being emissaries of the crown and priests being employed by the court.^{xli}

In the American colonies, the Episcopalians in support of a bishop on the continent were not unaware of this bond between the Church and the State. Consequently, many Anglicans in the Americas appealed to Archbishop Potter in 1745-6, Bishop Sherlock 1748-50, and Archbishops Secker and Drummond as well as Bishop Trevor in the 1760s to advocate for them in the Parliament.^{xlii} However, because of this bond between the Church and the State, any attempts to form an American episcopate ultimately failed. Each attempt for an American episcopate was snuffed out not by leaders in the Church of England, but rather by lobbying dissenters or an “instinctive Whig anticlericalism” present in the Pelham administration.^{xliiii} The leaders in the Church of England were united in their support for a North American episcopate because the presence of bishops

in the colonies was seen as “essential for the health of the Anglican Church there.”^{xxxix} Even Archbishop Drummond acknowledged that the Bishop of London had no time to take care of the Plantations.^{xl} Nonetheless, each time a plea came from the colonies or a proposal from Church officials was voiced, the ministry successfully stifled any discussion of the pleas or debate of the proposals.^{xli}

In the Revolutionary Period, the close relationship between church and state became a contentious issue. One anonymous writer, seeking to resolve the issue of the tight bond of the Church and the State, wrote in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1778 that bishops could be elected by clergy and laity to be ordained by those in the apostolic line, as was the practice in Saxon times.^{xlii} Furthermore, this writer was aware of not only the Freedom of Elect Charter, signed by King John, but also a minor statute of Edward III and used these documents to argue further that the parishioners and their priests should elect their own bishops.^{xliii} Taylor further writes that the “vigorous colonial debate about episcopacy” can be seen as “one aspect of the ideological origins of the American Revolution.”^{xliv}

In this time, many still saw the bishop as necessary for the “spiritual functions connoted by the miter [the hat traditionally used in episcopal vestments],” but wanted to disavow the political functions represented by the scepter (associated with a bishop’s governmental obligations).^{xlv} When the Revolution had finished and the need for an American bishop was greater than it had ever been before. The state and national conventions of the 1780s drew up plans for a purely spiritual bishop, untethered to the state, as proposed by Johnson decades before. In this way, the American Revolution was crucial to the cause of the American episcopate because it severed the Church from the State that was inhibiting it. Due to concerns that any consecration would be seen by Americans as an attempt to subvert the fledgling republic, the English bishops were hesitant in the years directly following the Revolution. However, the bishops of Scotland showed no inhibition, having consecrated Samuel Seabury of Connecticut into the episcopate in 1785.^{xlvi} Following this consecration, the Bishops of England were more motivated to consecrate other bishops for the United States and ordained William White and Samuel Provoost in the late 1780s.^{xlvii} These new American bishops could neither form nor participate in ecclesiastical courts or nominate individuals for ordination, a job given to parish vestries.^{xlviii} They were, however, more

democratic and favored less pomp than their English counterparts, with Seabury wearing a miter only on a few occasions and White and Provost never wearing one during their careers, while none of these first three bishops used a crosier.^{xlix}

Conclusion

The establishment of an American episcopate was an objective sought out by English and American clergy and laity since the time of William Laud. However, proponents had difficulty achieving this objective while the American colonies were still under the Crown due to several reasons. First, the Metropolitan Bishop of London had jurisdiction over the colonies. Second, the union of the Church of England to the English government, which allowed for lobbying from outside groups like the Puritans and the Dissenters, limited the efforts of those advocating for an American episcopate. Finally, stonewalling by anti-clerical politicians, such as those in the Pelham administration, made it difficult for an episcopate to be formed while the colonies were under British control. After the Revolution, the Church of England was free to consecrate bishops in the United States because the English government no longer had authority there. One could speculate about whether or not the American colonies would ever have received a bishop had they stayed loyal to the crown, being cognizant of the British dominions, such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, that eventually got bishops. Nevertheless, in the history of the United States, the episcopacy of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America is inseparable from the Revolution of the American colonies.

NOTES

- ¹ “History of the American Church,” Episcopal Church, June 5, 2013, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/history-american-church>.
- ² Ian T. Douglas, “Anglican Mission in Changing Times: A Brief Institutional History of the Episcopal Church, USA,” in *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times*, by David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 188–97.
- ³ Bordon W. Painter, “The Vestry In Colonial New England,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 44, no. 4 (1975): 381–408.
- ⁴ J. H. Bennett and Anthony H. Forbes, “English Bishops and Imperial Jurisdiction 1660-1725,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 32, no. 3 (1963): 175–188.
- ⁵ Bennett and Forbes.
- ⁶ “Journal of the Lords of Trade and Plantations [1 of 3],” *The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: North America and the West Indies 1574-1739 09* (January 21, 1676): 337–38.
- ⁷ “Report of the Lords of Trade and Plantations to the King. Whitehall,” *The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: North America and the West Indies 1574-1739 09* (February 3, 1676): 346.
- ⁸ Compton, “Memorial of Abuses Which Are Crept into the Churches of the Plantations Presented to the Lords of Trade and Plantations,” *The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: North America and the West Indies 1574-1739 10* (July 17, 1677): 117; “Lords of Trade and Plantations to Colonel William Stapleton. Whitehall,” *The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial: North America and the West Indies 1574-1739 10* (November 1, 1677): 174.
- ⁹ Philip S. Haffenden, “The Anglican Church in Restoration Colonial Policy,” in *Seventeenth-Century America*, by James Morton Smith (Chapel Hill, 1959), 179–80.
- ¹⁰ “MISCELLANY,” Lambeth Palace Library: Database of Manuscripts and Archives, accessed April 21, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/LambethMISC>; Bennett and Forbes, “Bishops and Jurisdiction.”
- ¹¹ “Compton, Henry (1631/2–1713), Bishop of London | Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,” accessed February 28, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/ComptonBiography>.

- ¹² Bennett and Forbes, “Bishops and Jurisdiction.”
- ¹³ Painter, “The Vestry In Colonial New England.”
- ¹⁴ Ibid. 381
- ¹⁵ Ibid. 386
- ¹⁶ Ibid. 391
- ¹⁷ Ibid. 396
- ¹⁸ F. L. Hawks and W. S. Perry, *Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. A. Concerning the Church in Connecticut*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (New York: James Pott, 1863).
- ¹⁹ Painter, “The Vestry In Colonial New England.”
- ²⁰ Ibid. 399.
- ²¹ Hawks and Perry, *Documentary History*, 209.
- ²² F. L. Hawks and W. S. Perry, *Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. A. Concerning the Church in Connecticut*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (New York: James Pott, 1863).
- ²³ Edgar Legare Pennington, “Some Observations Regarding the Colonial Clergy,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 10, no. 1 (1941): 45–56.
- ²⁴ Ibid. 54
- ²⁵ Don R. Gerlach, “Champions of an American Episcopate: Thomas Secker of Canterbury and Samuel Johnson of Connecticut,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 41, no. 4 (1972): 381–414.
- ²⁶ Ibid. 382
- ²⁷ Arthur Lyons Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1924).
- ²⁸ Gerlach, “Champions of an American Episcopate.”
- ²⁹ Ibid. 396
- ³⁰ “Laud, William (1573–1645), Archbishop of Canterbury | Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,” accessed April 26, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/LaudBiography>.
- ³¹ John Potter, *A Discourse of Church-Government: Wherein the Rights of the Church, and the Supremacy of Christian Princes, Are Vindicated and Adjusted.*, The second edition corrected. (London, 1711), <https://tinyurl.com/ChurchGovernmentDiscourse>.
- ³² Ibid. 144
- ³³ Ibid. 211
- ³⁴ Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000 - 1066. A Constitutional History* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1963) 137.

³⁵ Katherine Harvey, 'Magna Carta Project - Feature of the Month - The Freedom of Election Charter', The Magna Carta Project, August 2014, http://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk/read/feature_of_the_month/Aug_2014; cf. Frederick V. Mills, 'Mitre without Sceptre: An Eighteenth Century Ecclesiastical Revolution', *Church History* 39, no. 3 (1970): 365–71, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3163470>.

³⁶ Barlow, *The English Church*.

³⁷ Stephen Taylor, 'Whigs, Bishops and America: The Politics of Church Reform in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 333.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 334

³⁹ *Ibid.* 335, cf. page 343

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 337

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 343

⁴² Anonymous, "To the CLERGY and LAITY of the CHURCH Formerly Established in VIRGINIA.," *Virginia Gazette*, April 24, 1778, <http://www.accessible.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/accessible/print>.

⁴³ Anonymous 'To the CLERGY and LAITY'; for statue of Edward III see W Sparrow Simpson, 'Statutes (Baldock and Lisieux): Pars Septima, Cap. 1-12', in *Registrum Statutorum et Consuetudinum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Sancti Pauli Londiniensis* (London: Nichols and Sons, 1873), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/st-pauls-register/pp112-148>.

⁴⁴ Taylor, "Whigs, Bishops and America."

⁴⁵ Mills, "Mitre without Sceptre."

⁴⁶ Anonymous, "Copy of a Letter from New London Connecticut to a Gentleman in London," *Morning Herald*, March 7, 1786, <https://tinyurl.com/LetterCopy1786>.

⁴⁷ Mills, "Mitre without Sceptre."

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 368-9

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 361

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This paper, “The Canary in the Eugenics Coal Mine,” inquires to what extent modern advancements in genetic medicine represent a resurgence of eugenic practices. One example of a current medical advancement is the genetic screening of fetuses to detect chromosomal disorders such as trisomy-21, or Down syndrome. The primary thesis of this paper argues that when coupled with the termination of fetuses who were diagnosed with Down syndrome, genetic screening becomes reflective of infamous eugenic practices due to the presence of ableism. Genetic screening, therefore, can function as a “canary in the eugenics coal mine,” warning that modern medical advancements may be leading to a reappearance of unethical eugenic practices.

The Canary in the Eugenics Coal Mine

Sarah Jones

Eugenics is commonly described as an outdated process of discrimination that attempts to manipulate natural selection through the encouraged and occasionally coerced selective breeding of humans for subjectively favorable traits. Nazi Germany’s radical use of eugenics made it infamous, thus deterring further consideration of its scientific potential following World War II (1939-1945). Recent debates have surfaced, however, deliberating to what extent current advances in genetic medicine represent a resurgence of eugenics. One example of a modern advancement in genetic medicine is the genetic screening of fetuses to detect chromosomal disorders such as trisomy-21. Nevertheless, based upon the existence of ableism, or the discrimination of others based upon ability, within this genetic screening, it can be argued that the voluntary termination of fetuses who underwent contemporary genetic screening for trisomy-21 is reflective of infamous eugenic practices. Based upon the modern treatment of disabilities, it can then be argued that the voluntary termination of

fetuses who underwent contemporary genetic screening for disabilities such as trisomy-21 is reflective of infamous eugenic practices due to its promotion of ableism.

The process of eugenics as it applies to the disabled can be gleaned from eugenic practices prior to World War II. Francis Galton—cousin to evolutionary theorist, Charles Darwin—coined the term “eugenics” in the late nineteenth-century.¹ His work was heavily influenced by his cousin’s *On the Origin of Species*, in which Darwin described natural selection as the process by which organisms more adapted to their environment survive and reproduce, thereby preserving more profitable variations in species.² As Darwin noted, man had been manipulating natural selection for centuries through controlled breeding of various animal species in a practice he entitled artificial selection.³ To Galton, this artificial selection ought not only be used in animal populations, but human populations, as well. He contended that through artificial selection, natural selection could be manipulated in humankind.⁴ Galton’s objectives for this artificial selection in man included “to check the birth-rate of the Unfit [sic], instead of allowing them to come into being,” and to encourage “the improvement of the race by furthering the productivity of the Fit [sic] by early marriages and healthful rearing of their children.”⁵ Galton relied upon Mendelian heritability to preserve qualities that characterized “Fit” individuals, or those who possessed subjectively favorable traits. These traits might have included physical and mental conditions that were considered superior to others, such as athleticism or intelligence, and were thus preserved in order to improve upon the genetics of future generations. If educational programs or government regulated legislation could prevent those deemed “Unfit” from contributing to the gene pool, then “those only of the best stock” would remain to reproduce. It was this process that Galton entitled “eugenics.”⁶

Though eugenics is primarily thought to target specific races, the groups of people who were deemed “Unfit” by eugenicists also included those regarded as threats to racial purity, such as the mentally disabled. Eugenicists such as Galton notably disdained the “feble-minded,” especially due to the prominence of the theory of “degenerationism.” As exemplified in Stephen Gould’s “Mismeasure of Man,” degenerationism acted as a popular form of scientific racism prior to Darwin’s evolutionary theory, which claimed that “races have declined to different degrees” from “Eden’s perfection.”⁷

Feeble-mindedness was considered to be among the most prominent “degenerate, heritable” traits that characterized these inferior races, corroborated by the commonly held belief that intelligence was inherited from previous generations.⁸ Even after the introduction of Darwin’s evolutionary theory, eugenicists regarded feeble-mindedness as a trait that, if not obstructed from the breeding pool, could “manifest itself in crime, pauperism, and immorality,” as portrayed by Henry H. Goddard’s myth of the Kallikak Family.⁹ Goddard’s myth sought to admonish the breeding of mentally deficient individuals by describing the abysmal progeny produced by such “illicit unions.”¹⁰ Continuing to allow this kind of unchecked breeding of such mentally deficient individuals would result in an extensive progeny burdened by a “biological, social, and moral decline” that would “[drag] down the overall fitness of the population.”¹¹ This notion was especially concerning since, prior to the popularization of IQ testing, mental disabilities were not as identifiable as individuals of different races. Eugenicists could more easily discourage and socially stigmatize interracial reproduction in order to retain racial purity, but feeble-mindedness introduced a nearly invisible threat to the preservation of a Fit race. Therefore, eugenicists viewed those characterized as feeble-minded, specifically the mentally disabled, as a primary threat against racial purity and their Fit society.

Among the mentally disabled targeted by eugenicists were individuals diagnosed with trisomy-21, also known as Down syndrome. The syndrome was first officially diagnosed in the mid-nineteenth century, having been previously referred to as “Mongolian idiocy,” and it is highly considered to be the most distinguishable, known mental disability.¹² Down syndrome typically arises from a “chromosome defect” in a fetus involving an extra copy of chromosome 21, which results in “physical abnormalities” such as a short stature and broad face and “intellectual impairment” comparable to the feeble-mindedness disdained by eugenicists. The distinctive facial features associated with Down syndrome patients distinguish them among the crowd, meaning that those diagnosed were often quickly estranged from the Fit population and were thus more likely to be discriminated against by eugenic practices.

The eugenic practices utilized to neutralize the threat of disabilities such as Down syndrome stemmed from an outward manifestation of ableism. The actions most eugenicists took against the Unfit

population typically included educational programs, institutionalization, government legislations, and forced sterilization of those with hereditary disabilities, but the most radical actions were undertaken by the Third Reich. Nazi forces resorted to euthanizing disabled individuals in a eugenic act that Hitler deemed “merciful”.¹³ Despite the variations in eugenic practices, the core logic remained: the lives of the disabled were considered to be less valuable than those of subjectively Fit individuals. The disabled lacked qualities of life that most able-bodied people would regard as indispensable, namely autonomy and full functionality of the body. By lacking such qualities, the perceived value of their lives diminished, for they could not competently contribute to society and instead acted as a burden to others. This mentality developed from a “social construction” that sought to determine what was “normal,” which in turn fostered prejudices against those categorized as “abnormal,” including both the physically and mentally disabled.¹⁴ This discrimination of others based upon disability, or ableism, was the mentality that motivated eugenic practices in regard to the disabled prior to World War II. Eugenicists implemented their practices not only to prevent disabilities from manifesting into “crime, pauperism, and immorality” in future generations, but also to impede the inheritance of traits that ableism-influenced ideals determined were abnormalities.¹⁵ Following World War II, these eugenic practices became more notoriously equivalent to racism or discrimination. Therefore, both the general population and varying government facilities deemed most eugenic practices as immoral and promptly terminated their operations. Ableism, however, persisted. Assigning “inferior value and worth to persons with disabilities” is predominantly a belief system, not a definitive practice, so impeding eugenic practices did not eliminate the mindset that motivated them.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the continued presence of such ableist mentalities paved the way for future developments in eugenic practices. Historians such as Nathaniel Comfort argue that advancements in genetic medicine represent a resurgence of eugenics. Scientists have championed novel methods for gene editing as a means to end disease or even bring about the “transformation of humanity into a new and better species,” which possesses undertones of a eugenic mentality.¹⁷ Advocates for this new genetic medicine agree that these advancements are somewhat reflective of eugenics. They argue, however, that, contrary to the “morally repugnant eugenics” of the past, this

genetic medicine is “an avenue for alleviating individual suffering since it targets the Unfit genes that cause suffering in the population, as opposed to the Unfit individuals.”¹⁸ They assert that modern eugenics represents a medical approach to improving the human condition that does not rely upon the discriminatory sentiments held by previous eugenicists, but on efforts to increase the overall quality of human life. Yet Comfort contends that the advocates’ viewpoint relies on the notion that this medical approach is wholly “compassionate” instead of “misanthropic.” Alleviating suffering through genetic medicine may simply be a byproduct of a broader focus towards obtaining “human perfection.”¹⁹ Indeed, who can objectively decide what is considered perfect, and what happens to the individuals considered imperfect? There appears to be a fine line between the relieving of human suffering and the striving towards human perfection. Regardless, both advocates and opponents to genetic medicine apparently agree that recent technological advancements represent a resurgence of eugenics, yet they disagree as to what extent modern eugenics embodies infamous eugenic practices.

In regard to individuals with Down syndrome, however, genetic medicine has indeed retained the eugenic mentalities of the pre-World War II era due to the continued presence of ableism. Among the technological medical advancements that have harkened a resurgence of eugenics is the pre-natal screening of fetuses for Down syndrome. Pre-natal screening is an arguably beneficial asset for expecting parents since it allows them to prepare to accommodate the varying needs of a differently-abled child. Opponents argue, however, that the use of screening derives from a “manifestation of ableist attitudes.”²⁰ The screening alone suggests a need to differentiate between the abled and the disabled, but when coupled with abortion, the act becomes highly reminiscent of eugenic practices. Previously, eugenics were mainly enforced by government legislations and eugenic agencies, but contemporary medicine has corroborated the belief that “individuals have the right, and should have the means, to take steps to prevent giving birth to ‘unfit’ children.”²¹ Pre-natal screening differentiates between the Fit and Unfit, and then physicians provide parents the choice whether or not to “go ahead with pregnancies likely to result in physically or mentally handicapped offspring.”²² The physical and mental impairments of those with Down syndrome is considered so undesirable that some advocates of this practice may

consider it merciful. Such a process, however, embodies an ableistic discrimination against those who are thought to have a lesser quality of life, since it is coupled with the eradication of these individuals. Additionally, in this practice, the new eugenic medicine is not, in fact, targeting Unfit genes, but is again focused upon eliminating Unfit individuals, which is reminiscent of the “morally repugnant,” Nazi-enforced eugenics of the early-twentieth century.

Furthermore, these practices represent pre-World War II eugenics since the modern eugenic aim towards improving the human condition is unattainable through pre-natal screening and the voluntary termination of fetuses diagnosed with Down syndrome. This is primarily because terminating fetuses positively screened for Down syndrome does not reduce the probability that future fetuses will also develop the syndrome, it only acts as a preventative measure to reduce the number of children born who are considered Unfit.²³ As previously mentioned, Down syndrome arises from a “chromosome defect” that is primarily not inheritable. The most common type of Down syndrome is trisomy-21, in which the diagnosed individual has an extra copy of chromosome 21 throughout their cells. This type of Down syndrome accounts for approximately 95% of all cases and is non-hereditary, since it occurs due to random mutations or developmental errors in the parent’s reproductive cells. Mosaic Down syndrome occurs in about 2% of cases when only a portion of the individual’s cells possess an extra copy of chromosome 21, and it is also considered to be non-hereditary. These types of Down syndrome have only been partially correlated with older age in the mother since older women are more prone to spontaneous mutations and errors in cell development, but any other external contributing factors are, as of now, undetermined.²⁴ Robertsonian Translocation Down syndrome, therefore, remains the only type of Down syndrome that is believed to be hereditary, affecting about 3% of cases. This type of Down syndrome occurs when a part or a whole extra copy of chromosome 21 is translocated, or attached, to another chromosome. This is also referred to as familial Down syndrome, since other relatives are often carriers of this translocation. Nevertheless, the offspring of these carriers do not always have Down syndrome, and can in fact have normal karyotypes. Furthermore, Robertsonian translocation can also be the result of spontaneous mutations – similar to trisomy-21 and mosaic Down syndrome – which is not heritable.²⁵

Consequently, approximately more than 97% of the cases of Down syndrome are non-hereditary, meaning that terminating fetuses diagnosed with Down syndrome does not reduce the likelihood that future fetuses will also develop the syndrome. These subjectively undesirable traits are therefore not eradicated, but repressed, meaning that potentially no genes are edited in the process. Modern eugenicists cannot yet improve upon the human condition by targeting Down syndrome because they are not targeting heritable, Unfit genes, but, as previously noted, are targeting Unfit individuals (which they claim is the differentiating point between infamous practices and their own). Since they are not improving upon human genetics, they are not reducing individual suffering, but only the amount of people who are currently suffering. Hitler attained the same result through his euthanizing programs. Furthermore, the belief that Down syndrome is equivalent to suffering is a subjective opinion, highly influenced by the ableistic view that the disabled are of “inferior value.”²⁶ It is in this way that pre-natal screening combined with abortion largely exemplifies pre-World War II eugenics. The difference, however, is that there is scientific evidence that suggests that Down syndrome is not primarily heritable. If genetic medicine is not acting upon the notion that the human condition can be biologically improved, then it must be proceeding through ingrained sentiments of discrimination. This notion may hold dire implications for the underlying intentions of other practices in genetic medicine.

Overall, eugenics sought to classify human beings as either Fit or Unfit, which required subjective interpretations on what qualities of life were deemed more valuable than others.²⁷ Prior to World War II, eugenics manifested itself through discrimination of the Unfit, which included “inferior” races, the feeble-minded, and the disabled. Although current medical genetics does not seem to have retained such discriminatory sentiments towards different races, the continuation of ableism has sustained pre-World War II eugenic discrimination in regard to the disabled. The desire “to explain human nature in terms of heredity” has developed technological feats that have managed to revolutionize eugenic practices, as the fine line between reducing suffering and improving the human species has become blurred. Whether or not all forms of genetic medicine represent a resurgence in discriminatory eugenic practices is highly contestable, but the voluntary termination of fetuses who underwent pre-natal

screening for Down syndrome is indeed reflective of the infamous eugenics' ideology, since it is a result of an ableistic mentality. As disabilities advocate, Frank Stephens, claims, the abortion of individuals with Down syndrome may, in fact, function as a "canary in the eugenics coal mine," warning that current advances in eugenic medicine may eventually lead to the reappearance of the unethical eugenic practices of the early-twentieth century.²⁸ As long as genetic medicine continues to discriminate between subjectively favorable individuals, ableism towards individuals with Down syndrome may be one of the first of many discriminatory sentiments to arise in the future advancements of eugenic medicine.

NOTES

- ¹ Nathaniel Comfort, *The Science of Human Perfection: How Genes Became the Heart of American Medicine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 1-28
- ² Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- ³ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- ⁴ Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, "Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- ⁵ Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life* (London: Meuthuen, 1908), 323.
- ⁶ Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life* (London: Meuthuen, 1908), 323.
- ⁷ Stephen Jay Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company).
- ⁸ Stephen Jay Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company).
- ⁹ Mathew Thomson, "Disability, Psychiatry, and Eugenics," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- ¹⁰ Stephen Jay Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company).
- ¹¹ Mathew Thomson, "Disability, Psychiatry, and Eugenics," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- ¹² Nathaniel Comfort, *The Science of Human Perfection: How Genes Became the Heart of American Medicine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 95.
- ¹³ Mathew Thomson, "Disability, Psychiatry, and Eugenics," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁴ Wendy Kline, “Eugenics in the United States,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Mathew Thomson, “Disability, Psychiatry, and Eugenics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ “Ableism,” in *Faith in Action: A Handbook for Activists, Advocates, and Allies*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2017), 35-38.

¹⁷ National Comfort, “Genes are Overrated,” *The Atlantic*, June 2016, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/06/genes-are-overrated/480729/>.

¹⁸ Nathaniel Comfort, *The Science of Human Perfection: How Genes Became the Heart of American Medicine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹⁹ Nathaniel Comfort, *The Science of Human Perfection: How Genes Became the Heart of American Medicine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

²⁰ “Ableism,” in *Faith in Action: A Handbook for Activists, Advocates, and Allies*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2017), 35-38.

²¹ Susanne Klausen and Alison Bashford, “Fertility Control: Eugenics, Neo-Malthusianism, and Feminism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²² Mathew Thomson, “Disability, Psychiatry, and Eugenics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²³ “Ableism,” in *Faith in Action: A Handbook for Activists, Advocates, and Allies*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2017), 35-38.

²⁴ “Facts about Down Syndrome,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/downsyndrome.html#ref>

²⁵ “Facts about Down Syndrome,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/downsyndrome.html#ref>

²⁶ “Ableism,” in *Faith in Action: A Handbook for Activists, Advocates, and Allies*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2017), 35-38.

²⁷ Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, “Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁸ Frank Stephens’ Opening Statement on Down Syndrome, C-SPAN.Org, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4687834/frank-stephens-opening-statement-syndrome>.

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David Horowitz was an American communist-turned-New Leftist and initially a vocal member in promoting the Movement. He eventually abandoned the Movement and New Left entirely when the young radicals turned toward violence. Horowitz later emerged as a loud voice of condemnation, and now places himself firmly on the Right side of the political spectrum. Though his present, conservative lens may be seen as negatively biased in his retrospective appraisals of the young radicals, David Horowitz nonetheless offers an intimate perspective on the New Left. In considering his present and past views, preserved in the vast array of works he has written throughout his life, I assess the shortfalls of the New Left that led to the Movement's end.

The Tragedy of Commitment: David Horowitz and the Downfall of the New Left

Amelia Tidwell

The American decade of the 1960s often evokes ideas of open-air concerts, experimentation with drugs, and young people breaking out of the constrictive mold society imposed during the first half of the twentieth century. Those who remember much from their high-school U.S. history class likely add the civil rights movement to that picture, though the two movements seem rather distinct and separate from each other, both in racial composition and purpose—young whites simply rebelling from their parents and societal norms versus African Americans of all ages rallying to a necessary cause and demanding full enjoyment and protection of citizenship rights. The missing link between the two, tying the long decade into a messy bow, is the political rebellion known as the New Left.

To say that the counterculture, the civil rights movement, and the New Left are separate would be to misread the era. Although each had different starting dates—all of which can be contested—and a distinct goal or motivating drive, the three

revolutions influenced each other and exemplified the *Zeitgeist* of a decade of American unrest. The counterculture was a youth rebellion that rejected societal norms, the civil rights movement introduced new methods of activism in pursuit of racial equality, and the New Left was composed of young political rebels who sought to lead America into a new era. The distinct reasons for these rebellions, however, deserve a closer look.

The counterculture, the participants of which are better known as hippies, sought to return to the purity of nature and communal living and to find higher meaning in the use of drugs. The counterculture set the scene early in the 1960s for young people to break away from the status quo. While hippies looked for simplicity outside urban life, the civil rights movement and the New Left focused on political problems within the cities.¹ The civil rights movement rose from continued denial of African Americans' basic citizenship rights and lack of political or social power to make a change and bring about true equality. It insisted on the enforcement and protection of the rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The civil rights movement gained traction through the peaceful vision of total integration proposed by Dr. Martin Luther King Junior. When this movement eventually split, the emerging group shifted towards a militant and separatist path. Despite the desire of separatist groups to solve problems with violence, the civil rights movement and King's peaceful legacy changed the social fabric of the nation and the lives of African Americans for the better. The New Left was motivated by disillusion with the failures they saw in capitalist America, and its participants were tired of what they saw to be a painfully slow progress toward a better world. It combined the counterculture's belief in youthful insight and rejection of the status quo and activist tactics from the civil rights movement to become a political force during the long decade of the 1960s.

There were, of course, other movements, such as the rise of conservatism that eventually made its way into the spotlight shortly after the fall of the New Left. Those are not the focus of this essay, however, and even the influence of the counterculture and the civil rights movement will only be briefly touched upon as they relate to the New Left and the experiences

of David Horowitz. This essay dives deeply into the evolving perspectives of Horowitz in order to consider the interweaving issues that ultimately brought down the short-lived New Left before it could achieve its revolutionary goals.

Perhaps among the most infamous insights into the American Left comes from David Horowitz, an avid New Leftist turned conservative. His experience spans a century of political movements, from the Old Left to the New and then into conservatism and the Right. He puts his literature degree to use as a highly vocal member of each political ideology to which he has adhered, leaving quite a number of works written from every political viewpoint he has held. Retroactive biases are difficult to avoid, whether one is looking back fondly or critically on the politics of the past, but Horowitz's unabashed condemnation of his own past has evoked strong responses from former comrades and those who disagree with the claims he now makes as an outspoken member of the Right. He is called "smarmy" and "backhanded" in his portrayal of the Left, and some argue that Horowitz's memories are merely of the "lunatic fringe" and do not represent the "seriously intentioned leftists" of the sixties.² Though a large portion of Horowitz's work is written from his present conservative standpoint, he nonetheless offers an intimate look at some of the strongest American political waves of the twentieth century. By analyzing the far-ranging political perspectives of David Horowitz concerning the 1960s and comparing them to conclusions reached by others across the political spectrum, the New Left is exposed as an idealistic movement that was far from novel and ultimately destroyed itself, but which left a lasting mark on the nation.

The New Left

The New Left emerged in the late 1950s, arguably around 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev's public revelation of Joseph Stalin's crimes as the leader of the Soviet Union—the nation idealized by communists around the globe—shattered the faith of what came to be known as the Old Left.³ Others push that genesis date a few years forward to the start of the student sit-ins in February of 1960, which sparked the most important

quality of the New Left: activism.⁴ Still others suggest that the 1960 Port Huron Statement, which marked the beginning of Students for Democratic Society (SDS), is the true point at which the New Left arose as a clear movement.⁵ Regardless of when one definitively dates the beginning of the Movement—the term commonly used to refer to the New Left’s political activity—a few things are clear: the New Left was an international political movement that was comprised of young people who were dissatisfied with the progress society had made and therefore turned to activism, protest, and eventually radical extremism.

The New Left was hardly cohesive, a characteristic mark of the Movement’s rejection of formal, hierarchical organizations of power. Despite the pop-up effect of New Left groups around the nation and their differing goals, a few themes kept them unified as one broad Movement. The young rebels distrusted those in charge, from adults to universities to the government itself. They sought the voice they felt had been suppressed as well as freedom of expression. The young New Leftists fought against racism, oppression, capitalism, and the war, while fighting for equality and supporting the downtrodden.⁶ The New Left sought to do all of this in a hands-on way, and this commitment to activism is what historian and SDS member Staughton Lynd identified as their most distinct feature.⁷ Put simply, they wanted to “live in the rebellion.”⁸

Though many young activists believed they were forging a new revolutionary path, clear similarities exist between the New Left and their communist predecessors. The Old Left was filled with radical progressives like the parents of David Horowitz, who committed their lives to the ideals listed above and did so by completely rejecting the society in which they lived in favor of a new governmental structure. The Old Left was accused, contrary to their clearly active successors, of sitting around “until ‘after the revolution’” to make changes to the quality of life lived in America. In actuality, the Old Left helped make serious strides in areas such as labor and race while preparing for their ultimate goal, the toppling of the capitalist state.⁹

Members of the Old Left called for many of the re-

forms and methods adopted by New Leftists before the young rebels entered the political scene. In the 1940s, participatory behavior was identified as an absolute necessity for keeping democracy alive. In 1950, it was suggested that the new generation coming of age, untouched by the difficulties of the Great Depression and two world wars, needed a new spark of radicalism to pick up where the American communists had failed. Despite the young radicals' rejection of older generations and the New Left's desire to make a name for itself distinct from the Old Left, the budding activists were often mentored by older liberals and leftists, especially toward the beginning of the Movement. For example, Mario Savio received advice from an old follower of Leon Trotsky—one of the leading Russian revolutionaries—during Savio's spotlight role in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, which is now cited as a quintessential example of early New Left activism against authority.¹⁰

The New Left sought to distinguish itself from progressives of the past, both to its benefit and disadvantage. The distinction was at once a necessity in order to separate its new vitality from the moral tragedies of Stalinism and a choice in order to prove themselves “psychologically liberated.”¹¹ David Horowitz notes that the choice to start fresh under a new name rather than attempting to clean up the reputation of the old gave the young rebels a sense of freedom:

We no longer had the vulnerability of our parents. As members of a new radical generation, our political identity was virginal: We had the benefit of everybody's doubt. We could position ourselves as radical critics of American society without having to defend the crimes committed by the Soviet bloc. We could present ourselves as concerned civil libertarians without having to answer for the ghosts of Stalin's victims. And we could express our moral outrage at Communist excesses.¹²

At the same time, however, the young activists sequestered themselves off from the rest of the world, and even the rest of the Left, arguably limiting their success by doing so. They placed “self-imposed limits” on themselves, such as generational restrictions when they said, “Don't trust anyone over thir-

ty.” The New Left widened the gap between itself and the rest of society by embracing the physical manifestations of youth rebellion in the latter half of the sixties, similarly to the counterculture movement.¹³ The political youth revolt also placed an emphasis on working outside “The System” they so abhorred, which was a step away from the typical liberal inclination to make gradual changes within the system already in place. This placed the New Left at odds with society as a whole.¹⁴

David Horowitz

A self-proclaimed “Radical Son,” David Horowitz was raised with an intimate understanding of life as a dedicated communist by parents who belonged to the Old Left that deeply impacted the New Left to which he converted. He witnessed the way that political ties could overtake a person like a cultish religion in his parents, who viewed the communist Party as their “personal salvation” and believed they were living on the “intoxicating air of a world revolution.”¹⁵ Horowitz passionately took on the “special burden” of his parents, truly believing that their daily struggle as American communists living in secrecy was necessary to make the world a better place.¹⁶ He watched his parents reject the society from which they benefited as members of a comfortable, suburban middle class, only to see their world shattered when the Khrushchev Report exposed the dark truths of Stalinist Russia—the communist ideal to which his parents had dedicated their lives.¹⁷ That was not, however, the breaking point that pushed Horowitz to the other end of the political spectrum, where he still lies today. Rather, Horowitz only abandoned the Left completely when he saw the dangers in the militant and destructive path down which the New Left had turned. Prior to that break, however, his younger self saw the budding New Left as an opportunity to bring his parents’ “beautiful Idea” to life in a better way, and he “joined the others in our generation who were setting out to rescue the Idea from the taint of the past and create a Left that was new.”¹⁸

Horowitz frequently painted a romantic picture of the progressive ideal in his older works, but from his conservative stance today he demonstrates the problems with that romanti-

cism. Horowitz presents the New Left as having an unnaturally picturesque goal of achieving human perfection and harmony. He does so in order to elicit an understanding of what he now sees as an impossible fantasy that drove him and his peers in the 1960s—the “fantasy of a future that made us so blind.”¹⁹ His language when looking back on the radicals, both of the Old Left and the New, is quite telling of the delusion he claims drove the revolutionaries. He notes an “intoxication with ideas” and a “Marxist romance” that caused a “disabling effect” in the ability of the old progressives to perceive reality. He describes the “revolutionary fantasy” that took over the lives of left-leaning activists during the 20th century, both in his parents’ generation and his own.²⁰ He frequently uses the word “reality” when he seeks to correct revisionist memories and what he calls “left illusions,” the title of one of Horowitz’s books in which he tracks his own ideological conversion through the evolution of his writings. Horowitz dedicates an entire chapter to deconstructing the mythical, literary, and romantic ideology that characterized many progressives in *Left Illusions*. His works are an effort to tell “[w]hat actually happened” from his new, conservative perspective, shining a light on the “revisionist” attempts of his former leftist comrades.²¹ He is not just critical of people and ideologies with whom he had no connection; Horowitz was an outspoken member of the New Left prior to his transition to the Right, and he often critiques his own works as well as the beliefs he once personally bought into. His past and present works are oppositely biased, but nonetheless offer an intimate view of the New Left from both the perspective of a member of the Movement and as a self-reflecting critic. Horowitz presents the problem of blind commitment as a tragic aspect of the New Left in his retrospective, modern writings.

Commitment to the Movement took priority over anything else in many 1960s activists’ lives, which mimicked the mindset of early-twentieth-century dedicated communists. Horowitz exemplified this strong bond to activism with a story about a friend at Berkeley who left his ex-wife raising their son alone on the other side of the country in order to return to what the friend called “the center of the world-historical spirit” at Berkeley.²² David Horowitz offers his childhood as a “red-

diaper baby” as an example of this blind dedication and lack of self-reflection in *Radical Son*. He watched his parents desperately cling to their Party ties as if their ideological convictions were their sole identity. He also reminds a former comrade who still obstinately and unquestionably holds onto the New Left faith how a person can lose themselves to a radical cause in “Letter to a Political Friend,” a chapter in *Destructive Generation*.²³ The life story of Horowitz’ father exemplifies the repercussions of retreating so far into a movement that it affects every part of one’s life. His father, similarly to many of Horowitz’s comrades, adhered to Communist Party beliefs rather than forming critical personal convictions, which led to a conflict between the truth and party politics and decisions.²⁴ It caused a rift between father and son, as Horowitz’ father could not approve of his decision to reject the Communist Party and join the nascent New Left. Even when his father broke official ties with the Party due to mistreatment, he refused to take the opportunity to reevaluate its principles.²⁵ Horowitz recalls of his parents that, “[t]o the end of their days, they remained incapable of real self-reflection about the radical commitments that had defined their lives. In this way they were typical among the inhabitants of the progressive ghetto, who believed in their truth with a ferociousness that left no room for dissent.”²⁶ In this way too, the radical New Leftists failed to set themselves apart from their predecessors.

Though he did not make an immediate leap to the other side of the aisle, a chronological look at Horowitz’ writings at the New Left publication *Ramparts*, beginning in 1968, tracks his commitment to the Movement gradually morphing into concern with the direction the New Left was beginning to take. His “Southeast Asia” article (March 1968) revealed the New Left’s valuation of forging one’s own path by praising North Korea for rejecting the meddling forces of the Soviet Union, China, and “the American colossus,” instead making a “phoenix-like” ascension to communist success on its own.²⁷ His “Litton Industries” article (December 1968) remained true to the Movement’s suspicion of concentrated power by tearing apart the defense of conglomerate corporations and fiercely defending the need for the enlightened to protest.²⁸ In “The Foundations” (April 1969),

Horowitz admonished moderate tendencies to play into the hands of the wealthy elite, and he denounced the philanthropic coalitions that created what his future self would consider to be a proper course of action—job training and hiring—rather than redistributing wealth like the young rebels desired at the time.²⁹ In September of 1969, however, Horowitz became critical of what he called “Marxism of the hand-me-down variety.”³⁰ Though he by no means denied the communist roots of the New Left movement, he encouraged his fellow activists to embrace their heritage while forging their own path to a lasting success, distinct from the path of their communist predecessors. Then in his “Revolutionary Karma vs. Revolutionary Politics” article (March 1971), Horowitz explained the serious issues with the Weathermen and their approach. He warned of the dire consequences of confusing the political with the spiritual, and the rational with the ideal.³¹ What finally broke his commitment to the cause, however, was a betrayal that temporarily pushed him out of politics altogether.

The New Left in a way mirrored and idealized the civil rights movement. The southern student sit-ins inspired acts of solidarity in the north and rallied white activists to the cause of the poor and oppressed southern blacks. When at the end of the decade the Black Panther Party arose and “Black Power” began to rival the peaceful integrationist attempts of Martin Luther King, Jr., the New Left again rushed to support it. The young Horowitz was eager to contribute to the Black Panther Party—an organization that took a militant stance against the police in the name of protecting the black community against abuses, but which ultimately invited more conflict between the two groups.³² Horowitz sent fellow New Leftist Betty Van Patter to work for the Panthers as a bookkeeper for the East Oakland school he had helped the Panthers open in an African American community. In the winter of 1974, Van Patter was found murdered, and Horowitz concluded that the culprits were members of the Black Panther Party. He watched the Left vehemently defend the organization when police investigated members of the Panthers as suspects in the murder, and the young radicals called the officers racist and fascist for the audacity of such an inquiry.³³ Not only was Horowitz overcome with guilt at in-

volving the woman with an organization known for its tendency toward violence, he was shaken by the Left's response and could not consciously remain a part of a movement incapable of reasonable self-reflection.

Horowitz's harrowing experience was not unheard of. The civil rights legacy of the Panthers is marred by the group's connection to violent confrontations and criminality, causing doubt from the beginning about the underlying motives of the militant group's most charitable programs and causing problems for those who willfully ignored the violent connotations.³⁴ The first chapter in *Destructive Generation*, written by Horowitz and his fellow defector Peter Collier, follows the career of an idealistic New Left lawyer who fiercely defended every African American criminal she could find who claimed connections to the Black Panthers. This lawyer was wrapped up in the heroic image of the civil rights battle, and in her efforts to help, she ignored the reality that one's race does not by default absolve a person of criminality. When those criminals betrayed her trust and threatened her life, the lawyer was forced to make a necessary reevaluation of the New Left's desire to blindly chase after a cause in order "to serve a greater truth."³⁵

The Right-leaning Horowitz refuses to give credit for any of the good done by the Black Panthers. Whether he is blind to their moments of virtue or simply believes that the wrongdoings committed in their name so outweigh the good that the good is not even worth mentioning, it is clear that the violence and cover-ups associated with the organization removed any virtuous intentions in the eyes of David Horowitz. His connection to the Panthers was not the sole influence in his decision to abandon the New Left, however. Not only had a faction of the civil rights movement begun to turn toward violent means, but with the emergence of the Weathermen near the end of the decade, part of the New Left became violent and terroristic. The Weathermen sought to make a statement about American violence abroad and specifically the war in Vietnam by "bring[ing] the war home" to the United States through acts of terrorism.³⁶ Horowitz had, in the past, "discounted the destructive elements in someone's behavior as an excess of good intentions."³⁷ When "what began as American mischief matured into real destruc-

tiveness,” however, Horowitz took a step back.³⁸

He was raised with his parents’ religious-like devotion to the communist cause and even committed his own life to seeing that dream to the end through a new, fresh political movement, free from the stains of Stalinism. After watching the pain his father imposed on himself by refusing to admit the faults in the doctrine to which he clung so tightly, the young Horowitz had promised himself that he would “never be silent when confronted by such misdeeds; that I would fight within the left for the same justice as the left demanded of the world outside.”³⁹ The violent bombings committed by the Weathermen and the vitriolic condemnation of anyone who dared to suggest that members of an oppressed minority should be investigated for a crime ultimately forced Horowitz to leave the Movement and reemerge as a harsh critic of the New Left.

Faults in the New Left

In order to understand the tragic evolution of the Movement, the shaky foundations upon which the American New Left was built and the flaws in its ideology must be considered. The New Left rejected traditional American beliefs in favor of governmental structures that were time and time again proven destined to fail. Horowitz remembers the flawed ideas that he and his fellow New Leftists held about budding communist regimes. They ignored ugly truths that jeopardized their idealistic narrative and brushed off failures as simple mistakes that the New Left would fix.⁴⁰ The New Left simultaneously rejected “bureaucratic communism exemplified by the Soviet Union” and ignored the devolution of European socialism into the same bureaucratization.⁴¹ The oscillation between championing the socialist New Left as the way to successfully fix the shortfalls of communism and applauding the rise of communist nations around the globe exemplified the problems of founding a movement on such open-ended ideology.

The three major movements of the 1960s—the counterculture, the civil rights movement, and the New Left—were intertwined and overlapping such that it could be difficult to determine where one ended and the next began. The lack of a clear

and structured “New Left” caused the Movement to fracture under the pull of disconnected goals. The Port Huron Statement, the manifesto of the SDS that arguably spawned the New Left, was broad and open-ended, allowing a large number of youth with all sorts of ideas to join in. Some eagerly joined to be in solidarity with the fight for civil rights and social justice, hoping to bring meaning to their own lives in the process.⁴² Some were committed to the promotion of free speech, or to opposing American wars and imperialism.⁴³ Some entered the political fray hoping to initiate direct democracy in small communities, while others sought more anarchic results.⁴⁴ Regardless of their motivations, members found their own versions of the ideal lying somewhere within the New Left, and were encouraged to ignore the flaws and faults with which they did not agree.

The New Left rejected the rest of the American Left, and in turn isolated itself. The leftist political youth did not want to just reform the system; they wanted to topple the more moderate and liberal Left in order to usher in a socialist era of their own making. Horowitz comments that “[t]he radicals’ assault in the Sixties was never directed against conservatives. The target was liberalism itself.”⁴⁵ Former New Leftist Sol Stern seconds the assertion, remembering the preoccupation the publication *Ramparts* had with “Cold War liberals,” hurling more attacks their way at times than were aimed at conservatives.⁴⁶ The Old Left that was shoved aside by the New Left as outdated and flawed, while far from perfect, had lessons that could have been passed along to the young revolutionaries if they had cared to look back and learn from the mistakes of a group of progressives with rather similar aspirations. Their organization, structure, willingness to accept small steps forward, and ability to make peace with similar groups are lessons from which the New Left could have benefited.⁴⁷

In rejecting the Old Left, which held similar values, the New Left made many of the same mistakes that contributed to the failure of the Old. Although they claimed imminent success in breaking association with the horrors of Stalinism, they were not free from mistakes of their own.⁴⁸ Passion and radicalism are separated by a fine line from extremist actions, and that line was crossed when the New Left split into factions,

one of which took a dangerous and militant turn as the Weathermen. Staughton Lynd, a member of the SDS, wrote toward the end of 1968 that the New Left's naivety directed it down the same doomed path of the Old Left. The New Left wholeheartedly rejected the moderate left and liberals who could have been allies for gradual reform and instead sought a sudden and revolutionary change in American society. In doing so, the New Left began to entertain thoughts of the same violence that the Old Left had succumbed to in Russia in order to bring about its goals.⁴⁹ As the movement began to turn down this dangerously revolutionary path, the young radicals in favor of the new direction believed that it would allow them to make radical change and rally the people to their cause. The New Left may have been among the loudest voices of the 1960s, but it by no means constituted the majority. Horowitz had to remind an excited colleague as the New Left headed toward militancy, "The people aren't with us."⁵⁰ He reminisces now of this common, delusional outlook on the New Left's power and capabilities as part of a larger vision of grandeur.

The New Left also refused to look inward, and instead held fast to what Horowitz now sees as self-righteous hypocrisy. Horowitz notes the "moral and political double standard" of the Left in his 1979 article "A Radical's Disenchantment," which was printed to include an image referencing Aristophanes' satirical portrayal of Socrates' students in *Clouds*, exemplifying their supposedly superior understanding of the world by showing their faces toward the ground and their rears toward the sky.⁵¹ A supporter of the New Left who later turned and spoke against the excesses of the youth rebellion acknowledges the activists' admirable intentions, but calls them out for their moralizing mindset that forced all members to submit "to the tyranny of the peer group" and defend the cause without question.⁵²

When the illusion of moral superiority was dispelled, however, disenchanting radicals often retreated from politics altogether, as Horowitz did for a while. The intent of removing themselves from the political fray was to save themselves the pain of recognizing the consequences of their failures, re-evaluating their beliefs, and pushing for something better, as Horowitz sought to do when he reentered the political sphere.⁵³

This decision to brush off difficult truths and ideological faults led to a repetitive cycle on the Left of glorifying rebels without a second thought. They chose to limit their focus to the good intentions that, Horowitz points out, inevitably turned sour and yielded the opposite of that which they strove to achieve.⁵⁴ The unchecked idealism of the young activists placed them in a dream state from which they were fated never to wake up unless, as Horowitz experienced, painfully forced.⁵⁵

The New Left, as a whole, held onto views too grand and utopian to come to complete fruition—exemplified already by the failures of the Old Left—which led to both delusion and disillusion. In his 1962 book titled *Student*, young Horowitz touted the New Left's unabashed admission of its true goals and communist roots, its brilliant reformation of the faults in communist ideology, and its commitment to visible acts of protest as proof that the youth rebellion's selfless pursuit of those goals would eventually succeed. He looks back now, however, and sees the claim "as just another instance of the arrogant nature of our politics, as though progressives like us had a monopoly on caring."⁵⁶ The perceptions and motivations of many young New Leftists followed suit.

Many of the youth who joined the New Left in the 1960s were attracted to the flashy draw of protest and the idea of doing something bigger than oneself.⁵⁷ Horowitz claims he joined the Movement and actively made his voice heard because of an optimistic outlook on the capability of American institutions to make serious reforms. When he did not see radical change occur in response, however, he and many of his comrades did not realize it was because they "were pushing largely on open doors."⁵⁸ America has not always lived up to the founding principles entrenched in the Constitution and laid out by the Founding Fathers, but it is precisely those ideals that allowed for the New Left's activism. From the beginning, the Free Speech Movement that kicked off student protest on American college campuses was rooted in and protected by First Amendment freedoms.⁵⁹ The Left failed to see that they made war on the very system that protected their rights and was designed to respond to the will of the people in a functional manner.⁶⁰

In addition, many were more interested in the state-

ments they made and the actions they took than the outcome itself.⁶¹ Young radicals often itched for the thrill of protest more than looking for real change. They needed the system to remain broken in order to maintain their activist purpose, and therefore sought new bones to pick with a system so far from oppressive for the young, white radicals in the 1960s that many were able to quietly return to American society when their disillusionment finally led them to abandon the Movement. This trend caused Horowitz to suggest that, deep down, the radicals knew “that America was exactly the sort of flexible and forgiving society the leftists condemned it for failing to be.”⁶² There was a constant need for many New Leftists to seek out class conflict and injustice where there truly was not any. That need for struggle went so far as to cause tensions within groups supporting the same cause. As an example of the New Left’s tendency to view the world with an oppressive lens, Horowitz recalls a conflict between the newsreels and the editorial department at Ramparts. The former refused to accept any budget cuts while continuing to expand their budget rather than taking a small hit for the good of the magazine. These actions stemmed from the belief of the editors and writers that they were somehow superior and thus qualified to exert oppressive power.⁶³

No singular path led to the extremism of the New Left. Rather, minor ideological and foundational faults spiraled out of control until the Movement succumbed to factionalism and dangerously radical methods. That degradation of principles led a number of former members and supporters to turn their backs on the Movement and even raise their voice against it. Sol Stern was a Ramparts writer who helped the New Left magazine take off with his article exposing a CIA plot involving puppet-like use of the National Student Association, but he became a conservative after the New Left began attacking Israel.⁶⁴ David Riesman inspired budding activists with his book, *The Lonely Crowd*, and for a while encouraged the youthful revolutionaries, but he was later angered by the self-serving perversion of his book’s message and was put off by the excesses of the New Left later in the decade, especially its militant turn.⁶⁵ Riesman eventually retracted previous assertions about America’s ability to afford putting aside the Protestant work ethic that had

brought the nation to greatness. He instead emphasized the need for a return to stable, conservative values to calm down the upheavals of the decade.⁶⁶ Even avowed hippies felt the need to physically remove themselves from the urban political fray toward the end of the sixties as the Movement “descended increasingly into its own apocalyptic” end with the Weathermen.⁶⁷ Horowitz may have made his mark as among the most vocal and staunchly conservative of the defectors, but he is by no means an anomaly.

Conclusion

The American New Left as a movement, despite its larger failures, was not altogether unsuccessful and along with the coexisting movements of the time, left a lasting mark on American society. Its choice to adopt “stylistic radicalism” along with verbal and visual approaches put the Movement in the spotlight and allowed the young rebels to band together into a louder voice to achieve many of the changes they demanded.⁶⁸ Though some look back disdainfully at the 1960s as “the most self-dramatizing of decades,” the lasting results of that method are evident—for better or for worse.⁶⁹

The 1960s was a decade in which young rebels sought a cause, and many of them found it in political activism. Followers of the New Left broke away from political and societal norms in order to find themselves, but in the process fell into a herd mentality that convinced them to unquestioningly conform to the ideas of their rising generation and reject the notion that they could be wrong. The emotions surrounding the memories of those who lived through it all run high, naturally coloring works written retrospectively. Opinions and slanted perspectives are difficult to avoid when considering the explosive decade of the 1960s, but certain conclusions are found on both sides of the aisle.

The idea that the New Left self-destructed is not reserved for bitter or disillusioned members of the Right. Many former New Leftists agree that the disorganized start and undisciplined nature of the Movement led to its own failure.⁷⁰ Staughton Lynd, in an article published in 1969, opined that the

young radicals underestimated the task they took on and were “too hopeful” about the expected success with their methods.⁷¹ No political stance is without its fault, and the New Left made great strides in expanding the constricted boundaries of social acceptability in America and exemplifying activism and self-expression. Had it taken a critical look within and addressed its flaws, the Movement may have seen a different end.

NOTES

- ¹ Steven Conn, "Back to the Garden," 832.
- ² David Horowitz, *The Black Book of the American Left*, 360; Jeff Coulter, "Why I Am Not a Right Winger," 111.
- ³ Staughton Lynd, "The New Left," 65.
- ⁴ James P. O'Brien, "The Development of the New Left," 16.
- ⁵ Jarold S. Auerbach, "Means and Ends in the 1960s," 11.
- ⁶ Winifred Breines, "Whose New Left?" 542-43.
- ⁷ Lynd, "The New Left," 67-68.
- ⁸ Bruce J. Schulman, "Out of the Streets and Into the Classroom? The New Left and the Counterculture in United States History Textbooks," 1532.
- ⁹ Christopher Phelps, "The New Left Wasn't So New," 89.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 87-88.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* 86; Daniel Geary, "Children of the Lonely Crowd: David Riesman, the Young Radicals, and the Splitting of Liberalism in the 1960s," 604.
- ¹² David Horowitz, *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey*, 107. Emphasis in original.
- ¹³ Phelps, "The New Left Wasn't So New," 86; Geary, "Children of the Lonely Crowd," 617.
- ¹⁴ Geary, "Children of the Lonely Crowd," 617.
- ¹⁵ Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 27 and 36.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 62, 64, and 75.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 and 84.
- ¹⁸ Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties*, 333.
- ¹⁹ Collier and Horowitz, *Destructive Generation*, 337.
- ²⁰ Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 32 and 88-89.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ²² David Horowitz, "Scenes from the 60s: One Radical's Story," 29-30.
- ²³ Horowitz, "Letter to a Political Friend," in *Destructive Generation*, 323-347.
- ²⁴ Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 66-67.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ²⁷ David Horowitz, "Southeast Asia: The Two Koreas," 14.

- 28 David Horowitz, "Litton Industries: Proving Poverty Pays," 40-52.
- 29 David Horowitz, "The Foundations: Charity Begins at Home," 45.
- 30 David Horowitz, "Hand-Me-Down Marxism and the New Left," 16.
- 31 David Horowitz, "Revolutionary Karma vs. Revolutionary Politics," 27-29.
- 32 Randall Kennedy, "The Civil Rights Movement and the Politics of Memory," 85.
- 33 Collier and Horowitz, *Destructive Generation*, 337.
- 34 Roy Wilkins, "What About the Panthers?" 629.
- 35 Collier and Horowitz, *Destructive Generation*, 39.
- 36 Jarold S. Auerbach, "Means and Ends in the 1960s," 12.
- 37 Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 131.
- 38 David Horowitz, *Black Book*, 186.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 40 Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 110.
- 41 Lynd, "The New Left," 65.
- 42 Geary, "Children of the Lonely Crowd," 616.
- 43 Auerbach, "Means and Ends in the 1960s," 11-12.
- 44 Breines, "Whose New Left?" 533.
- 45 Horowitz, *Black Book*, 193.
- 46 Sol Stern, "The Ramparts I Watched," 10.
- 47 Breines, "Whose New Left?" 536.
- 48 Phelps, "The New Left Wasn't So New," 89.
- 49 Lynd, "The New Left," 71-72.
- 50 Horowitz, "Scenes from the 60s," 30.
- 51 David Horowitz, "A Radical's Disenchantment," 587.
- 52 Geary, "Children of the Lonely Crowd," 621.
- 53 Horowitz, *Black Book*, 15-16.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 89.
- 56 Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 115.
- 57 Horowitz, *Left Illusions: An Intellectual Odyssey*, 28.
- 58 Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 109.
- 59 Auerbach, "Means and Ends in the 1960s," 11.
- 60 David Horowitz, *Left Illusions*, 73.
- 61 Breines, "Whose New Left?" 542.

- ⁶² Horowitz, *Black Book*, 193.
- ⁶³ Horowitz, "Scenes from the 60s," 30-31.
- ⁶⁴ Stern, "The Ramparts I Watched," 3.
- ⁶⁵ Geary, "Children of the Lonely Crowd," 617-618.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 632.
- ⁶⁷ Steven Conn, "Back to the Garden," 834.
- ⁶⁸ Horowitz, *Radical Son*, 111.
- ⁶⁹ Horowitz, *Black Book*, 186.
- ⁷⁰ Breines, "Whose New Left?" 530.
- ⁷¹ Lynd, "The New Left," 71-72.

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