

CHAPTER THREE

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COFFEE:
POLICIES CONCERNING COFFEE IN ARABIA, TURKEY,
REVOLUTIONARY ENGLAND, PRUSSIA OF FREDERICK THE GREAT,
THE UNITED STATES, AND THE RISE OF AN INTERNATIONAL COFFEE CARTEL**

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This chapter explores relations between political economy and public policy concerning a drug that seems exceptional because it is almost everywhere legal: coffee. There have been many studies of the political, legal, and law enforcement aspects of criminalized or prohibited commodities, such as alcohol, opium-based products, illicit pharmaceuticals, and, in certain times and places, coffee. These studies often are aimed at informing current day law-enforcement policy but they also draw on historical and cross-national materials, such as the present essay. The basic theme that my research explores is the relations of political economy; culture, legal policies, and drugs—in this case coffee—that are traded as licit or illicit commodities.

Coffee's widespread legality today is made even more conspicuous when juxtaposed with the history of regulation and suppression of the drink, across a variety of times, places, and cultures, that makes up the bulk of this chapter. As a political-economic approach makes clear, monopolistic or oligopolistic control of mind-altering staples historically appears to be “normal” rather than exceptional. Control of these monopolies has often been of the highest strategic value for domestic and international affairs, and has, in many cases, involved illicit or criminal activities. And yet the story of coffee involves more than just monopoly politics. This essay will try to refine the political economic perspective on drug policy through interpretation and comparative analysis of the most fully documented historical cases of the use, trade, and policies related to coffee. These include early Islamic Arabia, Ottoman Turkey, Revolutionary England, Prussia of Frederick the Great and, more recently, the rise of an international coffee cartel.

Though elite interests often steer the course of drug regulation, in no country is the dominant class either monolithic or omnipotent, let alone omniscient. It has internal conflicts,

usually based on industrial groupings (e.g., aluminum and petroleum versus iron and coal); dynastic rivalries (the Rockefellers and Mellons against the du Ponts and Morgans); regional differences (the Sun Belt versus the Eastern Establishment); and national versus international interests (the National Association of Manufacturers versus the Committee on Economic Development). Normally the common interests of elites as a class will supervene over particular interests of segments of that class. In instances where this does not occur, elite factions will seek alliances with elements of the general populace, and pluralistic groups at such moments may shape policies of national importance.

The case of coffee requires further clarification, however. This drink has carried with it a variety of symbolic associations that have been at least as important, in determining the extent of regulatory efforts against it, as the economic concerns of elites mentioned above. While many argue that cultural explanations for drug regulation are merely a "cover" for political economic decisions of elites (such as the anti-Chinese sentiment mobilized in support of opium legislation in the U.S. during the early twentieth century), the same cannot be said for coffee. Its use, normally in groups and often in coffeehouses, encouraged open discussion and the creation of public forums. The prospects of citizens gathering together discussing the problems of government, and perhaps even plotting against that government, threatened authorities in Arabia, Turkey, and revolutionary England, and led to a number of attempts at suppression.

There are, however, a vast range of social symbolic meanings and functions of drugs which, as we shall see, have the potential for political or economic exploitation or suppression. For example, in the U.S. in the 1930's, when doubts were being raised about the safety of coffee, caffeine, and their use by children, an artist working for the Coca-Cola company designed a

portly Santa Claus with a Coke in his hand, and this kindly image helped to transform Coke into a drink for children, caffeine for kids, without any of the weighty adult connotations of coffee and tea. It was “the pause that refreshes” the drink that could “teach the world to sing”.

The cultural meaning of drugs is thus quite labile, and can be invested with symbolism quite beyond their pharmacology. For example contemporary North Americans think of marijuana as a drug of lethargy, but in Colombia, “peasants boast that cannabis helps them to *quita el cansancio* or reduce fatigue; increase their *fuerza* and *ánimo*, force and spirit; and become *incansable*, tireless (Courtwright 19xx:)” In 17th century Russia tobacco smoking was punishable by death, and in Germany briefly and suddenly after the Second World War, cigarettes were considered much like crack cocaine in the United States today, with habitual smokers going without food rather than giving up tobacco (Gladwell 2001:76). Even opium was once seen in a positive light. It was a staple commodity of the China trade for American merchants from the Peabodys to the Roosevelts, and was considered G.O.M. – God’s Own Medicine – throughout the nineteenth century in the United States.

Yet no drug has been quite as adaptable as caffeine, the chameleon of chemical stimulants. In some moments and locales it has been the drug of choice of café intellectuals and artists; in others, of coffee-klatch housewives; in others, of Zen monks or children thinking of Santa Claus. Caffeine also has been variously outlawed, monopolized, or suppressed. King Gustav III, who ruled Sweden in the latter half of the eighteenth century, was convinced of the perils of coffee over all other forms of caffeine (Gladwell 2001:76). Perhaps this was because in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, coffee symbolized liberalism, freethinking, and the rising middle classes, whereas its caffeinated rivals – coca, or chocolate as it was known, was the

drink of the aristocracy. “Goethe, for example, who used art as a means to lift himself out of his middle class background into the aristocracy, and who as a member of a courtly society maintained a sense of aristocratic calm even in the midst of immense productivity, made a cult of chocolate, and avoided coffee” (Schivelbusch 19xx). In eighteenth-century Europe “coffeehouses played a major role in the egalitarian, inclusionary spirit that was then sweeping the continent. They sprang up first in London, so alarming Charles II that in 1676 he tried to ban them. It didn’t work. By 1700, there were hundreds of coffeehouses in London, their subversive spirit best captured by a couplet from a comedy of the period: “In a coffeehouse just now among the rabble / I bluntly asked, which is the treason table” (Gladwell 2001:78).

Today, as noted by Weinberg and Bealer (2001), coffee and tea tend to symbolize opposite qualities, whereas few people even realize that coca or chocolate contain caffeine. Coffee is seen as male, boisterous, indulgent, hardheaded, libertarian, and promiscuous, and associated with individuals like Heidegger and Beethoven. Conversely, tea is seen as female, decorous, prudent, romantic, statist, and pure, and associated with the likes of Carnap and Mozart. As this example shows, the same chemical ingredient may be associated, in different substances, with very different characteristics and effects, proving once again the importance of the cultural constructions and political economic structures surrounding mind and mood altering substances.

The association of a drug with crucial historical events may also impart to it a special significance. For example, the campaign to eradicate opium by the Communist Party of China in 1948 was successful in large part because opium was associated with capitalist imperialism and hence, its elimination with Chinese national pride. Similarly, the American Revolution began

with the Boston Tea Party, thus making coffee the drink of the Revolution. “By contrast, the freedom fighters of Canada, a hundred years later, were most definitely tea drinkers. And where was Canada’s autonomy won? Not on the blood-soaked fields of Lexington and Concord but in the genteel drawing rooms of Westminster, over a nice cup of Darjeeling and small, triangular cucumber sandwiches” (Gladwell 2001:76-770).

Shifts in a people’s drug of choice also may be functionally related to their dominant mode of production. For example, by contemporary standards, most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence would be considered alcoholics but, aside for public drunkenness, alcohol use was not considered a public problem. With the growing Industrialization of the U.S. economy, however, and the greater need for coordinating economic activities in relation to machines and to each other, alcohol use was gradually suppressed, whereas the use of coffee was encouraged. People could walk behind a plow slightly drunk, it seemed, with little loss of efficiency, but lack of alertness in finding a machine could result in the loss of an arm, as well as the stoppage of production.

“In time, caffeine moved from the café to the home. In America, coffee triumphed because of the country’s proximity to the new Caribbean and Latin American coffee plantations, and the fact that throughout the nineteenth century duties were negligible. Beginning in the 1820s... Brazil 'unleashed a flood of slave-produced coffee'. Per capita consumption of coffee by Americans was three pounds per year in 1830, but rose to eight pounds by 1859. This massive infusion of caffeine helped large numbers of people to coordinate their work schedules by giving them the energy to start work at a given time and continue it as long as necessary” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001). Until the eighteenth century, many Westerners drank beer almost

continuously, even beginning their day with a “beer soup” or what was called a phlem cutter—a litre of hard cider. “Now they began each day with a strong cup of coffee. One way to explain the industrial revolution is as the inevitable consequence of a world where people suddenly preferred being jittery to being drunk. In the modern world, there was no other way to keep up. That’s what Edison meant when he said that genius was ninety-nine percent perspiration and one percent inspiration. In the old paradigm, working with your mind had been associated with leisure. It was only the poor who worked hard. (The quintessential pre-industrial narrative of inspiration belonged to Archimedes, who made his discovery, let’s not forget, while taking a bath.) But Edison was saying that the old class distinctions no longer held true – that in the industrialized world there was as much toil associated with the life of the mind as there had once been with the travails of the body” (Gladwell 2001:80).

Even if we accept the general importance of political, economic, and cultural factors in shaping behaviors and policies related to coffee, we still need to know, more specifically and systematically, how these forces actually worked. For this we undertake a comparative analysis of five crucial and well-documented historical cases in which the policies concerning coffee underwent a radical shift—from legal to illegal, or from illegal to legal. These include the use and regulation of coffee in Arabia and the Ottoman Empire from about 1450-1625, in Revolutionary England, in Prussia under Frederick the Great, and in America and internationally in the 19th and 20th centuries during the rise of an international coffee cartel.

COFFEE IN ARABIA AND TURKEY, 1450-1625

Coffee is indigenous to Abyssinia and may have been known to Arabs as early as the 6th century, though only much later was it introduced to Europe and the Americas. The first written mention of coffee was by the Arabian physician Rhazes (850-922), who inaugurated the classical period of Arabian medicine. He relates that bunchum, which is believed to have been coffee, "is hot and dry and very good for the stomach." Avicenna (980-1037), the great Arabian philosopher and physician, also explained the medicinal uses and properties of bunchum (Ukers a 1935:8). Until the 14th century, coffee was used mainly for medicinal purposes, and was not widely consumed nor systematically cultivated. Imported from Ethiopia and Somalia, it was high-priced and affordable only by the wealthy in Arabia and Turkey. By the 14th century, however, the technique of roasting and grinding coffee beans had been developed, and coffee was intensively cultivated in the Yemen district of Arabia, where at first it was zealously guarded. As production spread and the cost of coffee declined, its use became more general (Jacob 1935:27).

Coffee is often referred to as the "wine of Islam." When early Mohammedan churchmen discovered coffee they may have been seeking a substitute for the wine forbidden them by the Koran. (The Arabic word for coffee, gahwah, is the same as one of the words used for wine). The ban on wine surely accounted for much of the phenomenal popularity of coffee drinking in Islamic countries. This popularity is expressed in the many legends that claim for the faithful the honor of the first use of this substance. One legend relates how coffee was presented to Mohammed by the Archangel Gabriel, at the command of Allah, to relieve the prophet of sleepiness (Levin 1964:11). Another relates how an Arabian goatherd, disturbed by the peculiar behavior of his flock, observed that they had eaten some berries, of which he himself then partook. Immediately exhilarated, he rushed to call the mullah who prepared the beverage for

himself and his dervishes in order to keep them awake during the long night prayers in the mosque. According to this popular legend, the fame of the "wakeful monastery" spread rapidly, and the magical coffee berry was soon in demand throughout the kingdom, and eventually in all the nations and provinces of Islam (Jacob 1935:3-10, Ukers 1935:10). Members of Sufi orders that used coffee "were not as a rule reclusive, hermitic holy men. They went to their shops or workplaces, bargained in the markets, went to the baths, and went home at night to their families. This involvement of the members of the orders in everyday affairs of the world was, in all likelihood, one of the most important factors in the spread of coffee" (Hattox 1985:26).

The history of coffee in Arabia is intertwined with that of khat, another drug that was becoming popular at the same time and was also sometimes held to be contrary to the Koran (Levin 1964:242, Berm 1969:199, Gatahum and Kiekorian 1973:370). Derived from the leaf of Catha edulis, a tree grown in the mountainous regions of Yemen, Ethiopia, and Kenya, khat juices produce effects that have been compared to those of both marijuana and coffee. Khat is believed to have been used in a drink in Yemen before coffee; often in connection with the observation of prayers and combined with coffee to help believers stay awake. Later its use was extended to non-religious settings such as funerals, weddings, and business gatherings. Finally khat was considered a powerful medicine—in Ethiopia it is believed to cure 501 different kinds of diseases (Gatahum and Krikorian 1973:370). Khat is used today in the countries around the Red Sea, and is traded freely between hostile clans even in times of conflict, as during the civil war in Somalia (Washington Post 1993).

Turning to policies concerning the use of coffee in Arabia and Turkey between about 1450 and 1625, according to Sheik Abd-el-Kadir, coffee was not known in Yemen before 1450

when the prominent mufti of Aden, Sheik Gemaieddin became acquainted with it on a journey to Abyssinia. Becoming ill upon his return to Aden and remembering the coffee, he sent for some, took it, and recovered from his illness. Having noted coffee's stimulating effects, Sheik Gemaieddin sanctioned its use by dervishes so "that they might spend the night in prayers or other religious exercises with more attention and presence of mind" (Ukers 1935a:12).

Between 1470-1500, use of coffee for religious purposes was introduced to Mecca and Medina by dervishes. Coffee became so popular in Mecca that inhabitants ignored the restrictions of holy men and begin to drink publicly in secular coffee houses (kaveh kanes). Use also spread to the Egypt and reached Cairo in about 1510, where again dervishes used it in their religious ceremonies. During these ceremonies, the coffee bowl was passed to lay members of the congregation. Coffee was now so associated with the act of worship that it became a part of all solemn religious festivals. A decade later coffee reached Syria and Persia, probably spread by the pilgrimage caravan, and arrived in Istanbul around the mid-1500s. As coffee was increasingly removed from the context of the Sufi *dhikr* and introduced into general consumption, it was embraced by entirely new social groups and classes, thereby changing the associations and images connected to the drink. "While it remained one of the props of the nocturnal devotional services of the Sufis, others, perhaps less spiritually inclined, found it a pleasant stimulus to talk and sociability. From this the coffeehouse was born, and the controversy that was to surround this institution, and coffee itself by association, began to make itself heard" (Hattox 1985:28).

The first closely documented attempt to prohibit coffee was in 1511 when the governor of Mecca for the sultan of Egypt, Kh_'ir Bey, was outraged to find some dervishes drinking coffee in a mosque in order to carry out the night's ascetic exercises without falling asleep. He resolved

to "put a stop to the coffee-house abuses." The chief count in his indictment was that "in these places men and women met and played tambourines, violins, and other musical instruments. There were also people who played chess, mankala and other games for money; and there were many other things done contrary to our sacred law" (quoted in Ukers a 1935:13). Kh_'ir Bey published an edict forbidding public and private sales of coffee, ordered that coffee houses shut down and all the coffee burned. A man convicted of drinking coffee was led through the town mounted on a donkey. "Coffee was burned in the streets of Mecca, and many of those who trafficked in or consumed it were beaten. In the meantime, Shams al-D_n, along with the two doctors, also drew up a legal question asking for the general prohibition of coffee, which they dispatched to the central authorities in Cairo along with a copy of the minutes" (Hattox 1985:36).

Coffee itself was declared mekruh, neither forbidden nor permitted, but undesirable (Jacob 1935:28-33). A week long "reign of terror" followed, but in the end the unpopular edict was evaded: coffee was drunk secretly even though violators were sometimes punished. The Sultan of Cairo, an avid coffee-drinker, disapproved of the Bey's "indiscreet zeal" and ordered the edict revoked, declaring coffee to be harmless and therefore admissible (Ukers 1935a:14, Jacobs 1935:32).

Kha'ir Beg, a governor and overseer of public morality in Mecca, had his attention attracted to coffee, and his sense of danger aroused, by the mere sight of a group gathered around some lanterns in a part of the Sacred Mosque in 1511. When he found that these men were drinking coffee, he decided to call a meeting of the leading religious scholars of Mecca concerning the drink (Hattox 1985: 32-33). According to official accounts, in those first few moments he knew nothing of coffee or coffeehouses, of any mental or physical harm associated

with the substance, or of its intoxicating properties. He merely saw a gathering of a few people, and this in itself was enough to cause alarm. As this example illustrates, "we find an inherent suspicion (and, considering their always vulnerable position, a natural and healthy one) on the part of the civil authorities concerning the role of coffee and the coffeehouse in encouraging extended social intercourse. This is a theme that will be seen to recur often throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Hattox 1985:44-45).

Mecca was the scene of another serious incident involving coffee in 1525-26. When Muhammad Ibn al-'Arraq, a jurist of considerable reputation, came to Mecca and discovered that a variety of undesirable and immoral activities were going on in coffee houses there, he directed city officials to close these places down. "Here it is clear that coffeehouses, and the activities therein, were the targets of opposition, not coffee itself: Ibn al'Arraq affirmed the legality of coffee, and took no steps to prohibit it. In Medina, where he had lived earlier, he had long been acquainted with coffee, but had shown no predisposition toward banning it" (Hattox 1985: 37). Ibn al' Arraq's ire was directed at the potentially seditious settings in which coffee was consumed, not the substance itself.

However, Muhammad Ibn al'Arraq died the following year and any coffeehouses that had not already reopened did so then. Furthermore, Ibn al' Arraq's successors showed no desire to suppress the use of the drink in any way. Even his son, Sa'd al-Dan 'Ala, approved of the drink, and openly served it to guests (Hattox 1985:37-38).

In 1517 coffee reached Constantinople when Sultant Selim I annexed Arabia and Egypt to the Ottoman Empire, and the importance of coffee increased within the unified realm. It was used to refresh and invigorate both warriors and philosophers. Women also begin to take up coffee

drinking, and refusing coffee to a wife was said to be a valid ground for divorce. Rapidly becoming a regular article of diet, coffee was declared to be nutritive and of equal importance with bread and water (Jacob 1935a:34).

Coffee spread to Cairo as Yemenis and Hijazis carried their habit through the Azhar. Opposition to coffee in Cairo led to considerable civil disturbance and fighting in the streets when a Shafi' scholar named Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Haqq al-Sunbati delivered several sermons fiercely criticizing the drink. These verbal attacks inspired a mob to attack several coffeehouses, destroying fixtures and beating those they found there. In retaliation, proponents of coffee took to the streets and the threat of civil unrest caused Sunbati to rethink and eventually reverse his position (Hattox 1985:38-40).

Cairo's coffeehouses were the targets as well of an incident in January-February 1539 (Ramadan 945). Coffeehouses were particularly popular in this month of fasting, doing very brisk business at night. Thus they were probably fairly crowded when, one night, the commander of the night watch (*sahib al-'asas*) swept down on them, and had those whom he found there ignominiously dragged off, some tied up, and some in irons... The prisoners spent the rest of the night in custody, after which they each received seventeen lashes apiece and were released. Fear of a repetition of such a raid seems to have counted for very little: after a few days, the coffeehouses were again operating normally (Hattox 1985:40).

In the ensuing decades in the Ottoman Empire, policies concerning coffee continued to have their ups and downs. The export of coffee from Yemen to seacoast towns increased, and then moved inland to Damascus, Baghdad, and Teheran. Renewed civil disorders in Mecca in 1524, however, led to the closing of coffee shops again, although private drinking was still allowed. The shops were soon re-licensed and from that time on they were not disturbed (Ukers 1935a: 14). A decade later, in 1534, increasing public coffee drinking in Cairo caused consternation among the authorities. Physicians generally approved of its use; preachers opposed

it. In 1534, a preacher denounced coffee, declared that coffee-drinkers cannot be good Muslims, and led a mob to wreck the coffee houses. Public opinion was aroused. After consulting with learned physicians, the Chief Judge decided to "check the indiscretions of ignorant preachers" and officially approved coffee. However, religious agitation against coffee still often occurred (Ukers 1935a:15).

At the request of a favorite court lady, Suliman the Great, son of Selim I, forbade the use of coffee, but to no avail. In 1554, under Suliman's reign, the first coffee houses were established in Istanbul. Despite attacks by religious and political factions, coffee drinking and coffee houses increased. Used by all levels of society, the coffee houses reached their highest development and became known as "schools of wisdom". As demand outstripped supply, prices increased and coffee houses became haunts of the elite (Ukers 1935a:16, Levin 1964:250).

In 1570, religious zealots in Istanbul, upset by the increasing popularity of the coffee houses, claimed that roasted coffee was a kind of charcoal. Since charcoal is forbidden by the Koran as unsanitary, the priests insisted that coffee also was forbidden. Responding to such priestly opinion, in 1559 Amurath III classified coffee with wine and ordered the closing of all coffee houses on religious grounds. As with previous attempts at suppression, however, the order was not strictly observed. Ottoman "speakeasies" sprang up and coffee drinking continued behind closed doors and in private houses. Gradually the coffee houses were re-established and, finally, a new mufti declared that coffee was not a coal and the drink not forbidden. The coffee houses were taxed and became important sources of revenue for the grand viziers.

In the sixteenth century, coffee exerted an increasing influence on much of urban life in the Near East. Production of and trade in coffee revitalized many areas that had been faced with

sagging economies. The Yemenis, responsible for much of the drink's trade and distribution, took steps to preserve their monopoly. "Much of what was grown in the mountains and shipped from the ports of Yemen had as its ultimate destination the great warehouses of Cairo, where spice and coffee merchants also saw considerable profit. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Cairene merchants made up for much of what they had lost through European short-circuiting of the Indian spice trade by dealing in coffee" (Hattox 1995:72).

Coffee use spread and, at times, was praised broadly. Sheik Abd-ai-Kadir, who wrote the first authentic account of the origin of coffee, praised it in a hymn: "O coffee, thou dost disperse cares and sorrows, thou art the drink of the friends of God, thou givest health to those who labor to obtain wisdom" (quoted in Levin 1964:255). The Sheik observed that lawyers, students, travelers, artisans and others who worked at night took to drinking coffee to escape the heat of the day and even gave up another popular drink, khat, in favor of coffee (Ukers 1935:12). An early British traveler through the Levant, George Sandys, described Turkish coffee drinking in 1610:

"Although they be destitute of Taverns, yet have they their Coffee-houses, which something resemble them. They sit there chatting most of the day; and sipped of a drink called coffa (or the berry that it is made of) in little China dishes as hot as they can suffer it: black as soot, and tasting not much unlike it...Which helpeth, as they say, digestion, and procureth alacrity...." (Sandys [1616] 1973:66).

The repression of coffee as an aid to free thinking was not over, however, for in 1625 the Grand Vizier Kuprili, under Murat IV (1623-1640), decided that coffee houses were hotbeds of sedition. By the time of the sultanate of Murat IV (1623-40), coffeehouses were seen in official circles as "meeting places of the people, and of mutinous soldiers." In 1633, on the pretext of preventing the fires that occasionally started in coffeehouses, Murat ordered them torn down, and

coffee, as well as tobacco and opium, banned. Several decades later, Istanbul's coffeehouses were still closed, "desolate as the heart of the ignorant,' though they were to reopen in the last quarter of the century" (Hattox 1985:102).

Yet such heavy-handed tactics were not the only solutions to the problem of seditious coffeehouse patrons. "In the nineteenth century, Muhammad 'Ali's government had a rather sophisticated way of dealing with factious elements in Cairo coffeehouses. Realizing that such public forums for loose talk could easily be exploited, police spies were often planted in coffeehouses to gather information to which the government otherwise might not have been privy until the mischief of the seditious had been effected" (Hattox 1985:102-103).

To summarize, coffee initially spread in the Islamic world for its medicinal properties and as an aid to religious devotion. As its popularity grew, secular coffee houses also were established, which frequently became social and cultural centers for lively civic discourse. The stimulating effects of coffee were particularly appealing to Islamic intellectuals, and the coffee house soon became the central meeting place in towns. But as the association of independent thinking and coffee spread, conservative religious leaders and scholastics began to question whether coffee was not forbidden by the Koran because of its similarity to wine as an intoxicant and because coffee beans were burnt like charcoal, which also was forbidden. Coffee and coffee houses were soon subject to violent repression and attacks as vehement as those of the American Anti-Saloon League against alcohol, or those against tobacco houses in Turkey or Russia. These attacks were directed not so much against coffee as against the coffee houses which, as centers of free thinking and political unrest, were anathema to conservatives. Severe penalties were established against coffee houses even though wine taverns were allowed to remain open in spite

of the Koranic injunction against them, suggesting that the suppression of coffee was motivated more by politics than religion. Violations of the law were widespread and sometimes elites, such as Kuprili, once they were certain that coffee houses were no longer a menace to the state, again permitted the free use of coffee (Ukers 1935:16-17).

Attempts by governmental and religious authorities to suppress coffee often were influenced by civil unrest centered in the coffeehouses, especially in periods of social and political turmoil. Imported coffee also was often suppressed for economic reasons – it encroached upon the interests of providers of domestic drugs. Thus, in the varied history of coffee in Arabia and Turkey we see continuing conflicting efforts to define coffee as a benign or a harmful substance. On the one hand, it was seen as a useful medicine, an aid to worship, or a healthy food; on the other, as a dangerous substance that encouraged blasphemy and sedition. As a powerful stimulant of the senses, coffee acquired a symbolic value that was contested variously by priests and prelates, ordinary people and intellectuals, over many centuries, finally acquiring a stable meaning as a benign food, medicine, and aid to worship throughout the Islamic world.

Of course, when coffee was defined as a dangerous substance, attempts at prohibition were unsuccessful. Governments were generally unable to stop consumption of coffee once its place in social life had taken root, as was the case repeatedly in Syria and Egypt. Even the suppression of a substance as obviously forbidden in Koranic law as wine had to be repeated every few years. Next to wine, coffee's status was quite ambiguous and was regularly debated in religious circles, with no clear consensus emerging. As such, efforts to suppress coffee lacked both popular and religious support, and were usually doomed to failure because of it (Hattox 1985: 41).

Yet these early prohibitions were not solely or even primarily derived from the concerns of religious authorities alone. Civil authorities were quite interested in coffee and its role in mobilizing the public. Though the shari'a, or holy law, applies in theory to all of society, public piety was not the only consideration of the state authorities who crusaded against coffee and coffeehouses (Hattox 1985:41-42). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, after all, the growing use of coffee and the emergence of the formerly unknown institution of the coffeehouse were transforming social life in cities, towns, and villages. Coffee had become a public pastime, "the habit struck far deeper roots in the public places intended for that purpose than it did in the home. These public houses where it was served are mentioned immediately and in the closest possible connection with coffee itself, as though an essential part of the definition of coffee is that it is served in these places" (Hattox 1995:73).

The authorities may have been right to feel threatened. Coffeehouse conversation was not entirely benign. As happened later in Europe, the coffeehouse became a literary forum in which poets and writers would submit compositions to a critical public. As more overtly worldly or political topics made their way into discussion, and as public affairs were more often criticized there, coffeehouses became increasingly symbolic of social unrest and revolt. The coffeehouse fulfilled the role of the newspaper or other public forum, serving as an exchange of information spread by word of mouth, often in the form of "news leaks" from men of some position. One wishing to hear the latest news or freshest rumors needed look no further than the neighborhood coffeehouse (Hattox 1985: 101-102). These public forums had the potential to become centers from which concerted political action might be taken, and more than one coup d'etat has been launched from, or at least planned in, a coffeehouse. Yet governments could rarely "demonstrate

that the free exchange of ideas in a coffeehouse led to sedition" (Hattox 1985: 113). Despite that fact, coffee and coffeehouses were at best regarded with suspicion, and at worst actively suppressed during much of their history in Arabi

COFFEE IN ENGLAND, 1600-1800

One of the most important cases of attitudes and policies concerning coffee is that of London coffee houses of the 17th and 18th centuries. Coffee use came to England during a turbulent period of political, social, economic, and religious history. Great conflicts occurred over constitutional government, the divine right of kings, and religious tolerance, conflicts that shaped the subsequent character of modern England and launched liberal ideology and representative institutions. A rapid series of critical events came in the 17th century: the Parliamentary and Puritan rebellions, civil war, the execution of King Charles II, the establishment of a republican Commonwealth, the restoration of the Stuarts, the Glorious Revolution, and the expulsion of King James II. It was an era when advanced political debates were carried on throughout the country over natural rights, the rights of Englishmen, written constitutions drawn up by the people, and expanded suffrage.

“The first written mention of coffee in English occurs in the context of the first written mention of tea, in a 1598 translation of *Linschoten’s Travels*, in a chapter entitled “Of the Island Japan” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:46). “Only ten years later, the English read a vivid description of the Middle Eastern coffeehouse. William Biddulph, in his *Travels of Certayne Englishmen in Africa, Asia, etc. . . . Begunne in 1600 and by some of them finished – this yeere 1608* (London, 1609), describes the use of coffee and Turkish coffeehouses at a time when

England knew only the tavern: if there be any news, it is talked of there” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:149).

The English physicians of the day enjoyed at least a limited respect from their countrymen,⁵ and their approval of caffeinated drinks helped caffeine to make quick progress in their homeland. The influence of these medical men is apparent in the first printed advertisement in England for a caffeinated beverage, appearing on May 19, 1657, in the *Public Adviser*, which lists the maladies it was believed to cure: “In *Bartholomew Lane* on the backside of the Old Exchange, the drink called *Coffee*, which is a very wholsom and Physical drink, having many excellent vertues... fortifies the heat within, helpeth Digestion, quickneth the Spirits, maketh the heart lightsome, is good against eye-sores, Coughs, or Colds, Rhumes, Consumptions, Head-ach, Dropsie, Gout, Scurvy, Kings Evil, and many others is to be sold both in the morning and at three of the clock in the afternoon” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:150).

Coffee was introduced into England during the first quarter of the 17th century and was described by writers and travelers of the time such as William Parry (1601), John Smith (1603), Sam Purchas (1607), William Biddulph (1609 and 1625), George Sandy (1610), Edward Terry (1616), Francis Bacon (1624, 1627), Richard Burton (1632), Thomas Herbert (1628), and Henry Blout (1634) (Ukers 1935:31-36). At first coffee was presented as a medicinal and panacea, particularly for quickening circulation and for curing drunkenness, which was rife in England at the time (Jacob 1935:90-92). "As a cure for drunkenness its 'magic' power was acclaimed by its friends, and grudgingly admitted by its foes.... Coffee was praise by one writer as a deodorizer.

Another, Richard Bradley, in his treatise concerning its use with regard to the plague, said that if its qualities had been fully known in 1665, 'Dr. Hodges and other learned men of that time would have recommended it'" (Ukers 1935:54). In *Advice against the Plague*, published during the plague of 1664-1665, Gideon Harvey recommended coffee against the contagion. Coffee was praised as a protection against infection and coffeehouses survived this period despite the Lord Mayor's warnings against the danger of gatherings (Uribe 1954:14).

The institution of the coffee house appeared in Oxford in 1650, when a Lebanese opened the first coffee-house there and the drink gained favor among students, some of whom formed the Oxford Coffee Club. "This Oxford Coffee Club, an informal confraternity of scientists and students, was the beginning of the Royal Society, which quickly became and remains today one of the leading scientific societies in the world. Its academic members had something in common with Timothy Leary, the Harvard professor who experimented with LSD, in that they were dabbling in the use of a new and powerful drug unlike anything their countrymen had ever seen. Surviving recorded accounts confirm that the heavily reboiled sediment-ridden coffee of the day was not enjoyed for its taste, but was consumed exclusively for its pharmacological benefits" (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:153). In 1652, Pascal Rosea, a Greek, opened the first coffeehouse in London (Lillywhite 1963:17, Ukers 1935:38, Jacob 1935:92-94). The use of coffee and of coffee houses spread quickly throughout Britain and was seen as satisfying an important public need in day-to-day business and social life. Occasionally women ran coffeehouses but did not frequent them (Ukers 1935:52).

The first coffeehouse in Cambridge appeared about ten years after Oxford's, in the early 1660's. John North (1645-83), who went on to become a master of Trinity College, was known to

frequent this coffeehouse, while an undergraduate, as it was a favorite haunt for academics. It was also the publication site of the Trade of News, the first newsletter acting as an alternative to the “publick Gazette.” The coffeehouses in Oxford and Cambridge cultivated an congenial academic atmosphere where one could “meet the chief Professors and doctors who read the papers over a cup of coffee and a pipe of tobacco, and converse on all subjects”¹³ (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:152).

Another aspect of the history of coffee is its interaction with alcohol. This was a period of widespread drunkenness and coffee was recommended as a panacea for inebriation among other ailments. As the use of coffee grew, purveyors of alcohol became antagonistic to it. As in Prussia under Frederick the Great, the coffee brewer posed considerable economic threat to those with vested interests in English alcohol consumption. They demanded that the new trade in coffee be taxed, and Pascal Rosea was made to pay an annual import tax of one thousand sixpences. In 1660 a law was passed imposing a duty of four pence on every gallon of coffee made and sold (Jacob 1935:93, Ukers 1935:55). In 1663 all coffee houses were required to be licensed, with violations punished by fine.

With the restoration of the crown and the return of Charles II in 1660, a pamphleteer proclaimed that “coffee and Commonwealth came in together for a reformation, to make us a free and sober nation”. Moral and political debates occurred at the coffeehouses, which became associated with political activism. The Coffee Club, or Rota, as Samuel Pepys called it, was established in 1659 and flourished as a debating society for the dissemination of republican

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opinions and a forum for political discussions. In 1677, it was written that "None dare venture into coffee houses unless he be able to argue the question whether Parliament were dissolved or not." The Rota was also a center for literary discussions and criticism (Ikers 1935:55-56). Some tracts and satirical broadsides attacked coffee while others defended it. "The Women's Petition Against Coffee" complained that it made men unfruitful, disordered domesticity, and interfered with business. This was repudiated in a pamphlet reply by a group of men (Ukers 1935:66-67, Jacob 1935:94-95).

Opposition to coffee houses arose in the next decade, however, between 1665 and 1675, parallel to renewed conservatism generally in society. Coffee houses were placed under close surveillance by government officials (Lillywhite 1963:17). Most criticism of coffee use was explicitly political, although some also was fiscal and social. In 1666, the government planned to strike against coffee houses and, in 1672, Charles II suggested their suppression. His judges opposed the plan, pointing out that government derived considerable revenue from coffee, that the coffee houses permit the free speech that assisted in Charles' restoration, and that the command would be disobeyed (Ukers 1935:68). Again in 1675 Charles II sought to suppress coffee houses with a proclamation that all coffee houses in London "are places where the disaffected meet and spread scandalous reports concerning the conduct of His Majesty and His Ministers" (Jacob 1935:18, Ukers 1935:68).² An immediate public uproar ensued and discontent was so intense that within a month the proclamation was recalled.

Coffee houses also were active as media for the exchange and distribution of domestic and foreign news. Secretaries of State, who had a near monopoly on diplomatic news, decided to

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prosecute those who tried to undermine their control of information by arresting coffee house keepers for publishing and dispersing false news. Coffee houses continued to be under suspicion as centers of intrigue and treasonous talk and coffeemen were summoned before the Council for writing seditious news. The Protestant William of Orange, King James II's son-in-law, entered England in 1688 with the Glorious Revolution and James was dethroned. The Lord Chancellor commanded the Justices of the Peace of Middlesex to suppress all coffee houses that dealt in newsletters or exposed the public to foreign or domestic newspapers (Jacob 1935:19-20). In 1688, the discovery of the Rye House Plot again focussed attention on coffee houses, and the Lord Mayor of London forbade coffee houses to carry seditious newsletters.

Nonetheless, coffee houses grew and prospered as schools for public conversation throughout the 17th century. They were referred to as "Penny Universities" because that was the cost of admission (Jacob 1935:18, Ukers 1935:69). In 1680 the Penny Post was established, first privately and then by the government, and coffee houses were used for the collection and delivery of letters. Coffee houses came to assist in the daily business life of the city. Bankers, shipping, insurance, and stock brokers, merchants and traders, all mostly began and ended their business days in coffee houses. And to attract and retain such customers, coffeemen kept a wide variety of newspapers, bulletins, price lists, auction notices, and the like available to customers. Defoe's *Review*, Tutchin's *Observator*, and Swift's *Examiner* promoted civic dialogue, and were discussed in clubs and coffee houses, at home and in the streets" (Habermas 1991: 59). This increased in the 18th century as various trades and interests congregated at particular houses, paving the way to the establishment of the futures exchanges (Jacob 1935:20-21). By 1715 there

were some two to three thousand coffee houses in London; between 1680-1730 London consumed more coffee than any other city in the world.

The vogue of coffeehouses reached its zenith in the mid-eighteenth century. Almost every phase of public interest and activity found its expression and outlet in coffeehouses. They were used for lectures and educational purposes, bringing experiments and inventions to public notice. Started as a forum for the commoner, coffeehouses in the 18th century became clubs for the leisured class, centers for the intellectual and literary life of the town. "The democrats, the whigs, patronized St. James' or the Smyrna Coffee-House. The Tories, the members of the aristocracy – whom today no one would look for in a coffee-house – and their supporters likewise had their favorite haunts" (Jacobs 1935:95-96).

As in the *salons* where "intellectuals" met with the aristocracy, literature had to legitimate itself in these coffee houses. In this case, however, the nobility joining the upper bourgeois stratum still possessed the social functions lost by the French; it represented landed and moneyed interests. Thus the critical debate ignited by works of literature and art was soon extended to include economic and political disputes, without any guarantee (such as was given in the salons) that such discussions would be inconsequential, at least in the immediate context. The fact that only men were admitted to coffee-house society may have had something to do with this, whereas the style of the *salon*, like that of the rococo in general, was essentially shaped by women. Accordingly the women of London society, abandoned every evening, waged a vigorous but vain struggle against the new institution. The coffee house not merely made access to the relevant circles less formal and easier; it embraced the wider strata of the middle class, including craftsmen and shopkeepers. Ned Ward reports that the "wealthy shopkeeper" visited the coffee house several times a day, this held true for the poor one as well (Habermas 1991: 32-33).

On May 8, 1666, Samuel Speed, a stationer, bookseller, and writer headquartered at the Rainbow, was arrested on charges of publishing and selling treasonable books. Although the Rainbow continued doing business without interruption by the king's Proclamation of 1675,

discussed below, “Farr’s Coffee-house the Rainbow near the Temple” and Blount appear in a list of suspicious houses and persons published in 1679” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:155). Soon

the government had found itself compelled to issue proclamations that confronted the dangers bred by the coffee-house discussions. The coffee houses were considered seedbeds of political unrest: “Men have assumed to themselves a liberty, not only in coffee-houses, but in other places and meetings, both public and private, to censure and defame the proceedings of the State, by speaking evil of things they understand not, and endeavoring to create and nourish an universal jealousy and dissatisfaction in the minds of all his Majesties good subjects.” (Habermas 1991: 59).

Even a couplet from a 1685 comedy reported “In a coffeehouse just now among the rabble, I bluntly asked, which is the treason table?” (quoted in Weinberg and Bealer 2001:160).

“The English coffeehouse as a place in which men of every degree intermingled socially, in familiarity, was not to last long. While they endured, these coffeehouses offered democratic resorts in which, for a penny, a man could sit in comfort drinking coffee, and smoke, read, or converse in a manner marked by what Francis Maximillian Mission (1650-1722), a French traveler, called ‘the universal liberty of speech among the English’” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:165).

The success of Daniel Defoe and the various collaborative publications of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele exemplified the mixing and broadening of tastes associated with the culture of the coffeehouse. Addison said of his goals, “I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I brought philosophy out of the closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffeehouses” (quoted in Weinberg and Bealer 2001:166). Addison (1672-1719) and Steele (1672-1729) came to dominate early London journalism and coffeehouse literary life, especially through the daily Spectator, a periodical which they co-edited. (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:166). “Button’s boasted a mailbox with a lionine figurehead,

designed by Hogarth in imitation of the lion of Venice, that was set up by Addison to receive mail sent to his publication the *Guardian*. Meanwhile, the *Spectator*, which had been born on a Button's coffeehouse table, was in demand in other coffeehouses throughout the city" (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:167). Coffeehouse clientele joined clubs and gradually moved to their own houses. By the end of 18th century there were as many clubs as there had been coffeehouses at the beginning of the century. The consumption of coffee in homes was thereby also established.

The rise of coffee consumption effected another mild caffeine drug, tea. The British East India Company, which had lost its market share in coffee to French and Dutch traders, sought a substitute imported drink to maintain their revenues. Besides, the high taxes on coffee were limiting its consumption. The Company, with its ties to the tea production areas of India and China, increased imports of tea. Eventually, with the decline of coffeehouses, tea became the national drink. In response, as tea gained in popularity, coffeehouses began to serve wine, ale, and other liquors (Ukers 1935:69,76-77, Jacob 1935:24, Lewin 1964:89). By then, however, a broad and secure space for free public discussion and open exchange of news and information had been established – in Parliament, in the press, in legal protection, and in the franchise for propertied, educated males. The coffeehouses, once a center of activism against the absolutist crown, became just another gathering place.

Thus, "in retrospect, [in the 1830's] it can be clearly seen that the coffee-houses themselves (as with inns and taverns) had slowly passed through stages of transition. The early antagonism of the vintners had been replaced by acquisitiveness, and by the early years of the nineteenth century, coffee drinking had become a minor attraction and the coffeehouses were mostly in the hands of vintners. Although many maintained the description of coffeehouse, their

character varied with the ebb and flow of custom, the mode of the time, or perhaps the licensing laws. Changes noted are from inn to tavern, tavern and coffeehouse, thence to coffee-house, to coffee-house tavern and hotel, and lastly to hotel. Others changed from coffee-house to subscription-house, paving the way for clubs. With the approaching end of the coffee-house vogue, some reverted to tavern, winehouse or similar” (Lillywhite, London Coffee House, p.26).

In sum, coffee in 17th and 18th century England was often called "the drink of democracy" and coffeehouses "the home of liberty," for they were the symbols and spaces for the emerging public discourse of free citizens. Coffeehouses flourished as centers where men met and discussed the great issues of the day -- usually in support of the republican cause. Soon the coffeehouses came to serve social and political purposes that transcended their function of serving beverages, and just as soon the English monarchy tried to suppress them. As in Arabia, coffee houses became forums for the political debates of the age, and attacks on coffee often had less to do with the product and its effects than with the setting and what went on there politically. Eventually the monarchy came to terms with the coffeehouses and ceased its attacks, but only after the political turmoil of the period had ended and the coffeehouses had become more social than political centers.

Coffee also interacted economically with alcohol and tea. As coffee consumption began to erode the profits of purveyors of alcohol, this group successfully lobbied for taxes and licensing requirements to be imposed on coffee use and sale. As the price of coffee thus was driven up, and because the French and Dutch already dominated the international coffee trade of

the period, the British East India Company had a market opportunity and profit incentive to promote the use of tea, which eventually replaced coffee as England's national drink.

COFFEE IN PRUSSIA OF FREDERICK THE GREAT (1721-1786)

In the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, enormous quantities of beer were consumed throughout the German states, providing a main source of their wealth. Coffee drinking was introduced into Germany only about 1670. In 1675, limited coffee use appeared at the Court of Frederick William, the Elector of Brandenburg, where it likely was introduced by his Dutch physician, Cornelius Bontakuh, who believed consumption of tea, coffee, and chocolate prolonged life by accelerating the circulation (Ukers 1935:41, Jacob 1935:62). In 1679 an English merchant opened the first coffeehouse in Hamburg, most likely to fill the demands of English merchants and seamen. Soon thereafter coffeehouses appeared in Regensburg, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Augsburg and other cities (Ukers 1935:41, Jacob 1935:62, Uribe 1954:17). In 1721 King Frederick William I of Prussia granted a foreigner the privilege of conducting a coffeehouse in Berlin free of all rental charges. It was known as the English coffeehouse and, with it and other such establishments the English coffee merchants made headway against the resistance of the beer barons. Yet as coffee began to flow into the German cities, even in small amounts, it met stiff resistance at all levels of German society. Doctors argued that women who drank coffee could not bear children, though Johann Sebastian Bach wrote the Coffee Cantata which chided the doctors and defended the right of German women to drink coffee (Uribe 1954:19).

Although Frederick the Great initially cultivated coffee drinking within the court circle of Prussia, he soon realized that the spread of this new, imported substance produced a corresponding decrease in beer drinking. Even more than in England, those with economic interests in beer protested the arrival of coffee in Prussia. Frederick attempted to limit mass consumption of coffee and at the same time keep prices high in order to gain revenue for the state. By 1729 the use of coffee had spread from its beginnings in the court of Prussia to the higher circles of the bourgeoisie. During the reign of Frederick II, the Great, there were at least a dozen coffee houses in Berlin, and Frederick Meissner published the first comprehensive treatise on coffee, tea, and chocolate (Jacob 1935:149, Ukers 1935:41-42). By 1750 coffee had begun to supplant flour soup and warm beer as the traditional German breakfast.

In 1763, following the disorder of the Seven Years War, Frederick turned to reconstructing the financial base of the Prussian state. As a mercantilist, he sought to establish a favorable trade balance of higher exports than imports. As major imports, both tobacco and coffee disturbed his plans. Frederick discovered that over 700,000 thalers were paid annually to foreign coffee merchants, and that as coffee drinking increased there had been a corresponding decrease in the domestic brewing trade. Frederick tried to make coffee a restricted luxury by imposing a tax of eight silver groschen per pound. Seeking to optimize revenues from both coffee and beer, he made coffee drinking a court ritual and in 1777, issued a manifesto stating that the people, and especially soldiers, must drink beer for its nourishing qualities: "It is disgusting to notice the increase in the quantity of coffee used by my subjects, and the amount of money that goes out of the country as in consequence. Everybody is using coffee. If possible, this must be prevented. My people must drink beer. His Majesty was brought up on beer, and so

were his ancestors, and his officers. Many battles have been fought and won by soldiers nourished on beer; and the King does not believe that coffee-drinking soldiers can be depended upon to endure hardship or to beat his enemies in case of the occurrence of another war" (quoted in Ukers 1935:42).

For a while beer use increased and coffee remained a luxury afforded only by the rich. When coffee smuggling increased and its use continued despite all attempts to stop it, Frederick adjusted his policy again. Following the example of the French government, which he greatly admired, in 1781 he created a royal coffee monopoly and forbade coffee except in royal roasting establishments. It was hoped that this would help stop smuggling, since spies would be able to "smell out" where illegal coffee was being roasted. These "coffee smellers" became greatly disliked and the whole monopoly was resented, especially because it was administered by Frenchmen. Frederick also made exceptions in the monopoly to accommodate the nobility, clergy, and government officials, to whom he issued special licenses permitting them to do their own roasting. This, in effect, confined the use of coffee to the upper-class. They purchased their supplies from the government, and since the price had been greatly increased, Frederick at first derived substantial revenues. General trade in coffee fell off as the import duty, increased to one thaler per pound, led to a reduction in sales. Even though the duty was then reduced by a half, ordinary people turned instead to coffee substitutes such as barley, corn, wheat, dried figs, and chicory (Ukers 1935:42, Jacob 1935:160-161).

In the ensuing years, the state monopoly was attacked for mismanagement, harassment of merchants, reduction of trade, interference with transport, and increasing the costs of administration. Finally, in order "to remove all desire and inclination for fraud," Frederick's

successor, Frederick William II, issued an edict in 1787 that reduced the tax on coffee and ended the restriction on roasting, thereby revoking the government's monopoly and making coffee again generally accessible.

In sum, despite his concern over the spread of coffee use, Frederick never felt that he nor his court needed to restrict their own consumption. The coffee house never attained widespread popularity in German cities nor did there emerge during this period anything like a public sphere as in England. Thus, coffee was not associated with political resistance or dissent, as it had been in the Ottoman Empire and in England. The beer parlor and corner saloon were more to the German male's liking and beer continued to be the favorite beverage. But German women had other ideas. When they finished their daily housework, women gathered over coffee and discussed the events of the day. The epithet, Kaffeeklatsch, now popular in many languages to describe a kind of social gathering, was coined by beer-drinking German men to deride coffee as a "women's drink" (Uribe 1954:20).

In Germany at that time there was little urban culture with the institutions of a public sphere in civil society to replace the courts' near monopoly of political representation. "But similar elements existed, beginning with the learned *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies), the old *Sprachgesellschaften* (literary societies) of the seventeenth century. Naturally they were fewer and less active than the coffee houses and *salons* [of England and France]. They were even more removed from practical politics than the salons; yet, as in the case of the coffeehouses, their public was recruited from private people engaged in productive work, from the dignitaries of the principalities' capitals, with a strong preponderance of middle-class academics. The *Deutsche Gesellschaften* ("German Societies"), the first of which was founded by Gottsched in Leipzig in

1727, built upon the literary orders of the preceding century. The latter were still convened by the princes but avoided social exclusiveness; characteristically, later attempts to transform them into knightly orders failed. As it is put in one of the founding documents, their intent was “that in such manner an equality and association among persons of unequal social status might be brought about.”¹⁶ Such orders, chambers, and academies were preoccupied with the native tongue, now interpreted as the medium of communication and understanding between people in their common quality as human beings and nothing more than human beings. Transcending the barriers of social hierarchy, the bourgeois met here with the socially prestigious but politically uninfluential nobles as “common” human beings.¹⁷ The decisive element was not so much the political equality of the members but their exclusiveness in relation to the political realm of absolutism as such: social equality was possible at first only as an equality outside the state. The coming together of private people into a public was therefore anticipated in secret, as a public sphere still existing largely behind closed doors.

The secret promulgation of enlightenment, typical of the lodges but also widely practiced by other associations and *Tischgesellschaften*, had a dialectical character. Reason, which through public use of the rational faculty was to be realized in the rational communication of a public consisting of cultivated human beings, itself needed to be protected from becoming public because it was a threat to any and all relations of domination. As long as publicity had its seat in the secret chanceries of the prince, reason could not reveal itself directly. Its sphere of publicity had still to rely on secrecy; its public, even as a public, remained internal” (Habermas 19xx:34-

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35). In Prussia, therefore, coffee was not associated with civil resistance or dissent, and the king's policies concerning coffee were shaped by economic rather than political considerations.

VII. COFFEE IN THE UNITED STATES

The political and economic implications of coffee in America have much to do with the high social acceptance of this product as well as the relative lack of conflict surrounding its consumption, particularly when compared to the other cases discussed thus far. As early as 1668 coffee superseded beer as the breakfast drink of choice (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:18.) Coffee's popularity increased after coffeehouses opened in every colony. Although the first coffeehouses in America were essentially taverns, serving alcoholic beverages alongside coffee, they were modeled on their British counterparts in that they were sites for political activity. The American coffeehouses were celebrated as political spaces where citizens could participate in civic life. For example, many notable American revolutionaries, including Paul Revere and John Adams, patronized a coffeehouse called the Green Dragon. Established in 1697, the Green Dragon was dubbed the "headquarters of the Revolution" by Daniel Webster and was the supposed place where the Boston Tea Party was planned. The British Stamp Act of 1765, which imposed a tax on tea, certainly did much to politicize the consumption of coffee in the American colonies. When revolutionaries dumped tea imported by the British East India Company into the Boston harbor to protest British colonial authority, they turned coffee into a patriotic beverage. (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:183; Jiménez n.d.:3-4.)

The Green Dragon and the Boston Tea Party set the stage for the continuing political activity that surrounding coffee and coffeehouses. The first public reading of the Declaration of

Independence took place at a Boston coffeehouse, the Bunch of Grapes. The Sons of Liberty used New York's Merchants Coffee House as a meeting site to devise a boycott on British tea imports in 1774. This same year revolutionary leaders met at Merchants Coffee House to draft a petition calling for the First Continental Congress. Years later in 1789, Merchants Coffee House was the site of yet another pivotal political event: a victory celebration for the first president of the United States, George Washington (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:183.)

Although a sense of patriotism influenced Americans' preference for coffee over tea as the caffeinated beverage of choice, the high price of coffee, due in part to the modest scale of its cultivation in the tropics, limited its availability to upper and middle class consumers residing on the Atlantic seaboard (Braudel 1973:152-3; Tanahill 1973, part 5:236-319; Norman, ch 5:96-125; Jiménez n.d.:4) Even after coffee imports to the United States more than quadrupled from approximately 9 million pounds in 1800 to 38 million pounds in 1830, the per capita consumption of the beverage remained steady at three pounds per year (Ukers 1935:521,529.) Price concerns aside, coffee also had to compete with the exceedingly high level of alcoholic beverages consumed by Americans. Widespread drunkenness concerned physician Benjamin Rush (1735-1814) to such a degree that he founded an anti-alcohol movement in 1785. Rush and his followers advocated temperance through the use of beverages like coffee and tea, but their efforts to curb alcohol consumption were disappointing. Per capita, Americans annually consumed three times the amount of alcohol in 1800 as they did in the 1990s (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:184.)

The emerging capitalist economy did much to increase the consumption of coffee in America. Around 1870 the United States began to import coffee beans from producers in Latin

America rather than the distant European colonies located in the Far East. Brazil came to dominate coffee production, followed by Columbia, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Jiménez n.d.:12.) The emergence of a class of skilled wage laborers in the United States expanded the market for consumer goods, and in turn, created a new kind of working class consumer—one who desired goods beyond those needed for mere subsistence, including coffee. Wholesale distribution methods and technological advances drove down the cost of coffee and made it more widely accessible. Several firms began to consolidate the coffee market in the United States and apply new mass retailing techniques in the selling of coffee. For example, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, founded in 1859, pioneered the chain grocery store and by 1879 had opened one hundred stores from Virginia to Minnesota. Consumers could now purchase roasted and ground coffee packaged in paper bags from their local grocery stores rather than the expensive raw green coffee bean that formerly had to be prepared at home or a coffeehouse (Chandler 1977:233-239; Hooker 1981:130; Jiménez n.d.:5-7; Mueller et al. 1971).

Together, these economic factors encouraged Americans to incorporate coffee into their daily diets. The annual per capita consumption of coffee doubled between 1830 and 1870. Responding to the six-fold increase in coffee bean importation from 38,363,000 pounds in 1830 to 231,174,000 pounds in 1870, the average American now consumed 6 pounds of coffee per year (Uker 1935:521, 529.) But, the social acceptance of coffee and its cultural dominance over tea also influenced its increased consumption compared to Britain. In England “coffee never succeeded in following tea down the social scale” and its per capita consumption decreased into the early twentieth century. The annual per capita consumption of coffee in 1909 was only .71 pounds in England; thus one could conclude, “coffee entered the English workingman’s diet

scarcely at all” (Mathias 1967:22.) In America social reformers had much to do with coffee’s overall social acceptance and popularity. Temperance and church groups established coffeehouses in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and cities in California (Howerth 1895; Fox 1904; Troyer and Markle 1984.)

From 1870 to 1900 American consumption of coffee continued to increase as the capitalist economy became more fully entrenched. Innovations in manufacturing, distribution and marketing helped to promote coffee as a national beverage, while keeping its cost relatively low. American coffee roasters improved their manufacturing techniques, imitating the German method of using gas to process coffee beans. Mass retailers also found ways to expand coffee consumption, such as selling Naperian urns to restaurants and hotels and even stimulating the growth of coffee drinking in the home through new and improved coffee accessories such as grinders, coffee pots, and filters (Jiménez n.d.:10.) The gradual de-skilling and resulting homogenization of the industrial labor force contributed to the creation of a standardized national consumer market to which coffee could be sold by a nascent advertising industry (Gordeon et al 19xx:112-127; Braverman 19xx; Ewen 1976.) Just as the working class population became accustomed to drinking coffee in their homes and at work in the factories, the emerging white-collar class discovered in coffee the fuel, or “nerve food,” of modern life (Tractenberg 1982; Jiménez n.d.:9.)

New and improved modes of transportation expanded this national consumer market westward, introducing coffee to farm communities, railroad depots, mining centers, and commercial towns. According to one commentator, in the West coffee became “an unflinching and apparently indispensable beverage, served at every meal, (and) even under the boiling midday

sun, the wagoneer will rarely fail to replenish a second time, his huge tin cup” (Josiah Greeg, cited in Hooker 1981:185; see Kriedberg 1975.) By 1900 American per capita consumption of coffee grew to 10 pounds per year—an increase in 4 pounds from 1870. The import of coffee also increased from 231,174,000 pounds in 1870 to 748,801,000 pounds in 1900 (Ukers 1935:521,529?)

By the 1920s drinking coffee in America had become something of an institution. Coffee drinking contests appeared “in the midst of an intense, multifaceted campaign by the North American coffee industry, in collaboration with foreign producers and their governments, to expand consumption” (Spice Mill March 1925:533.) While coffee producers were amused by this fad of “frenzied drinking,” they also kept a check on this activity in case any negative effects of excessive coffee use might hinder their efforts to affirm coffee as a healthy drink” (Spice Mill March 1926:2478.) The popularity of coffee as well as the consolidation of a national market effectively eliminated other competing beverages, such as chicory, from the American diet (Jiménez n.d.:16). Coffee consumption also increased due to the prohibition of alcoholic beverages after the First World War. For example, a brewing company in Buffalo, New York converted its operations to coffee roasting and distribution to take advantage of the “radical change in the drinking habits of North Americans” (Jiménez n.d.:16.)

Coffee drinking did encounter contention from consumer groups in the 1920s. Although social reformers had promoted the consumption of coffee as a substitute for alcohol, arguing that coffee houses were the cure for the “saloon problem” (Howeth 1895:589), members of the Moral League began to question its social benefits. A report sent to coffee sellers in 1926 warned that “this earnest group [which] glories in the fact that □they use neither tea, coffee, nor

tobacco□have been inducing Sunday school pupils to sign pledges of abstinence from these immoral practices (and even from drinking soda water for many years!)” (Jiménez n.d.:18.)

American physicians also began to warn consumers about the negative health effects associated with coffee drinking. Symptoms related to “caffeine intoxication,” including nervousness, insomnia, irregular heartbeat, and tremors were reported in medical literature as early as the mid-1800s (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:309.) In 1902 Dr. T.D. Crothers, a professor of nervous and mental diseases at the New York School of Clinical Medicine and the editor of the *Journal of Inebriety*, wrote an article entitled “Coffee and Tea Drunkenness” that claimed caffeine caused nervous disorders. An article in the *New York Times* (1912) quoted a physician who warned that “the tea and coffee habit is decidedly pathologic” and recommended that their use be prohibited by law. The *New York Times* also published articles that reported coffee contributed to tension and neurosis (1928a, 1929b.) A further warning against coffee appeared in 1916 when a chemistry professor advised nursing mothers to avoid coffee because it interfered with milk production; his advisement was published in the popular *Ladies Home Journal* (Hawk 1916; Troyer and Marble 1984; Johnson 1925; Osborne 1924).

Despite the activism of the Moral League and medical claims by physicians, the overwhelming consensus reached by the late 1920s was that coffee did not produce an overwhelming number of negative health effects. For example, the *New York Times* published three articles (1924; 1929b; 1929c) extolling the “innocence” of coffee, and articles on coffee indexed by the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature* claimed that “the drink was safe for adults, but provided too much stimulation for children” (Johnson 1925; Osborne 1924.) By the 1930s “claims against coffee were virtually nonexistent in the United States.” Articles were

published in the *New York Times* that reported coffee aided digestion (1931) and vitality (1938.) This support for coffee continued into the 1940s although *Science Digest* (1940:43) reported on coffee drinkers' "headaches," and Wassersug (1946:26) wrote that coffee could cause ulcers in "a few susceptible persons" (Troyer and Markle 1984.)

Even after the *New England Journal of Medicine* in the 1950s classified coffee drinking as a drug habit similar to alcohol, opiates, and barbiturate addiction, the positive evaluation of coffee remained unchanged. The *New York Times* reported that coffee was an appropriated stimulant for athletes (1953) and that coffee breaks helped to maintain worker productivity (1956.) One physician even claimed that drinking 30 cups of coffee a day was most likely harmless (*Science Newsletter* 1955:216), while another argued that drinking two cups of coffee a day increased longevity (*Americas* 1956:39.) *Science Digest* (1956:49) published a physician's research findings that coffee was in fact healthy because it contained niacin and B-vitamins (Troyer and Marble 1984.)

It was not until the 1960s that the medical establishment started to connect coffee consumption with serious health complications. Articles appeared in *Newsweek* (1964:69) the *New York Times* (1963) and *Science Digest* (1963:55) that linked coffee to heart disease. The controversy over the relationship between coffee and health continued into the 1970s, and even today, the general population is often unaware that caffeine is a psychoactive drug. Nevertheless, coffee can produce a chemical dependency, with frequent users relying on a regular fix to ward off fatigue and headaches. In the worst cases, it can cause withdrawal symptoms similar to those associated with addictions to more "serious" drugs (Dicum and Luttinger 1999: 118).

Though coffee's detrimental effects on health did not immediately come to light, coffee's psychoactive properties have been well established within the medical community for some time. The basic chemical formula of caffeine (1, 3, 7 trimethylxanthine) was discovered by a German researcher, Emil Fisher, in 1882. It was Fisher's research that became the basis for the industrial production of coffee, for which he was awarded the Nobel prize in 1902 (Gillespie 1972:2; Troyer and Markle 1984.) Psychiatrists have long recognized that the psychoactive properties of caffeine; it acts upon the central nervous system to increase the users capacity for quick, clear thinking while decreasing drowsiness and fatigue (Goodman and Gilman 1975:368.) Yet these positive aspects are couple with many possible negative side effects, and medical experts have used the diagnostic label "caffeinism" to describe the less desirable behavioral patterns attributed to caffeine consumption (Foxx and Rubinoff 1979; Gilliland and Andress 1981; Greden 1974.) The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel (1980:160) describes the symptoms of caffeinism as restlessness, nervousness, excitement, insomnia, flushed face, diuresis, and gastrointestinal complaints. According to that manual these symptoms can appear in some individuals with the ingestion of only two cups of coffee per day (250mg.) Individuals who consume more than 1 gram of caffeine per day could display more extreme symptoms, such as muscle twitching, periods of inexhaustibility, psychomotor agitation, rambling flow of thought and speech, and cardiac arrhythmia. Caffeine has the potential to kill an individual who consumes 10 grams—the equivalent of 100 cups of coffee (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:313).

Considering that medically established caffeine is indeed a drug, we come to the "coffee paradox"—how a drug that has serious health complications can be consumed in America at a rate of more than a hundred billion doses a year without arousing the kind of legal repression and

social condemnation associated with illicit drugs (Brecher 1972:205.) According to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, coffee drinking is so widespread in the United States that in 1976, 80% of the adult population consumed an average of 3.2 cups of coffee per day (Troyer and Marble 1984.) Part of this paradox can be explained by the political and financial power of coffee, tea, and caffeinated soft drink manufacturers who created and funded the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) and its public relations arm, the International Food Information Council (IFIC) in the 1970s. According to Weinberg and Bealer (2001:190) the heart of these groups is a “Caffeine Committee” which acts to fight any efforts to regulate or ban caffeine. For the past twenty years the IFSI has sponsored, and the IFIC publicized, dozens of scientific research projects that have evaluated the effect of caffeine on human health. Of course, the Caffeine Committee, selects and supports only those studies that confirm its belief that caffeine is not a dangerous substance, and therefore, should remain unregulated in the marketplace. Its interests aside, the ILSI has “made important contributions to the inadequate understanding of caffeine’s pharmacological effects” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:190.)

In sum, we can conclude from our discussion that most of coffee's popularity in American society can be attributed to the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of its use and trade. Politically, coffee was not seen as threatening, and coffeehouses were even encouraged as sites for political engagement. Therefore, unlike in England and Prussia, coffee in the U.S. was not defined as a dangerous beverage that could destroy the social order and the state saw little reason to regulate its sale or consumption. Importers and manufacturers of coffee in America also promoted its consumption over other types of caffeinated beverages like tea. Thus, business did not oppose coffee because it was able to secure increasing profits from a consolidated national

market, especially during Prohibition. Coffee easily broke through the cultural boundaries of American social class hierarchy—coffee was understood as an appropriate beverage for all classes. This, of course, was due in part to the low price of coffee, but also resulted from the fact the coffee was viewed as a healthy alternative to alcohol. Caffeine was considered low on the scale of “dangerousness” compared to other types of drugs and was even incorporated into the average American’s diet. Drinking coffee was associated with higher rates of productivity and encouraged in the workplace. The coffee pot was, and is, present at most work places and the coffee break is considered a necessity by most workers and employers as a time to relax and refuel.

The Anomalous Case of Coca-Cola

While coffee accounts for approximately 75 percent of all caffeine consumed in America (Graham 1978:98), cola soft drinks are also popular caffeinated beverages. Cola soft drinks contain considerably lower amounts of caffeine than coffee—only 30-50mg per 21 oz serving compared to the 100-150mg found in a 5 oz serving of coffee. This difference in caffeine levels can be attributed to the different plants from which coffee and cola drinks are made. Coffee is made from the seeds of *Coffea arabica* and cola from the nuts of the tree *Cola acuminata* (Dews 1982; Troyer and Markle 1984.)

But, similar to coffee, cola drinks, although controversial during certain historical moments, have become part of at least one segment of the American population’s regular diet: youth.

Coca-Cola was the first caffeinated soft drink in America. Created as a patent medicine, Coca-Cola was initially sold in the form of tonic syrup at pharmacies. By 1900 it had become what is known today as a soft drink. Controversy surrounded the consumption of Coca-Cola

because its cocaine and caffeine content were not public knowledge; in order to ameliorate any negative connotations cocaine was eliminated from the beverage and its caffeine content cut in half. Nonetheless, the consumption of Coca-cola was a point of contention between the manufacturers of the beverage and Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley (1844-1930), the first director of the U.S. Bureau of Chemistry (which was the precursor to the Food and Drug Administration.) Armed with scientific expertise and an official government position, Wiley felt it was his duty to protect the public from adulterated food, and the health of the nation's children from the potentially dangerous additives found in Coca-Cola (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:187.)

Wiley targeted Coca-Cola instead of other caffeinated beverages like coffee and tea for two related reasons. The first was that adults were the primary consumers of coffee and tea and they were presumed to know of the fact that these beverages contained caffeine. Children, on the other hand, were the greatest consumers of Coca-Cola, and neither adults nor the children were much aware that the beverage contained caffeine. The Coca-Cola Company engaged in an aggressive advertising and public relations campaign to discourage the association between Coca-Cola and caffeine—a campaign that Wiley hoped to destroy (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:187.)

Wiley had worked a long time to establish his reputation as a pure food crusader, and in 1902, after twenty years of heading the U.S. Bureau of Chemistry, he gained national prominence when he established a “poison squad.” This poison squad was a group of twelve healthy adults who volunteered to test the safety of food and drink additives. Wiley's fight against the patent medicine industry and food and drink manufacturers who refused to truthfully label the ingredients in their products culminated in a legislative victory when Congress signed the Pure

Food and Drug Act in 1906. Also known as “Dr. Wiley’s Law,” he employed it to begin an investigation of the caffeine levels in Coca-Cola—or what one 1907 headline referred to as “Soda Fountain Dope.” The owners of Coca-Cola, John and Asa Candler, were chagrined by Wiley’s assertion that Coca-Cola was a dangerous product, arguing that “there can be no more objection to the consumption of caffeine in the form of Coca-Cola than there is to the importation of tea and coffee and their use” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:187.)

The majority of consumers must have agreed with the Candler, as Coca-Cola remains to this day a popular beverage of choice for much of the population, especially youths. Indeed, today caffeine is “the only pharmacologically active ingredient present in beverages that are dispensed from vending machines, soda fountains, and convenience stores” (Weinberg and Bealer 2001:186-7.) Caffeine is also the only drug that is considered acceptable for youths to consume. For example, there are no age restrictions that prohibit the sale of caffeinated beverages to minors. One could even claim that youths are encouraged to consume caffeinated soda drinks as is evident from the soda marketing campaigns that target this age group and the fact that caffeinated soda drinks are easily available in vending machines located at most grade schools and high schools. According to Weinberg and Bealer (2001:190) the unmonitored consumption of caffeine by youths is anomalous because “except for khat, widely used by adolescent Yemenis” the authors “know of no other mood-altering drug whose use anywhere by the young is or has been not only legal, but approved and fostered by adults.” The fact that youths are permitted to consume caffeine contributes to the understanding of this drug as harmless, or low on the scale of dangerousness, in American society.

VII. THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF COFFEE MAKING AND THE RISE OF AN INTERNATIONAL COFFEE CARTEL

Despite the widespread cultural acceptance of coffee in American society, coffee manufacturers, distributors, and importers encountered several obstacles, particularly after 1900 when the market for coffee became saturated (Netto 19xx:71-2; Jiménez n.d.:16.) First, “the massive capital accumulation following the debacles of the early 1890s, managerial reorganization, and technological innovation” had “generated dramatic increases in productivity,” but were “unaccompanied by commensurate increase in purchasing power” (Gordon et al 19xx:105.) In other words, the failure of North American capitalism to expand its consumer base threatened the very market that the coffee industry needed to sell its products (Jiménez n.d.:18.) Second, dramatic price variations caused by periodic upheavals in the international coffee economy thwarted the coffee industry from securing a low-price consumer market. Coffee prices dropped significantly between 1895-9 and 1899-1900 from 12.3 cents per pound to only 6 cents. Prices then began to rise reaching 14.2 cents per pound in 1911-12 only to drop again in 1915-6 to 9.6 cents per pound. Following the post-war boom in 1919-1920 coffee prices doubled from 12.1 cents per pound in 1918-19 to 24.8 cents per pound. Coffee prices then dropped again in 1921-2 to 10.4 cents per pound simply to rise to 24.5 cents per pound in 1925-6. In 1930-1 coffee prices fell to only 13.2 cents per pound (Topik 1987:82; Jiménez n.d.:19.)

The erratic and unpredictable price history of coffee resulted in repeated efforts by the coffee industry to manipulate the coffee trade. This manipulation was itself cited as a cause for the market’s unsteadiness. When world coffee producers and United States coffee interests came together in New York for a 1902 meeting, they concluded that a “monopoly” was responsible for

price irregularities and market fluctuations. This monopoly controlled “all operations of the coffee industry, from the time it leaves the planter’s hands till it reaches the consumer” and stifled competition, which may have lead to a more balanced coffee market (U.S. Department of State 1903:62.)

Coffee prices increased a few years later after a consortium of bankers, planters, and the state government of São Paulo in Brazil implemented a valorization program, which subsidized the withdrawal of coffee stocks from the market (Holloway 1975; Netto 19xx:76-105.) This incited business and political leaders with an interest in coffee and led the U.S. Justice Department to initiate legal proceeding against holders of valorized coffee as violators of federal anti-trust regulations (Krasner 1971:129-30.) The United States government remained suspicious of the coffee industry’s collusion with tropical producers and in 1926 the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, threatened a trade war and financial boycott against Brazil (Brandes 1962:130-8.) Thus, even though coffee was relatively cheap compared to other prepared and packaged foodstuffs, “the coffee lobby remained sensitive throughout [these] years to the public wariness of a product apparently so easily subject to speculation and manipulation, often costly, and putatively unhealthy” (Jiménez n.d.: 19-21.)

The U.S. coffee industry sought to expand its consumer market base in three ways: 1) by lowering the cost of importing; 2) by instituting a massive advertising campaign to increase the demand for coffee; and 3) by encouraging American citizens to recognize their role in promoting human progress and economic development throughout the coffee-producing world. Coffee merchants and manufacturers attempted to lower the cost of importing and reduce the price of coffee by streamlining the international and domestic trade in coffee. This entailed promoting

greater production of coffee abroad and improving the quality of the beans cultivated. Brazil was the first country where this process was implemented because U.S. coffee concerns had acquired considerable economic leverage with plantation owners, processors, and government officials (Netto 1959,) but it was soon duplicated in other Latin American countries. For example, local control of the coffee trade in Columbia, which had been dominated by indigenous businesses prior to the First World War, was destroyed after the penetration of U.S. firms in the 1920s (Zambrano 1977:391-436.) A similar situation occurred in Guatemala after the powerful W.R. Grace took over the coffee interests there after the War. These developments in the international coffee trade not only increasingly standardized the production of coffee, but also resulted in a greater diversity of sourcing (Dominguez 1970.) Although Brazil remained the most powerful producer of coffee, its global share fell from 69.7 percent in 1909 to 62.4 percent in 1923, while Columbia's share of the world market increased from 4.3 percent to 9.1 percent in the same time period. Smaller producing countries also witnessed a significant growth in their shares with El Salvador and Guatemala each controlling 3 percent of the world market (Bynum 1926:3; Jiménez n.d.:22-3.)

In the coming years Brazil gradually lost its monopoly control of the world coffee trade, especially after the collapse of its market-rigging schemes in the early 1930s. Brazil's attempt to control the world coffee trade through "valorization" measures proved to be a disastrous failure because they only temporarily dealt with abnormal market conditions. According to Wickizer (1943:26) "so long as valorization schemes were introduced to meet special and temporary situations, the by-products of control had no lasting significance." Other coffee producing countries were able to compete more effectively against Brazil's "coffee defense" as a result of

the Inter-American Coffee Agreement of 1940 (Wickizer 1943:26-7.) While only 14 percent of the world's coffee was grown outside of Central and South America in the late 1940s, African coffee producing countries began to enter the world coffee trade, increasing their market share from 19 percent in the early 1950s to 30 percent in the late 1960s (Lucier 19xx:32-3.) Brazilian and Colombian coffee exports to the United States fell from over 70 percent in 1950 to 60 percent in 1960 to only 37 percent in 1970 (Lucier 19xx:37.)

Nonetheless, Brazil remains the largest supplier of world coffee, contributing to approximately 30% of the market, while Colombia is the next largest. Since 1975 Brazil has increased its production of coffee from 8 million to 13-14 million of bags per year (Marshall 19xx:11.) Furthermore, Brazil's ability to manipulate the global price of coffee affects the export production of coffee by other countries in Central American and in Africa. Thus, even though the production of coffee has become more geographically dispersed, Brazil continues to act as a "dominant oligopolist" in the world coffee economy (Lucier 19xx:53; Rowe 19xx:27-9.)

Given the gradual dispersion in the supply of coffee sources it is important to note that the long-term trend in coffee consumption has been away from the Old World to the New, while the long-term trend in coffee production has been away from the Western Hemisphere (Wickizer 19xx:19-20.) Developed countries, particularly the United States and European nations, accounted for approximately 90 percent of the world imports both before and after the Second World War (Lucier 19xx:37.) Some producing countries, such as Ethiopia and Columbia, consume over 1 million bags of coffee per year, but most domestic consumption is of a lower grade of quality; the highest grades of coffee are exported to the West. The local populations in

the majority of African countries do not consume coffee—it is simply a cash crop (Marshall 19xx:11.)

The coffee industry is highly industrialized and concentrated at the point of processing and distribution. Trade in soluble coffee is more concentrated than roasted coffee with two firms, Nestlé and General Foods, accounting for 75 percent of the market share in developed countries in 1978 (Lucier 19xx:56-7.) In the United States coffee overwhelmingly enters the domestic market in the form of green coffee. Only 1.5 percent of coffee imported into America in 1976 was soluble compared to 96 percent of green coffee. At this time four importing companies handled 40 percent of all U.S. coffee imports, even though there existed approximately 100 green coffee importing agents and 200 processing companies (Lucier 19xx:29.) By 1980 the number of coffee-processing firms in the U.S. declined to only about 40, resulting in even greater concentration in the coffee industry (Lucier 19xx:56.)

The political dimension of the world coffee trade became evident in 1960 when an impending surplus in coffee production made it necessary for producing countries to restrict the global market. While several short-term agreements were made between Latin American countries, it was clear that with the growth of African trade in coffee an international solution to the coffee surplus was needed. Following the leadership of the United States, other consuming countries became involved in this issue and decided upon an International Agreement in 1962, which would go into effect on September 1, 1963. The International Coffee Organization was created and stationed in London to administer the Agreement. According to Marshall (19xx:107) the Agreement was essentially “an arrangement to share the world market,” providing consuming countries with the power “to police” producing countries. Although coffee producers had a say

in the Agreement, which was renewed in 1968 and 1976, voting power in the Agreement tended to favor those countries with the largest stakes in the coffee trade, including the European Community, the United States, Brazil, and Colombia (Marshall 19xx:107-119.)

The United States, in particular, was concerned with the potentially dangerous political effects that could result from an economic crisis in Latin America. This concern was the main reason it decided to back the Agreement. The United States was also fearful of the consequences of the Cuban revolution and the spread of communism in Latin and South American countries, so its decision to support the Agreement was a strategic political move in the Cold War (Rowe 19xx:190.) The political significance of coffee was made explicit by one commentator who reported that he frequently heard in his travels through Brazil and Columbia that “coffee is now politics not economics” (Rowe 19xx:190.)

While the International Agreement may have been justified on political grounds, its economic legitimacy was open to critique (Rowe 19xx:191.) Consumers were now forced to subsidize the world coffee market and pay higher prices for coffee than they would have under free trade. The national economies of many coffee-producing countries remained propped up by an artificial security blanket. Furthermore, natural and human resources were wasted in producing coffee that would be destroyed. Indeed, the Agreement seemed contrary to economic progress when, in some countries, people were prevented from growing coffee—even though they could do so more cheaply than protected producers. The Agreement also did not encourage new technological advances in coffee cultivation and production (Rowe 19xx:190-1.)

Transnational corporations (TNCs) are another important actor in the global coffee industry because they serve as the critical link between importing and exporting countries. While

TNCs are overwhelmingly headquartered in importing countries, their production apparatus is located in exporting nations. These “borderless” firms have certainly desired to profit from the international coffee trade, particularly considering the fact that coffee is the second most valuable legal commodity in the global market, behind only petroleum. For the most part TNCs have been able to fulfill this desire because nation-states cannot easily monitor or regulate them. The power of TNCs to escape national accountability is most evident in less developed countries, with weaker governments, where these corporations can exert substantial leverage. Transnational food processing firms had established 119 foreign affiliates by 1980; 61 of these affiliates were located in Latin America, Africa, East Asia and the Pacific (Lucier 19xx:30, 54, 58; Rowe 19xx:19.)

The growing concentration and dominance of TNCs in the world coffee trade has resulted from three factors: mergers and acquisitions, marketing practices, and control of technology. U.S. roast coffee producers entered into the world coffee economy through acquisition and joint ventures with private firms and host country governments. For example, Nestle established such contracts with the governments of Ghana, Tanzania, Chile, Portugal, and the Ivory Coast, which gave the firm a monopoly control of the coffee industry in these countries. Nestle was also able to gain control of 80 percent of Colombia’s soluble coffee market after it formed a joint affiliation with Borden there. Another TNC, the Atalla Group, established a joint venture with a private Japanese firm in 1977 that gave it a 30 percent share of the coffee market in Japan (Lucier 19xx:59.)

TNCs have employed aggressive marketing campaigns to capture high market shares in consuming countries. Advertising and promotional strategies by the coffee industry to launch

new coffee brands and open new markets have been increasing since the 1960s. In 1978 Procter and Gamble spent \$13.1 million to promote a new flaked roast coffee, sales of which accounted for 9 percent of its sales that year. In the same year General Mills spent nearly \$6 million to introduce new “brim” and “extender” blends of soluble coffee in Britain. TNCs also use marketing campaigns to compete with one another. In 1978 Procter and Gamble spent \$1.5 million per month to target the East Coast market in the United States. General Foods responded to this competition by engaging in a counter marketing campaign, reportedly spending \$3 million dollars a month to fend off Procter and Gamble. Interestingly, TNC coffee producers tend mainly to use advertising as a means of competition and rarely enter into price wars. This itself is a defining characteristic of oligopolies and is more prevalent in the soluble coffee market, which is dominated by two firms, than the retail roast market that is controlled by four firms. This oligopolical marketing behavior has rarely been questioned by consumers in the U.S. or other markets throughout the world (Lucier 19xx:60.) It is likely that as long as the price of coffee remains relatively stable consumers are willing to differentiate between coffee solely through brand name recognition.

Finally, TNCs have been able to dominate the world coffee trade through their control of innovative technologies, mostly in relation to soluble coffee processing techniques. Two important types of innovations in soluble coffee processing have been developed by TNCs. The first has been the alteration of soluble coffee's taste and appearance so that it is more similar to regular roast coffee. This has enabled firms to use lower and cheaper grades of coffee as substitutes for the more expensive, aromatic, Arabic blends. The second has been innovations to improve the extraction process and lower the cost of raw materials. This has permitted firms to

reduce the number of pounds of green coffee needed to extract one pound of soluble coffee. By the late 1970s firms were able to extract one pound of soluble coffee from less than 2.5 pounds of green coffee when in the 1950s they could only extract this much soluble coffee from more than 3.5 pounds of green coffee (Lucier 19xx:61.)

In sum the world production of coffee has been increasingly monopolized by a handful of TNCs. Compared to the earlier political economy of coffee, which was characterized by drastic price fluctuations, TNCs have, through their dominance of the market, kept coffee prices stable. Furthermore, TNCs have been able to take advantage of earlier international economic arrangements of the coffee industry through acquisitions and mergers, and joint ventures with the governments of producing countries. Perhaps most importantly TNCs have expanded the consumption of coffee worldwide by keeping the price of coffee affordable and inviting all consumers, regardless of their status, to partake in drinking a cup of coffee. The international power of TNCs and their aggressive marketing campaigns have done much to shape the public's perception that coffee is not a dangerous drug and therefore should not be regulated by any state.

Summary and Conclusions

No one knows exactly when coffee was first drunk. Indigenous to Ethiopia, Arabs used it primarily as a medicine until the 14th century (Ukers, 1935a:12). Apparently first cultivated in Yemen, the development of coffee bean roasting and grinding techniques during the 15th century led to its common consumption as a beverage throughout the Middle East (Jacob, 1935:27). Travelers and explorers introduced coffee to Europe during the 17th century (Ukers, 1935a). It came under attack almost immediately from several quarters. In Germany, doctors argued that

women who drank coffee could not bear children (Uribe, 1954:19). In England, and France, government officials linked coffee drinking with political radicalism and idle leisure (Jacob, 1935:144; Ukers, 1935a:68). In 1675, Charles II unsuccessfully attempted to close coffee houses, alleging they helped spread political discontent. In England and Germany, brewers opposed coffee because it detracted from beer sales (Jacob, 1935:93). In spite of such opposition, coffee consumption increased in Europe throughout the 18th and 19th centuries” (Troyer & Marble 1984).

What can we learn from these historical examples? A first lesson is the way in which substances may be labeled "drug" or "food." These alternative definitions often have symbolized the conflicts between religious and secular, or conservative and progressive, authorities. Although coffee fits the definition of a drug—as a substance ingested to alter the normal state of the mind, body or emotions—today coffee is almost universally classified as a food. In other times and places, however, coffee was considered a dangerous drug, and like tobacco in early modern Europe or cocaine in the United States today, coffee was at the center of heated political conflicts.

In the Muslim worlds coffee was contrasted to alcohol, which is prohibited for Moslems by Koranic injunctions. Coffee early became "the wine of Islam" and was believed to have medicinal and religious value. In the late 1400's in the Ottoman empire, it initially spread as an aid to religious devotions. As its popularity grew, secular coffee houses were established that appealed particularly to Islamic intellectuals. Coffee houses became centers for male sociability and discourse, including free thinking and social criticism. Soon conservative religious leaders and scholastics questioned whether coffee was not implicitly forbidden by the Koran because of

its stimulating effects and because coffee beans were burnt like charcoal, which also is forbidden.

Coffee and coffee houses became subject to attempts at violent repression, much like those directed by the American temperance movement against alcohol and saloons.

The story of coffee in 17th and 18th century England shares certain features with its history in Arabia and Turkey. Though first seen as a panacea for medical ills and a cure for drunkenness, English coffee houses soon became forums for the great political debates of the age, usually in support of republican causes. Coffee drinking acquired political symbolism, much as it had during the Ottoman empire. Thus coffee became known as "the drink of democracy" in England, and in the American colonies tea was boycotted as "the drink of the King". Throughout the period the English monarchy tried to suppress the coffee houses, and it was only after the abatement of political turmoil that the coffee houses came to have a primarily social rather than political function.

The case of coffee in Prussia of Frederick the Great is more economic than political. Typically, the use of a new drug is first popular among style-setting social elites and then gradually seeps down to the middle and popular classes. As coffee had supplanted beer and tea as a popular drink in England, so it competed with beer in Prussia, only more so, especially because beer was a major staple in Prussia and the coffee trade was controlled by foreign merchants. Frederick, a mercantilist in his economic views, sought to decrease the importation of coffee and increase the production of beer, while optimizing state revenues from each of them.

The history of coffee in the United States is marked by an overwhelming economic, political, and social acceptance. In colonial America drinking coffee was an act of protest against the high taxes the British imposed on tea and a sign of independence. Coffeeshouses were civic

spaces where citizens could engage in political debate that was welcomed by persons who were soon to become Americans. After the Civil War, and the industrial revolution, and especially during Prohibition, coffee became a desirable substitute for alcohol and approved for consumption by those at work. By the 1920s coffee drinking in America crossed the class hierarchy and became a beverage shared by all except youth, whose preferred caffeinated beverage of choice was Coca-Cola. Though several doctors and scientific experts have tried to warn American consumers throughout the years that caffeine has potentially harmful side effects, most people have chosen to ignore them. The dominance of U.S. TNCs in the world coffee trade has reinforced the way in which Americans think about coffee. Their power guarantees that coffee will remain unregulated by any state and their advertising campaigns confirm the belief of most American consumers that caffeine is low on the scale of dangerousness compared to other types of drugs.

Thus, together these cases illustrate the politics and economics of drug policies. Coffee use once symbolized dissident religious and political orientations and came to be seen as a threat to established authorities. At the same time, state authorities sought to enhance revenues by variously suppressing, taxing, or monopolizing the availability of coffee in relation to alternate substances of choice such as wine, tea, or beer.

By the nineteenth century coffee almost everywhere was accepted as a food, not a drug or, if a stimulant, then a safe and pleasant one. The substance ceased to symbolize secularism or dissent, though traces of this survived in the hippie and bohemian coffee houses of the 1960s. Generally speaking, however, the definition of coffee and its use was no longer problematic or contested. It had become a staple in the diet of the peoples of Europe, the Mediterranean, and the

English speaking and Muslim worlds. And, much like other major commodities, it came to be routinely traded internationally and subject to competition, regulation, and oligopolization, much like zinc, sugar, or bauxite.

Coffee's history is noticeably absent much rational analysis of the substance's relative benefits or harm to individuals or society. Although caffeine is obviously a less harmful drug than many others, we find almost no instances in which coffee's suspected negative effects on health were a motivating factor in attempts at suppressing the beverage. Instead, elites generally lobbied against the drug when it began to compete with other monopolized substances, or when it was perceived as a threat to civil or religious authority. Even more so than economic competition, this cultural component seems to be the most important factor determining the acceptance or suppression of coffee. Coffee has been associated with industry and the fast-paced modern world, with liberty and revolution, with vice and sin, and each association lent itself to certain policy shifts and regulatory actions. Furthermore, when popular associations varied greatly from those of authorities attempting to restrict the drink, efforts at restricting coffee were almost always doomed to fail. As such, coffee's history demonstrates the importance of cultural functions and symbolic associations, as well as political economic considerations, in the designation of a substance as food or drug, and legal or illegal.

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NOTES:

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