

PRIMARY SOURCES SUPPLEMENT TO

WORLD HISTORY

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WEST PUBLISHING COMPANY

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL NEW YORK LOS ANGELES SAN FRANCISCO

XII

Historical Narratives Written by Participants: The Spanish Encounter with Montezuma, Ruler of the Aztecs

Bernal Díaz del Castillo accompanied Cortés in his conquest of the Mexica (Aztecs) in 1519–1520. Unlike a number of the other conquistadors, Bernal Díaz did not become wealthy as a result of these adventures. Fifty years later, when an old man, he decided to write down the history of the conquest using his own memory as a primary source. The difference between Bernal Díaz's account and a memoir is that he keeps himself almost entirely out of the narrative as a character and he draws on other sources as though he were studying the period without actually having participated in it. This phenomenon of moving back and forth between interpreter and one's own memory as primary source is one that Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has written about in regard to his participation in the Kennedy Administration and his subsequent writing of a history of that Administration.¹

Bernal Díaz describes in the following selection how the Spanish took Montezuma prisoner as well as the discussions with Montezuma about his own capture.

Bernal Díaz on the Capture of Montezuma

As we had determined the day before to seize Montezuma, we were praying to God all that night that it would turn out in a manner redounding to His Holy service, and the next morning the way it should be done was settled.

Cortés took with him five captains who were Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Juan Velásquez de Leon, Francisco de Lugo and Alonzo de Ávila, and he took me and our interpreters Doña Marina and Aguilar, and he told us all to keep on the alert, and the horsemen to have their horses saddled and bridled. As for our arms I need not call them to mind, for by day or night we always went armed and with our sandals on our feet, for at that time such was our footgear, and Montezuma had always seen us armed in that way when we went to speak to him, so did not take it as anything new, nor was he disturbed at all.

When we were all ready, our Captain sent to tell Montezuma that we were coming to his Palace, for this had always been our custom, and so that he should not be alarmed by our arriving suddenly.

¹ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Historian as Participant," in *Historical Studies Today*, ed. Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard, New York, W. W. Norton, 1971, pp. 393–412.

Montezuma understood more or less that Cortés was coming because he was annoyed about the Villa Rica affair, and he was afraid of him, but sent word for him to come and that he would be welcome.

When Cortés entered, after having made his usual salutations, he said to him through our interpreters: “Señor Montezuma, I am very much astonished that you, who are such a valiant Prince, after having declared that you are our friend, should order your Captains, whom you have stationed on the coast near to Tuxpan, to take arms against my Spaniards, and that they should dare to rob the towns that are in the keeping and under the protection of our King and master and to demand of them Indian men and women for sacrifice, and should kill a Spaniard, one of my brothers, and a horse.” (He did not wish to speak of the Captain nor of the six soldiers who died as soon as they arrived at Villa Rica, for Montezuma did not know about it, nor did the Indian Captains who had attacked them), and Cortés went on to say: “Being such a friend of yours I ordered my Captains to do all that was possible to help and serve you, and you have done exactly the contrary to us. Also in the affair at Cholula your Captains and a large force of warriors had received your own commands to kill us. I forgave it at the time out of my great regard for you, but now again your vassals and Captains have become insolent, and hold secret consultations stating that you wish us to be killed. I do not wish to begin a war on this account nor to destroy this city, I am willing to forgive it all, if silently and without raising any disturbance you will come with us to our quarters, where you will be as well served and attended to as though you were in your own house, but if you cry out or make any disturbance you will immediately be killed by these my Captains, whom I brought solely for this purpose.” When Montezuma heard this he was terrified and dumbfounded, and replied that he had never ordered his people to take arms against us, and that he would at once send to summon his Captains so that the truth should be known, and he would chastise them, and at that very moment he took from his arm and wrote the sign and seal of Juichilobos, which was only done when he gave an important and weighty command that was to be carried out at once. With regard to being taken prisoner and leaving his Palace against his will, he said that he was not the person to whom such an order could be given, and that he would not go. Cortés replied to him with very good arguments and Montezuma answered him with even better, showing that he ought not to leave his house. In this way more than half an hour was spent over talk, and when Juan Velásquez de Leon and the other Captains saw that they were wasting time over it and could no longer await the moment when they should remove him from his house and hold him a prisoner, they spoke to Cortés somewhat angrily and said: “What is the good of your making so many words, let us either take him prisoner, or

stab him, tell him once more that if he cries out or makes an uproar we will kill him, for it is better at once to save our lives or to lose them,” and as Juan Velásquez said this with a loud and rather terrifying voice, for such was his way of speaking, Montezuma, who saw that our Captains were angered, asked Doña Marina what they were saying in such loud tones. As Doña Marina was very clever, she said: “Señor Montezuma, what I counsel you, is to go at once to their quarters without any disturbance at all, for I know that they will pay you much honor as a great Prince such as you are, otherwise you will remain here a dead man, but in their quarters you will learn the truth.” Then Montezuma said to Cortés: “Señor Malinche, if this is what you desire, I have a son and two legitimate daughters, take them as hostages, and do not put this affront on me, what will my chieftains say if they see me taken off as a prisoner?” Cortés replied to him that he must come with them himself and there was no alternative. At the end of much more discussion that took place, Montezuma said that he would go willingly, and then Cortés and our Captains bestowed many caresses on him and told him that they begged him not to be annoyed, and to tell his captains and the men of his guard that he was going of his own free will, because he had spoken to his Idol Huichilobos and the priests who attended him, and that it was beneficial for his health and the safety of his life that he should be with us. His rich litter, in which he was used to go out with all the Captains who accompanied him was promptly brought, and he went to our quarters where we placed guards and watchmen over him.²

Compare Bernal Díaz's detailed account with the account given by the descendents of the Aztecs (Mexica) themselves. After the Spanish conquest, some Spanish missionaries recorded in the Nahuatl language the Mexica account of what happened. Notice that the Mexica account is terse, not concerned with details, and emphasizing different aspects of the encounter between Montezuma and Cortés than Díaz does. The Nahuatl account begins with the very first meeting of Montezuma with Cortés.

Nahuatl Account of the Encounter

The Spanish arrived in Xoloco, near the entrance to Tenochtitlan. This was the end of the march, for they had reached their goal.

² Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico, 1517–1521*, trans. A. P. Maudsley, New York, Farrar, Strauss, 1956, pp. 228–231.

Motecuhzoma now arrayed himself in his finery, preparing to go out to meet them. The other great princes also adorned their persons, as did the nobles and their chieftains and knights. They all went out together to meet the strangers.

They brought trays heaped with the finest flowers—the flower that resembles a shield; the flower shaped like a heart; in the center, the flower with the sweetest aroma; and the fragrant yellow flower, the most precious of all. They also brought garlands of flowers, and ornaments for the breast, and necklaces of gold, necklaces hung with rich stones, necklaces fashioned in the petatillo style.

Thus Motecuhzoma went out to meet them, there in Huitzillan. He presented many gifts to the Captain and his commanders, those who had come to make war. He showered gifts upon them and hung flowers and bands of flowers to adorn their breasts; he set garlands of flowers upon their heads. Then he hung the gold necklaces around their necks and gave them presents of every sort as gifts of welcome.

When Motecuhzoma had given necklaces to each one, Cortes asked him: “Are you Motecuhzoma? Are you the king? Is it true that you are the king Motecuhzoma?”

And the king said: “Yes, I am Motecuhzoma.” Then he stood up to welcome Cortes; he came forward, bowed his head low and addressed him in these words: “Our lord, you are weary. The journey has tired you, but now you have arrived on the earth. You have come to your city, Mexico. You have come here to sit on your throne, to sit under its canopy.

“The kings who have gone before, your representatives, guarded it and preserved it for your coming. The kings Itzcoatl, Motecuhzoma the Elder, Axayacatl, Tizoc, and Ahuitzotl ruled for you in the City of Mexico. The people were protected by their swords and sheltered by their shields.

“Do the kings know the destiny of those they left behind, their posterity? If only they are watching! If only they can see what I see!

“No, it is not a dream. I am not walking in my sleep. I am not seeing you in my dreams. . . . I have seen you at last! I have met you face to face! I was in agony for five days, for ten days, with my eyes fixed on the Region of the Mystery. And now you have come out of the clouds and mists to sit on your throne again.

“This was foretold by the kings who governed your city, and now it has taken place. You have come back to us; you have come down from the sky. Rest now, and take possession of your royal houses. Welcome to your land, my lords!”

When Motecuhzoma had finished, La Malinche translated his address into Spanish so that the Captain could understand it. Cortes replied in his strange and savage tongue,

speaking first to La Malinche: “Tell Motecuhzoma that we are his friends. There is nothing to fear. We have wanted to see him for along time, and now we have seen his face and heard his words. Tell him that we love him well and that our hearts are contented.”

Then he said to Motecuhzoma: “We have come to your house in Mexico as friends. There is nothing to fear.”

La Malinche translated this speech and the Spaniards grasped Motecuhzoma’s hands and patted his back to show their affection for him.³

These friendly relations soon changed, as Díaz described in the first selection. Whatever genuine feelings of affection the Spaniards may have had for Montezuma were overwhelmed by their desire for gold.

The Spaniards examined everything they saw. They dismounted from their horses, and mounted them again, and dismounted again, so as not to miss anything.

The chiefs who accompanied Motecuhzoma were: Cacama, king of Tezcoco; Tettlepanquetzaltzin, king of Tlacopan; Itzcuahtzin the Tlacochealcatl, lord of Tlatelolco; and Topan-temoc, Motecuhzoma’s treasurer in Tlatelolco. These four chiefs were standing in a file.

The other princes were: Atlixcatzin; Tepeoatzin, The Tlacochealcatl; Quetzalaztatzin, the keeper of the chalk; Totomotzin; Hecateupatiltzin; and Cuappiatzin.

When Motecuhzoma was imprisoned, they all went into hiding. They ran away to hide and treacherously abandoned him!

When the Spaniards entered the Royal House, they placed Motecuhzoma under guard and kept him under their vigilance. . . .

In the morning the Spaniards told Motecuhzoma what they needed in the way of supplies: tortillas, fried chickens, hens’ eggs, pure water, firewood and charcoal. Also: large, clean cooking pots, water jars, pitchers, dishes and other pottery. Motecuhzoma ordered that it be sent to them. The chiefs who received this order were angry with the king and no longer revered or respected him. But they furnished the Spaniards with all the provisions they needed—food, beverages and water, and fodder for the horses.

When the Spaniards were installed in the palace, they asked Motecuhzoma about the city’s resources and reserves and about the warriors’ ensigns and shields. They questioned

³ *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Miguel Leon-Portilla, Boston, Beacon Press, 1992, pp. 63–65

him closely and then demanded gold.

Motecuhzoma guided them to it. They surrounded him and crowded close with their weapons. He walked in the center, while they formed a circle around him.

When they arrived at the treasure house called Teucalco, the riches of gold and feathers were brought out to them: ornaments made of quetzal feathers, richly worked shields, disks of gold, the necklaces of the idols, gold nose plugs, gold greaves and bracelets and crowns.

The Spanish immediately stripped the feathers from the gold shields and ensigns. They gathered all the gold into a great mound and set fire to everything else, regardless of its value. Then they melted down the gold into ingots. As for the precious green stones, they took only the best of them; the rest were snatched up by the Tlaxcaltecas. The Spaniards searched through the whole treasure house, questioning and quarreling and seized every object they thought was beautiful.⁴

- 1. How would you characterize the difference in the way Díaz describes the Spanish attitude toward Montezuma from the way the Nahuatl account describes it?*
- 2. From these excerpts, what would you say were the differences in values between the Spanish and the Aztecs? What things did they consider to have higher and lower value?*
- 3. What are the differences and similarities between the way Cortés' captains behave and the chiefs that accompanied Montezuma?*
- 4. The person called Doña Marina in Díaz's account and La Malinche in the Nahuatl account is the same person, an Indian woman named Malintzin, who acted as interpreter for Cortés and later bore his son. What differences do you detect in the way Díaz presents Doña Marina from the way La Malinche is presented in the Nahuatl account?*

⁴ *Broken Spears*, pp. 65–66, 68.

XIII

Memoirs: Catherine the Great's Account of Her Husband Peter III

Memoirs differ from autobiography in that they usually do not try to be a comprehensive account of the author's life. Instead they deal with specific important events or sequence of events the author participated in from that author's point of view. So there is no attempt to provide a historical perspective or gather other sources of information or compare and analyze them. Catherine II (ruled 1762–1796) was born Sophie, Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst on May 2, 1729. At the age of fifteen, she was invited to Russia by the reigning empress Elizabeth with the intention of marrying her to the empress' nephew Peter of Holstein, the heir to the throne. Catherine married Peter the following year and for the next seventeen years found herself in the difficult position of being the unwanted wife of the heir to the throne. Years later, when she was ruler in her own right, Catherine wrote her memoirs about her earlier experiences at the court. In this first excerpt, Catherine describes her future husband, the Grand Duke, as a teenager.

From the *Memoirs* of Catherine II

During my illness the Grand Duke had shown me every attention. When I was better he kept it up. He seemed to like me; but I can neither say that I liked him nor that I disliked him. I only knew how to obey, and my mother had to marry me; I believe in truth however that the Russian crown meant more to me than he.

I was sixteen years old at the time. Before he had the smallpox, he was quite handsome, but was very small and childlike. He used to talk to me about his playthings and toy soldiers with which he busied himself early and late. To be polite and agreeable, I listened to him, but I often yawned without exactly knowing why. But I did not go away and leave him and he thought that he ought to talk to me; as he spoke only of things that gave him pleasure, he was well entertained when he talked with me a long time. Many people looked on this as a genuine attraction, especially those who desired my marriage. But we never used between us the language of tenderness; it was surely not my business to bring it into use, my modesty would not have allowed that even if I had felt so inclined, and my natural pride was sufficient to prevent my taking the first steps. But it did not at all occur to him, which, frankly speaking, did not prepossess me in his favor. For no matter how well brought up a maiden may be, she always likes to hear the words of flattery and tenderness, especially from one to whom she may listen without blushing.

The Grand Duke Peter's good looks were disfigured by smallpox and he seemed to lose interest in his future bride. The following excerpt describes Peter shortly after they were married.

The Grand Duke's head was full of childish tricks; surrounded by his servants, in whom alone he took any interest, he occupied himself constantly with playing at soldiers. . . .

I should certainly have loved my young husband if he had only wished to be amiable or could have been so. But in the early days of our marriage I came to a bad conclusion about him. I said to myself: "If you love this man you will be the most unhappy creature on God's earth; your innermost being will demand response. But the man scarcely takes any notice of you. He scarcely talks of anything but dolls and he comes near to paying more attention to every other woman than he does to you. You are too proud to complain about it; so take care, please, regarding any tenderness toward this gentleman. Think of yourself first, Madame." This first impression, made on a heart as soft as wax, remained with me; and this idea never again went out of my mind.

But naturally I was on my guard against letting any word escape me about my firm resolve, which was never to love anyone devotedly who would not reward me with an unlimited response. But as my heart was constructed, it would have belonged wholly and completely to a husband who loved me and from whom I had no cause to fear all the mortifications that were allotted to me from mine. I have always regarded jealousy, doubt, mistrust, and all that proceeds from them as the greatest misfortune and I have always been convinced it is in the husband's power to have his wife love him if she is good-hearted and amiably disposed. Kindness and good manners on the husband's part will always win her heart.

In the following excerpt, one becomes more aware of Catherine's irritation with her husband, her general unhappiness, and her seeking of solace in reading.

The Grand Duke had at that time only two occupations: part of the time he scraped his violin and the rest of the time he trained dogs, the so-called Charlots, for hunting. I was obliged to listen from seven o'clock in the morning until late in the night either to the ear-splitting discords that he vigorously drew forth from his fiddle or to the barking and terrible howling of five or six dogs that he cudged horribly the whole day through. I must say that I was beside myself and suffered terribly from both kinds of music that tortured my ear drums from early morning till late into the night. Excepting perhaps the dogs, no one was as unhappy as I was. Yet I read something; I had undertaken at the time to read the *History of Germany* by Peter Barre, Canon of St. Geneviève, in nine volumes quarto. In the course of

the winter and a part of the spring I read all nine through.

Soon the Grand Duke began taking interest in other women in the court, which served to humiliate Catherine. She tried to hide her feelings of humiliation from other people, but, as the following description indicates, it was sometimes difficult for her to do so.

In the evening, we played cards; this was followed by supper. One evening I had a bad headache; I had to leave the table and go to bed. The Grand Duke had on this evening paid court to the Princess of Courland more than was his usual custom, which Madame Vladislav had observed through some crack or keyhole. Incidentally, she possessed the praiseworthy habit of satisfying her curiosity in this way. When I went to my room to undress, she could not refrain from seeking the reason for my indisposition in my jealousy of the Princess. She began by saying all manner of ill about her, whereby His Imperial Highness also came in for severe thrusts because of his bad taste and his relation to me, for which she had all manner of descriptive terms. Madame Vladislav's talk, although it was in my favor, made me weep. I could not endure the thought that I had aroused anybody's pity and she had let me see that she sympathized with my position.

I went to bed and fell asleep. The Grand Duke, very much intoxicated, came to bed at last; for in the first nine years of our marriage he never slept anywhere but in my bed. Later however, he slept there but seldom; that is a peculiarity that in my opinion is not without importance in view of the state of things that I have already mentioned.*

As I lay in bed, he awakened me, although he knew that I was ill, and began to talk about the Princes of Courland, of her personal charm, her talents, and her gift for conversation.

My imagination had been aroused by Madam Vladislav's words, my head was not quite clear on account of the pain, and I was indignant at the lack of consideration shown by this intoxicated man who awakened me only to talk about unpleasant things. So I replied with a few words, in which my bad humor was not wholly repressed, and pretended to go to sleep again. Both of these things angered him. He gave me a couple of rude thrusts in the side with his elbow, turned his back on me and went to sleep.

* This last passage, beginning with "for in the first nine years of our marriage . . ." was deleted from the first Russian edition of Catherine's *Memoirs* published in 1907 by the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. Most likely, the concern was that this passage would give the impression that Peter was not the father of Catherine's son Paul, who later became emperor in his own right. Paul was born in 1754, nine years after Catherine and Peter married. At the time there were rumors that Paul was not Peter's son, which brought his legitimacy into question.

This new treatment was very painful to me. I wept the whole night over it but was on my guard against saying a word about it to anyone. Whether the Grand Duke had forgotten it the next morning, or whether he was ashamed of it, in any case he said not a word about it and never afterwards did he mention the occurrence to me.

In 1762, the Empress Elizabeth died and Peter succeeded to the throne. Assassination or a coup d'état were ways for the ruling elite to deal with monarchs who did not carry out programs in the interest of themselves and the ruling class, or whose actions threatened the legitimacy of the ruling structure. And Peter's outrageous behavior certainly tested that legitimacy. In the following excerpt, Catherine describes her husband's mischievousness at the funeral of the Empress Elizabeth. This type of behavior was seen as undermining the dignity of the position of emperor and ultimately led to Peter's overthrow. Catherine was particularly offended by Peter's actions at the funeral because of her affection for Elizabeth.

the Emperor was in a particularly good mood that day, and during the sad ceremony, he invented a game for himself. He lingered from time to time behind the hearse and allowed it to advance about thirty sashen [about 70 yards], and then he would run to catch up with it as fast as he could. The elder courtiers, who carried the train of his black robe of state, especially Lord Marshal Count Sheremetev, who had the end of the mantle, could not keep up with him and were obliged to let the mantle go. As the wind blew it out, Peter III was still more delighted, and repeated the joke several times. So it happened that I and all who followed him remained far back behind the coffin. Finally a message had to be sent up to the front and the whole mourning procession halted until those who were behind could catch up again. Criticism of the Emperor's outrageous behavior spread rapidly and his unsuitable deportment was the subject of much talk.

Within six months Peter III had abdicated the throne and Catherine became the ruler. Given the years of unhappiness she experienced, it must have given her some pleasure to pen the following words in a letter to Count Poniatowski on August 2, 1762, concerning the last days of Peter III.

Catherine Writes to Poniatowski About Peter's Demise

Peter III abdicated in Oranienbaum in complete freedom, surrounded by 1590 Holsteiners, and came with Elisabeth Vorontsov, Gudovich, and Izamilov to Peterhof, where I gave him six officers and several soldiers as a guard. . . .

Then I sent the deposed Emperor, under the command of Aleksei Orlov with four officers and a division of peaceful chosen people, to a remote and very pleasant place called Ropsha, 25 versts from Petersburg, while decent and suitable quarters were fitted up in Schlüsselburg, and so had time to provide relays of horses for him.

But the good God arranged it otherwise! The anxiety had caused him to have diarrhea, which lasted for three days and still continued on the fourth. On this day he drank immoderately, for he had everything he wanted except his freedom. (He had incidentally asked for his mistress, his dog, his negro, and his violin; but in order to avoid a scandal and prevent increasing the excitement of his guards I had only sent him the last three.) He was attacked by a hemorrhoidal colic and fever fantasies. For two days he was in this condition; this was followed by great weakness and in spite of all that medical aid could do he breathed his last, after he had asked for a Lutheran pastor.

I feared the officers might have poisoned him. Therefore, I had the body dissected. But it was completely proved that not the least trace of poison existed. His stomach was quite healthy, but an inflammation of the intestines and a fit of apoplexy had carried him off. His heart was unusually small and quite shrunken.⁵

1. *If you had been Catherine in the days at court before she became empress, how would you have tried to protect yourself from unhappiness?*
2. *Do you think Catherine was being unfair or overly biased in her descriptions of Peter III's behavior?*
3. *Can you think of any examples of outrageous behavior on the part of members of other ruling families?*

⁵ *Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, trans. Katherine Anthony, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1927, pp. 92–93, 168, 205–206, 293–294, 315–316.

XIV

Official Documents: The British Colonies in America Break Away from England

By July 1776, it seemed a foregone conclusion that the British colonies in America would declare their independence. A long series of confrontations, demonstrations, and protests, including the Boston Tea Party, the Boston Massacre, and outright conflict between British and colonial forces had already occurred. The offensive behavior of King George III is documented in detail in the Declaration. In reading through the list of complaints, one begins to wonder why the Declaration was not issued sooner, especially if British treatment of the colonies was so brutal.

The Declaration of Independence

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these

States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained, and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places, unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners: refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: For protecting them by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: For imposing Taxes on us without

our consent: For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by Jury: For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses: For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Provinces, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: For suspending our own Legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravished our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstance of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

But only a year earlier, on July 8, 1775, the Second Continental Congress, which included twenty-five of the same people who later signed the Declaration of Independence, sent a very different document to King George III. At the time the Continental Congress drafted this so-called “Olive Branch” Petition, hostilities had already occurred between colonial forces and British troops at Lexington, Concord, and Charlestown (Breed’s Hill), and George Washington had taken command of the colonial army that was besieging the British in Boston. But in the “Olive Branch” Petition, there is no tone of defiance, no accusations of George III as a tyrant, and no expression of self-righteous indignation at the policies of the British government. Instead, the Petition presents just the opposite impression, as we see such revolutionary firebrands as John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston, Jr., Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, etc., adopt a respectful posture in presenting their “humble petition” and in praising the “mild and just government” of “[t]he union between . . . Mother Country and these colonies.” In this Petition, the Continental Congress places the blame for the difficulties between the colonies and Great Britain on the King’s ministers and appeals to the King’s “magnanimity and benevolence” to rectify the situation. The document closes with a reaffirmation that the signers are the “most dutiful subjects and the most affectionate colonists” of the king, who they fervently pray “may enjoy along [sic] & prosperous reign.”

What we see here is a last-ditch effort on the part of the members of the Second Continental Congress to reach some reconciliation with the government of Great Britain. By blaming the king’s ministers as the source of the problems, the signers of this Petition are providing a means for George III to reverse the British government’s policies and to save face while doing so. They were well aware that King George knew of and approved the various Acts previously imposed on the American colonies. And it is not clear what chance they thought they had for success, but given the alternative—a violent conflict against one of the major military powers of the world in

which victory was no means guaranteed or even likely—a final ardent appeal may well have served to save lives and property. If the appeal was turned down, as it indeed was, then the leaders of the American colonies could embark upon an insurrection knowing full well that they had exhausted all peaceful means of resolving the issues that separated them from the British government.

The “Olive Branch” Petition

To the Kings most excellent Majesty

Most gracious sovereign,

We your Majesty’s faithful subjects of the colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts bay, Rhode-island and Providence plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the counties of New-Castle Kent & Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina and South Carolina in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of these colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in general Congress, entreat your Majesty’s gracious attention to this our humble petition.

The union between our Mother Country and these colonies, and the energy of mild and just government, produced benefits so remarkably important and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known.

Her rivals observing, that there was no probability of this happy connection being broken by civil dissentions, and apprehending its future effects if left any longer undisturbed, resolved to prevent her receiving such continual and formidable accessions of wealth and strength, by checking the growth of those settlements from which they were to be derived.

In the prosecution of this attempt, events so unfavourable to the design took place, that every friend to the interests of Great Britain and these colonies entertained pleasing and reasonable expectations of seeing an additional force and extention immediately given to the operations of the union hitherto experienced, by an enlargement of the dominions of the crown, and the removal of ancient and warlike enemies to a greater distance.

At the conclusion therefore of the late war, the most glorious and advantageous that ever had been carried on by British arms, your loyal colonists having contributed to its success, by such repeated and strenuous exertions, as frequently procured them the distinguished approbation of your Majesty, of the late king, and of Parliament, doubted not, but that they should be permitted with the rest of the empire, to share in the blessings of peace and the emoluments of

victory and conquest.* While these recent and honorable acknowledgments of their merits remained on record in the journals and acts of that august legislature the parliament, undelivered by the imputation or even the suspicion of any offence, they were alarmed by a new system of Statutes and regulations adopted for the administration of the colonies, that filled their minds with the most painful fears & jealousies; and to their inexpressible astonishment, perceived the dangers of a foreign quarrel quickly succeeded by domestick dangers, in their judgment of a more dreadful kind.

Nor were their anxieties alleviated by any tendency in this system to promote the welfare of their Mother country: For 'tho its effects were more immediately felt by them, yet its influence appeared to be injurious to the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain.

We shall decline the ungrateful task of describing the irksome variety of artifices practised by many of your Majesty's ministers, the delusive pretences, fruitless terrors, and unavailing severities, that have from time to time been dealt out by them in their attempts to execute this impolitic plan, or of tracing thro' a series of years past the progress of the unhappy differences between Great Britain and these colonies, that have flowed from this fatal source.

Your Majesty's ministers persevering in their measures and proceeding to open hostilities for enforcing them, have compelled us to arm in our own[†] defence, and have engaged us in a controversy so peculiarly abhorrent to the affections of your still faithful colonists, that where we consider whom we must oppose in this contest and if it continues what may be the consequences, our own particular misfortunes are accounted by us, only as parts of our distress.

Knowing, to what violent resentments and incurable animosities, civil discords are apt to exasperate and inflame the contending parties, we think ourselves required by indispensable obligations to Almighty God, to your Majesty, to our fellow subjects and to ourselves, immediately to use all the means in our power not incompatible with our safety, for stopping the further effusion of blood, and for averting the impending calamities that threaten the British empire.

Thus called upon to address your Majesty on affairs of such moment to America and probably to all your dominions, we are earnestly desirous of performing this office with the utmost deference for your Majesty; and we therefore pray, that your royal magnanimity and benevolence may make the most favourable construction of our expressions on so uncommon

* The reference is to the French and Indian War (1754–1760).

† The word *own* was added later above the line in the same hand.

an occasion. Could we represent in their full force the sentiments that agitate the minds of us your dutiful subjects, we are persuaded, your Majesty would ascribe [sic] any seeming deviation from reverence, in our language, and even in our conduct, not to any reprehensible intention, but to the impossibility of reconciling the usual appearances of respect with a just attention to our own preservation against those artful and cruel enemies, who abuse your royal confidence and authority for the purpose of effecting our destruction.

Attached to your Majestys person, family and government with all the devotion that principle and affection can inspire, connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your Majesty, that we not only most ardently desire the former harmony between her and these colonies may be restored, but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis, as to perpetuate its blessings uninterrupted by any future dissensions to succeeding generations in both countries, and to transmit your Majestys name to posterity adorned with that signal and lasting glory that has attended the memory of those illustrious personages, whose virtues and abilities have extricated states from dangerous convulsions, and by securing happiness to others have erected the most noble and durable monuments to their own fame.

We beg leave further to assure your Majesty, that notwithstanding the sufferings of your loyal colonists during the course of the present controversy, our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin, to request such a reconciliation, as might in any manner be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare. These, related as we are to her, honor & duty, as well as inclination induce us to support and advance; and the apprehensions that now oppress our hearts with unspeakable greif [sic], being once removed, your Majesty will find your faithful subjects on this continent, ready and willing at all times, as they ever have been, with their lives and fortunes to assert and maintain the rights and interests of your Majesty and of our Mother country.

We therefore beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us releif [sic] from our afflicting fears and jealousies occasioned by the System before mentioned, and to settle peace thro every part of your dominions, with all humility submitting to your Majesty's wise consideration, whether it may not be expedient for facilitating those important purposes, that your Majesty be pleased to direct some mode by which the united applications of your faithful colonists to the throne in pursuance of their common councils may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation; and that in the mean time, measures be taken for preventing the further destruction of the lives of your

Majesty's subjects; and that such Statutes as more immediately distress any of your Majesty's colonies be repealed: For by such arrangements as your Majesty's wisdom can form, for collecting the united sense of your American people, we are convinced, your Majesty would receive such satisfactory proofs of the disposition of the colonists towards their Sovereign and the parent State, that the wished for opportunity would soon* be restored [sic] to them, of evincing the sincerity of their professions by every testimony of devotion becoming the most dutiful subjects and the most affectionate colonists.

That your Majesty may enjoy along [sic] & prosperous reign, and that your descendants may govern your dominions with honor to themselves and happiness to their subjects is our sincere fervent prayer.†

1. Read through the "Olive Branch" Petition as though you did not know who the signers were. See if you can find any similarities between it and the Declaration of Independence that would lead you to conclude that many of the same people that signed it also signed the Declaration of Independence one year later.
2. Most people are familiar with the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence, but fewer people remember the list of complaints against George III. Which complaints do you find most surprising?
3. What do you think led the members of the Continental Congress to change from blaming the king's ministers in July 1775 to blaming the king himself in July 1776?
4. Were the problems described in the "Olive Branch" Petition the same as, similar to, or different from those described in the Declaration of Independence?

* The word *soon* was added later above the line in the same hand.

† I publish this text according to the facsimile found in Randolph G. Adams, *The "Olive Branch" Petition: To King George III of England from the Second Continental Congress Signed by Forty-Six of Its Members*, New York, American Art Association Anderson Galleries, 1932, no pagination. I wish to thank Clark Baxter for drawing my attention to the "Olive Branch" Petition and for pointing out to me its sharp contrast with the Declaration of Independence.

XV

Diplomatic Correspondence:**Lin Tse-hsu and King Lobengula Write to Queen Victoria**

The British had been attempting to open trade with China since the early seventeenth century, but China preferred to reject that trade, claiming that it needed nothing from the West. From the end of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century, British merchants began to make some headway in trade with China. The problem was to find a product that the Chinese wanted. The British merchants soon found that product—the addictive drug opium. Great Britain had been importing tea and silk from China for a number of decades. The British ships then carried cotton goods from England to India. Merchants loaded those same ships with opium in India bound for China. This three-cornered trade proved to be profitable. So when the Chinese tried to prohibit the import of opium, the British merchants complained to the British government. The Chinese official Lin Tse-hsu, whom the Emperor had placed in charge of stopping the drug smuggling, wrote a letter of complaint to Queen Victoria. His protests fell on deaf ears and China soon found itself involved in a war with Great Britain that it lost. As a result of the Opium War of 1839–1840, the British kept open the profitable drug trade to China.

(1)

Lin Tse-hsu Protests to Queen Victoria About Opium

His Majesty the Emperor comforts and cherishes foreigners as well as Chinese: he loves all the people in the world without discrimination. Whenever profit is found, he wishes to share it with all men; whenever harm appears, he likewise will eliminate it on behalf of all of mankind. His heart is in fact the heart of the whole universe.

Generally speaking, the succeeding rulers of your honorable country have been respected and obedient. Time and again they have sent petitions to China, saying: “We are grateful to His Majesty the Emperor for the impartial and favorable treatment he has granted to the citizens of my country who have come to China to trade,” etc. I am pleased to learn that you, as the ruler of your honorable country, are thoroughly familiar with the principle of righteousness and are grateful for the favor that His Majesty the Emperor has bestowed upon your subjects. Because of this fact, the Celestial Empire, following its traditional policy of treating foreigners with kindness, has been doubly considerate towards the people from England. You have traded in China for almost 200 years, and as a result, your country has become wealthy and prosperous.

As this trade has lasted for a long time, there are bound to be unscrupulous as well as honest traders. Among the unscrupulous are those who bring opium to China to harm the Chinese; they succeed so well that this poison has spread far and wide in all the provinces.

You, I hope, will certainly agree that people who pursue material gains to the great detriment of the welfare of others can be neither tolerated by Heaven nor endured by men. . . .

Your country is more than 60,000 *li** from China. The purpose of your ships in coming to China is to realize a large profit. Since this profit is realized in China and is in fact taken away from the Chinese people, how can foreigners return injury for the benefit they have received by sending this poison to harm their benefactors? They may not intend to harm others on purpose, but the fact remains that they are so obsessed with material gain that they have no concern whatever for the harm they can cause to others. Have they no conscience? I have heard that you strictly prohibit opium in your own country, indicating unmistakably that you know how harmful opium is. You do not wish opium to harm your own country, but you choose to bring that harm to other countries such as China. Why?

The products that originate from China are all useful items. They are good for food and other purposes and are easy to sell. Has China produced one item that is harmful to foreign countries? For instance, tea and rhubarb are so important to foreigners' livelihood that they have to consume them every day. Were China to concern herself only with her own advantage without showing any regard for other people's welfare, how could foreigners continue to live? Foreign products like woolen cloth and beiges rely on Chinese raw materials such as silk for their manufacturing. Had China sought only her own advantage, where would the foreigners' profit come from? The products that foreign countries need and have to import from China are too numerous to enumerate: from food products such as molasses, ginger, and cassia to useful necessities such as silk and porcelain. The imported goods from foreign countries, on the other hand, are merely playthings that can be easily dispensed with without causing any ill effect. Sine we do not need these things really, what harm would come if we should decide to stop foreign trade altogether? The reason why we unhesitatingly allow foreigners to ship out such Chinese products as tea and silk is that we feel that wherever there is an advantage, it should be shared by all the people in the world. . . .

I have heard that you are a kind, compassionate monarch. I am sure that you will not do to others what you yourself do not desire. I have also heard that you have instructed every British ship that sails for Canton not to bring any prohibited goods to China. It seems that your policy is as enlightened as it is proper. The fact that British ships have continued to bring opium to China results perhaps from the impossibility of making a thorough inspection of all of them owing to their large numbers. I am sending you this letter to reiterate the

* This distance is equivalent to about 20,000 miles and is computed according to the distance ships had to travel between England and China.

seriousness with which we enforce the law of the Celestial Empire and to make sure that merchants from your honorable country will not attempt to violate it again.

I have heard that the areas under your direct jurisdiction such as London, Scotland, and Ireland do not produce opium; it is produced instead in your Indian possessions such as Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Patna, and Malwa. In these possessions the English people not only plant opium poppies that stretch from one mountain to another but also open factories to manufacture this terrible drug. As months accumulate and years pass by, the poison they have produced increases in its wicked intensity, and its repugnant odor reaches as high as the sky. Heaven is furious with anger, and all the gods are moaning with pain! It is hereby suggested that you destroy and plow under all of these opium plants and grow food crops instead, while issuing an order to punish severely anyone who dares to plant opium poppies again. If you adopt this policy of love so as to produce good and exterminate evil, Heaven will protect you, and gods will bring you good fortune. Moreover, you will enjoy a long life and be rewarded with a multitude of children and grandchildren, you can bring happiness to others as well as yourself. Why do you not do it?

The right of foreigners to reside in China is a special favor granted by the Celestial Empire, and the profits they have made are those realized in China. As time passes by, some of them stay in China for a longer period than they do in their own country. For every government, past or present, one of its primary functions is to educate all the people living within its jurisdiction, foreigners as well as its own citizens, about the law and to punish them if they choose to violate it. Since a foreigner who goes to England to trade has to obey the English law, how can an Englishman not obey the Chinese law when he is physically within China? The present law calls for the imposition of the death sentence on any Chinese who has peddled or smoked opium. Since a Chinese could not peddle or smoke opium if foreigners had not brought it to China, it is clear that the true culprits of a Chinese's death as a result of an opium conviction are the opium traders from foreign countries. Being the cause of other people's death, why should they themselves be spared from capital punishment? A murderer of one person is subject to the death sentence; just imagine how many people opium has killed! This is the rationale behind the new law that says that any foreigner who brings opium to China will be sentenced to death by hanging or beheading. Our purpose is to eliminate this poison once and for all and to the benefit of all mankind. . . .⁶

1. *True to his Confucian education, Lin Tse-hsu uses a number of arguments based on moral*

⁶ Dun J. Li, *China in Transition 1517–1911*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969, pp. 64–67.

force to persuade Queen Victoria to stop the opium trade. How many such arguments can you find in this letter?

2. Some of Lin Tse-hsu's arguments are faulty either because they are internally fallacious, such as post hoc ergo propter hoc or they do not correspond to external reality. How many of the arguments that you found in question 1 are fallacious for one or the other reason?

When Cecil Rhodes was building his economic empire in South Africa, he had visions of a Cape to Cairo telegraph, then railroad. One of the problems was the existence of tribes in between South Africa and Egypt that would make such communication and transportation connections extremely difficult if not impossible. Rhodes, being a dynamic businessman was not about to allow a few tribal kings thwart his vision and by hook or by crook he intended to fulfill it. Here, one of the victims of Rhodes' vision and methods writes a letter of complaint to Queen Victoria. It does not contain Lin Tse-hsu's reasonings and arguments, but it was no more successful in achieving redress.

(2)

King Lobengula Protests to Queen Victoria About Cecil Rhodes

Some time ago a party of men came into my country, the principal one appearing to be a man called Rudd. They asked me for a place to dig gold and said they would give me certain things for the right to do so. I told them to bring what they would and I would show them what I would give. A document was written and presented to me for signature. I asked what it contained, and was told that in it were my words and the words of those men. I put my hand to it. About three months afterwards I heard from other sources that I had given by that document the right to all the minerals in my country.⁷

1. The historian Carl Becker commented on this letter that "[t]hus Lobengula lost his country but learned something of European "civilization." Do you think that is a fair comment to make about European civilization?

2. Besides the fact that Queen Victoria chose not to respond to either letter, what similarities do you see between the two letters?

⁷ From Carl L. Becker, *Modern History: The Rise of Democratic, Scientific, and Industrialized Civilization*, New York, Silver, Burdett, 1935, p. 603.

XVI

**Autobiography: Sir Harry H. Johnston's Account
of His Encounter with King Jaja of Opobo**

Autobiography presents its own complex issues of evidence and bias for the historian. On the one hand, the person writing the autobiography is, for the most part, describing events and people that he or she has seen directly. On the other hand, the autobiographer may be seeing only part of a larger picture and may be enhancing their own importance in the events being described. People writing about themselves understand their own motives but may not understand those of others. In the following excerpt from his autobiography, Sir Harry H. Johnston, who was British Consul to the area that is now governed by Nigeria, describes his encounter with King Jaja of Opobo. Note how Johnston justifies his own actions but is suspicious and wary of those of Jaja. At issue is the trade in palm oil down the Niger River to waiting British merchants in the delta who would carry the oil to England for various uses.

Jaja had begun life as the slave of the King or one of the chiefs of Bonny. I could never ascertain decidedly what part of the Niger Delta had given him birth, but I think he was an Ibo, from Bende, and was sold as a slave when he was twelve years old. During the 'fifties and 'sixties he had become noteworthy by his ability. In the 'seventies he seems to have definitely settled down on the banks of the Opobo, a river which though it has several estuarine creek connections with the main Niger was derived from independent sources in the Ibo country. From being a trusted slave trading for his master Jaja rose to the position of an independent chieftain. The British war vessels visited his town occasionally; their commanders found him intelligent and hospitable, he gave them amusing entertainments and elaborate feasts. Among other extraordinary persons attracted to his "court" was an American Negress from Liberia: Emma Jaja Johnson, as she styled herself. I don't think she was ever a wife of Jaja: she was elderly and very plain. But she had become his secretary, after being governess to his children. Yet she looked into his theory of dispute with the Consuls and told him he had no "case."

The point was this: Jaja, early in his history as an independent chieftain—for he had been recognized as such by Consul Livingstone* who made a treaty with him in 1873—wished to constitute palm oil and palm kernels throughout all his domain his own monopoly. He would

* Charles Livingstone the brother of David who was given this consulate after the Zambezi Expedition.

farm the palm forests of the interior, be the sole seller of their oil products, and compensate the natives who brought in the oil or the kernels. He in fact would do all the trade; and as he had fixed a price at which the European merchants could buy these things from him, he resented the fluctuations in value of palm oil in the European market and the consequent occasional change of purchase price on the part of the merchants. After several years of disputes, he selected one firm with an agency at Opobo—Messrs. A. Miller Brothers of Glasgow—and sent all the oil to them.

No doubt the large and constant quantity he placed at their disposal compensated them for the slightly increased cost in the purchase; or they may have hoped that if the other firms had to abandon Opobo and they secured the monopoly they might bring Jaja to reason regarding the selling price. At any rate they had had in force a monopoly of oil purchase for some two years in the Opobo district, which materially increased the prosperity of their firm.

Amongst the questions to be solved was the area of Jaja's territory. If it were only ten square miles from the coast inland and could be fixed at that, it might have been better worth while to consider this ten square miles as being Jaja's personal property, his "farm," the produce of which he could dispose of as he pleased. But the Opobo River and its mouth with a "good" bar was the port for all the eastern portion of the Niger Delta, east of Bonny and west of the Cross River (Old Calabar).

Jaja had been spending a proportion of his great wealth on the purchase of many rifles—it was said he had four thousand—and several small field pieces, and was from month to month making himself the great Chief of the eastern half of the Niger Delta. He was seeking to become the overlord of the vigorous Ibo people behind his swamps, and had begun to send armed men to form garrisons on all the river mouths between Opobo and the Cross River. In fact when I arrived at the Niger Delta in 1885 and took stock of the situation I decided there were two powerful native states with whom one had to deal carefully: The kingdom of Benin on the west—with its important coast vice-royalty under the chief Nana; and Opobo, under Jaja, to the east of the main river. I had no quarrel with Nana or Benin, perhaps because before I visited them I had settled the Opobo question; but Jaja represented the whole crisis of our Protectorate over southern Nigeria: our attempt to establish freedom of trade.

I went to Opobo in July, 1887. On the east bank of the estuary were five Liverpool firms, members of the African Association of Liverpool; on the west bank was one, Messrs. A. Miller Brothers of Glasgow. Jaja's chief town was on the west bank, several miles from its mouth. The five firms had been obstructed in commerce for a year or more because they wanted to trade direct with the native producers of the oil and not through Jaja, at Jaja's

prices. . . . Miller Brothers in those days stood apart, independent of any League or Association, though they were credited with possessing an understanding with the Royal Niger Company. The firms of The African Association had a year or two previously brought out to Opobo steam launches or little river steamers. They proposed sending these to the inland markets, near the plantations of oil palms, and therewith purchasing and transporting to the port at the mouth of the Opobo the palm oil and palm kernels of the interior beyond the mangrove swamps.

Jaja answered this movement by barring the way to navigation with booms slung across the river where it narrowed and digging narrow canals for the passage of his trading canoes; and when I had purposely struck into the worst of these booms and ordered its removal as an illegal bar to the navigation of the Niger rivers he further obstructed trade by threatening the Ibo and Kwō peoples with punishment if they should bring their oil for sale anywhere else than to his market places or (possibly) to Messrs. Miller Brothers' house.

Jaja looked upon Consul Hewett's departure as a moral victory: he considered he had driven him home and that it would be easy further to establish his position by giving a handsome entertainment to the British war vessels which might occasionally visit the river mouth and hear of the restiveness of the five firms excluded from the local trade. My arrival came as a disagreeable surprise, enhanced by my youthful appearance. At first he declined even to discuss the matter, telling me my "father," Consul Hewett, had gone home and that he could only resume the discussion when he returned. I showed him however one or two despatches from the Foreign Office asking for a full report on the Opobo difficulty and pointed out that they were addressed to me personally as Acting Consul. Moreover I had come to the Opobo River in a gunboat, the *Goshawk*, under Lieut.-Commander Pelly who stayed with me till the end of the controversy.

. . . .

Captain Hand of the *Royalist* was the senior naval officer in command on the West African station and he met me in Opobo and lent me considerable assistance, making a journey with me under much discomfort and some danger to the verge of the Ibo country to satisfy himself that Jaja was really causing the alleged obstruction and monopoly in the palm oil trade. But without definite instructions from the Admiralty he would not undertake any coercive and punitive action, though he fully endorsed the views I expressed. Other coast business carried him away for a few weeks; and his departure having encouraged Jaja in the belief that there were divided counsels and a difference of opinion, the latter proceeded to more

violent measures to enforce his monopoly of trade and obstruction to water passage through his territory. At last wishing to nip his scheme in two before he could assemble all his widely scattered forces and retire with them to the Ibo country, I applied to the Foreign Office for permission to bring matters to an issue and either persuade Jaja to go with me to the Gold Coast Colony and there have his case tried, or declare him to be at war with the British Government and then take action against him.

I waited at Bonny for the answer. In those days the ocean cable had only got as far toward the Oil Rivers as the mouth of the Bonny River, forty miles from Opobo. The creeks through which one had to pass between the two places were much too narrow or shallow for the passage of a gunboat or any ship; the journey could only be made by native canoes. I appreciated fully all the risks of being caught by Jaja's people and quietly "put away." But fortunately I had sometime previously made friends with the very civilized King of Bonny, who spoke and wrote English like an Englishman and dressed as we do. The kingdom of Bonny had once ruled over Opobo, and Jaja had been one of the king's slaves. Some unfortunate intervention of Consul Livingstone had recognized Jaja's independence and prevented Bonny administration of the affairs of Opobo. I managed however to enter into communication with the young king, whose great-grandfather had been converted to Christianity,* and he sent a State canoe of his own to fetch me and to take me back.

I despatched my telegram and a few hours afterwards—"very quick response!" I thought—received what I naturally took to be the answer: "Your action with regard to Jaja approved. Further instructions will be sent after communication with Admiralty."

Accordingly I returned to Opobo under the protection of King George Pepple and prepared for action. I summoned Jaja to a meeting at Messrs. Harrison's house (my headquarters) or, if he preferred it, on the beach outside, where I would read to him my decision and invite his acceptance. I gave him my word that if he *refused* my conditions he should be allowed to return to his town before any act of hostility took place.

He came, with many canoes and an armed escort of seven hundred warriors, each with a Snider rifle.

I reviewed the circumstances of this long struggle between him and the Consular authority and stated there was only one way of arriving at a solution, outside a resort to arms: that he should proceed to Accra on a mail-steamer with a few attendants, that I should accompany

* His conversion made a great sensation in Evangelical London in the 'forties, and Bonny in the main was the original of Dickens' "Borriaboola Gha."

him; and there the case between us should be tried by a person to be appointed by the British Government. To every one's surprise he assented and went quietly on board H.M.S. *Goshawk*. I followed. The *Goshawk* took us to Bonny where we transferred ourselves to a mail steamer which in two or three days landed us at Accra. Oddly enough, during our passage to Accra I noted "Jaja has never shown such friendliness toward me before. All through the daytime he is my constant companion. He will sit by my side while I am writing and amuse himself by looking over my sketch book and asking questions as to its contents. He occupies the Ladies' cabin on board the steamer, with his wife, Patience, and his housekeeper and amanuensis, Emma Jaja Johnson. He is further accompanied by a cook, a steward, three servants and one Accra carpenter."

To Jaja the sight of Accra (the first civilized town he had seen) was a source of wonderment and for a time distracted his thoughts from his own troubles; so much so that he intimated to the Administrator of the Gold Coast (Col. Frederick White) that if he were sentenced to be exiled from Opobo to Accra he would be quite content, being an old man. Either he had never looked much at the pictures of cities given in the English illustrated papers, or had judged Europe to exist on a wholly different plan to Africa.

Admiral Sir Walter Hunt-Grubbe, Naval Commander-in-Chief on the Cape of Good Hope and West African station, had been appointed to try Jaja for his breaches of treaty and to investigate his case generally, but he could not arrive immediately at Accra; so having much other business to attend, I went back to Opobo and Old Calabar. I returned to the Gold Coast at the close of November, 1887. Sir Walter Hunt-Grubbe gave Jaja a very fair trial, spent, indeed, several days beforehand mastering all the written and printed evidence. At the conclusion of his investigation he found the old man guilty on three counts of the breaches of treaty with which he was charged; on the fourth count the accusation was not fully proved. Jaja was therefore deposed, and no succeeding chief of Opobo was to be elected; Jaja was further sentenced to a banishment of five years from this country, and a choice of residence offered him—either in the British West Indies, St. Helena, Ascension, or Cape Colony. He chose St. Vincent in the Windward Islands.

Those of my readers who have long memories may remember that Lord Salisbury pardoned him after four years' residence at St. Vincent, that he was returning thence to Opobo, but fell ill on the voyage and died at one of the Canary Islands. His wealth, which must have been considerable, was secured to him, and during his exile the district of Opobo made him an allowance at the rate of ₦1000 a year. So that I do not think he could be regarded as harshly treated. And the quick result of my intervention was an enormous increase in Opobo trade, on

the part of the natives as well as of the Europeans.

The settlement of this test case—a case watched from all points of the Protectorate coast—ended the tyranny of the “middle-man” which had been the great obstacle to a wide development of trade in the vast Niger Delta for a hundred years.⁸

1. *Johnston presents the events from his point of view and the point of view of the British administration. Try describing the same events from Jaja’s point of view. Why do you think Jaja gave himself up peacefully to stand trial in Accra?*
2. *Johnston’s impression of the King of Bonny is very different from that he presents of Jaja. How do you account for the difference?*
3. *At the end, Johnston talks about the “tyranny of the ‘middle-man’ ” in preventing free trade in the region. If Jaja had been an Englishman, like Cecil Rhodes, and had established a monopoly of the palm oil trade through Opobo, do you think Johnston and the British government would have taken the same kind of action?*

⁸ Harry H. Johnston, *The Story of My Life*, Garden City, NY, Bobbs-Merill, 1923, pp. 176–182.

XVII

Letters: Sources of Evidence from Soldiers in the War Zone

“War is hell,” William Tecumseh Sherman observed. Modern warfare especially is also a form of mass insanity that drives many of the soldiers who fight it mad or leaves them with debilitating emotional scars for the rest of their lives. Studying the great battles in order to understand strategies and blunders can be fascinating, but one must not forget the cost of those battles in human lives and suffering.

In soldiers’ letters about what they encountered at the front in World War I, we can get a sense for what it was like for those who did the actual fighting without any control over how the war or battle was being fought. In this first letter, the English literary figure Robert Graves writes about the absence of patriotism, religion, or nationalism in the trenches.

(1)

Patriotism, in the trenches, was too remote a sentiment, and at once rejected as fit only for civilians, or prisoners. A new arrival who talked patriotism would soon be told to cut it out. . . . Great Britain . . . included not only the trench soldiers themselves and those who had gone home wounded, but the staff, Army Service Corps, lines-of-communication troops, base units, home-service units, and all civilians down to the detested grades of journalists, profiteers, “starred” men exempted from enlistment, conscientious objectors, and members of the Government. The trench-soldier, with this carefully graded caste-system of honour, never considered that the Germans opposite might have built up exactly the same system themselves. . . .

Hardly one soldier in a hundred was inspired by religious feeling of even the crudest kind. It would have been difficult to remain religious in the trenches even if one had survived the irreligion of the training battalion at home. A regular sergeant at Montagne . . . had recently told me that he did not hold with religion in time of war. . . . “And all this damn nonsense, Sir—excuse me, Sir—that we read in the papers, Sir, about how miraculous it is that the wayside crucifixes are always getting shot at, but the figure of our Lord Jesus somehow don’t get hurt, it fairly makes me sick, Sir.” This was his explanation why, when giving practice fire-orders from the hill-top, he had shouted, unaware that I stood behind him: “Seven hundred half left, bloke on cross, five rounds, concentrate, FIRE!” . . . His platoon, including the two unusual “bible-wallahs” whose letters home always began in the same formal

way: “Dear Sister in Christ,” or “Dear Brother in Christ,” blazed away.⁹

In the second letter, a German soldier, Rudolf Binding, writes about what life at the front was like and of the loneliness of being separated from the person he loves.

(2)

August 5, 1915

The War is changing for me; perhaps this happens to everyone sooner or later. For the last few weeks I no longer look to Him alone as to the only Lord of us all, claiming an unwilling allegiance. I think of you, too. Not that I had forgotten you, but you were more inside me and with me. Now I feel that you are something behind me, that I had to leave at home, and that I must now worry about—from a distance.

For this reason I think of Peace, too. But I say with truth that this is not the only reason; the War itself gradually brings the warrior round to this point of view. This is not a summit, but rather an end at which one arrives.

Here on the Western Front the War has lost all its dash; it is so devoid of resiliency, and so bloodless that the blood that still flows daily seems like a sign of old age, where the blood oozes through the brittle walls of the veins. . . .

We say that we do not think of Peace, but at the same time we long for it.

And yet there are people who enjoy the War. But they are those who know nothing about it. *The Archives of Reason* give good advice on this point to those Americans who want war:

“Dig a trench shoulder-high in your garden: fill it half-full of water and get into it. Remain there for two or three days on an empty stomach. Furthermore, hire a lunatic to shoot at you with revolvers and machine-guns at close range. This arrangement is quite equal to a war and will cost your country very much less.”

I liked the hired lunatic especially.¹⁰

World War I saw the introduction of poison gas as a weapon. Use of the gas depended on wind conditions, so the gas would not blow back into your camp. And its effectiveness depended on

⁹ Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*, 1929, rev. ed. Garden City NY, Doubleday, 1957, pp. 188–189.

¹⁰ Rudolf G. Binding, *Aus dem Kriege*, Frankfurt, Lit. Anstalt Rutten, 1925, trans. John L. Heineman in *Readings in European History: A Collection of Primary Sources 1789 to the Present*, ed. John L. Heineman, Dubuque IA, Kendall/Hunt, 1979, pp. 289–290.

surprise, since all the armies were early on equipped with gas masks (or respirators). Yet, tragedies such as the one described in the following letter still occurred. R. Scotland Liddell was an English orderly who was attached to the Russian army on the Eastern front. He describes a German gas attack on the Russian lines. One of the problems with gas masks was, and still is, that they are hot and uncomfortable to wear for any period of time. Thus, the idea was to avoid putting them on until the last possible moment before a gas attack. When we add to that the realization that many of the Russian soldiers were illiterate peasants who had no concept of the dangers that poison gas threatened, then perhaps we can gain a little understanding of what happened to the 21st Siberian Regiment.

(3)

July 6, 1915

The Germans on the Bzura-Rawka front fired gas shells against the Russians for the second time. The first occasion was five weeks before. The battle scene during the night was wonderful. The flashes of the artillery fire were like gleams of lightning in the sky. The boom of the guns was continuous. The shrapnels burst in fours with spurts of orange flame. I did not sleep. I stood in the open air and watched the spectacle. In the early morning the poisoned men were brought out of the deadly area of the trenches, gasping for air. The 21st Siberian Regiment of four thousand men had seven hundred left when daylight came. Three thousand three hundred men were dead or poisoned. Yet each man was supposed to have a respirator, and each respirator was said to be gas-proof. The officers were confident of this; they were confident of their readiness to fight against the foul fumes. . . . I discussed the heavy percentage of losses with an officer on whose word I can depend.

“But I thought the men had respirators?” I said. He assured me that every man had one, and that the men had been ordered to have them ready for wear.

“Then why?” said I. He shrugged his shoulders. ‘Russia’s a queer country,’ he said, “there are things you’ll never understand. The men were not ordered to put them on.”

I tell of this instance as it was told to me. I confess that in spite of my friend’s reliability, I was inclined at first to doubt his word. Later on, I mentioned the matter to some other officers of high rank. “But that could never be?” I said. “It’s possible,” said they.¹¹

In the following two short letters of the German soldier Josef Birnbeck, age 18, we see a common phenomenon of soldiers in the war zone, a premonition of their imminent death.

¹¹ R. Scotland Liddell, *On the Russian Front*, London, Simpkin, Marshall, 1916, pp. 26–27.

(4a)

July 23, 1915

One thought constantly runs through my head: “You are a dead man!” And yet I believe even more firmly that such an eventuality is most improbable. It should not and will not happen! And yet the thought reoccurs; the many patrols on which I have been sent, and the many dangers and fears I have experienced, have obviously not been without influence. Indeed, after all I have been through, it is quite natural that I can picture myself as dead. And yet it is hideous, because I can see it so clearly. I can even hear the sound of the bullet that brings my death, feel the slap and penetration of the shot into my body—and then a heavy fall and I lay in the mossy covered ground of a forest. And then I shudder with fear at how you will take the news when it reaches home—and even my pain is blocked out with my yearning for you. . . . And with the last remaining energy, I am able to pull your picture out of my breast pocket—but already my breath is getting shorter, the blood flows darker, and thicker, and then. . . .

Almighty God and Father, no—it can’t happen like that! Do you believe in such signs?

(4b)

July 26, 1915

Tonight we cross the river and tomorrow we go into action; we are to storm a position! My heart is full of pain. My comrades are all sitting together, singing soldier’s songs and melodies from our homeland, but their faces tell a different story. In case it should happen . . . we shall meet again in another world. I can write no more.¹²

Josef Birnbeck was killed on August 1, 1915.

1. The total number of soldiers killed in World War I from all sides was over 8.5 million. Why were the governments of the belligerent countries willing to endure such losses of the lives of their young men?

2. If there was not much patriotism or religion in the trenches, then what do you think got the men through, that is, those who managed to survive?

¹² Josef Birnbeck, *Der Deutsche Soldat: Briefe aus dem Weltkrieg*, ed. Rudolf Hoffman, Munich, Langen Müller Verlag, 1937, trans. John L. Heineman in *Readings in European History*, p. 284.

XVIII

Interview: Mahatma Gandhi Discusses His Ideas

Interviews are a relatively recent form of historical source. With the rise of newspapers and journalism, reporters found that interviews were an excellent way to get information for news stories. Historians also make use of this technique in researching topics wherein the participants are still alive.

The following “interview” is a little deceptive only because the interviewee, Mohandas K. Gandhi, is writing both parts. For many years in South Africa, Gandhi was the editor and chief reporter of Indian Opinion, a newspaper for the Indian population there. He found the interview format an effective one in this case for explaining in more detail his views on civilization and satyagraha, “soul force,” as he sometimes called it. The work is Hind Swaraj (Indian Self-Rule), which Gandhi wrote on his way back to South Africa after a trip to England. He is basing the questions of the interviewer, the Reader, on conversations he had with Indians in London, and it appeared as a series of interviews in Indian Opinion. When the work was republished as a book in India in 1921, the Bombay Government banned it.

Gandhi on Civilization, Religion, and Soul Force

In this first excerpt from Hind Swaraj, Gandhi provides some of his views on modern civilization, the complexity of which he disdains. He sees the reliance on machinery and the striving for bodily comforts as pulling people away from the spiritual truths of religion and morality.

(1)

READER: . . . Now will you tell me something of what you have read and thought of this civilization?

EDITOR: Let us first consider what state of things is described in the word “civilization.” Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. . . . The people of Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness. Formerly, they wore skins and used spears as their weapons. Now they wear long trousers, and for embellishing their bodies they wear a variety of clothing, and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers. If the people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilized out of savagery. Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labor. Now one man can plough a vast

tract by means of steam engines and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilization. Formerly, the fewest men wrote books that were most valuable. Now anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds. Formerly, men traveled in wagons; now they fly through the air, in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilization. . . . Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilization. Formerly, men worked in the open air only so much as they liked. Now thousands of workmen meet together and . . . work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion, now they are enslaved by the temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases of which people never dreamed before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilization. . . . Formerly, people had two or three meals consisting of homemade bread and vegetables; now, they require something to eat every two hours, so that they have hardly leisure for anything else. What more need I say? All this you can ascertain from several authoritative books. These are all true tests of civilization. And, if any one speaks to the contrary, know that he is ignorant. This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion. . . .

This civilization is irreligion, and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad. They lack physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy by intoxication. They can hardly be happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets, or they slave away in factories. For the sake of a pittance, half a million women in England alone are laboring under trying circumstances in factories or similar institutions. This awful fact is one of the causes of the daily growing suffragette movement.

This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed. . . . Civilization seeks to increase bodily comforts and it fails miserable even in doing so. . . .

READER: . . . You have denounced railways, lawyers and doctors. I can see that you will discard all machinery. What, then, is civilization?

EDITOR: The answer to that question is not difficult. I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. . . . Rome went. Greece shared the same fate, the might of the Pharaohs was broken. Japan has become Westernized, of China nothing can be

said, but India is still somehow or other sound at the foundation. . . . What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience we dare not change. . . .

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. . . . To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. . . . The Gujarati [the language of Gandhi's home district] equivalent for civilization means "good conduct."

If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be. . . .

We notice that the mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. . . . Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times and our indigenous education remains the same as before. We have had no system of life-corroding competition. Each followed his own occupation or trade and charged a regulation wage. . . . This nation had courts, lawyers and doctors but they were all within bounds. Everybody knew that these professions were not particularly superior; moreover, [they] did not rob people, they were considered people's dependents, not their masters. Justice was tolerably fair. The ordinary rule was to avoid courts. . . . The common people lived independently and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true Home Rule. . . .

The tendency of Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being, that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality. . . .¹³

1. *To what extent do you agree or disagree with Gandhi's assessment of Western civilization?*
2. *If you were going to defend the achievements of Western civilization against someone who is arguing the way Gandhi did, what would you point to as its successes?*
3. *How many of these "successes" that you pointed to in your answer to no. 2 have improved people's spiritual well being and the general morality?*
4. *What period in Indian history do you think Gandhi had in mind when he referred to "our ancestors" and when "[j]ustice was tolerably fair"?*

¹³ M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, rev ed., Ahmedabad, Navajivan, 1946, pp. 25–26, 43–46.

In this second excerpt from Hind Swaraj, Gandhi discusses the issue of Muslim-Hindu conflict. Gandhi wrote this interview many years before the split of the Muslim state of Pakistan away from India. It was Gandhi's hope that all Indians, whether Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, or whatever religious preference, could live together in peace and tolerance in an independent India.

(2)

READER: . . . Has the introduction of Mahomedanism* not unmade the nation?

EDITOR: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religions. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsees and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India.

READER: But what about the inborn enmity between Hindus and Mahomedans?

EDITOR: That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy.[†] When the Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight. How, then can there be any inborn enmity? Pray remember this too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Muslim sovereigns and Muslims under the Hindu. Each party recognized the mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent the quarrels recommenced. . . .

Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mahomedans own the same ancestors and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mahomedan different from the God of the Hindu?

* This term has now been dropped in favor of Muslim (< Islam) because it gave some people the incorrect impression that Muslims worshipped Muḥammed rather than Allah.

† Gandhi is referring here to the British.

Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarreling?¹⁴

1. To what extent have events since Gandhi wrote these words tended to confirm or refute his ideas about the relations between Muslims and Hindus?

2. Do you agree with Gandhi's view that "[r]eligions are different roads converging to the same point"? If so, then why are there so many religious conflicts? If you do not agree, then which religions do you think are going to different points and why?

In this final excerpt, Gandhi discusses his concept of satyagraha, translated variously as "soul force," "truth force," or "passive resistance." Gandhi devised this method of non-violent combat when he was fighting for the rights of the emigré Indian population in South Africa. In developing satyagraha, Gandhi was influenced by a number of varied influences, including Christianity, Jainism, Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin, and others, all of which he synthesized into a peaceful means for gaining justice. This is not to say there is no violence, but the violence is done to the practitioners of satyagraha not by them. The method itself requires tremendous inner discipline, the willingness to endure great physical harm, and an unbending faith that you can win over your enemy through reason and love. It is not to everyone's taste as a means for gaining one's ends.

(3)

READER: Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force. I still think that the evil-doers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.

EDITOR: . . . The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. . . .

The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

¹⁴ Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 35–36.

Thousands, indeed, tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. . . . Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

READER: According to what you say, it is plain that instances of the kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to understand this passive resistance more fully. It will be better, therefore, if you enlarge upon it.

EDITOR: Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me: I do not like it, if, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim to be absolutely in the right, or that a particular thing is wrong, because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgment. It is, therefore, meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul-force. . . .

READER: From what you say, I deduce that passive resistance is a splendid weapon of the weak but that, when they are strong, they may take up arms.

EDITOR: This is gross ignorance. Passive resistance, that is soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms. how, then, can it be considered only a weapon of the weak? Physical-force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister. Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? Extremists are considered to be advocates of brute-force. Why do they, then, talk about obeying laws? I do not blame them. They can say nothing else. When they succeed in driving out the English, and they themselves become governors, they will want you and me to obey their laws. And that is a fitting thing for their constitution. But a passive resister will say he will not obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon.

What do you think? Wherein is courage required—in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and to be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior—he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

This, however, I will admit: that even a man, weak in body, is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs not Jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind alone necessary, and, when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest, and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far-reaching results.¹⁵

1. *Can you think of any instance in history where soul force showed itself to be effective?*
2. *How would you evaluate Gandhi's argument that history does not record the successful use of soul force because it is the norm? Could that not be said about almost any such idea?*
3. *Can you think of some situations where the method of soul force would be more effective than the use of arms?*
4. *Do you think Gandhi's use of the interview format was effective for explaining his ideas? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a technique of explanation that Gandhi used here?*

¹⁵ Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 56–60.

XIX

Treaties: The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany Reach Agreement

*On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany shocked the world by announcing they had reached an agreement and had signed a pact of non-aggression. The reason this was so shocking was that, since the coming to power of Adolf Hitler in January 1933, Germany and the Soviet Union had been bitter enemies. In his autobiography *Mein Kampf* and in speeches, Hitler had announced and reiterated his goal of ridding the world of communism and of dismembering the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, had been just as vehement in his opposition to Hitler and the Nazis. He had offered military support to the British and French to protect Czechoslovakia when Hitler began making demands of integration of the Sudeten Germans into the Third Reich. Indeed, Stalin had repeatedly sought a military alliance with England and France against the Nazi threat, but he was rebuffed at every turn. For example, he was not even invited to Munich when the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and the French Premier Édouard Daladier signed over the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia to the Germans without Czech approval and in violation of the treaty that France had with Czechoslovakia.*

Thus, Stalin may have felt that England and France were selling out to Germany and leaving the Soviet Union alone to face the threat of invasion. We must also remember that World War I, when Germany had struck deep into Russian and Ukrainian territory, was still fresh in the minds of many of the leaders of the Soviet Union.

When looked at, though, in the broader context of European diplomacy, especially over the previous 150 years or so, then the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 appears less surprising. During the nineteenth century, Russia and Prussia had been allied on a number of occasions, e.g., against Napoleon at Leipzig and later in the Three Emperors' League. After World War I, both countries found themselves isolated diplomatically in Europe. Germany was isolated because the victorious powers had declared that Germany was responsible for the war, and Russia, then called the Soviet Union, was isolated because the Bolsheviks had taken over and removed Russia as a combatant from the war, which was seen as a betrayal by the Western Allies. As a result of the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, Germany and the Soviet Union formed an alliance. Germany was able to train troops on Soviet territory that it was not allowed to train on its own territory as a result of the Treaty of Versailles. It was only with the coming to power of Hitler in 1933 that this alliance was ended. Between August 1939 and June 22, 1941, Germany and the Soviet Union moved quickly from hostility (though without open conflict) to warm friendship, then back to hostility (this time with open conflict).

In the following two selections, we see the ability of hostile enemies to almost overnight bury their differences and reach far-ranging agreement. The first selection is the text of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939.

Treaty of Non-Aggression Between Germany and the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics, August 23, 1939.

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, desirous of strengthening the cause of peace between Germany and the USSR, and proceeding from the fundamental provisions of the Treaty of Neutrality, which was concluded between Germany and the USSR in April 1926, have reached the following agreement:

ARTICLE I

The two Contracting Parties undertake to refrain from any act of violence, any aggressive action and any attack on each other either severally or jointly with other Powers.

ARTICLE II

Should one of the Contracting Parties become the object of belligerent action by a third Power, the other Contracting Party shall in no manner lend its support to this third Power.

ARTICLE III

The Governments of the two Contracting Parties will in future maintain continual contact with one another for the purpose of consultation in order to exchange information on problems affecting their common interests.

ARTICLE IV

Neither of the Two Contracting Parties will join any grouping of Powers whatsoever which is aimed directly or indirectly at the other Party.

ARTICLE V

Should disputes or conflicts arise between the Contracting Parties over questions of one kind or another, both parties will settle these disputes or conflicts exclusively by means of a friendly exchange of views or if necessary by the appointment of arbitration commissions.

ARTICLE VI

The present Treaty shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The instruments of ratification will be exchanged in Berlin. The Treaty shall enter into force immediately upon signature.

Done in duplicate in the German and Russian languages.

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government
of the German Reich:

With full power of the
Government of the USSR:

v. RIBBENTROP

V. MOLOTOV

Secret Additional Protocol

On the occasion of the signature of the Non-Aggression Treaty between the German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the undersigned plenipotentiaries of the two Parties discussed in strictly confidential conversations the question of the delimitation of their respective spheres of interest in Eastern Europe. These conversations led to the following result:

1. In the event of a territorial and political transformation in the territories belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern frontier of Lithuania shall represent the frontier of the spheres of interest both of Germany and the USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna territory is recognized by both Parties.

2. In the event of a territorial and political transformation of the territories belonging to the Polish State, the spheres of interest of both Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula, and San.

The question whether the interests of both Parties make the maintenance of an independent Polish State appear desirable and how the frontiers of this State should be drawn can be definitely determined only in the course of further political developments.

In any case both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly understanding.

3. With regard to South-Eastern Europe, the Soviet side emphasizes its interest in Bessarabia. the German side declares complete political *désintéressement* in these territories.

4. This Protocol will be treated by both Parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government of
the German Reich:

v. RIBBENTROP¹⁶

With full power of the
Government of the USSR:
V. MOLOTOV

Of course, both Hitler and Stalin had immediate concerns that brought them to the realization that they could reach an agreement with one another. Hitler had already decided to send the German army into Poland and was concerned about how the Soviet Union would react. This

¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*, Series D, 1937–1945, Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1956, vol. 7, pp. 245–247.

agreement guaranteed that the Soviet Union would adopt a hands-off policy to that part of Poland that was within the German sphere of influence. Stalin, for his part, was fearful of having to face a German invasion of the Soviet Union alone. This agreement gave him and the Soviet Union security, or so he thought. Many people felt that this Non-Aggression Pact would not last long and that it would end as soon as Germany and the Soviet Union encountered the slightest difficulty. With the German invasion of Poland, begun on September 1 of that year, many people, including many Poles, thought the Soviet Union would come to Poland's assistance. During the first two weeks of the German invasion, the German Foreign Ministry put pressure on the Soviet Union to intervene to occupy its sphere of influence in the eastern part of Poland. Such an intervention by the Soviet Union would bring an early end to Polish resistance from eastern Poland. The Soviet Union hesitated, but then on September 17 announced its troop movements into eastern Poland.

The joint occupation of Poland required a number of decisions to be made. One was the question of a rump Poland, that is whether a residual Polish state would be allowed to exist. An argument in favor of such a rump state was that it might help England and France to reconcile themselves to the fait accompli and agree to the new situation in Eastern Europe without resort to war. But with each passing day, that seemed less likely, and the decision was made to eliminate Poland altogether as an independent state. Another issue was the military demarcation line between the Soviet and German forces. Ideally the military demarcation line should have coincided with the political demarcation line, but in reality German troops in pursuit of Polish troops had already crossed over into the Soviet sphere of influence. Should they be pulled back or could a trade of territories be arranged? The decision was for the latter for a number of reasons, not the least of which it was easier to arrange. But Stalin may also have realized that a trade of territories at that point would bring the western border of the Soviet Union more in accordance with the Curzon line of 1919, which was originally suggested as the boundary between Russia and Poland. The Russo-Polish War of 1919–1920 eliminated that line, but Stalin would have a better chance of justifying and maintaining a boundary that had been suggested by the Allied Commission under Lord Curzon at the end of World War I. In other words, it would provide him a legal justification over and above the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact should he need one.

The resolving of these issues shows up in the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of September 28, 1939. This treaty shows, perhaps even more than the original treaty of August 23, that two formerly antagonistic powers could set aside their differences and reach common agreement very quickly when their interests happened to coincide.

German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty

Moscow, September 28, 1939

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the USSR consider it as exclusively their task, after the disintegration of the former Polish state, to re-establish peace and order in these territories and to assure to the peoples living there a peaceful life in keeping with their national character. To this end, they have agreed upon the following:

ARTICLE I

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the USSR determine as the boundary of their respective national interests in the territory of the former Polish state the line marked on the attached map* which shall be described in more detail in a supplementary protocol.

ARTICLE II

Both parties recognize the boundary of the respective national interests established in article I as definitive and shall reject any interference of third powers in this settlement.

ARTICLE III

The necessary reorganization of public administration will be effected in the areas west of the line specified in article I by the Government of the German Reich, in the areas east of this line by the Government of the USSR.

ARTICLE IV

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the USSR regard this settlement as a firm foundation for a progressive development of the friendly relations between their peoples.

ARTICLE V

This treaty shall be ratified and the ratification shall be exchanged in Berlin as soon as possible. The treaty becomes effective upon signature.

Done in duplicate, in the German and Russian languages.

For the Government
of the German Reich:
v. RIBBENTROP

By authority of the
Government of the USSR:
V. MOLOTOV

Confidential Protocol

Moscow, September 28, 1939

* Not reproduced here. The map can be found in Appendix 6 of U.S. Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*, Series D, 1937–1945, Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1956, vol. 8.

The Government of the USSR shall place no obstacles in the way of Reich nationals and other persons of German descent residing in its sphere of influence if they desire to migrate to Germany or to the German sphere of influence. It agrees that such removals shall be carried out by agents of the Government of the Reich in cooperation with the competent local authorities and that the property rights of the emigrants shall be protected.

A corresponding obligation is assumed by the Government of the German Reich in respect to the persons of Ukrainian or White Russian descent residing in its sphere of influence.

For the Government
of the German Reich:
v. RIBBENTROP

By authority of the
Government of the USSR:
V. MOLOTOV

Secret Additional Protocol

Moscow, September 28, 1939

The undersigned plenipotentiaries declare the agreement of the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the USSR upon the following:

The Secret Additional Protocol signed on August 23, 1939, shall be amended in item 1 to the effect that the territory of the Lithuanian state falls to the sphere of influence of the USSR, while, on the other hand, the province of Lublin and parts of the province of Warsaw fall to the sphere of influence of Germany (cf. the map attached to the Boundary and Friendship Treaty signed today). As soon as the Government of the USSR shall take special measures on Lithuanian territory to protect its interests, the present German-Lithuanian border, for the purpose of a natural and simple boundary delineation, shall be rectified in such a way that the Lithuanian territory situated in the southwest of the line marked on the attached map falls to Germany.

Further it is declared that the economic agreements now in force between Germany and Lithuania shall not be affected by the measures of the Soviet Union referred to above.

For the Government
of the German Reich:
v. RIBBENTROP

By authority of the
Government of the USSR:
V. MOLOTOV

Secret Additional Protocol

Moscow, September 28, 1939

The undersigned plenipotentiaries, on concluding the German-Russian Boundary and Friendship Treaty, have declared their agreement upon the following:

Both parties will tolerate in their territories no Polish agitation which affects the territories of the other party. They will suppress in their territories all beginnings of such agitation and inform each other concerning suitable measures for this purpose.

For the Government
of the German Reich:
v. RIBBENTROP

By authority of the
Government of the USSR:
V. MOLOTOV¹⁷

1. *Compare the secret and confidential protocols in each document. Why would the Soviet Union and Germany want these agreements kept from being known to other countries?*
2. *The Soviet Union under Stalin adhered to the Communist ideology of Marxism, while Germany under Hitler adhered to the Fascist ideology of Nazism. Why do you think there was no mention of these ideologies in these two treaties? Were the leaders of these countries cynically disregarding their own ideologies or do you think they believed that, at some level, the two ideologies could co-exist?*
3. *Do you think that Stalin trusted Hitler? If so, why do you think he did? If not, what evidence leads you to believe that he did not?*

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*, Series D, 1937–1945, Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1956, vol. 8, pp. 164–166.

XX

History in Fiction: Tadeusz Borowski and the Concentration Camp at Auschwitz

One of the most dreadful occurrences in all of human history, perhaps equaled for horror, brutality, and numbers killed only by the Soviet purges of the 1930's, was the Holocaust under Nazi aegis in World War II. Our best estimates of numbers of Jews killed is around six million. This number is almost equaled by the number of non-Jews, including Slavs, gypsies, homosexuals, dissenters, and other "undesirables," also killed, which is estimated at about five million.

But the sheer numbers, while astounding in themselves, do not begin to tell the story of the disgusting horror of the concentration camps and the business-like efficiency with which the mass murders took place. Tadeusz Borowski was a non-Jewish Pole who was sent to Auschwitz for publishing, by means of an underground press, a book of his own poems. He was one of the "lucky" ones because he survived to write about his experiences. His memories, however, were so painful that they led to two results. One is that he published his experiences as short stories, ostensibly fiction, because he could not express them as events that really happened to him. Writing about them as though they were fiction was the only way he could put them down on paper in any coherent way. The other result was that, on July 1, 1951, at the age of 29, he committed suicide. Those who survived the concentration camps often felt tremendous guilt merely because they survived while so many millions others did not.

In this excerpt from his short story, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen," Borowski describes the scene unloading the boxcars of their human freight. From his detailed description, I do not think there can be any doubt that he is drawing on firsthand experiences.

"This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen"

"The transport is coming," somebody says. We spring to our feet, all eyes turn in one direction. Around the bend, one after another, the cattle cars begin rolling in. The train backs into the station, a conductor leans out, waves his hand, blows a whistle. The locomotive whistles back with a shrieking noise, puffs, the train rolls slowly along side the ramp. In the tiny barred windows appear pale, wilted, exhausted human faces, terror-stricken women with tangled hair, unshaven men. They gaze at the station in silence. And then, suddenly, there is a stir inside the cars and a pounding against the wooden boards.

"Water! Air!—weary, desperate cries.

Heads push through the windows, mouths gasp frantically for air. They draw a few breaths, then disappear; others come in their place, then also disappear. The cries and moans grow louder.

A man in a green uniform covered with more glitter than any of the others jerks his head impatiently, his lips twist in annoyance. He inhales deeply, then with a rapid gesture throws

his cigarette away and signals to the guard. The guard removes the automatic from his shoulder, aims, sends a series of shots along the train. All is quiet now. Meanwhile, the trucks have arrived, steps are being drawn up, and the Canada men* stand ready at their posts by the train doors. The S.S. officer with the briefcase raises his hand.

“Whoever takes gold, or anything at all besides food, will be shot for stealing Reich property. Understand? *Verstanden?*”

“*Jawohl!*” we answer eagerly.

“*Also los! Begin!*”

The bolts crack, the doors fall open. A wave of fresh air rushes inside the train. People . . . inhumanly crammed, buried under incredible heaps of luggage, suitcases, trunks, packages, crates, bundles of every description (everything that had been their past and was to start their future). Monstrously squeezed together, they have fainted from heat, suffocated, crushed one another. Now they push towards the opened doors, breathing like fish cast out on the sand.

“Attention! Out, and take your luggage with you! Take out everything. Pile all your stuff near the exits. Yes, your coats too. It is summer. March to the left. Understand?” “Sir, what’s going to happen to us?” They jump from the train on to the gravel, anxious, worn-out.

“Where are you people from?”

“*Sosnowiec-Bedzin*. Sir, what’s going to happen to us?” they repeat the question stubbornly, gazing into our tired eyes.

“I don’t know, I don’t understand Polish.”

It is the camp law: people going to their death must be deceived to the very end. This is the only permissible form of charity. The heat is tremendous. The sun hangs directly over our heads, the white, hot sky quivers, the air vibrates, an occasional breeze feels like a sizzling blast from a furnace. Our lips are parched, the mouth fills with the salty taste of blood, the body is weak and heavy from lying in the sun. Water!

A huge, multicolored wave of people loaded down with luggage pours from the train like a blind, mad river trying to find a new bed. But before they have a chance to recover, before they can draw a breath of fresh air and look at the sky, bundles are snatched from their hands, coats ripped off their backs, their purses and umbrellas taken away.

“But please, sir, it’s for the sun, I cannot . . .”

“*Verboten!*” one of us barks through clenched teeth. There is an S.S. man standing behind your back, calm, efficient, watchful.

* The detail of men who unload the boxcars is called “Canada.”

“*Meine Herrschaften*, this way, ladies and gentlemen, try not to throw your things around, please. Show some goodwill,” he says courteously, his restless hands playing with the slender whip.

“Of course, of course,” they answer as they pass, and now they walk alongside the train somewhat more cheerfully. A woman reaches down quickly to pick up her handbag. The whip flies, the woman scream, stumbles, and falls under the feet of the surging crowd. Behind her, a child cries in a thin little voice “Mamele!”—a very small girl with tangled black curls.

The heaps grow. Suitcases, bundles, blankets, coats, handbags that open as they fall, spilling coins, gold, watches; mountains of bread pile up at the exits, heaps of marmalade, jams, masses of meat, sausages; sugar spills on the gravel. Trucks, loaded with people, start up with a deafening roar and drive off amidst the wailing and screaming of the women separated from their children, and the stupefied silence of the men left behind. They are the ones who had been ordered to step to the right—the healthy and the young who will go to the camp. In the end, they too will not escape death, but first they must work.

Trucks leave and return, without interruption, as on a monstrous conveyor belt. A red Cross van drives back and forth, back and forth, incessantly; it transports the gas that will kill these people. The enormous cross on the hood, red as blood, seems to dissolve in the sun.

The Canada men at the trucks cannot stop for a single moment, even to catch their breath. They shove the people up the steps, pack them in tightly, sixty per truck, more or less. Near by stands a young, cleanshaven “gentleman,” an S.S. officer with a notebook in his hand. For each departing truck he enters a mark; sixteen gone means one thousand people, more or less. The gentleman is calm, precise. No truck can leave without a signal from him, or a mark in his notebook: *Ordnung muss sein*. The marks swell into thousands, the thousands into whole transports, which afterwards we shall simply call “from Salonica,” “from Strasbourg,” “from Rotterdam.” This one will be called “Sosnowiec-Bedzin.” The new prisoners from Sosnowiec-Bedzin will receive serial numbers 131–2—thousand, of course, thought afterwards we shall simply say 131–2, for short.

The transports swell into weeks, months, years. When the war is over, they will count up the marks in their notebooks—all four and a half million of them. The bloodiest battle of the war, the greatest victory of the strong, united Germany, *Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Führer*—and four crematoria.

The train has been emptied. A thin, pock-marked S.S. man peers inside, shakes his head in disgust and motions to our group, pointing his finger at the door.

“*Rein*. Clean it up!”

We climb inside. In the corners amid human excrement and abandoned wrist-watches lie squashed, trampled infants, naked little monsters with enormous heads and bloated bellies.

We carry them out like chickens, holding several in each hand.

“Don’t take them to the trucks, pass them on to the women,” says the S.S. man, lighting a cigarette. His cigarette lighter is not working properly; he examines it carefully.

“Take them, for God’s sake!” I explode as the women run from me in horror, covering their eyes.

The name of God sounds strangely pointless, since the women and the infants will go on the trucks, every one of them, without exception. We all know what this means, and we look at each other with hate and horror.

“What, you don’t want to take them?” asks the pockmarked S.S. man with a note of surprise and reproach in his voice, and reaches for his revolver.

“You mustn’t shoot, I’ll carry them.” A tall, grey-haired woman takes the little corpses out of my hands and for an instant gazes straight into my eyes.

“My poor boy,” she whispers and smiles at me. She walks away, staggering along the path. I lean against the side of the train. I am terribly tired. . . .

The morbid procession streams on and on—trucks growl like mad dogs. I shut my eyes tight, but I can still see corpses dragged from the train, trampled infants, cripples piled on top of the dead, wave after wave . . . freight cars roll in, the heaps of clothing, suitcases and bundles grow, people climb out, look at the sun, take a few breaths, beg for water, get into the trucks, drive away. And again freight cars roll in, again people . . . The scenes become confused in my mind—I am not sure if all of this is actually happening or if I am dreaming. There is a humming inside my head; I feel that I must vomit. . . .

We proceed to load the loot. We lift huge trunks, heave them on to the trucks. There they are arranged in stacks, packed tightly. Occasionally somebody slashes one open with a knife, for pleasure or in search of vodka and perfume. One of the crates falls open; suits, shirts, books drop out on the ground . . . I pick up a small, heavy package. I unwrap it—gold, about two handfuls, bracelets, rings, brooches, diamonds . . .

“*Gib hier,*” an S.S. man says calmly, holding up his briefcase already full of gold and colorful foreign currency. He locks the case, hands it to an officer, takes another, an empty one, and stands by the next truck, waiting. The gold will go to the Reich.

It is hot, terribly hot. Our throats are dry, each word hurts. Anything for a sip of water! Faster, faster, so that it is over, so that we may rest. At last we are done, all the trucks have gone. Now we swiftly clean up the remaining dirt: there must be “no trace left of the *Schweinerei*.” But just as the last truck disappears behind the trees and we walk finally, to rest in the shade, a shrill whistle sounds around the bend. Slowly, terribly slowly, a train rolls in, the engine whistles back with a deafening shriek. Again weary, pale faces at the windows, flat as though cut out of paper, with huge, feverishly burning eyes. Already trucks are pulling up,

already the composed gentleman with the notebook is at his post, and the S.S. men emerge from the commissary carrying briefcases for the gold and money. We unseal the train doors.

It is impossible to control oneself any longer. Brutally we tear suitcases from their hands, impatiently pull off their coats. Go on, go on, vanish! They go, they vanish. Men, women, children. Some of them know.

Here is a woman—she walks quickly, but tries to appear calm. A small child with a pink cherub's face runs after her and, unable to keep up, stretches out his little arms and cries: "Mama! Mama!"

"Pick up your child, woman!"

"It's not mine, sir, not mine!" she shouts hysterically and runs on, covering her face with her hands. She wants to hide, she wants to reach those who will not ride the trucks, those who will go on foot, those who will stay alive. She is young, healthy, good-looking, she wants to live.

But the child runs after her, wailing loudly: "Mama, mama, don't leave me!"

"It's not mine, not mine, no!"

Andrei, a sailor from Sevastopol, grabs hold of her. His eyes are glassy from vodka and the heat. With one powerful blow he knocks her off her feet, then, as she falls, takes her by the hair and pulls her up again. His face twitches with rage.

"Ah, you bloody Jewess! So you're running from your own child! I'll show you, you whore!" His huge hand chokes her, he lifts her in the air and heaves her on to the truck like a heavy sack of grain.

"Here! And take this with you, bitch!" and he throws the child at her feet.

"*Gut gemacht*, good work. That's the way to deal with degenerate mothers," says the S.S. man standing at the foot of the truck. "*Gut, gut, Russki.*"

"Shut your mouth," growls Andrei through clenched teeth, and walks away. From under a pile of rags he pulls out a canteen, unscrews the cork, takes a few deep swallows, passes it to me. The strong vodka burns the throat. My head swims, my legs are shaky, again I feel like throwing up.

And suddenly, above the teeming crowd pushing forward like a river driven by an unseen power, a girl appears. She descends lightly from the train, hops on to the gravel, looks around inquiringly, as if somewhat surprised. Her soft, blond hair has fallen on her shoulders in a torrent, she throws it back impatiently. With a natural gesture she runs her hands down her blouse, casually straightens her skirt. She stands like this for an instant, gazing at the crowd, then turns and with a gliding look examines our faces, as though searching for someone. Unknowingly, I continue to stare at her, until our eyes meet.

“Listen, tell me, where are they taking us?”

I look at her without saying a word. Here, standing before me, is a girl, a girl with enchanting blond hair, with beautiful breasts, wearing a little cotton blouse, a girl with a wise, mature look in her eyes. Here she stands, gazing straight into my face, waiting. And over there is the gas chamber: communal death, disgusting and ugly. And over in the other direction is the concentration camp: the shaved head, the heavy Soviet trousers in sweltering heat, the sickening, stale odor of dirty, damp female bodies, the animal hunger, the inhuman labor, and later the same gas chamber, only an even more hideous, more terrible death . . .

Why did she bring it? I think to myself, noticing a lovely gold watch on her delicate wrist. They’ll take it away from her anyway.

“Listen, tell me,” she repeats.

I remain silent. Her lips tighten.

“I know,” she says with a shade of proud contempt in her voice, tossing her head. She walks off resolutely in the direction of the trucks. Someone tries to stop her; she boldly pushes him aside and runs up the steps. In the distance I can only catch a glimpse of her blond hair flying in the breeze.

I go back inside the train; I carry out dead infants; I unload luggage. I touch corpses, but I cannot overcome the mounting, uncontrollable terror. I try to escape from the corpses, but they are everywhere: lined up on the gravel, on the cement edge of the ramp, inside the cattle cars. Babies, hideous naked women, men twisted by convulsions. I run off as far as I can go, but immediately a whip slashes across my back. Out of the corner of my eye I see an S.S. man, swearing profusely. I stagger forward and run, lose myself in the Canada group. Now, at last, I can once more rest against the stack of rails. The sun has leaned low over the horizon and illuminates the ramp with a reddish glow; the shadows of the trees have become elongated, ghostlike. In the silence that settles over nature at this time of day, the human cries seem to rise all the way to the sky.

1. *How was it possible for people, who otherwise considered themselves to be at the pinnacle of civilization, to engage in such brutal treatment of the fellow human beings?*
2. *If you had the choice of going immediately to your death in the gas chambers or trying to survive as a worker in the death camps, which would you have chosen?*

XXI

Speech: Martin Luther King, Jr., Has a Dream—the American Dream

Many people regard the following speech as the height of the Civil Rights movement in the United States during the 1950's and 1960's. The setting was a dramatic one. On August 23, 1963, hundreds of thousands of peaceful demonstrators went to Washington DC, and Martin Luther King, Jr., the acknowledged leader of that movement delivered this speech. The speech, itself, goes beyond the Civil Rights movement. By tying in the failed promises made to the black people, King is talking also about the yet-to-be-fulfilled promise of America. In effect, he is saying that as long as racial injustice prevails in the United States, then the real America betrays the ideal America of liberty and justice for all. The key word here is all, not just some, not just a few, not just the wealthy, not just those who think or look like I do, but all as in everyone, all God's children. In this sense then, racial injustice is un-American because it prevents the fulfillment of America's promise. So, from a speech demanding justice for blacks, Martin Luther King turned the speech into justice for all Americans and a reminder of what the United States is supposed to be all about.

The speech itself makes use of a number of rhetorical devices particularly effective in a spoken setting. Notice in the second paragraph the words "Five score years ago" are an allusion to the Gettysburg Address wherein Abraham Lincoln, in front of whose Memorial King was standing, said: "Four score and seven years ago." This rhetorical device is known as paradiorthosis, when famous words are quoted but with a twist and without identifying them. In the third paragraph, the repetition of "One hundred years later" underscores the lack of fulfillment of the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation. This repetition of a phrase or word is called anaphora. And King ties the unfulfilled promise of the Emancipation Proclamation with the unfulfilled promises of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In the fourth and fifth paragraphs, King used a number of metaphors to make his point. He referred to the "bank of justice," the "promissory note . . . [of] unalienable rights," and the "drug of gradualism." Note these aspects of his rhetorical style throughout the rest of the speech.

"I Have a Dream"

- 1** I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.
- 2** Five score years ago, a great American in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.
- 3** But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely

island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

4 In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

5 It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of *now*. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. *Now* is the time to make real the promises of democracy. *Now* is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. *Now* is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. *Now* is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

6 It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquillity in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

7 But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with

soul force.* The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

8 And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, “When will you be satisfied?” We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro’s basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

9 I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

10 Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our modern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

11 I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering in the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

* The words “soul force” are an allusion to Mahatma Gandhi’s idea of *satyagraha*, which influenced Martin Luther King and the entire Civil Rights movement.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

12 This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

13 This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

14 And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city. We will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"¹⁸

1. Analyze the rest of Martin Luther King's speech in terms of rhetorical devices. If you recognize but do not know the name of a particular rhetorical device, look it up. How does their use heighten the impact of the message?

2. Has Martin Luther King's dream been fulfilled?

¹⁸ "Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Ennobles the Civil Rights Movement at the Lincoln Memorial," in *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*, ed. William Safire, New York, W. W. Norton, 1992, pp. 495–500.

XXII

Book Review: Juan Bosch's Evaluation of Henry Kissinger's Justification for the Overthrow of Salvador Allende

*Book reviews are often an overlooked source of evidence about people and events. Those who write reviews are usually selected because they have some special knowledge of the topic and can evaluate the book from the vantage point of that expertise. Sometimes the reviewer has an axe to grind because the author of the book writes something the reviewer finds offensive to his own view of the events being described. In the following excerpt from a review, Juan Bosch, a noted Dominican politician and writer, provides a negative assessment of an argument Henry Kissinger made in his memoirs *The White House Years*. You are to decide the strengths and weaknesses of the respective arguments.*

The issue is the coup in which the Chilean military, with CIA assistance, ousted President Salvador Allende in 1973. Allende's administration was replaced by the brutal dictatorship of General August Pinochet. At the time, Kissinger was Secretary of State of the United States and Allende had been president of Chile for three years. Allende was a Marxist and had in mind some sweeping changes for the relationship between the government and the economy in Chile. It was in the middle of the Cold War, and Kissinger's concerns about Allende's potential sympathy with the Soviet Union, the archenemy of the United States, comes through in the quotations that Bosch cites.

Bosch on Kissinger's Argument

In the first volume . . . of his book, *White House Years*, Henry Kissinger devotes thirty-one pages to relating the events, as he sees them, that culminated in the assassination of President Salvador Allende. Those thirty-one pages make up a whole chapter that its author titles "The Autumn of Crises: Chile," and that begins by referring to the election of September 4, 1970. In those elections, writes Kissinger, "Salvatore Allende achieved a plurality . . . with a bare 36.2% of the popular vote."

Why did Kissinger begin the chapter in this way? With the obvious intent of impressing his readers, from the first, with the argument that the electoral victory of Popular Unity that brought Allende to power was not legitimate because he did not obtain more than half of the votes cast. This also makes perfectly clear from the first that with regard to Chile the former secretary of state of President Nixon was not really writing his memoirs but his defense, and that this account of what he did in the Chilean affair attempts to deform the truth so that his readers may absolve him of his responsibility for the years of suffering and humiliation, death, and misery that his actions and those of his government caused to the country of Pablo Neruda

and Orlando Letelier.

In case the absurd argument of the number of votes obtained by Popular Unity should not suffice, Kissinger, acting as lawyer in his own defense, tries to justify his conduct with respect to Chile by alleging that the Chilean elections took place

just as Moscow and Cairo were rejecting our protests of Middle East ceasefire violations; Jordan feared an imminent Iraqi move against the King; a Soviet naval force was steaming toward Cuba. On September 8, the day the Chilean developments were first discussed by an interagency committee, several airplanes had been hijacked in the Middle East and the Soviet flotilla was nearing the port of Cienfuegos. Six days later, on September 14, when Chile was next considered, the Jordan situation had deteriorated, and Cuban MiGs intercepted a U-2 flight seeking to photograph Cienfuegos and the mission had to be aborted. In the weeks that followed, our government pondered Chilean events not in isolation but against the backdrop of the Syrian invasion of Jordan and our effort to force the Soviet Union to dismantle its installation for servicing nuclear submarines in the Caribbean. The reaction must be seen in that context.

At whom was this long and unnecessary explanation, and its last words, in particular, directed? The reply to this question is found in the lines that follow immediately on the same page (p. 654):

In any circumstances, Allende's election was a challenge to our national interest. We did not find it easy to reconcile ourselves to a second Communist state in the Western Hemisphere. We were persuaded that he would soon be inciting anti-American policies, attacking hemispheric solidarity, making common cause with Cuba, and sooner or later establishing close relations with the Soviet Union. And this was all the more painful because Allende represented a break with Chile's long democratic history and would become president not through an authentic expression of majority will but through a fluke of the Chilean political system. Thirty-six percent of the popular vote was hardly a mandate for the irreversible transformation for Chile's political and economic institutions that Allende was determined to effect.

The chief of foreign policy of the United States cannot conceive that any country in the world can accept as a democratic—and constitutional—principle that when there are three candidates for president the victory should go to the one who obtains more than 33.33% of the vote. This simply cannot be. In conformity with the rules of the only true, authentic democracy, the one invented by the authors of the Constitution of the United States, the only legitimate elections are those in which only two candidates vie for power. It was inconceivable and

unpardonable, above all, that this violation of the principles that govern the functioning of capitalist democracy should be used to bring to power men who were not submissive subjects of Yankee interests. For this reason, that part of the chapter dedicated to Chile in *White House Years* ends with these words: “Two previous American administrations had come to the same conclusion. Two administrations had judged that an Allende government in Chile would be against fundamental American national interests. Our conclusion in 1970 was substantially the same.”

Now, since those two previous administrations had been those of Kennedy and Johnson, and Johnson was no longer president at the beginning of 1970, it is plain that the Allende government, which began its mandate at the end of 1970, was born with a sentence of death that had been passed against it at least two years before, and this sentence of death was merely ratified by Kissinger and Nixon, designated by an overwhelming majority of mankind to judge the governments of this world, both the quick and the dead, and apply to them the sentences they deemed suitable.

Let me point out, however, that despite that previous sentence of death, if Salvador Allende had sent Kissinger and Nixon a message assuring them that Popular Unity would maintain a policy favorable to the national and world interests of the United States, Allende would have been kept in power, come what may, with the argument that in accordance with the Chilean constitution, Allende had obtained a legal plurality of votes over his rivals. For such is the arbitrary position of the high officials of the United States, who will even justify a crime on the grounds that it is their duty to defend the national interests of the United States—meaning thereby the interests of an oligarchy of multibillionaires.

To read, almost seven years after the murder of Salvador Allende, what Kissinger writes about the events that led to the murder of Salvador Allende fills one with bitterness and wrath, for a reading of those pages makes clear that the destiny of peoples like those of Latin America depends on astoundingly ignorant men, men who wield enormous power concentrated in engines of destruction which they set in motion without the least awareness of the forces they unleash. Kissinger was a poor devil, a sorcerer’s apprentice who did not even know why he did what he did. He says (p. 656):

What worried us about Allende was his proclaimed hostility to the United States and his patent intention to create another Cuba. It was his explicit program and indeed long-standing goal to establish an irreversible dictatorship and a permanent challenge to our position in the West Hemisphere. And in the month of Cienfuegos it was not absurd to take seriously the implications of

another Soviet ally in Latin America. Our concerns with Allende was based on national security, not on economics.

What should we make of this paragraph? If what Kissinger calls his “concern” authorized the Nixon administration to dispose of Allende at any cost, including his physical elimination, by what right does the United States proclaim itself the world champion of democracy? Can a democracy resort to crime because it believes that its national security is in danger even before events prove the existence of a danger?

Kissinger affirms that between 1962 and 1964 the Kennedy and Johnson administrations contributed more than three million dollars to the political campaign of Eduardo Frei, who during those years was Allende’s rival for the presidency of Chile; later he says that Johnson made available hundreds of thousands of dollars to Allende’s enemies in order that the parties opposed to Popular Unity might win the legislative elections held in March 1969. He adds that North American aid to Chile during the Frei administration “totaled well over \$1 billion, the largest per capita program by far in Latin America,” and explains that this was done “to strengthen the democratic forces against Allende.”

The high point of this illuminating chapter of Kissinger’s book appears on the last page (p. 683), in a paragraph that reads as follows: “The myth that Allende was a democrat has been as assiduously fostered as it is untrue. The fact is that various measures taken by Allende’s government were declared to be unconstitutional and outside the law by the Chilean Supreme Court on May 26, 1973, by the Comptroller General on July 2, 1973, and by the Chamber of Deputies on August 22, 1973.”

Naturally, after reading this paragraph, the ordinary reader must ask himself how Mr. Kissinger can call undemocratic a government in which the Supreme Court, the Comptroller General, and the Chamber of Deputies, which formed very important parts of the Chilean state apparatus, operated with complete freedom with respect to the executive branch of government. What emerges very clearly from the chapter on Chile in *White House Years* is that Allende’s murderers dared to liquidate him because behind them stood the overwhelming power of the United States, and that in his eagerness to conceal the truth the serpent named Henry Kissinger ended up swallowing its own tail.¹⁹

¹⁹ Juan Bosch, “Henry Kissinger on Salvador Allende,” in *Latin American Civilization: History and Society, 1492 to the Present*, ed. Benjamin Keen, 5th ed., Boulder, Westview Press, 1991, pp. 434–437; trans. from Juan Bosch, “Salvador Allende en las memorias de Kissinger,” *Casa de las Americas* (Havana), Year 22, September-October 1981, no. 128, pp. 100–103.

1. *What do you think of Juan Bosch's critique? Has he misrepresented Kissinger's argument?*
2. *Can you think of other arguments that Bosch did not use to refute Kissinger's argument?*
3. *Can you think of arguments other than those of Kissinger to refute what Bosch is saying?*
4. *Given what has occurred since 1973, do you think U.S. involvement in the overthrow of Allende was justified?*