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American revolutionary thinkers unjust wars, limited government and natural rights

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AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY THINKERS: UNJUST WARS, LIMITED
GOVERNMENT AND NATURAL RIGHTS

by

ADAM JAMES SPERA
University of Central Florida, Spring Term 2012

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

The conceptual bases of this thesis include the philosophical constructs of Just War Theory, limited government, and natural rights as applied to foreign policy. Just War Theory was originally articulated by St. Augustine and represents the requirements a nation must satisfy to wage war justly. Building upon the basis of Just War Theory, I then split the discussion into two main categories. The first is a historical look at certain American thinkers and their reactions to what they saw as unjust wars based in their strong idealistic goals for humanity. The second is a critical examination of American foreign policy based upon the analytical model arising from these American thinkers. The thesis concludes with an examination of contemporary applications of this analysis with an examination of recent wars that have taken place in the Middle East and an assessment of their just or unjust nature.

My historical research examines the arguments of Thomas Paine, Emma Goldman, Henry David Thoreau, and Martin Luther King, Jr. I will review each thinker to highlight their criticisms of the unjust wars in which America has been involved from the 18th Century to the 21st Century. A secondary goal of this research is to trace a pattern of idealistic thinking that is present in American Revolutionary thought. These ideals refer to notions of natural rights, social liberty, economic freedom, and the constant pursuit of justice. By using the established arguments put forth by these four American thinkers, I argue that another unjust war will only bring misery to America and any other nation involved.

Finally, my contemporary research develops the CIA term “blowback” and its effect on American foreign policy. By applying the theory of blowback to the current military disputes in which the United States has been or could be involved, I attempt to persuade the reader to resist the notion of engaging in another war. Historically unjust wars have never improved the standard of living for the American citizen and have served to suppress the inherent natural rights of the human beings involved. In conclusion, I combine contemporary and historical arguments to highlight the continuing stream of injustice that exists in American foreign policy.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”

-Martin Luther King

This thesis covers a broad range of political and social topics. By looking at particular American thinkers I intend to highlight a certain stream of revolutionary thought that is unique to American culture. This stream pertains to issues of war, society, and government. Each century yields new issues for the American people and thus a new individual rises to combat it. The focal point of this thesis is primarily the concept of war. I plan to show the destructive nature of war, not only the act of war itself, but also the indirect consequences of its implementation. When a nation is at war, its entire people bear its consequences. Thinkers such as Thomas Paine, Emma Goldman, Henry David Thoreau, and Martin Luther King, Jr., offer visions of the kind of consequences the American people must endure as the result of war and its unforeseen consequences.

As a prelude to my examination of the history of American warfare and its effects on the American people, I lay out a foundation for what is considered a just war. Articulated by St. Augustine of Hippo, Just War Theory provides an ethical framework for entering, maintaining, and exiting war. The first prong of Just War Theory is referred to by St. Augustine as *Jus ad bellum*. The elements of just war include the justifications for initiating war in the first place, as well as the concept of legitimate authority and the probability of success in combat.

The second prong of Just War Theory, *Jus in bello*, deals with maintaining justice during war. Concepts include dealing with separating innocent civilians from military combatants,

treating prisoners of war humanely, and implementing military minimalism. Augustine commented on the treatment of prisoners, “As violence is used towards him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or the captive, especially in the case in which future troubling of the peace is not to be feared” (Augustine). The third prong, *Jus post bello*, details concepts of exiting wars. Exiting wars deals with issues of possible rehabilitation and the ultimate pursuit of peace. Augustine wrote, “By conquering those whom you attack, you may lead them back to the advantages of peace” (Augustine).

With this framework of Just War Theory as a starting place, the examination of American thinkers begins with the revolutionary era thinker, Thomas Paine. The British born activist and scholar made his way to America by invitation from Benjamin Franklin. He is the only thinker who will be discussed who actually had the opportunity to support a just war, that war being the American Revolution of 1776. This may be the only example of a clearly justified war in American history. The constant tax demand being placed on Colonists by King George III was seen by the colonists as unjustified and harmful to human flourishing. The British King was engaged in multiple wars spanning all across the known world, and implemented taxes on American colonists in order to help support imperial imperatives. Colonists felt justified when they resisted the tax collections of Great Britain because of the unjust nature of the wars Britain had engaged at the time. This topic will be developed later in this thesis.

Thomas Paine helped inspire the Declaration of Independence by writing a short essay called *Common Sense*, which “had sold at least 150,000 copies” (Foner 79). The pamphlet was a monumental source of inspiration for colonists who no longer wished to be oppressed by Great Britain. Paine supported the idea that dependence on Great Britain directly led to colonial

oppression, therefore he argued passionately against it. Paine filled the pages of *Common Sense* with arguments against British dependence, which ultimately helped inspire the liberation of Colonial America and the writing of the United States Constitution.

Another important aspect of Paine is his concept of natural rights, which is developed in his work, *Rights of Man*. In his own words he describes this concept as follows: “Natural rights are those which appertain to man in right of his existence. Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights of the mind, and also all those rights of acting as an individual for his own comfort and happiness, which are not injurious to the natural rights of others” (Paine 121). It is his position that no government has the right to abuse its citizen’s natural rights. Correspondingly, it is my intention to argue that unjust wars directly harm the natural rights of all human beings involved.

Paine’s philosophy on natural rights is inherent within the United States Constitution, especially within the Bill of Rights. As the U.S. Constitution is the foundation of American political culture, I plan to show the consistency of its philosophy with the pattern of American thinkers I am highlighting here. As Just War Theory is an argument against unjust wars, I plan to use natural rights as argument against unjust government action.

The next chapter in this discussion belongs to the American thinker Emma Goldman. At the beginning of the 20th Century, Emma Goldman appears on the American stage. Similar to Thomas Paine, she was not actually an American citizen. She immigrated to America from Russia in order to live the American dream. Upon her arrival in New York City, she quickly realized that the American dream seems to reside in a 14 hour work shift within a large inhumane factory warehouse. Unimpressed by the American standard of living in that time, she sought the

acceptance of a local anarchist group. Association with this group gave Goldman the opportunity to meet individuals who had similar philosophical views and provided her an outlet for passionate expression. With these new friends she found her way as an activist and public speaker.

Her most influential work was *Anarchism: What it really stands for*. In this work she calls for a rejection of all man-made law. She does this because in her experience, American government was an attack on the basic human rights of American citizens. She believed that the existing institutions of American society acted as an impediment to human growth and flourishing. She described this point as follows: “With human nature caged in a narrow space [by government], whipped daily into submission, how can we speak of its potentialities?” (Goldman 68).

The concept of natural rights is the basis for her arguments against injustice. Goldman wrote, “A natural law is that factor in man which asserts itself freely and spontaneously without any external force, in harmony with the requirements of nature. For instance, the demand for nutrition, for sexual gratification, for light, air, and exercise, is a natural law” (Goldman 64). Although this conception of natural law is different from Thomas Paine’s understanding of natural rights, the method in which these aspects of nature are to be respected are similar. For example, Goldman continues to write “But [the expression of natural laws] need not the machinery of government, needs not the club, the gun, the handcuff, or the prison. To obey such laws requires only spontaneity and free opportunity” (Goldman 64).

Even though Goldman and Paine define their terms a bit differently, a connection is evident between advocacy of human rights and condemnation of government. Goldman

describes the natural aspects of humanity as bound by laws. These laws must be satisfied on a basic level in order for a human being to have an opportunity to flourish. Goldman's concept of natural laws is similar to Paine's because they both agree with the notion that humanity must be free to satisfy these basic natural laws. Therefore no government ought to deprive humanity of these basic needs.

Emma Goldman presents another very important argument against unjust wars. She makes the point that war implicitly suppresses woman's rights. The act of taking thousands of husbands, brothers, and sons away from home in order to fight a war in which they most likely would not return brings a great sense of anguish to women. Due to their inability to serve in war, they are left at home to handle all the responsibilities of raising children, getting an education, maintaining the home and family business, and simply pursuing happiness, alone. Goldman writes "The insatiable monster, war, robs woman of all that is dear and precious to her. It exacts her brothers, lovers, sons, and in return gives her a life of loneliness and despair" (Goldman 202). War does nothing but hamper the individual growth of women, and in fact all human beings, by the human losses suffered in war.

The last of the revolutionary thinkers to be discussed are Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr. They are considered in tandem here because they embody very similar revolutionary ideas with the latter borrowing heavily from the former. The notion of civil disobedience becomes more evident in these thinkers, more so than in Goldman and Paine, and they both manifest this philosophy in their own actions. Thoreau and King call on their fellow citizens to resist the machine of injustice by simply not supporting American government. Henry David Thoreau took a much more radical approach by isolating himself from society altogether

as opposed to King, who chose to resist race oriented laws created by American government.

While Paine and Goldman also advocated for non-violence in their philosophy they never acted upon it in with the same success as Thoreau and King. Although revolution itself increases the potential for violence, the concept of self-defense was understood as a means of resisting the attacks of injustice. Thoreau demonstrates civil disobedience by refusing to pay taxes and was subsequently arrested for his resistance thus gaining awareness of the unjust Mexican-American War he protested. Martin Luther King writes about the effect Thoreau had on his life:

I became convinced that noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. No other person has been more eloquent and passionate in getting this idea across than Henry David Thoreau. As a result of his writings and personal witness, we are the heirs of a legacy of creative protest. The teachings of Thoreau came alive in our civil rights movement; indeed, they are more alive than ever before. Whether expressed in a sit-in at lunch counters, a freedom ride into Mississippi, a peaceful protest in Albany, Georgia, a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, these are outgrowths of Thoreau's insistence that evil must be resisted and that no moral man can patiently adjust to injustice. (M. L. King 34)

King often said that he was heavily indebted to Thoreau for the work he began with the philosophy of civil disobedience. King took this idea and acted upon it leading one of the greatest moments of social justice America has ever seen. Here the student has surpassed the master.

Henry David Thoreau is also famous for helping create New England Transcendentalism. A major contributor to this movement, Ralph Waldo Emerson, must also be mentioned in this discussion. Both men believed the basic premise that, "If a man is at heart just, then in so far as he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God, do enter into that man with justice" (Emerson 60). This quotation reflects the fundamental relationship

Transcendentalism holds with its conception of God. God is manifest through man as long as he is consistent with justice. This idea can be seen as a reaction to the strict Calvinism that was popular in New England at the time, a topic which will be developed later in this chapter.

Thoreau expresses his distaste of conformity, criticizing the pettiness that has characterized urban societies. Individuals themselves are not bad, instead it is the institutions that guide them that lead to their corruption and evil ways. Thoreau saw American culture as void of God and sought a return to nature as a means to replenish this divine emptiness.

Within the philosophy of Transcendentalism there is a basic notion of human rights. Thoreau deals with natural rights in a similar fashion to Thomas Paine and Emma Goldman. In *Civil Disobedience* Thoreau poses this question, "Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing the rights of man?" He goes on to say, "There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly" (Thoreau 286). His views on government vis-a-vis the role of the individual make Thoreau an important link in the chain of people who have criticized America's wars.

Thoreau notably speaks out against the Mexican-American War. Thoreau states that America was engaged in an unjust war by taking Mexican land forcefully for no other reason but to increase the mass of the Union. He uses this situation to motivate individuals to detach themselves from the American government. Thoreau argued that Americans explicitly support injustice when they contribute time and money to the American government. He writes "How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political

organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also” (Thoreau 268).

Thoreau claimed that when enough people are ready for change, they can systematically destroy the standing government by simply not participating, thus bringing about a revolution in human society. “I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it” (Thoreau 266). Civil Disobedience is a defining feature of revolutionary thought that is presented by Henry Thoreau which will be put into practice on a much larger scale by Martin Luther King, Jr.

A unique feature of the revolutionary thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. was his advocacy of civil disobedience in two of the most powerful American struggles of the 20th Century: the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. Fighting against racial segregation within American society was without a doubt the most influential aspect of King's public career. King argued that the method by which the Vietnam War was fought helped support racial tensions in American society. In, *A Time to Break Silence*, King highlights the idea that the same nation that restricts the minority from attending certain schools also requires them to fight and die together in the name of freedom and justice. King believed that this act of hypocrisy is evil and ought to be recognized for the hatred it breeds among American citizens. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. satisfies this need for justice and does so without the need for violence.

Dr. King stands apart from the rest of the thinkers previously discussed because he never actually advocates abolishment of the standing government of his time. But he still remains consistent with the idea that government is obligated to recognize the basic human rights of its citizens. In his most famous speech, *I Have a Dream*, he says:

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (M.L King 102)

King goes on to say that liberty has been withheld from the African-American. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation there was still racial injustice in America. King believed each human being deserves to have their natural rights protected. King saw unjust wars as an attack on the natural rights of human beings. With King's fight against the concept of unjust wars and his unwavering advocacy of natural rights, he fits well within the bounds of American Revolutionary thought. Martin Luther King, Jr. remains the last great individual to bring such massive social reforms to American society though hopefully he will not be the last.

My final chapter is intended to apply the discussion of unjust wars to contemporary foreign policy. By understanding the negative consequences of unjust wars, which have been highlighted by the American revolutionary thinkers discussed, perhaps Americans in today's society will become more aware of current accounts of unjust war. In order to make my final argument a discussion of the CIA term "blowback" is necessary.

"Blowback" refers to the unintended consequences of CIA operations. These operations consist of, but are not limited to, the arming, training, and funding of Islamic extremist groups. Of the Islamic extremist groups that have been trained by the CIA the Mujahedeen stand out, specifically because this group was led by Osama Bin Laden himself. Recent American influences in Middle Eastern affairs have brought great tragedies to both America and the Middle East. Much evidence has recently come to light linking blowback to the tragic events of

September 11, 2001. United States political leaders found it easy to blame these attacks on an implicit hatred that exists in the Muslim community against American freedom, but the history of American involvement in the Middle East suggests a much more complicated reality lies behind them.

Also included in my final chapter is a brief account of recent wars in which America has been involved. These wars include, but are not limited to, The Russian-Afghanistan War, The Persian Gulf Wars, and The Iraq War. Observable results of these wars lead to my argument that American foreign policy must change. American intervention in the affairs of other nations has brought economic hardship, social injustice, and political degradation since America was founded. This argument is especially important considering the impending crises surfacing between Israel and Iran.

Iran is allegedly in pursuit of a nuclear bomb. Israel feels threatened by Iran and wishes to make a pre-emptive strike, thus disabling Iran's ability to build a nuclear bomb. If Israel decides to attack Iran, Iran will associate America with that attack. Former CIA official Bruce Riedel expressed this point in a recent interview, "because Israel is supplied with "American aircraft and American munitions; Iran will retaliate against not just Israel but also the United States" (Riedel). Riedel argued that if Israel attacks Iran then America will be automatically engaged in a new Middle Eastern war.

CHAPTER TWO: JUST WAR THEORY

“A war is never undertaken by the ideal State, except in defense of its honor or its safety”

-Cicero

There are many ways to consider whether a war can be just or unjust. Some questions to consider include the following: Who is fighting? Why are they fighting and how long are they going to be fighting? Shall the victorious nation take prisoners or must all citizens of the enemy's nation be killed? Many moral problems arise as well as practical ones in the attempt to answer these questions. This section will focus on these questions with the aim of understanding justice in war.

John Mattox provides a basic understanding of Just War Theory in, *Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War*. He wrote, “The modern theory of just war typically is presented under two major headings: *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*” (Mattox 8). The former deals with *the right to go to war* in general and the latter deals with *right conduct within war*. Mattox said that, “Augustine is regarded as the father of what has developed as the Western theory of just war” (Mattox 1).

Although St. Augustine may seem antiquated given the current complexity of modern warfare, he provided a very solid ethical foundation for the conception of justice within war generally. A critical aspect of Augustine's analysis is based on a conception of a universal good and evil that comes from the Catholic tradition. Even without his strong Catholic values, it is possible to make a secular argument regarding just wars. Most civilizations could agree on basic principles that fall under the category of good and bad. These principles would be as follows: do

not kill, do not steal, keep your promises, help others when you can, do not harm yourself or others, minimize the suffering of others, and do not deceive. This list is not complete, but it does provide some basic universal principles on which perhaps every civilization could agree. These universal principles are used to build the framework of Just War Theory.

Jus ad bellum

Jus ad bellum is Latin for “justice before war.” It refers to all of the criteria a nation must meet before it is able to engage in war. The first principle to understand is just cause. Just cause is the most fundamental aspect of *Jus ad bellum* because it refers to the nation’s intentions surrounding going to war in the first place. The list also includes comparative justice, competent authority, right intention, last resort, proportionality, and probability of success. These will be discussed in more detail below. When thinking about the term “Justice” in Just War Theory it must be noted that it is used as an absolute term which means there is no such thing as a war being partially just. Any nation that fails to meet all of the requirements of *jus ad bellum* is seen as unjustified in their military exploits.

This line of thought leads to a larger question: What are those things in particular that are considered acts of war? An act of war can be seen as anything that either impedes the liberty or undermines the security of another nation. Wars can be as minimal as a two day battle or it can lead to the extermination of an entire race or minority group. When wars become destructive on a massive scale, they gain the attention of well-intentioned nations. These well-intentioned nations sometimes feel obligated to intervene in destructive wars to provide humanitarian aid. But before one gets behind the idea of war in order to help people who are suffering somewhere else it is

necessary to first consider many other questions. Will an invasion of the country truly help its people? Is the battle winnable? What will be the price the intervening nation must pay? These questions must first be answered before a nation can commit to aiding a foreign country or ally because even if a nation wishes to help another, many negative implications can still surface if the operation is not planned well. Therefore the effort to help another nation ultimately becomes self-defeating.

At the most fundamental level, Just War Theory requires an answer to the question of just cause. John Mattox, a scholar of St. Augustine, writes “Augustine draws no distinction between offensive and defensive wars in the militarily relevant sense of those terms. Ideologically, it would appear that Augustine views all wars as defensive in nature.” (Mattox 47) Any nation that takes up arms against an invading force or takes up arms while committing a humanitarian act and is attacked will always be justified in their self-defense. Therefore self-defense is really the only justification a nation can use in order to engage in war.

The second requirement that must be met deals with the question of last resort. When a nation is faced with the decision to go to war, it can only be justified if that is its last resort. Just because war becomes an option, it does not mean it has reached the threshold of justification. Any nation with the option to wage war must first exhaust all other reasonable alternatives. Augustine writes, “War should be waged only as a necessity” (Augustine, Letter 189) therefore individuals waging war must be sure that it is truly the only possible method for achieving peace.

The next two principles are very similar. Probability of success and proportionality both require a strict framework for finding justification. A nation must first realize when resistance is rational or suicidal. The weaknesses of these principles are highlighted in this example. Imagine

a medieval town being attacked by barbarians. Some townspeople may want to fight to the death for the sake of honor. Others may suggest surrender in order to possibly walk away with their lives. Regardless, the possibility of rationality exists within the two situations. If success in war is impossible then it would be unjust to engage the enemy.

This line of thought also applies to the question of proportionality. A war should not be conducted if its evils outweigh its goods. It seems that a simple understanding of a hostile situation is enough to be able to determine if any good could come of it. If the United States wanted to invade South Africa because it wanted to test out some new weaponry, the evils would arguably outweigh the goods. Augustine clarifies this point in one of his letters to another scholar, Boniface “Peace is not sought in order to the kindling of war, but war is waged in order that peace may be obtained” (Augustine, Letter 189).

Augustine established the idea that war could only be justified if peace is its end result. This requires determining the possibility of success before one engages in any type of war. Both of these points bring up important questions. How is success defined? How are sacrifices calculated? What is considered peace? These questions may be tough to answer, but they must be addressed before war is initiated.

The fourth principle is right intention. This deals specifically with the mental state of the nation saying yes or no to war. Right intention must be understood in the sense that true intention is often only realized after or during the war itself. Nation X could easily say that all their intentions were good when initiating war with Nation Z. But if nation X begins to act immorally, suspicion regarding the true intention of nation X will begin to arise. In this situation, nation X would have already caused harm to nation Z because the war has already been initiated. To

clarify, the citizens of nation X would only begin to suspect their nation after a wrongdoing has occurred. The author of *War & Ethics*, Nicholas Fotion, observes:

Germany's claim in 1939 that Poland started the war, and that Germany's intention was to stop an aggression, fooled no one. But in many cases the situation is so complicated that it is impossible to tell at the start what the real intentions of a nation entering a war are. It may later all become clear. If, for example, the liberating army stays on well after the war is over, and stays on against the will of the country it has liberated, it becomes obvious that that nation's intentions were not good. (Fotion 17)

Right intention requires a trust between citizen and nation. When the government gives the people its word on a situation as devastating as war, it wagers more than just its reputation. The people, if not properly informed of the truth, will lose trust in their government.

Finally there is the notion of legitimate authority. A good example of legitimate authority is the United States Constitution. Ultimately, as America's founding document, it has the final say regarding the declaration of war. The document itself delegates this power to the United States Congress, which was created to represent the will of the American people. However, this order of operations has been changed during the 21st Century. Today the United Nations is often seen as the legitimate international authority on the subject of waging wars though this understanding is not without its resisters. Assembly woman and 2010 Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate from Nevada, Sharron Angle argued that it is unconstitutional for America to be involved with the United Nations "There is no place in the Constitution with those priorities about the United Nations. So when we start talking about cutting programs I think the United Nations fits into that category" (Siegel). Although the reference here is to funding cuts, the argument against the role of the of the United Nations in determining the justification for war from a consitutional perspective is explicit within the statement.

Any act that violates the United States Constitution is ultimately a threat to American

government and the people it governs. America is built upon certain limitations and delegations of power meant to prevent federal institutions from violating the natural rights of human beings. The Bill of Rights laid the foundation for protecting natural rights in the form of civil liberties which could not be infringed upon by the national government. Although various lines can be drawn when considering what is free speech and what is not, the basic principles are intended to maintain fundamental freedoms. These freedoms are trampled upon when the option to declare war is decided within the United Nations and not by American representatives and citizens. For a war involving the United States to be just it must first satisfy the legitimate authority requirement set up by St. Augustine. By remaining within the power of the United States Constitution to declare war specifically delegated to Congress, America will have passed one of the major requirements of Just War Theory.

Jus in bello

With this understanding of what justifies war, the discussion now turns to standards that must be observed during war. As before, there are a few subcategories that must be fleshed out in order to understand the concept at hand. These categories are as follows: “Distinction, Proportionality, Military necessity, and Fair treatment of Prisoners of War” (Mattox 10). Even if a just war is initiated, if the above standards are not followed the war instantly becomes unjust. Therefore, if there are cases in which even small minorities of military combatants are acting unjustly, they must be detained, disciplined, and dishonorably discharged.

The first issue in *jus in bello* theory is distinction. Distinction deals with issues of labeling an individual as a military combatant or a civilian. A military combatant is defined by

the Geneva Convention as “The armed forces of a party to a conflict consist of all organized armed forces, groups and units which are under a common responsible to that Party for the conduct of its subordinates, even if that Part is represented by a government or an authority not recognized by an adverse party” (Geneva Convention).

Today, in the Middle East, American intervention is a difficult issue. It goes without saying that no wartime conflict ought to cause the deaths of innocent civilians. Innocent civilians, by definition, are not representative of the overall action initiated by their government, but sometimes it is very hard to draw that line. For instance, military combatants in Middle Eastern nations often do not wear a standard uniform. This creates a problem for American soldiers when they attempt to differentiate between citizens and military combatants. Perhaps an Afghan family is holding weapons for a terrorist group. Is that family now an enemy combatant? What if they are forced to hold weapons against their will? Examples like this create many problems in the current U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. The difficulty of determining answers to such questions adds to the difficulty in assessing proportionality discussed in the last section. Such dilemmas of distinction must be taken into account when considering the rationality of staying in war.

Within the framework of distinction another principle arises, military necessity. Military necessity is determined through the notion of minimalism. One ought to expect our nation to use the smallest amount of resources to handle problems of war. The price tag of military intervention is extraordinarily high so to use force in excess is synonymous with using force unjustly. The indirect expense placed on the people of the warring nation jeopardizes the general economic stability of that nation. When wars are waged on such massive scales as observed in

the 21st Century, an injustice is passed down to the American taxpayer. “The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost Americans a staggering \$1 trillion to date” (Giroux).

Distinction is also necessary when determining the treatment of prisoners of war. It is unjust to treat a human being differently as a military combatant if he or she is being held in custody. A detained individual must be treated with the same respect and dignity that applies to every other human being. Article 3 of the Geneva Convention explains quite clearly that

Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria. (sec. 2, ch 1, art 21)

The term “humanely” is defined in many subsections after this first reference. Specifically “cruel treatment and torture” are labeled as unjust treatment regarding prisoners of war. Under no circumstances should a nation feel privileged to cause severe and potentially fatal injuries to a defenseless person. The issue of torture is commented on by St. Augustine when writing to imperial military commander Flavius Marcellious. Augustine recognized the wickedness of certain Donatists clergy members by commenting on their savage treatment of a Catholic presbyter. The Donatists were convicted of “cutting off the finger and digging out the eye” of their victim. Augustine confirms the need for severe punishment but urges Marcellious to remain within certain boundaries:

We do not wish to have the sufferings of the servants of God avenged by the infliction of precisely similar injuries in the way of retaliation. Not, of course, that we object to the removal from these wicked men of the liberty to perpetrate further crimes; but our desire is rather that justice be satisfied without the taking of their lives or the maiming of their bodies in any part, and that, by such coercive measures as may be in accordance with the laws, they be turned from their insane frenzy to the quietness of men in their sound judgment, or compelled to give up mischievous violence and betake themselves to some useful labor. This is indeed called a penal sentence; but who does not see that when a restraint is put upon the boldness of savage violence,

and the remedies fitted to produce repentance are not withdrawn, this discipline should be called a benefit rather than vindictive punishment? (Augustine, Letter 133)

If a nation wishes to maintain justice in times of war, prisoners of war and military combatants must be treated with the dignity every human being deserves.

Proportionality is a major concern of *jus in bello* theory. This concept brings up a very grim aspect of war. Let us say that there are 1,000 known terrorists residing within a large hospital. Intelligence shows that within the hospital approximately 50 – 60 patients and doctors are present. Proportionality requires a grim cost/benefit analysis of this type of situation. Those in favor of blowing up the hospital, regardless of the innocent lives within, would argue that a few innocent lives are a small price to pay for the sake of striking a major blow against terrorism. Perhaps if the opportunity to kill 1,000 known terrorists is missed, the terrorists may live long enough to take many more than 50-60 innocent lives. The opposing side may argue that no matter what the situation is, no warring nation should ever knowingly kill innocent civilians. Innocent lives may be lost at war, but one ought never to involve themselves in a direct attack involving their death under the principles of just war theory.

A final consideration deals with the means by which a just war is conducted. This prohibits diabolical methods of warfare. For example, using weapons with unknown consequences is considered unjust in times of war. Today people still suffer from the biological damage that resulted from the experimental use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. Nuclear bombs also fall under this category of unknown consequences. When nuclear bombs are used, harmful radiation is spread across thousands of miles. The death and serious injury count is always unknowable and any distinction between innocent civilians and military combatants is erased.

Nuclear warfare also includes the long lasting biological effects of radiation position which is almost impossible to track on a global scale. Therefore biological and nuclear weapons are not justified within Just War Theory, strictly because of their unforeseen consequences.

Jus post bello

The final level of Just War analysis lies in the appropriate methods of ending a war.

Augustine offers the following considerations:

For he whose aim is to kill is not careful how he wounds, but he whose aim it is to cure is cautious with his lancet; for the one seeks to destroy what is sound, the other that which is decaying...What is important to attend to but this: who were on the side of truth, and who were on the side of iniquity; who acted from a desire to injure, and who from a desire to correct what was amiss? (St. Augustine, Letter 93.8)

When considering the possible punishment of a warring nation at the conclusion of hostilities, some new concepts come into play. First let us hypothetically say that one nation has absolute knowledge concerning the character of a nation's citizens, whether they are military combatants or simply innocent civilians. Once this is ascertained the just nation must restrain itself from punishing innocent civilians. Think for a moment what would happen if the Allies lost in WWII. Would it have been just if Germany decided that each individual American citizen took on a personal war debt? It would be justice according to Germany perhaps but not according to any universal concept of justice within Just War Theory.

Defeat in war is justice enough for any opposing nation. To force a punished nation into war debt, loss of land, limitations on military, and political sanctions is an abuse of justice. As Augustine writes "Peace should be the object of your desire [in war]" (St. Augustine, Letter 189). Therefore once peace is attained nations ought not engage in attempts to punish or reprimand an

opposing nation.

The last element of *jus post bello* is rehabilitation. Under what circumstances would it be necessary for the victorious nation in a military conflict to rehabilitate the defeated side? Just because a nation is able to defeat their enemy in combat does not mean they are morally superior. The attempt to educate a nation that has just been on the receiving end of an unjust war may be imperialistic which can lead to negative consequences for both nations. The relationship between educator and student requires expect respect, responsibility, and sacrifice from both parties. Even though the educator has a position of power over the student, it does not justify any actions the educator may arbitrarily take against the student.

Conclusion

The foundation established by Just War Theory will serve as a means for assessing American foreign policy. Some criticize Just War Theory for being too naive and outdated or overly subjective and impossible to decipher. One possible response to criticisms of this kind is that war deserves to be held to the standards of a very demanding philosophy of justice. War is death, suffering, loss, and chaos. War brings out the absolute worst of humanity and for this activity to receive the label of just it must first pass through the rigorous principles set forth by Just War Theory.

Augustine's concepts of *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bello* each defines justice in the three phases of war. These phases include the initiation of war, the practice of war, and the withdrawal from war. Each of these phases must adhere to a strict sense of justice in order for the war, in its entirety, to be seen as a just war. For example, if France plans to go to war because there is substantial evidence that a foreign aggressor has weapons of mass destruction then they

ought to assemble. But if the evidence is based on meager amounts of intelligence, even though some evidence exists, justification for invasion is absent. This is especially unjust if France has the same devastating weapons and is simply unwilling to let other countries advance their defenses. Therefore, justifying sanctions, which is an act of war, based on the notion of weaponization of a foreign country, is unjustified in this particular situation.

Finally, this chapter is intended to encourage individuals to apply these principles to contemporary political legislation. If American foreign policy does not practice the principles of justice, then it is the responsibility of its citizens to act. An American citizen who supports the government, whether by paying taxes or living into one's civic duties, must assume responsibility regarding the actions of their nation. The following chapters will consider the practice of several American wars by considering prominent thinkers who spoke out against American foreign policy in their own times.

CHAPTER THREE: THOMAS PAINE

“The same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from Europe, pursues their descendants still”

-Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine is truly one of American's great heroes. Paine played a major role as an activist and writer in the American Revolution by inspiring American colonists to fight against British dependence in 1776. He also played a significant role in the creation of the United States Constitution. Eric Foner, a scholar on Paine, notes, “Paine's vision of republican government strongly influenced a group of radical intellectuals, professionals and artisans who emerged into sudden political prominence in 1776, and played a leading role in overturning the established government and drafting a new constitution” (Foner 107). For this act alone, Americans today should regard Thomas Paine as one of the Founding Fathers of their nation.

The circumstances of Thomas Paine's life are interesting and are necessary to understand the political atmosphere of the late 18th Century. This entails two of his best known writings, *Common Sense*, and, *Rights of Man*. Understanding the relationship between Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson will help reveal the significant influence the former had on the latter.

Of particular interest to this study is the nature of Thomas Paine's political philosophy. He is labeled by historians as a revolutionary writer, existing in a revolutionary age. Foner wrote, “Today, the revolutionary generation is widely seen as simultaneously liberal and republican.” (Foner xix) Further in his writings Foner suggests a temporary suspension of judgment to better observe Paine as an individual first rather than representing a specific political ideology. Foner's suggestion will help to make Paine's philosophy easier to understand.

During the times of British oppression, notions of justice became more important to colonialists. In order to bring about justice, the oppressed people must first unite regardless of specific political ideology. Foner explained the position Thomas Paine took in this political dichotomy:

Others stressed the common strands within both liberalism and republicanism, or redefined these outlooks so that liberalism came to embrace not simply self-interest but concern for the public good, while republicanism now included a commitment to commercial and material progress. Americans of the revolutionary generation did not see themselves as confronted by two rival or mutually exclusive ideologies, nor did they believe that every political debate could be interpreted as either an extension of republicanism or a reaction against it. Both political ideologies could inspire a commitment to constitutional government, freedom of speech and religion, and restraints on arbitrary power. (Foner xix)

The point here is that both camps shared some common ground. This is hardly to say that the current American two party system is arbitrary but rather that both need to work from a similar foundation, an ultimate concern for the public good building upon a foundation of justice and independence.

That foundation of justice and independence is exactly what Thomas Paine represents in history. He embodies this stance in his passionate expression: “America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the continent must in the end be conqueror; for though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal can never expire” (Paine 60). This same sentiment is important today. Casual readers may consider him a classic liberal or a modern republican, but such terms are not terribly helpful in understanding Paine on his own terms. Instead Paine is more accurately viewed as one who wishes to fight against injustices and to bring peace and prosperity to a new world untouched by the dictatorial powers of the European monarch. Paine insisted that the burning coal of liberty can never expire. Liberty, like justice, has its place in Natural rights and

will be forever a guiding light for those who are oppressed by governments. But how bright is that burning ember today?

Common Sense

Common Sense is one of the most powerful essays written in American history. Thomas Paine came to America in November of 1774 shortly after New England farmers and British soldiers began to fight in Boston, after the British retreat at the Battle of Concord Bridge. The Framers succeeded in preventing British soldiers from restocking at their expense. As the story goes:

Seven months later, there appeared all over the land a slim booklet entitled *Common Sense*. And by April of 1776, almost every adult in the thirteen colonies had read or had read to them some part of the booklet. In December of 1775, only wild-eyed radicals called for independence; six months later only the most conservative elements of the American popular front stood out against independence. In that six-month period, the country united itself, set its face solidly against the enemy, the loose alliance of thirteen far-flung colonies becoming a solid coalition. (Paine 3)

Paine's book reflects a significant mental shift that took place in American history. In the time before *Common Sense* was written, many of the citizens in the British colonies feared independence. Colonists were happy knowing that they were not necessarily constrained by British oppression and at the same time had the support of their military and navy. Those who resisted Paine argued that a connection was not only necessary, but beneficial to the overall growth and safety of America.

An understanding of the French and Indian war is pivotal to grasping the issues facing the colonists during the 18th Century. The war is also known as the Seven Years War, a more accurate name because the war itself was much larger than the conflict between the French and British. The Seven Years War included not only North America but also Europe along with Central

America, West Africa, India, and the Philippines. From 1756 to 1763 a total of four wars broke, out each involving Great Britain. Fred Anderson, author of the book, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America*, writes “[The Seven Years' War] involved all the major powers of Europe, with Austria, France, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and later Spain siding against the alliance of Great Britain, Hanover, Prussia, and later Portugal” (Anderson 170). Great Britain was involved with each one of these conflicts directly, leading to a massive economic burden for the English economy.

During the Seven Years War (strictly the part of the war that dealt with the North American Continent,) Great Britain, France, Spain, and Native Americans were all fighting for land and power. Since this war took place on American soil, colonists had the opportunity to enlist and fight for their land against the French. George III, however, did not trust the colonists. In a letter titled “*On the Loss of America*” he wrote “The situation of the Kingdom is novel, the policy that is to govern it must be novel likewise, or neither adapted to the real evils of the present moment, or the dreaded ones of the future” (George). Because he distrusted the intentions of the American colonists the crown refused to enlist willing volunteers into the British army. Once colonists were discovered among the ranks of English soldiers, they were ordered to disband.

At the same time, regardless of their refusal to accept colonial soldiers, British troops still demanded supplies and shelter from colonial families. Some scholars speculate that this strange relationship between colonists and British soldiers created a friction that quickly led to a fire. That fire would eventually lead to the Third Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting quartering soldiers in private homes.

Slowly but surely, George III (King of Britain during the time of America's revolution) began to lose popularity among the colonists. Their major issue with King George III was the legislation he convinced Parliament to create such as the Quartering Act, the Stamp Act, the Sugar Act, and the infamously dubbed Intolerable Acts. Each piece of legislation acted as a direct tax on the American people. These taxes were meant to replenish the severe economic losses Britain suffered during the Seven Years War. Colonialists felt betrayed by King George III because in one instance he refused them the right to defend their land, but still felt it necessary to collect a tax a few years later. This caused a growing sense of anger and rebellion towards our British attachment. "Taxation without representation!" (Otis) Thomas Paine heard this cry and lit the powder keg of American hostilities.

Throughout *Common Sense* Paine criticized many aspects of Great Britain. One particular aspect concerned Britain's over-extended military. During the late 18th Century Britain had spent 3,500,000 million gold sterling for a total of 336 ships and 13,000 guns (Paine 33). He also noted "The East and West Indies, Mediterranean, Africa, and other parts, over which Britain extends her claim, make large demands upon her navy. From a mixture of prejudice and inattention we have contracted a false notion respecting the navy of England" (Paine 35). Paine observed the inability of Britain to actually unify their entire navy for one purpose at any given time. Britain was spread so thin, with so many foreign responsibilities, that America would have been silly to have thought that she could not have defended her ports against Britain. Paine said, "because as we neither have, nor claim any foreign dominion, our whole force would be employed on our own coast, where we should, in the long run have two to one the advantage of those who had three or four thousand miles to sail over before they could attack us." (Paine 35)

Another factor in Paine's analysis was the sheer distance between Great Britain and America. The amount of time it would take for Britain to respond to any major distress that America is experiencing would effectively prevent any meaningful response. A message would have to be transported via ship across the Atlantic Ocean with the same process required for any response. This could take months, leaving America at the hands of whatever issues were taking place.

The unsteady relationship between Great Britain and the colonies would lead Thomas Paine to call for independence. By achieving independence, America would become responsible for creating and maintaining its own naval force. This undertaking, as he perceived it, would not require America to take on a substantial national debt. He commented on the state of America at that time as being plentiful in resources. He also boasted about America's ship building potential, "No country on the globe is so happily situated, or so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce. We need go abroad for nothing" (Paine 33).

Rights of Man

Thomas Hobbes, a major figure in Western political philosophy who predated Thomas Paine by about one hundred years, asserted that monarchical governments are necessary for human flourishing. In his work *Leviathan* he makes his point clear by claiming that psychologically all humans are inclined towards war, "Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man" (Hobbes 69). According to Hobbes, free individuals will quickly attempt to steal, rob, and pillage their neighbors for the

sake of their own selfish desires. Therefore a strong government, in which individuals sacrifice liberties for security, is necessary to maintain order and growth. Specifically, Hobbes prefers an absolute monarchy which is an indirect opposition to Paine's conception of government.

Paine did not see human nature in the same fashion Thomas Hobbes did. For Paine, individuals are much less prone to engage in a war against every man. However, Paine believed that individuals suffer from moral defect simply because "nothing but Heaven is impregnable to vice" (Paine 7). Humanity itself is subject to vice and confusion; therefore we must have government even though some liberty is sacrificed. Paine asserts, "The fact therefore must be that the individuals themselves, each in his own personal and sovereign right, entered into a compact with each other to produce a government: and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist" (Paine 123) adding, "I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature which no art can overturn, that the more simple any thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered" (Paine 102). Therefore his original philosophy regarding the role of government inspired a notion of minimalism, which many of his contemporaries could relate to when remembering the injustices King George III imposed upon colonial America.

In *Common Sense* Paine also expressed his views regarding the relationship between society and government, "Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness" adding, "Society in every state is a blessing, but Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil" (Paine 1). This idea was at the heart of colonial values in the late 18th Century. A major difference between Paine and Hobbes lies with who has priority within the social contract, the government or the people. For Hobbes, government comes first "The condition of mere

Nature, that is to say, of absolute Liberty such as is theirs, that neither are Sovereigns, nor Subjects, is Anarchy, and the condition of War: That the Precepts, by which men are guided to avoid that condition, are the Laws of Nature” (Hobbes 180). Hobbes here argued that the creation of government is just as natural as nature itself. Paine did not necessarily disagree with the natural growth of government, but he did disagree regarding the actual role of government. Paine provided a framework in which the people are ultimately of higher concern than government.

Paine wrote in *The Rights of Man*:

It has been thought a considerable advance towards establishing the principles of Freedom to say that Government is a compact between those who govern and those who are governed; but this cannot be true, because it is putting the effect before the cause; for as man must have existed before Governments existed, there necessarily was a time when Governments did not exist, and consequently there could originally exist no governors to form such a compact with. (Paine 123)

Paine here supported the power of the people over the government. In fact Paine even argued that it is the responsibility of the people to rebel against their government if it begins to act unjustly. Therefore the natural rights of the individual human being are more fundamental than the collected powers of government.

One additional argument in *Rights of Man* deserves to be mentioned. Paine wrote, “A Constitution is a thing *antecedent* to a Government, and a Government is only the creature of a Constitution. The Constitution of a country is not the act of its Government, but of the people constituting a Government” (Paine 124). Not only do the people come first in the relationship between citizen and government, the people also are in charge of setting up all the rules and regulations in which said government can operate.

Conclusion

Thomas Paine is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in early American history. American history and government has been greatly impacted by his ability to educate and inspire. There are many more aspects of Paine's life and thinking to consider if one wishes to gain a full understanding of this figure and his contributions to American government. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I offer the following main points.

The first main point deals with the subject of limited government. Thomas Paine did not want independence from Great Britain simply for the sake of political or economic gains. Instead he regarded independence as a sort of necessity for the natural growth of justice and prosperity. This desire for independence was related to the lack of freedom colonists were experiencing due to Great Britain's restraints on colonial life. The notion of taxation without representation alone was enough to spur the flames of revolution among the colonists. Other aspects of the revolution centered on a general lack of influence to colonists felt regarding their fate. The American colonists recognized that Great Britain was in control of their destiny. Some colonists argued that this foreign dependence was a good thing, but the imperialistic and oppressive nature of Great Britain itself seemed to have had a stronger effect on people like Thomas Paine.

These frictions in turn led to war in the form of a bloody revolution that eventually allowed America to live on her own terms. The Constitution set up by the Founding Fathers contained, among other provisions, a set of restrictions for government. During this time the Bill of Rights was created recognizing the natural rights of each individual. The new nation thereby separated itself from the past monarchical governments. Some major rights protected by the Bill of Rights were, Freedom of Speech, Freedom to Assemble, and Freedom to Bear Arms. This

concept of natural rights vis-à-vis the role of government can be linked directly to the philosophy of Thomas Paine, and will be reflected by each subsequent thinker to be covered in this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR: EMMA GOLDMAN

“The powers that have for centuries been engaged in enslaving the masses have made a thorough study of their psychology. They know that the people at large are like children whose despair, sorrow and tears can be turned into joy with a little toy.”

-Emma Goldman

This chapter is devoted to Emma Goldman’s influence on American thought during the 20th Century. She was born on June 27th 1869 in Kovno, Russia and immigrated to America in 1889. Emma Goldman stood out more than others from her time due to her ability to capture the spirit of her American working class audience. Her reputation is one of toughness, independence, coupled with an unrelenting desire for “real social wealth” (Goldman 63). She spoke out against things like the abuse of factory labor, unjust wars, social injustice, women’s suffrage, and many other issues.

Once Goldman landed on American soil she began her new life. She commented in her biography that everything in her past was gone forever, “cast away like old clothes.” Abraham Goldman, her father, once attempted to marry her off at a young age, but Goldman refused due to her desire to “continue her studies” (Goldman Ch.1). Her father replied “Girls do not have to learn much! All a Jewish daughter needs to know is how to prepare gefullte fish, cut noodles, and give the man plenty of children” (Goldman Ch.1). Goldman reflected on her father in her autobiography as somebody who constantly suppressed her intellectual growth. It was this oppression that eventually leads her to pursue the American dream. She writes “I wanted to study, to know life, to travel...I was ready to escape my father's plans for me that I had insisted on going to America” (Goldman Ch.1).

Upon arrival in America, Goldman was able to reconnect with an old Anarchist friend she

met in Europe years before. This new acquaintance eventually led her to meet Alexander Berkman, one of the most well-known members of the American Anarchist movement during that time. She was enamored with his ability to speak and she became extremely dedicated to the Anarchist cause and quickly became an important figure in this group. Suddenly she found her life immersed in a world of social and political activism. Her criticisms focused mainly on criticisms of American society in which she advocated for reforms within religion, patriotism, education, women's rights, sexual freedoms, and many more.

Emma Goldman is historically known as a key figure in the rise of Anarchist philosophy in America. Her passionate speeches wowed audiences and inspired revolutionaries. A biography written by historian Vivian Gornick describes a historic speech given by Goldman in New York City's Union Square:

Emma was at her best badgering and berating her working class audience. They loved being told that all they had to do was fight their own cowardice. Her insulting bluntness was received like balm applied to an open wound. Eyes glittered with relief as she scorned those listening for not taking to the streets now, right now. Inevitably, the applause was deafening, and a sea of hands reached up toward her, as though to touch her was to gain spiritual strength. (Gornick 32)

When she arrived in America the Industrial Revolution had ushered in thousands of factory jobs for the average citizen. Emma Goldman tapped into the concerns of a mass of individuals oppressed by long hours of hard labor with meager pay. She described her first job in America in her autobiography; "I found employment at Garson and Mayer's, sewing ulsters ten and a half hours a day, for two dollars and fifty cents a week" (Goldman Ch.1). Many Americans were in a similar position as Goldman and were looking for a better way to live.

Goldman's critique quickly extended to arguments against the wars in which America had participated during her life. The Spanish-American war ended in 1898 and WWI began in 1914.

She lived through both of these wars and criticized the American government for what she saw as its seemingly unjust decisions. Her influence on American thought questioning the justness of wars is found in her questioning of what patriotism actually means and the impact wars have on American women. Many of the issues she spoke about are still in need of attention today and will be discussed in the following sections.

Anarchism: What It Really Stands For

Anarchism is Emma Goldman's masterpiece of political theory. She attacks “ignorant men” for confusing the true definition of Anarchism with a false one. In response, she provides her own definition by explaining the nature of her ideals. On one hand she condemns the state of American culture while on the other she provides a philosophical look at human nature. Her humanitarian philosophy and political activism blend together in a powerful essay that would affect the lives of the American working class.

Anarchy, for many immigrants at the turn of the 20th Century, *was* the American Dream. C. Brid Nicholson wrote, “Anarchy was appealing to the newly arrived immigrant in the 19th Century, as they, like many before them, hoped to find in the United States a place where their American Dream could happen... Instead, what they found was a country that, for many, was as bigoted and biased as their homeland, and a place where employment and fair wages were not guaranteed” (Nicholson 54-55). The disillusionment with the American Dream helped encourage the growth of Anarchism among immigrants. Many immigrants took a chance on America, and were ultimately disappointed by what they found. With nowhere else to go, they decided to try and change the American system, as Nicholson writes, “The situation seemed ready for anarchy”.

Early on in her essay she attacked those who, in her eyes, misrepresented the true meaning of anarchy. Critics, specifically Oscar Wilde, argued that Anarchism is synonymous with violence, danger, and destruction. Goldman responded saying, “A practical scheme, says Oscar Wilde, is either one already in existence, or a scheme that could be carried out under the existing conditions...but it is exactly the existing conditions that one objects to, and any scheme that could accept these conditions is wrong and foolish” (Goldman 55).

Wilde contended that Anarchism would only lead America down a path of death and pain. Although Goldman does not disagree with Wilde on this point, she responded by saying “Destruction and Violence! How is the ordinary man to know that the most violent element in society is ignorance” (Goldman 56). Violence is therefore justified in the attempt to destroy “the parasitic growth that feeds on life's essence”. Therefore it is true that Anarchism is a force of destruction, but in the eyes of a revolutionary, this destruction is necessary for new and better things to grow. This line of thought suggested a faith, not in an organized religion, but rather in “nature's forces” (Goldman 56).

In the early 20th Century, it was commonly believed that Anarchism was devoid of the advances of science and technology, leaving humanity to forever dwell as savages in a primitive state. Although individuals may acknowledge the simplicity of life for the primitive, critics argued that this is not the destiny of man. Theodore Roosevelt himself criticized Anarchism in his message to Congress on December 3, 1901:

[Anarchism's] perverted instincts lead them to prefer confusion and chaos to the most beneficent form of social order. His protest of concern for working men is outrageous in its imprudent falsity; for if the political institutions of this country do not afford opportunity to every honest and intelligent son of toil, then the door of hope is forever closed against him. (Roosevelt)

Such accusations were disputed by adherents to Anarchist theory. Albert Pearson, a noted socialist who favored Anarchism towards the end of his life, wrote, “We don't fight machinery. We don't oppose the thing. It is only the manner and methods of employing them that we object to. That is all. It is the manipulations of these things in the interests of a few; it is the monopolization of them that we object to” (Nicholson 55).

A definition of Anarchism is supplied by Goldman: “ANARCHISM:- The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary” (Goldman 56). This new social order is an attempt to balance the individual with society evenly, ending the “bloody battle” in which both sides are “striving for supremacy” (Goldman 56). Goldman suggested that a better understanding of history and human development will aid humanity in developing a harmonious society. To wit:

Anarchism is the only philosophy which brings to man the consciousness of himself; which maintains that God, the State, and society are non-existent, that their promises are null and void, since they can be fulfilled only through man's subordination. Anarchism is therefore the teacher of the unity of life; not merely in nature, but in man...The individual is the heart of society, conserving the essence of social life; society is the lungs which are distributing the element to keep the life essence-that is, the individual- pure and strong. (Goldman 59)

Goldman believed that the unity of life does not come from government or organized religion. Instead our “essence” is rooted in the nature of man. This idea is very similar to Thomas Paine’s words in *The Rights of Man*. He wrote, “Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of Government. It has its origin in the principles of society and the natural constitution of man. It existed prior to Government, and would exist if the formality of Government was abolished” (Paine 192).

The notion of natural rights is an important concept in American thought because it provides the foundation in which revolutionary ideas can flourish. The more Emma Goldman explained Anarchism, the more her tendencies towards natural rights were fleshed out. Anarchism seems, to many, like a complete destruction of values, morals, and structure. But in Goldman's view it simply represented the rise of another, stronger, moral structure. She argued, "Freedom, expansion, opportunity and above all, peace and repose" (Goldman, *Anarchism* 68) and also noted that this new structure could only be realized with a complete reevaluation of values within American society.

Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty

It is her stance on war and patriotism in general that requires the inclusion of Emma Goldman in this thesis. In her essay *Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty* she wrote, "[C]onceit, arrogance, and egotism are the essentials of patriotism" (Goldman 134). She continued to attack this vision of patriotism throughout her essay and blamed it for supporting social injustice, which in turn leads to human suffering. Goldman strongly opposed what she saw as the "despotic" nature of American society and sought radical change in the system of government.

Goldman's work on *Patriotism* begins with a brief example of what patriotism ought to be. She wrote, "What is patriotism? Is it love of one's birthplace, the place of childhood's recollections and hopes, dreams and aspirations?...In short, is it love for the spot, every inch representing dear and precious recollections?" (Goldman 133) Responding to her own questions she wrote, "If that were patriotism, few American men of today could be called upon to be

patriotic, since the place of play has been turned into factory, mill, and mine, while deafening sounds of machinery have replaced the music of the birds” (Goldman 133). It may be argued that, given her status as an immigrant, Emma Goldman was not even an American citizen until her early twenties and perhaps inexperienced as to the reality of American culture. Thus, Goldman’s criticism of American culture could be seen as less relevant because of her foreign descent. Even so, her writings have none the less inspired many Americans to fight against an artificial sense of patriotism that was being fed to the nation's citizens in her own time and arguably continues today.

Goldman also argued that war itself is irrational. Arming oneself with high powered weapons is synonymous with moving away from any kind of global peace. When government begins to gain power through weaponry, a primal tendency to test those weapons is sometimes uncontrollable. Goldman said, “The experience of everyday life fully proves that the armed individual is invariably anxious to try his strength. The same is historically true of governments. Really peaceful countries do not waste life and energy in war preparations.” (Goldman 140) It is not clear if she condemned an armed populace in general, but she definitely spoke profoundly against massing military power by central governments.

One particular scene in American history has brought Emma Goldman a unique disgust:

Let us take our own Spanish-American war, supposedly a great and patriotic event in the history of the United States. How our hearts burned with indignation against the atrocious Spaniards! True, our indignation did not flare up spontaneously. It was nurtured by months of newspaper agitation, and long after Butcher Weyler had killed off many noble Cubans and outraged many Cuban women...But when the smoke cleared, the dead buried, and the cost of the war came back to the people in an increase in the price of commodities and rent-that is, when we sobered up from our patriotic spree- it suddenly dawned on us that the cause of the Spanish-American war was the consideration of the price of sugar; or, to be more explicit, that the lives, blood, and money of the American people were used to protect the interests of American capitalists, which were threatened by the Spanish Government. (Goldman 139)

Here in particular she makes a powerful comment regarding the negative economic and moral affects war has on nations. Economically, war is unjustified due to the great strain it places on both the aggressor and the defending nation. She also points out that the reasons the American people were given to justify war were completely immoral due to the infringement of natural human rights resulting from these wars. To fight, kill, and starve humanity for the sake of the price of sugar is a mortal sin for Goldman and it ought to be.

This line of thought is very similar to an argument Thomas Paine makes in *Common Sense*. One of the main aspects of his literature was the economic instability caused by wars. While Thomas Paine saw the Revolutionary war as justified, it was only because it was necessary for the sake of human flourishing and growth. In contrast, the Spanish-American War was seen by Goldman as being waged simply for the economic gain of the power elite. Therefore money was the end result of a certain action, namely death, loss, and depression for the lower classes.

Goldman also criticized the war machine for being a tool used to distract the American masses. The opening quote of this chapter shows Goldman's argument, "that people at large are like children" and they can be easily swayed by toys. The rest of that paragraph reads "An army and navy represents the people's toys. To make them more attractive and acceptable, hundreds and thousands of dollars are being spent for the display of these toys" (Goldman 141). The display of these "toys" gives American citizens a sense of pride and safety. But ultimately, in Goldman's view, arming a nation for war most certainly brings war.

Thomas Paine's view of militarism in government draws an important parallel: "All the monarchical governments are military. War is their trade, plunder and revenue their objects.

While such governments continue, peace has not the absolute security of a day” (Paine 32).

Paine is describing here the style in which monarchical governments act. If militarism is seen as a trait of monarchy, then militarism is suddenly placed into a category that is inconsistent with the natural rights of all human beings. The sense of restricted liberties that Thomas Paine felt towards the British Empire is very similar to Emma Goldman's sense of restricted liberties in the late 19th Century.

Woman Suffrage

When considering the time-line of American Revolutionary thought, each outstanding individual brings a unique argument to the discussion. Thomas Paine's argument represents the need for an independent Constitution. Emma Goldman brought woman's suffrage to the forefront of the revolutionary thought of her own time.

In her essay, *Woman Suffrage*, Goldman wrote, “Then there is the home. What a terrible fetish it is! How it saps the very life-energy of woman, this modern prison with golden bars. Its shining aspects blinds woman to the price she would have to pay as wife, mother and housekeeper” (Goldman 202). Goldman supported equal rights for woman in “all affairs of society” (Goldman 202). She looked upon the current political systems as inadequate to support woman's suffrage; this added a greater fire within Goldman to tear down these systems with Anarchy. She wrote, “As a matter of fact, the most advanced students of universal suffrage have come to realize that all existing systems of political power are absurd, and are completely inadequate to meet the pressing issues of life” (Goldman 205). This line of thought plays a significant role in the philosophy of Emma Goldman, specifically because there seems to be no hope for women to influence the political sphere during her time.

The debate over women's suffrage is also implicit when discussing war. Emma Goldman explained that the role of women during wartime is often overlooked. War is inherently an oppressive social construct, leaving women isolated and depressed over the loss of family and loved ones. She eloquently wrote:

The insatiable monster, war, robs woman of all that is dear and precious to her. It exacts her brothers, lovers, sons, and in return gives her a life of loneliness and despair. Yet the greatest supporter and worshiper of war is woman. She it is who instills the love of conquest and power into her children; she it is who whispers the glories of war into the ears of her little ones, and who rocks her baby to sleep with the tunes of trumpets and the noise of guns. It is woman, too, who crowns the victor on his return from the battlefield. Yes, it is woman who pays the highest price to that insatiable monster, war.

This adds another reason to resist unjust wars –it violates the equal rights of woman in America. Her argument is subtle but important and very often overlooked. When a woman's husband leaves home to go to war, the woman becomes potentially widowed leaving her at economic and social risk.

Ultimately, Emma Goldman asserts that war must change or be ended, in order for woman to have a better chance at equality. Of course war is not the only thing preventing women from reaching equality, her words on war add to the urgency of combating the infringements on human rights caused by unjust and reckless American wars.

Conclusion

Emma Goldman represents a new brand of American thought occurring at the turn of the 20th century. What makes her similar to the other thinkers in this thesis is her ideas concerning basic human rights, unjust wars, and the reduction of government. Goldman also makes a unique contribution to this pattern of argumentation with her support of women's rights. The fact that

Goldman, towards the end of her career, advocated for non-violence as the appropriate means for opposing injustice also brings her fully into harmony with the pattern of American Revolutionary thought this thesis is developing.

Goldman experienced two American wars during her life, Spanish-American War and WWI. Goldman observed that both wars, which she saw as unjust, led directly to avoidable restrictions on women in American society. Women did not even have the right to vote when Goldman was writing. She argued that war itself takes brothers, fathers, sons, and husbands away from the home, thus leaving the woman alone to support the home, family business, or the children too young to be drafted. Towards the end of Goldman's life she wrote, "...it is one thing to employ violence in combat, as a means of defense. It is quite another thing to make a principle of terrorism, to institutionalize it, to assign it the most vital place in the social struggle. Such terrorism begets counter-revolution and in turn itself becomes counter-revolutionary" (Goldman 233).

This quotation embodies two major points. The first is the idea that violence ought to be used only in situations of self-defense, which is delineated by St. Augustine in Just War Theory. The second is that violence can be used against a just revolution. When revolutionaries use violence to rebel, the opposition then becomes justified in using violence against them in response, thus leading to a counter revolution.

Finally, it should be noted that Goldman's ideas regarding limited government in her work, *Anarchism*, embodied the radical downsizing of government that is an element in American Revolutionary thought. She wrote on this topic:

To achieve such an arrangement of life, government, with its unjust, arbitrary, repressive measures, must be done away with... [For] only in freedom can man grow to his full stature. Only in freedom will he learn to think and move, and give the very best in him. Only in freedom will he realize the true force of the social bonds which knit men together, and which are the true foundation of a normal social life. (Goldman 67)

This quotation embodies a basic understanding and respect for the natural rights of humanity. Such rights are trampled when nations decide to unjustly engage in destructive wars. These are the fundamental aspects of this thesis, and will be touched upon again in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE: THOREAU AND KING

“Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good.”

-Ghandi

Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr. represent the continued American struggle for justice in the 19th and 20th centuries. Both of these men would employ civil disobedience to combat oppressive forms of American government. Both Thoreau and King believed that injustice and oppression could be combated by engaging in strict nonconformity in the forms of boycotting, tax resisting, and public gathering. Fundamentally these principles are based on the notions of limited government, natural rights, and the pursuit of justice. Martin Luther King, Jr. stands apart from the previous thinkers because he never has mentioned his philosophy on the role of government itself.

Thoreau and King are also distinguishable from Goldman and Paine because of their religious inspiration. Thoreau was one of the founders of the New England Transcendentalist movement, and Martin Luther King was one of the most influential Baptist ministers in American history. Both Thoreau and King looked at natural rights in a similar way as Paine and Goldman, but simply through a more religious eye. Within the four thinkers considered here, are a Deist, an Anarchist, a Transcendentalist, and a Baptist. Regardless of these varying viewpoints, all four of these thinkers seem to agree on the basic notions of the rights a human being should be able to enjoy simply by virtue of being human. Natural rights appear to be a concept that can be agreed upon by individuals from many different belief systems and cultural backgrounds.

The revolutionary aspects of Thoreau and King are highlighted within topics of war and human rights. Thoreau was born in 1817. His generation was exposed to slavery in practice and

the Mexican-American War with its subtext of the westerly spread of slavery. Both of these issues he combated with zeal. His primary act of civil disobedience was resisting government tax collectors and isolating himself from what he described as the “machine” of American government. Writing in the isolation of Walden Pond, he urged the populace of America to abandon their dependency on government. Without the support of the people, or the unwillingness of the people to be used as fuel for political engines, standing governments topple, leaving in their wake an opportunity for humanity to create something new.

Martin Luther King was born January 15, 1929. Though the Second World War was fought during his teenage years, the war that defined the late 20th Century was the Vietnam War. Also during this time the civil rights movement came to a climax. Inspired by Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi’s successful campaign for Indian independence from Great Britain, King became the leader of the movement in America utilizing the theories of civil disobedience he readily adapted from Thoreau and Gandhi’s examples. This would lead to victories for African Americans in their bid for freedom and dignity.

King wrote in his autobiography:

I became convinced that noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. No other person has been more eloquent and passionate in getting this idea across than Henry David Thoreau. As a result of his writings and personal witness, we are the heirs of a legacy of creative protest. (M. L. King 37)

Civil disobedience was used by Dr. King during the Civil Rights Movement as a method for combating political oppression. A decade earlier Gandhi had been very successful in combating oppression from the British Government at the beginning of the 20th Century using non-violent tactics. King also comments on the inspiration received from Gandhi, “India’s Gandhi was the guiding light of our technique of nonviolent social change” (M. L. King 40).

King writes about his enlightening experience in his travels in India which he called “his brothers’ country” (M. L. King 40). He speaks of the great hospitality that the Indian people showed him and came to see their struggle as parallel with his own.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man of faith, attending Morehouse College, Crozer Theological Seminary, the University of Pennsylvania, Boston University, and Harvard University (Ansbro xiv) where he majored in religious studies and philosophy. He went on to become a Baptist minister and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, acting as the first standing president. The religious foundation acted as a platform for King’s rise as a public figure. His vast knowledge of theology, in which he earned his Ph.D., helped him inspire and move an entire race of people for the sake of social justice.

The following sections will discuss the major publications of Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr. The most important parallel between these two thinkers is the practice of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience can be traced back to these two individuals’ strong sense of spiritual dedication.

Thoreau: Civil Disobedience

Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divides states and churches, it divides families; ay, it divides the *Individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

-Thoreau

To best understand the works of Henry David Thoreau, one must first recognize his spiritual life as a Transcendentalist. Transcendentalism was a reaction to the dominant religion in the New England area, Calvinism. Calvinism is a very strict religion that advocates a vengeful

God. Infamous Calvinist and American philosopher Jonathan Edwards preached these words, “Natural men are held in God’s hand, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those suffering executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell” (Edwards 12).

Both Thoreau and his colleague, Ralph Waldo Emerson, rejected this type of deterministic philosophy. They also rejected the idea of a vengeful God and instead focused more on spirituality itself, a spirituality that never led to any kind of God in specific. The spirituality of Transcendentalism focused more on uplifting mankind. Here is where Transcendentalism and natural rights become intertwined. Transcendentalism, on a basic level, supports human flourishing. In order for human flourishing to occur, man must be able to embrace his natural rights freely.

Emerson wrote:

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. This, in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed is by the action itself contracted. He, who puts off impurity, thereby puts on purity. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God, do enter into that man with justice. (Emerson 60)

Justice here represents the man becoming in touch with the “laws of the soul.” Many aspects of American society were viewed by these individuals as an infringement of justice against man himself. Thoreau in particular speaks out against slavery, war, and large government. Thus he is brought into the discussion of American Revolutionary thought.

One of Thoreau’s most famous quotations was written in his book *Civil Disobedience*, “That government is best which governs least” (Thoreau 265). The phrase itself is attributed to

Democratic Review journalist John O'Sullivan but is also noted as a fundamental aspect of Thoreau's philosophy and frequently echoed by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Although Thoreau ascribes to this notion of limited government, he added, "That government is best which governs not at all" (Thoreau 265).

With this alteration we begin to see a much more radicalized conception of government similar to the Anarchism of the yet to be born Emma Goldman. Thoreau justifies his radical claim with this comment "when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have" (Thoreau 265). People must prepare for this un-governing government by becoming aware of the injustices that exist within their lives and their society. Thoreau implies that individuals do not need to rely on government to supply them with security, food, and shelter. After making some general comments about limit government, he begins to focus on the state of American society, Thoreau wrote, "Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people have done all that has been accomplished" (Thoreau 266).

This point adds further support to the notion that humanity strives with limited government, an idea which is consistent among each revolutionary thinker covered in this thesis. The implicit idea in Thoreau's comment is that governments often tend to lose focus on natural human rights, primarily due to the specific concerns of government for its own imperatives. This leads to limitation on the flourishing of humanity, a concern which becomes materialized in the Mexican-American War of 1846.

The war began in 1846 and lasted two years. America was successful in conquering at

least half of Mexico's land which encompassed what are today the states of California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. The president at the time was James Polk, a strong believer in Manifest Destiny. This philosophy was seen as justifying the ethnic cleansing of the Mexican population. Mexico, before the war, was dealing with serious internal issues such as civil war and a general lack of national morality. Therefore America was able to quickly and easily take advantage of the divided nation. (Frazier 13-14)

Civil war general Ulysses S. Grant described the Mexican-American war as, “one of the most unjust wars ever waged.” He goes on to say “It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory” (Grant Chapter LXVII). Grant touches on a very sensitive issue in his comment - European monarchies. Although Thoreau never explicitly speaks out against European monarchs, his thought parallels the thinking of Grant when he said, “The government itself...is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure” (Thoreau 265). Even though America has just recently gained its independence from Great Britain, imperialistic tendencies were already becoming apparent in American foreign policy by the 1840's.

In his essay *Civil Disobedience* Thoreau attacks the American military complex viciously. Thoreau observed the unjust invasion of Mexican territory by the American government. He wrote:

Now what are they? Men at all? Or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy-Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an

American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts, a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments. (Thoreau 267)

The strong comments made by Thoreau stem in part from what he viewed as the soldiers' inability to control themselves independently, especially when the force upon which they are dependent leads them to unjust actions. Thoreau argues that these military men are stripped of their humanity. Once the natural rights of freedom, justice, and independence are lost, people become alien to what makes them human.

Thoreau also speaks strongly about his opposition to slavery in America. As a man who stood for universal equality as a principle of natural rights, there is no room for slavery. He makes a revealing point when speaking about the relationship between the North and the South regarding this practice. He writes "Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers [in New England]" (Thoreau 269).

This point is revealing because most Americans are taught that the North was mainly concerned about human rights and thus strongly opposed slavery. Thoreau disagreed with the idea that New England was free of thinking, saying, "[New England] is more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave or to Mexico, *cost what it may*" (Thoreau 269). This argument touches on a major theme that occurs in the future civil rights movement. Individuals who support racism and slavery are indeed a problem, but the greater issue lies with those individuals who oppose slavery in principle yet do nothing about it. Issues of this sort fall under the rubric of Edmund Burke's observation that the only way evil can ever triumph is for good men to do nothing.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: War and Slavery

An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural rights. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.

-King M.L.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is a very dynamic character in American history. Hundreds of books have been published honoring and remembering his life work. This section will focus on his arguments concerning natural rights, unjust war, and social oppression. Just like many other of the revolutionary thinkers previously discussed, there is a consistent understanding of what justice is in the sense of natural rights. King is unique because of his belief that justice will always triumph over evil. He writes, "There is something in the universe that unfolds for justice...we felt somehow that as we struggled we had cosmic companionship. And this was one of the things that kept the people together, the belief that the universe is on the side of justice" (M. L. King 30).

What makes King similar to the other thinkers discussed is his desire to bring justice to American society. The injustice of war, for Dr. King as for Thoreau, was manifest through non-violent protest. Thomas Paine and Emma Goldman were in the same fight for justice but went about it differently. For Paine it was impossible to become detached from Great Britain without a violent revolution. Similarly, Goldman viewed political violence as a necessity, as Paine, writing, "To the earnest student it must be apparent that the accumulated forces in our social and economic life, culminating in a political act of violence, are similar to the terrors of the atmosphere, manifested in storm and lightning" (Goldman 85). Each thinker brings their own form of "storm and lightning." The combination of all of their methods of resistance is something that makes American Revolutionary thought dynamic and beautiful.

In 1955 the Vietnam War was commenced. “By the time it had ended in 1975 four million people had died, half of that number are civilian casualties that occurred during warfare” (Hull). The war was seen as unjust and wasteful by Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other American citizens. King wrote, “Adventures like Vietnam continue to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such” (M. L. King 138). He continued to argue that America was hypocritical when preaching the message of spreading democracy around the world while failing to practice it at home.

King often pointed out that America was not even able to bring peace to its own citizens. The hypocrisy of seeing the black and white youth of America fighting together in war overseas but back home are not even allowed to be enrolled in the same school was cruel to Dr. King, wrote on this subject, “So we have been repeatedly faced with cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools” (M. L. King 138). King decried the double standard of American society during the Vietnam War. Individuals of the black community were faced with a mandatory draft to protect the nation that at the same time was restricting their liberties at home through segregation.

A 1969 article titled, *Black Power in Vietnam* written by Pulitzer Prize nominee and award winning journalist Terry Wallace, explains how the Vietnam War actually made the injustices of segregation even more vivid. Placing whites and blacks together in the battlefield forced the two sides’ of racial conflict to meet face to face. Perhaps in times of war, racial issues can be put aside to fight as one unified force against evil. This was not the case in the Vietnam

War. When a war itself is unjustified, upon what basis could soldiers be expected to unify?

Wallace wrote, “While traditional military discipline remains an overwhelming control, the combination of domestic turbulence, an unpopular war and the new spirit of black militancy has produced ugly incidents in which American fighting men turned upon one another” (Wallace).

The argument embodied here supports the overall message of this thesis: unjust wars only breed more injustice.

Dr. King wrote that unjust wars are toxic for American culture. In fact it poisons the very soul of its individuals. When able bodied citizens are taken away from their home to die in a war that does not benefit his country, humanity suffers. Not only does this affect the infrastructure of a society but it also reaffirms violence as a positive method for problem solving. Therefore, in Dr. King's mind, war itself corrupts the society it claims to defend.

King himself wrote, “If America's soul becomes totally poisoned; part of the autopsy must read Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over” (M. L. King 139). This argument is still important today. Even though our current occupation of the Middle East is not on scale with the Vietnam War, it still acts as what King described as a moral and economic drain on the, “soul of America” (M. L. King 139). Dr. King articulated the moral obligation of all Americans citizens to oppose the initiation of unjust wars. This obligation is heightened when the importance of the Civil Rights Movement of his time challenging injustice at home is taken into consideration.

One of King’s most compelling essays is, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. Here he explicitly states the difference between man-made law and natural rights. He writes “A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God” (M. L. King 89). These two terms

are defined by their relationship with justice. Citing Augustine's vision of natural law, laws which find themselves outside the realm of moral law have no weight in society. These unjust laws are enforced with the threat of punishment or death, adding even more distress to the already oppressive legislation. Many problems arise when considering natural rights as the standard for all man-made laws. With the almost limitless definitions of God, how can anybody actually claim to know what is justified by God?

King's letter contained his famous objection to moderation. Many Southern moderates argued for patience, evidencing fatalism over what they saw as God's plan. Creating public disturbances and clashing with police only creates violence and chaos, thus one should wait for racial injustice to work itself out over time. Martin Luther King, Jr. replied to these arguments very pointedly:

I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, 'Wait.' But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children...then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. (M. L. King, Letter From a Birmingham Jail 88)

King asserted that there is only so much any individual can take of injustice, eventually it boils over into action. Justice then becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. The moderate paralyzed with fear, awaiting divine redemption, thus becomes the obstacle in the crusade for justice. Martin Luther King, Jr., with these ideals, became an inspirational figure for millions of human beings around.

The problem of the inactive citizen is still prevalent today as are many other problems revolutionary thinkers had to face. Citizens of a nation have power, regardless of the idea that an individual is nothing against the dominating forces of government. When gathered together, when acting as a single force, small groups of people can achieve significant accomplishments. King points out that the resistance of the perhaps well-intentioned individual to support justice is one of the most daunting issues humanity must face, "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Councilor or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice" (M. L. King 91). These words are daunting as well as inspiring. If one can accept the notion that in today's 21st Century American society there are still rampant examples of injustice then what does that mean for those of us who subscribe to law and order rather than to justice?

Conclusion

Both Thoreau and King spent time in jail for their actions. King would eventually die for his cause. Thoreau wrote, "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison" (Thoreau 275). Martin Luther King, Jr. later would write one of his most influential works while imprisoned in Birmingham Jail. Even while imprisoned Thoreau writes "I did not feel for a moment confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax" (Thoreau 278). Similarly Martin Luther King was able to create a historically legendary "letter" while imprisoned, he writes: Never before have I written a letter this long...I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else is there to do when you are alone for days in the dull monotony of a narrow jail cell other than write long letters, think

strange thoughts, and pray long prayers? (M. L. King 100)

For an individual to make these kinds of positive and confident statements from the bowels of a prison is an astounding testament to their character and a display of their conviction to truth and justice.

Many levels of similarities exist between King and Thoreau. Both represent strict obedience to non-violence in their resistance to government. Thoreau expressed this position clearly and firmly in his essay on Civil Disobedience. By refusing to pay taxes to the American government, Thoreau practiced the notion of civil disobedience. However, in his time Thoreau was unable to gather a mass of individuals to rally against the government in the way that King did. Regardless, his literary work helped inspire individuals such as King to materialize the ambitions of civil disobedience for the end goal of justice.

Civil disobedience itself is supported by a firm commitment to spiritual life. On a micro level the faiths of these two individuals were different. But on a larger and more important scale, both realized the inherent bend towards justice to which the universe adheres, notions deeply rooted in a life of spiritual grounding. In King's words, "There is something in the universe that unfolds for justice. And this was one of the things that kept the people together, the belief that the universe is on the side of justice" (M. L. King 30). Thoreau expresses this point poetically, "Be but Thy inspiration given/ No matter through what danger sought/ I'll fathom Hell, or climb to Heaven/ And yet esteem that cheap which Love hath brought" (Sanborn 270).

Paired with this belief is the need for individuals to act. Neither is deterministic regarding their philosophy of human existence. Both found strength in striving for justice. These methods of action are manifest as opposition to the wars and racial issues of their times. Another vividly

expressed idea is impatience with individuals who do not wish to act, those who wait for justice to come to them rather than pursuing it. These individuals are seen as inhibitors of and obstacles to justice.

CHAPTER SIX: BLOWBACK

American officials and the media talk a great deal about “rogue states” like Iraq and North Korea, but we must ask ourselves whether the United States has itself become a rogue superpower.

-Chalmers Johnson

The final thinker in this discussion is Chalmers Johnson. Former president of the Japan Policy Research Institute, U.S. Navy veteran, and Berkeley Ph.D. in Political Science, Johnson discusses the concept of blowback in his book, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*. Johnson offers the following definition: “Blowback, which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency first invented for their own internal use, is starting to circulate...It refers to the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people” (Johnson 9). In other words, when the CIA attempts or completes a covert operation there are often consequences that are unforeseeable. Many of those consequences take shape as revenge against what many foreign countries call American Imperialism. Many scholars of American foreign policy have claimed that the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. of September 11, 2001 could be linked to blowback.

A look at the history of American military involvement with the infamous Osama Bin Laden, mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, is necessary to deal with this issue fairly. The CIA in 1984 built a military complex in the city of Khost, Afghanistan, for the sake of training “Arab Fighters” (Johnson xiv). The intent behind training Arab fighters was to repel the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, which began on December 24, 1979. The Soviet government supported the socialist leader in Afghanistan, but religious fundamentalists like the Mujahedeen saw the socialist reform as an attack on Islam.

The Mujahedeen was comprised mainly of American aided Arab fighters. America at that time was engaged in a Cold War with Russia and was worried that a Soviet victory in Afghanistan would leave America vulnerable. A documentary covering the Soviet Afghan War featured U.S. national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski saying, “We were faced with a possibility that one way or another we may have either a hostile Iran on the Persian shore facing us, or we may even have the Soviets there” (Brzezinski). The Carter administration thus began supporting the Mujahedeen in hopes that they would succeed in overthrowing the Russian backed socialist movement.

In the end the Mujahedeen were victorious. Even after being invaded by the Soviet army, they were still able to successfully repel the socialist regime. The political conflict between Russia and America led to a civil war within Afghanistan. On February 15, 1989, the Soviet Afghan war ended with a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, leaving Russia defeated and demoralized. Professor of Pediatrics, Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta, from Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan writes “By the time the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, [Afghanistan] had suffered over 50,000 documented casualties. The local populace and the Mujahedeen had paid a terrible price in destruction, death, and disability” (Bhutta).

The next step in understanding America’s influence in Middle Eastern affairs deals with the relationship between Osama Bin Laden and the CIA. Chalmers Johnson highlights this relationship, “An important member of the Russian resistance was Osama bin Laden, hand-picked by the CIA. A military complex in Khost was built for him and it successfully trained over 35,000 troops” (Johnson xiv). America also founded Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency which worked to recruit “radical Muslims to come to Pakistan, receive training, and

fight on the Afghan side” (Johnson xiv).

At first glance the American aid could ostensibly have been seen as a humanitarian effort but once Russians were repelled from Afghanistan the Americans refused to leave. This led Osama bin Laden, and the rest of the Muhajideen to assume that the aid they received was only meant to serve American interests and not the interest of Islamic values. Frank Anderson, former CIA Director of Task-force Afghan stated while being questioned about American involvement in the Russian-Afghan war that, “It is entirely true that this was a war that was fought with our goal but their blood” (F. Anderson). There is no room for justice when one is using others as a means to an end, especially when it may cost thousands of innocent lives in the process.

American involvement in the Russian-Afghan war was unjustified according to Just War Theory. There is no principle that allows the utilization of a foreign nation to fight your wars for you. This war was not in the pursuit of peace, justice, or human flourishing. Nor was there an imminent threat to America. America’s Cold War postures ultimately led its people to accept that all forms of socialism ought to be suppressed, regardless of plished. President Carter stated, “The implications of the Russian occupation of Afghanistan could cause the most serious threat to *the peace* since the second world war, the vast majority of nations on earth have condemned the Soviet attempt to extend its colonial domination of others” (Carter). Carter here is making the claim that the Soviet Union is going to cause a disturbance in *the peace* of America and many other nations. Therefore the American intention for involvement in this war is to preserve *the peace*. An investigation of this claim is necessary.

According to Just War Theory, the intent of certain war time polices can only really be determined after the incident has occurred. For example, if nation X builds military bases in

nation Y in order to help them defend against nation Z then nation X is seen as providing a humanitarian effort to protect nation Y. But when the conflict between nation Z and nation Y has ended and nation X still insists on maintaining a military presence in nation Y (against their wishes) it may be determined that nation X never really intended to help nation Y. Instead it seems the intent of nation X is ultimately unknown, thus deeming the original attempt of humanitarian aid to nation Y as an unjustified act.

This scenario is meant to parallel the relationship between America (nation X), Afghanistan (nation Y), and Russia (nation Z) during the Afghanistan-Russian war. Once nation Y realizes that the help they have received from nation X was merely an attempt to gain power in their region, hatred grows. This feeling was only intensified by the death and destruction Afghanistan experienced by associating with the American military in the Russian-Afghan conflict.

While the Russian-Afghan conflict was being waged, there was also a war taking place between Iran and Iraq. This war is often referred to as the First Persian Gulf War. Contributing to this war were the issues of land and religious conflict between the two countries. America took interest in this conflict when considering post-war Iraq under the leadership of Saddam Hussein. Similar to Germany after WWI, Iraq was humiliated and economically destroyed during the Iraq-Iran conflict. In order to rebuild his nation, Hussein rallied Iraqi citizens with the notion that Saudi Arabia was unjustly controlling the global oil market. Stephen Hart, Senior Lecturer at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst said the following in a recent interview, "Hussein had bankrupted Iraq fighting the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, in the early 1990's Saddam was trying to find ways of easing the economic burden on his country." Hart added, "Kuwait allegedly was

overproducing their oil, they were flooding the market lowering the global price of oil. Hussein and his economists found that every dollar off the price of oil reduced Iraq's export revenue by a billion dollars a year" (Hart). Hussein also decried the relationship existing between Saudi Arabia and the United States claiming that this relationship violated the teachings of Islam, therefore justifying his invasion of Kuwait in 1990. A secular justification of the war was based on Iraq's desperate need to rebuild their economy, due to Iraq's defeat against Iran in the First Persian Gulf War. Saddam sought to gain control of one of the world's most oil rich country, Saudi Arabia, in order to regain economic strength.

The economic relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States was beneficial to both of them. But, many Islamic fundamentalists viewed the relationship between the two nations as unholy. Chalmers Johnson provides a condensed description of the scenarios explained above:

It was only after the Russians had bombed Afghanistan back to the Stone Age and suffered a Vietnam-like defeat, while the United States had walked away from the death and destruction the CIA had helped cause, that Osama bin Laden turned against his American supporters. The last straw was the way that "infidel" American troops – around 35,000 of them – remained in Saudi Arabia after the first Gulf War to prop up [their] decadent, fiercely authoritarian regime. Devoutly Muslim citizens of that kingdom saw the troop's presence as a humiliation to the country and an affront to their religion. Dissident Saudis began to launch attacks against Americans and against the Saudi regime itself. (Johnson xv)

Another international relations writer, William Pfaff, observed, "Within 15 years at most, if present American and Saudi Arabian policies are pursued, the Saudi monarchy will be overturned and a radical anti-American government will take power in Riyadh" (Johnson xiv). This comment was written in 1996, a few years before his prediction was confirmed and a new enemy to American society was born - Al Qaida.

What were the benefits to the American people of helping Afghanistan rebel Russian forces? What rewards did American citizens reap from helping “Arab fighters” in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan? By the end of the final Gulf War, America had become enemies with Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Within these countries as well as within supposed ally Saudi Arabia large anti-American sentiment still exists. This sentiment became more dangerous when the radical religious citizens of these countries were trained by advanced tactics and provided advanced weaponry. Chalmers Johnson writes “For over forty years, the policies needed to maintain these client states economically, while protecting and controlling them militarily, this produced serious unintended consequences, most of which Americans have yet to fully grasp” (Johnson 218). This statement is ominous indeed considering that it was written in the year 2000.

The term “blowback” became popular when it began to be associated with the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Johnson wrote his book *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Imperialism* one year before the attacks occurred. He later added a new post-9/11 introduction to his book. He begins with this:

In a speech to Congress on September 20, 2001, shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, President George W. Bush posed this question: 'Why do they hate us?' His answer: 'They hate our freedoms-our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote.' He commented later that he was amazed 'that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us...I just can't believe it because I know how good we are.' But how 'good' are we, really? If we're so good, why do we inspire such hatred abroad? What have we done to bring so much blowback upon ourselves? (Johnson 1)

With this mentality, America went to war, first invading and occupying Afghanistan, who supposedly harbored Al Qaida terrorists, and later did the same in Iraq. The Iraq military operation implemented a strategy called “shock and awe”. This strategy is designed to hit the enemy hard when they are not expecting an attack. Main targets were sources of food,

infrastructure, warehouses, ammunition stores, and airports. The entire country of Iraq was subject to Operation Shock and Awe either directly or indirectly. This type of attack is used to disable the enemy, limiting their ability fight back. In a book titled, *Shock and Awe*, Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade wrote that military strategists intentionally use shock and awe tactics to “disrupt the means of communication, transportation, food production, water supply, and other aspects of infrastructure.” They also go on to say “the threat of fear of action that may shut down all or part of the adversary's society or render his ability to fight useless short of complete physical destruction” (Wade 68).

In the wake of this military tactic, it is estimated that 7,500 Iraq civilians were killed (Wade 70). These innocent deaths are a result of attacking the cities of a country in order to weaken the entire military infrastructure instead of fighting a ground war. Although this may be better for American soldiers, because the risk of death is greatly decreased, innocent civilians replace the lives lost due to massive amount of collateral damage.

One major aspect of Just War Theory states that innocent lives are to be avoided. It also says that engaging in war must be the result of a just cause. What was the cause of going to war with Iraq in 2003? Americans were told that Saddam Hussein had connections to various anti-American groups such as Al-Qaida. President George W. Bush made this accusation during a public address to the American people, “The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained, and harbored terrorists, including operatives of Al-Qaida” (Bush).

Bush also stated that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and intended to use them against American citizens “Peaceful efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime have failed again

and again, because we are not dealing with peaceful men. Intelligence gathered by us and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraqi regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised” (Bush). Ultimately these allegations were proved false. Even though these allegations were false America still maintains a military presence in the Middle East. Since 2003, 5,000 American soldiers have died and countless innocent Iraqi citizens have also lost their lives, BBC reported that, “The [Iraqi] death toll was put at 109,000, of whom 66,081 were civilians” (BBC News Middle East).

The tests of Just Way Theory have yielded a failing grade for the United States in Iraq if not in both countries invaded. Not only did America not have justice as their aim when initiating the Iraq war, they also overlooked the probability of success. What could be considered a successful result from our foreign occupation? Would it be to eliminate all terrorists’ threats? When considering the elimination of terrorists, individuals must realize that *America* becomes the terrorist when the death of innocent civilians results from their success.

American involvement in Middle Eastern affairs has proved to be a major incitement of anti-American sentiment around the world. Not only have these invasions caused great emotional, physical, structural, and social damage within this region, they have also armed and trained combatants who continue to fight long after the wars for which they were prepared have ended. This history is largely unknown by most Americans and readily forgotten amidst heated passionate responses to events like 9/11. Johnson notes in *Blowback* that, “The suicidal assassins of September 11, 2001, did not 'attack America,' as political leaders and news media in the United States have tried to maintain; they attacked American foreign policy” (Johnson xv). If this is true, perhaps the American people should focus their attention on the real cause of foreign

terrorism -their own government.

Each life lost due to the reckless engagement of unjust wars is truly a crime against humanity. John F. Kennedy commented during a radio address in 1973, “The loss of even one human life, or the malformation of even one baby, who may be born long after each of us have gone, should be a concern to us all” (Kennedy). The lives of citizens that are lost due to the operation of blowback must be recognized. As American citizens, as the most powerful country in the world, we have a responsibility to those less fortunate than us. This idea is supported by the words of French philosopher Voltaire, “With great power comes great responsibility” (Voltaire). American citizens have a responsibility to ensure that their leaders do not treat the death of human beings lightly, or as justified for the sake of some other end.

Opinion

I agree that America is a great nation. It has brought many citizens a happy and comfortable life and thus should be respected for the lives that have flourished on its soil. Where I disagree is when this notion is taken to mean that everybody in the world should be like America and Americans ought to impose themselves and their culture on other nations. In fact, foreign nations have historically been constructed as savages and radicals by American society. That line of thinking is what gives patriotism a bad name. It is one thing to be proud of the country that has raised you, but it is another thing entirely when one decides to colonize, enslave, and convert individuals who may not have similar values. Emma Goldman says it best in her accurate critique of American patriotism, “Patriotism assumes that our globe is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. Those who have had the fortune of being born on some particular spot, consider themselves better, nobler, grander, more intelligent than the living

beings inhabiting any other spot” (Goldman 134).

America has involved itself in a series of other covert military operations in places like Cuba, Vietnam, Iran, Greece, the Philippines, and South Korea. Each one of these nations “fought hard to free themselves from American-backed dictatorships” (Johnson xv). The America being discussed here is ominously similar to the Great Britain of a previous Century. Humanity once observed Great Britain force itself on the nations of Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, South Africa, Australia, India, Burma, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Palestine, and of course North America. Colonists themselves fought against the dictatorship that was the British Monarchy, they fought for freedom, justice, and independence. Now today, to the rest of the world, we represent the very thing that our ancestors once fought against -empire.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

I have covered many issues in this thesis. My intent was to highlight a pattern of thought as it has played out in various different sources. By looking at these figures in American history, a certain consistency becomes evident. For example, the thinkers Thomas Paine, Emma Goldman, Henry David Thoreau, and Martin Luther King all focus on some very specific fundamental principles. These principles primarily deal with situations of injustice, and the eradication of evil. Also, they each have concerns about the values and operations of the United States government. Each thinker experiences a unique form of social oppression from the oppression of a foreign monarch to racism of white supremacist states. And, ultimately, each of these concerns about injustice expressed itself in a critique of the wars of their times.

For Goldman, war worsened the situation of women in American society. By sacrificing hundreds of thousands of husbands, brothers, and sons, women are put into a very difficult social situation. For King, war worsened race relations between whites and blacks at a critical time in the civil rights movement, perhaps preventing the movement from going far enough in the fight against racism. Thoreau refused to pay taxes to a government that supported unjust wars and slavery, eventually leading to his imprisonment. As a white male he was largely able to avoid oppression, but he was wise and brave enough to face the injustice going on around him, leading to his public outcry against American society. Paine supported war, but he supported a just war as the only means he saw available to address the injustice of his day. Ultimately, he supported a war that led to the rise of a great nation. Sadly, in my opinion that great nation has come under its own taint of injustice over time.

The goal of my research was to provide a unique perspective on an American anti-war

tradition. The great fighters for independence, woman's suffrage, and social justice all seem to have a similar philosophical outlook. Not only have these issues existed in the past, but they still exist today. America is still fighting against the ugliness of racism, the shame of sexism, the dehumanization of the individual, and the dispassionate masses. As stated before, America is also responsible for the countless deaths of innocent Iraqi citizens since our occupation. What does that say about us as a people? How we can stand by this nation, and praise it for its good deeds, and simply close our eyes to this great evil?

One may argue that war is necessary, human beings will always have differences and it is in our animal instincts to fight to the death over them. This may be true, but what is not true is the idea that *unjust* wars are natural. Unjust wars do nothing but suck the life out of everything from nations and their peoples. Unjust wars are a crime against humanity, and as long as they continue, human flourishing will be stunted.

As this thesis is being defended, tension is growing between Israel and Iran. Both have a long history of war and violence toward each other. If there is anything to be learned from history, it ought to be that America would do well to avoid involvement in this conflict. For the sake of a brighter future, for the sake of peace, let us end the tradition of intervention once and for all; not only for the sake of our own interests, but to set an example for the rest of the world to follow.

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