

History Happenings

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La Belle Feronnière by Leonardo da Vinci. Read more in Peter Brand's enlightening article about a special exhibit at the Louvre.



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History in the Age of Coronavirus

Sometimes we forget that future historians will look back on our own time and make meaning of it. But this is not one of those times. The COVID-19 pandemic has not just cost lives – it has detonated our daily patterns, and it will have far-reaching consequences on our economic and political systems.

And yet, we keep doing what historians do. The entire university shifted to online classes in mid-semester. The Department of History was well-equipped to handle the transition, thanks to our pioneering online program, which had already involved so many of our faculty. Our colleague Amanda Lee Savage deserves our special thanks for helping all the faculty navigate this transition.

We remain committed to helping our students think critically, express themselves clearly, and logically interpret the past. But we also recognize that our students may need more than that. The crisis is cutting deep in Memphis. We can guide students through a document, but we can also extend a little personal understanding, or maybe crack a corny joke. In overt and subtle ways, we can remind our students that we are here to help them succeed.

We thought about canceling this edition of *History Happenings*, but we decided that it was important to publish it, because we remain committed to our mission as historians. We convey the value of a well-rounded perspective grounded in the humanities, as evidenced by Peter Brand's cover piece on Leonardo DaVinci. We provide models of community-based scholarship at its best, as seen in Susan O'Donovan's article about the book she co-edited with Beverly Bond on the 1866 Memphis Massacre. The essays by Catherine Arnold and Brad Dixon are good reminders that our department is filled with people doing cutting-edge research into the human experience. When Mandy Campbell writes about her senior Honors Thesis on religious leaders and 1968 Sanitation Strike, it showcases one of exceptionally talented students, who is planning to become a historians in her own right. Articles by Aram Goudsouzian and Cookie Woolner show our department's reach into the lives of U of M students and the broader Memphis community.

Finally, what would an edition of *History Happenings* look like without an extended conversation between our resident Beauvoir and Sartre? In their delightful explorations of the past, Guiomar Duenas-Vargas and Andrei Znamenski model a spirit of intellectual inquiry. We need it – now, more than ever.



Genius in Residence: Leonardo da Vinci at the Louvre

By Peter Brand

On our way back to Memphis from a field season in Egypt, my doctoral student Katie Fincher and I spent a few days in Paris early in January. The Louvre Museum's vast Egyptian collection was one draw, but we also took the rare opportunity to see a spectacular exhibition of the works of Leonardo da Vinci.

When I heard about this exhibit last year, I realized it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The prototypical "Renaissance Man," Da Vinci's colossal intellect blended seamlessly with his astounding artistic talents. Always busy, the Louvre had attracted so many visitors since the exhibition opened in October that tickets for the Da Vinci show could only be purchased online—well in advance. When we bought them in early November, the show was already booked solid through Christmas and we barely got tickets for early January.

Little more than a dozen paintings by Da Vinci still survive. Both a perfectionist and a genius, he did not produce a torrent of paintings with the aid of the apprentices in his workshop on the industrial scale of Botticelli. In fact, he completed almost *none* of his paintings. Instead, Leonardo tinkered with some works for decades, and left others, like his *St. Jerome*, as little more than sketches with some under-paintings. Even these are masterpieces.

With six works, the Louvre houses the largest share of his paintings, including that pop icon, the Mona Lisa. A few others travelled to Paris, but an important feature of the exhibit were scores of Da Vinci's sketches and notes. These reveal the boundless curiosity of his restless mind. Leonardo was a scientific artist, a polymath obsessed with nature and beauty. In his folios, or on any scrap of parchment he could get his hands on, he made vivid drawings, often with notes scrawled in his famous mirror writing. Multiple images crowd every page. Delicate studies of figures for religious paintings keep company with geometric diagrams, futuristic plans for flying machines, armored vehicles, and other technical contraptions that no one would build before the 20th century.



One masterpiece that he never finished was an *Adoration of the Magi*. A number of sketches for the work do survive. In these exquisite little doodles, he tried out various poses for the Christ Child and Virgin Mary. It was to be set in an architectural setting, so Da Vinci worked up a mockup showing how lines of perspective, that great innovation of Renaissance art, shaped the space the figures would reside in and guide the viewers eye to the Virgin and Child at its center—perhaps the most beautiful geometry lesson in history!



Artistic geometry: Da Vinci's perspective study for *Adoration of the Magi*

Since the Italian artist and biographer Vasari penned his *Lives of the Great Artists*, we have often viewed Da Vinci as a lone genius. But Leonardo did not spring from a vacuum, nor did he toil alone. He was trained in the workshop of the Florentine artist Verrocchio, where he apprenticed in drawing, painting, sculpting and other techniques of a Renaissance artist. Among the works by a young Da Vinci was an elegant *Tobias and the Angel*, of which the apprentice painted the dog and a fish while reputedly serving as the model for the Archangel Rafael's face. Another spectacular product of Verrocchio's studio was the over life-sized sculpture in bronze of Christ and the Apostle Thomas. A dramatic tour de force, being in its presence inspires intense emotion and awe of its technical virtuosity.



My favorite piece – indeed, my favorite painting in the world – is Da Vinci's *The Virgin, Child, and St. Anne*. Overshadowed in the popular imagination of tourists who flock to see *Mona Lisa*, the *St. Anne* is a superior painting. The lovely face and enigmatic smile of La Joconde, as the French call the *Mona Lisa*, are not unique, but turn up in other paintings of the master, including *St. Anne*'s. A recent restoration cleared away centuries of grime, revealing the intense azure of the Virgin's dress. Before taking up his brush, Da Vinci experimented with different arrangements of the figures. A full-sized study in chalk and ink is a treasure of the National Gallery in London, which was lent to the Louvre. Smaller drawings reveal alternate poses in quick ink sketches and elegant chalk studies of faces and other elements.

What makes Da Vinci's paintings so alluring is not just the refinement of his brushwork and the sophistication of his compositions. He employed a technique called *sfumato*, or "smokiness." *Sfumato* deliberately blurs the lines in his paintings, mimicking the optical effect produced when our eyes see objects on the periphery of our vision, just out of focus, as if we are dreaming. This softening of the edges of his figures give *Mona Lisa* her mysterious allure. It is so subtle that we never regard it as the Renaissance equivalent of an out-of-focus photo. When we look upon



La Belle Feronnière, a masterful portrait of a Florentine lady, she stares back at us with a gaze that is piercing, yet not hard or sharp. The effect is startling, even mesmerizing. (See image on cover of newsletter).

In the spirit of a great event, there were several no-shows on the Louvre's roster of selected works of Leonardo, and a flurry of controversy and lawsuits swirling around the exhibition. After a court battle, the famous *Vitruvian Man* drawing that often symbolizes Da Vinci's marriage of science and art came only for a few weeks. It returned to Italy in December, before we had a chance to see it. I had hoped to see *Lady with an Ermine*, but it remains in Krakow, Poland. The most anticipated work, which did not appear, was the *Salvator Mundi*, a portrait of Christ which recently became the most expensive work of art ever sold at auction for \$450 million to a buyer in the Middle East.

There was one work absent from the exhibition that was not so far away: the *Mona Lisa* herself. Countless tourists flock to the Louvre to say they've checked her off their bucket list. No longer the portrait of a Florentine lady named Lisa del Giocondo – I bet you didn't know that! – she has become a pop cult icon like Tutankhamun's gold mask in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo or the Louvre's own *Venus de Milo*. Visitors queue up for upwards of half an hour so they can stand directly in front of *Mona Lisa* for a few seconds for a quick selfie. But not too close! She sits in a bulletproof glass case mounted on a specialty-built partition wall several yards behind them. A wooden balustrade and a team of watchful security guards prevents anyone from getting any closer. The scene is not unlike medieval pilgrims gathering before the altar of a shrine to the Virgin Mary.



Meanwhile, in the enormous gallery all around her, dozens of masterpieces by some of the greatest artists of the Renaissance hang within view of the indifferent tourists. And what does *Mona Lisa* herself see looming behind her throng of gushing fans? A magnificent painting by Veronese, *The Wedding at Cana*. This masterpiece is alive with color and detail, and at almost 22 x 32 feet, it is larger than many Paris apartments! Yet most visitors don't even notice it. They only have eyes for hers. They would be better off seeing Leonardo da Vinci's other works like the *St. Anne*, *La Belle Feronnière*, or that little fish he painted in Verrocchio's *Tobias and the Angel*.

Remembering a Massacre

By Susan O'Donovan



In the early hours of May 1, 1866, a mob of white men launched a rampage of terror in the streets of Memphis. Their targets? Black men recently released from active duty military service, their families, and any other black Memphian who crossed their path. When the violence finally abated three days later, more than forty-six African Americans were dead. Every African-American church and schoolhouse lay in ruins, businesses and homes had been ransacked and burned, and at least five women had been raped.

Although this horrific event galvanized Congress into acting more forcefully in the defense of America's four million recently freed slaves – passing, for instance, the Fourteenth Amendment which guarantees birthright citizenship – the massacre at Memphis quickly disappeared behind a shroud of silence. By the twentieth century only specialists in the field knew anything about what had happened in our city on those three terrible days. Only specialists in the field knew anything about how one angry mob changed the nature of American citizenship forever. Only specialists in the field knew that at the center of this watershed moment were thousands of former

slaves who refused to let a mob dictate their futures.

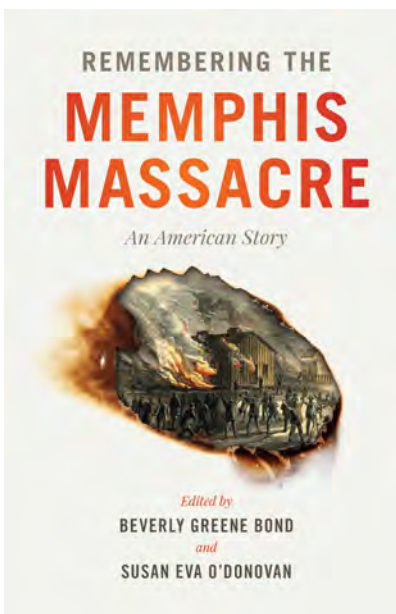
That changed 150 years later, when in February 2016, Beverly Bond and I launched the Memphis Massacre Project. A first-of-its-kind initiative, the Memphis Massacre Project brought Memphians of all colors and classes together to discuss a deliberately forgotten part of our national history, one in which African Americans played a central and formative part. We considered the event itself, asking key questions: Why then? Why in this form? Why Memphis?

We talked about the conditions that produced the tensions that flared to such dramatic and deadly effect in May 1866. We discussed the nation's response and Congress's willingness to take black Memphians seriously, to listen to their testimony, to gather evidence, to offer respect. We especially talked about the consequences of those three days and how what happened in Memphis in May 1866 was as much about the nation's future as it was a reflection of its past. These were powerful and poignant discussions that drew in and drew from students, teachers, clergymen, librarians, archivists, community activists, and concerned citizens, as well as scholars of the black past.

By May 2016, we were ready for the longest and most intense discussion on our schedule: a public symposium that took place on the University of Memphis campus. Bringing together leading historians in the fields of slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction, and memory, we led a two-day discussion about the Memphis Massacre and its legacy. It was a remarkable conversation, frank in its assessment of the cotton economy, an event that swept millions of enslaved people into the Mississippi Valley. We talked just as frankly about the Civil War, seeing it as both a liberating and oppressive event, one that dislocated and displaced even as it emancipated the nation's slaves.

And we talked about the Memphis Massacre itself, about why cities were such combustible places, about the role of churches black and white, and why it was that white Southerners so vilified black soldiers. We closed the symposium with long discussions about the constitutional and political legacies of an event that we still feel today – in the three Reconstruction-era amendments, in ongoing struggles over Confederate symbols on our landscape, about whose history is worth preserving, and about who gets to choose.

One does not have to go back in time to revisit these conversations. In March 2020, the University of Georgia Press released the book that grew out of the closing symposium. Filled with essays by the same historians who came to the University of Memphis in May 2016, *Remembering the Memphis Massacre: An American Story* covers all the same ground. In it, the authors explain the rise of cotton and with it, the rise of slavery in the Mid-South region. They explore a Civil War that swept impoverished black farmer workers out of the countryside and into the city, and the struggles waged by people of all classes, creeds, colors, and conditions over freedom and its meanings. They show how by May 1866, Memphis was a tinderbox of frustrations, fears, and expectations, many of them decades in the making. Most of all, the essays in this volume put the Memphis Massacre in its historical context, making it easier to see that what happened on those three terrible days was part of a much larger story, one that involves the whole of the nation and one that arguably continues into this present day.



Native American Porters in the Early South

By Brad Dixon

Trails and trade routes knitted together the Native peoples of Southeastern North America long before the arrival of European colonizers. But in a world with no domestic draught animals, how did cargo move? The question might seem strange, given that we tend to picture Native Americans as inseparable from the horse (of course). Whether pursuing their enemies into battle or following the buffalo on the hunt, we tend to picture Native peoples as virtual centaurs.



Horses served them in more workaday ways as well—pulling in a travois everything from the camp’s baggage to a little baby. And who could forget that iconic picture of Geronimo in his 1904 Locomobile? But, really, before the internal combustion engine or the horse (the only pre-Columbian draft animal was the llama and it was far to the south and high in the Andes) how did goods move over the trading paths of Turtle Island?

The answer: Human beings carried loads on their backs. Even after horses became more widely available with the expansion of European colonization in the late seventeenth century, Native men continued to serve as carriers, sometimes shouldering packs of deerskins and other trade goods on journeys as long as 700 miles. Some did so to earn trade goods; others were pressed into carrying by Spanish and

English colonists and resented work that Natives had long considered of low status. Why did the practice continue for so long? And why did it finally end?

To answer those questions we first need to learn how Natives thought porters ought to be treated. The chroniclers of the Hernando de Soto entrada of 1539-43 wrote often of how its commander would demand the “necessary tamemes” at every town he stopped. *Tameme* derived from a Nahuatl word meaning to carry something, and it referred to a class of men who at the command of their local lord carried goods of a limited weight, for limited distances, and who expected to return home when the job was done and there to receive a wage. As in Mexico, Southeastern societies had people whose customary work was like that of *tamemes*—hence the name. But Soto was never satisfied with the *tamemes* provided—there were never enough. So he enslaved Native people – hundreds of them shackled together – just to carry his expedition’s luggage!

Soto’s dreams sunk with him to the bottom of the Mississippi River; the Spanish would not permanently colonize La Florida until 1565. From a military outpost, the presidio at San Agustin quickly became a mission field.

A chain of missions from the presidio in the east to the province of Apalachee in the west spread along the *camino real* — the “royal road” — that was hardly worthy of the name. It was a tortuous, swampy path that crossed several wide rivers. And despite a growing stock of horses and oxen, the road was too treacherous for any but human carriers. Cargueros were carried about 75 pounds on their backs, moving the produce of Apalachee to San Agustin in a roundtrip of about two weeks. It was difficult work that wasted the bodies, which we know because the mission-era skeletons show more evidence of joint damage and arthritis than pre-mission skeletons.



The demand for porters in the region did not abate even as a new colony – Charles Town – was established in 1670 at the point where the Ashley and the Cooper Rivers meet to form the Atlantic Ocean. Carolina would make its fortune trading with Indian nations deep in the interior for deerskins – and for Indian slaves. Indeed, the Indian Slave Trade would net some 51,000 captives between 1670 and 1715, decimate the Florida missions, and realign the politics of the region. The Apalachees—or at least those not enslaved or killed or fled to safer territory – would be led back, some 1300 of them, to Carolina and settled by Charles Town’s officials in a new town conveniently located on one of the key trading paths for the deerskin trade. What did Carolina officials have in mind? You guessed it: Apalachees became a handy pool of burdeners for the trade.

Carrying goods for sale hundreds of miles, as far as the Chickasaw country (where we are standing today), the Apalachees’ service as burdeners far exceeded the customary rules that *tamemes* would have expected to live by. They were going farther, carrying heavier loads (some sources say as much as 100 pounds), and they were paid a pittance or perhaps nothing at all. This abuse of burdeners was one of the many reasons that the Apalachees and scores of other nations rose up in war against South Carolina in 1715.

That uprising, known to history as the Yamasee War, proved unsuccessful. But it led to key reforms in the Indian trade, especially reforms of burdening that were aimed at getting the practice more in line with Indigenous customary expectations. The period from 1716 to 1718 — the height of reform — saw burdening parties of as many as 115 young men bearing some 6,000 pounds of skins! Each man received two yards and a half of cloth, blue duffels to be exact. But burdening remained humiliating and dangerous work for Natives.

They feared being waylaid on the path by their enemies and they resented the pay (and to the consternation of Charles Town officials) took a little off the top from their packs. Tired of the practice, the Catawbias, for one, demanded that Carolina do what their competition, the traders of Virginia, were already doing: Bring their goods on the backs not of men but of packhorses. The Cherokees made the same demand, telling one Carolina trading factor that they would not long let the Carolinians “make Horse [of them] to carrie.”

Burdening of sorts would continue, of course, well into the nineteenth century. But after the 1720s, burdening would never again reach the proportions it had during the seventeenth and early years of the eighteenth century. Demands that they take up packs again — made by Carolinians when the complicated technology of packhorses didn’t work as easily — smacked of colonial hauteur and met with the derision of Native leaders.

Indeed, one can think of few better symbols of colonialism than the excesses to which burdening was put, long into the nineteenth and even the twentieth centuries, as the engraving below of a white traveler in Colombia in the 1820s suggests.

Although human carriers were nimbler, better suited to hike the winding and narrow trails of the region, they were finally relieved in spite of colonial demands. In the North American Southeast, Indian cargo-bearers made their treatment and status a political issue, leading to efforts first at regulating the practice and, finally, to abolish it altogether by adopting (for good or ill) a comparatively new technology for the Southeast: the packhorse train.



A Memphis Story

By Mandy Campbell



Every day for nearly a year, I have been thinking about the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike. I have been researching and writing the biggest project of my college career, my senior thesis. This project, which consists of four profiles of Memphis ministers who were involved in the strike, interrogates the motives of religious leaders in social action campaigns and examines the intersections of religious and political history.

In the past few months, I have moved from mostly researching to mostly writing and editing. I am reminded of what my favorite novelist, Ann Patchett, says it feels like to finally start writing after the long, lovely period of reading and thinking: "I reach up and pluck the butterfly from the air. I take it from the region of my head and press it down against my desk, and there, with my own hand, I kill it. It's not that I want to kill it, but it's the only way I can get something that is so three-dimensional onto the flat page." It does feel a little like I'm killing something. What I'm putting onto the page is not really what exists in my head, and I'm scared that I'm ignoring too many important things. But it doesn't feel totally destructive. I'm learning that the narrative that exists in my head is only worth something if I can get a version of it on paper. I am learning that it will be imperfect even after many revisions, but it's worth the effort to make an attempt to communicate it.

Over this last year, this project has felt like a companion,. It is a needy companion, demanding near-constant attention. But it has also sustained me, as I navigate my last year of college. The best metaphor perhaps comes from Umberto Eco, who instructs his students to think of their theses as a first love. And it does feel that way. It feels like the most important thing I could possibly do, even though I know I will have many more research projects in the future. Like a first love, I have learned lessons that will realistically benefit later projects more than this one. And I think this is the love that I will filter all my future loves through. I hope that I produce much better work in the future. I hope my work is only more inclusive, more justice-oriented, and more compassionate. I know I will fall in love again, but prophetic religion and the sanitation strike will always be my first.



Reverend Dick Moon and Sister Adrian Hofstetter



Reverend James Lawson

At the end of last semester, one of my advisors, Dr. Colin Chapell, asked me if reading about segregated churches in Memphis had changed how I felt about living in Memphis. I think it did. Being immersed in the sanitation strike for the last year does change how I understand Memphis. But I have tried to not make it change everything. As much as I care about this project, I don't want to see everything through the lens of the sanitation strike. The strike is a defining story for this city, but it's not the only story. I only know a little more. And I think that this perspective is essential to being a good researcher and writer. I need to have enough humility to realize that this is an important story, without mistaking it for the only important story. There's plenty more to discover.

Affairs of Humanity

By Catherine Arnold

In 2020-2021 I will be traveling to new archives at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, in order to finish the research and revisions for my first book, *Affairs of Humanity: Humanitarian Intervention Between Reformation and Enlightenment*, which is under advance contract at Yale University Press.

Affairs of Humanity explores the emergence of humanitarian intervention in early eighteenth-century Britain and Europe. The monograph challenges the current historiographical consensus which holds that the transition from religious, or “confessional,” intervention to humanitarian intervention occurred during the critical period of the American and French Revolutions and the re-making of European empires that followed. Historians of humanitarianism in the long nineteenth century, as well as scholars of early modern religion and diplomacy, have characterized the eighteenth century as a period when European states were only willing to protect their co-religionists, whether by intervening on their behalf abroad or by offering them refuge at home.



Jewish families being expelled from Prague, 1745

By contrast, *Affairs of Humanity* shows that, between 1690 and 1750, British statesmen and diplomats intervened to protect not only Protestants, but also Catholics and Jews, who had been imprisoned or exiled for refusing to accept the theological orthodoxies of their national churches. British officials justified their interventions with humanitarian arguments. They asserted that a ruler's decisions to imprison or expel her subjects only for their religious beliefs was an action that violated the laws of acceptable behavior in human society, as defined in natural law. In such instances, they argued, intervention was warranted. Britain had a duty to prevent states from further violating natural law and a moral obligation to aid sufferers of all religious faiths out of common humanity.

Affairs of Humanity traces how Britain gradually shifted from confessional to humanitarian intervention

during the early eighteenth century in response to lobbying from persecuted prisoners, refugees, and the transnational religious communities to which they belonged. Between 1685 and 1750, as some European states, like France, repressed minority faiths, religious minorities began to engage in a new kind of transnational advocacy, lobbying for protection from foreign governments when their own monarchs threatened them. Prisoners and their allies elsewhere in Europe petitioned high-ranking European diplomats and statesmen, like Britain's Secretaries of State, and publicized their cause in Europe's international French-language newspapers, pamphlets, and books.

Drawing on English, French, Italian, Dutch, and Austrian print materials, state papers, church and synagogue records, petitions, and private correspondence, *Affairs of Humanity* reconstructs five cases in which minority advocacy pushed Britain to intervene on behalf of persecuted men and women: those of Protestants in France, north-western Italy, and the Holy Roman Empire; Marrano fugitives from Portugal; Jansenists in France; and Ashkenazi refugees in the Habsburg kingdom of Bohemia.

In their campaigns to secure Britain's intervention, *Affairs of Humanity* demonstrates how prisoners, refugees, and their advocates elsewhere in Europe marshaled humanitarian justifications for intervention, which were later adopted by British officials. Prisoners and their allies claimed that persecution was a violation of natural law and a moral outrage that demanded the sympathy of all men and women, no matter their religious affiliation.

They framed their appeals in these universalist terms because prisoners and refugees “for conscience’s sake” could not claim foreign protection within the system of confessional intervention that had developed in Reformation Europe. In this system, which was enshrined in a series of international treaties—including the Treaties of Westphalia—Protestant states, acting as guarantors, could licitly intervene to enforce the collective rights of some Protestant communities in majority-Catholic territories, while Catholic states could do the same for Catholic minorities.

However, these treaties made no direct provision for intervention to release individual prisoners and, moreover, where no treaty had been negotiated, European governments had no legal basis for intervention across sovereign borders. The result was that Jews, Catholics, and even some Protestant prisoners could not claim protection from Britain under existing treaty law. Thus, when prisoners, refugees, and their networks petitioned for the intervention of Britain and other European governments, they emphasized the prisoners’ status as humans, rather than their status as members of a religious community, stressing the moral obligation that humans have to succor one another and the duty that all rulers have to enforce natural law.

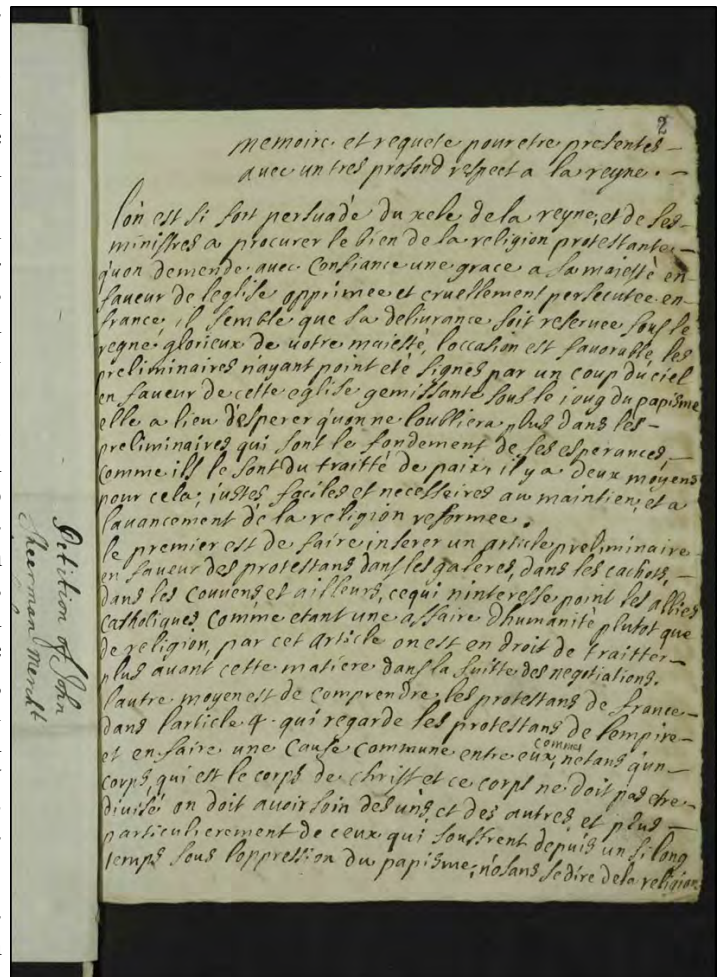
The advocacy of religious minorities in petitions, pamphlets, and newspapers brought the fate of prisoners and refugees to the attention of governments from Prague to London. But it was in Britain that they met with their greatest success. *Affairs of Humanity* traces how the British state’s institutions, including its culture of lobbying and its growing reliance on public finance, enabled prisoners and their allies to demand action from British officials at the highest levels of government. Between 1690 and 1750, British politicians and diplomats from across the ideological spectrum came to agree that common humanity required that Britain intervene to prevent other states from unjustly punishing their subjects. As a result, Britain gradually shifted from confessional intervention to the kind of humanitarian intervention that prisoners and their allies demanded.

The impact of religious communities’ transnational advocacy and of Britain’s transition to humanitarian intervention was felt beyond the sphere of early eighteenth-century international politics. *Affairs of Humanity* traces how questions of just state action and humanitarian sympathy were fused together during early eighteenth-century campaigns on behalf of prisoners and refugees, creating what Dan Edelstein recently identified as a distinctive Enlightenment mode of rights talk.

The arguments made in the context of minorities’ advocacy informed later campaigns against the slave trade and judicial torture and laid the groundwork for nineteenth-century humanitarian interventions in the Ottoman empire and central Europe. Minorities’ advocacy also set the stage for more modern forms of human rights politics.

As *Affairs of Humanity* suggests, in the early eighteenth century, European refugees and prisoners were already using natural law, a supranational source of rights, to appeal to foreign publics and foreign governments and challenge the policies of their own states—a tactic which has become a defining feature of modern human rights.

Affairs of Humanity concludes, then, that developments within European religious politics led to the emergence of a more secular politics of humanitarian intervention in early eighteenth-century Britain and Europe. It is this argument about the religious origins of humanitarian intervention that I will further develop while a Long-Term Research Fellow at the Newberry Library and holding a Short-Term Research Fellowship at the Huntington Library. These libraries hold some of the richest and most extensive collections of British and French sermons, pamphlets, newspapers, and state papers in the United States and I will use these resources to further investigate how British and European debates about religious toleration and pluralism influenced the development of early modern humanitarian politics.



A 1710 memorandum declaring that the fate of Protestant prisoners is an “affair of humanity”

Tiger Hoops

By Aram Goudsouzian



Aram Goudsouzian and Caroline Carrico on the PR circuit, here with Coach Penny Hardaway and Bill Walsh from the Pink Palace

Last year, I received a call from Steve Pike, who was then the Director of the Pink Palace Family of Museums. The museum was putting on its first exhibit in a space dedicated to the Memphis community, and it wanted to feature 100 years of basketball of what began as West Tennessee Normal School and what is now the University of Memphis. He asked if I would be interested in serving as the guest curator.

I jumped at the chance. I had written about the history of basketball throughout my academic life, including a biography of Bill Russell called *King of the Court*. I have long been interested in what sports can tell us about the larger society, and the Pink Palace's exhibit was a chance to bring those ideas to a wide swath of Memphians.

The exhibit, entitled "Tiger Hoops," opened on March 7. It was a unique and rewarding professional experience. I researched and wrote a narrative that chronicled the history of both the men's and women's basketball programs, constantly seeking to explain what the basketball team reflected about not only the state of this educational institution, but also about the city itself. Instead of serving as yet-another hall of fame, the exhibit shows that sometimes for better, and sometimes for worse, Tiger basketball tells a story about Memphis.

The extraordinary part was working with the Pink Palace team. They took my words and ideas, and they transformed them into a beautiful exhibit filled with quirky artifacts. Beyond the game-worn jerseys and signed basketballs, the space holds an authentic women's basketball uniform with "bloomers," a trophy from the 1957 National Invitational Tournament, bobbleheads of various coaches, the incredibly enormous sneaker of William Bedford . . . and, believe or not, a surfboard!

It was gratifying to work with Caroline Carrico, who got her M.A. in History along with a Certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Memphis. She had once been a student in my graduate seminar, and now she is the Supervisor of Exhibits at the Pink Palace. On the week before the exhibit opened, we did a lot of community publicity, the highlight of which was appearing on Penny Hardaway's radio show.

Of course, the Pink Palace is closed right now due to the Coronavirus crisis, as is every other public institution in Memphis. But the exhibit will run until October, so there remains plenty of time to come visit. And in the interim, you can go online and vote in a 64-player, March Madness-style bracket for the Greatest Tiger Ever. You can find the link at: <https://www.memphismuseums.org/pink-palace-museum/exhibits/tiger-hoops-100-years-of-memphis-basketball/>



Feminist Fair

By Cookie Woolner



March is Women's History Month, and as usual, the University of Memphis offered a slate of relevant events for students and the campus community. As a member of the Women's History Month Steering Committee, I organize the annual Feminist Fair, which took place on March 2 in the University Center. This event kicks off our full calendar of programming by introducing students to local gender and sexuality-centered resources and information.

This year, the Student History Society (SHS) made an impressive display on women's suffrage, an apt subject since 2020 marks the centennial of the 19th Amendment. However, not *all* American women gained the right to vote in 1920, and the SHS display highlighted this discrepancy by discussing the history of voting rights for women of color. This issue was also centered by my colleague Beverly Bond, who on March 6 gave a Women's History Month lecture on African American women and the suffrage movement.

Other local organizations that engaged with U of M students at the Feminist Fair included Birth Strides, which offers no-cost doula services and child-birth education to African American mothers in the Memphis area, and Choices, a local clinic that offers comprehensive reproductive health care to everyone.

History Department advisor and instructor Amanda Lee Savage, a founding board member of the new campus organization Pride & Equity Alliance, was tabling for her group at the Fair. This group is focused on LGBTQ+ inclusion at U of M and is working on educating the campus via partnerships throughout the city.

The Stonewall Tigers Gender & Sexuality Alliance student group also attended the Feminist Fair. This past October, the Stonewall Tigers collaborated with my Community of Research Scholars, the Mid-South LGBTQ+ Archive, to put on "Deconstructing Stonewall," a day of events that commemorated the 50th anniversary of both the Stonewall Uprising in New York and the local Miss Gay Memphis pageant, the first openly gay event here in town. The Stonewall Tigers put on the very first drag show on the campus of the University to cap off the day, which was incredibly well attended. It even had a historical theme: "Category is...1969 – Now."

All of these groups and events show that local interest in issues of gender and sexuality is really making headway, and some much-needed work is currently going on to make the campus and region more welcoming to everyone. This year's U of M Women's History Month theme is "Speak Now: Mempoer Women," and the organizations at the Feminist Fair gave the attendees information to empower themselves while introducing them to the rich landscape of local activism and services for women and LBGTQ+ people.



Socialism: A Political Religion?

An interview with Andrei Znamenski about his book-in-progress

Guiomar Duenas-Vargas: Many books about Socialism have been written. Why do you think we need a new one?

Andrei Znamenski: These many books either advocate for Socialism or bash it. Mine seeks to approach this topic in a neutral manner. I explore how and why this phenomenon flourished and why its numerous brands inspired millions of people. As a historian of religion, I view Socialism as a political religion. I draw on Emile Durkheim's argument that a religion represents a unified system of beliefs and practices that glue people together as a moral community and that are considered sacred. If you use this angle, any comprehensive ideology (including a secular one) could be considered a religion. The sacred is not necessarily related to the otherworldly realm. It might be a ritual, site, event, and object that cannot be touched with impunity.

The role of the sacred is to unite humans into moral communities. Scholars have been increasingly stressing that to draw a strict line between the so-called secular and religious is a flawed approach. For example, recently in *New Republic*, talking about the emergence of atheism, intellectual historian John Gray has noted that secularism was too often mistakenly viewed as something opposed to the realm of religion and spirituality. He has insisted, and I agree with him, that there was no such thing as the secular era. Modern movements we usually call secular in fact represent repressed religions.



Andrei Znamenski

What originally prompted me to look at Socialism as a surrogate religion was an observation of how passionately proponents of different versions of this creed attacked and still attack each other, arguing that their own faction carries the "true" Socialism and their opponents are not "real" socialists. This reminds me of factional conflicts within Christianity and Islam, where various factions frequently insist that they are "true" Christians/Muslims and that their competitors are not "genuine" ones. In my book, I do not seek to disentangle "genuine" forms of Socialism from "non-genuine" ones; such attempts strongly remind me of theological debates between Protestants and Catholics or between Shiites and Sunnites about "correct" and "incorrect" ways of practicing their faiths. Putting such theological debates aside, I simply want to explore where, how, and under what circumstances people adopted socialist rhetoric and practices, what contributed to their demise in the 1970s, and what sustains and regenerates this rhetoric and practices in our days.



A poster for Kibbutz Socialism, 1940s

One of my arguments is that Socialism never manifested itself in a pure form. As a historian of culture and religion, I prefer to talk about a socialist rhetoric, socialist thought collective, and socialist "governmentality," which have been unevenly present in different historical contexts and areas of the world. Moreover, the very understanding of what Socialism is all about has changed in a course of time. Just like Catholicism and Protestantism, democratic Socialism and Communism (two major brands of the creed) evolved in time and space.

What also sets up my book apart is its global history approach. In contrast to available surveys of Socialism that are focused more on European experiences, I explore how Socialism was introduced, assimilated, and practiced in various European, Asian, North American, and African contexts. You are a Latin American scholar, and I hate to say that my only regret is that, for the lack of space, I had to exclude from my volume such a crucial area as Latin America; my book contract specified that the text should be 100,000 words, and I have produced 196,000 words. But I might reserve Latin America for a separate article.

Guiomar Duenas-Vargas: Different forms of Socialism have been developed since the nineteenth century. What strands are you interested in examining? And are you looking at earlier “socialist” ideas?

Andrei Znamenski: An excellent question. To be specific, Socialism sprang up in Western Europe in the 1820s-1830s in the wake of Enlightenment and dislocations produced by the Industrial Revolution. Then it gradually spread around the world, being assimilated and indigenized by various cultures and countries. Some of them (e.g. Russia, China, Italy, and France) heavily embedded Socialism into their intellectual, political, and cultural matrix. Others (as, until recently, the United States) did it to a lesser degree. At the same time, my purpose was not only to single out and examine specific strands of Socialism but also to draw attention to the varieties of socialist experiences in different countries and cultures. By the way, the title I chose for my introduction “The Varieties of the Left Experience” is a paraphrase of famous *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) by William James. Among others, I examine such forms of Socialism as Marxism, Anarchism, Fabians, Social Democracy, Soviet Communism, Maoism, the Israeli *kibbutzim* movement, National Socialism, Tanzanian *ujamaa*, and the Western New Left.



Ahh, socialist utopia....

Still, I approach the various manifestations of the socialist creed as movements and systems that share similar aspirations. As the famous sociologist Norman Birnbaum aptly stated, “Socialism in all its forms was itself a religion of redemption.”

Students of Socialism frequently set apart the early “utopian socialists” (Henri de Saint-Simone, Robert Owen, and the like) and the later “scientific” doctrine of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels that emerged in the 1840s. Such notions ignore the fact that Marxism itself was a utopian mythopoetic drama dressed in a scientific-sounding garb. The utopian sentiments that grew out of the Judeo-Christian tradition manifested themselves in the Marxian “scientific” theory of socio-economic formations with its “paradise” (primitive Communism), the “fall” (slavery, feudalism, capitalism), and the “Eden” (Communism). It was also vivid in the concept of the industrial working class (proletarian) as the “chosen people” who were destined by history to save the humankind from oppression.



That profoundly theological attempt to set aside “utopian” from “scientific” Socialism had been in fact promoted by Marx and Engels themselves. Acting as millenarian prophets, the founding fathers of Marxism had implied that all earlier brands of Socialism had not been genuine and complete, and that they were the ones to come and complete the job of developing the true teaching of liberation. You will be laughing, but the only analogy that comes to my mind in this case is Muhammad, who too had claimed that he had come to this world to make religion “complete,” setting his Islam aside from earlier Abrahamic religions (Judaism and Christianity).

The Proletariat: “Noble Savages” and “Chosen People”

Guiomar Duenas-Vargas: I know that you are interested in Libertarianism. Has this doctrine influenced your theoretical approach?

Andrei Znamenski: This intellectual trend, along with epistemological anarchism, indeed influenced my approach to the socialist phenomenon as well as to nationalism and, as a matter of fact, to all other forms of collective mobilization and social engineering. Here in the US, the Libertarian intellectual tradition had been pioneered by Lysander Spooner and by several other anarchist thinkers. In terms of theory, the major message of Libertarianism is methodological individualism. This means putting at the center of history and politics personal liberty and individual human beings with their personal experiences, feelings, expectations. That is why I am strongly convinced that in order to grasp history, one needs to explore first and foremost individual experiences in the context of their times and cultures. A personal human agency interplays with larger (race, gender, religion, ideology, class) or smaller (professional, local, and interest) categories that might or might not condition people's behavior and that provide an important context.

Moreover, I am convinced that now in the twenty first century we are becoming increasingly more individualized. The fact that we have been problematizing and melting the existing ethno-racial "pentagon" categories and traditional gender identities into a host of smaller fragmented identities is a sure movement in this direction. As German sociologist Ulrich Beck said, our age is the age of "individuation." On the left, you can see this gradually developing libertarian trend in the growing popularity of anarchism.

In the first seven decades of the nineteenth century, Marxian Socialism and Anarchism had been the two most influential currents in Socialism. Yet, marginalized by Marx and Engels, anarchism was further squashed in the 20th century when people preferred to live by martial ideals. This led to the victory of state Socialism.

The fate of anarchism was sealed in 1936-1938 when during the Spanish Civil War, Stalinists massacred anarchists. In our days, when people have been tired of moving around in crowds being navigated by enlightened masters, we are witnessing the revival of this libertarian tradition. And the internet age itself forces society to go horizontal and become decentralized. For example, how we are working from our home offices (the coronavirus panic speeds up the whole process) and gradually ditching old nineteenth-century "crowd" and "factory" style of learning and working.

Although I privilege "individuation," I do not wish to downplay the influence of other cultural and economic factors and identities. Moreover, I believe that there was hardly any room for libertarian ideas during the last century at the "age of extremes" (historian Eric Hobsbawm's expression) when people were brutalized by two world wars and when state worship, mass mobilization, and martial ethos reigned supreme. Naturally, state Socialism (and nationalism too) resonated more with mass feelings and expectations.

That is what I am writing about in my book. In that context, personal liberty was a "luxury" that people could not afford. It was only natural that at that time Anarchism was marginalized in contrast, for example, to Marxism that was amplified and gave us an intellectual narrative and numerous memes and clichés that we are still using to the present day.

By the way, just like Socialism, libertarian ideas too can evolve into a form of a surrogate religion. A good example is Ayn Rand, the author of *Atlas Shrugged*, who reached the status of a political prophetess here in US. In the 1920s, having been burned by the brutalities of Soviet Socialism and moving to the United States, she created her own version of the "chosen people" by idealizing and glorifying business entrepreneurs whom she viewed as saviors of society. This was her ideological response to the Soviet Marxism that worshipped and elevated proletarians an ultimate "noble savages," who too were expected to act the "chosen ones" to save the world from evil. Essentially, both views were two roads to the same intellectual abyss.



Guiomar Duenas-Vargas: Do you think Socialism is inherently totalitarian?

Andrei Znamenski: It is no less and no more totalitarian than any other world religions, which always harbor in their midst both tolerant notions and totalitarian temptations. Just like Christians and Muslims, socialists had their reformed factions and their fundamentalists. During the last century, two major factions of Socialism were social democracy, which evolved from the early 20th-century revision of the Marx-Engels original creed, and Communism, a radical child of Socialism, which claimed to keep the radicalism of that original creed intact.

In fact, one of the chief goals of my book is to bring together Communism and reformed Socialism in order to show that under “two red flags” we have two large factions of the same creed. Scholars and writers sometimes seek to exorcise “bad” Communism from “good” democratic Socialism and other brands of their choice. A conscious or unconscious goal of such intellectual exercise is to draw a wedge between the two in order to show that both have nothing in common.

For example, I encountered such an attitude in 2016 at an academic conference where I met and briefly talked with Archie Brown, a prominent UK historian of Communism. When I mentioned that I was going to use his excellent book on Communism as one of the texts in my history of Socialism book project, he was happy to learn about my choice. Yet he strongly cautioned me that I must emphasize that Communism had nothing to do with Socialism whatsoever.

Not meaning an intellectual insult, such a stance reminded me of an episode from an introductory class in my History of Religions course a year prior to this. When I casually mentioned that, among other world religions, we were going to discuss Christianity and its major factions such as Protestants and Catholics, one of the students “corrected” me by saying, “Catholics ain’t no Christians.”

I ran across the most exotic attempt of this kind in a book about Socialism in Tanzania. Its author sought to distinguish between Tanzanian “African Socialism,” which she has viewed in a positive light, from “scientific Socialism” or Marxism-Leninism that was assimilated by pro-Soviet regimes in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. The author specified that she referred to the Tanzanian Socialism with a capital “S” to emphasize its indigenous, non-Western and “authentic” nature. In contrast, speaking about the Marxist-Leninist brands of the creed, she used a small “s” to stress its “non-genuine” character!

Socialism experienced its great schism in 1919, when the movement split into Social Democracy and Communism. Both currents became involved into prolonged ideological warfare over who held the keys to the “haven on the earth.” The first gave rise to reformed Socialism that later assimilated itself into the existing capitalist socio-economic system. The second, Communism, was a militant offshoot that aspired to overthrow that system through a revolution and radical social engineering. Later, Communism canonized itself as Marxism-Leninism and gave rise to such schemes as Stalinism and Maoism. These two totalitarian trends were very popular during the last century, especially in the Third World.

Overall, millenarian “great awakening” notions in Socialism (radical egalitarianism, mobilization, and state worship) were in vogue in the first half of the last century. At that time, the expression “Socialism” was frequently associated with nationalization of economy, curtailment of free speech, and with experiences of such countries as the Soviet Union and China. When statist commanding economies in these and other countries began to collapse, mobilization schemes lost their appeal and were downsized. Crowd and statist mentality began subsiding and more attention was given to an individual well-being.



Gradually, from the 1960s through the 1990s, the radical notions in Socialism were muted and became adjusted to the realities of surrounding life. Hence, currents emerged such as Eurocommunism, Socialist Humanism, and Marxism-Humanism in the West, “Socialism with a human face” in communist Czechoslovakia and Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, and “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” in China. Reform “vegetarian” brands of Socialism (democratic Socialism, social democracy, market Socialism and so forth) came to the forefront and gained more popularity.

Thus, social democrats realized that there was no need to kill the “capitalist cow” that could be useful if properly “milked.” I am convinced that the debate between capitalism (or neoliberalism if we were to use the buzz word that is currently popular with the left and nationalists) and Socialism will never end. “Neoliberals” will be peddling economic efficiency that socialists shall counter with moral arguments. Moreover, mobilization schemes too might resurface and become popular when our societies again face emergency situations like in the last century. Remember the old saying: when students are ready, a teacher comes.