

---

# Penn History Review

---

Journal of Undergraduate Historians

---

Volume 25, Issue 2 Fall 2018



Mitchell Chan

*on the Rule of Law and  
China's Unequal Treaties*

Qingyang Zhou

*on Interactions between Chinese  
and Jewish refugees during WWII*

Amanda Durfee

*on Britain's Wartime Utility  
Fashion Scheme*

Walker S. Schneider

*on American Human  
Trophy Collecting*



# Penn History Review

Journal of Undergraduate Historians

Volume 25, Issue 2 Fall 2018

## Editor-in-Chief

Courtney Carpinelo  
*2019, American History*

## Editorial Board

Julia Barr  
*2019, General History*

Bryce Daniels  
*2019, American/Economic History*

Eric Eisner  
*2019, American History*

Justin Estreicher  
*2019, American History*

Sarah Marron  
*2019, European History*

Helen Catherine Darby  
*2020, European History*

Alia Schechter  
*2020, Intellectual History*

William Weiss  
*2020, Medieval European History*

Lorenza Colagrossi  
*2021, European History*

## ABOUT THE REVIEW

Founded in 1991, the Penn History Review is a journal for undergraduate historical research. Published twice a year through the Department of History, the journal is a non-profit publication produced by and primarily for undergraduates. The editorial board of the Review is dedicated to publishing the most original and scholarly research submitted for our consideration. For more information about submissions, please contact us at [phrsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:phrsubmissions@gmail.com).

Funding for this magazine provided by the Department of History, University of Pennsylvania.

Cover image: “Utility Scheme Prototypes Designed by the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers,” original illustration by Amanda Durfee.

*All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permissions in writing. The authors and artists who submit their works to Penn History Review retain all rights to their work.*

Copyright © 2018

# Penn History Review

Volume 25, Issue 2 Fall 2018

## *Contents:*

Letter from the Editor.....6

Rule of Law and China's Unequal Treaties:

Conceptions of the Rule of Law and Its Role in Chinese  
International Law and Diplomatic Relations in the Early  
Twentieth Century

*Mitchell Chan*.....9

Interactions Between the Chinese and the Jewish Refugees  
in Shanghai During World War II

*Qingyang Zhou*.....50

Utility Futility:

Why the Board of Trade's Second World War Clothing  
Scheme Failed to Become a Fashion Statement

*Amanda Durfee, Dartmouth College*.....89

Skull Questions: The Public Discussion of American  
Human Trophy Collection During World War II

*Walker S. Schneider, Dartmouth College*.....125

# UTILITY FUTILITY: WHY THE BOARD OF TRADE'S SECOND WORLD WAR CLOTHING SCHEME FAILED TO BECOME A FASHION STATEMENT

*Amanda Durfee*  
*Dartmouth College*

---

If one were to interview a survivor of the Second World War British home front, they would almost certainly mention the Utility clothing scheme. Along with well-known propaganda campaigns like “Make Do and Mend” and “Mrs. Sew and Sew,” the Utility scheme is one of the most prominent and enduring features of the collective memory of the British home front experience.<sup>1</sup> An unprecedented program of economic regulation, Utility was a system of price and quality controls imposed by the Board of Trade - a legislative body that governed British commerce - on every stage of production in the clothing industry, from the price and type of cloth produced by textile mills to the price of a finished garment on the sales floor. The foremost intent of the program was to keep prices down and quality consistent to ensure that middle- and working-class wartime British citizens could afford good quality clothing. Every garment produced through the scheme bore a distinct label: twin CC’s paired with the number 41, nicknamed “the double cheeses.”<sup>2</sup> This label became one of the most prominent trademarks of the British home front.

Despite its memorability, the Utility scheme has received surprisingly little historiographical discussion. Most of the scholarship that does exist focuses primarily on the scheme’s economic significance, rather than its importance to British fashion history.<sup>3</sup> The writers who do analyze the Utility scheme from a fashion history perspective tend to do so as part of a broad overview of wartime fashion, rather than specifically focusing on the Utility scheme. Because of their breadth, these analyses often make slight mistakes, such as confusing the Utility scheme with

other wartime regulations like the austerity restrictions.<sup>4</sup> While it is widely acknowledged by fashion historians that utility clothing failed to make a favorable impression on the consumer market, there has been little analysis as to why this was the case.

The Utility scheme (and its siblings: clothes rationing and austerity restrictions) was not only an unprecedented system of economic regulation in the clothing industry, it was also an exceptional story of government interference in the development of British fashion. For the sake of this essay, the term “fashion” refers to a progression of popular trends in clothing and dress designs dictated by a conversation between those who produce them (designers, clothing manufacturers), those who present them (retailers, the fashion press), and those who wear them (the consumers, in this case women). This process is cyclical and interdependent. At any given point, a participant can be either a recipient or a respondent in the conversation on fashion. This conversation and Utility’s place in it were only partly about the trends themselves. The larger dialogue was more about how trends were produced and presented to the clothing industry, to the fashion press, or to women, and in turn each group’s response to that production and presentation.

Although the primary purpose of the Utility scheme was economic – to ensure that all British citizens could afford good quality clothing in wartime – the Board of Trade also cared about Utility clothing’s fashionableness. Throughout the program’s history, Utility clothing was in competition with non-Utility attire. Even at its height, the Utility scheme comprised only 80-85% of the total clothing market, leaving 15% of choice for the women who could afford it (mainly the middle- and upper-classes).<sup>5</sup> The Board of Trade wanted these women to choose Utility over non-Utility, and to accomplish that, it needed to make Utility desirable and fashionable – which, unfortunately, it was only marginally successful at best. The Board of Trade’s poor initial presentation of the project – as well as the word “Utility” itself – sparked a negative reaction in the clothing industry and

the public, prompting the Board to commission British haute couture designers to create Utility designs and improve the production and presentation of the scheme. Even this attempt on the government's part had its problems, however, as neither the couturiers' high profiles nor their designs for the scheme managed to impress the clothing industry and its consumers. As a result, Utility clothing fell short of making a lasting impression in fashion history. If anything, Utility clothing proved to have the opposite effect of normal fashion trends: an anti-statement. To the participants of the cyclical fashion conversation, the Board of Trade's "conscripted fashion" proved to be no fashion at all.

### Part I: Origins of the Utility Scheme

From the onset of the Second World War, the British government predicted the conflict would be massively disruptive to the home front economy. Most government officials in 1939 remembered how taxing the First World War had been on the nation's resources, specifically raw materials and labor. More so than any previous war, the First World War had been a contest of economic endurance, with the victor decided in part by which side could outlast the other. The British government, however, did not implement rationing until 1917, when the German naval blockade had caused near-crisis levels of shortage.<sup>6</sup> To compensate for the abruptly restricted levels in production and consumption caused by rationing, the market drove prices sharply upwards. By 1918, the cost of living index in Britain had skyrocketed to over 265% of the prewar level.<sup>7</sup> This figure continued to climb, reaching 330% by 1920.<sup>8</sup> Food and clothing rationing during the First World War was reactive, an emergency response to unforeseen levels of shortage. As a result, it was not as successful as it could have been and led to much economic hardship in the postwar years.

It was this economic hardship, as well as its potential effects on home front morale, that government officials sought



to avoid in 1939. The British government's approach to the home front economy in the Second World War differed from that of the First World War in two key ways: first, rationing was preemptive, not reactive; and second, it was part of a package deal that included extensive price control and other forms of centralized economy management, such as setting production quotas at different stages of the clothes-making process. Throughout the Second World War, the government imposed three distinct forms of control over the clothing industry: clothes rationing, austerity restrictions, and the Utility scheme. Whereas clothes rationing restricted consumers' purchase of clothing, Utility controlled prices and the quality of fabric, and austerity restricted the design, style, and make of the clothes themselves.

The first step in the British government's wartime control over the clothing industry began almost immediately in 1939 with the passing of the Price of Goods Act. This act gave legislative bodies such as the Board of Trade the power to fix maximum prices on almost any item, including clothes, and in doing so, laid the foundation for what would eventually become the extensive system of price and quality control that was the Utility scheme.

Despite their ability to fix maximum prices, the Board of Trade struggled initially to impose clothes rationing due to parliamentary resistance. In the meantime, it considered other means of restricting the clothing industry, including one idea that was a relic of the First World War - the 'standard' clothing scheme.<sup>9</sup> Implemented in 1917, this scheme involved designating certain types and amounts of cloth produced by textile mills for the production of price-controlled, 'standard' suits for men and boys and 'standard' dresses for women and girls.<sup>10</sup> The project had been poorly implemented and was only marginally successful, however, not to mention vastly unpopular among the public, who mistakenly viewed the 'standard' garments as a form of government-imposed uniforms.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the

scheme's controlled prices neither allowed room for sufficient profit nor provided alternative compensation or incentive for manufacturers to participate. Understandably, few did.<sup>12</sup> As a result, very few 'standard' suits and dresses appeared in clothing stores, and consumers often turned down those that did appear in favor of better quality, 'non-standard' garments. The failure of this scheme, along with the unfortunate terms 'standard' and 'standardization,' left a difficult legacy for the Board of Trade to work with as it considered its options in the Second World War.

Regardless of these challenges, the press did not wait for the Board of Trade to reach a decision. In early 1940, as soon as news of a potential revival of the First World War's 'standard' scheme reached the media, rumors began to circulate. Before any official announcement had been made, papers like the *Daily Express* reported that "standard suits" may soon be reintroduced. In April, when a reporter asked Edward Leslie Burgin, Britain's Minister of Supply, if the government was considering standard suits, the minister failed to provide a definitive answer one way or the other.<sup>13</sup> With no solid information to report, the press continued to speculate. In September 1940, the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail* advanced speculation about the predicted standard clothing, even listing specific prices and patterns, still before the Board of Trade had made any official statement.<sup>14</sup> This confusing sensationalism, based primarily on the ghost of the 'standard' clothing scheme and the evasive comments of government officials, laid the groundwork for the misrepresentation and misinterpretation of all subsequent government clothing regulations.

Notwithstanding its inability to keep 'standard' discussions secret, the Board of Trade somehow managed to successfully conceal its plans for clothes rationing from the press. In 1941, the announcement of the decision to ration clothes came as a complete surprise both to the press and to the public as E.M.H. Humphreys, a Civil Services worker in Cardiff, commented in her diary entry on that date.<sup>15</sup> Due to the

staunch opposition clothes rationing faced in Parliament from Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Conservatives who were concerned about over-regulating the wartime economy, Oliver Lyttelton, President of the Board of Trade, had resorted to extreme measures to get it passed, namely keeping his plans entirely confidential and biding his time for the right opportunity. That opportunity arrived in early 1941, when Churchill became obsessively preoccupied with the hunt for the German submarine *Bismarck*. While the hunt diverted the Prime Minister's attention, Lyttelton finally managed to "slip" clothes rationing through Parliament, announcing his feat suddenly on June 1. Lyttelton even scheduled the announcement strategically. June 1 was a bank holiday, therefore all the shops were closed. This gave the clothing industry and the public a day to get used to the idea of rationing before it officially began. The launch of clothes rationing occurred so suddenly, however, that shoppers initially had to use margarine coupons in place of those designated specifically for clothes because the clothing coupon booklets had not yet been printed. Eventually, each citizen received sixty-six annual ration coupons (a figure that fluctuated dramatically throughout the war), along with a booklet explaining the uses and restrictions of those coupons.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the initial surprise, the public proved reasonably receptive to the idea of rationing.<sup>17</sup> Lyttelton's well-executed plan proved the Board of Trade could manage its public relations successfully. This success, however, would unfortunately not repeat itself in the context of the subsequent Utility scheme and austerity restrictions.

The early success of its publicity notwithstanding, clothes rationing quickly proved to be economically insufficient without effective price control. Despite the powers granted by the 1939 Price of Goods Act, the Board of Trade was reluctant to implement extensive price control in the clothing industry because of its complexity. As contemporary historian H.E. Wadsworth remarked, "It was one thing to fix the price of bread or coal or candles. It was another altogether to regulate fashion

goods of all shapes, sizes and qualities.”<sup>18</sup> Regardless, price control seemed necessary. As ration coupons restricted the amount of clothing people could buy in a year, those who could afford it chose to spend their money and coupons on more durable – and often more expensive – garments, driving prices higher. In April 1941, the price of clothing averaged 72% above the prewar level. By the following year, it rose to 95%.<sup>19</sup> The cost of living index also continued to climb as a direct result of the rampant rise in clothing prices. While certain socio-economic classes were able to keep up with these increases, spending their money and coupons on the best quality goods they could, lower classes were often forced to waste precious coupons on shoddy clothing that fell apart before the next rationing cycle.<sup>20</sup> The Board of Trade decided action above and beyond rationing needed to be taken to keep prices down and sufficiently clothe all sectors of British society. If not, they risked suffering a crisis like that of the years after the First World War and even worse, a crisis in home front morale – and therein, the war effort. It was beginning to look as if some kind of “standard” program would be necessary after all.

By the summer of 1941, the Board of Trade launched into designing and implementing such a project, one that would regulate quality and price at every stage of production in the clothing industry for virtually all types of clothing, not just suits and dresses.<sup>21</sup> Due to the program’s complexity and the Board of Trade’s desire to avoid the mistakes of the First World War, however, preparation took much longer than expected. Despite the Board’s hope of distancing itself from the ‘standard’ scheme of the First World War, during the early stages of the planning process it often took to calling the new scheme “standard” as well.<sup>22</sup> For the first step of the complex process, the Board calculated a national clothing budget in which it estimated the number of “standard” and “non-standard” garments likely to be bought each year. As the program was intended first and foremost

to assist those who were struggling the most to buy good quality clothes under the rationing system, officials designed it to meet 100% of the clothing needs of families with an annual income of fewer than 200 pounds, and 25% of the adults and 50% of the children in households with annual incomes between 200 to 300 pounds – in other words, the middle- and working-classes of wartime Britain.<sup>23</sup> At its height, the project accounted for 80-85% of the total British clothing market, but never 100%, as not all raw materials were suitable for the scheme's specifications and not all manufacturers had machinery or labor suitable for the long production runs it required.<sup>24</sup>

Once the Board knew roughly how much clothing it needed to produce through the program each year, it drew up quality specifications for the types and varieties of cloth designated to make that clothing, such as thread count and shrinkage. The process of cloth specification alone was a herculean task, as any one textile manufacturer produced thousands of varieties of cotton alone.<sup>25</sup> To accomplish such an undertaking, the Board of Trade worked with the British Standards Institute (BSI), which in turn dedicated separate sub-committees for each primary type of cloth - cotton, rayon, and wool. After lengthy discussion with representatives from the textile industry itself, the BSI came up with 40 essential types of cloth: 16 varieties of cotton, 19 of wool, 4 of rayon, and 1 of locknit.<sup>26</sup> It then assigned each type of cloth a number and a list of quality specifications. For example, every yard of 404 cotton would be required to have X shrinkage and Y number of threads. As the project evolved, it encompassed a greater range of cloth, but the initial production runs were limited to just these 40. In time, this limitation would prove problematic.

Once the BSI had completed the cloth specifications, the Board of Trade needed to provide incentive for manufacturers to produce that cloth – the very incentive that had been lacking in the 1917 'standard' scheme. The Board came up with a system of designation. Textile mills could apply to become designated

“standard” cloth producers, and in return, they would be guaranteed access to raw materials, which were becoming increasingly limited due to the German naval blockade that restricted shipments of raw cotton and wool from British dominions such as India and New Zealand.<sup>27</sup> Even with this incentive, manufacturers were understandably reluctant to participate in a scheme that limited their profit margins, but enough were grudgingly brought on board to produce a considerable number of “standard” clothing in the production runs of late 1941.<sup>28</sup>

The final step in the Board of Trade’s preparations was the most daunting and controversial task of all: drawing up a list of maximum prices for each type of garment at each subsequent production stage. Not only did the Board of Trade fix maximum prices for the cloth and the garment on the sales floor, but every stage in between, from the sale price of the clothing manufacturer to the wholesaler to the retailer. As the BSI had done when assembling the list of designated cloths, the Board of Trade made efforts to work with representatives from each sector of the clothing industry when drawing up its prices.<sup>29</sup> Involving the industry itself did not guarantee perfection, however, and there were frequent disputes between Board of Trade officials and the representatives of the clothing industry.<sup>30</sup>

On balance, the Board of Trade was very thorough when designing its wartime clothing program, gathering input directly from the experts in the field and leaving practically nothing to chance. For all their thoroughness, though, it neglected to consider one of the project’s simplest yet most crucial details: its name. The Board put little, if any, deliberate thought into what to call the program, even while designing it. At the very least, the Board knew it could not keep calling its project the “standard” clothing scheme, in part because the name had been used already and in part because of its previous connotations of standardization and uniformity. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade Captain Charles Waterhouse posited, the civilian population was “not going to be dragooned into wearing some sort of State

uniform.”<sup>31</sup> Notwithstanding the Board’s wise decision to nix the word “standard,” officials did not invest any strategic thought in a better alternative.<sup>32</sup> The first recorded use of the word “Utility” appeared no sooner than the announcement speech of the program itself, on July 12, 1941. Metford Watkins, Director General of Civilian Clothing, the subdivision of the Board of Trade directly in charge of running the scheme, employed the term arbitrarily, using the phrase “general utility” to describe everyday garments economically in reach of the working-class, which comprised the scheme’s primary market.<sup>33</sup> To distance the project from standardization, Watkins even suggested (perhaps jokingly) that the menswear of the scheme should be nicknamed a “Watkins Suit.”<sup>34</sup> Evidently, that phrase did not last as long as Utility, but it illustrates a half-hearted attempt and ultimate failure to establish a more appealing name.

Why was “Utility” such an inadequate label? First, it had been used in the clothing industry before to describe a type of heavy-duty garment designed to weather tough use, the equivalent of what consumers today might think of as blue-collar “work clothes.” It appeared with relative frequency in advertisements for coats and jackets well before the Utility scheme’s conception, proving that consumers already had a preexisting idea in mind when they heard the word “Utility,” an idea contrary to the reality of Utility scheme clothes.<sup>35</sup> While the word “Utility” made consumers picture drab, unflattering jumpsuits, in actuality Utility garments differed little in appearance from non-Utility attire. Second, like the word “standard,” “Utility” conveyed a degree of standardization to British consumers, or at the very least failed to erase the fears that had cropped up while rumors of the return of the 1917 ‘standard’ scheme still circulated. Consumers were afraid the government would force them all into wearing uniforms for the duration of the war.

Regardless, the Board of Trade stuck with its choice of label. References to the “Utility” scheme began appearing in clothing advertisements and window displays shortly after

production of the clothes began in late 1941.<sup>36</sup> Later on, in April 1942, the Board passed legislation that made it illegal for advertisements to use the word to refer to anything other than garments officially part of the program, thus sealing the fate of Utility as the official name of the scheme.<sup>37</sup> Along with this designation, the Board of Trade required manufacturers to attach the official Utility label to every garment produced from Utility designated cloth, making the “CC41” or “double cheeses” mark one of the most recognizable and memorable logos of the British home front.<sup>38</sup> The Board of Trade hoped that this emblem would become an indicator of good quality for a fair price, but unfortunately that was not always the case, especially in the early months of the project.

## Part II: Negative Initial Reactions to Utility

Despite the Board of Trade’s meticulous efforts to promote its new program, the first Utility clothing that appeared in stores in January 1942 received mixed to negative reactions on all sides, from the public to the press to the clothing industry itself.<sup>39</sup> Much of this negativity, particularly in the public sphere, did not stem from issues with the clothes themselves but rather related to the negative connotations of the word “Utility,” as well as its predecessor, ‘standard.’<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, a small portion of the negativity was grounded in empirical evidence, as some of the first Utility clothing in stores was rather shoddy. This only confirmed the suspicions of the public, press, and industry, further extrapolating the Board of Trade’s publicity issues. Since it was still early in the scheme’s development, however, all hope was not yet lost, and if the Board solved the quality issues and took the right steps in publicity, it had a chance at turning around initial negative reception.

The first verdict came in February 1942, when the *Drapers’ Record*, a prominent journal for clothiers and other sectors of the clothing industry, released one of the earliest articles surveying women’s initial receptions of the Utility scheme. The article began by pointing out that since Utility had yet to make a significant appearance in stores, many of the women interviewed based their opinions solely on their impressions of the word “Utility,” rather than on firsthand experience.



One interviewee commented that “Utility” made her think of a uniform - “government stuff, sackcloth.”<sup>41</sup> Another interviewee worried Utility clothing would be “clumsy and heavy.”<sup>42</sup> Still another expected colors to be “dark and uninteresting.”<sup>43</sup> The reporter even added that these three women had not heard about the scheme before being interviewed about it, further demonstrating the power of the word “Utility” to produce negative first impressions of the entire project.<sup>44</sup>

The following month, Mass Observation, a politically-independent organization that collected data on British public opinion on a wide range of topics, released one of its first reports on the initial reaction of the British public to the Utility scheme. Interviewing respondents from a wide range of backgrounds - from window shoppers to haute couture designers - Mass Observation’s report concluded much the same as the *Drapers’ Record* article. As the report detailed, the previous use of the word “standard” had created “resistances to the scheme,” which the word “Utility” failed to amend, having “given an entirely misleading impression as to the real nature of these clothes.”<sup>45</sup> The report concluded that the public was reacting negatively to the name, and not necessarily to the clothes themselves, and that the Board of Trade had a chance at reversing public opinion with the right publicity.

The fashion press chimed in on similar notes. In an article titled “The Only Thing Wrong with These Clothes is their Name,” Ann Seymour, writing for the March edition of *Woman and Beauty*, confessed that when she first heard the word “Utility” she had “visions of sack-cloth at best,” and “wondered just how long it would be before we were all going about looking as if we’d been cut out from the same paper pattern,” but concluded that the Utility clothes she viewed at a fashion show were “smart, well cut,” and “beautifully made,” and that the public would agree once they were properly informed.<sup>46</sup> An article in the April edition of *Tailor and Cutter* consented that the word “Utility” gave misleadingly negative first impressions: “There is

no glamour about Utility in clothes and...certainly the word would not appeal to women.”<sup>47</sup> It seemed, therefore, that if the Board of Trade wanted to mitigate the effects of its poorly chosen scheme name, it would have to try and inject a little “glamour” into Utility.

Unfortunately for the Board of Trade, however, it was not always just the name or idea of the Utility scheme that led to negative initial reactions in the press and public. Some consumers had good reason to complain. The quality of certain elements of the first Utility clothes in stores was rather shabby. Even with months of preparation, the Board of Trade and the British Standards Institute had not had enough time to draw up sufficiently detailed specifications to ensure consistent quality in each of the forty designated Utility cloths, and they also failed to impose adequate accountability measures on clothing manufacturers.<sup>48</sup> Even after the Board of Trade compensated them with guaranteed access to raw materials, skeptical manufacturers were frustrated by being forced to make something they did not want to make - long production runs of lower grade fabrics and clothes – and angered by the restrictions Utility imposed on their profits.<sup>49</sup> As a consequence, they often gave the production of Utility cloth and clothing a low priority, sometimes even failing to provide sufficient care and attention to the garments’ cuts and trimmings. The resulting clothes were a disappointment, made from cloth of inconsistent quality, and lacked a polished finish. Although not all of the first Utility clothes turned out this way, those that did only compounded the scheme’s poor reception by the press and public, adding proof to their fears of drabness and shoddy quality.

The final blow to the Utility scheme’s rocky start was the dogged reluctance of the clothing retailers, who, like manufacturers, were irked by the restrictions on their profit margins and doubtful of how well Utility would sell. When the first Utility garments arrived in shipments to clothing stores, many retailers immediately shoved them into storage or

backrooms, choosing to delay displaying them on sales floors until their old, non-Utility stocks had been depleted.<sup>50</sup> These retailers cited the lack of public interest in Utility as their excuse, failing to understand that it was in their businesses' best interests to help generate public enthusiasm for the project, especially since Utility would soon become a large part of the market.<sup>51</sup> Even the retailers that did choose to openly display Utility garments in the early stages of the program were not always willing or able to accurately explain the scheme to inquiring customers, prompting an article in the *Drapers' Record* that coached retailers on how to amend this problem.<sup>52</sup> The trick, according to the article, was to stress the value and quality of Utility clothing. Retailers were to explain that although the Board of Trade kept prices low, quality was still as high, or better than comparably-priced garments had



Utility clothing displayed in shop window

been before the scheme.<sup>53</sup> “Remembering that in six months or so the greater part of your trade will be Utility,” another *Drapers’ Record* article chastised retailers, “what are you doing to make the public more ‘Utility-conscious?’”<sup>54</sup>

While this might have been an opportune moment for the Board of Trade to step in and provide an official definition of the Utility scheme for retailers to use, the Board remained silent. When a journalist from the *Drapers’ Record* asked Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade Captain Charles Waterhouse whether the government had taken steps to stop references to ‘standard clothing’ and accurately define the Utility scheme, he replied that it “was a matter for the newspapers” to “teach the public what ‘Utility’ clothing means.”<sup>55</sup> In fact, the British government as a whole – not just the Board of Trade – was hypocritical in its approach to providing its citizens, particularly women, with home front information. On the one hand, the government relied on and expected editors in the fashion and women’s press to present women with accurate information on war-related matters such as the Utility scheme. On the other hand, the government refused to work directly with these editors or provide them with official information.<sup>56</sup> It felt that women simply did not need or want to hear about “war stuff” when they were so busy tending to their homes and families.<sup>57</sup> The Board of Trade applied similar logic to the Utility scheme and thus left it up to the fashion press to decide what and what not to say about the scheme, resulting in inconsistency and confusion over what exactly was meant by the term “Utility.” This further aggravated the negative initial response from women, since many of them were not made aware of how the Utility scheme operated, or of its purpose. All they saw was the “double cheeses” label in stores, occasionally attached to clothes of unimpressive quality.

Although the Board of Trade refused to take full responsibility for accurately explaining the scheme to the public and dispelling misconceptions about the program, it did recognize that action needed to be taken to improve Utility’s

reputation. First, it approached the issue of quality by drawing up stricter and more elaborate specifications, expanding the list of designated cloth, and implementing quality control tests – a relatively simple fix.<sup>58</sup> Second, it tackled the more complicated and widespread publicity issue. As mentioned, apart from a few initial cases, the problem was not the clothes themselves. Jean Guest, a reporter for the *Drapers' Record*, wrote that Utility clothes and non-Utility clothes alike had “an equal share of fashion interest and style.”<sup>59</sup> The foremost problem was public prejudice against the idea of the scheme, the word “Utility,” and all it conveyed. In order to convince women to spend precious coupons on Utility clothes instead of their non-Utility counterparts, the Board of Trade needed to overcome this bias and assure women that Utility clothes were of good value, good quality, and even fashionable. The Mass Observation file report from March recommended fashion shows, stylish photographs, and positive reviews in prominent fashion magazines to improve the project's image. The Board, however, ended up going a step beyond these ideas.<sup>60</sup> It decided to recruit a special group of individuals it thought might inspire the most excitement for the program: Britain's most renowned couturiers, the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers.

### Part III: Bringing in the Best: The IncSoc Utility Commission

The Board of Trade's commissioning of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers (IncSoc) marked a turning point in the history of the Utility scheme. It had the potential to turn public opinion around and even earn Utility a respected place in the progression of fashion history. The Society was comprised of the biggest, most influential names in British fashion at the time - designers who had earned the right to their fame through their talent and ingenuity - and the group was practically custom built for cooperation between the government and the fashion world. Furthermore, the IncSoc Utility commission received exuberant

coverage in the fashion press, from upper tier magazines like *Vogue* to popular housewife reads like *Modern Woman*. Thanks to this commission there was still hope for the public to see Utility as something other than a restriction – and just when the Board of Trade needed it most.

On top of the negative initial impressions the Utility scheme was making in the press and public, there was another pressing issue that drove the Board of Trade to finally seek publicity solutions: the looming implementation of the third and final form of wartime regulation on the clothing industry, the austerity restrictions. Though Utility helped ensure a certain level of durability and quality in the cloth garments were made from, more could still be done to reduce the labor needed to



Model wearing evening dress designed by IncSoc couturier  
Peter Russell

produce these clothes.<sup>61</sup> In early 1942, shortly after Utility first started arriving in stores, the Board of Trade decided to introduce restrictions on the style and make of clothing. These regulations – commonly referred to as austerity restrictions – applied to Utility and non-Utility clothes alike, and there were several different types.<sup>62</sup> The first type prohibited the use of trimmings such as embroidery, applique work, or leather embellishments. The second limited the use of materials that were particularly scarce, such as steel or elastic. The third type of restriction governed the design of garments themselves: in women's outerwear, the Board set limits for the number of pleats, seams, buttons, and buttonholes, as well as maximum widths of sleeves, belts, hems, and collars. The fourth and arguably most controversial austerity restriction placed a limit on the number of basic designs per type of garment. For example, each clothing manufacturer could produce no more than fifty different designs of dresses.<sup>63</sup> Restrictions allowed them to switch out these designs once a year, but for an industry that was accustomed to two or three annual seasons, this was a tremendous blow. It was a step beyond Utility, which had only governed the cloth and price of clothes, not the design process itself. In addition, unlike Utility, austerity restrictions applied to the entire clothing market, from working-class pinafores to the Queen's evening gowns.<sup>64</sup>

The looming implementation of the austerity restrictions, on top of the public's negative predisposition towards Utility, drove the Board of Trade to seek solutions and hire the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers. The group attracted the Board for several reasons, firstly because it included the biggest names in London's haute couture – or high fashion – scene, names that had the power to influence public approval. Much like today, these designers created looks for the most famous celebrities in Britain, and some of them, such as the Queen's official dressmaker, Norman Hartnell, were even celebrities themselves. Others included some of the most renowned designers in British fashion history. Edward Molyneux

(a British native, despite his French surname), was a celebrated contributor to the Paris collections until he emigrated back to London to escape the Nazi occupation in 1941.<sup>65</sup> Digby Morton and Hardy Amies, on the other hand, were well known for their contributions to the classic British tailored suit.<sup>66</sup> Other IncSoc designers included Elspeth Champcommunal, lead designer for Worth, one of London's top couture houses, Victor Stiebel, Bianca Mosca, Charles Creed, and Peter Russell, all of whom were household names in the 1940s.<sup>67</sup> The Board of Trade hoped that with these couturiers leading from the top, as well as the publicity and excitement their names would generate, they could inject a little glamour into the Utility scheme.

Secondly, these designers were famous for a reason. They were talented and inventive – capable, the Board of Trade hoped, of rising to the unique, Project Runway-esque design challenges presented by the austerity restrictions. In fact, when Hardy Amies first heard of the impending style restrictions, he reportedly laughed and said that he and Molyneux had been designing austerity for years.<sup>68</sup> In his autobiography he later wrote that he “hardly found these regulations irksome,” as he felt they attested to his strengths as a designer: simplicity and “sobriety.”<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, some of the other designers, such as Norman Hartnell, were less than thrilled by the austerity restrictions, but still proved every bit as capable of taking on the challenge. One of Hartnell's signature design features were his elaborate embellishments in beadwork and embroidery, which austerity restrictions prohibited. To overcome this obstacle, the designer took to hand painting his elegant patterns onto his gowns and dresses.<sup>70</sup> The Board of Trade was confident these designers would be able to produce Utility garments that would be attractive and fashionable to the public, even with the added restrictions posed by austerity.

The third and perhaps most convenient appeal of turning to IncSoc was the group had practically been created for the task. That is, the group had been founded in part to further the interests



of the British government and hence offered an ideal platform for cooperation between the fashion world and the Board of Trade. According to IncSoc's official history, one of the group's foremost purposes was to unite London's top designers in promoting "the sales of British fashions in... overseas markets," and in so doing, earn foreign currency to help finance the British war effort.<sup>71</sup> The first joint venture of the group had been a fashion show exported to South America, which had been enthusiastically covered by the British fashion press and well-received by its target market.<sup>72</sup> In fact, the success of this show prompted the official formation of IncSoc itself, which had formerly existed under the more nebulous guise of an organization called the London Fashion Group.<sup>73</sup> However, once the American Lend-Lease Act



IncSoc designer Norman Hartnell comparing a finished dress to its original sketch

began providing Britain with sufficient levels of munitions and funding in late 1941, IncSoc's primary services were rendered unnecessary. In early 1942, shortly after the group cancelled their proposed New York show, the Board of Trade approached them about designing a set of garments for the Utility scheme that also tastefully demonstrated the impending austerity restrictions, which were scheduled to be announced in May.<sup>74</sup> IncSoc officially accepted the Board of Trade's commission in March.<sup>75</sup> With their New York show cancelled, the group needed a collaborative project to justify its continued existence. They also felt it was a good opportunity for the designers to demonstrate doing their patriotic duty for their country: good for both public morale and for the designers' own reputations. Lastly, IncSoc felt it might provide a chance to improve levels of "taste" in mass-produced fashion and its customers.<sup>76</sup>

By late March 1942, the Board of Trade established a list of criteria for the IncSoc Utility commission. Each participating designer would produce three ensembles: an overcoat, a skirt suit, and a day dress. All garments would be made from Utility designated cloth and conform to austerity restrictions. As austerity only allowed clothing manufacturers one set of designs a year, the garments would be designed for all-year use, as opposed to a specific season. Lastly and most importantly, the garments would be designed intentionally for mass production – a realm most haute couture designers were previously unaccustomed to. Once completed, the garments' patterns would be made available for clothing manufacturers to purchase and release into the ready-made fashion market.<sup>77</sup>

When the Board of Trade finally released the completed designs in September 1942, the collection received exuberant coverage by the fashion press.<sup>78</sup> Eight IncSoc designers participated: Digby Morton, Hardy Amies, Victor Stiebel, Peter Russell, Charles Creed, Bianca Mosca, Edward Molyneux, and Elspeth Champcommunal. Norman Hartnell also participated in designing for the Utility scheme, but through the wholesale



Two models wearing a Utility day dress and skirt suit

company Berketex rather than directly for the Board of Trade.<sup>79</sup> The fashion press, as well as the clothing industry and the public, were introduced to the new IncSoc Utility collection through several fashion shows, including one which featured pairs of models wearing nearly identical garments – one Utility and one non-Utility – that asked the audience to guess which was which.<sup>80</sup> The success of these shows led to articles charged with positivity, particularly for the novel concept of haute couture designers creating clothes for the masses. In an article for their October 1942 issue, *Vogue* praised the collection as “an object lesson in the power of pure style over mere elegance,” and “a revolutionary scheme...an outstanding example of applied democracy.”<sup>81</sup> *Modern Woman* echoed this view in their December issue, calling the IncSoc Utility collection “the greatest revolution that has ever taken place in the clothing industry of this country.”<sup>82</sup> On balance, the fashion press was excited and impatient for the haute couture Utility designs to hit the mass market.

As the first fashion ever commissioned by the government, the Board of Trade considered the designs historically significant and immediately sent the original models to the Victoria and

Albert Museum for preservation.<sup>83</sup> In fact, the Board of Trade was so proud of their historic commission that the pieces went on immediate public display. All the models remain at the Victoria and Albert Museum to this day, and some are even part of the Museum's permanent fashion exhibit. All in all, the Board of Trade felt satisfied and even optimistic about the results of the IncSoc Utility commission.

#### Part IV: What Happened to Revolution?: The Weaknesses of the IncSoc Utility Commission

Despite the Board of Trade's hope in the "revolutionary" IncSoc Utility commission, the project did not result in remarkable success. Not all articles in the fashion press were as positive as those in *Vogue* and *Modern Woman*, and some were even downright negative. Clothing manufacturers once again proved skeptical, and the haute couture designers' inexperience in designed for the mass market showed. Lastly public reaction – the whole point of it all – proved lukewarm, due to factors both within and beyond the Board of Trade's control.

As early as August 1942, before the Board of Trade had even released IncSoc's final designs, the *Drapers' Record* reported a disgruntled sentiment in the clothing industry towards the commission. One of the clothing manufacturers' initial criticisms was that the IncSoc commission would not be sufficient to clothe the entire market. In an article entitled "Women Still Want Variety," clothing manufacturers pointed out that despite the "consumer appeal" the IncSoc designs might have, their female customers would not all want to wear the same eight skirt suits, overcoats, and dresses.<sup>84</sup> "Every dress maker and retailer knows that each Mrs. Smith wants clothes different from those worn by all the other Smiths and Browns...Similarity of style, mass produced, is unlikely to meet with favorable feminine reception."<sup>85</sup> The clothing industry's second major issue with

the IncSoc designs was a sense of “resentment” that the IncSoc designers “were brought in to show a long-established industry its job.”<sup>86</sup> Clothing manufacturers employed their own stylists who, unlike haute couture designers, specialized in creating clothing for mass production. They did not appreciate the message the Board of Trade seemed to be giving them by bringing in IncSoc: namely that the industry designers had not been doing a good enough job designing for the Utility scheme by themselves and needed guidance from the “top.”

In early October, when the Board of Trade officially unveiled the finished IncSoc designs and made the patterns available for purchase by clothing manufacturers, some experts in the industry reacted with a sense of “disappointment...tinged with a certain amount of satisfaction.”<sup>87</sup> According to them, the IncSoc designs were hardly saleable and remarkably unremarkable. In addition, manufacturers and retailers continued, the “designs may be all right for the [haute couture] trade; but will they suit medium-price business?”<sup>88</sup> J.P. Grossman, director of Graceline Dress Co. Ltd., added that the patterns did not “fit in with the trade idea of popular-price dress-making” and did not “appear to be specially labour- or material-saving.”<sup>89</sup> “I thought we might learn something from these,” he lamented, almost smugly.

To a certain extent, the clothing industry had a right to be frustrated by IncSoc’s designs, as the haute couture designers that produced them were not accustomed to designing clothing for mass production. Before beginning work on their Utility models, the IncSoc designers had to visit clothing factories to acquaint themselves with how machine-made garments were produced.<sup>90</sup> Even after their self-education, some of the designers’ garments still encountered problems in mass production and had to be redone, if not abandoned altogether.<sup>91</sup> In an October meeting between IncSoc and the Board of Trade (shortly before the patterns became available to the manufacturers), Mr. W. Heron, a Board official, evaluated each of the designs’ initial performances in trial production runs. All the designers but



Two seamstresses tacking together a day dress in the workroom of Norman Hartnell's fashion house

Edward Molyneux and Victor Stiebel had encountered problems and needed to rework their designs. In the case of the dresses, some did not even conform to rations-imposed maximum yardage.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, whenever Mr. Heron made a negative comment on the results of a designer's work, the designer was quick to blame the manufacturer, not flaws in their design, perhaps because they still felt their work was above that meant for mass production.

Furthermore, though the public's reaction to the IncSoc Utility commission was not as negative as that of the clothing industry, it was lukewarm at best. There were several reasons for this, the foremost being the delay between when the IncSoc designs were first announced to the public – fall 1942 – and when the designs finally hit the stores, which was not until spring 1943. The Board of Trade was unable to sell the patterns to manufacturers in time for the 1942 fall season, and hence had to wait another six months for the garments to arrive in stores.<sup>93</sup> Unlike the initial announcement of the IncSoc designs, their arrival in retail stores spring 1943 received no great fanfare in the

fashion press. Despite its enthusiasm in fall 1942, *Vogue* failed to mention the actual arrival of IncSoc Utility in stores. Ultimately, its primary focus as a magazine was to follow the happenings in haute couture, rather than mass produced fashion. In *Vogue's* view, the IncSoc Utility commission had been an entertaining anomaly, but not one worth following up on. Unfortunately, it seems the rest of the fashion press agreed, and magazines across the genre failed to mention the arrival.

In addition, as per the conditions of the Board of Trade's original agreement with the Society, the IncSoc Utility clothes were not advertised or labeled as "haute couture" designs in stores.<sup>94</sup> Though the Society had discussed the creation of an "IncSoc Utility" label in its meetings, they failed to settle on a finalized design, and the garments that eventually hit the stores did not have this label.<sup>95</sup> In other words, if the average middle-class housewife had not been keeping up on fashion news – which was very likely, considering how expensive magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were during the war – she would have no idea that some of the new Utility models in stores spring 1943 had been designed by IncSoc.<sup>96</sup> To most consumers, the IncSoc Utility clothing looked much like any other Utility clothing, which continued to suffer from the negative connotations implied by the word "Utility": drab, uninteresting, heavy, etc. At this point, women did begin buying Utility in greater numbers, but primarily out of necessity rather than desire. It also helped that Utility clothes were no longer subject to purchase tax.<sup>97</sup>

The Board of Trade, the fashion press, and even IncSoc itself had hoped the IncSoc Utility clothing's "superior design" would speak for itself, and generate demand all on its own, even raise the level of "taste" in the general consumer market, but in truth, the IncSoc Utility designs looked much the same as any other fashion of the age, and only an expert would notice the difference.<sup>98</sup> Like many other wartime looks, the IncSoc Utility collection comprised mainly of straight, pleated skirts, military-inspired jackets, padded shoulders, and boxy silhouettes. To be

fair, there was good reason the IncSoc designers chose to go this route. Square shoulders and boxy silhouettes were popular in wartime: they mirrored the uniforms of men and women in the service, and wearing such looks made British women feel more closely tied to the national war effort.<sup>99</sup> Despite the clothing manufacturers' cries that women still wanted variation, this fashion recipe left little room for it: uniformity was part of the point.<sup>100</sup> By giving the public what it wanted, IncSoc ended up producing garments that blended right in – superior design or not.

Though the Board of Trade was able to sell a “satisfactory” number of IncSoc Utility patterns to clothing manufacturers, they never asked the Society for another Utility commission, even though the scheme lasted for another ten years.<sup>101</sup> The 1942 IncSoc Utility commission failed to spark the “revolution” the fashion press heralded.<sup>102</sup> Instead, members of the Society returned to focusing on designing for the haute couture market, or in the case of Hardy Amies and Victor Stiebel returned to their posts in the service.<sup>103</sup> Molyneux's solo work once again appeared as part of the London spring haute couture collection in 1943.<sup>104</sup> Remaining members of the Society were approached around the same time to design clothing for an upcoming film.<sup>105</sup> Later, in 1946, while austerity restrictions were still in place, Digby Morton wrote a letter to the Board of Trade asking for exemption from the restrictions in designing clothes for a list of his clients who were going abroad, in order to present “first class propaganda for... London tailoring.”<sup>106</sup> It seems that despite the designers' willingness to participate in the challenge of designing fashionable, even glamorous clothes for the Utility scheme under austerity restrictions, even they eventually admitted the limitations of government conscripted fashion.

### Conclusion: The Failure of Conscripted Fashion

The story of the Utility clothing scheme is a story of



unprecedented intervention by the Board of Trade in the clothing industry. Though the primary focus of this intervention was economic - to ensure all sectors of British society, particularly the middle- and -working-classes, could afford good quality clothing in wartime – the Board of Trade also cared about fashion, and therefore attempted to make Utility clothing appealing in production and presentation to the consumers who would spend their precious coupons on it.

From the start, however, Utility Scheme experienced problems that hindered the Board of Trade's mission to make it fashionably appealing: from the unfortunate legacy of the First World War's 'standard' scheme, the negative connotations of the word "Utility," the poor quality of some of the scheme's initial production runs, and the reluctance of the clothing industry itself. Although the Board of Trade attempted to mitigate the effects of these issues by commissioning the haute couture designers of IncSoc to create Utility garments, the problems inherent in that attempt led to a disappointing reception in the industry, press, and consumer market, further preventing the public from seeing Utility as anything other than a necessity. This truth became very clear after the war's end, when the women who purchased Utility grew impatient with wartime restrictions on clothing and secretly wished for a change.<sup>107</sup>

An answer to the women's wishes arrived promptly in 1947, in the form of Christian Dior's famous "New Look" collection. In stark contrast to the boxy silhouette, square padded shoulders, and straight skirts of wartime fashion, Dior's collection featured an hourglass-shaped, "feminine" silhouette, softly rounded shoulders, and full skirts made from yards and yards of fabric – a feature that had been impossible during the wartime restrictions.<sup>108</sup> In one of the most dramatic fashion turnarounds in the twentieth century (and perhaps of all time), women's entire wartime wardrobes were rendered obsolete in a matter of a few months. Those that could afford to do so immediately filled their closets with ensembles conforming to the New Look, while those



Model wearing Utility day dress

that could not be watched enviously.<sup>109</sup>

Even at its height, the Utility scheme failed to generate the same level of excitement as Dior's New Look collection. This failure was in part due to Utility's nature as a form of government intervention into the clothing industry, which made it difficult for the public to see the program as anything else. Part of the blame, however, also rests with the Board of Trade's handling of the scheme – how it produced and presented the project, and all the mistakes it made along the way. At its best, Utility clothing simply blended in with everything else. It was no better and no worse than other clothing on the market at the time, but even then, women still frowned at its name. Those who could not afford alternative clothing choices put up with it during the war out of necessity, but once given true choice, women were quick to abandon Utility.

To this day, the Utility scheme occupies a unique place in collective memory: it never completely overcame the negative connotations inspired by its name: drab, heavy, boring, sackcloth, etc. or the negative effects of all the other problems it faced along its progression. Scholars of mid-twentieth century

fashion history are faced with the task of explaining that this was not what Utility clothing actually looked like: “There was... no standardizing of dress,” writes fashion historian Geraldine Howell.<sup>110</sup> “Far from being a story of drabness and misery, it is a story of color, inventiveness...”<sup>111</sup> Julie Summers, historical consultant and author, explains. These experts and others have to counter the negative conclusion fashion enthusiasts jump to about wartime conscripted fashion.

This unfavorable conclusion, however, is rarely based on empirical evidence or firsthand experience. Just as in the 1940s, modern-day fashion enthusiasts base their perception of Utility clothing first and foremost on the objectionable mental picture the term conjures up. This intriguing tendency reveals that fashion is more than just a progression of popular trends. It is also how those trends are produced and presented by all members of the fashion conversation, from the producers (designers and clothing manufacturers), to the presenters (retailers and the fashion press), to the wearers (the consumer public). In the case of Utility, poor production and presentation had a detrimental effect on the perception of the clothes themselves, to the extent that consumers no longer truly saw the garments for what they were. Ultimately, Utility’s fate is also its greatest contribution to fashion history: it offers a reflection on the progression of the fashion conversation itself, and just how removed this conversation can be from reality.

## Second World War Clothing Scheme

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Julie Summers, *Fashion on the Ration: Style in the Second World War* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2015), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Summers, *Fashion on the Ration*, 96.

<sup>3</sup> The list of previous scholarship on the economic aspect of the Utility scheme includes contemporary work done by H.E. Wadsworth, J. Hancock and M.M. Gowing, E.L. Hargreaves and M.M. Gowing, and Sir Thomas Barlow, who served as Director of Civilian Clothing, the subdivision of the Board of Trade that ran Utility. More recent work has been done by Geraldine Howell, Christopher Sladen, and Mike Brown.

<sup>4</sup> Julie Summers and Geraldine Howell provide overviews of British fashion in the Second World War, and Elizabeth Ewing briefly summarizes it in her comprehensive volume on 20th century British fashion.

<sup>5</sup> H.E. Wadsworth, "Utility Cloth and Clothing Scheme," *The Review of Economic Studies* 16, no.2 (1949-1950): 85.

<sup>6</sup> Hancock and Gowing, *British Wartime Economy*, 173.

<sup>7</sup> Sir Thomas Barlow, "The Conception, Birth and Development of Utility Fabrics," *The Journal of the Society of Dyers and Colourists* 60, no. 3 (March 1944): 53.

<sup>8</sup> Barlow, "Conception," 53.

<sup>9</sup> 'Standard' in single quotation marks refers to the 1917 clothing scheme. Later, when used to describe an early unofficial name for the Utility scheme, it will appear in double quotation marks: "standard." This also is done to remind the reader that neither scheme enforced actual standardization of dress – it was merely a poorly chosen name.

<sup>10</sup> In early 1940, Lord Woolton, Minister of Food, presented the War Cabinet Ministerial Committee on Economic Policy (EP(M)) with a paper on a potential "standard" scheme for men's suits, much like what the government had attempted in the final years of the First World War (Sladen, 27).

<sup>11</sup> Mike Brown, *CC41 Utility Clothing: The Label that Transformed British Fashion* (Sevenoaks: Sabrestorm Publishing, 2014), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, *CC41*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>15</sup> Diary entry by E.M.H. Humphreys, 1941, Documents.23443, Box No. 16/29/1, Private Papers of Mrs. E.M.H. Humphreys, Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>16</sup> Board of Trade, *Clothing Coupon Quiz: Answers to Questions on the Rationing of Clothing, Footwear, Cloth and Knitting Yarn, 1941-1942* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1941), iii.

## Second World War Clothing Scheme

<sup>17</sup> Mass Observation (M-O) Publication “Change,” No.1: Clothes Rationing Survey: An Interim Report Prepared by Mass-Observation for the Advertising Service Guild, August 1941, p. 7-8.; Diary entry by E.M.H. Humphreys, 1941, Documents.23443, Box No. 16/29/1, Private Papers of Mrs. E.M.H. Humphreys, Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>18</sup> Wadsworth, “Utility Cloth,” 83.

<sup>19</sup> Barlow, “Conception,” 53.

<sup>20</sup> Geraldine Howell, *Wartime Fashion: From Haute Couture to Homemade, 1939-1945* (London: Berg, 2012), 99.

<sup>21</sup> Sladen, *Conscription*, 27.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>25</sup> Howell, *Wartime Fashion*, 101.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, CC41, 31.

<sup>27</sup> Hancock and Gowing, *British War Economy*, 173

<sup>28</sup> Sladen, *Conscription*, 37.

<sup>29</sup> Correspondences between Board of Trade and British Standards Institute, December 1941. BT 64-74: Women’s Outerwear Utility Pricing, Board of Trade Archives, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>30</sup> Correspondences between Board of Trade and various clothiers, September 1941. BT 64-74: Women’s Outerwear Utility Pricing, Board of Trade Archives, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>31</sup> Howell, *Wartime Fashion*, 20.

<sup>32</sup> In fact, the Board of Trade was notoriously bad at labeling in general. The famous “CC41” aka “double cheeses” label that designated Utility clothes from non-Utility had no clear meaning associated with it. It was anyone’s best guess what the CC stood for: “Civilian Clothing,” “Cloth Control,” “Controlled Commodity,” etc. At times consumers even mistook the CC for CG, short for “Government Control.” It begs the question why the Board of Trade chose such an ugly word – Utility – over any one of these (Brown, CC41, 32).

<sup>33</sup> Brown, CC41, 26.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> Advertisement for Allama “Utility” coats. *Vogue*, February 1939, p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> Advertisement for Stella Utility apparel, *Drapers’ Record*, 6 December 1941, p. 3; advertisement for Goray Utility skirts, December 1941, in Brown, CC41, p. 32.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, CC41, 36.

<sup>38</sup> Sladen, *Conscription*, 32.

## Second World War Clothing Scheme

- <sup>39</sup> Ibid, 31.
- <sup>40</sup> Mass Observation (M-O) File Report 1143: The Utility Scheme, 9 March 1942, p. 1.
- <sup>41</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (14 February 1942), p. 26-27.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> M-O File Report 1143, p. 1.
- <sup>46</sup> *Woman and Beauty* (March 1942), p. 38-39. According to M-O File Report 1143, this was also the first article on Utility clothes written for the public. Only clothiers and manufacturers had access to the February *Drapers' Record* article.
- <sup>47</sup> *Tailor and Cutter*, (April 1942), p. 17.
- <sup>48</sup> Sladen, *Conscription*, 32.
- <sup>49</sup> E.L. Hargreaves and M.M. Gowing, *Civil Industry and Trade* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), 435.
- <sup>50</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (15 January 1942), p. 20.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (21 March 1942), p. 18.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid, 18-19.
- <sup>54</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (14 February 1942), p. 26.
- <sup>55</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (15 November 1941), p. 13.
- <sup>56</sup> Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory, and National Identity* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), 60.
- <sup>57</sup> Mass Observation File Report 1453: Women's Opinions, November 1942, p. 4.
- <sup>58</sup> Sladen, *Conscription*, 51.
- <sup>59</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (15 January 1942), p. 20.
- <sup>60</sup> Mass Observation File Report 1143: The Utility Scheme, p. 3-4.
- <sup>61</sup> Howell, *Wartime Fashion*, 104.
- <sup>62</sup> Deputation of the Joint Committee of Bespoke Tailors, 12 March 1942. BT 64-925: The Making of Civilian Clothing Restrictions Orders. Board of Trade Archives, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.
- <sup>63</sup> Hargreaves and Gowing, *Civil Industry and Trade*, 436-39.
- <sup>64</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (2 May 1942), p. 13, 34.
- <sup>65</sup> Obituary for Captain Edward Molyneux, 25 March 1974. NAL Information File: Molyneux, Edward, 1891-1974, The National Art Library, The Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London, United Kingdom.
- <sup>66</sup> Michael Pick, *Hardy Amies* (Woodbridge: ACC Editions, 2012), 9.
- <sup>67</sup> History of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, January 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1. Lilian Hyder Papers, Archive of Art and Design,

Olympia, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>68</sup> Howell, *Wartime Fashion*, 170.

<sup>69</sup> Hardy Amies, *Still Here: An Autobiography* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 1984), 40.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Pick, *Be Dazzled!: Norman Hartnell: Sixty Years of Glamour and Fashion*, (London: Pointed Leaf Press, 2007), 140.

<sup>71</sup> History of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, January 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>72</sup> *Vogue*, (March 1941), p. 30-31.

<sup>73</sup> History of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, January 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>74</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 21 January 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>75</sup> First Annual Report of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, 18 March 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>76</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 27 January 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>77</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 28 April 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>78</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (22 August 1942), p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Norman Hartnell* (St. Edmunds: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1985), 36.

<sup>80</sup> Howell, *Wartime Fashion*, 170.

<sup>81</sup> *Vogue*, (October 1942), p. 25-26. An article titled "Fashionable Intelligence."

<sup>82</sup> *Modern Woman*, (December 1942), p. 52. An article titled "Dress Revolution, 1942."

<sup>83</sup> Second Annual Report of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, 11 March 1943. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>84</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (22 August 1942), p. 20.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (3 October 1942), p. 20. An article titled "Trade Cold-Shoulders 'Mayfair Utility.'" ("Mayfair" was another common reference to "IncSoc.")

<sup>87</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (3 October 1942), p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 28 April 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>91</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 8 October 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

## Second World War Clothing Scheme

<sup>93</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (22 August 1942), p. 20.

<sup>94</sup> *Vogue*, (October 1942), p. 26.

<sup>95</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 4 June 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>96</sup> Note attached to copy of *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1942. Documents.7530a, Box No. 75/114/1, Private Papers of Mrs. S.R. Petter, Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>97</sup> General Memorandum on Utility and Near-Utility Schemes, 23 March 1943. BT 64-139, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>98</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 27 January 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Elizabeth Ewing, *History of 20th Century Fashion*, 4th ed. Rev. by Alice Mackrell (London: Batsford, 2009), 141. Dr. Cecil Willett Cunnington, prominent fashion historian of the 20th century, described women's fashion in the Second World War as "domestic battle dress."

<sup>100</sup> *Drapers' Record*, (22 August 1942), p. 20.

<sup>101</sup> IncSoc Meeting Minutes, 29 October 1942. AAD/2011/14/1/1, Lilian Hyder Papers.

<sup>102</sup> *Vogue*, (October 1942), p. 25-26.

<sup>103</sup> Hardy Amies, *Just So Far* (London: Collins, 1954), p. 81.

<sup>104</sup> *Vogue*, (May 1943), p. 40.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Correspondence between Digby Morton and the Board of Trade, 11 February 1946. BT 64-928, Board of Trade Archives, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>107</sup> Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 29-30.

<sup>108</sup> Alfredo Cabrera and Matthew Frederick, *101 Things I Learned in Fashion School*, (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2010), p. 74.

<sup>109</sup> Ewing, *20th Century Fashion*, 155.

<sup>110</sup> Howell, *Wartime Fashion*, 165.

<sup>111</sup> Summers, *Fashion on the Ration*, 2.

### Images

Page 102: "Utility clothing displayed in shop window," courtesy of Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection, D 10727.

Page 105: "Model wearing evening dress designed by IncSoc couturier Peter Russell," courtesy of Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Information Second



## Second World War Clothing Scheme

World War Official Collection, D 23778.

Page 108: “IncSoc designer Norman Hartnell comparing a finished dress to its original sketch,” courtesy of Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection, D 23067.

Page 110: “Two models wearing a Utility day dress and skirt suit,” courtesy of Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection, D 14818.

Page 113: “Two seamstresses tacking together a day dress in the workroom of Norman Hartnell’s fashion house,” courtesy of Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection, D 23063.

Page 117: “Model wearing Utility day dress,” courtesy of Imperial War Museum, Ministry of Information Second World War Official Collection, D 14837.

SKULL QUESTIONS:  
THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF AMERICAN HUMAN TROPHY  
COLLECTION DURING WORLD WAR II

*Walker S. Schneider*  
*Dartmouth College*

---

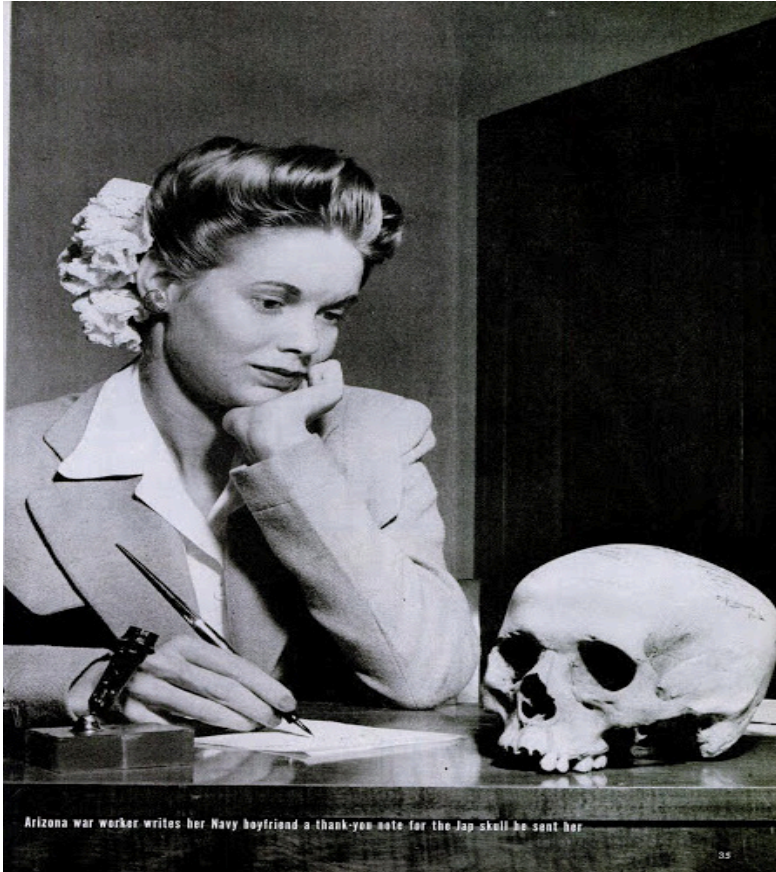
“Last week Natalie received a human skull, autographed by her lieutenant and 13 friends, and inscribed: ‘This is a good Jap—a dead one picked up on the New Guinea beach.’”

*Life* magazine, May 22, 1944<sup>1</sup>

The May 22, 1944, issue of *Life* magazine featured a full-page photograph of a young woman gazing at a shiny human skull on her desk. The caption read, “Arizona war worker writes her Navy boyfriend a thank-you note for the Jap skull he sent her.”<sup>2</sup> According to the text on the opposite page, the woman’s Navy boyfriend had promised her a “Jap” before he left for the Pacific theater, but the armed forces strongly disapproved of “this sort of thing.”<sup>3</sup> The *Life* image sparked a debate in the public discourse of the United States that became known as the “skull question.”<sup>4</sup> The controversy revolved around the practice of human trophy collection, an ancient martial tradition that became semi-popular with American soldiers during World War II. In the Pacific theater, many U.S. Marines collected the skulls, bones, ears, and hands of the Japanese war dead as souvenirs. As these grisly mementos trickled into the United States, they captivated and appalled the public, revealing that wartime American society was not as unified in its belief in American exceptionalism as it might have otherwise appeared.

A common belief during World War II and for much of the postwar era was that the American people almost

unanimously supported the United States and its “noble” war effort.<sup>5</sup> This widespread perception is commonly referred to as the “Good War” framework, and it is through this lens that many Americans understood (and still understand) American involvement in World War II.<sup>6</sup> Edgar Jones, an ambulance driver and war correspondent in the Pacific theater, sneeringly labeled the American wartime disposition a “holier-than-thou attitude”



The infamous *Life Magazine* "Picture of the Week" that sparked the great "skull question" and was featured in much of the American public discussion about human trophy collection.

in 1946.<sup>7</sup> In July 1944, Charles Lindbergh, the famed nationalist aviator, wrote that Americans “are constantly telling ourselves, and everyone else who will listen to us, that we are the upholders of all that is ‘good’ and ‘right’ and civilized.”<sup>8</sup> In the minds of many Americans, the power of the United States government and military stemmed from a superior morality. The American soldier was therefore viewed as the manifestation of the United States and its virtues, and the public had a strong, “morally charged connection” to American GIs.<sup>9</sup> Wartime propaganda bolstered this perception by portraying the GI as an American cultural ideal and a “first-class citizen” that all Americans should strive to emulate.<sup>10</sup>

Many historians have succumbed to believing that the Good War framework was a cultural monolith for the wartime United States. This perception, forged well before the guns went silent in the Pacific, was strengthened by a surge in patriotism and nationalism during the Cold War, when the first histories of World War II were being written.<sup>11</sup> Michael C.C. Adams has accused most historians of portraying World War II as “America’s golden age” and as “a great war... the best war ever.”<sup>12</sup> To exemplify Adams’ point, Thomas Bruscino has recently argued that World War II was an occasion for Americans of all racial and religious backgrounds to discover “many of the shared principles, assumptions, and biases that united them as Americans.”<sup>13</sup>

Not all scholars, however, agree that the Good War framework perfectly captures wartime American society. James T. Sparrow has argued that World War II was not the “uniformly noble crusade” it has typically been portrayed to be, and John W. Jefferies has claimed that the idea of the American home front as defined by “evident unity and common cause” is largely a misconception.<sup>14</sup> Careful examination of the public discussion of American human trophy collection provides vivid support for Sparrow’s and Jefferies’ argument. American society during World War II experienced a greater diversity of thought than both wartime efforts and postwar histories have acknowledged.

The so-called skull question was anything but one-sided. This debate involved a spectrum of reactions that ranged from awe to total condemnation. The majority of articles written during the war, however, expressed at least one of four prevailing sentiments: apathy, acceptance, caution, and horror. These sentiments were not always mutually exclusive. Many authors presented a nuanced view and expressed multiple, overlapping reactions.

It is important to define these four main terms and identify how they usually manifested themselves in the discussion. Many articles addressed human trophies with a prevailing sense of apathy. These publications treated human trophies as unremarkable objects and grouped them with other souvenir products of the Pacific War, such as Japanese swords or flags. Other articles advanced an argument of begrudging acceptance—that while American human trophy collection was wrong and detestable, the American mutilation of war dead paled in comparison to Japanese atrocities. Journalists also preached caution. Some writers openly wondered if the attention given to American human trophy collection would undermine the United States' efforts to appear as a force for good. They feared human trophy collection could be used as a propaganda tool to stoke the flames of Japanese anti-American fervor; the fault thus lay in the ramifications of human trophy collection, not in the act itself. Finally, at the most extreme, many articles expressed horror at the idea of human trophy collection and resolutely condemned the practice on the basis of human decency and Christian morality. The articles in newspapers and magazines that considered the skull question were not just participating in a debate about the Japanese war dead. They were also a part of a very public struggle to understand American wartime identity.

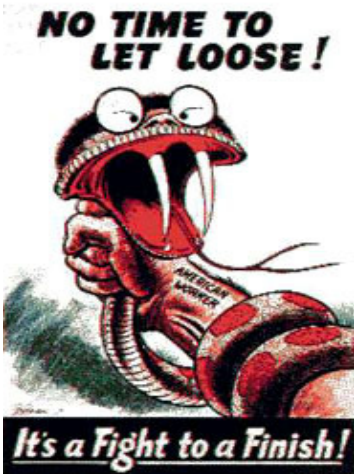
American Dehumanization of the Japanese

“In retrospect it is clear that these attitudes in part reflected an undertone of racism and a conviction that the Japanese were somehow a lesser form of human being.”

Richard J. Aldrich, *The Faraway War: Personal Diaries of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific*<sup>15</sup>

Throughout World War II, the majority of Americans—whether soldiers, civilians, or government officials—actively dehumanized the Japanese. John Dower, a prominent historian of U.S.-Japanese race relations, has described the characteristic emotion of the Pacific War as “sheer race hate.”<sup>16</sup> Not only were the Japanese perceived as sneaky, treacherous, and savage, but they were also largely treated as a separate species.<sup>17</sup> The American press and government conceptualized the Japanese as animals—the Japanese were varyingly depicted or described as termites, rats, apes, monkeys, reptiles, and bats.<sup>18</sup> The subhuman treatment of the Japanese in the American public discussion is best understood using Benjamin Tsubokura Uchiyama’s “Carnival War” framework. Although Uchiyama used this framework to examine Japanese wartime culture, it can also be applied to the United States. These “Carnival War” societies brought the average civilian into close contact with the violence and hatred of the Pacific War through articles and publications that focused on the grotesque and prioritized shock value.<sup>19</sup> The American press, with articles like “Marines Knock Off Japs at Rate Of 1000 a Night on Guadalcanal” and “Igorots, Riding to Battle Atop Tanks, Wipe out 1500 Japanese,” trumped up the idea that the Japanese were animals to be exterminated in an attempt to appeal to the American consumer and captivate his or her interest.<sup>20</sup>

This focus on dehumanizing the Japanese and spectacularizing the fight against them cast the Pacific War as more of a hunt than a traditional war. In the minds of many Americans, the object of fighting Japanese soldiers “was the killing of cunning,



U.S. government propaganda posters

but distinctly inhuman creatures.”<sup>21</sup> In 1942, the U.S. Marine Corps passed out certificates to potential recruits that read “Japanese Hunting License,” and declared “Open Season!” and “No Limit!” in the corners.<sup>22</sup> This probably resonated with many Americans because the concept of the hunt was popular among twentieth-century American men. The anthropologist Simon Harrison has argued that “hunting came to symbolize masculine qualities of self-reliance and hardihood associated with pioneer times [...] the figure of the hunter had an almost mystical significance as the quintessential expression of American male character.”<sup>23</sup> The “hunt” in the Pacific theater, therefore, was seen as a mechanism through which young American men could prove their masculinity and value to American society.

The Japanese did not hold many favorable opinions of Americans, either. Fueled by their own perceptions of racial superiority, Dower asserts, the Japanese believed Americans to be “monsters, devils, and demons.”<sup>24</sup> Takashi Fujitani has argued convincingly that Dower and other historians of Japanese-American relations tend to oversimplify and overunify aspects of the Japanese (and American) wartime psyche. While Fujitani may partially refute Dower, it is important to note that his



argument does not discredit Dower's larger point: fierce racial hatred marked both sides during the Pacific War.

These national conceptions of racial superiority created a mutual Japanese-American hatred that resulted in particularly ferocious fighting. E.B. Sledge, an American veteran of the Pacific War, retrospectively observed that this extreme race hate was "as characteristic of the war in the Pacific as the palm trees and the islands."<sup>25</sup> American war correspondents noted that the fervor of U.S. soldiers fighting the Japanese was unique to the Pacific: contemporary observers routinely described the nature of the war in the Pacific as more "savage" than the conflict in Europe.<sup>26</sup> The word "savage" carries especially heavy connotations about the expectations of U.S. conduct. As Paul Kramer has explained in his examination of American atrocities during the Philippine-American War, there was a widespread belief in American society that fighting a "savage" war against a "savage" enemy absolved U.S. soldiers of any moral or legal restraints.<sup>27</sup> They were free to imitate the alleged savagery of their opponents. Exacerbated by the "Carnival War" press, this cultural perception encouraged U.S. civilians and GIs to believe that such atrocities as human trophy collection constituted acceptable conduct in a war of exceptional savagery.

The islands of the Pacific witnessed both Japanese and Americans soldiers committing atrocities. The Japanese tortured and abused Allied prisoners, while the Allies relentlessly bombed Japanese civilian targets. Neither side showed much mercy to surrendering soldiers on the battlefield.<sup>28</sup> Race hate and atrocities in the Pacific War were mutually constitutive, justifying one another in a deadly positive feedback loop.<sup>29</sup> The atrocities did not necessarily end when the soldier's life did, however. Since many American soldiers thought of their Japanese adversaries as subhuman and objects to dominate, they treated the Japanese dead as hunters would a slain animal.<sup>30</sup> Just as a hunter will skin his prey, American soldiers removed a piece of their enemy as proof of their conquest and superiority. As the war dragged on



and feelings of racial hatred on both sides only heightened, the grisly practice of human trophy collection gained popularity among American soldiers in the Pacific.

Human Trophy Collection in the Pacific Theater

“This was a gruesome business, but Marines executed it in a most methodical manner.”

E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*<sup>31</sup>

It did not take long for the practice of human trophy collection to gain popularity among American soldiers. In 1943, for example, journalist Richard Tregaskis described a conversation he had overheard between two Marines who were about to depart for the Pacific in late July of the previous year. The first Marine proclaimed that he was going to make himself a necklace out of the gold teeth of Japanese soldiers. The second replied that he was going to bring back “some Jap ears ... Pickled.”<sup>32</sup> This conversation reveals two aspects of human trophy collection in the Pacific. First, it was widespread and popular enough that soldiers stationed in the United States had heard of it. Second, human trophy collection did not necessarily result from a hatred and bitterness developed through months or years of fighting against the Japanese; it was a well-established practice only six months after Pearl Harbor was bombed.

As the remarks of Tregaskis’ first Marine suggest, the practice of collecting the gold teeth of dead soldiers was notably popular during the Pacific War, but its placement within the scope of human trophy collection is unclear. It appears that American soldiers viewed the extraction of gold teeth from corpses differently from the extraction of other body parts. The taking of teeth, according to Simon Harrison, “seems to have been largely accepted or tolerated, by both officers and enlisted men, but not other parts of the body.”<sup>33</sup> This contrast is best

illustrated by Sledge's reaction to his friend's proud exhibition of a Japanese hand. Reflecting on the incident decades later, Sledge wrote, "Although I didn't collect gold teeth, I had gotten used to the idea, but somehow a hand seemed to be going too far."<sup>34</sup> This is supported by a vignette earlier in his memoir, wherein Sledge nonchalantly reacted to a fellow Marine slashing a still-alive Japanese soldier's face open to extract gold teeth.<sup>35</sup> The emotional difference between gold teeth and other human trophies is likely connected to the tangible value of gold teeth. A 1943 article in the *Los Angeles Times* explained that gold teeth had "a definite value in trade and barter" among the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Islands. Therefore, it is plausible that U.S. soldiers who collected gold teeth did so because they were used as a form of currency.<sup>36</sup> There are no articles commenting on U.S. soldiers trading other human trophies with indigenous peoples. This suggests that gold teeth served a very different purpose than other human trophies, which held no tangible value and were collected with the sole intention of making them into souvenirs. The skulls, bones, ears, and hands of Japanese soldiers were thus introduced to the U.S. home front, while the gold teeth remained in the Pacific theater and largely outside of the contemporary public discussion concerning trophy collection.

Sledge commented that the collection of human trophies differed from souvenir hunting or looting because "it was more like Indian warriors taking scalps."<sup>37</sup> However, the scalping popularized in American mythology as a Native American practice (British colonists and American settlers participated in it as well) was undertaken immediately after the fighting, if not mid-battle. The collection of human trophies during the Pacific War, on the other hand, occurred "a considerable time after the end of fighting, in an activity perhaps better described as trophy-scavenging than trophy hunting."<sup>38</sup> Usually, American military personnel (both combat and noncombat) would return to the battlefield several hours after the fighting had ceased to search for souvenirs. Japanese helmets, swords, flags, and other pieces

of valuable equipment were the most popular items among GIs. Those who desired human trophies would cut off the head, ears, or hands of Japanese war dead, then wrap the remains in wax paper or boil the flesh off to display the bones. Some carved the bones into small tools, such as letter openers.<sup>39</sup> The practice of souvenir-hunting, whether for swords or skulls, was so popular that it became a characteristic aspect of war in the Pacific. As an astute Associated Press staff writer reported as early as November 1942, "They said on Guadalcanal, 'the Japs fight for their lives - the marines fight for souvenirs.'" <sup>40</sup>

The question remains: Why did American soldiers engage in such a gruesome activity? James Weingartner has argued that since Americans viewed the Japanese as subhuman, "abuse of [their] remains carried with it no moral stigma."<sup>41</sup> As stated earlier, Americans believed their human trophies symbolized their dominance over the Japanese enemy. Moreover, Harrison has added that human trophies were collected for the same reasons tourists purchase souvenirs, "as proof of 'having been there.'" <sup>42</sup> As more Americans partook in the practice, these grisly souvenirs began to decorate American military outposts or were mailed back to the United States as tokens of affection for their loved ones or gifts for figures of authority.<sup>43</sup>

Human trophy collection was not an uncommon experience for U.S. soldiers in the Pacific. Though there are no statistics recording the percentage or number of servicemen who engaged in human trophy collection, it was "something which officers knew to be common on the battlefield."<sup>44</sup> Weingartner has called the practice "as popular as [it was] gruesome."<sup>45</sup> The collection and subsequent mailing home of human trophies had become so prevalent by September 1944 that U.S. customs officers began asking all military personnel if they had any bones in their baggage.<sup>46</sup>

The popularity of human trophy collection among U.S. soldiers in the Pacific theater contrasts sharply with its absence in the European theater. The historian George Roeder reviewed



American lieutenant posing with Japanese skull aboard a Navy torpedo ship in 1944

thousands of censored military photographs from World War II and did not find any evidence of American troops collecting human trophies from European soldiers.<sup>47</sup> Military historian Samuel Hynes has written that he has never encountered an instance of American soldiers mutilating German or Italian dead for souvenirs.<sup>48</sup> Both Weingartner and Dower agree that no American mutilation or abuse of European war dead resulted in any form of a human trophy.<sup>49</sup> It is therefore virtually impossible to deny that human trophy collection in the Pacific theater was largely a racially driven enterprise.<sup>50</sup>

### American Public Discussion

“Possibly it is a heritage of the pioneer days when men took what they wanted. Perhaps it’s the false spirit of ‘every American a king’ – and the king can do no wrong. Maybe it is just bad

manners and poor upbringing...”  
*Christian Science Monitor*, November 28, 1945<sup>51</sup>

The public discussion of American human trophy collection in the Pacific theater peaked in the summer of 1944. In late May, *Life* magazine published its infamous photograph of the Arizona war worker with the skull of a Japanese soldier that her boyfriend had sent her. In August, the *New York Times* revealed that President Roosevelt had refused a gruesome gift: a letter opener carved from the bone of a Japanese soldier.<sup>52</sup> Since *Life* magazine and the *New York Times* acted as major sources of information concerning the war for U.S. civilians, their high-profile inclusions of American human trophy collection brought the issue into the national spotlight, sparking a lively debate in the public discussion.<sup>53</sup>

The idea of human trophy collection, however, was not entirely foreign to public discourse in the United States. The press featured the exploits of the Igorot people, indigenous Filipinos who traditionally dwelt in the highlands of Luzon, on several occasions during the early stages of the war. Articles on this subject almost uniformly praised the Igorots' bravery and ruthlessness in fighting the Japanese alongside U.S. General Douglas MacArthur. They occasionally mentioned the admiration American soldiers had for the Igorots, as well as the high level of organization that existed between the Igorots and U.S. troops. Interestingly, these same articles often highlighted that the Igorot people were head-hunters. As products of the "Carnival War," these publications demanded attention with sensational titles and subtitles such as, "Weapons of Headhunters, Now Aiding MacArthur, Exhibited," "MacArthur Praises Heroic Natives, Who Were Head-Hunters," and "Head-hunters Go Scot Free for First Time in 40 Years."<sup>54</sup>

As the titles suggest, the articles did not condemn the Igorot practice of head-hunting, but rather glorified it as a product of primal bravery and a crucial aspect of the Igorots' all-out resistance against the Japanese. One writer for the *Los*

*Angeles Times* described these indigenous allies as “the head-hunting Igorots of Luzon... [who] are pledged to fight ‘to the death’ against the Japs.”<sup>55</sup> Another explained how the Army was so grateful for the ferociousness of the Igorot people that they actually *de facto* legalized head-hunting in the Philippines. The article explained that “the Igorots came marching single file out of the wilderness, a spear over each shoulder and a Japanese head on each spear. The entire Japanese party had been beheaded.”<sup>56</sup> That was, the article continued, the first time the practice of head-hunting had not been punished in the Philippines since the United States had gained control of the islands, presumably as a thank-you for the Igorots’ bravery. As a result, not only did the U.S. military condone the practice in the Pacific theater, but the mainstream press also covered head-hunting without any tone of disapproval or horror. The implicit support for Igorot head-hunting practices is even more evident in a third article from the *Los Angeles Times*. The piece was printed under a large photograph of a smiling American woman holding an Igorot weapon, described as a “strange, saw-toothed weapon” that could behead a man with one strike and included “a hook on the reverse side upon which the triumphant warrior tied the victim’s head before proudly marching home with his trophy.”<sup>57</sup> This image Americanized the concept of human trophy collection in the public discussion. Seeing a normal American woman smile and casually pose holding a weapon used for head-hunting began to normalize, if not glorify, the concept of human trophy collection for the American reader.

This encounter with human trophy collection early in the Pacific War and its glorification doubtlessly impacted public discourse in the United States. The attention and praise lavished on the Igorots and their head-hunting probably explains why a reader declared the macabre 1944 *Life* magazine photograph “A rare and memorable spectacle....”<sup>58</sup> This reaction of awe remains an outlier in the American public discussion of human trophy collecting, but it is not difficult to account for its origins. The

author, along with many of his fellow Americans, presumably compared the American soldiers' trophy collection to Igorot head-hunting. The nearly universal praise for the "Proud Savage Warriors" of the Philippines presents a new twist on Kramer's theory of "savage" war.<sup>59</sup> Beyond simply imitating the savagery of their enemies, Americans consumed news that condoned the savagery of their allies. As a consequence, GIs were even more absolved of moral or legal condemnation because their allies had already received national praise for committing such atrocities. If American society accepted head-hunting as a result of the "sheer breath-taking and heart stoppin' acts of heroism" of the Igorots, then human trophy collection was logically understood as the result of Americans undertaking similar feats of bravery in the same theater against the same enemy.<sup>60</sup>

### *Apathy*

The "Carnival War" framework and the enthusiasm shown for Igorot head-hunting help explain why much of the public discussion reflected desensitization to the grotesque practice of human trophy collection. Often, the skulls, ears, bones, and other body parts collected by American soldiers were discussed or mentioned as ordinary souvenirs. In a 1944 *Washington Post* column describing the assortment of souvenirs that American civilians received from their loved ones fighting overseas, the mention of a Japanese skull is entirely brushed over. The article reads, "Atlanta reported the recent receipt of a Japanese skull and two live love birds; Tampa, painted emu eggs and bronze Tunisian daggers, and San Francisco miniature outrigger canoes from New Guinea."<sup>61</sup> Aside from being the first object mentioned, the Japanese skull is paid no more attention than are the painted emu eggs or bronze Tunisian daggers. This casual comparison of human trophies to other war souvenirs again appears in an article about Marine souvenir culture in the Pacific:

Cigarettes, matches, soft drinks and the other luxuries have their values, too. The Marines will trade any sort of battle souvenir available for whatever a traveler has in his bag. And if the leathernecks are short of souvenirs one of them will go out into the jungle, waylay a Jap and bring back his ears, if that is what you want.<sup>62</sup>

In this article, not only are human trophies apathetically mentioned, but the act of attaining them is, too. The military publication *Leatherneck* published an anonymous letter describing human trophy collection. The letter described a young man's friend, Stanley, who had collected eleven Japanese ears. As if acknowledging his own apathetic tone, the author attempted to normalize Stanley's grotesque collection by explaining, "It was not disgusting, as it would be from the civilian point of view. None of us became emotional over it."<sup>63</sup>

Still, it appears that civilians, even when considering human trophies outside of the realm of souvenirs, did not find the practice as appalling as the author might have believed. Another article published a month earlier presented a humorous anecdote of an Australian skull trophy. "Claudius, the talking skull," the article began, "has lost his voice."<sup>64</sup> The piece goes on to discuss how an officer with a talent for ventriloquism used to regale the indigenous islanders until he was moved to another station. The article focuses on the humorous story, not the existence of the skull trophy in an Allied military outpost. This sense of apathy characterized much of the public discussion regarding human trophies, which often treated them as unremarkable objects.

### *Acceptance*

In his travels around the Pacific theater, Charles Lindbergh noticed that American atrocities were excused because they were considered acceptable in comparison to Japanese atrocities.



Lindbergh described a perfect example of Kramer's "savage" war theory. In his journal he wrote, "A Japanese soldier who cuts off an American soldier's head is an Oriental barbarian... An American soldier who slits a Japanese throat 'did it only because he knew the Japs had done it to his buddies.'"<sup>65</sup> Despite this criticism, Lindbergh himself conceded, "But barbaric as our men are at times, the Orientals appear to be worse."<sup>66</sup>

This acceptance of American barbarism was also prevalent in the American public discussion at large. Even though many publications criticized human trophy collection, they tolerated the practice because it was viewed as less "barbaric" than the atrocities the Japanese had committed. One column confidently declared, "But, when all is said and done, our barbarisms are pretty pallid by comparison with theirs [the Japanese], and the stories from the Pacific... put a gap between the standards of the two countries."<sup>67</sup> Even the president of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the Right Reverend Henry St. George Tucker, acknowledged that American human trophy collection had been provoked by Japanese atrocities.<sup>68</sup> Another article used an example from Japanese history—"when centuries ago a Japanese invader of Korea brought back thousands of pickled human ears as trophies"—to justify American atrocities (including human trophy collection) in the Pacific War.<sup>69</sup> This sense of acceptance did not go unnoticed. Writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* only six months after the Japanese surrender, Edgar Jones accused the American media of publicizing Japanese atrocities to justify moments of American "moral frailty."<sup>70</sup> These aspects of the contemporary American public discussion also fit within Kramer's "savage" war theory. Articles tolerated human trophy collection because they perceived it to be a justified response to the Japanese atrocities, which were always portrayed as more brutal and cruel than anything ordinary Americans could imagine.

### Caution

Many other writers were quick to condemn American human trophy collection because evidence of the practice, such as the *Life* magazine photograph, was a Japanese propagandist's dream. One letter to the editor of *Life* condemned the publication of the image because the author believed the Japanese would use the photograph "potently... for anti-allied propaganda."<sup>71</sup> Another submission thoughtfully considered the hypothetical American response if "one of the most prominent magazines in Tokyo published the picture of a young Japanese girl in such a pose."<sup>72</sup> The writer claimed that a "storm of protest at such savagery" would consume American society in hatred for all Japanese.<sup>73</sup> Since much of American psychological warfare was geared towards convincing Japanese civilians and soldiers to surrender to the United States, journalists warned that the public discussion of human trophy collection would prove counterproductive to American strategy.<sup>74</sup> One article even directly accused *Life* magazine of undoing the efforts of American psychological warfare.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, many feared publicizing these human trophies would provoke violence against the American prisoners of war held by the Japanese.<sup>76</sup> In an article in the *New York Times*, Reverend Tucker bemoaned the fact that "reports of such conduct have the effect of stiffening morale in enemy countries and of engendering feelings of hatred."<sup>77</sup> It is therefore important to understand that the fear of a potential Japanese reaction to American human trophy collection influenced many of the negative reactions towards American human trophy collecting.

### *Horror*

The final widespread sentiment that characterized the great skull debate was horror. The *Life* magazine photograph and the letter opener intended for President Roosevelt both received strong condemnations. One of the letters to the editor called the *Life* photograph "revolting and horrible," while another declared, "The head of the Navy lieutenant mentioned is without a doubt

as empty as the skull pictured on the desk.”<sup>78</sup> In a *Washington Post* article entitled “Atrocity Tale,” the author disavowed the letter opener sent to Roosevelt. The article described the object as “a rather nasty variety of barbarism” and congratulated Roosevelt’s refusal of it, stating that the president “did exactly what any man of civilized instincts would have done in his place.”<sup>79</sup> Edgar Jones claimed human trophies were produced from “the blackest depths of bestiality.”<sup>80</sup> A reporter, Enoc Waters Jr., expressed similar horror in his coverage of postwar racial tensions for the *Chicago Defender*, a newspaper dedicated to a primarily African-American readership. In one article about the lynching of a young African-American man, Waters wrote that the “primal savagery” of the lynching reminded him of his experience with human trophy collection as a war correspondent in the Pacific theater. With a disgusted tone, Waters described the American soldiers as “ignorant Southern backwoodsmen” who believed “the Japanese were subhumans who had the audacity to match themselves against white men.”<sup>81</sup>

Many of the horrified responses to American human trophy collection were particularly impacted by a sense of Christian morality. In his article, Weingartner described how American religious organizations quickly and vigorously condemned the practice of human trophy collection. Reverend Tucker declared that human trophies “cannot but be condemned not only from the standpoint of Christian ethics but also out of respect for the canons of human decency.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed, it also appears that President Roosevelt’s refusal of the letter opener was at least partially influenced by religion. Information regarding his refusal of the letter opener “was made available here after the Vatican News Service in Rome said the recent publication of a story about the letter opener had resulted in a request from the Catholic Archbishop of Tokyo for ‘respect for the laws of humanity even in total war.’”<sup>83</sup> While there were many non-religious reactions of horror to human trophy collection in American public discussion, a significant portion of responses

that condemned human trophy collection evoked some degree of Christian morality in order to justify their disapproval. Implicit in these reactions was a comparison between Christianity and Shintoism. Since Shintoism, the state religion of Japan, supposedly tolerated Japanese atrocities, these articles insinuated that the strong Christian condemnation of American atrocities proved Christianity to be the more moral religion. Thus, even in the most critical responses to human trophy collection, Americans still attempted to assert their superiority over the Japanese.

### The Military's Response

“The army has gotten the holy jitters about the skull question...”

John Gaitha Browning's Diary, October 3, 1944<sup>84</sup>

The U.S. military leadership's response to the skull question and its public discussion was characterized by both caution and horror but largely failed to stop the practice. According to Weingartner, the initial military response reflected more horror than caution. U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall allegedly became aware of American human trophy collecting in late 1943 and radioed General MacArthur about the “concern over current reports of atrocities committed by American soldiers.”<sup>85</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff soon afterwards sent a directive to all theater commanders in January 1944 forbidding human trophy collection in the Pacific and any shipment of the souvenirs back to the United States.<sup>86</sup> The publication of the *Life* magazine photograph sparked a flurry of responses from military leaders. Major General Myron C. Cramer, the Army's judge advocate general, quickly dispatched a memorandum to the War Department leadership. He condemned the practice because it violated the 1929 Geneva Convention's clause regarding maltreatment of enemy war dead, as well as the “sensibilities of all civilized peoples.”<sup>87</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas L. Gatch, the Navy's

judge advocate general, recommended to Admiral Ernest J. King, the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, actions to quash the practice of human trophy collection out of fear that the attention given to the grisly souvenirs would result in retaliation by the Japanese.<sup>88</sup> The War Department shared the Navy's concern regarding possible retaliation. The director of the Army's Bureau of Public Relations was instructed by a War Department bureaucrat to inform U.S. publishers that printing stories about American human trophy collection "would likely encourage the enemy to take reprisals against American dead and prisoners of war."<sup>89</sup> These different responses by the U.S. military shared similar features to some of the aspects that dominated the contemporary public discussion. While the Army's memorandums almost exclusively reflected a horrified reaction to human trophy collection, the Navy's and the War Department's documents are marked by caution and reveal a preoccupation with the fear of Japanese retribution.

Despite their efforts, these military directives soon proved to be ineffective. While the leadership was "vigorously enforcing a 'no skulls' policy and making efforts to discourage the defiling of enemy dead," the soldiers in the Pacific theater were largely unaffected by the policy changes.<sup>90</sup> Harrison cites a veteran who claimed that "his officers never encouraged the collection of skulls and teeth, but never tried to prevent it either, even when orders came forbidding the ownership of skulls."<sup>91</sup> Sledge recounted that when an officer encountered a severed Japanese hand, his only reaction was, "throw that thing away before it begins to stink."<sup>92</sup> There was no condemnation of the action, only of the smell. Lindbergh noted a similar failure to enforce the "no skulls" policy. In August 1944, he wrote about seeing a Japanese skull decorating a blackboard in an officer's tent and hearing about a certain patrol that had carved the thigh bones of Japanese soldiers into pen holders and paper knives.<sup>93</sup> The "number of absurd threats for possession of Japanese bones, teeth, etc." had very little impact on the soldiers of the Pacific theater, and the practice of human trophy collection was largely

unhindered by them.<sup>94</sup>

### Conclusion

“Let us hope, however, that the person who sent this gruesome trophy to the White House was not an American soldier”  
*Washington Post*, August 12, 1944<sup>95</sup>

The skull question is largely forgotten today.<sup>96</sup> For all of the blatant and widespread dehumanizing of the Japanese, postwar Americans suddenly became ashamed of their human trophy collection. The human trophies sent home from the Pacific theater did not become objects of display like the other souvenirs of World War II.<sup>97</sup> The hands, ears, and skull that were so proudly mailed home by U.S. GIs were quietly stored in trunks or unceremoniously returned to Japan.<sup>98</sup> However, the practice of human trophy collection was not totally eradicated from American military culture; there were several notable cases of American soldiers collecting human trophies during the Vietnam War.<sup>99</sup> The skull question resists didactic categorization; it was neither an American moral awakening nor a robust endorsement of human trophy collection.

Instead, the skull question is best understood as a site to puncture the Good War mythology that was pervasive in wartime society and has persisted in historical scholarship. The journalists who participated in the skull debate were grappling with both the issue of human trophy collection and their own national identity. In World War II, Americans were divided on the question of whether American exceptionalism was always a legitimate justification for U.S. actions. The skull question serves as a valuable reminder that the civilian body was not wholly unified in its belief in a superior American morality. As a result, many Americans refused to accept the actions and behavior of U.S. soldiers in the Pacific theater blindly. Even during the so-called “best war ever,” Americans and their press actively

questioned and challenged what it meant to be an American at war.

## Skull Questions

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>“Picture of the Week,” *Life*, May 22, 1944, 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Richard J. Aldrich, *The Faraway War: Personal Diaries of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London: Doubleday Publishers, 2005), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 8.

<sup>6</sup> John W. Jefferies, *Wartime America: The World War II Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Edgar L. Jones, “One War is Enough,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Charles A. Lindbergh, *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), 880.

<sup>9</sup> James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> For more discussion of wartime America as a unified actor, see Paulina Calcaterra, “America, the Liberator and the Propagandist: Tensions with Psychological Warfare in the Pacific Theater” (seminar paper, Dartmouth College, 2018); Amanda Durfee, “Battle for the Smithsonian: An Analysis of the Congressional Hearing over the *Enola Gay* Controversy” (seminar paper, Dartmouth College, 2018); and Karina Korsh, “Cultural Narratives of the Zoot Suit Riots and Twentieth Century American Masculinity” (seminar paper, Dartmouth College, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Bruscino, *A Nation Forged in War: How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 14.

<sup>14</sup> Sparrow, *Warfare State*, 10-11; Jefferies, *Wartime America*, 10.

<sup>15</sup> Aldrich, *The Faraway War*, 476.

<sup>16</sup> John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 11.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 8.

<sup>18</sup> James T. Weingartner, “Trophies of War: U.S. Troops and the Mutilation of Japanese War Dead, 1941-1945,” *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no.1 (1992): 54.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Tsubokura Uchiyama, “Carnival War: A History of Wartime Japan, 1937-1945” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2013), i.

<sup>20</sup> Walter B. Clausen, “Marines Knock Off Japs at a Rate of 1000 a Night



on Guadalcanal," *Washington Post*, November 21, 1942; "Igorots, Riding to Battle Atop Tanks, Wipe out 1500 Japanese," *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1942.

<sup>21</sup> Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 55.

<sup>22</sup> "'Hunting License' Issued by U.S. Marines," *New York Times*, April 1, 1942.

<sup>23</sup> Simon Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance," *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 12, no.4 (2006): 821.

<sup>24</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1981), 34.

<sup>26</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Paul A. Kramer, "Race-Making and Colonial Violence in the U.S. Empire: The Philippine-American War as a Race War," *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 2 (2006): 172, 205.

<sup>28</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 9-12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 66-67.

<sup>31</sup> Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 118.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Tregaskis, *Guadalcanal Diary* (New York: Random House, 1943), 15-16.

<sup>33</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 827.

<sup>34</sup> Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 153.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>36</sup> Kyle Palmer, "Traffic Cops and Radios Found on Guadalcanal," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1943.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 823.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, "One War is Enough."

<sup>40</sup> Clausen, "Marines Knock Off Japs at a Rate of 1000 a Night on Guadalcanal."

<sup>41</sup> Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 67.

<sup>42</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 823.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Schrijvers, *Bloody Pacific: American Soldiers at War with Japan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 224; Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 825.

<sup>44</sup> Aldrich, *The Faraway War*, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 66.

<sup>46</sup> Lindbergh, *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh*, 923.

<sup>47</sup> Schrijvers, *Bloody Pacific*, 216.

<sup>48</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 826.

<sup>49</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 66; Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 67.

<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note that, according to Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 826, all of the World War II trophy skulls in the "forensic record" have been identified as Japanese. This of course helps show that human trophy collection was unique to the Pacific theater, but it also hints that it was a distinctively American practice. For all of the atrocities committed by Japanese troops in World War II, the collection of skull trophies seems to be noticeably absent. There is no discussion of Japanese human trophy collection from American soldiers during World War II in the historical literature.

<sup>51</sup> "Souvenir Hunters?," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 28, 1945, 18.

<sup>52</sup> "Roosevelt Rejects Gift Made of Japanese Bone," *New York Times*, August 10, 1944, 30.

<sup>53</sup> Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 57.

<sup>54</sup> "Weapons of Headhunters, Now Aiding MacArthur, Exhibited," *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1942; "Igorots, Riding to Battle Atop Tanks, Wipe out 1500 Japanese"; "Head-hunters Go Scot Free for First Time in 40 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 1942.

<sup>55</sup> "Filipinos Pledge Guerillas Will Continue Fight on Japs," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1942.

<sup>56</sup> "Head-hunters Go Scot Free for First Time in 40 Years."

<sup>57</sup> "Weapons of Headhunters, Now Aiding MacArthur, Exhibited."

<sup>58</sup> James B. Giern, "Letter to the Editors," *Life*, June 12, 1944, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Ernie Santos, "Fighting Igorots," *Washington Post*, March 2, 1942.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> "Curio Gifts Form Bulk of Mail from Oversea Boys," *Washington Post*, January 2, 1944.

<sup>62</sup> Olen W. Clements, "Marines Will Swap Jap General's Pants For a Consoling Bottle," *Washington Post*, November 7, 1942.

<sup>63</sup> "Old Young Men," *Leatherneck* (Washington, D.C.), June 1943, 29.

<sup>64</sup> "Muted Skull Can't Sing for his Sponsor's Supper," *New York Times*, April 3, 1944.

<sup>65</sup> Lindbergh, *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh*, 880.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 903.

<sup>67</sup> "Another's Poison," *Washington Post*, December 5, 1944.

<sup>68</sup> "Tucker Deplores Desecration of Foe," *New York Times*, October 14, 1944.

<sup>69</sup> Morris Harris, "Jap Atrocities Not New, But Now We're Victims," *Washington Post*, January 30, 1944.

<sup>70</sup> Jones, "One War is Enough."

<sup>71</sup> Ruth Case Phenix, "Letter to the Editors," *Life*, June 12, 1944, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Philip Randolph, "Letter to the Editors," *Life*, June 12, 1944, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Calcaterra, "America, the Liberator and the Propagandist."

<sup>75</sup> "Another's Poison."

<sup>76</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 827.

<sup>77</sup> "Tucker Deplores Desecration of Foe."

<sup>78</sup> Mrs. J. D. Hubbard and N.E. Bishop, "Letter to the Editors," *Life*, June 12, 1944, 6.

<sup>79</sup> "Atrocity Tale," *New York Times*, August 12, 1944.

<sup>80</sup> Jones, "One War is Enough."

<sup>81</sup> Enoc P. Waters Jr., "New High in Savagery: Ignorance Rivals Brutality in Lynchers," *Chicago Defender*, August 24, 1946.

<sup>82</sup> "Tucker Deplores Desecration of Foe."

<sup>83</sup> "Roosevelt Rejects Gift Made of Japanese Bone."

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Aldrich, *The Faraway War*, 475.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 57.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 59.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.; "Leadership," *The Official Web Site of The United States Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps*, U.S. Navy, [www.jag.navy.mil/](http://www.jag.navy.mil/).

<sup>89</sup> Weingartner, "Trophies of War," 60.

<sup>90</sup> Aldrich, *The Faraway War*, 15.

<sup>91</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 827.

<sup>92</sup> Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 153.

<sup>93</sup> Lindbergh, *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh*, 897, 906.

<sup>94</sup> Aldrich, *The Faraway War*, 475.

<sup>95</sup> "Atrocity Tale."

<sup>96</sup> Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War," 818.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 828.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Sharmila Rudrappa, "Fingers in the Attic: Coming to Terms with Our Long History of Collecting Human Remains as Trophies and Souvenirs – From Public Lynchings and Grounds of War both Past and Present," *Pacific Standard*, January 28, 2015, <https://psmag.com/social-justice/fingers-in-the-attic-collecting-human-remains>.

## Skull Questions

### Images

Page 126: "Picture of the Week," originally in *Life Magazine* (May 22, 1944), accessed January 25, 2019 via Google Books, <https://books.google.com/books/about/LIFE.html?id=RE8EAAAAMBAJ>.

Page 130: U.S. government propaganda posters, originally released in 1943, accessed January 25, 2019, via <http://www.princeton.edu/~kkruse/his383/History383combined.html>.

Page 135: "Lieutenant (Junior Grade) E.V. McPherson, of Columbus, Ohio with a Japanese Skull which serves as a mascot aboard the United States Navy Motor Torpedo Boat," from the Australian War Memorial (April 30, 1944), accessed January 25, 2019, via Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AWM\\_072837.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AWM_072837.jpg).

