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Historical Review

Revival

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Horizons

Historical Review

Horizons is a publication run by the HPRSS department that showcases student research and writing. Published once each term, it features scholarly essays, including outstanding work from classes and original independent research, and will expand to include student-created infographics and comics. Horizons aims to promote true academic engagement in the humanities, give students a platform to share their ideas, and spark thoughtful discussion across campus. The publication is primarily written for and by students, with a faculty advisor providing final editorial guidance. A print edition is produced each term, with plans for a future digital platform.

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Mission Statement

Horizon Magazine strives (1) to provide exceptional students of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Social Science an opportunity to have their outstanding writings on the subject disseminated to a larger audience and (2) to provide the Choate Rosemary Hall community with interesting, thought-provoking points of view on topics in recent and ancient history in order to promote interest in the study of the HPRSS outside the classroom.

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Letter from the Editors

Dear readers and scholars,

After seven years of dormancy, Horizons returns this spring, continuing a legacy as one of Choate Rosemary Hall's oldest student publications! Amidst a backdrop of global dynamism and perceived chaos, it is imperative that history be engaged with—particularly by Choate students. As the next generation of leaders, scholars, and changemakers, we must examine what history "repeating itself" truly entails. Simultaneously, Horizons offers a unique opportunity to disseminate student work throughout our community, stimulating thoughtful discourse and inspiring interest in the humanities. In reviving the magazine alongside the HPRSS Department, we hope to restore a space for academic curiosity and ideas that reflect, question, and answer the rapidly evolving world.

Appropriately, the theme of REVIVAL celebrates this renewed pursuit of knowledge. Not all questions surrounding revival are so joyful — revival is one of history's most enduring and complex forces. It often emerges in moments of uncertainty, when societies feel fragmented, weakened, or disconnected from their values. Revivalist rhetoric promises renewal through a return to tradition, identity, or forgotten ideals. In some cases, revivals are harmful—such as the manipulation of "national revival" in Nazi Germany.

In other cases, revival has created opportunities for democratization, resistance, and cultural renewal — from the spiritual transformations of the Great Awakening to modern Indigenous movements for sovereignty. Essays on the Byzantine Empire's rebirth and the Meiji Restoration similarly explore how societies sought renewal during moments of crisis and transition.

Throughout, it is clear that revival is never simply about restoring the past. It raises deeper questions about collective memory and power: Can societies truly return to what once was, or does revival always yield something new? Who benefits from calls for renewal, and who is excluded? Together, these selected essays hope to offer you the opportunity to explore these questions in nuance as we close out the school year. Enjoy.

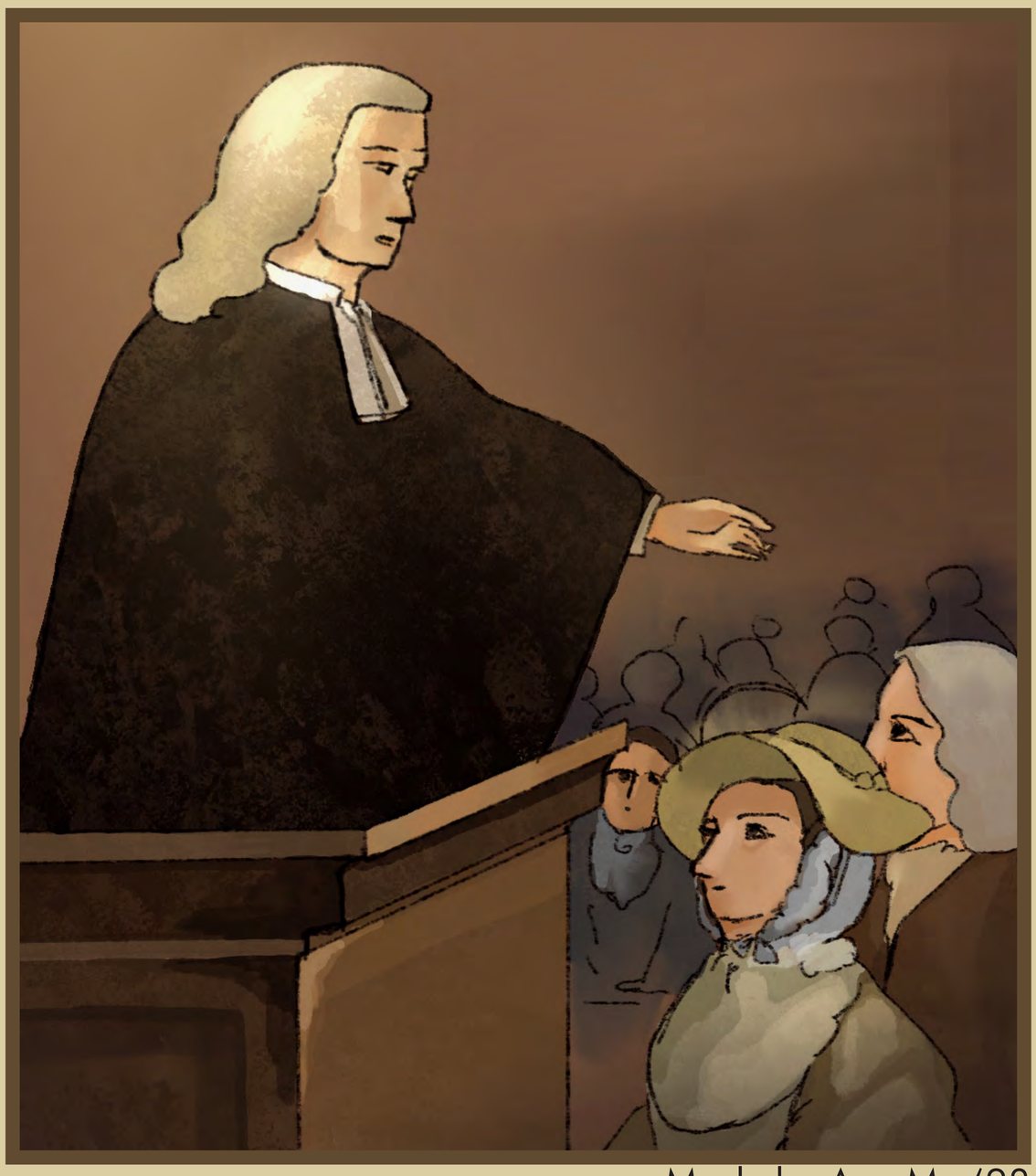
Sincerely,
The Editors

Passion and Piety: Religion During the Great Awakening

By Ryan Murray ‘27

The First Great Awakening is often remembered as a surge of religious enthusiasm that swept through the British American colonies in the mid-eighteenth century. Yet to merely describe it as a revival of piety is to omit its deeper significance. The Awakening did not simply intensify existing religious practices; it transformed the grounds upon which religious authority rested. In an intellectual, colonial environment increasingly shaped by Enlightenment rationalism, revivalist preachers advanced a striking version of faith rooted not in reason or institutional mediation, but in immediate, emotional experience. This shift altered Protestant devotion beyond tone or structure.

By encouraging inward conversion over clerical institutions, the Awakening destabilized traditional hierarchies and fostered a more participatory religious culture.[1] In this sense, the First Great Awakening functioned both as an emotional reaction to Enlightenment thought and as a catalyst for the democratization of religious authority in colonial America.



Made by Ann Ma ‘28

By the early eighteenth century, many colonial churches reflected the broader transatlantic influence of Enlightenment ideals. Protestant ministers emphasized order, discipline, and rational analysis of scripture, often delivering sermons that appealed to the intellectual curiosity rather than visceral appeal.[2] In his 1630s sermon, Dreams of a City on a Hill, Protestant leader John Winthrop urged followers to “uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality.”[3] Through said meekness, gentility, and patience, Protestant religious communities became unbearably passive and boring. Religion, in this framework, was to be understood, not felt. The intellectualization of faith produced anxieties among

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1 Philip F. Gura and Patricia U. Bonomi, “Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America,” The William and Mary Quarterly 45, no. 1 (January 1988): 179, https://doi.org/10.2307/1922227.

2 “Great Awakening - First, Second & Definition | HISTORY,” HISTORY, March 7, 2018, https://www.history.com/articles/great-awakening.

3 John Winthrop, “Dreams of a City on a Hill,” Sermon, https://www.americanyawp.com/reader/colliding-cultures/john-winthrop-dreams-of-a-city-on-a-hill-1630/.

some clergy who feared that religion had become spiritually inert—orthodox in form, yet lacking in vitality.[4]

In response to this criticism, revivalist preachers recentered religious practice and conversion as a means of combatting perceived stagnation. Priests such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield insisted that true faith required a profound, emotionally charged encounter with divine grace. Whitefield characterized this clarity as a sense of personal revival. One must live a journey of introspection and self-criticism until they are "born again." He argued that those who had not experienced this rebirth were "lukewarm" and Christians in name only.[5] Edwards's famous sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, exemplifies this ideological shift towards repentance. Rather than presenting a detached theological argument, Edwards deployed vivid imagery—sinners dangling over the fiery pit of hell—to provoke an immediate, visceral response.[6] His goal was not simply to persuade people but to awaken them, and to produce a moment of existential clarity in which the listener felt and internalized the reality of divine judgement.

Crucially, Edward's emphasis on emotional experience did not represent a rejection of reason so much as a reordering of its place within religious life. In fact, Edwards himself, though often portrayed as an anti-rational enthusiast, sought to reconcile emotion with theological rigor. In works such as Religious Affections, he argued that a genuine religious experience involved both understanding and will, but true faith ultimately manifested in the "affections" and the deep-seated inclinations of the heart.[7] Emotion, in this framework, was not a threat to truth; it empiricized it. Revivalists thus challenged Enlightenment assumptions not by discarding its rationality, but by subordinating it to experiential, emotional knowledge.

This theological reorientation, however, carried profound implications for religious authority. If faith was defined by an individual's inward experience of conversion, then the crux of spiritual legitimacy shifted from the institutional church to the individual believer. The clergy could no longer claim exclusive authority as interpreters of divine truth; and, their credibility now hinged on their ability to facilitate or demonstrate genuine spiritual transformation. As theologian Thomas S. Kidd observed, revivalists encouraged ordinary people to "assess whether anyone, even pastors, had truly experienced the converting work of the Holy Spirit," effectively empowering audiences to judge religious leaders based on perceived authenticity rather than formal credentials.[8] This anti-establishment radicalism manifested in the burning of religious books, clothes, and more.[9]

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4 Martin Luther King Jr. , "'An Appraisal of the Great Awakening,'" The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, July 10, 2017, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/appraisal-great-awakening.

5 Thomas Kidd, "The Great Awakening," Bill of Rights Institute, 2014, https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-great-awakening/.

6 Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Sermon (July 8, 1741), https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/edwards_jonathan/Sermons/Sinners.cfm.

7 Jonathan Edwards and John Edwin Smith, Religious Affections (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), https://www.faithbiblechurchnh.org/edwards_religious_aff_exc.htm.

8 Thomas S. Kidd, The Great Awakening : The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 24.

9 Kidd, "The Great Awakening."

Additionally, the rise of itinerant (nomadic) preaching further eroded traditional structures of authority. Whitefield, arguably the most famous revivalist of the era, drew massive crowds across the colonies, often preaching outside the confines of established churches. His performances transcended local parish boundaries and created a shared intercolonial religious experience rooted in drama, emotion, and accessibility.[10] As historian Harry S. Stout argues, Whitefield's success depended in part on his ability to harness emerging forms of mass communication, turning revival into a far-reaching public spectacle.[11] In doing so, Whitefield weakened the geographic and institutional binds that had traditionally governed religious life.

In conjunction with one another, these developments contributed to a broader democratization of religious participation. Laypeople, including women and members of the lower social class, found new opportunities to actively engage in religious discourse. Testimonies of conversion circulated widely, and individuals who might have previously remained silent in the era of hierarchical church structures began to assert power through their spiritual experiences. This was not, however, a straightforward movement toward equality, although people experienced more freedom. Formal leadership roles remained restricted, and existing social hierarchies persisted. Nonetheless, the Awakening expanded the boundaries of who could speak, judge, and participate within the religious domain.[12]

At the same time, the movement generated significant resistance. Critics, often labeled "Old Lights," condemned revivalist practices as disorderly and irrational, warning that excessive emotionalism threatens both religious and social stability. They believed emphasis on personal experience was a dangerous departure from established norms—one that undermined respect for educated clergy and encouraged fanaticism.[13] Even Edwards, a central figure in the revival, acknowledged the potential for emotion to overpower religious interpretations and sought to distinguish genuine spirituality from mere enthusiasm.[14] These debates underscore the extent to which the Awakening represented a contentious redefinition of religious life.

At the close of the revival, the tensions between reason, emotion, authority, and experience did not resolve neatly. Instead, they became enduring features of American religious culture. The First Great Awakening established a model of revivalism that would persist in subsequent periods of religious renewal, from the Second Great Awakening fifty years later to modern evangelical movements. Preminently, it reconfigured the relationship between individuals and established institutions, embedding within American Protestantism a persistent skepticism toward centralized authority and an emphasis on personal authenticity. Such skepticism largely inspired the United States' First Amendment which guarantees the "'free exercise'" of religion and prohibition of the "establishment of religion."[15]

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10 Ian Maddock and Tom Schwanda, "10 Things You Should Know about George Whitefield," Crossway, June 9, 2025, https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-george-whitefield/.

11 Harry S Stout, The Divine Dramatist : George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991).

12 Gura and Bonomi, "Under the Cope of Heaven," 179.

13 Kidd, "The Great Awakening."

14 Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections.

15 Kidd, "The Great Awakening."

As such, the First Great Awakening can be understood not simply as a moment of heightened religious fervor, but as a transformational movement in the history of authority itself. By encouraging emotional experience—something available to all—as a source of religious knowledge, revivalists challenged Enlightenment assumptions that heralded the supremacy of reason while undermining traditional clerical hierarchies. The result of this revival was a more dynamic and participatory religious culture, one that reflected the inklings of democracy that would soon flourish in the Colonies. Revival, in this sense, did not simply restore religious vitality or emotionalism; it redefined the terms on which that vitality could be claimed—shaping the spirituality of a nation to come.

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Japan's Step Away From Conservatism: How Japan Maintained Sovereignty Through the Meiji Restoration

By Kiki Wenren '28

Meiji Japan was on a mission to protect its national sovereignty in the nineteenth century. As socioeconomic power shifted from the East to the West under the name of The Great Divergence, a socioeconomic shift beginning around 1800 where Western Europe and its settler colonies emerged as the dominant global power. Western Europe consolidated authority through industrialization in order to compete against its neighbouring countries for land, resources, and most of all, survival. However, East Asian societies, specifically the Qing Dynasty and Tokugawa Japan, did not face the same pressure for rapid growth. The difference in political priorities led the West to become highly revolutionary, while the East remained conservative, limiting contact with the West to maintain internal social order and power. In light of the Great Divergence, the world's new power dynamics meant that remaining an isolationist state would lead to political decay. Characterized by political scientist Francis Fukuyama, political decay occurs when a nation is unable to respond to changing circumstances. This inability to adapt leads to instability and ultimately, the fall of a nation.[1] Japan, fearing this decay, reconstructed its sociopolitical systems, technology, and philosophy through industrialization and centralization in order to maintain its self-sufficiency and sovereignty.

The first of Japan's attempts to avoid the political decay felt by its neighbour, China, was to change its sociopolitical systems. When envoys from the West came to request trading relations with Eastern nations on two separate occasions, China and Japan responded differently. George Macartney, a British envoy, traveled to China in 1793 to pursue expanded diplomatic and trade relations between the two nations, yet he was met with complete refusal.[2] In response, Britain initiated the Opium trade to integrate itself into the Chinese markets. The distribution of these narcotics weakened Chinese productivity and governance, prompting China to crack down on the drug trade. This crackdown heightened tensions between the two nations and contributed to the outbreak of the Opium War, which crippled China's authority in the Eastern world by turning it into a semi-colony of the British Empire. China's decline was primarily due to underdeveloped infrastructure and resistance to technological change, as the empire "rejected" metallurgical technology and "did not realize that the technology was indispensable to increase a country's material wealth."[3] Thus, China fell behind during the Great Divergence and entered a period of political decay. Japan, having witnessed China's decay, took a much different

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1 Francis Fukuyama, The Origins of Political Order : from Prehuman Times to the French Revolution, paperback ed ed. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 7.

2 James Carter and Richard A. Warren, Forging the Modern World : a History, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2023), 213.

3 Notehelfer et al., "An Extraordinary," 102.

Made by Ann Ma ‘28

path with the arrival of American naval officer Commodore Perry in 1853. Similar to Macartney, Perry demanded that Japan open itself to trade with the West. Unlike China, however, Japan opened itself to Western influence despite its isolationist identity. Japan acknowledged that China fell due to its refusal to industrialize. If Japan had continued with its isolationist tradition under the Shogunate, it risked similar decay, so it began to westernize and industrialize. Thus, the Meiji era began with a keen focus on restoring Japan’s power and influence amongst Western nations .

In pursuit of the infrastructure necessary to ensure its internal stability and sovereignty, Japan embraced foreign influences, knowledge, and technology, all of which would be pivotal to its reforms. In 1871, the Meiji Emperor commissioned the Iwakura Mission. This mission sent a delegation of fifty Japanese officials and a cohort of students to observe industrialized Western institutions in order to modernize Japan. Kume Kunitake, the diarist of the mission, vividly noted the differences between Japan and the West, both in technology and sociopolitically.[4] He observed that Western industrial power stressed “the importance of iron and coal as sources of wealth in a nation.”[5] Indeed, iron and coal were the foundation of the Industrial Revolution in the West: iron was used to manufacture the machinery and infrastructure, while coal powered the steam engines of said machinery. Industrialization, Japan realized, would be unattainable without these resources.

Additionally, the delegation was exposed to Western philosophies of liberty, equality, and natural rights, which informed the organization of states, specifically those of the Atlantic Revolutions. Kume extensively noted the balances between these ideals and the power of the state.

> Of course, no man-made constitution will be perfect, and if you give power to the people, the power of government will be reduced. The more you promote liberty, the more lax the laws will become.[6]

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4 F.G. Notehelfer et al., “An Extraordinary Odyssey: The Iwakura Embassy Translated,” Monumenta Nipponica 59, no. 1 (2004): 98, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25066275.

5 Notehelfer et al., “An Extraordinary,” 101-102. 6 Notehelfer et al., “An Extraordinary,” 98.

Japan observed that liberty was a common theme among the industrialized Western nations and that it increased productivity—a key part of institutionalization. These philosophies, however, would have to be carefully integrated to avoid infringing on the jurisdiction of Japan's monarchy. If a revolution driven by political dissatisfaction resembling the Atlantic Revolutions occurred in Japan, it could decentralize its power and result in foreign colonization. Soon after, the Meiji government combined Western philosophies with its own semi-constitutional monarchy to create the Constitution of the Empire of Japan in 1889, a policy best suited to its governance that protected its sovereignty. The constitution maintained a strict balance between integrating Western philosophies into society and ensuring that power remains concentrated. Chapter II, "Rights and Duties of Subjects," stated that "Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings, and associations."[6] These rights of liberty are clearly influenced by the West, but the constitution's use of "subjects" implicitly signaled that the Emperor and the Imperial Diet (Japan's oligarchy) held absolute authority. The difference between a "subject" and a "citizen" lies in their role with respect to the government. Subjects must obey the government unconditionally, while citizens have a voice, and alongside it, rights and responsibilities. In the Meiji Constitution, calling the Japanese people "subjects" contradicts the rights and liberty they are supposedly granted. The constitution merely references liberty as a formality to ensure that their society reaps the benefits of productivity seen in Western societies, but also restricts liberty to avoid decentralization. This restriction of liberty was critical to maintaining the centralized power Japan needed to carry out its initial phases of industrialization efficiently; otherwise, development would require more time. The Japanese constitution successfully combined Western ideals of liberty, equality, and natural rights with their centralized society in order to maintain absolute authority, while also integrating similar values that promoted industrial productivity in the West.

Although the Meiji government initially relied on Western knowledge and aid to industrialize, it still sought to achieve total self-sufficiency by quickly implementing programs and infrastructure that supported its development. The first of which was to mentor engineers and launch railways. Railways were a Western technology delivered by Commodore Perry on his early expedition to Japan. He displayed a miniature railroad along the shore near Yokohama, which quickly sparked Japanese interest.[7] Although railway infrastructure began before the Iwakura Mission in 1872, it was still a result of Western influence. Early on, Britain aided Japan, specifically with technical expertise to construct preliminary railroads. However, Japanese engineers soon adapted Western methods and rejected foreign assistance by the 1880s.[8] The Japanese railway was the foundation of its industrialization, and with it came economic development. Coal, established as an integral part of industrialization during the Iwakura Mission, was heavily invested in after the Japanese became independent from British aid. Nobutaka Ike, a professor and researcher in East Asian politics, notes that "in 1893 Japan produced a little more

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6 Ito Hirobumi and Hanover Historical Texts Project, "The Constitution of the Empire of Japan," 1889, accessed February 3, 2026, https://history.hanover.edu/texts/1889con.html.

7 Nobutaka Ike, "The Pattern of Railway Development in Japan," The Far Eastern Quarterly 14, no. 2 (1955): 218, https://doi.org/10.2307/2941732.

8 Ike, "The Pattern," 222.

than three and a third million tons of coal; by 1920 this had increased about 8-fold to 26,200,000 tons."[9] Coal became one of the railway's primary freight goods. It was a crucial resource that formed the foundation of Western growth, as its production directly influenced the productivity of machines. Thus, with the rise in coal production, the number of power-enabled factories rose eleven-fold from 2,388 to 29,855 in just twenty years.[10] As such, the Japanese railway was the foundation of its self-sufficiency and power. Western influence was once again necessary for Japan's early industrialization and growth, but it was Japan's own investment in infrastructure that enabled its rapid development and later independence from Western nations.

The Japanese nation did not survive and thrive merely because of their decision to change, but because they actively sought out Western ideologies and adapted them to their own infrastructure and society. The total transformation the archipelago endured is a testimony to the capability of Eastern nations to enact the same industrialization and consolidation of power that Western states displayed; moreover, they were able to accomplish these feats quickly and effectively, and, in the years that followed, Japan became an imperial power in its own right, waging its own territorial expansion in East Asia. Although Japan integrated many Western ideologies, they were shaped to fit its own society rather than emulate the West. Through the Meiji Restoration, Japan overcame the limits of conservatism and advanced its quest for national sovereignty.

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9 Ike, "The Pattern," 228.

10 Ike, "The Pattern," 228.

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Pheonix in Purple: Byzantium After 1204

By Josh Pan ‘27

Made by Ann Ma ‘28

When Latin crusaders breached the walls of Constantinople in April of 1204, the Byzantine statesman and historian Niketas Choniates watched his city devour itself. What he could not see was that the moment of greatest catastrophe was also the first step in one of the most ambitious imperial revivals of the medieval world. “O City, City, eye of all cities,” he lamented, “thou hast drunk to the dregs the cup of the wrath of the Lord.”[1] Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, was the Christian continuation of Rome that had endured in the eastern Mediterranean for nearly nine centuries. The Latin Crusaders who ransacked it were composed of Western European armies originally bound for Jerusalem. For three days, these soldiers of the Fourth Crusade had sworn to liberate Jerusalem, yet instead found themselves plundering the greatest Christian capital in the world, melting altars and shattering relics that had stood for 900 years. For Choniates and his contemporaries, 1204 marked the end of the Roman Empire after nearly 2,000 years. Yet the more intriguing story begins in the rubble. Within four years, a Byzantine emperor was crowned in exile at Nicaea. Fifty-seven years later, his heirs marched across the Hellespont, and the cultural boom that followed outshone the borders of the diminished empire that produced it. Byzantium’s response to the catastrophe was driven not by the need for survival but by the desire for revival; it was a deliberate, self-conscious reinvention of what it meant to be a Roman.

The Fourth Crusade reached Constantinople because the crusaders could not pay their bill. In 1202, Pope Innocent III summoned Christendom to reclaim the holy city of Jerusalem, and the assembled French and Flemish (modern-day Belgians) contracted with the Republic of Venice[2] to ferry their armies to Egypt.[3] When far fewer crusaders arrived in Venice than promised, the host could not pay the agreed sum of 85,000 silver marks, and the aged Doge Enrico Dandolo seized the leverage. To work off the debt, the crusaders sacked the Christian Adriatic port of Zara in 1202, drawing papal excommunication.[4] A second diversion followed when the exiled Byzantine prince Alexios Angelos appeared in the crusader camp, promising

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1 Niketas Choniates, O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 317.

2 The Serene Republic of Venice was Europe’s premier maritime power at the time and commandeered a large fleet comprised of trade ships as well as war galleys.

3 Jonathan Phillips, The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 55–68.

4 Thomas F. Madden, Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 122–28.

vast sums and military aid if the army would restore his blind father, Isaac II, to the imperial throne. The crusaders agreed, and in the summer of 1203, their fleet appeared beneath the sea walls of Constantinople.

The arrangement collapsed within months. Alexios IV, installed as co-emperor, could not deliver the promised payments; soon after, he was deposed in a palace coup in 1204, and the new regime refused crusaders altogether. On April 12, the Latin army stormed the city of Constantinople. The three-day sack that followed was, in historian Jonathan Phillips' assessment, "an act of cultural vandalism on a scale rarely seen before or since." Bronzes were melted for coins, libraries were burned, and the Orthodox cathedral, the Hagia Sophia, was hacked apart for its silver.[5] The victors then partitioned the empire through the Partitio Romaniae treaty, carving out a Latin Empire of Constantinople and dividing the provinces among Frankish lords and Venetian merchants. Choniates, fleeing the city on foot, described the moment: "the streets, squares, houses of two and three stories, sacred places — all were filled with bodies of the dead."[6] The Roman Empire of the East, in its unified form, had ceased to exist. But the revival had already begun; in the months it took the imperial court to scatter eastward, the Byzantines were rebuilding what the crusaders had broken.

The empire's leadership may have scattered, but it would take more than just a pillage to erase an empire that had stood for millennia. Within months of the assault, three Greek successor states emerged from the wreckage: the Despotate of Epirus in the western Balkans, the distant Empire of Trebizond on the Black Sea coast, and most consequentially, the Empire of Nicaea in northwestern Anatolia.[7] It was at Nicaea in 325, where the first ecumenical council had defined Christian orthodoxy, that the son-in-law of the deposed emperor Alexios III, Theodore I Laskaris, gathered the remnants of the imperial court. In 1208, Theodore was crowned emperor by a newly installed Patriarch of Constantinople-in-exile, deliberately reproducing the traditional coronation ceremonies held in the lost capital, serving as an assertion that the Roman imperial headquarters had merely changed address.[8]

Theodore's successors built on this exile state's foundation. John III Vatatzes, who reigned from 1222 to 1254, transformed Nicaea from a temporary court into a functioning state by reforming agriculture, building hospitals, and repelling the Latins back across the Aegean and into Europe.[9] His contemporaries took notice: the Nicaean historian and statesman George Akropolites, writing in the imperial chancery, presented Vatatzes as the legitimate Roman emperor in all but geography.[10] Crucially, classical learning continued under exile. The scholar Nicephorus Blemmydes tutored future emperors in the classics, ensuring that when Constantinople was eventually recovered, the empire's intellectual apparatus would return with it.[11] What Nicaea demonstrated, in other words, was that "Rome" had

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5 Phillips, Fourth Crusade, 269.

6 Choniates, O City of Byzantium, 315.

7 Michael Angold, A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204–1261 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 1–14.

8 George Akropolites, The History, trans. Ruth Macrides (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 119–22.

9 Nicol, Last Centuries of Byzantium, 19–25.

10 Akropolites, The History, 178–84; Macrides, introduction, 5–10.

11 Angold, Byzantine Government in Exile, 173–80.

long since stopped being a place. It was a set of institutions, ceremonies, and texts that could be carried across the Aegean and reconstituted in a provincial Anatolian city without losing its claim to be the same empire Augustus had founded twelve centuries earlier. The Roman Empire's most enduring legacy was the conviction that it could not actually end.

The recapture of Constantinople itself looked, at first glance, like sheer luck. On the night of July 25, 1261, a small Nicaean reconnaissance force under the general Alexios Strategopoulos discovered that the Latin garrison and the Venetian fleet had sailed off to raid a Black Sea island, leaving Constantinople almost undefended. A local sympathizer led the Nicaeans through an unguarded passage in the walls, and by morning, the Latin emperor Baldwin II was fleeing by ship.[12] After 57 years, the city had fallen to the Greeks without a drop of bloodshed.

To read the recapture as an accident, however, would not give the Byzantines enough credit. As the historians Nikolay Barabanov and V. Zolotovskiy have recently argued, Strategopoulos's coup was the harvest of half a century of deliberate Nicaean preparation: diplomatic isolation of the Latin Empire; the March 1261 Treaty of Nymphaion, which secured Genoese naval support against Venice; and a sustained military campaign that had reduced the Latin holdings down to little more than the city itself.[13] When Michael VIII Palaiologos entered Constantinople on August 15, 1261, he did so on foot, walking behind the Hodegetria icon believed to have been painted by Saint Luke, in a ceremony the historian George Pachymeres describes as a deliberate restaging of Constantine's founding of the city.[14] As Ruth Macrides notes, Michael was not merely returning to Constantinople; he was being crowned in the eyes of his subjects as a New Constantine over a new Constantinople.[15]

The reconquered city was not the city Michael VIII had imagined. Decades of Latin neglect had left whole sections of the city depopulated, churches stripped, and the Hagia Sophia in disrepair.[16] There was much restoration to do. Michael VIII rebuilt the sea walls, repaired the Hagia Sophia, and erected a column at the Church of Holy Apostles bearing an archangel, a monumental program that acted, as historian Jessica Varsallona has argued, as proof that Roman order had been divinely restored.[17] What followed under his successors' discretion was something even more ambitious: a cultural and intellectual boom that historians call the Palaiologan Renaissance.

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12 Nicol, Last Centuries of Byzantium, 33–36.

13 Nikolay Barabanov and V. Zolotovskiy, "The Recapture of Constantinople in 1261: An Accident or a Pattern?" Vestnik Volgogradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta 28, no. 6 (2023): 234–42.

14 George Pachymeres, De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis libri tredecim, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn: Weber, 1835), 1:140–45.

15 Ruth Macrides, "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople — 1261?" Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 6 (1980): 13–41.

16 Nicol, Last Centuries of Byzantium, 41–44.

17 Jessica Varsallona, "Reinventing the Capital: The Ideological Use of Monumental Architecture in Michael VIII Palaiologos' Constantinople (1261–1282)," Eurasian Studies 19, no. 1 (2021): 155–82. [20] Theodore Metochites, Byzantios, in Clive Foss, Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1996), 167.

At the center of this Renaissance stood renowned scholars, like Maximus Planudes, who recovered and edited the works of Plutarch and Ptolemy, and Theodore Metochites, prime minister to Andronikos II, who, in a public oration around 1290, praised Nicaea as the "citadel for the whole Roman state" that had "nobly resisted the tide of evil…and survived."[20] Metochites poured his fortune into the restoration of the Chora Monastery, whose early fourteenth-century mosaics find their place among the supreme achievements of high medieval art. [18] Even after the eventual collapse of the empire in 1453, westward-traveling Greek refugees transferred this knowledge to the Italian peninsula, kindling the Italian Renaissance itself. In its final years, Byzantium had become more self-consciously Roman, more deliberately classical, than it had been at the height of its power.

Choniates died in exile at Nicaea in 1217, never witnessing the city he had mourned and hoped to restore to its original glory. He could not have imagined that his lament would stand at the beginning of a cultural revolution where scholars would copy Plutarch by candlelight and mosaicists at the Chora would set gold tesserae into walls that still glow seven centuries later. The Byzantines did not merely survive the catastrophe of 1204; they rose to the challenge, deliberately and self-consciously, by staging their own return. This is what makes their revival worth remembering. Empires may fall in an afternoon, but it is the work of revival – choosing what to carry forward and what to make new – that takes generations, and begins, always, in the rubble.

18 Edmund Fryde, The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261–c. 1360) (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1–18, 322–46.

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The Banality of Revival: Psychology and Propaganda in Nazi Germany

By Connie Shi ‘28

Revival is not inherently a force for good. The same collective longing that rebuilds nations can, under the right conditions, be transformed into something far darker. The very urgency that fuels revival is also what makes it exploitable. When a frustrated society seeks to redeem itself, state actions that would normally raise concern become tolerated if framed as necessary for restoration. In the aftermath of World War I, Germany faced severe economic instability and national humiliation, particularly under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. At the same time, issues such as hyperinflation, unemployment, and political fragmentation collectively undermined Germany’s stability, making the promises of restoration appealing to German citizens experiencing nationwide shame both emotionally and politically. In Nazi Germany, the rhetoric of national revival worked through both military force and the deliberate reshaping of public perception, which ultimately normalized .

Amid a time of vulnerability, the Nazi Party rose to power by presenting itself as a force capable of restoring German order, unity, and national strength. Its messaging resonated with a population already seeking national restoration, allowing the regime to make radical fascist goals seem like necessary steps towards Germany’s revival. Once in power, the Nazi government gradually implemented a system of exclusion in the name of developing the Third Reich — a government intended to last a millennium. Between 1933 and 1939, without accounting for regional and local orders, the regime issued over 400 decrees and regulations restricting nearly every aspect of Jewish life.[1] Early policies, such as the April 1933 Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, removed Jews from government positions and excluded them from education and other professional fields.[2] Subsequent restrictions extended into cultural life, with Jewish actors barred from performing by 1934.[3] While each individual measure may have appeared limited in scope, they collectively normalized exclusion and discrimination. This escalation reached a critical turning point with the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, which formally defined Jews by ancestry rather than religion, despite the lack of any scientific basis for such racial distinctions.[4] The laws institutionalized Jewish segregation from so-called “Aryan” society. The term “Aryan,” has been historically associated with definitions such as “noble” and “civilized” in the ancient Iranian language, though its Nazi usage was radicalized and distorted.[5] Within this environment of prolonged insecurity reinforced through rhetoric, the idea of restoration gained significant emotional and political appeal. By framing revival as an urgent necessity — and the Jewish people as the obstacle —the state was able to

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1 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Antisemitic Legislation 1933–1939.” Holocaust Encyclopedia. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/antisemitic-legislation-1933-1939.

2 USHMM, “Antisemitic Legislation 1933–1939.”

3 USHMM, “Antisemitic Legislation 1933–1939.”

4 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Nuremberg Laws.” Holocaust Encyclopedia. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nuremberg-laws.

5 “Aryan.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aryan.

mobilize public support for increasingly radical solutions, promoting segregationist policies as necessary for Germany's revival.

Furthermore, the manipulation of psychological tendencies was central to the effectiveness of Nazi strategy. Extreme fascist ideologies could only be sustained through either proactive consensus or complete societal desensitization. Central to this process was the construction of a rigid "us versus them" framework. Membership in the national community, or Volksgemeinschaft, was defined through the exclusion of Jews.[6] As nationalist sentiment intensified, Jews were increasingly portrayed as outsiders and threats to the collective success of Germany. The regime's calculated, incremental imposition of increasingly restrictive decrees further enabled this process. As each measure was implemented without widespread opposition, individuals were more likely to view the situation as acceptable or justified, reinforcing passive compliance through collective bystanderism. Such a dynamic reflects the psychological "foot-in-the-door" phenomenon, in which the gradual acceptance of small actions conditions people to comply with increasingly extreme demands.[7]

As decrees continued without visible resistance, public acceptance grew. In the absence of opposition, many non-Jewish Germans interpreted the situation as either not severe enough to warrant concern or as implicitly justified by the state. This gradual normalization contributed to what German-American historian Hannah Arendt later described as the "banality of evil," the idea that ordinary individuals can participate in or tolerate harmful systems through uncritical acceptance and the

Made by Ann Ma '28

Historic contextualization: This antisemitic Nazi propaganda image uses familiar visual tropes to portray Jews as corrupting and dangerous to German society. The exaggerated features of the male figure — hooked nose, dark clothing, and predatory grin — reflect offensive stereotypes commonly seen in children's propaganda. In contrast, the blonde girl represents the idealized Aryan child, symbolizing racial purity and the future of the people's community. The image invokes the Nazi idea of racial defilement, the fear that Jews threatened the purity of the German nation through contact and manipulation. By depicting Jews as dangerous outsiders, propaganda like this contributed to the broader Nazi process of dehumanization, helping justify exclusion, persecution, and eventually genocide.

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6 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda." Google Arts & Culture. https://artsandculture.google.com/story/state-of-deception-united-states-holocaust-memorial-museum/2QVhSSb7oRR7Jg.

7 Anthony D. Kauders, "From Particularism to Mass Murder: Nazi Morality, Antisemitism, and Cognitive Dissonance," Holocaust and Genocide Studies 36, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 46–59, https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcac011

slow erosion of moral alertness to the widely propagated ideologies.[8] Rather than confronting complex structural factors, Nazi rhetoric directed frustration at Jews, an internal group portrayed as responsible for the nation's suffering. portraying Jews as responsible for Germany's suffering. According to Nazi rhetoric marked with a distorted sense of blame, exclusion was necessary to restore Germany's greatness.

The Nazi case forces a deeper question about revival itself: Is it the recovery of something lost, or the reconstruction of something new under the illusion of restoration? When revival is driven by collective grief and a clear vision, how vulnerable does it become to exploitation? And how can one prevent such manipulation? The question worth sitting with is not solely how the Nazi regime became monstrous, but how it justified such a monstrosity – and, perhaps more importantly, what responsibility democratic societies bear today to prevent history from repeating itself.

8 Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

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The Poverty of Spirit: How Indigenous Activism of the 1960s Revived Identity and Sovereignty

By Lara Amer ‘28

Is rejection a fundamental step toward revival? For Indigenous Americans, political and cultural renewal emerged through the rejection of earlier strategies. The start of the twentieth century marked a period of persistent suffering, forced assimilation, and injustice for Native Americans across the nation. Forced enrollment in conversion boarding schools designed to make youth abandon Indigenous traditions grew rapidly, and by 1926, nearly 83% of Native American school-age children were attending them.[1] As a result, an increasing number of Indigenous youth became disconnected from their cultures, as boarding schools enforced harsh punishment for speaking native languages, forced students to cut their hair, and required them to give up traditional clothing. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), a non-profit organization founded in 1944 to advocate for the rights of Indigenous people in America, was seen to have failed to properly take action against these injustices. The disconnect from their culture among Indigenous youth produced a generation that lacked connection to their parents’ and grandparents’ customs, leaving many feeling distanced and trapped between the expectations of mainstream American culture and their Indigenous heritage. After decades of limited progress towards breaking this cycle of cultural erosion, many Indigenous Americans began to view the NCAI’s approach as too cautious to effectively challenge ongoing federal policies, prompting a new generation of Indigenous Americans in the 1960s to take matters into their own hands, creating a path towards justice and renewed pride.

The Termination and Relocation Acts, enacted from 1953 to 1968, widened the disconnect between the NCAI and the new generation, leading to a push towards mainstream Anglo-American culture. This period, known as the “Indian Termination Era,” marked the federal government’s attempt

Made by Ann Ma ‘28

1 “Struggling with Cultural Repression,” National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian, accessed May 1, 2026, https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/code-talkers/boardiIndiansis ng-sovereigntyschools/.

to sever its relationship with Native nations.[2] Through policies that ended recognition of tribal sovereignty, trust status, and essential reservation services, the government effectively deconstructed Indigenous sovereignty. Later, the Indian Relocation Act followed, a law that encouraged Native Americans to leave their homelands and reservations and move to urban areas, promoting this shift through vocational training and housing assistance. While these policies appeared to offer equal opportunities, they were ultimately part of a greater effort to erase Indigenous identity. Although the National Congress of American Indians diligently worked to expose these federal policies and seek justice through legal advocacy– such as lobbying for the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946, which allowed the Indigenous tribes to sue over broken treaties or land confiscations– its efforts fell short in securing meaningful justice. The severity of termination and relocation demanded a more confrontational response, leading many activists to reject these cautious methods and ignite a resurgence of Indigenous pride and activism.

The formation of advocacy groups such as the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) marked the beginning of a new era of Indigenous pride and activism. Through protests like "fish-ins," activists achieved legal victories that expanded Indigenous sovereignty and revived hope within Native American communities. Founded by individuals from diverse tribes and backgrounds, the NIYC united members around a common goal of restoring Native rights and respect for Native land and culture. Focused on rebuilding a strong and independent Native American culture after decades of oppression and forced assimilation, the organization targeted issues in Native American education and discrimination. Clyde Warrior, a founder of the NIYC, emphasized the need for revival in his speech, "We Are Not Free," proclaiming, "we were rich in things of the spirit, but if there is one thing that characterizes Indian life today it is the poverty of the spirit."[3] His words highlighted the urgency of cultural and political renewal. Warrior also argued that this "poverty of spirit" could not be overcome unless Indigenous people gained control over their decisions and material conditions, calling for stronger action against termination policies. This mindset sparked protests like the "fish-ins," which challenged state regulations that prohibited fishing in "usual and accustomed" areas, restrictions that violated treaty-guaranteed rights. The NIYC, alongside the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), a Washington-based activist group founded in 1964, defended the treaty rights of Indigenous communities secured in the 1850s. Such efforts led to the landmark case U.S v. Washington, also known as the Boldt decision, which ruled that Native Americans were entitled to up to 50 percent of the harvestable fish in the Pacific Northwest, and granted them a role in managing the fishing industry through tribal commissions.[4] In achieving this restoration of Indigenous control over land and water-based resources—a longtime issue for communities—the NIYC and SAIS instilled a renewed sense of empowerment into

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2 "Bureau of Indian Affairs Records: Termination," National Archives, accessed May 1, 2026, https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/bia/termination.

3 "Clyde Warrior – 'We Are Not Free' (1967)," PBWorks, accessed May 1, 2026, http://americanindianhistory.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/67442782/Warrior%20-%20We%20Are%20Not%20Free.pdf

4 Gabriel Chrisman, "The Fish-in Protests at Franks Landing," The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington, accessed May 1, 2026, https://depts.w, confrontational approach to restoring the economic resources guaranteed byashington.edu/civilr/fish-ins.htm.

Indigenous peoples that would continue to grow over the following decades. Furthermore, these legal successes set important precedents for future land and sovereignty disputes. Although the NIYC opposed the forced urbanization of Native Americans, it also helped inspire movements that mobilized Indigenous urban youth in the broader struggle for equality.

Although Indigenous advocacy movements were rooted in rejecting assimilation into mainstream American society, urbanization among youth also ignited resistance, helping pave the way for the Red Power Movement of the 1970s, a pan-Indian movement centered on militant activism. At the heart of this crusade was the American Indian Movement (AIM). Unlike the NIYC, the AIM adopted a more aggressive and confrontational approach to restoring economic resources guaranteed by treaties. One of its most important achievements was the establishment of the K-12 Heart of the Earth Survival School in 1971. Designed to provide culturally based education focused on Indigenous languages, culture, and survival skills, the school directly combated the cultural erasure produced by both boarding schools and urban assimilation.[5] AIM's efforts to educate and instill a renewed sense of Indigenous pride in younger generations further accelerated Indigenous cultural revitalization. AIM's activism also extended to the reclamation of tribal land. In a bold act of protest, activists occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco for over a year, an effort that was later ended when federal officers cut off the island's access to power and water. The occupation aimed to pressure the government to return the retired federal land to Indigenous tribes, as promised in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Richard Oakes, a leader in the Red Power Movement who spearheaded the occupation, declared, "In the name of all Indians... we reclaim this island for our Indian issues. We feel this claim is just and proper and that the land should rightfully be granted to us for as long as the rivers run and the sun shall shine," capturing the profound pride and determination behind the movement.[6] Although the revolt failed to permanently reclaim the land, it garnered national attention, establishing the American Indian Movement as a household name and bringing to light many of the injustices Native Americans faced. The revolt also led President Richard Nixon to end the termination policies described by Cole Bates, a doctoral student in American studies at SMU, as "culturally genocidal," marking a landmark success in the Indigenous cultural revival efforts.

Decades after the first advocacy groups were formed, their impact on reviving Indigenous pride and activism continued through major victories in reparations and representation. The influence of the NIYC and the subsequent Red Power Movement is evident in U.S. census data, which shows a steady increase in the number of people identifying as Native American since 1960. Between 1960 and 1990, a dramatic surge in reported Native American population growth occurred, with numbers rising from 552,000 to 1.95 million, an increase of approximately 255 percent.[7] Most

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5 "Struggling with Cultural Repression," National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian, accessed May 1, 2026, https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/code-talkers/boarding-schools/.

6 "The Native Occupation of Alcatraz—Looking Back 50 ,Years Later," Pima County Public Library, last modified November 19, 2019, accessed May 1, 2026, https://www.library.pima.gov/blogs/post/the-native-occup, as evidenced byation-of-alcatraz-looking-back-50-years-later/.

7 Jeffrey Passel, "The Growing American Indian Population, 1960–1990: Beyond Demography," National Library of Medicine, accessed May 1, 2026, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK233102/.

recently, the 2020 census recorded that the number of those identifying as fully or partially Indigenous American had risen to more than 9.6 million people.[8] Since the census tracks demographics by self-identification, this trend reflects increased Indigenous self-identification, a direct result of the resurgence of Indigenous pride and a shift away from assimilation since the 1960s. Furthermore, in 2014, the Obama administration resolved a long-standing lawsuit filed by the Navajo Nation in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in 2006. The administration agreed to pay $554 million to the Navajo Nation as reparations for the federal government's mismanagement of funds and misuse of natural-resource royalties on the reservation for more than fifty years.[9] As the single-largest settlement awarded to an Indigenous tribe, this case marked a historic achievement and demonstrated the lasting impact of 1960s and 1970s Native American activism.

The rejection of the National Congress of American Indians' earlier strategies sparked a period of revival in Indigenous culture, advocacy, and pride, driven by protests, legal battles, and educational initiatives. These efforts produced lasting results, including increased Indigenous self-identification and the restoration of people's connections to cultures weakened by termination policies and conversion boarding schools. From the "fish-ins" led by the National Indian Youth Council to the occupation of Alcatraz orchestrated by the American Indian Movement, the Indigenous pride and sovereignty recognized today would not have been possible without this era of activism and revival. In the case of Indigenous Americans, the rejection of earlier activism proved not the end of progress, but rather the catalyst for revitalization.

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8 Alan Ramirez, "Tribal Nations Face More Limited 2020 Census Data," National Indian Council on Aging, last modified September 20, 2023, accessed May 1, 2026, https://www.nicoa.org/tribal-nations-face-more-limited-2020-census-data/.

9 "U.S. to Pay Navajo Nation $554 million in Largest Settlement People's,t with Single Indian Tribe," The Washington Post, last modified September 24, 2014, accessed May 1, 2026,https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/

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