

INFLAME



U-HIGH HISTORY JOURNAL

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Dear Reader--

Welcome to Vol. IV, Issue 2 of U-High's history and economics Journal, *InFlame*! Dedicated to publishing excellent student papers written in history and economics, Inflamm is published twice annually, once in the Winter and once in the Spring. This issue marks our second of the year, and the seventh overall for the journal. Both issues will be published online as well as a limited print release of the entirety of Vol. IV.

All U-High students are eligible to submit papers written during their high school career. Submissions are reviewed anonymously by our student board composed of eight members. Please see page 4 for submission guidelines — we look forward to reading your papers!

Happy Reading!

The Inflamm Board

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Mission Statement

We are a student-run journal dedicated to publication of work in history and economics. We wish to promote scholarly discussion by providing students a forum in which to publish and share work with their peers. Our editorial staff works directly with authors at each stage of the publication process. As a journal, we hold ourselves to a high standard of excellence. We value honest academic research and strong theses. We look for papers of a high quality that demonstrate a clear understanding of the material, draw meaningful conclusions, and present new and interesting ideas. Our goal is to foster a community that encourages thoughtful and creative writing in history and economics.

Criteria for Submission

All submissions must be written by a U-High student during their tenure at U-High for a history and economics class or independent study course. Papers must meet the following formatting and length criteria:

- Between 4 and 20 pages in length
- Include proper citations (footnotes/endnotes and works cited list) in Chicago Turabian format (guidelines [here](#))
- Include a cover page which contains: title, author name, class for which paper was written
- Double spaced
- 1 inch margins
- 12 pt., Times New Roman font
- Header with author last name, page number
- Submitted as in Microsoft Word or as a PDF
- Illustrations, maps and tables are welcome but should be properly cited

All submissions are reviewed anonymously by the student board. No decisions may be repealed, however all students are encouraged to revise and resubmit their papers if not accepted. An InFlame editor will provide general feedback with notification of rejection to guide revision. No special consideration is given to papers that have received external recognition. InFlame typically publishes between 3-5 papers an issue.

Submissions should be sent to inflammesubmissions@gmail.com. Questions about any of our policies should be directed to inflammejournal@gmail.com. See InFlame's [grading rubric](#).

Dvořák and Mahler: Two Great Old World Composers in America

By: Alexander Tyska

I. Introduction

In modern times, the United States of America possesses exemplary musical culture. However, at the turn of the twentieth century, this state of cultural excellence had only just been born. The American republic, just past its centennial, experienced an artistic awakening that would leave a permanent mark on western civilization. This was especially true in the case of what some would call *western art music*—or rather, in more typical terms, *classical* music. The young nation's overseas counterparts in Europe already boasted the most illustrious musical tradition in the history of the world.

The Austro-German lands alone had given the world an outpouring of genius unlike anything seen before or since: Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn, Richard Wagner, Johannes Brahms, Gustav Mahler, and Richard Strauss. But this genius was not confined to the age-old borders of the European continent. By the turn of the twentieth century, many of Europe's greatest composers and orchestral conductors had made their presence known in the New World. Antonín Dvořák, Bohemia's greatest composer, had lived in the United States from 1892–1895, where he would compose perhaps the best-loved symphony in history.¹ Gustav Mahler, the most profound symphonic mind western civilization would ever produce, was chief conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic from 1908–1910 and 1909–1911.²

These two men were very different people. Dvořák was a devout Catholic who loved his wife and children, and Mahler was a mysterious philosophical mind—a man who might have considered artistic talent akin to supernatural powers. As a result, the New World to which they came at this exciting time in American history had a distinctly different influence on each of them. Dvořák's time in America saw him in a starring role at the new National Conservatory of Music.³ It also saw him take a great interest in American folk melodies and the musical traditions from which they came. But for all his celebrity and position as a person of import, he was homesick—the thing he longed for most was his beloved *vlast*, or fatherland: Bohemia. Out of this came a font of inspiration, which led to the Czech master's most inspired creative period. Personal suffering and inspiration in a foreign land made Dvořák capable of producing his greatest works. But there was something more than just homesickness and folk melodies which must have inspired him: the American spirit.

¹John C. Tibbetts, "Dvořák: A Chronology" in *Dvořák in America, 1892–1895* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993), 14.

²Stephen McClatchie, trans., ed., *The Mahler Family Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2006), 389.

³Tibbetts, "A Dvořák Chronology," 14.

Mahler, however, was a very different person. After being pressured into resigning (thanks to opposition, sometimes anti-Semitic) from his dream job as director of the Vienna Court Opera, Mahler came to America to serve as music director of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic. At this time in Mahler's life, personal conflicts on many fronts reached their climaxes: health issues, in particular, had left him beaten and torn. His existence defined by tragedy, and this was especially true in the period of 1907–1911, the last five years of his life, four of which included extended stays in America at his New York posts. The most important area of consideration with regards to the expatriate Gustav Mahler, however, is the influence the the New World had on his compositional output. He was always heavily influenced by his surroundings, and the “brave new world” that Mahler encountered when he came to New York profoundly inspired what might well have been his greatest symphony.

It is possible to conclude that both of these composers were profoundly influenced by America, as is evident in their extraordinary creative efforts that were inspired, directly or indirectly, by the new nation. Even though the two of them experienced the intoxication of the New World in his own individual terms, it is undeniable that what happened when old world genius met the American continent was something extremely remarkable. Dvořák, in his homesickness, sympathized with the nation's immigrants and found solace and much to admire in the American nationalist spirit. He also found fascinating new material in the realm of American folk melodies. Mahler, on the other hand, was inspired solely by the American *zeitgeist*—that of a nation which was, above all things, young. In understanding this meeting of Dvořák and Mahler with a new culture on a new continent, it is possible to gain insight into their creative processes, and the different ways Europeans perceived the New World at the time.

II. *Z nového světa – From the New World*

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) is best remembered as the composer of a symphony subtitled “from the New World,” but to musicologists and his own countrymen, he is one of the greatest composers of the romantic nationalist epoch. His musical output, including ten operas, nine symphonies, fifteen string quartets and three concertos, is full of the warmth and flavor of the wonderful Bohemian folk music tradition, while at the same time adopting the venerable classical forms of Mozart and Beethoven.⁴ He gave Czechs a rallying point for their nationalist sentiments. In an era when nation states were coming into their own all across Europe, Bohemians, Moravians and Silesians longed for independence and the formation of a Czech nation free from the domination of the ruling Austrians. On a personal level, Dvořák's music is, for the most part, an expression of earnest, warm hearted devotion to the beauty of

⁴ “Antonín Dvořák,” list of complete works by genre, last modified 2016, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://www.antonin-dvorak.cz/en/works/complete-list-by-genre>.

Bohemia's natural wonders, to the values of the Roman Catholic Church, and most of all to a pure hearted but intellectually stimulated love of life. This is how Dvořák is surely best characterized. It is hard for him to come across as anything less than an honest, humble, noble and intelligent man—one who possessed an extraordinary gift for composition. He was a great musical genius, and it for this reason that he was wanted overseas in America.

Dvořák first came to America in September of 1892, in order to begin his tenure as the new director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. He had received an invitation the previous year to take up the post on a two year contract, and arrived in the country expecting to teach composition classes and rehearse the institution's orchestra.⁵ In accepting this offer, he decided to leave four of his children in Bohemia, while taking the rest of his family with him to America⁶. This would have profound effects later. In any case, Dvořák was very impressed with the United States from the time of his arrival. In a letter to Dr. Emil Kozánek, a friend from back home, he writes: "The view from "Sandy Hook" (harbor town) of New York with the magnificent Statue of Liberty (in whose head alone there is room for 60 persons and where banquets etc. are often held) is most impressive! And then the amount of shipping from all parts of the world?! As I say amazing. [...] The city itself is magnificent, lovely buildings and then, everywhere, the greatest cleanliness. It is dear here."⁷

The industrial might and visual splendor of New York impressed Dvořák greatly, as his excited, cheerful demeanor in this letter fully attests. He was in the New World now, and he was ready to take it by storm with his music. As the weeks and months passed, Dvořák conducted concerts of his own music, gave interviews, and taught classes at the conservatory. For the most part, things went well. Even though he writes to Dr. Kozánek that the newspapers are 'terribly fond of gossip', he also declares that he has 'not met with opposition' like in Vienna.⁸ Furthermore, Dvořák found plenty of time for recreation. According to Josef Jan Kovařík, one of the composer's secretaries, Dvořák missed his two favorite hobbies from back home: keeping pigeons, which he bred at Vysoká, his summer home, and watching steam locomotives of the railway in Prague. In New York, he was able to replace these by visiting the pigeons of Central Park, and, since there was no easy way to watch locomotives in the city, by watching the many steamships in the harbor.⁹ But in missing his beloved hobbies, Dvořák began to clearly betray signs of homesickness. By late 1892, he was increasingly affected by the fact that he dearly missed his four beloved children. In the end, no longer able to bear the distance, he sent for the children, who sailed

⁵Tibbetts, "A Dvořák Chronology," 14.

⁶Otakar Šourek, ed., Roberta Finlayson Samsour, trans., *Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences* (Prague: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1954), 147.

⁷Ibid., 151.

⁸Ibid, 156.

⁹Ibid, 155.

for America the following summer. They arrived in May of 1893, just in time to begin a Dvořák family expedition further into the heart of the New World.

The destination to which Dvořák and his family travelled in the summer of 1893 was the town of Spillville, Iowa. It was a town populated by Czech immigrants, and Dvořák hoped his homesickness would be helped by some time spent with fellow countrymen in the company of his family; in addition, he would be able to visit other sites of interest on the way there, including the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.¹⁰ By the time he reached Spillville, he could relax. In the previous months, while he both suffered terrible longing and homesickness and was at the same time gazing in wonder at the new country, Dvořák had plenty of opportunity to contemplate all that he had so far encountered in the new world: everything emotional, political, social and musical. The E minor symphony which he had finished before the journey to Spillville was an expression of Dvořák's feelings during this new experience.

Immediately before Dvořák's first American summer vacation he had finished the Symphony No. 9 in E minor, subtitled, in Czech, „Z nového světa“ – *From the New World*.¹¹ This was not the first or the last work by Dvořák to be associated with America. There was the festive *Te Deum* which was written for performance in New York while Dvořák was still in Prague, the tuneful String Quartet nicknamed “the American,” composed during his stay in Spillville, and the dramatic Cello Concerto written months later. While these works are also important in understanding the profound affect America had on the Czech master, the Symphony No. 9 is the most important.¹² It is perhaps his greatest composition, a work that in many ways surpasses all his previous symphonic efforts in originality, melodic character, and dramatic emotional power. Studying the symphony's orchestration, structure, and thematic arch reveal stark differences when compared with the earlier symphonies. Even the two previous symphonies, Nos. 7 and 8, undeniably great works, are emotionally tame by comparison. Seven is surely dark and brooding, with a dramatic conclusion and rustic scoring typical of Dvořák's idiom, but in a refined, Brahmsian manner so far as expression is concerned—even if the orchestration is still Czech sounding. Eight is cheerful and sunny, jam-packed full of rustic dance figures, but when heard, it sounds no more rhythmically adventurous than any of his earlier works.

From the outset, the Ninth Symphony is totally different creature altogether. The first movement begins calmly enough, with gentle but somewhat mysterious and unsettled utterances from the cellos and winds. All seems still and darkly meditative. Then, a downbeat on the lower strings, followed by a timpani figure and a two-note wind response, forces the drama into motion. It is here that a theme appears which will appear in all the remaining movements. More tempestuous music follows, with lyrical call-

¹⁰Ibid, 82.

¹¹John C. Tibbetts, “Dvořák's Spillville Summer: An American Pastoral,” in *Dvořák in America, 1892–1895*, ed. John C. Tibbetts (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993), 84.

¹²Tibbetts, “A Dvořák Chronology,” 14.

and-response interludes starting with a solo flute and ending with the full violin section. The movement eventually concludes in a powerful, strident manner with strings and timpani pounding away furiously.

The second movement, a *largo*, is very famous for its lyrical *cor anglais* melody. It is perhaps here that the most misunderstood interpretation of the symphony's thematic material originates. Initially, many interpreters and critics wrongly concluded that Dvořák had used authentic Indian and African American folk melodies in the composition of his symphony.¹³ He himself rejected these claims when they first appeared, as reflected in his statements during an interview printed in the New York Herald: 'It is merely the spirit of Negro and Indian melodies which I have tried to reproduce in my new symphony. I have not actually used any of the melodies.'¹⁴ This is an important distinction, as the presence of motifs quoted from any real folk melodies in question would have very much changed the overall scheme of the symphony. There is no question that Dvořák was fascinated and enamored with American folk music. He heard African-American spirituals sung by Harry T. Burleigh, and was so impressed that he declared that music from this background would be the foundation of a uniquely American school of music. Retrospectively, the subsequent mass success of jazz, blues and rock 'n' roll in the later twentieth century, make Dvořák seem prophetic.¹⁵

As far as Native American melodies were concerned, Dvořák stated that he had 'carefully studied a certain number of Indian melodies which a friend gave me, and was truly intrigued by their characteristic traits – imbued with their spirit, in fact.'¹⁶ As well as melodies themselves, Dvořák also told his interviewers in the New York *Herald* that the second movement was partially inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*, an epic poem about legendary Native Americans: "It [the *largo*] is in reality a study or a sketch for a longer work, either a cantata or an opera which I purpose [*sic*] writing, and which will be based on Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. I have long had the idea of someday utilizing that poem."¹⁷

Perhaps the generally nostalgic mood of the movement stems from the homesick Dvořák's sympathy with the feeling of longing reflected in the text of Longfellow's poem. Although the larger work based on the text never fully materialized, the reference to the poem's influence reflects the universal feelings evoked in listeners by the symphony.

¹³ "Antonín Dvořák," Symphony No. 9, last modified 2016, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.antonin-dvorak.cz/en/symphony9>.

¹⁴ "Antonín Dvořák," Symphony No. 9

¹⁵ "Dvořák American Heritage Association," Timeline of Dvořák in America, last modified 2015, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.dvoraknyc.org/dvorak-in-america/>

¹⁶ "Antonín Dvořák," Symphony No. 9

¹⁷ Michael Beckerman, "The Dance of Pau-Puk-Keewis, the Song of Chibiabos, and the Story of Iagoo: Reflections on Dvořák's "New World" Scherzo," in *Dvořák in America*, ed. John C. Tibbetts (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993), 211.

This Native American material, along with the spirituals sung by the eminently talented Burleigh, were what inspired Dvořák's unique melodic material for this movement and the rest of the symphony. It is certainly true, however, that it was by no means some sort of fantasia or capriccio on previously existing material, but rather a unique expressive device using melodic composition techniques which were new to Dvořák. This makes all the difference when analyzing the symphony. In any case, the second movement concludes itself peacefully, after music which is full of the most heartfelt expression.

The third movement scherzo, full of jagged cross-rhythms and exciting orchestral outbursts, is also said to show Native American influence. According to Dvořák's interview in the New York Herald from December 15, 1893, this third movement is also influenced by Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*: "The Scherzo of the symphony was suggested by the scene at the feast in Hiawatha where the Indians dance, and is also an essay I made in the direction of imparting the local color of Indian music to [my] music."¹⁸

Again, just as it is not right to see the previous two movements as a fantasia on American folk themes, it is not right to view this movement as simply a programmatic scene from *Hiawatha*, but rather as an integral part of the symphony's own, unique idiom. The music of the scherzo seems to become increasingly lively and frenzied, but finally concludes itself with the melody that also dominated the landscapes of the previous two movements.

The finale of Dvořák's Ninth Symphony begins thematically (after some rhythmic string figures) with one of the most famous melodies ever written, played by the brass section of the orchestra. It is a theme that is undeniably exciting, and is probably best described as being *heroic* in nature—that is to say, it seems to reflect resistance and struggle against ambiguous darkness. Here it is important to discuss the influence of the American national spirit on Dvořák's creative energies. This can be detected early on in a letter to a Mr. and Mrs. Hlávka of Prague from November 27, 1892: "There are things here which one must admire and others which I would rather not see, but what can you do, everywhere there is something—in general, it is altogether different here, and, if America goes on like this, she will surpass all the others. "Just imagine how the Americans work in the interests of art and for the people!"¹⁹

Dvořák was certainly enamored with the American way of life. He sensed in its people a freedom of expression and opinion which would greatly benefit them in the future: 'she will surpass all others'. There are other pieces of evidence that show Dvořák possessed great enthusiasm for the American spirit. For one thing, he had composed a work which he hoped would eventually become a new national anthem for the United States—a great expression of admiration for the young country.²⁰ Dvořák's anthem was

¹⁸Ibid, 211.

¹⁹ Šourek, *Antonín Dvořák*, 151.

²⁰"Antonín Dvořák" American Anthem, B. 411, last modified 2016, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://www.antonin-dvorak.cz/en/b411>.

never adopted, but there, nevertheless, other things that struck a chord with the composer. There was an undoubted spirit of optimism and happy, free living in America. This joy coexisted with a very different reality—the struggle of the poor immigrants. This was something which naturally resonated with him as a foreigner in the new country. While in Spillville, the village in Iowa, Dvořák wrote a letter to Kozánek which reflected on his fellow Czechs in the new world: “And in the morning when I went to church, my way took me past his [the town founder, Joseph Spielman’s] grave and strange thoughts always fill my mind at the sight of it as of the graves of many other Czech countrymen who sleep their last sleep here.”²¹

It seemed strange to a man who had lived his entire life in Bohemia that so many of his countrymen had died in America, so far away from their fatherland, struggling to make ends meet. ‘They sleep their last sleep *here*,’ rather than *there* in the Czech fatherland so beloved by its people. This observation, of course, was made after Dvořák had finished his new symphony, so the specific instance did not contribute to the emotional makeup of the work. However, the lifestyle of such people had already been observed by Dvořák in New York, where he visited the area around Mulberry Street known as Five Points—a place known for its extreme crime and poverty. It was appalling to his sensibilities, but at the same time, it left him inspired. He saw people living in these terrible conditions, and concluded that Americans had an unsurpassed energy to create new things for bettering their society: “The enthusiasm of most Americans for all things new is apparently without limit...Nothing better pleases the average American, especially the American youth, than to be able to say that this or that building, this or that new patent appliance is the finest or the grandest thing in the world...They are unwilling to stop at anything.”²²

Later on, in the same letter to Kozánek dating Dvořák’s time in Spillville, he returned to the issue of poverty and describes the plight of the poor Czechs who came to America, but not without affirming his belief in their ultimate success in the New World: “All the poorest of the poor, and after great hardships and struggle they are very well off here. I liked to go among the people and they, too, were all fond of me, and especially the grandmas and granddads were pleased when I played “God before Thy Majesty” and “A Thousand Times we greet Thee”. ”²³

Even the side of America which he said he would ‘rather not see’ found its way into Dvořák’s New World experience, thanks to the natural curiosity that brought him to the country in the first place, and which enticed him to explore the poorer neighborhoods of New York. It is thus seems very fitting that the bitter, sometimes even militaristic struggle painted so brilliantly in the last movement of the symphony is more than a simple vehicle for Dvořák’s new, pentatonic, Native American, and African

²¹Tibbets, “Dvořák’s Spillville Summer,” 86.

²²John C. Tibbetts, “Dvořák’s New York: An American Street Scene,” in *Dvořák in America*, ed. John C. Tibbetts (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993), 41–43.

²³Šourek, *Antonín Dvořák*, 166.

American inspired melodies. It is an expression of the struggle these groups faced, and of the struggles faced by all humans. But, because Dvořák was no pessimist, it ends in an atmosphere which is peaceful and calm—an expression of hope for redemption for Dvořák’s own longing for his people and country, and for all those who toiled to live in their new American nation. Dvořák had never composed a heroic finale like this before coming to America, and it is likely that this New World spirit may well have inspired him to choose that creative path. This path is what made this brilliant symphony rapturously received upon its premiere.²⁴

Jeanette Thurber, a highly influential woman in New York high culture, had founded the National Conservatory and had invited Dvořák to come and teach there. She, along with her colleagues, the conductor-composer Anton Seidl and the critic Henry Krehbiel believed it would be necessary to foster a uniquely American school of music, that respected the influences of Native American and African American folk melodies.²⁵ While these ideas were indeed important to creating a distinctly American musical idiom, Dvořák did something entirely different and more universal. His work’s universality came from empathetically mirroring both his own struggle and that of oppressed groups in America. The elevated the symphony beyond the level of a simple fantasia on American-inspired themes. On a musical level, Symphony No. 9 is structurally masterful, yet is without a hint of classical restraint. It is a mature, expressive work, with advanced rhythms, brilliant melodies stemming from American inspiration, and dazzling orchestration. It was in this way that a new nation’s culture, musical idioms, and nationalist spirit inspired a great composer from overseas to reach his artistic pinnacle. We can only be grateful that Dvořák accepted the post at the conservatory. Strange though it may sound, his nostalgia and homesickness were much of what made this symphony so great. Otherwise, he might not have produced such great works of genius. Indeed, his *American* period of composition may never have happened at all, were it not for the joys and sorrows he encountered in the New World.

III. *Das Lied von der Erde* – “The Song of the Earth”

Gustav Mahler, like his contemporary Antonín Dvořák, is best remembered today as a great symphonic composer. Indeed, the core of Mahler’s compositional output is a cycle of eleven symphonies, with only forty-three songs and one cantata making up the remainder of his life's work. Also like Dvořák, his music possesses a rustic, folk-like character and is indebted to more traditional classical forms. But Mahler is otherwise a drastically different composer. Born in the Bohemian village of Kalischt (now

²⁴ Joseph Horowitz, “Dvořák in the New World: A Concentrated Moment,” in *Dvořák and His World*, ed. Michael Beckerman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 95–96.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 93–94

called Kalište) to German speaking Jewish parents, Mahler's identity was a complex affair²⁶. He describes it well himself: "Thrice homeless, as a native of Bohemia in Austria, as an Austrian among Germans and as a Jew throughout the world. Everywhere an intruder, never welcomed."²⁷

From here, it can be established that Mahler's music has no tie to one specific national tradition. He was not at all part of the romantic nationalist epoch, and as a result, his music benefits from an innate ability to transcend time and place. He loved nature, which magnificently presented itself in his rural Austro-German retreats, all of which contained "composing huts".²⁸ But his love of nature was not part of any national tradition, and its routes were far more primeval than Dvořák's similar affection. He was a student of idealist philosophy, and he frequently pursued the works of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche with interest.²⁹ ³⁰ Religion was something in which he never had faith, even though he was a student of theology and used the metaphors of Christianity in many of his symphonies, particularly Nos. 2 and 8—both of which directly deal with Christian themes of resurrection and divine redemption. He was born a Jew, but never had any interest in pursuing that faith later in life. His pragmatic decision to convert to Roman Catholicism in order to take up the directorship of the Vienna Court Opera in 1897 (Jews were not allowed to hold the post) further reflects his attitude towards the subject.³¹ Other elements in Mahler's musical idiom include irony, the issue of fate, heroism, and questions about death. All these questions were on Mahler's mind when he came to America, for the very reason that many of them had brutally presented themselves in his life just before he arrived.

Mahler arrived in New York in late 1907 to prepare for the next year's operatic season, where he was to make his debut as music director of the Metropolitan Opera.³² He had taken up this position after resigning from his previous job as director of the Vienna Court Opera, a post which he had held since 1897. 1907 was a hard year for Mahler, since on top of this incident, it was also then that his daughter, Maria Anna had died after a terrible illness. Shortly thereafter, he was diagnosed with a dangerous heart condition.³³ His first impression of the city and the new country were, as a result, somewhat mixed. In an early 1908 letter to his sister Justine and her husband, the violinist Arnold Rosé, he says that: "I have nothing essential to report. Life goes along monotonously as never before. I endeavor to earn my salary

²⁶Jens Malte Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Yale University Press, 2011), 12.

²⁷Jonathan Carr, *Mahler: A Biography* (Woodstock and New York, The Overlook Press, 1997), 7.

²⁸Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 228.

²⁹"Arthur Schopenhauer," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, last modified 2011, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/#8>

³⁰Carr, *Mahler*, 26.

³¹Ibid, 81.

³²Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 568–570.

³³McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 311.

with the least amount of work possible, and have been counting the days until I can board ship. But the country is incredibly interesting, and will provide lots to talk about.”³⁴

At first, Mahler didn't seem too excited about being in America. This is understandable, considering the personal tragedies he had endured the previous year. Nevertheless, things had looked up a bit by the time Mahler wrote this letter. The month before, on January 1, 1908 he had made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, conducting Wagner's great music drama *Tristan und Isolde*. Years later, one Samuel Chotzinoff, who had been a young music lover and an attendee of the performance, recounted his experience:

Mahler came out hurriedly and climbed swiftly into the conductor's chair. His profile was sharp and arresting. He looked and behaved quite unlike Hertz [another conductor at the Met around the same time]. His gestures were economical and precise. The prelude sounded different. It was not as lush as with Hertz. There were fewer retards and accelerations. There was a severity about this interpretation, that, strangely enough, heightened both its sensuousness and its suspense. [...] He was 'riding' the orchestra with the calculated sureness of a master trainer, at one moment curbing it to a crafty balance between it and the voice on stage, at another giving it its head as it raced along. [...] Now at last I knew how Wagner should sound.³⁵

Even though some critics were less favorable about Mahler's performance, Chotzinoff gives a good, objective description of his conducting style, and leaves the reader with the impression he truly was a “podium wizard”.³⁶ Mahler would give other operatic performances with similarly impressive results, and all personal feelings aside, the 1908 season could have been worse. Even though Mahler scholarship typically decries his time in America as a serious failure, this is far from being entirely true, and Mahler found his fair share of success in the New World, conflict and all³⁷. It is also important to note that Mahler was not running away to America after being forced to leave his Vienna post, but that he accepted his jobs at the Metropolitan Opera and shortly thereafter the New York Philharmonic as part of his long held consideration for a New World position.^{38 39}

³⁴Ibid, 390.

³⁵Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 571.

³⁶Ibid, 571.

³⁷Carr, *Mahler*, 156–158.

³⁸Ibid, 158.

³⁹Calomino, Salvatore. “Gustav Mahler: A Second Vienna?” Lecture, Newberry Library Colloquium, Chicago, January 13, 2016.

As Mahler spent more time in New York, his comments about the new country became more positive. His admiration for the American way of life was in many ways quite similar to Dvořák's. But his writing betrays a certain skepticism which is absent from the older Czech master's descriptions of the country. From a letter to the set designer Alfred Roller of January 20, 1908:

The people here are tremendously unspoilt—all the crudeness and ignorance are *teething troubles*. *Spite* and hypocrisy are found only among our dear immigrant compatriots. Here the dollar *does not reign supreme*—it's merely easy to earn. Only one thing is respected here: *ability* and *drive*!⁴⁰

His comments about 'our dear immigrant compatriots' are surely far from complementary. But since Mahler himself acknowledged that he is amongst the city's immigrant community, this is far from a xenophobic generalization. Nonetheless, he extolls the virtues of American even more in a letter to the Secessionist painter Carl Moll:

We must chat about America a great deal during the summer. I now regard it as an awkward youth, whose incivilities one gladly overlooks as excesses of a driving life-force. – Whether the attractive youngster may turn into a disgusting philistine later on, I will leave untouched. [...] Furthermore, we especially get to know everything from the most pleasant side, which is what people instinctively show the distinguished foreigner. – To spend a few weeks each year is so extraordinarily exuberant and refreshing for a European. – Like all young peoples, the Americans are exceptionally grateful (regrettably, they gulp everything down, like children, with uncritical enjoyment – that is to say, strictly speaking there are consumers here for everything, the good as well as the bad). [...] The dregs of our society, who ascribe all misfortunes, which arise from their own incompetence and indolence, to "circumstance", and who, at the same time, make it more difficult for those who come after by causing the mistrust of foreigners to increase more and more. [...] A truly native American is a high-minded and capable person.⁴¹

Mahler's letter to Moll suggests that he finds America to be a refreshing change of pace from the European scene. His skepticism continues in this letter, however, when he refers to the idea of America losing its freshness and youthful exuberance with age. The idea of youth, and in conjunction with it the

⁴⁰Zoltan Roman, *Gustav Mahler's American Years, 1907–1911: A Documentary History* (Stuyvesant, New York, Pendragon Press), 62–63.

⁴¹Roman, *Mahler's American Years*, 82–83.

loss of childhood innocence was an idea which thoroughly fascinated Mahler. It was something he had contemplated since his early days as a composer. The First Symphony dealt with the unhappy, unrequited love which he had felt for the singer Johanna Richter—it was the symphonic embodiment of his emotional struggles as a lonely young man.⁴² Mahler was interested in this facet of human existence not just because of his own personal struggles as a youth, but also because of traumatic experiences in early childhood. Eight of Mahler's siblings died young, so death was an ever-present guest in his childhood home. This would influence the composer's worldview in general, full of existential questions about mortality, just as it would inspire many of his compositions. Most significantly, there is the Fourth Symphony, which in its last movement features a song about a child's vision of heaven, and the *Kindertotenlieder*—"Songs on the Death of Children", which deal directly with the raw nerves of Mahler's tragic early life. *Kindertotenlieder* also dealt with the fear Mahler harbored about the potential loss of his own children. A fear which was horrendously realized in 1907, when his daughter Maria Anna died.

Just as ideas about youth, loss of innocence and mortality influenced Mahler's composition, the concept of America's exuberant youth played an important role in his creative and intellectual outlook during the years 1907–1911. The uncertainty of America's future, and in similar terms, his own future was something Mahler meditated on while he stayed in the New World. Around this time, his letters begin to more frequently discuss ideas about old age. From around February of 1908 onwards, the composer frequently signs himself as 'your old Gustav' or 'your old (unfortunately) Gustav'.^{43 44} At the age of forty-eight, he wasn't, strictly speaking, an old man. But he had seen life flash before his eyes with the death of his daughter, and with the heart condition diagnosis. The lived, concrete experience of seeing the brilliant, exuberant youth of the United States, made the theme of youth in Mahler's music more than just nostalgia for the past. It was a real, physical manifestation that readily intensified his preoccupation with death.

His compositions betray similar sentiments. Here it is important to take note that Mahler did not spend much time composing in America. His habit of composition, which built itself around his day-job as conductor, largely meant that most of his work was done over the summer at one of his composing huts when the opera and concert seasons were over. During the summer of 1908, Mahler returned overseas, continued this pattern, and composed *Das Lied von der Erde*, in English, *The Song of the Earth*. He titled the work a "symphony for tenor, contralto (or baritone) and large orchestra" based on six German translations of ancient Chinese poetry.⁴⁵ The work deals with themes such as youth, misery, the passage

⁴²Carr, *Mahler*, 38–47

⁴³McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 311, 390, 395, 397.

⁴⁴Roman, *Mahler's American Years*, 83.

⁴⁵Egon Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and His Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1978), 336.

of time as shown in the seasons, death and eternity. Perhaps most interestingly, this symphony contains three, vivid, extremely exuberant songs about youth, which contrast immediately with songs about despair and death. These three songs, called “Of Youth”, “Of Beauty” and “The Drunken One in Spring”, the third, fourth and fifth movements of the symphony, seem to express the sort of emotional immediacy that Mahler experienced in America. It is not as in earlier works, where youth is experienced in a nostalgic, distant tone. Correspondingly, the experiences of despair, death and tragic contemplation in the first, second and sixth songs are all the more real and intense.

Because Mahler’s work routine made it so he was only a “part-time” composer, because the summer months are only so long, and because Mahler’s symphonies are so lengthy, detailed, and structurally complete works, it follows that during the rest of the year he was forming ideas for what to compose. That way, when he went away to the country for the summer, he would be ready to begin in earnest. In nearly every case, the composition of a symphony took him more than one summer, but *Das Lied von der Erde* was largely finished after only a single spell in the summer of 1908. This is really quite a feat, considering the fact that the work contains a vocal and orchestral line, and that its use of orchestration and orchestral color is extremely advanced, even for Mahler’s always avant-garde, late romantic style. The speed with which he worked on this piece seems to correspond with the emotional intensity of his American experience. *Das Lied von der Erde* is stylistically very different from Mahler’s earlier works, but its musical themes cannot be connected in any direct way to America in the manner that, say, Dvořák’s Ninth Symphony can. However, Mahler’s impression of the youthful character of America, which made even him more reflective than he had been in the past, was what spurred him to write this work in such a personally intense expressive manner. As a result, *Das Lied von der Erde* owes a great debt to Mahler’s time in on the other side of the Atlantic.

IV. Conclusion

Dvořák, in the company of his wife and eldest son, set sail for Europe and his Czech fatherland in April 1895. Shortly thereafter, he sent a letter to Jeanette Thurber, the founder of the National Conservatory, and offered his resignation.⁴⁶ Even though the stimulations of the exciting new country, with its exotic melodies, rhythms and naturalistic splendor, had been greatly interesting to him, he decided to remain in Bohemia, where he felt most at home. The *New World* was Dvořák’s last symphony, although he would continue composing operas and tone-poems until his death in 1904⁴⁷. He died much as he had lived: a simple, wise, kind and peaceful man. His music, especially the last three symphonies, and

⁴⁶Tibbetts, “A Dvořák Chronology,” 19.

⁴⁷“Antonín Dvořák,” Dvořák’s Life, last modified 2016, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.antonin-dvorak.cz/en/life>.

No. 9 in particular, remain popular with audiences and respected by the musicological community to this day, although the rest of his work is far less appreciated.

Mahler left the Metropolitan Opera in 1909 in order to focus on his position at the New York Philharmonic, where he became music director and lead the orchestra for two seasons⁴⁸. He also continued composing after *Das Lied von der Erde*, his Ninth Symphony being completed in 1910 in New York (possibly the only work he did overseas) after most of the composing was done in the summer of the previous year. The summer of 1910 was a busy time, largely because it saw the premiere of his massive Eighth Symphony in Munich—the most successful of his life.⁴⁹ It was then that he also started work on his tenth and final symphony, which he never completed.⁵⁰ After conducting his last ever concert in New York, Mahler returned to Vienna in May 1911.⁵¹ A week after his arrival, he died of his heart condition, aged only fifty.⁵² His life had its fair share of tragedy, but Mahler's suffering was redeemed by the towering, heroic expression of love and defiance found in his music. That music experienced relative neglect until the 1960s, when it was revived in the so-called "Mahler renaissance". Now, it is as respected and beloved as that of Mozart or Beethoven.

What these two undeniably ingenious musical minds experienced in America was remarkable, but in very different ways. Dvořák felt a genuine rapport with the nation's struggling immigrants and found wonderful things in the folk music traditions of Native Americans and African Americans, as well as being inspired by his own longings for his home country. From these experiences and feelings, Dvořák found the thematic and emotional building blocks to create the masterpieces of his American period. The American String Quartet, the Cello Concerto, and, of course, most importantly of all, the New World Symphony. His American experience was one dominated by the cultural influence of the country he was visiting, and by the emotions this stirred in him for his own homeland.

Mahler, on the other hand, was hardly sympathetic to the immigrants in New York, had no interest in incorporating American folk melodies into his own music, and felt no need to musically address any feelings of homesickness he might have had. Instead, Mahler took his highest inspiration from the vigor and youthfulness of the American nation—the country's *zeitgeist* in the early twentieth century. He saw in it, realized in a living form before his very eyes, what it had been to be a youth, with all the promise, potential and joy of life in the human world to look forward too. With this newly intensified perspective, Mahler was able to compose *Das Lied von der Erde*, a universal masterwork for

⁴⁸Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 590–592.

⁴⁹Roman, *Mahler's American Years*, 260.

⁵⁰Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and his Music*, 358

⁵¹Carr, *Mahler*, 220.

⁵²Ibid, 220.

the ages, which is perhaps the greatest meditation on the passage of time, morality, and the eternity of nature's renewal ever produced by an artist.

The American nation profoundly influenced these two great European composers, in profoundly different ways. This stands as proof not only of their genius, but of the promise and excitement in the New World as it matured into the great cultural center that it is today.

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Pullman: the Man, the Town, the Strike

By: Benjamin Wittenbrink

The role of the U.S. government in labor strikes has always been a contentious issue. It tries to strike a balance between protecting workers' rights and allowing – and perhaps even promoting – unionization, as advocated for by labor activists and progressives, and supporting moneyed corporate interests in quashing labor strife, as industrialists and the American elite of the Nineteenth Century had hoped. Still others, namely free-market conservatives and capitalists, call for the government to remain wholly neutral in disputes, intervening only when absolutely necessary. Questions arise, though, as to whether the latter is even possible. American public policy prior to 1894 and George M. Pullman would certainly dictate that the government support corporate and commercial interests. Yet, the American Railway Union (ARU), formed in 1893 and championed by Eugene V. Debs vowed to push for vast labor reform.

One of the first paternalistic company towns in the United States, Pullman was founded in 1881 and constructed by George Pullman to house the employees of his railroad car company, Pullman Palace Car Company (PPCC). The Panic of 1893 resulted in a decreased demand for railroad cars and continental travel, and so Pullman cut worker wages, choosing to pay his shareholders instead. In response, the ARU initiated the Pullman Strike of 1894. Originally limited to the city of Pullman, the strike capitalized on the widespread dissatisfaction that laborers' felt toward their employers, spreading throughout the country. Although an immediate failure for the workers residing in Pullman, the strike ultimately advanced the position of labor in the United States. The strike led to the demise of "government by injunction," thereby restricting federal intervention in dismantling labor strikes and disputes, and brought forth widespread labor reform, including the establishment and the strengthening of labor unions.

A man of humble beginnings, George Mortimer Pullman, was born in Brockton, New York on March 3, 1831 to Emily Caroline and James L. Pullman, a farmer turned carpenter.⁵³ In 1845, George stayed behind when his parents moved to Albion, New York. At the age of fourteen, Pullman dropped out of school and began to work with Emily's uncle, John H. Minton, and Edwin Buck at the Minton & Buck General Store in Brockton.⁵⁴ Three years later in 1848, Pullman joined his parents in Albion. He worked as a carpenter alongside his father until his father's death, after which Pullman managed the family's cabinetmaking business. Shortly thereafter, Pullman contracted with the State of New York to relocate

⁵³ "George Mortimer Pullman," last modified February 2016. <http://www.pullman-museum.org/theMan>.

⁵⁴ "George M. Pullman," last modified August 1, 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/biography/George-M-Pullman>.

twenty buildings, mostly warehouses, during the First Enlargement of the Erie Canal. Pullman learned the method of shifting buildings to newly built foundations, which proved valuable a couple years after his arrival to Chicago⁵⁵ when he answered an advertisement to help control flooding and construct a modern sewer system.

Chicago was a “boom town,” its population expanding rapidly – according to the Censuses in each decade there were 29,963 people in 1850 (a 570% increase from the 4,470 people in 1840) and 112,172 people in 1860 (a 274% from 1850) – forcing the hasty construction of buildings and housing. However, this rapid construction proved problematic, as the low-lying bog beneath the city required that all of the buildings in central Chicago be moved to a higher grade to maintain an effective sewer system.⁵⁶ Pullman’s development of an elaborate set of jacks allowed him to raise the buildings and construct their new foundations. In 1861, Ely, Smith, & Pullman, the partnership Pullman formed while in Chicago, raised the Tremont House Hotel, a six-story brick house, while its guests remained inside.⁵⁷

This marked the beginning of Pullman’s prospering career as an engineer and industrialist. As legend has it, after an uncomfortable overnight train ride from Buffalo to Westfield, New York, Pullman had an epiphany. Given the rapid expansion of the American railroad system, Pullman recognized the vast market potential for comfortable cars and efficient passenger services.⁵⁸ In 1857, before moving to Chicago, Pullman initiated a partnership with former New York State Senator Benjamin C. Field to create several sleeper cars. Securing a contract from the Chicago, Alton, and St. Louis Railroad, Pullman and Field began to revolutionize railroad travel.⁵⁹ In 1859, the luxurious sleeper cars received reviews calling them the most extravagant way to travel. Despite the positive publicity, Field was uninterested in rail cars, caring for politics instead, and thus, assigned his company interests to Pullman in exchange for future loans.

The Civil War (1861-1865) proved an obstacle for Pullman’s business enterprise. Nonetheless, like many wealthy men of the time, Pullman hired a replacement to fulfill his service and continued work. Upon his arrival in Chicago, Pullman and Field financed and constructed two additional sleeper cars, the *Springfield* and the *Pioneer*. Completed in 1865, the *Pioneer* cost roughly \$20,000 and garnered national attention, featuring folding upper berths, seat cushions capable of expanding to reveal a lower berth, red carpeting, hand-finished woodwork, and silver-trimmed coal lamps.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Joseph Husband, *The Story of the Pullman Car* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1917).

⁵⁶ “George Mortimer Pullman.”

⁵⁷ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 22, 1861.

⁵⁸ Philip Dray. *There is Power in a Union* (New York: Doubleday, 2010).

⁵⁹ “George Mortimer Pullman.”

⁶⁰ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

The *Pioneer's* luxuries came at a cost. The *Pioneer* was cumbersome and impractical, as the immense height and width necessary for the plush car prohibited its use on existing tracks. Moreover, the railroad companies remained skeptical as to whether the public was willing to pay the high cost of such luxury transportation. Skepticism faded, however, with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865. The "Lonesome Train" transported Lincoln's body to Springfield for his burial. The chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, Colonel James H. Bowen, chose the *Pioneer* to accompany the funeral cortège and accommodate the Lincoln family.⁶¹ Pullman's inclusion of the *Pioneer* in the cortège marked an immeasurable publicity boom for the company.⁶² Pullman's sleepers became prototypical, and within months, the railways adjusted their lines to accommodate the larger Pullman cars.⁶³

As Pullman continued to produce his signature sleeper cars, his renown and personal wealth grew immensely. Pullman acquired prominent investors, including industrialist Andrew Carnegie. In January of 1867, Benjamin Field relinquished his ownership and dissolved the partnership, focusing instead on his political ambitions. The company became known as the Pullman Palace Car Company (PPCC), and was approved by the Illinois Legislature on February 22, 1867. The Board of Directors of the company elected Pullman as President and General Manager. Pullman's brother, Albert Benton, managed the manufacturing of the cars while he concentrated on the marketing of the sleeper car services.⁶⁴

The following years marked the construction of the *President* (1867) and the *Delmonico* (1868). While Pullman had always manufactured lavish sleeper cars, the *President* and the *Delmonico* offered a new and innovative means of transportation. The *President* was, in essence, a hotel on wheels; it incorporated an attached kitchen and a dining car into the already extravagant two-story sleeper cars. The subsequent sleeper car, the *Delmonico*, contained a restaurant serving fine-cuisine, and it hired recently freed and displaced former slaves to serve as porters, waiters, chambermaids, entertainers, and valets.⁶⁵

By 1870, with the PPCC's continuous growth, Pullman bought the Detroit Car and Manufacturing Company (DCMC), originally established in 1853 by Dr. George B. Russel.⁶⁶ Pullman used the industrial hub of Detroit to consolidate all of his manufacturing operations into one facility, including the construction of his five car makes: hotel cars, parlor cars, reclining room cars, sleepers, and diners. Pullman was able to maintain such elegant and opulent cars and his own high standards for quality

⁶¹ "George Mortimer Pullman."

⁶² Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁶³ Husband, *The Story of the Pullman Car*.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Larry Tye, *Rising from the Rails: Pullman porters and the making of the Black middle class* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

⁶⁶ "Detroit Car & Manufacturing Company," accessed February 15, 2016, <http://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/detroit-car-manufacturing-company>.

and cleanliness because of his business model. Rather than selling his cars, Pullman leased his cars to the railroads, retaining ownership and operating the sleeping cars himself.⁶⁷

Yet, the DCMC facility proved too small. Pullman's cars and services had become so popular that he was forced to expand and diversify his manufacturing plant again. Pullman's groundbreaking solution to accommodate the production demands while still maintaining a close watch over all aspects of his business was to establish one of the first company towns in the United States alongside the new factory, purchasing 4,000 acres of land twelve miles south of Chicago for \$800,000 in 1880.⁶⁸ Although the land and its surroundings were mostly marsh and difficult to access, Pullman's eponymous town was situated near Lake Calumet and on the Illinois Central Railroad, connecting it to Chicago. Hiring Solon Spencer Beman to design the town and factory, Pullman sought to establish housing, shopping areas, churches, theaters, parks, a hotel, and a library.⁶⁹

Pullman's motivation to establish his company town was largely a consequence of the upheaval caused by the 1877 Railroad Strikes, and was inspired by a novel he had read on a transatlantic voyage, *Put Yourself in His Place* by Charles Reade. In Reade's novel, an inventor applies scientific thought to his factories, increasing profits while bettering working conditions and hours – two factors often believed to be mutually exclusive at the time. The notion that humane reforms and efficient business principles could act in tandem appealed to Pullman.⁷⁰ Historian Stanley Buder writes, "Seeing nothing wrong in a society oriented toward the profit motive, his intention was only to apply principles of business efficiency to meet the needs of his own workers."⁷¹ Thus, the quality of life in Pullman for its workers was uncommonly good, as Pullman believed a healthy and loyal work force would ultimately be more productive, less likely to unionize, and less likely to complain if wages were lower than those paid by its competitors.⁷²

Additionally, the Model Tenement Movement, widespread during the Gilded Age and championed by Alfred T. White, had piqued Pullman's interest. White was convinced that the liberation of urban workers from predatory landlords would alleviate many of the social hardships rampant in poverty and afflicting the workers. Clean and affordable housing would, according to White, stabilize the lives of workers and instill virtues of thrift, diminish their capacity to riot against their employers, and

⁶⁷ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "George Mortimer Pullman."

⁷⁰ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁷¹ Stanley Buder, *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁷² Jonathan Bassett, 1997, "The Pullman Strike of 1894," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 11 (2): 34–41, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25163135>.

protect the interests of industrialists.⁷³ In essence, Pullman envisioned a model community that improved the social standing and behavior of its workers while simultaneously furthering the capitalist, industrialist system.⁷⁴

On January 1, 1881, the first permanent residents of Pullman's paternalistic utopia, the Benson family, arrived. By April, all of the Pullman car shops were operating, and by May, the town's population reached 350. The town was finally completed in 1884, with a population of 9,000. Although housing in Pullman was more expensive than other parts of Chicago, with the monthly rent for a three-room apartment averaging about eight dollars, housing quality was far superior to that available to workers elsewhere, including indoor toilet facilities, running water, effective heating, private yards, and daily garbage collection –advantages unheard of in most working class neighborhoods. In addition to the three-room apartments, more spacious housing was offered, including five-room houses with a basement, bathroom, and water faucets; and even larger housing for company officers.⁷⁵

Pullman ruled and managed the town with a rigid and extreme paternalism. Pullman's brand of paternalism entailed keeping close watch over the town's affairs, dominating all municipal functions, controlling town officials, and restricting the behavior of renters – Pullman never sold his houses, instead choosing to lease them to retain complete control, another aspect of his authoritarian approach. A conservative and firm supporter of the Republican Party, Pullman's control extended to the political sphere, frequently coercing employees to vote for candidates approved by the company, exemplified by the overwhelming vote of the town against annexation to Chicago in 1889. Pullman's vehement opposition to annexation to the Democrat-controlled Chicago, and to the sale of land stemmed from his ideological conservatism and necessity for complete domination.⁷⁶

The basis of the Pullman town was inherently commercial, with substantial profits coming from the sale of utilities. Although gas was sold for \$1.25 per thousand cubic feet in Chicago, Pullman sold gas for \$2.25, with the average cost of production estimated at only 33 cents. Additionally, the company sold water at over twice the market price, and rent in Pullman was 25% more than a similarly sized

⁷³ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁷⁴ Jane Eva Baxter, 2012, "The Paradox of a Capitalist Utopia: Visionary Ideals and Lived Experience in the Pullman Community 1880—1900," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 16 (4): 651-65, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23355812>.

⁷⁵ George Mortimer Pullman."

⁷⁶ Almont Lindsey, 1939, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike," *The American Historical Review* 44 (2): 272-89, doi:10.2307/1839019.

accommodation in Chicago, although these city lodgings didn't include aesthetic and sanitary features as were standard in Pullman. A library membership in Pullman cost residents three dollars.⁷⁷

For a decade, the town of Pullman was quite successful. The town attracted over 10,000 tourists during the World's Columbian Exposition in May of 1893, peaking at 12,500 residents in early 1893; however, the Panic of 1893 severely obstructed production at the factory. Financial optimism and irrational exuberance were largely the root cause of the Panic: railroad overbuilding and precarious railroad financing ignited a series of bank failures, which in turn unleashed the serious economic depression lasting from May to November. The Panic of 1893 would remain the worst depression the United States had ever experienced until the Great Depression (1929-1939).⁷⁸

The Panic and the consequent collapse of the market for railroad cars and services caused the PPCC to suffer. As a result, by the late summer of 1893, Pullman and his company laid off more than three thousand workers. In the spring of 1894, the company managed to reemploy two thousand of those laid off workers, albeit at lower pay. Wage reductions averaged between 25 and 33 percent, and in the most extreme cases 50 percent, with pay falling from \$3 to \$1.50 for carpet-cutters, \$2.25 to \$1.40 for mattress-makers, and \$1.25 to \$0.79 for seat-makers.⁷⁹ Yet the decline in wages was less significant to the impending strike than was Pullman's aversion to charity, as he maintained that the workers continue to pay the competitive housing rent despite their lowered wages. The workers were simply unable to afford this rent, for it was not nearly proportionate to their earnings.

Pullman had always deducted the cost of heating, water, and other utilities from the workers' wages. During the economic downturn he continued to do so, reducing their paychecks to pennies. Pullman's staunch conservatism and firm belief of labor as a commodity – and thus that the conditions of the labor market must govern the wage scale – led to his continuous fight against labor unions and his slashing of wages in response to the poor economy, even as his company's earnings remained strong. Although Pullman certainly maintained an interest in the wellbeing of his workers, he set aside his humanitarian worries in order to protect his commercial enterprise and economic fortunes. In essence, Pullman used his ideological viewpoints as a basis to justify the further exploitation of his workers for his personal economic and commercial gain.

Pullman's obstinacy in maintaining his position was best exemplified in 1893 when the company possessed assets worth \$62,000,000, half of which were undivided profits. After the dividends to the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "The Panic of 1893," accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/HIST312-10.1.2-Panic-of-1893.pdf>

⁷⁹ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

stockholders were paid, a surplus of \$4,000,000 remained, and even in 1894, the company earned enough to compensate its shareholders and maintain the profit from the previous year. Nevertheless, Pullman refused to use the company surplus to maintain wages at their original values and alleviate the suffering of his employees.⁸⁰ Reports that the company remained lucrative, and that Pullman and his top executives maintained their salaries while workers wages were slashed, agitated workers and fueled their dissent.⁸¹ In an effort to maintain his authoritarian control, Pullman hired spies to keep him abreast of residents' activities and foremen to ensure the rules were obeyed. Disgruntled workers, prevented from meeting inside the town limits by Pullman's spies, began to meet outside the town to discuss their predicament

On May 7 of 1894, the Pullman workers organized a meeting with PPCC Vice President Thomas H. Wickes, who subsequently requested that they submit their grievances in writing and return in two days' time to attend a meeting with Pullman. Pullman explained that wages had been cut due to the lack of car orders, and that the company was attempting to manage the amount of work to limit layoffs, agreeing to several low-bid work contracts. In fact, Pullman even offered to let workers inspect the company's financial records, and promised that workers would not be punished for their written grievances. Coincidentally – or at least there is no record of the Pullman Company specifically targeting these individuals⁸² – three of the men who had shared their complaints with Pullman and Wickes were let go the following day. Regardless of the intent behind the three dismissals, it circulated around the Pullman town that they had been discharged for speaking up, and that Pullman had gone back on his word. Two days later on May 11, the Pullman workers, “fed up with the sleeping car magnate's greed, obstinacy, and apparent double-dealing, set their tools down,” and went on strike.⁸³

On June 12, 1894, a month after the strike began, the American Railway Union's (ARU) first annual convention at Chicago's Uhlich's Hall was held, where Pullman workers congregated to request the union's help.⁸⁴ Eugene Debs had formed the ARU in response to the Panic of 1893 the previous year. Prior to its establishment, railroad unions were small, local organizations with minimal power. The ARU was organized in order to consolidate these unions and establish a united front of workers, free of the petty jealousies that plagued the efficiency of the previous unions. Due to the growth and concentration of the railroads, within a year the ARU had incorporated 465 local chapters and 150,000 members.⁸⁵ The ARU had championed the cause of railroad workers against the Great Northern Railroad in 1893,

⁸⁰ Lindsey, “Paternalism and the Pullman Strike,” 272-89.

⁸¹ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ “The Debs Case: Labor, Capital, and the Federal Courts of the 1890s,” accessed February 17, 2016, http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf/page/tu_debs_bio_aru.html.

negotiating with James T. Hill, the owner of the Great Northern Railroad, until he agreed to arbitration, eventually leading to the victory of the workers.

Upon hearing the Pullman workers' complaints, Debs left the convention to tour the Pullman village. Debs was distraught with the state of affairs in Pullman: "The paternalism of Pullman is the same as the self-interest of a slaveholder in his human chattels. You are striking to avert slavery and degradation."⁸⁶ The ARU appealed to Pullman, requesting that he submit the company's issues with the employees to arbitration. Pullman and his company refused. Historian Philip Dray writes, "the nation's railroad men were spoiling for a fight with the 'management' of America; unlike 1877, now they were not only angry but organized, and in Eugene Debs they saw their crusader."⁸⁷

On June 21, the ARU voted to support the Pullman strike, simply a practical exhibition of sympathy, Christian brotherhood, and republican mutualism in the eloquent words of Debs. The ARU refused to have any of its switchmen handle Pullman cars unless Pullman or his company agreed to arbitration. Pullman's refusal marked the beginning of the Pullman Strike of 1894, with the sides preparing themselves for a serious confrontation. The big railroads and industry aligned themselves with Pullman while the ARU garnered support from rail brotherhoods and sympathetic unions of carpenters, mechanics, and warehousemen. James Sovereign, the leader of the Knights of Labor, one of the most significant labor organizations of the late 19th century, urged the unions to come together: "The sons of toil must stand together, shoulder to shoulder."⁸⁸

Philip Dray, describing the great significance of the strike for business, writes, "The ARU boycott of Pullman's railcars and, by extension, America's railroads, was, in the eyes of commerce, a far more reprehensible act than a run-of-the mill trade union strike."⁸⁹ Dray argues that because the Pullman Strike of 1894 engaged diverse groups of workers and transcended occupational boundaries, it represented a potential for a full-fledged rebellion, and had the potential to harm the economy as a whole.

Indeed, because of the centralized leadership and organized nature of the strike, the rebellious fervor swept across the nation, capitalizing on the universal feeling of discontent amongst the working public. Within the next few days, 100,000 rail workers in 27 states and U.S. territories joined the strike

⁸⁶ Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (New York: United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America, 1972).

⁸⁷ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁸⁸ *New York Times*, June 28, 1894.

⁸⁹ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

and voluntarily stopped working. Both freight and passenger trains in and out of Chicago were at a standstill.⁹⁰

The press and moneyed interests vehemently attacked Debs and his union, with one newspaper condemning Debs as “an enemy of the human race” while the *Chicago Tribune* ran the headline “Mob Is in Control, Law Is Trampled On, Strike Is Now War.” Similarly, Pullman and the railroads did not back down, assembling the General Managers Association (GMA), which was founded in 1886 and consisted of all 26 railroads that served Chicago. The consortium of railroads settled on a strategy to destroy the ARU, deciding to bring in the U.S. Federal Government, as Washington had expressed its outrage with the strikers in Chicago.

U.S. Attorney General Richard Olney was determined not to let the transgression of the ARU against the nation slide. Olney believed it necessary for the government to take a stand in Chicago, in order to crush the “ragged edge of anarchy” and ensure the labor strike “a failure everywhere else.”⁹¹ Intent on squashing the strike, Olney, a veteran railroad lawyer, appointed a former colleague, Chicago attorney Edwin Walker, to the position of special federal attorney in Chicago.

Olney’s strategy hinged on the policy of “government by injunction”, the principle vehicle of judicial intervention during the Gilded Age and “America’s distinctive contribution in the application of law to industrial strife.”⁹² The rise of this practice can be attributed to the new era of union-led strikes in the United States. Where previously strikes had been local in nature, strikes now often mobilized national organizations like the ARU or entire working-class communities against a single employer. This transformation, according to historian William E. Forbath, “rubbed more abrasively against judges’ individualism.”⁹³ In addition, labor movements presented a greater threat to the courts’ definition of law and order as labor leaders believed that they stood for a higher, truer legal order, and thus challenged the courts’ and states’ normative authority. The first court injunction against strikers occurred during the 1877 railroad strikes, and set a precedent for the administrative capacity of the judiciary to regulate labor conflicts. By the onset of the Pullman Strike after 16 years of experience, the federal judicial role was already in place: the tendency of “enjoining strikes on non-receivership lines; of collaborating with railroad management and attorneys; of mobilizing troops without regard to the will of state authorities;

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Gerald G. Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes: The Beginnings of Federal Strike Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967).

⁹² Felix Frankfurter and Nathan Greene, *The Labor Injunction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 53.

⁹³ William E Forbath, 1898, “The Shaping of the American Labor Movement,” *The Harvard Law Review* 102 (6); 1109-1256. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1341293>.

and of holding summary hearings in lieu of jury trials.”⁹⁴ By the eve of the Pullman Strike, the federal courtroom had turned into “a kind of police court,” Judge Taft claimed.⁹⁵

Thus, using the example of “government by injunction,” Walker was to seek a court injunction against the ARU for their interference with the U.S. mail and their supposed violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, a statute intended to prevent potential corporate monopolies. The purported transgression against the Sherman Act offered the government an argument for federal military involvement. It was also a convenient tactic to get around the requirements of due process, as the government was able to hold individuals in contempt without having to prove more significant or specific criminal acts. President Grover Cleveland vowed to end the strike, saying, “If it takes every dollar in the Treasury and every soldier in the United States Army to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that postal card shall be delivered.”⁹⁶

Understanding the potential implications of Walker’s court injunction, Debs instructed the ARU not to disrupt or interfere with the U.S. mail. In addition, the ARU received support from John P. Altgeld, Governor of Illinois. Altgeld reminded President Cleveland that federal troops could only be sent upon the request of the state, and reproached Olney’s miscarriage of justice through the use of government by injunction, transforming, Altgeld said, a “federal judge [into] ... a legislator, court, and executioner.”⁹⁷

Nonetheless, in order to incite a violation, the government and the GMA had begun attaching Pullman sleepers to mail cars. On July 2, federal District Court Judge Peter J. Grosscup issued an injunction banning the ARU from interfering with the mail or interstate commerce. The injunction was written so broadly that it disallowed the ARU to maintain or organize the boycotts.⁹⁸ Shortly thereafter on July 3, 2,000 federal soldiers arrived from Fort Sheridan. These soldiers, according to Detroit mayor Hazen S. Pingree, intended “not so much to quell a riot as to crush labor unions.”⁹⁹

Violence erupted. Yet it was not, as many popular accounts of the strike would assert, the ARU or the railroad workers who sparked the violence but hostile citizens who catcalled, cursed, and hurled bricks and stones. In fact, substantive evidence proving the involvement of workers in the violence does not exist. These hostile citizens commandeered the strike from a rightful dissatisfaction with the inhuman exploitation of the poverty-stricken laborers to an aimless anarchy, promoting indiscriminate violence,

⁹⁴ Forbath, “The Shaping of the American Labor Movement.”

⁹⁵ Letter from William H. Taft to Helen H. Taft (July 1894) *The Life & Times of William Howard Taft*

⁹⁶ Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross; A Biography of Eugene Victor Debs* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1949).

⁹⁷ John P. Altgeld, “Comment on the Supreme Court Decision,” *The Pullman Boycott 1894: The problem of Federal Intervention*, edited by Colston E. Warne (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1955).

⁹⁸ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

⁹⁹ Ginger, *The Bending Cross*.

and therein inhibited the optimistic yet possible success of the strike. In response to the pointless violence, federal marshals hired 2,000 special deputies, described not as officers of the law but as “thugs and thieves” by Chicago Police Chief John R. Brennan.¹⁰⁰ Shortly after the arrival of the deputies, a mob estimated at ten thousand set railroad cars afire and destroyed property. The battle between the two sides raged. Buildings were razed and protestors shot.

As the violence continued, national labor leaders were called to attend an emergency conference at the Briggs House Hotel in Chicago to direct the protest. In consultation with Samuel Gompers, a major labor leader, Debs and Altgeld recognized that events had gotten out of hand, and informed the American Federation of Labor (AFL) that a national general strike was not recommended. Subsequently, Debs and three of his aides were arrested on a charge of interference with U.S. mail. Shortly thereafter, they were released on bail and quickly rearrested, this time on a charge of contempt of court for disregarding Judge Grosscup’s verdict. The arrest of Debs coupled with the introduction of federal troops to disrupt the crowds destroyed the Pullman Strike and the ARU boycott, as it stripped the rebellion of its leadership.¹⁰¹

The following May in the case *In re Debs*, the United States Supreme Court unanimously upheld the unmitigated injunctions issued against the Pullman Strike, and the contempt conviction of Debs. Justice Brewer credited the decrees with the immediate establishment of peaceable acquiescence on behalf of the strikers, and cessation of the strikers’ lawless anarchy.¹⁰² The Pullman Strike was quashed, and Pullman, who had stayed out of the public view for much of the strike, finally reemerged and continued to operate the PPCC.

Thus, in one sense, this labor action was unsuccessful. However, it had a tremendous impact on the company and on the labor environment in the United States. The Illinois State Supreme Court asserted that Pullman’s town existed in opposition to good public policy, and ruled that the company relinquish all ownership over town.¹⁰³ In addition, the strike exposed the basic grievances of the citizenry under paternalistic rule, including political domination and the lack of democracy; unrelenting control over the tenants; and the excessive rates for gas, water, and housing. Therefore, the strike led to the demise of a true paternalistic company-town model, as it dissuaded planners of such communities from holding unconditional power over its residents. Historian Almont Lindsey argues that it “destroyed whatever revolutionary effect the experiment was believed to have upon industrialism.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Ray Ginger, *Algeld’s America: The Lincoln Ideal Versus Changing Realities* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1958).

¹⁰¹ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

¹⁰² Forbath, “The Shaping of the American Labor Movement.”

¹⁰³ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

¹⁰⁴ Lindsey, “Paternalism and the Pullman Strike.”

The most noteworthy consequences of the strike arguably stem from a commission of inquiry, ironically convened by President Cleveland. While the inquiry questioned the wisdom of the ARU for allowing the Pullman factory employees to assemble into a railroad union, it also condemned Pullman for his actions as an employer and landlord and for his refusal to submit the workers' demands to arbitration. Furthermore, the inquiry denounced the GMA for scheming to disband the ARU on the grounds that it was an illegitimate labor combination, as the GMA was itself a combination, albeit of business.¹⁰⁵

In the *Report on the Chicago Strike of June-July, 1894*, the Commission concluded that the country must "admit [labor unions'] necessity as labor guides and protectors, conserve their usefulness, increase their responsibility, and prevent their follies and aggressions by conferring upon them the privileges enjoyed by corporations." The Report continued that we have "heretofore encouraged the one [corporations] and comparatively neglected the other [labor unions]" and that wisdom demands "that each be encouraged to prosper legitimately and to grow into harmonious relations of equal standing and responsibility before the law."¹⁰⁶

Moreover, the Commission recommended that a permanent three-member United States strike commission be established, tasked with investigating disputes between railroads and their employees; that courts be granted the power to compel railroads to obey decisions made by the aforementioned commission; and that labor contracts requiring men to agree not to join a labor organization or union as a condition of employment (also known as yellow-dog contracts) be made illegal. On top of that, the Commission firmly urged corporations to recognize and even cooperate with labor unions.¹⁰⁷

The inquiry held the government responsible for its failure to control corporations and protect the rights of labor. It provoked the question: What should the proper role for the U.S. government be in labor disputes? This debate initiated a shift in public opinion, as many argued that the government's obligation is to pass legislation and establish enforcement agencies to protect workers' rights, improve working conditions and amend labor abuses, rather than aid corporate interests as it had done in Pullman.¹⁰⁸ The government's persisting policy of following the criminal conspiracy approach, essentially treating unions as unlawful organizations scheming to cause harm, finally came to an end.¹⁰⁹

With his vision of order secured, even the stalwart U.S. Attorney General Olney acknowledged elements of the revised liberalism. Olney wrote, "it must now be regarded as substantially settled that the

¹⁰⁵ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

¹⁰⁶ *U.S. Strike Commission Report: The Chicago Strike of June-July 1894*.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Dray, *There is Power in a Union*.

¹⁰⁹ Robert P. Hunter, *Michigan Labor Law: What Every Citizen Should Know*; (Midland, Michigan: Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 1999). <https://www.mackinac.org/archives/1999/s1999-05.pdf>.

mass of wage-earners can no longer be dealt with by capital as so many isolated units.”¹¹⁰ Olney, at the suggestion of the strike commission, sponsored the Erdman Act passed by Congress in 1898, criminalizing yellow-dog contracts, and recognizing railroad brotherhoods and collective bargaining, the process of negotiation between a group of employees, e.g. a union, and their employers. At the behest of Congress and President William McKinley, a temporary government body (1898-1902) was established to investigate the relations of labor and capital. In its final report, the Industrial Commission concluded with a ringing endorsement of collective bargaining to redress the power imbalance between “the buyers and sellers of the labor in the market.”¹¹¹

The Pullman Strike of 1894 substantively advanced the cause of labor in the United States, later to be furthered by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal policies to a compulsory unionism approach, i.e. where the government plays an active part in encouraging unionization.¹¹² The strike awakened the country and working classes to the immense power they held from their vast numerical majority. Even though laborers were often impoverished and held little voice individually, the strike demonstrated the substantial strength that workers had in solidarity. While the strike was unsuccessful in the short term, the rebellious workers managed to completely disrupt the American economy.¹¹³ “They might as well try to stop Niagara with a feather as to crush the spirit of organization in this country,” Eugene Debs said after the boycott. “It may not come up in the form of the American Railway Union, but this spirit of resistance to wrong is there, it is growing stronger constantly.”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *U.S. Strike Commission Report: The Chicago Strike of June-July 1894*.

¹¹¹ Richard Schneirov, 1999, “‘To the Ragged Edge of Anarchy’: The 1894 Pullman Boycott,” *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 13 (3); 26-30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25163289>.

¹¹² Hunter, *Michigan Labor Law: What Every Citizen Should Know*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *U.S. Strike Commission Report: The Chicago Strike of June-July 1894*, p.163.

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Getting' Whiggy With It: Campaign Innovations in the Elections of 1836 and 1840

By: Willis Weinstein

From the rigid Democrat-Republican structure to campaign songs and mudslinging, American presidential elections have always been unique.. Today, campaigns often involve painting the president as an “everyman,” a person who has a background and story which appeals to and reflects the sensibilities of the average American and the American Dream. With nearly every American citizen having the right to vote, elections are a veritable popularity contest. Candidates attempt to convince the public that they embody the values and policies which will be most beneficial to America, and are honest people with character traits that the average American values.

To succeed in this end, politicians use tactics such as emotional advertisements and rhetoric, to cultivate this idealized “American everyman” image. At the same time, candidates seek to rhetoric against their opponent’s values or character, so that they seem unsympathetic, “out of touch,” and like a poor leader who will lead the country into ruin. These tactics are the offspring of developments perfected by the Whig party between the elections of 1836 and 1840. These tactics set the stage for modern election politics by solidifying the Second Party system, engaging in crowd based campaigning, expanding the scope of political activity to the larger American population, a process called popularization. The structure of American political elections has changed greatly over time.. In the 18th century, elections were the contests of the elite. Moneyed landowners believed that campaigning to the workingman was beneath them, so they would “lubricate the election” by passing out beer and liquor in a public forum in hopes that people would speak well about their policies and character.¹¹⁵ Political office was restricted to the upper strata of society in this manner, until the emergence of the Jacksonian Democrats and the Whigs in the 19th century.

By 1828, the year Tennessee senator Andrew Jackson was elected, America had experienced a fundamental political power shift, from the Eastern seaboard to the West: Kentucky was admitted as a state in 1792, Tennessee in 1796, Ohio in 1803, Louisiana in 1812, Mississippi in 1817, Alabama in 1819, and Missouri in 1821.¹¹⁶ The incorporation of these states signaled a large population increase in the modern Midwest, then known as the American “frontier.” Disconnected from the remote federal government of Washington DC, westerners had political views in stark contrast to wealthy easterners. As a result, presidential elections became a game of not only appealing to the landed East Coast, but the burgeoning frontier, and increasingly, the South. Jackson, whose election highlighted the importance of these geographic zones, heralded a new era in politics, appealing to “the people.”

Although Jackson was the first president to represent the new geographical shift in politics, it was the actions of the Whig party, the political rivals of Jacksonian Democrats, who developed on key elements of modern politics visible today. After their loss to the Democrat Martin Van Buren in 1836, and their victory under William Henry Harrison in 1840, the Whigs had demonstrated the effectiveness of campaigning for popularity, as well as the development of a contemporary bipartisan system.

At the time of the 1836 election, America had two main political parties. One was the Jacksonian Democrats, a strong party who only faced serious opposition in the Northeast. The other party, the Whigs,

¹¹⁵ Evan Cornog, *Hats in the Ring: An Illustrated History of American Presidential Campaigns* (New York: Random House, 2000), 71.

¹¹⁶ Charles A. Beard, *The American Party Battle* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928), 57.

was a coalition with supporters scattered all over the country who united themselves in 1834 under one common theme: a mutual hatred for either Jackson's actions as president, or his policies.¹¹⁷ Together, the solidly grouped Democrats and the rag-tag Whigs constituted the Second Party system, the bipartisan political arrangement of the time in which two main parties represented the frontrunners in political elections and the two diverging schools of political thought. Previously, political debate existed within one party, the Democratic Republicans, with party members holding contrasting political beliefs despite being under the same party label. This can be seen in the election of 1824, where, despite their policy differences, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, William Crawford, and Andrew Jackson were all on the Democratic-Republican ticket. By 1828, the Second Party system had taken root, with Jackson, running as a Democrat, contesting the election of the incumbent National Republican, John Quincy Adams. In this way, Democrats and Whigs were similar, due to their similar origins from political discontent. The Jacksonian democrats

“...that came to power in 1829 had formed as an opposition coalition; it was opposed to the party and the administration headed by John Quincy Adams. Exhibiting overwhelming strength in the South and much of the West, and with a secure base in the middle states, the coalition brought together very diverse elements united on no firm principle except “reform” but committed to placing the Old Hero [Jackson] in the White House.”¹¹⁸

Jacksonian Democrats represented an ideal of ousting “old office holding ‘aristocrats’ without regard to their appearances and circumstances.”¹¹⁹ In contrast to the Whigs in 1836, the Democrats had precise doctrines and well spelled out policy, which not only earned Jackson the election in 1828, but boosted him to reelection in 1832. Democrats endorsed “...an agrarian creed in language so plain that any farmer or mechanic could understand it. They opposed protective tariffs, the establishment of another United States Bank, internal improvements, the creation of public debts, and all interferences with slavery.”¹²⁰ Democrats also believed in laissez-faire economics, and were staunch advocates of hard currency, such as gold or silver.

Initial Whig policy, on the other hand, was far less clear-cut. In their earliest stages, the Whigs were little more than a political merger, flying under the banner of Jacksonian discontent. Their policies were less political beliefs than they were statements which demonized Jackson, the Democrats, and as the election commenced, Van Buren. The term “Whig” has inherently Jacksonian connotations, as the original Whigs were Englishmen during the Revolutionary War who opposed King George and his ministers. The term had an American resurgence in 1834 to spark organized resistance against the tyrannical “King Andrew,” and make a statement on the increase of executive power during his presidency. Their key constituent groups included National Republicans, States' Rights southerners, and Anti-Masons, a third party from upstate New York that opposed secret societies such as the Freemasons and their supposed influence on mainstream politics and the economy.¹²¹ Essentially, the Whig party had no real policy. If both northerners and southerners had not possessed a mutual hatred for Jackson, the party would have crumbled instantly.

¹¹⁷ Paul F. Boller, Jr., *Presidential Campaigns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 61.

¹¹⁸ Richard P. McCormick, “Was There a ‘Whig Strategy’ in 1836?” *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1984): 48.

¹¹⁹ Beard, 62.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 73.

¹²¹ Cornog, 64.

Given their eastern roots, northern Whigs valued industry highly, and were firm supporters of protective tariffs and federal grants for projects like roads, harbors, canals, and river facilities.¹²² Northern Whigs also supported the Second Bank of the United States (the “Bank”) and paper money, but had to tread carefully on their presentation of financial policy. Because America was still a largely agrarian nation, hard currency was considered the most trusted medium for economic exchange.¹²³

Southern Whigs, on the other hand, were against federal handling of finances through the Bank, and were strong supporters of states’ rights. Despite not supporting the bank, Southerners discontent with Jackson stemmed from his executive actions in regards to closing the Bank and the nullification crisis. In 1832, the Congress passed a federal protectionist tariff, designed to secure northern financial interest. This tax, like other tariffs, reduced competition with foreign markets, and was not beneficial for the agrarian southern economy. Dissatisfied with the tax, the South Carolina legislature attempted to “nullify” the tariff, or deem the federal law unconstitutional and thus not applicable to the state.¹²⁴ In this way, the South Carolina legislature attempted to take on a quasi-judicial role in debating the merit of federal law.

In response, Jackson issued a proclamation which condemned nullification, and also challenged “...the states’ rights doctrine so cherished in the South.”¹²⁵ In response, South Carolina threatened secession, so Jackson lowered tariff rates, but also passed the Force Bill, which empowered Jackson to send in the military to South Carolina to enforce the new rates if South Carolina failed to comply.¹²⁶ Jackson’s actions provoked enormous criticism from supporters of nullification and state’s rights, as well as criticism for his “executive usurpation.”¹²⁷

As an opponent of the Bank, Jackson took specific action during his second term to strike down the National Bank and empower state banks, as the National Bank’s charter was legislated to expire in 1836. In 1833, Jackson moved to withdraw federal funds from the national bank and put them in state banks, causing controversy in the business communities in both the North and South.¹²⁸ Northern financial interests “...had every reason to fear that a calamity would follow the destruction of the United States Bank and the flooding of the country with paper money through the state banks”¹²⁹ and Southern business owners and planters, who relied on Northern banks, were also angered by Jackson’s action against the Bank. Jackson’s usage of executive power with respect to nullification and the Bank helped create organized Southern opposition to the Democrats which strengthened the Whigs.

By the time of the nominations for the election in 1836, the Democrats were well prepared. In February of 1835, Jackson decided to not run for a third term, and urged Democrats to have a national convention, while endorsing Martin Van Buren of New York for President, and Col. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky for Vice President.¹³⁰ Van Buren was chosen at the Democratic convention in Baltimore in May, and in his nomination acceptance “promised to perfect the work which he [Jackson] has so

¹²² Beard, 67-9.

¹²³ Ibid, 68.

¹²⁴ Cornog, 66.

¹²⁵ McCormick, 50.

¹²⁶ Cornog, 66.

¹²⁷ McCormick, 52.

¹²⁸ Cornog, 65.

¹²⁹ Beard, 66.

¹³⁰ Boller, 60.

gloriously begun.”¹³¹ Van Buren and Johnson were not well-received in the South, as Van Buren was from the North and Johnson had a black wife and mixed-race children. However, this proved little obstacle, due to the poor organization of the opposition, party loyalty, admiration of Jackson, and efforts of the Democrats to set up state and local committees to fundraise, distribute campaign material, and host rallies.

The Whigs, in stark contrast, were unready to challenge the Democratic dynasty. While the initial unity of southern and northern Whigs against Jackson’s perceived tyranny had seemed like a harbinger of change, it ultimately led to sheer dysfunction in the 1836 election. Oftentimes, the Whigs are stereotyped as having the unique strategy of putting forth three “regional” candidates to block Van Buren from obtaining electoral votes, thus throwing the election of the three candidates into the House of Representatives, but this is a gross misinterpretation.

The truth of the matter is that at the time, the Whigs lacked the national unity to win an election, and they were aware of this. The Whigs held no national convention to decide their candidate in 1836, as they feared it would reveal their disunity.¹³² Squabbles within the Whig coalition for presidential nominations also are telling of further disunity and lack of strategy. Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, and Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts were all forecasted as being the heads to oppose Van Buren, but by the time of the election, Webster was the only candidate of the three on the ballot, as Calhoun and Clay dropped out of the race after the midterm election of 1834 restored a Democratic majority to Congress.¹³³ Webster, who also tried but failed to gain the support of the Anti-Masons, also attempted to contact William Henry Harrison, to run on the Whig ticket in 1836 as Vice President, but Harrison declined the offer.¹³⁴ Harrison, a moderate from North Bend, Ohio, serving as the clerk of the Court of Common Pleas in the country, had no intentions of presidential office until he heard Col. Richard M. Johnson, a fellow war hero and veteran, bragging about presidential ambitions and military achievement. Wanting equal attention for his achievements, Harrison published an article on his military fame in *Niles’ Register*, and was soon being mentioned as candidate.¹³⁵ The third candidate on the Whig ticket, Senator Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee, can hardly be called a Whig, but for the purpose of dismantling Van Buren, flew under the Whig colors. A personal friend of Jackson who felt spited by Van Buren being handed the nomination, White was a firm supporter of the Force Bill, withdrawing from the Bank, and disliked both tariffs, internal improvements, and interference with slavery.¹³⁶

White appealed to Jacksonian Democrats who were wary of a northern Democrat for President, Webster to the National Republicans and eastern elite, and Harrison, famous for confining his remarks to nonpolitical topics was able to create a general appeal that “...projected an image that was acceptable to his diverse constituencies”¹³⁷ of the West and other moderate states. A fourth candidate, Willie P. Mangum, a Senator from North Carolina, also ran, on the platform that Jackson’s “violent and lawless

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² McCormick, 48.

¹³³ Ibid, 55.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 57.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 63.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 70.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

seizure of the deposits,”¹³⁸ was an overuse of his executive power. In this respect, Mangum essentially reconstituted the policies of Daniel Webster, but with the appeal to a Southern audience due to his origins. As a whole, the Whigs wanted one candidate to trounce the Democrats, but as the editor of the *National Intelligencer*, a newspaper with Whig sympathies, declared, “...what we desire is impossible.”¹³⁹ With little more than smear tactics calling Van Buren “...the common sewer for all the filth of the country”¹⁴⁰ and “the New York” magician,¹⁴¹ the Whigs had little solid criticism against the Democrats and were passively accepting that the tables were turned against them. Van Buren won the election with 764,198 popular votes (50.9 %) and 170 electoral votes, but the Whigs totaled an impressive 746,147 votes collectively, and 124 electoral votes. 584,000 of these popular votes and 73 of the electoral votes were carried by Harrison alone, perhaps foreshadowing his success in the following election.¹⁴²

The election of 1840 had far more fortunate circumstances for the Whigs. Under Van Buren, the country entered into a serious recession, known today as the Panic of 1837. The Panic was caused by Jacksonian banking policies, bad harvests, and speculation on western lands, which, in combination drove down the price of cotton, a key export to Great Britain, who was unable to loan money or trade with the United States due to a recession of its own.¹⁴³ The recession provided an excellent opportunity for the Whigs to try again for the presidency under the strategy of replacing an incompetent and rich incumbent, especially with Harrison’s popularity proven in the last election. Henry Clay was considered for the 1840 nomination, but lacked sufficient national popularity.¹⁴⁴ Winfield Scott was also considered, given his illustrious military background, but Harrison’s Ohio background and respective military service made him the ideal choice for the presidency, as a “Washington of the West” who would lead the country out of recession. In contrast to 1836, the Whigs had far less debate over a nominee, and thus could achieve a more centralized effort towards ousting Van Buren. Although the Whigs still had a cross-country constituency in 1840, the selection of one candidate to run against Van Buren created a more effective mouthpiece for targeted attacks on Van Buren and mudslinging. Harrison won the election with 1,275,612 popular votes (53%) to Van Buren’s 1,130,033 (47%).¹⁴⁵ Although the margin for popular vote was relatively close, Harrison won the Electoral College by a landslide, earning 234 electoral votes and 19 states to Van Buren’s 60 electoral votes and 7 states.¹⁴⁶ James G. Birney, the nominee for the Antislavery Liberty Party also ran, but received only 7,000 popular votes.

The victory for the Whigs not only represented an impressive political achievement for a “party” that four years before had a pitiful patchwork of national support, but development in terms of political platforms. The Panic of 1837 created popular disdain for Van Buren and proved the faults of Jacksonian banking policy, and thus made it difficult for the Democrats to win reelection if they were to keep their platform. The Whigs winning under Harrison was not a result of careful political diplomacy and decision making, but capitalizing on an opportunity and good campaigning. Their ability to run only Harrison

¹³⁸ Ibid, 52.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 64.

¹⁴⁰ Erik McKinley Eriksson, “Official Newspaper Organs and the Presidential Elections of 1828, 1832, and 1836,” *The Tennessee Historical Magazine*, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (January 1926): 9.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Boller, 62.

¹⁴³ Cornog, 72.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 72.

¹⁴⁵ Boller, 71.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

illustrated the arrival of two dominant political parties to the era. With two contrasting frontrunners in the 1840 election, the United States had developed the Second Party system, thus fortifying the main parties of the era, and setting future precedent for modern bipartisanship. Although the Whigs were on the national political stage, they can hardly be said to have had a distinct platform. The Panic of 1837 was crucial to the Whig victory in 1840 and the arrival at the Second Party system, such achievements would not have been possible without the campaigning developments made that election year.

The other two Whig contributions to politics, crowd-based campaigns and the popularization of politics, are two developments which go hand in hand, as the both occurred during the election of 1840, and were not innovations made specifically by the Whigs in 1840, but improvements on a Jacksonian Democratic system of campaigning. The way in which the Whigs triumphed in 1840 was in fact, beating the Democrats at their own game. Elections "...ceased to be the private preserve of the rich and well-born. They became in part great entertainments in which even people who could not vote joined in on the fun. By 1840, it was necessary for all the presidential aspirants to do what Andrew Jackson had done when he first entered the hustings: bid for the support of the masses."¹⁴⁷ Like the Jacksonian Democrats in 1828, who sought to oust what they saw as an incompetent executive, the Whigs in 1840 were an effort to toss out the incompetent and aristocratic Martin Van Buren, who the Whigs saw as lavishly spending on stagecoaches, servants, and fine champagne while the public coffers remained empty.

Whigs claimed "...the people do not sympathize with anything Mr. Van Buren says or does. He is too aristocratic, even in his drink; preferring imported champagne [sic] and imperial tokay, to that simple and republican beverage of the people, hard cider!"¹⁴⁸ Whigs further attacked Van Buren's lifestyle, stating "the majesty of democracy does not consist in an extravagantly furnished house, magnificent plate, golden spoons and forks, nor any of the tinsel drapery with which monarchy dazzles the eyes of its slaves."¹⁴⁹ This strategy of typecasting Van Buren as a wealthy dandy in the wake of the Panic of 1837 proved to be an especially potent message in times of recession. Not only did Van Buren's wealthy tastes in the midst of economic downturn make him seem unsympathetic, but unsuited for office at the time as well.

However, mud-slinging and attacks on Van Buren were only one half of the brilliant Whig strategy in 1840. By using the Panic of 1837 as a pretext to attack Van Buren's financial policy and wealthy lifestyle, the Whigs also had a canvas on which they could paint the image of their idealized candidate. The other more crucial half to Whig success in 1840, however, was the pro-Harrison efforts of the party which manifested themselves in what was called the "Log Cabin Campaign," a strategy which involved painting their candidate as "... a man of the people and a military hero."¹⁵⁰

As a result of his stump speeches, a decidedly Democratic tactic, given about his life and military service, Harrison was referred to as the "Farmer's President," and an "old soldier and farmer," and his slogans, such as "Harrison, two dollars a day and roast beef," a nod to his supposed agrarian roots and embodiment of hard work, or "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" which served as a lionizing testament to his

¹⁴⁷ Boller, 65.

¹⁴⁸ "Wherefore Change?" *More Than One Hundred Reasons Why William Henry Harrison Should and Will Have the Support of the Democracy for President of the United States in Preference to Martin Van Buren* (Boston: Tuttle, Dennett, and Chisholm, 1840), 12.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Boller, 65.

military victory over the Native American chief, Tecumseh.¹⁵¹ The Whigs wished to portray General Harrison as the “friend of all those principles and measures by which the country has prospered in former times,” harkening back to an era before the corrupt and aristocratic Van Buren drove the country into a financial mire.¹⁵² The Whigs even went as far to say that if George Washington were still alive, he would be greatly pleased to see Harrison occupying his former office.¹⁵³

In reality, however, Harrison was far from the plain and simple farmer and war-hero the Whigs portrayed him as. Born in Virginia, Harrison had a wealthy background, was college educated, and lived on a comfortable farm in North Bend, Ohio. His military career was far from distinguished, aside from leading troops when he clashed with Tecumseh at Tippecanoe in 1811, and was noted as “merely competent, at best” as an officer during the War of 1812.¹⁵⁴ However, the Whigs managed to reinvent Harrison, calling him “Old Buckeye” and the “Hero of Tippecanoe,” much like the Democrats affectionately called Jackson “Old Hickory” and the “Hero of New Orleans.”¹⁵⁵

Democrats failed to discredit this label as a war hero, and an attempt to ridicule Harrison’s background in an 1839 article in the *Baltimore Republican* only fanned the proverbial flames that became the wildfire of Whig popularity. The article, taking a jab at Harrison’s war hero and farmer background, stated “Give him a barrel of hard cider and a pension of two thousand a year, and my word for it, he will sit the remainder of his days in a log cabin, by the side of a ‘sea-coal’ fire and study moral philosophy.”¹⁵⁶ Despite the intentions to deride Harrison, the Whigs jumped on the opportunity of the article, appropriating the intended mocking references of “hard cider” and “log cabin” as symbols of Harrison. Soon, the two icons became synonymous with Harrison and his simple, down-to-earth, war hero, farmer roots. Through criticism of the Whigs, the Democrats had given them a key political strategy, and cemented their own downfall.

The “log cabin” stereotype of Harrison as a simple veteran and farmer consisted of more than a clever tactic of responding to the Panic of 1837 and using a successful past Democratic strategy. Certainly, casting Harrison as the rugged and humble frontiersman was effective during a recession under a “wealthy dandy” president, but it also was a response to two factors. Firstly, although the Whigs had managed to rally their ranks under one candidate, they still had an exceedingly diverse constituency, the same “...motley crew of nationalists, states righters, protectionists, free traders, pro Bank, and Anti Bank people drawn from every section of the country” as in 1836.¹⁵⁷ By shifting the focus and key arguments of their 1840 campaign to endorsements of Harrison’s “buckeye” character, the Whigs could avoid their previous dilemma of finding a policy which satisfied all the members of their constituency. For the 1840 Whig strategy, images, not issues, were the centerpiece of the campaign.

The Log-Cabin campaign also represented a paradigm shift in the target dynamic for elections. With the removal of property or tax qualifications for voting in states, the incorporations of Western states and immigration to the frontier, politicians had to focus on garnering the votes of western Americans, oftentimes farmers or veterans of Native American wars, who were disconnected from the

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 67, 71.

¹⁵² “Wherefore Change?,” 14.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Boller, 65.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Boller 70.

politics of the East. In this sense, the Whigs casting Harrison as a veteran farmer shows the new trend of catering to the West of America, a trend established by Andrew Jackson in 1828. Although the Whig's strategy represented a continuation of Democratic campaigning legacy, Whig innovations in campaign tactics simultaneously plastered over their lack of a cohesive policy and effectively propagated their idealized image of Harrison, the old soldier and farmer.

Whigs used events like parades, picnics, barbecues, and rallies as their main forums for pro-Harrison speeches and drawing citizens into the campaign. At Whig rallies, thousands of spectators joined in to listen to speeches or sing songs. Stump speeches by Harrison himself, and even his former opponent, Daniel Webster, were given to rally support.¹⁵⁸ Whigs passed out hard cider at campaign rallies, the official drink of the campaign and iconic beverage of Harrison, erected hickory poles with Harrison propaganda, and constructed log cabins, decorated with coonskins (in the fashion of frontier houses), which passed out campaign literature and cider to voters.¹⁵⁹ Political cartoons of Harrison depicted him as a farmer passing out cider, ham, and eggs, to the weary American people.¹⁶⁰ Whig newspapers, songbooks, "Tippecanoe" themed handkerchiefs and badges were all passed out. The phrase, "keep the ball rolling," was coined by the Whigs as a campaign slogan after huge balls, nearly ten feet in diameter, were covered in Harrison slogans and maxims, and rolled down streets in towns.¹⁶¹ Women also played an important role in election efforts, making floats, putting on performances where they would "sweep out Democrats" with brooms, sewing flags and banners, and writing songs.¹⁶²

Specifically, it was the role of music and campaign songs which made the Whig campaign so dynamic and engaging. Lecky Harper, editor of the Democratic *Banner*, a newspaper from Ohio, recalled "...in 1840 it was 'singing that did the work...Men, women, and children did nothing but sing' and that the 'ceaseless torrent of music...worried, annoyed, dumbfounded, [and] crushed the Democrats.'"¹⁶³ Although campaign songs allowed Whigs to "...avoid addressing the inevitable political compromises that a Whig coalition would be forced to make if elected"¹⁶⁴ and excited crowds, it also translated Whig policies and beliefs into a popular, adaptable format that could engage party supporters. Music "encouraged mass participation...by translating the issues of the campaign into the language of popular culture, thereby appropriating the aesthetics of pleasure into the communication of substantive national issues."¹⁶⁵ At the same time, songs could persuade voters that their candidate was a collective representative of the people. Whig songs and campaigns thus used log cabins and hard cider to equate Whig values with American values, and to "...accomplish vital tangible and symbolic objectives: to rally supporters, attract the attention of politically disinterested citizens...and help construct the campaign as a choice between hope for the future or the continuation of present injustices."¹⁶⁶ One Whig song exemplifies this possibility of entertainment and information intertwined:

"There's a favorite hobby of Matty and Co.,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 66, 72

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 67.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid, 74.

¹⁶³ William Coleman, "Music in the American Democratic Process: The 1840 and 2008 Presidential Elections," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (December 2010): 2.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 6.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 17.

The Sub Treasury Scheme as all of us know
Which should it succeed, he'll unite sword and purse
And make the rich richer, the poor ten times worse:
But good hard cider, etc. will banish that curse.”¹⁶⁷

The song lambastes the Sub-Treasury scheme, a financial action by Van Buren meant to separate taxpayer money from private banks after the Panic of 1837, while simultaneously skewering Van Buren for not caring about the poor and plays on the symbols of hard cider to playfully communicate the message that “Harrison and his buckeye, honest American values will remedy the excess of typical politicians.”¹⁶⁸ In response to the song, one Whig supporter stated, “As to what the Sub-Treasury really was, I had not the remotest idea, but this I knew; that it was the most wicked outrage ever committed by a remorseless tyrant upon a long suffering people.”¹⁶⁹

Through their campaigning strategies, the Whigs managed to not only divert public attention away from their failures, but engage the populace in the election. Some Whig tactics would be considered slanderous by today's standards, but the Whigs nonetheless set a precedent for modern campaigning through their targeted response to the Panic of 1837, large amount of rallies and public events, and usage of trinkets and propaganda to engage public support. Many of these strategies also served the purpose of covering up for a lack of distinct policy under Harrison, but they also accomplished the real goal of engaging citizens in elections, and thus popularizing politics. Although they could not vote, women and children were still integral to the election process by writing songs and making banners, key parts of Whig campaign efforts. The fact that the 1840 election had the highest voter turnout of any other presidential election of the time indicates that through their strategies, the Whigs made politics a thing of the people, and not purely the elite.

Although ideologically opposed to Jackson, the Whigs' contributions to modern politics today are all ideas which took root in Jacksonian democracy: an opposition party system, campaigning which catered to the masses, and engaging all men in political affairs. Though a great contradiction, these Whig achievements not only bolstered their originally rag-tag party to control of the nation, but set the precedent for presidential elections today.

As recently as the 2008 presidential election, songs for candidates Barack Obama and John McCain attempted to appeal to the common man, and restore “...American democracy in the face of crisis.”¹⁷⁰ Just as in 1840, elections today are between two frontrunners, and revolve around painting each candidate as a man of the people and the embodiment of contemporary American values, who can bring change and hope to the government. Although Harrison died tragically after one month in office due to pneumonia, and the Whig party eventually disintegrated in the mid 1850's, their political ideas are still alive and well.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 6.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 3.

The modern election as it is presently known, a bipartisan contest where the goal is to appeal to the average American and engage as many voters as possible, was nothing more than a borrowed Jacksonian tactics used by a patchwork political party struggling to stay afloat in a sectional and divided political system. By looking at the Whigs innovations between in 1836 and 1840, one sees that at its core, the Union rests on a foundation of disunity.

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