Teaching History

A Journal of Methods

Volume 31 - No. 1 - Spring 2006

TEACHING HISTORY
A JOURNAL OF METHODS
<http://www.emporia.edu/socsci/journal/main.htm>

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Teaching History: A Journal of Methods is published twice yearly in the spring and fall. *Teaching History* receives its chief financial support from the Department of Social Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Emporia State University. It also receives support from the College of the Ozarks. Annual subscriptions in U.S. currency are $12.00 for individuals, libraries, and institutions or $30 for three-year subscriptions. All business communications, including subscriptions, should be sent to Chris Lovett, Campus Box 4032, ESU, Emporia, KS 66801-5087, fax 620/341-5143, e-mail lovettch@emporia.edu.

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ISSN 0730-1383

TEACHING HISTORY
A JOURNAL OF METHODS
Volume XXXI, Number 1, Spring 2006

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MOCKING POPE AND PREACHER: POPULAR PROPAGANDA IN THE AGE OF REFORMATION

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Introduction

As we enter the twenty-first century, students increasingly rely upon visual imagery for their understanding of past (and present) events. My students can quote confidently from "Troy," "Alexander," "Amistad," and "JFK" to illustrate their knowledge of Classical Greek or American life, even as they struggle to memorize a basic chronology or analyze a written document. Although we might bemoan the rise of television, video games, and "McNewspapers" that favor style over substance, such reliance upon visual information is hardly unique to our era. Editorial cartoons, posters, and pamphlets for centuries have simplified complex ideas or debates into recognizable "image bytes." Similarly, in earlier times, Roman bas-reliefs, Byzantine icons, medieval stained glass, and Renaissance frescoes conveyed intricate theological and political concepts to a largely illiterate population. Textual sources remain fundamental to the study of history, but teaching students to "read" visual primary sources can provoke their curiosity and enhance their understanding of complex issues. In addition to printed documents (i.e., maps, cartoons, engravings), visual primary sources might include sculpture, paintings, numismatics, architectural designs, and so forth. Because coins, cartoons, and buildings were often designed for mass viewing, analysis of visual primary sources not only teaches students a new skill but also allows us to view historical developments as they were presented to non-elite men and women.

Nowhere is the impact of visual imagery more evident than in the religious conflict of sixteenth-century Europe. Protestants and Catholics alike produced thousands of images designed to glorify their own position and demonize their opponents.[1] Fueled by the invention of the printing press and inexpensive paper, printers and preachers could produce broadsheets and pamphlets that even day laborers and widows could

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[1]The seminal work remains Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). A 1994 paperback edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press and New York: Oxford University Press) includes updated bibliography. A more recent analysis is the M.A. thesis of Jessica Davis, which considers propaganda directed against the Protestant Reformation: J. Davis, "The Reformation Attacked: Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Visual Propaganda," unpublished M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 2002. For a discussion of early Reformation propaganda in lay pamphlets, see Miriam Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519-1530* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996). Also see A.G. Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966). Although dated in its interpretation, Dickens's book includes hundreds of useful images. The most useful primary source is *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550*, ed. Walter L. Strauss (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), containing 1600 pages of images in four volumes; and also Hans- Joachim Kohler, ed., *Flugschriften des fruehen 16. Jahrhunderts*, Serie I (Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company, 1978-1987).

afford. This explosion of "popular" propaganda might or might not represent an accurate sampling of popular opinion in the sixteenth century.[2] It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to accurately interpret what Everyman (and Everywoman) believed five hundred years ago, particularly about a topic at once as personal and as universal as salvation. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the plethora of cheap, accessible images fundamentally transformed the transmission of ideas. In the same way that television and the Internet revolutionized (and democratized) the acquisition of information in recent decades, pamphlets with simple line drawings expanded the distribution of new concepts more broadly.

This essay describes one method for introducing high school or college students to the Protestant Reformation. This unit can range from two to five classes, depending upon the number of texts and images utilized. The documentary evidence—both visual and textual—provides conflicting perspectives that students must analyze and explain, just as professional historians do. In addition, utilizing visual sources encourages the participation of students for whom English is not a first language as well as those who have trouble comprehending dense theological tracts. Visual sources also can promote interdisciplinary analysis (e.g., history, fine arts, and religious studies). In this essay I have chosen to limit my examples to printed visual propaganda, but inclusion of hymns and songs of the Reformation would be useful too.[3] I usually begin with an observation that the Protestant Reformation might have been the first example of a multimedia ad campaign, with the same ideas presented visually, aurally, and textually. My students intuitively understand this approach, and are intrigued by the challenge of discovering similar ideas about sin and salvation in a variety of mediums. Debate about the images regularly spills into the hallway after class, and students consistently mention this unit in their final evaluations as one that taught them to think both more creatively and more analytically.

Historical Background

The Protestant Reformation is traditionally dated to October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther allegedly nailed a copy of his "95 Theses" to a church door in Wittenberg. A former Augustinian monk and a professor of theology, Luther

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[2]Keith Moxey argues that "far from being expressions of popular opinion, such [sixteenth-century woodcut] prints were actually the means by which the reformed attitudes of the middle and upper classes could be disseminated to as broad an audience as possible." *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 2–3.

[3]See the three printed hymns in Merry Wiesner, Julius Ruff, and William Bruce Wheeler, *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence, Vol. I to 1789*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 294–297, as well as Rebecca Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001). See also the comments of Marshall McLuhan about "hybridisation of media" in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

complained bitterly about corruption and sloth within the Roman Catholic Church. He was particularly incensed about the sale of indulgences, papal letters that drew upon the Church's "treasury of merits" to allow sinners to avoid earthly penance or time in Purgatory. Luther was hardly the first to raise such complaints, but his observations struck a chord with the German populace. Drawing upon a potent combination of preaching and printing, Luther's ideas spread rapidly throughout Europe, inspiring other reformers to break with the Catholic Church. Modern scholarship identifies multiple "reformations" (e.g., reformation of the cities, a peasants' reformation, magisterial reformation), but all of them trace their origin to Luther's powerful ideas about the relationship between man and God. Beset with internal problems and a powerful Islamic threat to the East, the Catholic Church responded slowly. Within a few years the religious unity of Europe had been shattered forever, with equally important consequences in the political, social, intellectual, and artistic realms.

How were such radical ideas disseminated? Visual propaganda, especially broadsheets (posters) and book illustrations, were critical means for conveying new ideas. These inexpensive images, found in title pages, single-leaf woodcuts, manuscript illustrations, chapbooks, and pamphlets, served for decoration, entertainment, and instruction. The subject matter varied widely, from biblical narratives and devotional images to ancient history, battle scenes, and portraits.[4] Satire, too, became a powerful weapon in the competition to capture believers. The German woodcuts considered here were simple, even rustic, in their composition and execution, far removed from the formal intricacies of High Renaissance art. Yet it was precisely their low cost that contributed to their ubiquity and their impact. (One scholar estimated the cost to be between four and eight pfennings, when a master artisan earned nearly thirty pfenning per day.[5]) As Robert Scribner has observed, the lowly woodcut is redolent of homemade gin; it was "cheap, crude, and effective."[6]

Lesson Plan

The opening lesson covers essential background information about the causes and principal characters of the Protestant Reformation. Prior to examining the sources, it is important that students be familiar with the common complaints of the German *Volk*: clerical pluralism and absenteeism; tithes and taxes destined for Rome; a lavish papal lifestyle; widespread inflation; papal claims to temporal power; clerical immunity from lay courts. The most immediate cause, of course, was the sale of indulgences; thus we

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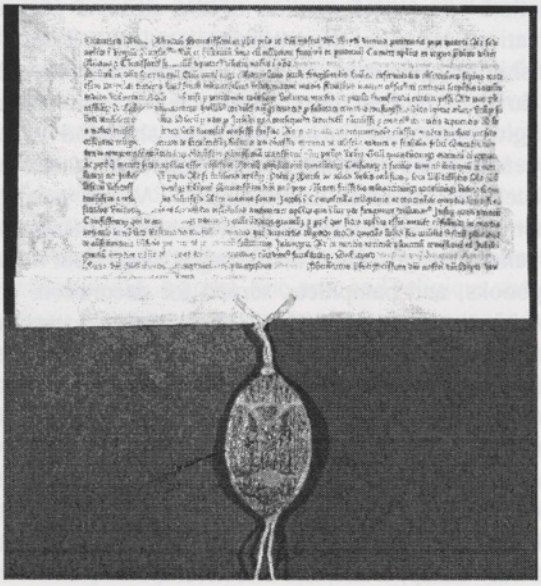
[4]Moxey, 3–5.

[5]Moxey, 23, n. 71, citing Bruno Weber, *Wunderzeichen und Winkeldrucker, 1543-1586* (Dietikon-Zurich: U. Graf, 1972).

[6]Scribner, 5.

begin with a photograph of an actual indulgence, printed by William Caxton in 1476 (Figure 1). Figure 2 represents the sale of indulgences.[7] It is important to show a relatively evenhanded portrayal here because, as we shall see shortly, the sale of indulgences was frequently parodied in Lutheran propaganda.

Figure 1. An Indulgence printed by William Caxton of England, ca. 1476.
With permission from the UK National Archives, ref. E135/6/56.



Students also need to be familiar with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, including the traditional clothing and symbols associated with popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, and monks. Students further benefit from knowing the key phrases and ideas of evangelical reform, such as *sola fide* (justification by faith), *solo scriptura* (preeminence of the Word), *cuius regio eius religio* (he who rules chooses the religion), as well as the key elements of Catholic dogma (e.g., seven sacraments, good works, efficacy of saints, the Trinity). Much of this information can be obtained from a standard textbook. Alternatively, one can assign students to read Martin Luther's early letters or sermons (e.g., *Freedom of a Christian*) in preparation for the first class. If time permits, we

[7]This broadsheet depicted various financial threats to Germany, including the sale of papal indulgences. Note how the indulgence is nailed to the cross in place of Jesus. The artist clearly opposes the pope, but he also criticizes merchants, moneylenders, and ostentatious clothing with fur and ornamentation. See Steven Ozment, *Protestants: Birth of a Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 53.

usually read excerpts together in class and list key tenets of Protestantism on the blackboard.

Figure 2. Jörg Breu the Elder, woodcut (ca. 1530).
With permission from *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550*, rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss. 4 vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 323. Also available in Jensen, 58; Ozment, 53.

Once students have a grasp of the basic ideas behind the early Reformation, we consider any two editorial cartoons that represent opposing viewpoints of a contemporary divisive issue (e.g., stem-cell research, abortion, war in Iraq). We discuss the pros and cons of a cartoon versus a written editorial: Which has more impact? Which is more difficult to create? To distribute? To reproduce? Which might reach a wider audience? Which is more cost-effective? How might these two means of distributing information compare to a sermon, a hymn, a TV ad, or a legal decision? At this point I usually provide some statistics about literacy rates and the number of printed books in early sixteenth-century Europe, in order to remind students that most people could neither read nor afford an entire book. We also discuss the use

of advertising and "propaganda," both historical and modern.[8] For example, what is the distinction (if any) between these two terms? Do they carry positive or negative connotations? Is one more (or less) effective at altering our actions or beliefs? Once again students have the opportunity to apply knowledge from other subjects (e.g., political science, marketing) to the study of history.

Next I explain that we are going to study several images from the Reformation that are the equivalent of editorial cartoons. Students are encouraged to look for links between the images and the written texts we have already studied, as well as among the visual images themselves. The images can be presented in a number of different ways: I prefer PowerPoint, but overhead transparencies and photocopies work equally well. These images are all woodcuts from inexpensive Protestant pamphlets or broadsheets, and would have been readily available in markets, taverns, and other public places. Most of these images and symbols would have been instantly recognizable to any sixteenth-century person, even if they initially appear baffling to us. To reinforce this point, I will sometimes show students a collage of modern symbols and personalities that have no meaning on their own but are nonetheless familiar to everyone (e.g., McDonald's "Golden Arches," the "got milk?" slogan, a silhouette of Michael Jordan). Students should now be prepared to begin their analysis of Reformation visual propaganda.

Figure 3 introduces students to the essential ideas of Protestant/Catholic debate. Created by Hans Sebald Behem in 1524, to accompany a text by Hans Sachs, it shows Protestants grouped behind Martin Luther, while Catholics congregate behind a priest. Luther holds the Bible, pointing to it with his right hand to emphasize the truth to be found in Scripture. He wears a scholar's cap to emphasize his role as a teacher of true doctrine. The group behind him represents the common folk, dressed in ordinary clothes and carrying agricultural implements (a flail for threshing wheat, a basket full of eggs or fruit). Although Lutheranism was popular with powerful princes and middle-class merchants from the beginning, it also appealed to the German masses, and evangelical reformers frequently emphasized the "working man" (*Karsthans*) to promote their new faith.[9] In contrast, not only are the Catholics more finely-dressed, but they carry tools and symbols linked with Catholicism: a nun in her habit carries a chalice, a blacksmith points to a church bell at his feet, and a fisherman waves his net in the air. The text that accompanies this illustration criticizes the Catholic Church for the practice of simony (selling of Church offices), a point reinforced visually by the

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[8]The term "propaganda," meaning "extension" or "enlargement," comes in part from Gregory XV's papal bull of 1622, *Congregatio de propaganda fide*, to establish a group of cardinals to extend and promote the Catholic faith. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith remains an active office in the Vatican today.

[9]Luther initially emphathized with the peasants' uprising of 1525, but he rapidly changed his position when he published *Against the Robbing Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (1525).

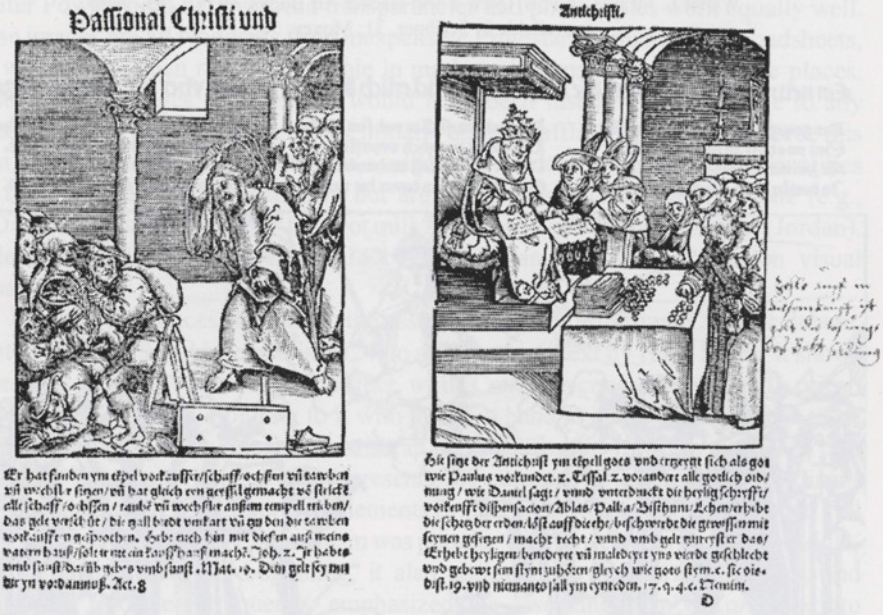
repeated references to material gain among the Catholics. After students have described the characteristics of each group, I ask them to identify any authorial bias. The title ("The Complaint of the Godless Against Luther") is a dead giveaway, of course, but so too is the fact that God (or Christ) tilts his scepter toward the Protestant side to indicate that they possess his favor. Despite the obvious favoritism of the artist, this woodcut is relatively neutral in its depiction of each side.

Figure 3. Hans Sebald Behem, "Complaint of the Godless Against Luther" (1524). With permission, from *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550*, rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss. 4 vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 203. Also available in Scribner, 31; Moxey, 56.

The next several figures contrast Protestant and Catholic practices more explicitly. All but Figure 7 favor Protestants, which reflects the reality that Luther and his followers were quicker to realize the advantages offered by printing. Lucas Cranach's small pamphlet of 1521, entitled "Passional Christi und Antichristi" (Figure 4), was intended to underscore how the Church had evolved away from the early values

professed by Christ.[10] Each of the thirteen pairs of images included a brief commentary by Philip Melanchthon to juxtapose the pious life of Christ with the dissolute actions of the Antichrist Pope. In Figure 4, Jesus drives the moneylenders from the Temple, while the contemporary pope runs a profitable business selling indulgences. The

Figure 4. Lucas Cranach the Elder, "Passional Christus und Antichristus" (1521), fol. Di.
With permission, from J. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
Also available in Wiesner, 300; Scribner, 150-155, and online at Emory University (see n. 11).



expensive gowns of the pope (and the moneylenders) contrast visibly with the simple robes worn by Jesus and by the laity lining up to leave money on the table. Figure 5 contrasts Jesus' peaceful entry on a donkey into Jerusalem with the pope astride a horse, accompanied by military soldiers and heading toward Hell. The remaining images echo this theme of contrast: Christ is crowned with thorns while the pope wears a triple tiara; Christ and his followers pay taxes to Rome while the clergy enjoy

[10] Scribner, 149–159.

exemptions; Christ carries his cross in agony while the pope reclines on a palanquin carried by servants.[11]

Figure 5. Lucas Cranach the Elder, "Passional Christus und Antichristus" (1521), fol. Cii.
With permission, from J. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
Also available in Scribner, 150–155, and online at Emory University (see n. 11).

Figure 6, entitled "The Descent of the Pope into Hell," was created by Hans Sebald Beham in 1524. Wearing a papal tiara and a jeweled cloak, a despondent pope leads a wagon full of churchmen and indulgences into a flaming building. Smirking demons stoke the fires and gather other religious figures to join the plethora of ecclesiastical figures already inside the burning structure. The text below the image cites the Book of Isaiah 14, which revels in the downfall of Lucifer, here equated with the pope.

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[11]Scribner, 149–159. Scribner's comments on each pair are useful, but some of his illustrations are misnumbered. For teaching purposes, all twenty-six images are available online at http://www.pitts.emory.edu/dia/1521LuthWbook/pc1.cfm.

Figure 6. Hans Sebald Behem, "Descent of the Pope Into Hell" (1524).
With permission from *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550*, rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss, four vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 205.

Figure 7 is a broadsheet (poster) created by Matthias Gerung in 1546. It forms part of a series of thirty-two allegorical scenes, most of which were anti-Catholic. By this point in time it was apparent that reconciliation between Rome and Wittenberg was all but impossible, and the level of verbal and military conflict continued to increase. On the upper level, devout Protestants are engaged in serene prayer, baptism, preaching, and communion. In startling contrast, the lower half is full of chaos, Catholics, and creatures of the devil. Two devils dressed as cardinals offer indulgences for sale to the crowd, as the pope—with a devil peeking out from under his cloak—greedily collects the money. The lower half of the image emphasizes fine linens and a reliquary in the background, in juxtaposition with the deliberate simplicity of the Protestant service.

Figure 7. Matthias Gerung, "Sale of Indulgences" (1546).
With permission from the Sekretariat of the Kunstsammlungen, Coburg, Germany; Ref. VC: Inv. No. I, 349, 7. Also in *From a Mighty Fortress: Prints, Drawings and Books in the Age of Luther, 1483-1546*, Christianne Anderson & Charles Talbot, eds., (Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983).

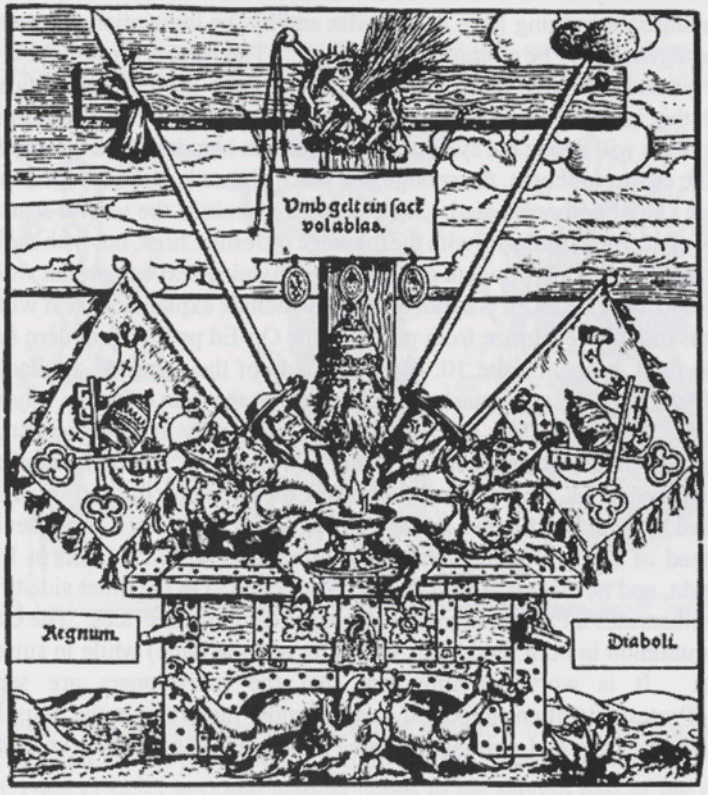
At this point students are reasonably well-versed in Protestant polemics, so it is useful to throw them a curveball. Figure 8, a Catholic denunciation of Martin Luther,

Figure 8. "Siebenkopfe" ("Seven-Headed Luther").
Anonymous (possibly Hans Brosamer), from a pamphlet written by Johann Cochleus (1529).
With permission from the British Library, shelfmark 3905.5.81(1).
Also available in Scribner, 233.

represents the Church's effort to retaliate in 1529. The body is that of an Augustinian monk clasping a prayer book, but he is depicted with seven heads (*siebenkopfe)*, each accompanied by an inscription. From left to right, the first head shows "Doctor" Luther wearing a scholar's hat; the second makes a play on his name "Martinus" by contrasting Luther's avarice with the generosity displayed by the Catholic St. Martin who donated

half of his cloak to a beggar; and the third head shows "Luther" wearing a turban and thus affiliated with the infidel.[12] The center head ("Ecclesiast") evokes Luther's status as a priest, while the fifth head represents him as a wild-haired fanatic with bees buzzing around him. The last head refers to Barrabas, a thief freed by Pilate in place of Christ, with a club and wild hair intended to reinforce the image of Luther as a radical.[13]

Figure 9. Anonymous, "Seven-Headed Papal Beast."
With permission, from *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550,* rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss, four vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 1530. Also available in Scribner, 103; Moxey, 28.



[12]Scribner rightly points out (253–254) that some ambiguity exists in deciphering these images. The third head might represent a Turkish infidel, or a Saxon nobleman affiliated with Luther, just as the item above his head might represent an imperial baton, a bridle for Luther's loose tongue, or something else.

[13]I have not included a description of the sixth head of Luther's "Siebenkopfe" because the identity and meaning are uncertain. The expert in this field, Robert Scribner, whose work I cited often in the notes, also omitted a description of this particular head even as he described each of the others.

Figure 9 provides an excellent contrast to the previous image: Again we encounter the theme of a seven-headed beast, but this time from a Protestant perspective. In fact, Figure 9 was expressly created in response to the *siebenkopfe* of Luther. Both references are to the book of the Apocalypse, when a seven-headed dragon presages the end of the world. In Figure 9, however, the central head wears a papal tiara, while the other ecclesiastics are recognizable by the cardinal's flat hat, the bishop's pointed miter, and the monk's distinctive round haircut (known as a "tonsure"). The beast surrounds what should be an altar, but instead it has been transformed into a treasure box protected by numerous heavy locks. The contents of the treasure chest are easily identified, both by the indulgence hanging from the crucifix and by the inscription that reads "A sack full of indulgence may be obtained for money."[14] The flags represent the crossed keys of St. Peter and the papal tiara, the same coat of arms used by the Vatican today.[15] Although this image at first appears to be solely a condemnation of Catholic practice, astute students will notice the symbols of the Passion hanging from the crucifix. These include the crown of thorns, the sponge, the lance, the nails, the whip, and the flail used to scourge Christ before he died. Their presence reminds the viewer that the Church should be concerned primarily with the message of Jesus Christ, not with the acquisition of material goods. This woodcut also includes rhyming text below that would explain the images in more detail. It was not unusual to include explanatory text with an image, as students quickly recognize from perusing the Op-Ed pages of modern newspapers.

The final image, Figure 10, captures many of the elements alluded to in prior slides. Created by Lucas Cranach, ca. 1540, this image is an effective way to conclude the lesson.[16] On one side, the ecclesiastical hierarchy is being consumed by an enormous fire-breathing monster called the "Jaws of Hell." Students should be able to easily identify a monk, a cardinal, and a bishop; the pope is in the bottom of the painting surrounded by imps and devils. In the very top of the woodcut, a small devil defecates on the head of a nun. Such scatological references were common in Reformation propaganda, and never fail to enliven the end of class. On the other side of the image, Cranach illustrates a Protestant vision of proper religious services. The congregation takes communion in both kinds (i.e., the wafer and the wine) while in suitably devout positions. It is worth pointing out that the parishioners are separated by gender—Protestants often supported a rigid gender hierarchy in the household, in the shop, and in the church. Looming over the Protestant faithful is the crucified Christ and

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[14]Scribner, 100–104.

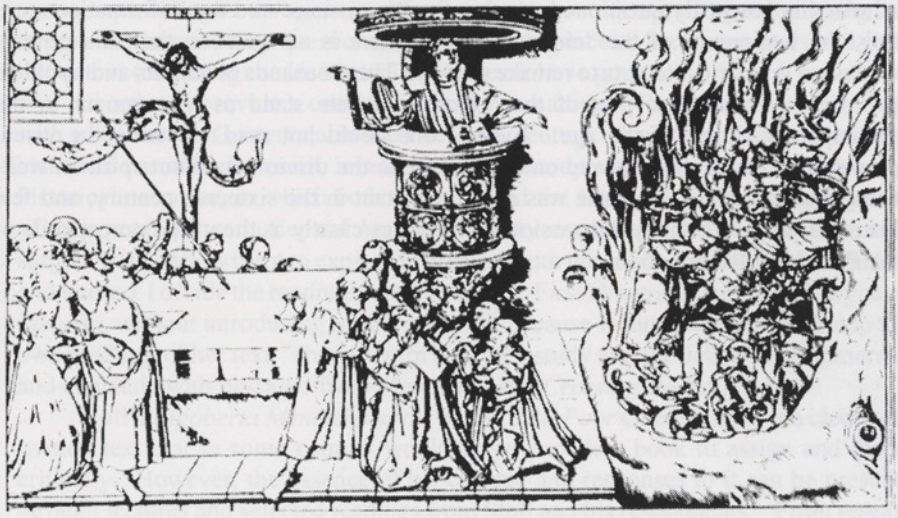
[15]A satirical coat of arms of the Pope, ca. 1545, can be found in *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut,* 855.

[16]To provide students with additional practice, consult a similar (but more detailed) woodcut by Cranach (ca.1545) that illustrates Catholic and Protestant theological practices, although always from a pro-Protestant perspective, in *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut*, 619.

the Lamb of God (representing John the Baptist). At the center of the painting is the by-now-familiar figure of Martin Luther. With the Bible open in front of him, he condemns the Roman church to Hell with his left hand while raising up the evangelicals with his right. The "foundation" of Luther's belief, represented by the four circular seals that support the pulpit and the book of Scripture, are the four Gospels. Together with the crucified Christ, these references to the Apostles reinforce the evangelicals' emphasis upon the New Testament.

Figure 10. Lucas Cranach the Younger, "Luther Preaching, with the Pope in the Jaws of Hell."

With permission, from *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550*, rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss, four vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 618. Also available in Scribner, 206; Dickens, 59.



Conclusion

This lesson can be amplified or extended in a number of different ways. Images from the Catholic/Counter Reformation can be utilized to show the response from the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and activist popes in the second half of the century.[17]

[17]See, for example, Davis, *The Reformation Attacked*, containing more than four dozen images, mostly pro-Catholic. Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in his Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) also contains several images from each perspective. See also the 1575 *Godly Contemplations for the Unlearned* (London: Scholar Press, 1973), which contains Catholic catechism and visual images. On Catholic propaganda, see Richard Croft, "Printing, Reform, (continued...)

Although Queen Elizabeth enacted new legislation to prohibit the publication of defamatory images in England, such images flourished in Catholic presses elsewhere. These images can be particularly useful for showing students how politics and religion became inseparable as the early modern state developed. The status and role of women in early modern Europe is another subject to be explored profitably in sixteenth-century propaganda.[18] Luther wrote extensively about marriage and women, and his own marriage to a former nun (Katherine von Bora) generated still more discussion on both sides of the religious divide. The perception of peasants or Jews or other marginal groups can be viewed through historical images, as can popular beliefs about magic or science.

The sixteenth century was a tumultuous time, one in which venerable traditions and institutions were severely challenged and sometimes toppled. While recent scholarship has justly questioned whether the Renaissance and the Reformation were truly the beginnings of the "modern" world, there is no question that this century witnessed dramatic attempts to remake society. The thousands of leaflets and booklets that were published as part of that vigorous debate stand as a testament to the participatory nature of the age. Even if one could not read or write, the visual propaganda of the day allowed one to partake in the discussion about spiritual well-being and salvation. No issue was more important in the sixteenth century, and few historical sources convey the passion of the era as clearly as the visual propaganda of the Protestant Reformation.

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[17](...continued)
and the Catholic Reformation in Germany (1521-1545)," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (Fall 1985): 369–381, and Kevin Stevens, "Vincenzo Girardone and the Popular Press in Counter-Reformation Milan: A Case Study (1570)," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (Fall 1995): 639–659.

[18]See, for example, "A Reformation Woodcut" in Thomas Noble, et. al., *Western Civilization: The Continuing Experiment*, Vol. 1 to 1715, Third Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 494–495, which discusses Erhard Schön's 1533 woodcut of a husband and wife role reversal in the context of the Reformation.

DEALING WITH ACADEMIC CONFLICTS IN THE CLASSROOM: *I, RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ* AS A CASE STUDY

Donald Reid
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Writing in 1999, the American anthropologist David Stoll challenged several important elements in Guatemalan Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú's *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, a text assigned in courses in many disciplines in American colleges.[1] The controversy Stoll sparked encouraged a number of instructors to drop *I, Rigoberta Menchú* from their reading lists. Yet it is the controversial nature of this work which makes it suitable for my 150-student introductory course, "The World Since 1945," which meets a "cultural diversity" requirement for students at all class levels. My goal in assigning a troubling and troubled text such as *I, Rigoberta Menchú* in this course is to open up a dialogue. *I, Rigoberta Menchú* questions students, while encouraging them to pose and answer new questions, taking them to places where supporters and critics of the text (including the instructor) might never have gone.

In order to provide a context for students reading *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, I begin with a lecture on Guatemala in the twentieth century. I want students to relate the historical narrative I present, in which the 1954 coup is a central event, to Menchú's historical narrative, in which both the coup and the United States are largely absent. (This is not a course in Central American history in which students' immersion in the subject would allow them to explore in greater depth the context in which Menchú lived and wrote.) I divide the readings into three parts. First I have students read *I, Rigoberta Menchú,* without introducing Stoll's analyses, because I want students to develop their own readings of her text. Then we turn to Stoll's study and the debate it has generated, and conclude with passages from Menchú's later *Crossing Borders*.

Stoll's *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* is a clear, well-written text that in some courses would be an excellent book to assign and discuss critically. However, the essence of his critique and responses to it can be presented through lectures and selected readings from Stoll and his respondents.[2] From research

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[1]Rigoberta Menchú, *I Rigoberta Menchú*, ed., Elisabeth Burgos-Debray; trans. Ann Wright (London: Verso, 1984). All references to this text are given as *IRM* followed by the page number. On teaching *I, Rigoberta Menchú* before Stoll's critique, see Allen Carey-Webb and Stephen Benz, eds., *Teaching and Testimony: Rigoberta Menchú and the North American Classroom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[2]David Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999). For discussions of Stoll's work, see "If Truth Be Told: A Forum on David Stoll's 'Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans'," *Latin American Perspectives* 26 (November 1999), 5–88; "The Menchú Controversy: The Nature and Politics of Truth and Representation in the Postmodern Era," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 13 (2000): 103–162; Arturo Arias, ed., *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); and

(continued...)

in archives on land disputes in Menchú's community and from interviews with a number of individuals who knew Menchú and her community during the period covered by her memoir, Stoll argues that there are several major errors in her account. For example, Stoll contends that the land dispute that consumed Menchú's father, Vincente Menchú, was with his in-laws rather than with *ladinos*, members of the racial elite of European and Indian origin who identify with their European ancestry; that Menchú might not have worked as a seasonal laborer on plantations as a child; that she attended a Catholic school through seventh grade and therefore learned Spanish earlier than she says in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*; and that guerrilla forces committed acts of violence in her community. Stoll therefore contests the nature and chronology of the political engagement of Menchú and her parents presented in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.[3]

It is important for students to understand that Stoll has a political agenda, but that this does not mean that he is wrong. This contention sparks resistance from students who have been taught to look for and value signs in a text of an apparently apolitical objectivity. Yes, I argue, political commitment can interfere with historical investigation, but it might also be necessary in order to pose certain questions and to pursue answers to them. Stoll believes that indigenous peoples in Guatemala saw themselves caught between the army and the guerrilla forces, a conflict that perpetuated the intra-*ladino* conflict of 1954. Although Stoll recognizes that the army was responsible for more than ninety per cent of the killings in the fighting in Guatemala in the decades after the coup, he blames the guerrillas for misleading indigenous groups and making them targets for the army. Stoll believe that Menchú misrepresents indigenous people's politics by depicting elements of her life experience and that of her family inaccurately in order to convince a West European and North American audience that she was the voice of the indigenous rural poor in Guatemala and that their

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[2](...continued)
"Conditions, contexts and controversies of truth-making: Rigoberta Menchú and the perils of everyday witnessing and testimonial work," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16 (May-June 2003): 275–375.

[3]For good critiques of Stoll's research, see Nelly P. Stromquist, "On truth, voice, and qualitative research," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 13 (2000): 139–152; and Dorothy E. Smith, "Rigoberta Menchú and David Stoll: contending stories," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16 (May-June 2003): 287–305. To go beyond such appraisals, one needs to look at Stoll's fixations, such as the cause of the fire in the Spanish embassy in which Menchú's father died. Stoll is puzzled by his daughter's failure in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* to take the politically expedient position of expressing no doubts that the Guatemalan military was responsible for the fire. But this suggests that *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is not as simple as the guerrilla tract Stoll makes it out to be. It might also offer a key to the story Menchú tells in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* of the army executing her brother by burning him to death, an account that Stoll disputes. Is this Menchú's halting effort to speak of the unspeakable, her father's death, in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* ?

experience led them to support the guerrillas.[4] In other words, the "I" of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is a politically conceived collectivity. While Menchú and a number of scholars have addressed particular points Stoll raises, the preponderant response of academics has been that *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is a *testimonio*, a deeply political literary genre in which the experiences of a number of people (indigenous peasants in this case) could be presented in the life of one individual. In this reading, Rigoberta Menchú is not the *witness* of events, but *witnessing for* a struggle, in the way that some of my students speak of witnessing for Christ. In sum, Stoll's critique and the academic rejoinder has been to see Menchú as a political or sociological "we." My aim is to encourage students to use Stoll's research to problematize his reading of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* and to make the "I" of the title not a site of moral accusation, but a new tool of interpretation.

Stoll and several experts in Arturo Arias's *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* contend that the guerrilla groups were fundamentally *ladino* movements with the goal of pursuing a radical modernizing agenda that saw Mayan culture as an impediment to recruitment and organization of indigenous peoples. Stoll reads Menchú's text as an effort to show West Europeans and North Americans that Mayans were attracted to the guerrilla insurgency. However, I think students are also right to read Menchú's lengthy account of indigenous cultural practices as a message to the guerrillas that, if Mayans joined the insurgency, it was to protect their culture from modernizing projects as well as evidence that native ways did not preclude political action. Menchú's rejection of Catholic Action—what Stoll terms a "modernization vehicle"—and her espousal of Liberation Theology—a contested reading of Catholic doctrine—suggest that she could also question other organizations and orthdoxies.[5] Her critique of guerrilla organizations in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is damning: "I've come up against revolutionary *companeros*, *campaneros* who had many ideas about making a revolution, but who had trouble accepting that a woman could participate in the struggle not only in superficial things but in fundamental things" (*IRM*, 221).

I, Rigoberta Menchú is a text of self-questioning as well. Menchú tells us that her indigenous community is as wary of her as Stoll is. Her participation in guerrilla movements separated her from her culture: "The community is very suspicious of a woman like me who is twenty-three but they don't know where I've been or where I've lived" (*IRM*, 61). Stoll contends that West Europeans and North Americans found

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[4]Stoll believes that European and North American radicals listened to Menchú because her argument was one they wanted to hear. Reading *I, Rigoberta Menchú* in the United States in 2003, students asked whether American expectations of welcoming crowds in liberated Baghdad were based on a similar type of reading of selected indigenous sources.

[5]Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú*, 90. Catholic Action was a movement to train Mayans to be catechists. Liberation Theology reads the Bible to say that if the poor are Christ's children, then confronting the forces that make them poor and oppressed is doing Christ's work. Pope John Paul II condemned Liberation Theology in 1979.

Menchú appealing as a "pure" indigenous individual. But Menchú herself suggests that she risked any such indigenous "purity" in making the political commitments she believed necessary to save her community. In the context of a course directing students' attention to "cultural diversity," the "I" of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* emerges at the heart of the complexities and contradictions of multicultural politics and education. Taken together, Menchú's and Stoll's texts bring to the fore the contesting interpretations of multiculturalism with which students grapple all semester: that national societies are composed of separate cultural communities or that individuals are located at intersections of multiple cultural identities. To assess Menchú's project critically, students enter into dialogue with her text as she does with Catholicism and revolutionary theory, neither of which have her professed aim of protecting and nurturing her indigenous cultural community.

This brings students back to the appearance of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* on syllabi today. I find students quite open to interpreting the nature and content of their education in historical terms.[6] Like all political texts, *I, Rigoberta Menchú* initially sought to win readers' support in a particular historical context. If, as Stoll argues, Menchú intended *I, Rigoberta Menchú* to garner support for a guerrilla insurgency that ended some time ago, what is its place in the cultural politics of today's classrooms in the United States? After all, as feminist sociologist Dorothy E. Smith reminds us, "Menchú's story was not written for what it has become, a resource for faculty teaching humanities and social sciences with a multicultural orientation in American universities."[7] Menchu's text is appealing to proponents of contemporary Western ideologies such as feminism and socialism, but the fact that her ideas do not always fit well with what is conveyed by these terms in Western political thought enables students to reconsider these ideologies as sites of unfulfilled desires. Do feminists and socialists seek to "rewrite" Menchú's text to make her a feminist or socialist as they understand these terms in the way that Stoll argues Menchú rewrote her life to make her experience fit a guerrilla narrative? For Stoll's argument is that *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is a guerrilla tract. Stoll assumes readers read it as he thinks it was intended to be read and then he critiques readers for accepting Menchú's call for guerrilla insurrection. But literary scholar John Beverly, a pioneer in the study of *testimonios*, is correct that most readers

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[6]I begin the course with a lecture on the history of the continuous creation, dismantling, and recreation of graduation requirements at UNC and outline the particular political economy of pedagogy in which high enrollments in required courses are the currency that departments present to acquire new faculty hiring lines. I then draw on research in syllabi for the course on post-1945 world history at UNC from its origins, when one goal was to explain to students the sacrifices necessary to pursue the Cold War (like Western Civilization courses following American intervention in World War I), through the post-Cold War integration of mandates to teach the world in light of the American ideologies of multiculturalism and globalization.

[7]Smith, "Rigoberta Menchú and David Stoll," 289.

now interpret *I, Rigoberta Menchú* as a plea for an end to violence and for the preservation of Mayan culture.[8] Consideration of this debate allows students to explore the importance for historians of situating not only when and why a text was written, but when and why a text is read.

I, Rigoberta Menchú and the conflicts to which it has given rise are crucial for helping us understand the complexities of identity, identity politics, and multiculturalism in both Guatemala and the United States. To do so, we must recover the individual voice of Rigoberta Menchú and see its hesitations and conflicts as a source. Instructors in the United States assign and students read texts such as *I, Rigoberta Menchú* because they see them as "representative" of an "other," and they shy away from analyzing figures such as Menchú as individuals for fear of losing this representivity. We want Menchú to be representative, even while chastising her for not portraying the individuality of her experience. But it is precisely Menchú's individual narrative with its conflations and mistellings that addresses major historical problems of identity—the reason why most American students who read *I, Rigoberta Menchú* outside of Latin American history courses do so now.

Why, students ask, typically in late night e-mail messages, read something that the instructor knows might contain untruths? I am glad they ask and have forwarded samples (rendered anonymous) to the whole class. After voicing their frustration, many students come up with an answer. Having encountered therapy either as clients or students, they see that they might come to understand better the experience of war and repression in Guatemala from identification and analysis of what generates contradictions and absent presences in a text drawn from interviews with a woman about their age. Of course, there is a danger in assuming that American students' psychological insights and perspectives are appropriate tools for interpreting the narrative of an individual from another culture. But, students agree, as long as they are likely to pursue this strategy, it is important that they recognize this is what they are doing. And, in turn, this offers students the possibility of later assessing whether their external perspectives open up the text or deny it coherence and cultural integrity.

Beverly suggests a reading of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* as an Oedipal *bildungsroman*, in which Mendú identifies with her father, then, after his death, with her mother, and finally, after her death, emerges as a woman on her own in telling her story.[9] There is unquestionably a therapeutic element to *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. Menchú's nightly

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[8]John Beverly, "What Happens When the Subaltern Speaks" in Arias, *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, 224.

[9]John Beverly, "The Real Thing" in Georg M. Gugelberger, ed., *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 268. Menchú situates this independence in chapter XIII, the pivotal chapter in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*: when Menchú was about twelve, her friend Maria's death from pesticide poisoning led her to resolve that she would learn Spanish, against her father's wishes, and that she would not get married, thus renouncing her mother's identity (*IRM*, 87–90).

awakenings with memories of her horrors in Guatemala ended only when she told her story to the Franco-Venezuelan anthropologist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, who later cut-and-pasted the interviews to construct *I, Rigoberta Menchú* (*IRM*, xv). Menchú's political position emerges from her relationship to her parents. She was deeply attached to her father ("If anything was wrong, if my stomach ached, I'd go to him rather than to my mother" [*IRM*, 193, 211]), and she was in turn her father's favorite (*IRM*, 30, 84). Menchú became a catechist like her father and accompanied him on his political work. *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is constructed to honor him in his life and death. The distortions Stoll sees in Menchú's account are explicable in terms of her effort to create a heroic narrative in which his death takes on meaning and he continues to live in a project she works to fulfill. But the narrative that celebrated her father marginalizes her mother: "It isn't that I didn't love my mother, but I felt slightly more love for my father" (*IRM*, 210, 211). She adds that "My mother taught many people many things, but I didn't learn as much from her as I should have learned" (*IRM*, 219).[10]

Stoll shows that Menchú went to school and learned elements of Spanish at a much younger age than she admits in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. But when students reread her text with this in mind, her father's repeated affirmations that he does not want his children to go to school because this will take away their indigenous culture (*IRM*, 169, 190) and the leitmotif of the moral degradation of "ladinized Indians" who use their knowledge of Spanish to exploit other Indians (*IRM*, 22, 24, 37) take on a new meaning.[11] Menchú recognizes that Indians like her who have tasted the apple have used their knowledge and experience to oppress their fellow Indians, not to save Eden or to expel the snake. It is not surprising that schooling in the oppressors' language evokes denial in Menchú's text. Stoll's account of Menchú's support for guerrillas whose activities bring violence upon the Indians is a retelling of the accounts of "ladinized Indians" who hurt their communities at the heart of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. If this conflict informs *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, a text about coming to terms with the death of her father in a fire in the Spanish embassy, it also seeks to resolve it. The historical narrative of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* begins with the arrival of the Spaniards more than four hundred years earlier, but the fact that Vicente Menchú goes to the Spanish embassy in an effort to resolve grievances

[10]Early in the course, students analyze several accounts of the memory of the Holocaust, including Tzetevan Todorov's *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps*, trans. Arthur Denner and Abigal Pollak (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996). Todorov's analysis leads students to see Menchú's mother in terms of his idea of a feminine-coded "ordinary virtue," undervalued and difficult to transmit in traditional Western genres, and her father in terms of a male-coded "heroic virtue." According to Todorov, heroic virtue is presented in epic narratives and this underlies the way Menchú tells her father's story in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.

[11]Discussion of this element of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* has prompted a few first-generation college students to talk to me individually of parents who promoted their children's achievement, but feared its effects. These students spoke of understanding this aspect of Menchú's account. And this in turn helped me to understand her text better.

apparently irresolvable in contemporary Guatemala brings closure to this narrative (*IRM*, 186). The revelation of the good and the bad sides of the political cultures that speak Spanish in the late twentieth-century, that of the Spanish state and of the Guatemalan army, will allow Menchú to come to terms with her Mayan identity, to become a representative for Mayans who seek to preserve the diversity, but overcome the divisions, among Mayans by using Spanish as a shared language.

Stoll sees Menchú shaping her autobiography to fit the ideology of her guerrilla organization. But I ask students to consider whether Menchú is in as much control of her story as Stoll suggests. At a minimum, Menchú evokes a feeling of disorientation that exposure to Catholicism and travel created: "I was very ashamed at being so confused [over the morality of political violence], when so many of my village understood so much better than I. But their ideas were very pure because they had never been outside their community" (*IRM*, 121). Menchú can be seen responding not solely to ideologies or even constituencies, but to her own fears and doubts. This does not diminish Menchú or her text. It reveals the difficulties at the heart of any multicultural dialogue, difficulties that cultures face collectively, but which Menchú has presented in her individual narrative. She produces a multicultural *testimonio* not (solely) as a political project, but because she embodies several cultural experiences. This becomes evident when one reads *I, Rigoberta Menchú* in conjunction with Menchú's second memoir, *Crossing Borders*, in which Rigoberta Menchú is no longer the Rigoberta Menchú of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.[12] She comes to see herself as a bridge in Mayan communities between progressive Catholics and indigenous Mayans.

When you cross a border you first affirm your fixed identity to the authority of the other, the border guard,[13] and then, having crossed, you put yourself into a new environment where your own understanding of your identity is subject to affirmation and questioning. You can emerge with different ideas of who you are and of the societies you have come from and visited. For students in a history class in the United States to read *I, Rigoberta Menchú* critically is to cross such a border. The metaphor of crossing borders informs Menchú's second memoir. Perhaps because Menchú's project in *Crossing Borders* is closer to that of the students, they find it a more accessible text: the "I" of *Crossing Borders* is closer to the "I" American students use.[14]

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[12]Rigoberta Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, trans. and ed., Ann Wright (London: Verso, 1998). All references to this text are given as *CB* followed by the page number.

[13]In *Crossing Borders*, Menchú relates several accounts of the suspicious questioning given her by immigration authorities when she crosses borders. And this, of course, is one interpretation of Stoll's project of interrogating Menchú.

[14]One strategy I have pursued in this course is to teach autobiographic accounts of traumatic adolescences in violent non-Western environments (such as *I, Rigoberta Menchú*) in conjunction with

(continued...)

Menchú situates herself in a world of difference absent from *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. Child of a mother rooted in Mayan culture and of a militant catechist father who did not believe in Mayan religion (*CB*, 213), Menchú develops a confidence in her identity in exile by working for reconciliation of tradition and progress. The Menchú of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* believed she would have to sacrifice at least temporarily those elements of her indigenous identity she associated with her mother—centered around marriage and children—in order to fulfill her father's mission. But in *Crossing Borders*, her goal becomes a wedding of cultures from which both will gain. As she says of the foundation she established after winning the Nobel Prize, it "should combine our own native wisdom and experience with present-day technology" (*IRM*, 5). In *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Western practices are fended off as simply destructive of indigenous ways; in *Crossing Borders*, modern technology is presented as incomplete without a cooperative relationship with indigenous culture. Gone is the Menchú who would not use a mill to grind maize (*IRM*, xvii); now she "always travels with [her] little computer under [her] arm" (*CB*, 219). In *Crossing Borders* she is married to a Mayan man and has a child. And she does not limit herself to describing Mayan ways as she did in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. She now speaks very comfortably in the voice of Mayan culture, her mother's voice, suggesting, for instance, to some Mayans "that perhaps Mother Earth needed prayers and offerings" (*CB*, 61).

I, Rigoberta Menchú is informed by Menchú's relationship with her father. *Crossing Borders* is her account of coming to terms with her mother. It is a book of guilt and penance. "When I recorded the tapes for my book *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, I was still in a state of shock. I was incapable of tackling the subject of my mother." "I will never get over the trauma of having left my mother so shortly before her death." "When my mother was alive I never managed to understand her completely ... Only in the last twelve years have I realized what she was. For me, she is a constant teacher. Every time things go wrong for me, I always ask myself how she would have coped" (*CB*, 86, 71). Stoll presents Menchú's father's land dispute as a conflict with her mother's family, the

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[14](...continued)
selections from autobiographic sequels that reveal individuals' experiences and self-analysis in the West (such as *Crossing Borders*). Le Ly Hayslip with Jay Wurts, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace* (New York: Doubleday, 1989); Le Ly Hayslip with James Hayslip, *Child of War, Woman of Peace* (New York: Doubleday, 1993); and Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy: the true story of a Black youth's coming of age in Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Macmillan, 1986); Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy in America: an encounter with apartheid* (New York: Scribner's, 1989) work well in this context. However, the fact that the initial volumes on life in the non-West were written as autobiographies (not assembled later from interviews) and were written by individuals living in the United States, individuals who had or were given by a co-author a good idea of what an American audience expected from an autobiography, make them different in nature from *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. Students explore the expectations they bring to texts in explaining why they find Hayslip's and Mathabane's stories of life in the non-West initially less alien and more enjoyable and satisfying to read than *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.

Tums. *Crossing Borders* is about Rigoberta Menchú's rebirth as a Tum. We learn in *Crossing Borders* that Rigoberta Menchú was the name her father had given her when he registered her birth, but she was called M'lim as a child, and did not know of or use the name Rigoberta until she was eighteen; her mother could never pronounce it. In her first memoir she goes by Rigoberta Menchú, the name she began to use as she was attaining a political consciousness associated with her father. In exile she increasingly went by her full name, Rigoberta Menchú Tum.

In *Crossing Borders* Rigoberta Menchú becomes the figure she had wanted her mother to be in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*—the political activist rooted in Mayan culture. Menchú makes constant reference to what is presented as a Mayan worldview of an ultimate harmony in which antagonistic forms of difference coexist: "... the balance that exists in the Mayan memory. It is harmony. Mayans understand well that you cannot have a world that is totally good without having a bad side to it. Negative aspects are offset by good ones" (*CB*, 22). The secrets Menchú spoke of in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* are clearly associated with her mother in *Crossing Borders*. In *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, she had said that Indians in Guatemala are discriminated against because they hide their identity and keep their secrets (*IRM*, 20). But in *Crossing Borders*, Menchú decides to tell readers one secret by completing a story she had told in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* (*IRM*, 212–213). It concerns her mother, about whom she previously could not easily speak: "The person *Rajaaw juyub'* [the divine Guardian of the World] chooses to appear to must find a way to persuade other people to beg his forgiveness for the damage they have done to the natural world—and to life itself. Or else they must keep the secret that they never talk about" (*CB*, 89). In *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Menchú was too unsure of how her border crossings affected the Mayan community to do more than affirm the existence of secrets, secrets from outsiders and in a different sense from herself. But in *Crossing Borders*, she explains that parents keep certain secrets from their children until they reach maturity. Menchú's parents died as she was becoming an adult, and *I, Rigoberta Menchú* and *Crossing Borders* are accounts of her effort to learn her *own* secrets and to persuade people to ask forgiveness for the damage they had done. Consideration of such issues allows students to reassess interpretations of the individual and the collective that underscore all debates about Menchú's work,[15] and the place of the individual in discussions of cultural identity and difference. And this is the point as well when the most adventuresome students explore the possibilities and cultural limits of the psychology they might have brought to their interpretations of Menchú.

In *Crossing Borders*, the shift from a *marxisant* Liberation Theology analysis to an identity politics and feminist analysis is embodied in Menchú's new ability to talk of her mother: "My mother is a symbol of women and of indigenous peoples. She

[15]Vicente Menchú fought for rights to what he considered his land, property imbricated with cultural practices. In *Crossing Borders*, his daughter considers *I, Rigoberta Menchú* the same way: "My dream is to recover the rights to *I, Rigoberta Menchú*"—rights held by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray (*CB*, 114).

personified two kinds of discrimination. Women and indigenous peoples have both been mistreated." "[T]he insurgents mistrusted the people [Mayans] who had minds of their own." "The liberation movements ... had no real understanding of the struggles of women and indigenous peoples" (*CB*, 60, 87, 88). Menchú's critique of guerrilla organizations' relations with women changes from *I, Rigoberta Menchú* to *Crossing Borders*: Guerrilla organizations gave women power, she wrote in the later memoir, but not the right to be themselves. They denied women their identities.[16]

Reading Menchú's resolution of personal and collective identity issues in *Crossing Borders* resonates for students facing their own such issues. I find it helpful at this point to address my own conflicted feelings about Menchú's account. My initial reading of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* some twenty years ago shared traits with that of Stoll's generic leftist. As confronting the literature on *I, Rigoberta Menchú* and teaching the text have given me a fuller, more intellectually satisfying understanding of Menchú the historical actor, it is one tinged with a kind of loss I know few of my students—now born about the time *I, Rigoberta Menchú* first appeared in English (1984)—feel. But I want them to see that interpretation goes beyond the thrill of the first time and the disillusionment of second thoughts. Thrill and disillusionment are just the beginning and raise essential questions of readers and of texts.

But what of Stoll? It is important for students to read Stoll in dialogue with Menchú as well. Having learned to ask new questions of a memoir, they are ready to ask them of an academic's work. Stoll presents himself as the protector of indigenous peoples, but he also engages in struggles over protection of his own chosen culture of academic anthropology. A one-time journalist who earned his doctorate in anthropology, Stoll finds critics calling him a journalist untrue to the ways of academic anthropology. He is in the position of Menchú, whose catechist training and beliefs make her affirmations of Mayan culture questionable for some observers.[17] Stoll is now an academic anthropologist who criticizes the practices of many academic anthropologists in the name of defending the community and values of academic anthropology. He crafts elements of the introduction and conclusion of his book to support a right-wing political ideology he has apparently come to see as offering an explanation of the threats to his cultural community of academic anthropology and which he believes offers the power to protect it, although most in that community see this ideology as alien and destructive of their community (as Stoll sees the guerrilla movements Menchú supports to defend her indigenous community as being a threat to the existence of that community). Like the Menchú of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Stoll

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[16]In a sign of her confidence in her identity in *Crossing Borders*, Menchú deals with intra-familial (*CB*, 24–46), intra-Mayan, and intra-indigenous peoples (*CB*, 3) conflicts absent in *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.

[17]See, for instance, Duncan Earle, "Menchú Tales and Maya Social Landscapes: The Silencing of Words and Worlds" in Arias, ed., *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, 288–308.

presents himself as someone who will be looked upon with suspicion by elements of the academic anthropology community that he treasures as a consequence of his struggle to save this community from alien elements.

Why ask students to read a disputed text and disputes about the text? If anthropologists want native peoples to be pure, I have worked to get students to explore their similar sentiments about education. Although students might favor the introduction of certain elements of consumer capitalism and electoral democracy into the classroom (such as publication of course evaluation data), they are often initially wary of taking on problematic, unresolved texts, of the very sort they must learn to analyze to navigate these economic and political cultures. And articulation and reception of cultural difference is a contaminating activity. Menchú is correct that it involves secrets that no telling or mistelling can fully reveal.[18] I suggest that we interpret *I, Rigoberta Menchú* like the chocolate the mysterious daughter of a French father and a Guatemalan Indian mother offers inhabitants of a small French village in Lasse Halström's film *Chocolat*: It teaches new things to villagers that even the disappearance of the woman we thought we knew will not take away.

[18]"It is the degree of our foreignness, our cultural difference, that would make [Menchú's] secrets incomprehensible to the outsider. We could never know them as she does, because we would inevitably force her secrets into our framework." Doris Sommer, "Las Casa's Lie and Other Language Games" in Arias, ed., *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, 246.

"THIS IS WHAT THE UNION DONE"— ONE EXAMPLE OF USING MUSIC TO MAKE HISTORY MATTER

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Most history teachers have experienced something like this at least once in their careers: The lecture or assignment bombs, not because we are unprepared or we have pushed our students too far, but because the topics we explore are simply too removed from the daily experiences of our students to have any real meaning. The subjects of our explorations are, therefore, almost unbelievable to the students. They simply shut down, or they become apathetic or alienated.[1]

As a labor historian who has taught at both large universities and small colleges in the South during my brief career, I occasionally have experienced this phenomenon when I discuss the rise of the industrial union movement in the wake of the Great Depression. This period typically occupies a key point in the American and African American history surveys that I have taught over the years. Yet, because the labor movement that rose in the wake of the Great Depression has been in steep decline for decades, most of today's students have little knowledge or understanding of unions or their important role in American history. Often, when I ask students if they have relatives in unions, for example, less than a handful of the 35 or 40 students in the class will raise their hands. Sometimes students who have relatives, even parents who are members of unions, are unaware of the ways that the labor movement has touched their lives.

Music has become an important tool in my efforts to overcome these obstacles. First, music allows students to hear people describing the world around them in their own words. This helps students understand how people in the past made sense of the

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*Note: The author is currently on leave from Miles College as a visiting assistant professor at Clark Atlanta University.

[1]For a discussion of this phenomenon that is both amusing and enlightening, see Leon Fink, "Getting Lost—and Getting Home in History," *Perspectives* 39:8 (November 2001). I am indebted to many people for helping to inspire this essay. Most importantly, I must thank Dexter Blackman and Abou Bamba: We often discussed using music in survey classes at Georgia State University, while we were graduate students. I would like to thank the participants in the "Using Music to Teach World History" panel at the Twelfth International Conference of the World History Association held at Georgia State University in summer 2003. The panelists, Rebecca Wendelken, Jim Lane, Alex Zukas, and Monica Bond-Lamberty, inspired me to re-examine my teaching methodologies shortly before I began my job at Miles College in Birmingham. For an interesting overview of a high school teacher's efforts to use popular music in the classroom, see James Lane, "Keep on Rockin' in the Free World: The Advantages of Using Rock and Roll in Teaching Social Studies," *The Ohio Council for the Social Studies Review* 33:1 (Summer 1997): 13–19. Thanks are also in order to those who offered comments on an earlier draft of this essay at the Organization of American Historians' 2004 Southern Regional Conference at Georgia State, July 2004. Finally, I am grateful to Cliff Kuhn for first pointing me to the collection of songs discussed later in this essay.

times in which they lived. Second, music draws students into the subject in ways that typical lectures, and even other primary sources, cannot. It lessens the gulf between the students and the material and opens a window through which the students can gain a deeper historical understanding.

In the following essay I will describe how I use music in my discussions of the rise of the industrial union movement in Birmingham, Alabama. In this classroom exercise I play several songs written and performed by African American union activists in the Birmingham District from the 1930s to the 1950s. The discussions that arise from this presentation allow students to make important connections among the generation of African Americans who built the industrial union movement, the activists who later led the assault on Jim Crow during the civil rights movement, and themselves.

Though my discussion in this essay is focused on the labor movement in Birmingham and the classes I have taught in that city, the techniques I use in this exercise transcend geographic and topical constraints. Music, I believe, may be employed to help students understand other important eras and movements in American history. The discussion that follows suggests ways that teachers might adopt music to help students understand a wide range of topics and issues that are not limited to a particular historical context.

Since the fall of 2003, I have taught African American history surveys at Miles College, a small, historically black school located just outside Birmingham, in the industrial suburb of Fairfield. The formal titles of these classes are HI 308, African American History, and SS 101, the African American Experience. Mostly junior and senior political science majors make up the African American History class, while the African American Experience, a survey of black history in the United States, is typically filled with freshmen and sophomores. My discussion of the growth of the industrial union movement in the early 1930s focuses on Birmingham and the role that African Americans played in its dramatic success.

The centrality of Birmingham to the industrial union-building project during the New Deal era cannot be exaggerated. As the industrial center of the South, the city served as the union stronghold in the region. Beginning in the early 1930s, labor organizations identified with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) made inroads in the region's mines and mills. Because they were under the auspices of the CIO, these industrial unions were interracial organizations, welcoming both black and white workers into their fold. Typically, however, CIO unions followed a policy that left these unions in white control, regardless of their racial makeup.[2] Despite this fact, many of the unions—particularly in the coal and iron ore mining industries—had African-

[2]See Ray Marshall, *Labor in the South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 151, and Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 199), 64. This situation is also described in depth in my dissertation, "Race and Industrial Transformation in the Alabama Coalfields, 1933-2001" (Ph.D. diss., Georgia State University, 2003), 112–113.

American majorities. In Birmingham, historians have argued, black workers made up the backbone of the industrial labor movement.[3]

Largely as a result of the success of unionists in Birmingham, Alabama, became the union center of the Deep South. In 1956, almost a quarter of the state's nonagricultural workers belonged to unions—below the national average but impressive nonetheless.[4] Over time, and after bitter opposition from the state's economic and political establishment, unions became an accepted part of the social, economic, and political landscape in Alabama. Even among some opponents in the business community, the union movement grudgingly received credit for improving the quality of life by raising the standard of living in the state.[5] Then-Governor George Wallace reflected this status when he spoke to the state's coal miners in 1974. Wallace acknowledged the important contributions that the labor movement had made to the quality of life in the state and went on to claim that unions had "been a determining factor in the location of many new industries in our state."[6] At the time that Wallace spoke those words, almost eighty percent of Alabama's miners were unionized and more than twenty percent of the state's other workers belonged to labor organizations.[7]

By the early 1990s, however, the public attitude of state officials and business leaders toward unions had changed dramatically. In their efforts to lure a huge Mercedes automobile assembly plant to the state, for example, Alabama officials

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[3]See Woodrum, "Race and Industrial Transformation," 166–167, Horace R. Clayton and George S. Mitchell, *Black Workers and the New Unions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 323, and Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 142–3 and 144–5. See also, Peter Alexander, "Rising from the Ashes: Alabama Coal Miners, 1921-1941," in *It Is Union and Liberty: Alabama Coal Miners and the UMW*, Edwin W. Brown and Colin Davis, eds. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 62–83. It also should be noted that unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) had a large presence in Birmingham.

[4]William Warren Rogers, Robert David Ward, Leah Rawls Atkins, and Wayne Flynt, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 569.

[5]Wayne Flynt, *Poor but Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 348.

[6]Governor George C. Wallace to UMWA District 20 Convention, January 27, 1974, "Alabama Governors Speeches, Wallace, George C., January 18, 1971 to July 31, 1978," Microfilm Reel No. 5, SG 12678 Series, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.

[7]"Organizing: Where We Stand," *United Mine Workers Journal*, May 1, 1973. For state statistics, see Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 348-49.

aggressively marketed the state as a bastion of low-wage, non-union labor.[8] And they worked hard to make sure the plant, located near Birmingham in the community of Vance, remained unorganized. Efforts by the United Auto Workers (UAW) to represent workers at the plant were met with ferocious opposition. "Some in Alabama's business community are worried that a successful UAW drive at the Vance plant could tarnish the state's anti-union reputation, which they believe helps economic recruitment efforts," the state's largest newspaper reported.[9] The shift reflected, at least in part, the weakening of the state's labor movement. Deindustrialization and globalization decimated Alabama's unions in the decades after the 1970s.[10] By the end of the 1990s, the unionization rate in Alabama had dropped to about eleven percent.[11]

Miles College has not been immune from these changes. The college, in the words of one author, has always served students "from the black working class, from families involved in the ceaseless struggle to make ends meet."[12] While historically black institutions such as Morehouse College and Howard University attracted many of the children of middle-class and prominent African American families in Birmingham, Miles drew most of its student body from children whose parents worked in the mines and mills around the city.[13] By the eve of the civil rights movement, the college had

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[8]For an account of this effort, see William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 93–97.

[9]"Consultant Hired to Fight UAW Drive at Mercedes, Economic Recruiters Want Employees' Voices Heard," *The Birmingham News*, September 2, 1999.

[10]For an overview of the impact of deindustrialization on the iron and steel industries, see Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Racial divisions during the era of the civil rights movement also weakened Alabama's labor movement. See Rogers, et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, 569. For other accounts, see the work of Robert J. Norrell, especially "Caste in Steel: Jim Crow Careers in Birmingham, Alabama," *Journal of American History* 57:2 (1991): 201–234, and "Labor Trouble: George Wallace and Union Politics in Alabama," in *Organized Labor in the Twentieth-Century South*, Robert Zieger, ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 250–72.

[11]"State Union Rolls rise to 201,000," *The Birmingham News*, February 4, 2000.

[12]Jimmie Lewis Franklin, *Back to Birmingham: Richard Arrington, Jr., and His Times* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 38. See also *Miles College Catalog: 2001-2003*, 17–19.

[13]Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama, the Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 151.

"miraculously survived hard times" and it became a key institution in the struggle that enveloped Birmingham in the 1950s and early 1960s.[14]

The college produced many of the early student leaders who, along with the dynamic minister Fred Shuttlesworth and the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), began the struggle against the racist caste system that defined the city and state. Autherine Lucy, the daughter of sharecroppers who was a graduate of Miles College, became the first African American admitted to the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa in the winter of 1956. Her tenure at Alabama proved brief. She was driven away by violent mobs of whites and expelled—ostensibly for "her protection"—by the university's board of trustees a few days later.[15] Inspired by the sit-in movement of the winter of 1960, Miles students, led by student body president Jesse Walker, the son of laborers, initiated a "Prayer Vigil for Freedom" in a public park to protest racism and a planned filibuster of the 1960 Civil Rights Act. About a dozen students from Miles and a local two-year college were arrested for the protest, and one of the Miles students and some of his family members were later assaulted by whites for taking part in the demonstration. A month later, Miles students participated in a series of sit-ins at five segregated lunch counters in downtown Birmingham. Police arrested the students for violating the city's "trespass after warning" law.[16]

As the movement in Birmingham gathered momentum in the early 1960s, Miles students continued to provide inspiration. Another student body president named Frank Dukes, a former autoworker and Korean war veteran, led more than 800 of the 900 students at Miles to sign a statement called "This We Believe" in December 1961. The statement proclaimed that students would "use every legal and nonviolent mean [sic] at our disposal to secure for ourselves and our unborn children these God-given rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States." Dukes led the creation of the "Anti-Injustice Committee," which began a high profile boycott in the spring of 1962 of businesses in downtown Birmingham that discriminated against African Americans. The boycott, supported by Shuttlesworth, ACMHR, and other organizations in the black community, spurred a decline of 85 to 90 percent of African American patronage of white stores downtown during the crucial Easter holiday sales period. The demands that organizers of the boycott articulated—hiring African American clerks and salesmen in downtown businesses, promoting blacks at downtown businesses, hiring black police officers, and desegregating rest rooms and drinking fountains—would make up many of

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[14]Franklin, *Back to Birmingham*, 37–38.

[15]McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 96–9, and Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 22. Lucy was admitted to the university's library school.

[16]McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 151–57, and Eskew, *But for Birmingham*, 148 and 150.

the core demands of the street protests and campaign led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and ACMHR in the spring of 1963.[17]

Finally, in more recent years, Miles College has played an important role in the shift to black political power in Birmingham. Richard Arrington, the city's first African American mayor, elected in 1979, was an alumnus and former professor and administrator at the college. U.W. Clemon, another Miles alumnus and former vice president of the Anti-Injustice Committee, became an important civil rights lawyer in the city. President Jimmy Carter later appointed him the first African American federal judge in Alabama in 1980.[18]

The massive economic changes that have swept Birmingham since the civil rights era have hit the city's African American community particularly hard.[19] Miles College has continued its tradition of serving students often overlooked by other institutions. Today, the college's historic mission is articulated in its "open-door" admissions statement, a policy that attracts many students from backgrounds that are both economically and educationally disadvantaged.[20] Reaching these students often requires professors to employ non-traditional methods designed to inspire students to cross the gulf that separates them from the study of history, a gulf created during their years in the Alabama public education system.[21] Music has become an important teaching tool in my goal of helping students connect with historical material that is often foreign to them.

To help students understand why the industrial union movement prospered in Birmingham, I have drawn on a collection of songs issued in 1999 by the Sloss Furnace

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[17]Eskew, *But for Birmingham*, 194–201; and McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 265–73.

[18]On Arrington, see, generally, Franklin, *Back to Birmingham*, and J. Mills Thornton III, *Dividing Lines: Municipal Politics and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 513–31. On Clemon, see McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 286–87, especially the footnote on 287. Also, "'Foot Soldiers' Remember King Legacy: Martyr Saluted in March, Love Feast," *Birmingham News*, January 21, 1997. Current Birmingham Mayor Bernard Kincaid is also a Miles College graduate. See "Candidate Profiles," *Birmingham News* (October 12, 2003).

[19]See, generally, Robin D.G. Kelley, "Birmingham's Untouchables: The Black Poor in the Age of Civil Rights," in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 77–100.

[20]*Miles College Catalog: 2001-2003*, 48.

[21]For an overview of the problems facing the Alabama educational system, see Rogers, et al., *Alabama*, 609–10. The history faculty at Miles College in recent years has demonstrated a great deal of creativity in meeting these challenges, including adopting changes to the curriculum that emphasized World History. See Robert Cassanello and Daniel S. Murphree, "Implementing *The La Pietra Report*: Globalizing U.S. History Instruction in Birmingham, Alabama," *OAH Newsletter*, 29:4 (November 2001).

Association called *Spirit of Steel: Music of the Mines, Railroads and Mills of the Birmingham District*. Many of the 21 songs in the collection were written and performed by workers and union activists during the "golden years" of the industrial union movement, from the early 1930s through the mid-1950s. This collection has helped me go beyond merely describing the protections that unions enjoyed under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs or in the new organizing tactics used by CIO activists. It allows the workers and activists themselves to describe why they cast their lot with unions and how they viewed the world around them.

This music was central to the union-building efforts of Birmingham District activists. In the words of historian Robin Kelley, CIO unions in the region fostered a "unique social and cultural environment—a milieu that blacks themselves helped to create."[22] Black churches and gospel musicians who performed throughout the industrial regions of Alabama proved central to the organizing efforts of union activists. Gospel quartets were of particular importance because Birmingham was a center for this type of religious music. The quartets, which typically performed a capella, wrote songs that reflected the twin concerns of work and religion.[23]

As CIO unions established a presence in the mines and mills of the Birmingham area, the line between union and religion often blurred.[24] Folklorist Brenda McCallum, who pioneered the study of black gospel quartets in Birmingham, called this convergence between the labor movement and Protestant Christianity in the African-American community the "gospel of black unionism." Black workers, she argued, saw the industrial union movement as a "secular church," and they easily blended aspects of evangelical Christianity with labor unionism.[25] African-American workers in Birmingham often found justification for their involvement with the union movement in Biblical scripture. Unionism was a "holy cause" that offered "deliverance and emancipation" from the "wage slavery" and exploitation that black workers knew in the mines, mills, and company towns of Alabama.[26] In their efforts to support organizing drives at their mines and plants, black workers composed songs that "commemorated

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[22]Kelly, *Hammer and Hoe*, 148.

[23]Brenda McCallum, "The Gospel of Black Unionism," in *Songs about Work: Essays in Occupational Culture for Richard A. Reuss*, Archie Green, ed. (Bloominngton: Indiana University Press, 1993), 113, and Ray Funk, "Birmingham Quartets Celebrate the Union Movement," in *Spirit of Steel: Music of the Mines, Railroads and Mills of the Birmingham District* (Birmingham: Sloss Furnace Association, 1999), 11.

[24]Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 149, and McCallum, "The Gospel of Black Unionism," 108.

[25]McCallum, "The Gospel of Black Unionism," 108 and 117.

[26]Ibid., 118–19.

and canonized labor leaders, sanctified labor organizations, and praised the gospel of black unionism," McCallum wrote.[27] This impulse comes through clearly in two songs from the *Spirit of Steel* collection that I play for students when I discuss the emergence of the industrial union movement in Alabama in the years following the Great Depression.

The first song that I play for students is "This What the Union Done" by "Uncle" George Jones, an elderly miner recorded by folklorist George Korson in Trafford, Alabama, in 1940. Jones set the lyrics to "Honey in the Rock," an old spiritual. It describes the challenges that black miners faced in the early years of the Great Depression and the efforts of union leaders to resurrect the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). It also illustrates McCallum's concept of the "gospel of black unionism."[28] Jones was born in rural Greene County a few years after the Civil War. He migrated to Birmingham, where he eventually found work in the region's coal mines. He participated in the early organizing drives of the UMWA, and he was shot during one of these efforts in 1902. By the time he was recorded by Korson, he was blind, had difficulty walking, and no longer worked in the mines.[29] The fact that Jones was too old to enjoy the high wages or benefits that union contracts brought to the Alabama coalfields did not dampen his enthusiasm for the UMWA cause. During the recording, Jones's voice seems to crack with emotion as he sings the chorus, an effect that is not lost on students who hear his song today.

Among the more important topics that Jones explores in the song are the rebirth of the UMWA in Alabama in the early 1930s and the way that New Deal legislation emboldened miners. Many miners believed that UMWA leader John L. Lewis and President Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed a close relationship and that the president and the federal government were committed to protecting industrial unions.[30] Early in the song, Jones sings that, when Roosevelt took office in 1933, he told Lewis,

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[27]Ibid., 108.

[28]Jones, "This What the Union Done," in *Spirit of Steel*, 69, and McCallum, "The Gospel of Black Unionism," 119. See also Funk, "Birmingham Quartets Celebrate the Union Movement," 16.

[29]Jones, "This What the Union Done," 69. The UMWA had a long history in the Alabama coalfields before it established a permanent presence in 1933. For accounts of these early organizing efforts and strikes, see Daniel Letwin, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and Brian Kelly, *Race, Class, and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-1921* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

[30]Of course, Lewis later broke with the Roosevelt administration. For an overview of the complex relationship between the UMWA leader and the President, see Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., 1977).

> In union we must be.
> Come, let us work together,
> Ask God to lead the plan.
> By this time another year,
> We'll have the union back again.[31]

In addition, by invoking "God," Jones demonstrates how miners and other workers saw the industrial movement as divinely inspired. As such, labor unions enjoyed protection that was both secular and other-worldly.

Later in the song, Jones shows how workers viewed the measures passed under the New Deal, including the National Industrial Recovery Act and the National Labor Relations Act (the Wagner Act). These measures, he sings,

> Gave all the men the right to organize
> Join the union of their choice
> When the President had passed the law,
> We all did shout with joy
> When they said no operator, sheriff, or boss
> Shouldn't bother the union boys.[32]

Jones also describes the difficulties that miners knew during the early years of the Great Depression, when they had to travel "from place to place" looking for work because the mining industry had virtually shut down in Alabama. It was a time when wages were so low that miners "could scarcely live in the summer time—almost starved in the fall."[33] Jones's memories of the old days contrast sharply with the new reality after miners brought the union back:

> Now when our union men walked out,
> Got the good clothes on their backs,
> Crepe de Chine and fine silk shirts,
> And brand new Miller block hats;
> Fine silk socks and Florsheim shoes,
> They're glittering against the sun,

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[31]Jones, "This What the Union Done," 69–70.

[32]Ibid., 70.

[33]Ibid., 71.

Got dollars in their pockets, smoking good cigars—
Boys, this what the union done.[34]

Another song that I use to discuss the growth of the industrial union movement in Alabama is "Satisfied," recorded by a gospel quartet called the CIO Singers in 1952.[35] The group often performed at union meetings and was a key fixture on a local CIO-sponsored radio show. Most of the singers were members of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA), a union that established a strong presence in the steel and iron mills in the Birmingham area. The group's promoter, Perry L. "Tiger" Thompson, was a political and union activist in the black community.[36] In "Satisfied," the CIO Singers associate the origins of Birmingham area unionism with Biblical scripture:

Christ's last Passover
He had his communion.
He told his disciples
Stay in union.
Together you stand
Divided you fall.
Stay in union
I'll save you all.[37]

Like Jones, the CIO Singers describe the emergence of the industrial union movement as a divinely inspired force for liberation from the exploitation and poverty that workers had known before they belonged to unions:

Well, you read in the Bible to understand
God must have meant this mighty plan.
Men working hard, day by day
Working overtime and getting little pay.[38]

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[34]Ibid. See also, Alexander, "Rising from the Ashes," 83. The lyrics he uses, taken from another source, are slightly different.

[35]CIO Singers, "Satisfied," in *Spirit of Steel*, 73.

[36]Funk, "Birmingham Quartets Celebrate the Union Movement," 12–13. See also McCallum, "The Gospel of Black Unionism," 123–24.

[37]CIO Singers, "Satisfied," in *Spirit of Steel*, 73.

[38]Ibid., 74.

Union leaders in "Satisfied" take on the role of divinely inspired reformers sent to liberate workers from the ravages of the Great Depression and exploitation. Philip Murray, a former miner who headed both the CIO and USWA, was sent by God to "take care of the CIO."[39] Murray died in 1952, and his death was seen as divinely inspired as well:

> But one Sunday morning about one-thirty
> He had a cerebral hemorrhage, the world was worried.
> Well he called him loud, he called him low
> Said, We decided you must go
> To Canaan land where you'll be safe. ...[40]

Lest Murray hesitate about making the trip, God tells the ailing union leader:

> I prepared a man to take your place.
> Now tell the working men they need not fear,
> "Walter Reuther is going to be their engineer."[41]

As the songs by Jones and the CIO Singers demonstrate, the industrial union movement that emerged in Birmingham after the Great Depression sunk deep roots in Birmingham's black community. The songs show how CIO unions were, in Robin Kelley's words, "broad-based social movements, enriched with southern cultural traditions."[42] Playing these songs to today's students, I believe, helps them understand how African-American activists viewed the world around them and why so many flocked to the union fold. The music also illustrates an important point about why unions under the CIO umbrella were so successful in Birmingham—they were shaped by the communities in which they existed.

In this respect, the music helps students comprehend how a movement that has become disconnected from their community was at one time deeply rooted in it. The students at Miles, most of them aware of the college's central role in the black community in Birmingham, can explore the history that their grandparents and great-grandparents made. Students can understand the important connections among the generation of African American activists who established the industrial union movement,

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[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 151.

the later generation who transformed the city with the civil rights protests of the 1950s and 1960s, and their own generation. In this sense, the music helps Miles College students recover their own history.

Such revelations, of course, are not limited to Miles College and Birmingham. Music can prove a valuable teaching tool for instructors at small colleges and large research universities located in both small towns and urban areas (and everywhere in between). Music could prove a valuable asset in helping students explore other social and political movements in American history as well. For one example, Gregory Freeland recently described how music allows his students to understand the ideology and the "psychological and emotional elements" that inspired civil rights protestors in the 1950s and 1960s.[43] Music from the civil rights movement, like the labor songs that I use, inspires Freeland's students to connect more directly and emotionally with the historical material in ways that are not possible through more traditional lectures and document analysis.[44] Teachers who want to try different ways to connect to their students can use music to open windows to many times and topics. If they look around, they will see many opportunities to bring history into their classrooms.

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[43]Gregory Freeland, "Music and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1968: A Classroom Approach," in *Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement: Freedom's Bittersweet Song*, Julie Buckner Armstrong, Susan Hult Edwards, Houston Bryan Roberson, and Rhonda Y. Williams, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125.

[44]Ibid., 126–27.

TEACHING WITH ON-LINE PRIMARY SOURCES:
DOCUMENTS FROM NARA

CAMPAIGNING IN 1928: CHICKENS IN POTS AND CARS IN BACKYARDS

Daniel F. Rulli
National Archives and Records Administration

While the military and political accomplishments of World War I were clearly limited, the war, nonetheless, established a foundation for unparalleled economic growth in the United States during the 1920s. A significant consumer economy grew as many Americans worked fewer hours, earned higher salaries, invested in the stock market, and bought everything from washing machines to Model T Fords. This culture of consumerism in the 1920s changed the politics of American society and set the tone for American attitudes about economic political issues for decades to come. In the early 1920s, President Warren G. Harding's policies were generally conservative, especially regarding taxes, tariffs, immigration restriction, labor rights, and business regulation. Continuing Republican policies, President Calvin Coolidge included federal tax cuts and high tariffs. The expansive economy of the 1920s was fueled by the use of factory machine manufacturing and standardized mass production. The economic boom also resulted from the effects of World War I on technology, scientific management, the rapid increase in worker productivity, the psychology of mass consumption (with installment credit) behind the purchase of radios, motion picture tickets, electric appliances, and automobiles. Certainly, federal policies that supported big business with high tariffs, cutbacks in the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to regulate unfair trade practices, and the reduction of corporate and personal income taxes contributed to the boom as well.

It was with this backdrop that Herbert Hoover and Al Smith squared off in the election of 1928. Hoover was born in Iowa and orphaned as a child. He began a career as a mining engineer soon after graduating from Stanford University in 1895. Within twenty years he had used his engineering knowledge and business skills to make a fortune as an independent mining consultant. In 1914, Hoover administered the American Relief Committee and during World War I he headed the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the U.S. Food Administration and was chairman of the Interallied Food Council. After the war he directed the American Relief Administration. Then Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt said of Hoover in 1920, "He is certainly a wonder and I wish we could make him President of the United States. There could be no better one." In 1919 Hoover founded the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University. As Secretary of Commerce in the Harding and Coolidge administrations from 1921 to 1929, Hoover was widely celebrated for his leadership. The man who had fed Belgium, had run the U.S. Food Administration, revolutionized the Department of Commerce, and ministered to victims of the 1927 Mississippi flood appeared the ideal candidate in 1928. Hoover seemed more practical than Woodrow Wilson, glowed with respectability compared to the Harding administration, was easily more inspired than

Coolidge, and was generally considered more "purely American" than his Democratic opponent, New York Governor Alfred E. Smith.

Smith, a colorful and charismatic Democrat from New York's lower East Side, was the first Catholic in United States history to be nominated for President. And, while Smith's Catholicism was attacked by some nativist groups, in his memoir Hoover states that "Governor Smith unwittingly fanned the flame in an address in Oklahoma against intolerance. He insisted that religious faith did not disqualify any man from public office. He was right. But up to that moment it had been an underground issue."

In any case, the election of 1928 was a contest between two self-made men, both "Horatio Alger" stories that celebrated rugged American individualism. Very similar to the 1928 Democratic platform, Hoover's New Day platform included shorter working hours for labor, additional public works, and a Federal Farm Board to assist hard-pressed farmers. In addition, the candidates agreed upon reform of judicial procedure and the prison system; the promotion of child welfare; better housing; the elimination of national wastes; better organization of the Federal Government; control of immigration; development of water resources; and oil conservation. The one major issue that divided the candidates was Prohibition: Hoover supported the Eighteenth Amendment's ban on the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, but Smith pressed for its repeal.

The Hoover campaign used a variety of slogans in 1928 including "Vote for Prosperity," "Lest We Forget" (referring to Hoover's World War I relief work), and "Who but Hoover?" But other slogans were introduced by Hoover supporters, often without direct input from him. Hoover made several very optimistic statements during the campaign, including "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land," but he never promised "a chicken in every pot."

Nonetheless, the Republican National Committee pounced on the "chicken in every pot" slogan and published it in newspaper advertisements across the country. The featured document is an example that appeared in a number of newspapers during the Herbert Hoover presidential campaign in the fall of 1928. It detailed how the Republican administrations of Harding and Coolidge "reduced hours and increased earning capacity; silenced discontent; put the proverbial 'chicken in every pot, and a car in every backyard,' to boot." The ad continues by asserting that previous Republican administrations had also made "the Republican Party the party of democracy, equality, opportunity; supported national development, not sectional interests; built better homes, more skyscrapers; passed more laws that benefited, regulated and purified immigration; and filled the working man's pail, gasoline tank and generalized the use of time-saving devises that released women from the thrall of domestic drudgery." The previous Democrats, according to the ad, had "impoverished and demoralized the railroads, led
packing plants and tire factories into receivership, squandered billions on impractical programs, issued billions on scraps of paper to deflate foreign debt and then left to the Republican Party the job of mopping up the mess." Finally, the ad contended, "The Republican Party rests its case on a record of stewardship and performance and its Presidential and Congressional candidates stand for election on a platform of sound

practice, Federal vigilance, high tariffs, Constitutional integrity, the conservation of natural resources, honest and constructive measures for agricultural relief, sincere enforcement of the laws, and the right of all citizens, regardless of faith or origin, to share in the benefits of opportunity and justice." A vote for Hoover would be a vote for continued prosperity.

The pre-election Hearst Newspapers poll predicted that Hoover would get 60 percent of the women's vote and 56 percent of the men's vote. He won 58 percent of the popular vote and garnered 444 electoral votes to Smith's 87. Interestingly, Smith's totals were partly a result of both anti-Catholic and pro-Catholic bias. Additionally, his campaign theme song, "The Sidewalks of New York," hardly appealed to voters in rural America as Smith's results were also affected by a decade of anti-urban bias. Smith carried only seven states, six in the "Solid South" and Massachusetts. He even lost his home state of New York, where reform Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt won the governorship. While dormant politically during most of the 1920s, women made the election of 1928 the "Year of the Woman Voter." Hoover was endorsed by the National Woman's Party, primarily because of his leadership of the Food Administration and his support of Prohibition. According to Hoover, the issues that defeated Smith were the general prosperity of the decade, Smith's support of the repeal of Prohibition, farm tariffs, Smith's association with Tammany Hall, and his "snuggling up" with the Socialists. Hoover concluded that Smith would have lost by a wider margin had he been Protestant.

Seven months after Hoover was inaugurated, the stock market crashed. While contrary to Hoover and his party's policies, it became clear that the subsequent economic depression could not be curbed without government intervention. Hoover insisted that the federal budget remain balanced as he cut taxes and expanded public-works spending. Unfortunately, he also signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which raised tariffs on over 20,000 items, and later the 1932 Revenue Act, which increased taxes and fees (including postage rates). These acts, along with the Federal Reserve's tight money policy, are now generally considered major economic and political miscalculations that may have deepened the depression.

[For access to the document, visit www.archives.gov/research/arc/. After clicking the yellow search button, type the identifying ARC #187095 into the keyword box and check the box for "descriptions linked to digital copies" just below the keyword box. This document is from the Herbert Hoover Papers, 1913-64, at NARA's Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, IA, and may be printed and duplicated in any quantity.]

Teaching Suggestions

1. Focus Activity with Document Analysis

Provide students with a copy of the document. Also supply students with a copy of the document analysis worksheet found at www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/document.html. Ask students in pairs

to analyze the document by completing the worksheet. Then guide a discussion based on the questions from the worksheet. From this article and other sources, present students with information about Hoover's economic policies and actions after the election, and ask them to discuss how those might affect their analysis of the document.

2. Brainstorming Activity: Politics and Economics

Close analysis of the featured document (see #1 above) reveals that this political advertisement was primarily about economic issues. Prominently on the document, there is the promise of a "chicken in every pot" and "a car in every backyard." Keep a list on the board or overhead as students brainstorm ways in which that promise applies today. In other words, how does the promise translate into 2006 economic terms: an iPod in every ear, a 45-inch plasma television in every living room, or a prepaid college education? What are the symbols of economic prosperity today? When the brainstorming is exhausted, ask students in small groups to compare the list on the board or overhead with the other economic issues in the advertisement, and ask each group to report their conclusions orally.

3. Current Events Activity: Writing Political Platforms

Explain to students how and why political party platforms are written. Supply them with a copy of the featured document and the Republican platform from 1928 (visit www.presidency.ucsb.edu for example). Use NARA's document analysis worksheet at www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/document.html to allow small groups to compare the documents. Lead a discussion that examines the similarities and differences. To conclude this activity, ask students in two large groups to write political platforms for the Republican and Democratic parties in 2008. Allow class time for the two groups to compare their issues and positions.

4. Small Group Drawing Connections Activity: Creating a Political Advertisement

Supply students with a copy of the featured document. Divide the class into small groups. Ask half of the small groups to each create a political advertisement for the Democratic Party platform for 1928 in the exact same format as the featured document. Ask the other half of the small groups to each do the same for the Republican Party for 1932. Allow class time for all of the small groups to share their advertisements.

5. Current Events Activity: Platforms from 1928 to 2004

Provide students with copies of the Republican and Democratic platforms from 2004 (visit www.gop.com/ and www.democrats.org/). After students have read the materials and reviewed the featured document, lead a discussion that compares the "planks" of the 2004 platforms with statements in the advertisement. As the advertisement was submitted to the newspapers by the Republican National Committee, ask students to research the role played by the Democratic and Republican national committees and other "unofficial" political campaign groups in the campaign of 2004. Allow class time to guide students in discussion of their findings on the impact of political party organizations on candidates.

6. Cross-Curricular Activity: Geography and Political Campaigning

In the elections of 1928, the Democrat Smith carried the states of the "Solid South" and Massachusetts. Explain to students the origins of the term "Solid South" and its impact on elections since the Civil War. Then, to help students understand how political party voting can follow geographic factors, assign each student (or each small group depending on class size) a presidential election from 1928-2004. For each election, ask them to create an electoral map of the United States that shows the states the Republicans won in red and the ones the Democrats won in blue. Allow class time for each student to report on his or her election map, and then lead a class discussion that analyzes how the red and blue states have shifted. Help students examine each election for an understanding of how political issues relate to geographic factors.

7. Project Documentary Oral History Activity: Remembering the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression

The featured document serves as a pivotal point between one of the economically best times and one of the worst times in American history: While there was tremendous prosperity for many Americans in the 1920s, there was economic tragedy for most Americans in the 1930s. Explain to students that one of the most interesting aspects of these two decades was how diversely Americans were affected. Ask students in small groups to select either the 1920s or 1930s, and develop a list of ten or fewer questions they would like to ask someone who experienced that decade. Help students locate local individuals who would be willing to participate in an interview about their experiences during either decade, and ask students to record the responses. Allow class time for the groups to report their findings, and create a list that reflects the variety of experiences. Note: The Smithsonian Oral History Project might be useful at www.si.edu/archives/ihd/ihda.htm.

8. Extended Cross-Curricular Activity: Mass Media and Political Campaigns

The newspaper advertisement in the featured document is a good example of an early use of the mass media in American political campaigns. To provide background information for students, ask journalism and media colleagues to develop topics for a series of two or three thirty-minute lectures with discussions on the use of media in political campaigns. For further background information, set aside a class period for a panel of local reporters from newspaper, radio, and television to discuss the characteristics of the use of their media in political campaigns. Allow time for students to ask panel members questions. Finally, in an analytical essay of two or three pages, ask students to evaluate the impact of media use in political campaigns based on the background information from the lectures and discussions and the panel presentation. It might be useful to suggest that in their essays students examine the effect that mass media has on basic democratic principles.

REVIEWS

Paul R. Waibel. *Martin Luther: A Brief Introduction to His Life and Works.* Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2005. Pp. xi; 139. Paper, $12.95. ISBN 0-88295-231-5.

Martin Luther remains an intriguing and confounding figure: He confronted—head on—issues that concern us still, and we haven't stopped debating his significance. Now we have a new biography that has some value for teachers and students but is ultimately disappointing. Among its virtues are its brevity, student-friendly explanations (e.g., of purgatory and indulgences), and a 23-page annotated appendix of Luther's writings; it is also strong on theology. But it offers no new information or interpretations, the narrative is based on a combination of secondary sources and select printed documents, and key subjects and views are either ignored or given short shrift, which is not surprising in so brief a book. There are flashes of sophisticated understanding, especially on theological distinctions and issues (e.g., the significance of the 95 Theses and key treatises), but in other places the text is short on analysis and nuance. For example, Luther's decision to become a monk instead of a lawyer, following his narrowly escaping being struck by lightning, is explained simply by his need to keep the vow—made as he cowered in fear—whereas the addition of context would have explained more; Luther's debt to his predecessors is minimized; the discussion of "justification by faith" slights the significance of Luther's appending "alone" to the concept.

My reservations, however, cover a wider swath. A lot of research has been done in recent decades on Luther and women, marriage, and the family, but these subjects are ignored, as this is primarily a theological life. Although in a footnote Waibel states that recent scholarship questions the veracity of Luther's posting his 95 Theses, he says nothing about that scholarship and otherwise treats the legend as fact. This is a shortcoming, as the difference is significant for our understanding of Luther and the course of the Reformation; also, nothing is said about the unauthorized translation of the Theses into German and their subsequent circulation. The role of the printing press is acknowledged but not the critical contribution of Lucas Cranach.

While Waibel shows us a flawed, human Luther, he also serves as an apologist. In his otherwise effective chapter on Luther's writings on peasants and Jews, the author wonders "about Luther's mental state" at the time he wrote his venomous diatribes, but this hypothesis is posed, not explored. We might not be able to place Luther on a psychiatrist's couch, but Waibel could have examined why Luther went overboard against peasants in revolt and Jews all the while, during the last two decades of his life, he was able to write dozens of treatises so rationally. Marius and Oberman's theories on Luther's vitriol are presented, but Waibel is mostly embarrassed by this part of his great man's legacy. Luther, to me, was an ideologue and an extremist. After he found his "truth," he allowed for neither other truths nor compromise. Luther also had a bad temper, which, along with his fear that the Last Days had begun, intensified his anger

and fear. Room should have been made to explore these areas, as they contributed to his mental state.

I also have issues with the book's organization and the absence of much of Luther's actual life. But there is little doubt that Luther saw the world as refracted through the prism of his faith. He lived during a revolutionary time, a time of transition from the medieval to the modern world. The strength of this brief life is its focus on Luther's views on aspects of Christianity; its weakness is the narrowness of his approach. My advice: Don't discard your weathered copy of Bainton's classic biography.

California State University, San Bernardino Robert Blackey

Robert Mallett. *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003. Pp. ix; 266. Cloth, $75.00; ISBN 0-333-74814-X. Paper, $24.95; ISBN 0-333-74815-8.

Taking advantage of newly-released archival materials Robert Mallet has entered the debate on the role played by Fascist Italy in the background to the Second World War. The results confirm *Il Duce's* aggressive policies and challenge recent Italian scholarship, particularly that of Renzo De Felice, that denies Mussolini's expansionist goals. Resenting Italy's secondary imperial status, Mussolini's fascist *imperium* was ideologically distinct from previous Italian leaders, recalling the glories of the Roman empire. Mallett insists that such a policy meant war against Britain and France to secure key strategic points in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Such a policy was not possible without substantial rearmament and compatible allies. Prior to 1935, such an ally was not to be found.

Admired by many for crushing Bolshevism and finally securing a concordat with the Roman Church, Mussolini even prepared to fight Hitler over the question of Austrian independence. Having promised his people international greatness, however, Mussolini abandoned Austria in favor of imperial conquest in Africa. Italy's assault on Ethiopia set in motion a series of events that contributed greatly to the outbreak of the Second World War. The League of Nations began its slow collapse, and Italy moved closer ideologically to Nazi Germany. The Rome-Berlin Axis was difficult and unequal, and Hitler ordered the assault on Poland even before signing the Pact of Steel, but Mussolini was a victim of his own doctrine. Italian fascism viewed war as the means to ennoble great nations. Given Italy's military and economic weakness, such a policy required an ally. The only ally that supported such a world view was Nazi Germany. Despite the many problems, Mussolini remained faithful to this relationship, as he believed that such a partnership was the only means to secure his greater fascist empire.

Mallett's assessment of Italy's role in the events leading to the Second World War is thorough and compelling. He does not attempt to provide an economic or cultural connection. This is a purely political argument, and one that is presented with strength and style. Mallett expands the argument made in his previous study, *The Italian Navy and Fascist Expansionism, 1935-1940* (1998), insisting that the first concern of Italian foreign policy was to end its "geopolitical imprisonment" in the Mediterranean. The Allied blockade, imposed in September 1939, only strengthened Mussolini's determination to support Germany. Taking advantage of historical material available in Italy and abroad concerning Mussolini's actions between 1933 and 1940, Mallet wades through the perceived duplicity and public confusion that characterized Italian foreign policy at the time and provides new insight into Mussolini's objectives.

Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War would be an excellent choice for supplemental reading in any upper-division university course on modern Italy or the Second World War. An even more compelling choice would be to use Mallett's book in those courses that seek to teach students how to prepare a well-researched, well-argued, well-written historical monograph. Even Mallet's pro-Italian bias should provide fuel for class discussion.

Northwest Missouri State University Joel D. Benson

Helmut Walser Smith, ed. *The Holocaust and Other Genocides: History, Representation, Ethics.* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002. Pp. xxii; 262. Paper, $27.95; ISBN 0-8265-1403-0.

There is no shortage of Holocaust-related literature on the academic textbook market, but when it comes to works that offer a comparative approach to genocide, instructors find little of value. *The Holocaust and Other Genocides* is a notable exception. Helmut Walser Smith's concise volume is a treasure. Filled with primary source material related to the Holocaust, Armenian genocide, events in Bosnia and Kosovo, and Rwanda, the book's format provides students with the tools they need to think deeply about some of the twentieth century's worst crimes.

The first half of the book is dedicated to the Holocaust. Section I, entitled "History of the Holocaust," opens with images of Jews in the medieval period and an anti-Semitic statement from Martin Luther. Subsequent documents include photographs from 1930s Germany; excerpts from the Nuremberg Laws; a 1943 German railway schedule that shows how many passengers were transported and to where; and an excerpt from a Warsaw Ghetto diary.

Section II, entitled "Representations of the Holocaust in the Arts," addresses the use of language and prompts the reader to consider how it can be manipulated. Also discussed in this section is the literature of the Holocaust. Elie Wiesel's *Night* and Art

Spiegelman's *Maus* are excerpted and analyzed. Compelling poetry, such as "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car," is also reproduced here. In a chapter dedicated to monuments and memorials, the reader is presented with photographs of the Warsaw Ghetto monument and the Treblinka memorial and is challenged to consider whether death camps should be left to decay or be restored and maintained as tourist sites. Section II also explores Holocaust photography and film.

The book's third section addresses "Other Genocides," each introduced by an informative essay that places events in the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia and Kosovo, and Rwanda in their historical and cultural context. As with the Holocaust sections, these chapters include compelling documents.

The book's final chapter, entitled "Ethical Questioning," is particularly valuable. Here Smith offers insightful commentary in essays such as "Is Prejudice a Prelude to Annihilation?" "What is a Choiceless Choice and the Extent of Moral Blame?" "What are the Limits of Forgiveness and Reconciliation?" "How Have Christians Responded to the Holocaust?" and "What is the Relationship Between Ethics and Remembrance?" These engaging commentaries raise more questions than they answer, and no doubt that is Smith's goal.

Each of the book's chapters opens with a concise, accessible essay that lays the foundation for the documents that follow. Two of the volume's most useful features are the thought-provoking questions linked to each of the documents and cross-references that tie each document to others in the book. The volume also includes timelines and glossaries specific to each instance of genocide. A teacher's guide written by Paul Fleming is available from the Tennessee Holocaust Commission and provides additional helpful material.

The Holocaust and Other Genocides is most appropriate for undergraduate students, although it could be used with advanced high school students. Helmut Walser Smith has assembled an outstanding array of documents and essays that treat genocide with the gravity it deserves and that challenge the reader to consider this subject from a variety of different perspectives.

Geneva College Jeffrey S. Cole

Christopher Read, ed. *The Stalin Years: A Reader.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Pp. xviii, 241. Paper, $22.95; ISBN 0-333-96343-1.

Christopher Read contributes a very good study of the years Joseph Stalin dominated the Soviet Union. In a short, yet exceptionally written first chapter, Read deals with the "main currents of interpretation of Stalin and the Stalin years." Read summarizes his strategy and the focus of his book in his "Preface," emphasizing what he is going to do and presents his two-fold aim—he leads "a self-contained journey

through the Stalin years, focusing in detail on the main events" and, second, he samples new historiographical views emerging from Russian Archives.

A very good glossary of terms provides satisfactory definitions and explanations. Read also includes a chronology generally outlining Stalin's life and work by period, including the formative periods in Stalin's life. There is a good bibliography, including a representative list of general works on the historical period, and a list of specialized works on Stalin. This bibliography can be helpful to beginning students and to new faculty in Russian-Soviet studies. There is an adequate and useful index that aids in identifying individuals, geographical areas, movements, events, ideas, and topics.

For the serious student of this period in Russian-Soviet history, Read's work provides a variety of resources and studies, supplying interpretative and definitive explanations of the man, his following, and his contributions both negative and positive. The controversial questions associated with Stalin are addressed, although some are not resolved, such as the number of victims in what is termed "The Great Terror." Read argues that this calculation remains "distastefully political and polemical as much as academic" (15-16).

Faculty can use this volume in a variety of ways, both in the classroom and in the preparation of lectures, discussions, and seminars on the work and contribution of Stalin, his supporters, and his opponents. The opening chapter is an excellent summary of the historical setting, the technical elements involved in studying Stalin's work, and the related historiography. This chapter is a good example of how to approach this period from the perspective of an important, key figure in the Soviet Union. After this general survey of Stalin's life and times, there follow five chapters that cover key facets of the development of Soviet Russia, and the cultural revolution aiming to socially modernize Russia, primarily efforts to modernize Russian motherhood between 1917 and 1937.

Daniel Peris's work on efforts in Soviet Russia to oppose religion, focuses on the 1929 "Congress of the Godless." Read turns next to the efforts to industrialize Soviet production and to collectivize agriculture by giving concentrated attention to the peasants and how this trend played itself out particularly during the famine of 1932-1933. He draws material from the work of Kurt S. Schultz on the Nizhnii-Novgorod Automobile Factory in 1927-1932 and on what Stalin and his comrades tried to do in the early 1930s with the peasantry in the scholarly work of R.W. Davies, M.B. Tauger, and S.G. Wheatcroft.

In a similar approach Read selects two scholars who have contributed significant studies on "The Great Terror" of 1937. The Second World War is covered in a selection from the work of John Erickson on "Soviet Women at War."

Brief explanations give the basic framework and strategic approach Read employs for presenting his summary of Stalin's life and work. Read provides a good basis for both the student and the faculty member. Especially graduate students, beginning to develop their style and approach to instruction, can use this small book as a foundation for analyses, conversations, and lectures on Stalin. The approach that Read has applied

in the development of this volume serves as an excellent example for developing studies of Stalin's leadership.

Introductory analytical essays prepare one to consider the scholarly studies used. These explain key issues, policies, leaders, and historical interpretations associated with the period. These can assist both the student and the faculty member in providing summary and analytical statements for discussion and lecture.

Each of the chapters and scholarly articles included have extensive endnotes of sources, documents, and important secondary studies. These notes are a good basis for bibliography on the subject being studied.

East Texas Baptist University Jerry Hopkins

Minor Myers, Jr. *Liberty without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005. Pp. xvi, 280. Paper, $16.95; ISBN 0-8139-2311-5.

This is an unrevised reprint of Myers's study of the Society of the Cincinnati first published in 1983. The only new material is a short Foreword by Jay Wayne Jackson, President General of the Society of the Cincinnati, discussing the commendable career of the late Dr. Myers and, very briefly, the history of the Society in the years since the book first appeared. The Foreword is inconsequential as a contribution to understanding the Society.

Myers was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati—in addition to being a political scientist, professor, and university president at the time of his death—but his membership does not seem to have skewed his work on the first Society—formed out of the Continental Army officer corps in the aftermath of the Newburgh Conspiracy. It might have colored his view of the current society and its origins, as I will develop below. This is a well-researched, nicely written study of an important organization that has not received the attention it deserves. This is especially true of the Society that emerged from the War for Independence.

There are, of course, two Societies of the Cincinnati as Myers acknowledges. The first grew out of the American War for Independence, while the second, a "revival" of the first, developed during the formation of hereditary, patriotic societies later in the nation's history. Myers' discussion of the first society is much richer and fuller than his discussion of the second. His discussion of the first Society is the largest part of the book.

Those who teach the era of the American Revolution and the formation of the United States will find much of value in Myers' discussion of the beginnings of the society in the final stages of the War for Independence. His discussion of the events at Newburgh and their aftermath, both immediate and lingering, is based on very wide

ranging research and familiarity with the literature. There is a lot here to enrich a lecture or two. Similarly, his discussions of the role of the Society in the debate over the need for a new form of government and the ratification of the Constitution draw on solid research and present a subtle and nuanced understanding of a complex situation. Finally, his discussion of the Society's lobbying—a modern concept and word that describe their activities well—on behalf of the economic interests of former Continental Army officers is a welcome reminder that real people with needs and economic concerns fought the War for Independence.

The discussion of the second, current, Society is presented as a revival of an existing organization, when the evidence is stronger for a revival of a dormant one. While Myers provides a rich societal context for the original Society, the revived Society seems to exist in a vacuum. While he acknowledges its similarities to other hereditary, patriotic organizations, there is no discussion of how the increasing diversity of the United States due to immigration effected a new interest in hereditary connections to the founding generation and the definitions of who was a real American inherent in this. That is the one weakness of an otherwise well-done book.

Murray State University William H. Mulligan, Jr.

James E. Crisp. *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. xviii, 201. Paper, $13.00; ISBN 0-19-516350-8.

Sleuthing the Alamo is an amazing little book. James E. Crisp takes the reader behind the scenes and into the world of the revisionist historian. He shows how he found and analyzed documents, how he had to overcome his own preconceptions of what happened during the Texas Revolution, and how he had to deal with adverse public opinion. Apparently it can be dangerous to one's health to suggest that David Crockett did not go down swinging Old Betsy.

Crisp begins his saga with his own public school education in Texas history which, as it turned out, was based much more on myth than on reality. He traces his personal growth into a revisionist historian bent on finding the TRUTH, no matter what myths had to be overturned in the process. The heart of the book reveals his passion for Alamo history and his search for documents about the de la Peña diary. Discarding rumor, he finds that mistranslations have led previous historians down the wrong paths, and that edited diaries can be just as deceptive. Crisp became determined to find out what really happened at the Alamo.

His journey took him to various sources, both real and imagined. Looking at the famous paintings of the Alamo, Crisp learned that imagery often revealed racial prejudice that then influenced generations of both Texans and tourists. He includes

color plates of these pictures so the reader can also see how the participants were portrayed. Davy Crockett was always the hero and the Mexicans were always sinister savages. Hollywood played its own role in both television and movies, convincing all Americans that Crockett, whether played by John Wayne or Fess Parker, could never have surrendered or been captured. The truth, as Crisp found, was otherwise.

James Crisp narrates the real story of Texas Independence based on reliable sources, and speculates that the de la Peña account could be factual, that Crockett did surrender or was captured, and that he was executed like all the rest by Santa Anna's order. The public reaction to his version was immediate and negative. He received hate mail and death threats for daring to correct the John Wayne version of the Alamo. It seems most people want their history written in large letters, in black and white, with mythology and prejudices intact.

Crisp also addresses the story of the Yellow Rose, who supposedly kept Santa Anna busy the night before the battle of San Jacinto, which allowed the Texans to win their independence. Again the reader sees the historian at work as Crisp wades through the stories to find out what can be proved. He analyzes the race, class, and gender stereotypes that gave rise to the heroic Yellow Rose and that remained so prominent in Texas histories for so long. It turns out we cannot know if there was an Emily Morgan (or West) at that battle. If there was, she, like other women and people of color, has been erased.

This book should be mandatory reading for all Texans, for all Texas historians, and especially for all students who are learning to be historians.

West Texas A&M University Jean A. Stuntz

David E. Kyvig. *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940: How Americans Lived Through the 'Roaring Twenties' and the Great Depression.* Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002, 2004. Pp. xv, 330. Paper, $18.95; ISBN 1-56663-534-5.

Only rarely are we treated to a volume that serves equally well as a resource for lecture preparation and as a required text. Most books that we keep on a handy shelf for quick reference are too narrow and technical for undergraduate or secondary school students; most texts that we choose for classroom use are too general and derivative to bother with for reference. David Kyvig's new volume fills both bills for the cultural and social history of the 1920s and 1930s. *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940* is virtually encyclopedic in its coverage of a vast array of topics, yet it manages to be readable and engaging. Kyvig ranges across changes in family demographics, religion, education, media (especially radio and the movies), leisure pursuits, courtship, labor, immigration, transportation, economics, and fashion (right down to women's underwear), paying careful attention to the differential experiences of social change

across region, race, class, and gender. For introductory courses in United States cultural history, or as a supplementary text in survey courses, *Daily Life* is accessible and absorbing without talking down to students; for teachers and scholars, Kyvig provides an excellent synthesis of the last three decades of historical scholarship in social and cultural history, with well-chosen data and vignettes to illustrate findings and trends.

The basic premise of the book, as of most contemporary social history, is that the fabric of daily life is as worthy of historical consideration as the "big events" that usually dominate historical study. Working from that premise, Kyvig focuses on the effects of technological, economic, and social changes on the ways Americans experienced daily life. And certainly those changes were dramatic, ranging from the rapid embrace of radio, automobiles, and the movies to the effects of electrification and advances in sanitation on the ways many, if not all, Americans thought, worked, and acted. Oddly, however, after devoting three-quarters of the narrative to a fine-grained foregrounding of social and cultural change separate from the "big events" (though with due regard for the experiences from World War I and the Depression), the book concludes with an extended traditional rendering of the New Deal, replete with an agency-by-agency rehearsal of New Deal initiatives. Although the chapter does make obligatory references to the Depression's and the New Deal's social and cultural impacts, most of them are repetitive of earlier observations. The result is an unfortunate reification of "big events" as the legitimate focus of historical inquiry, quite the opposite of what appears earlier to be Kyvig's interest.

Kyvig's research base is comprehensive. Those who have kept up with the scholarship in cultural history will recognize the sources of his narrative, though documentation is spare. He does not devote attention to the historical debates at the heart of much of the scholarship, rendering the text less valuable for upper-division and graduate courses but probably more accessible to secondary school and lower-division college students and a general audience. In only one area is this volume disappointing: Although Kyvig occasionally notes changes in educational attainment from 1920 to 1940, both the narrative and the bibliography are virtually innocent of the remarkable work in the social and cultural history of education produced in the last quarter century. This omission is doubly curious, since, birth and death excepted, by the 1920s, arguably, no institution or experience was more universally experienced than public schooling, at least through the elementary years. In that fault, of course, Kyvig merely participates in an omission common to contemporary social and cultural historians, few of whom read the work of historians of education.

That disappointment aside, this is a book worth the time of every teaching historian interested in the twentieth century. It deserves consideration as a classroom textbook, and will serve all of us well as a resource for our class lectures and discussions.

University of Georgia Ronald E. Butchart

Eric Dorn Brose. *A History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. xii; 528. Paper, $40.00; ISBN 0-19-51357-7.

Eric Dorn Brose has written a wonderful new survey of the tumultuous history of Europe in the twentieth century. This book is designed as a textbook for a course on twentieth-century European history. While the book is organized chronologically, the true strength of the book revolves around the five themes that reoccur throughout the text.

The first theme is "War and the Quest for Alternatives to War." This is a particularly important theme for a history of Europe in the twentieth century. Two particular periods, the interwar years (1919-1939) and the post World War II period, provide a good treatment about how some Europeans tried to preserve, maintain, and create peace. In a century filled with war, turmoil, and unprecedented death and destruction, this theme provides a refreshing alternative in many sections. The second theme concerns ethnic and racial harmony and belligerency where the author explores the problematic nature of national identity and nation-state structures. The third theme addresses the constant rise of authoritarian regimes and the struggle to establish and maintain democracy across Europe. The fourth theme discusses the rise of technology throughout the century and how different areas of Europe dealt with the changes it brought. The last theme analyzes the phenomenon of elite and popular culture.

In particular, chapters four and five (the interwar years) are two of the strongest chapters of the book where the author examines closely the attempts for keeping and maintaining peace, the interplay between countries trying to maintain their relative diplomatic positions, recover from economic distress, and avoid possible aggression. Another strength of this book that sets it apart from other treatments of modern Europe is its inclusion of events related to the Soviet Union. Russian and Soviet history are often marginalized in studies of Europe. Some debate whether or not Russia is even really a part of Europe, but certainly the story of Europe in the twentieth century is heavily shaped by events in the Soviet Union such as the revolutions and role in World War I, Stalinism and World War II, and the Cold War. Lastly, chapter eight links the events in Europe to the United States that will be particularly appealing to students in the United States.

This book surveys the history of twentieth-century Europe very well. The book is well organized, well written, and follows a strong chronological format that would make it a good text for a course on twentieth-century Europe. In an era that is so visual, it would be nice to have a few more visual images to supplement the text. In the end, this book would not only serve as a good classroom text, but it would also serve as a good reference book for instructors teaching about Europe in the twentieth century.

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