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German Republicans and Radicals in the Struggle for a Slave-Free Kansas: Charles F. Kob and August Bondi

Although they were mostly Democrats prior to 1850, the Germans broke party lines in the decade before the Civil War and played a prominent part in the formation of the Republican party. . . . They vigorously fought the extension of slavery into new territories . . .

John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants*¹

Kansas was a violent and a radical and maybe even a crazy place by nature and by the circumstances of its founding.

Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*²

Upon arrival in the United States, leading German revolutionaries, defeated and exiled in their fight for greater freedoms in 1848 and 1849, discovered a conflict with comparable implications. In the early 1850s these immigrants confronted a rapidly transforming political landscape. Without interruption, the headlines of northern newspapers focused on the crisis in Kansas. The opening of the Kansas Territories to a vote on slavery in 1854, seen in the North as a blatant violation of the Missouri compromise of 1820, became a direct cause for the realignment of the existing party system. In their effort to form a political force to oppose the expansion of slavery, northern politicians welcomed the arrivals from Europe. The German revolutionaries quickly embraced the challenge and opportunity to revive their frustrated idealism. The fight for freedom in Europe became the struggle against slavery and slavery's extension. Charles F. Kob and August Bondi were not prominent political figures, but through their associations and actions they demonstrate how the exiled "Forty-eighters" contributed to the new political conditions in their adopted country.

Reactions to the Kansas-Nebraska bill, signed by President Pierce on May 30, 1854, were swift. Within about a month Michigan and Wisconsin hosted conferences at which participants voiced vigorous protests and for the first time signaled a new era by using the name Republican.³ At the same time, immigrants began to arrive

from Massachusetts in Kansas, where they established the first Free State settlement. The pioneers of Lawrence named the new city after the Boston benefactor Amos Lawrence, a member of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Established with the expressed goal of populating the state with voters opposed to slavery, this company gave the most important challenge to the Missouri settlers who expected to be a force for a proslavery state. The northern settlers were the “intruders” in the eyes of the proslavery residents from Missouri. In subsequent years, the inevitable clash between forces manipulated from afar, involving threats, intimidation, and killings, became sensational material for newspaper reports about Kansas. Whether one side or the other could prevail in Kansas would depend on the vote of the population. Could the influx of immigrants from the North persevere in light of the pressures and attacks from the proslavery power issuing from the South and the administration in Washington? Constant reports of alleged injustices and violence ultimately became the catalyst for increasing support of the Free State cause and the emergence of the Republican Party.

The platform forged at the Republican convention of 1856 focused on a single issue, slavery. Nominating the presidential candidate with some chance of victory entailed a troublesome search for a prominent personality with few enemies. The Philadelphia delegates considered John C. Frémont, who had become famous for his accounts of exploration of unknown segments of the West. As a senator of California, a state that he helped to bring into the Union, the “Pathfinder” established his credentials as an opponent of slavery; he was stronger than the established politicians whom the convention was considering. In preparation for the convention, strategists in support of Frémont supported the publication of his correspondence with Charles Robinson. They expected favorable publicity from a focus on the connections with Robinson, the governor of Kansas under the Free State constitution. Frémont and Robinson had been friends earlier in California. In his letter, Frémont wrote that Robinson had stood firmly by him “when we were defeated by the nullifiers in California, I have every disposition to stand by you in your battle with them in Kansas.” This letter was printed and widely reprinted nationally. The publicity gave Frémont a prominent place in the list of candidates. Impressed with the image, more than his views on major political issues, delegates nominated him as their candidate for the presidency.⁴

In the weeks that followed an earlier letter from Alexander von Humboldt, well known for his firm opposition to slavery, also strengthened the candidate’s public image. Humboldt had written that the king of Prussia appreciated Frémont’s contributions to science through the account of his expeditions and was awarding him the “Great Golden Medal of Progress in the Sciences.” Shortly before the election, the *Weekly Chicago Democrat* and the *New York Daily Tribune* revived Humboldt’s reference to “a friend of liberty” who resisted slavery in California.⁵ The results of the subsequent election took observers by surprise. James Buchanan won with 174 electoral votes to Frémont’s 114. Despite this defeat, Frémont fared better than Buchanan in the popular vote of the free states, “a performance that was little short of astounding in view of the party’s position the year before.” In a short time “the Republicans had transformed their party from the weakest party in the North to the strongest.” The party became the only alternative to the Democrats.⁶ Thus, the defeat, though painful, was, in one sense, a victory; it was an indispensable precondition for

Abraham Lincoln's successful candidacy just four years later. At the same time, the Germans who participated actively in the campaign of 1856 established themselves as dependable and necessary constituents of the new party.

The enthusiastic participation of Germans was broadly based and made itself felt in all northern states of the union. For example, according to the *New York Daily Tribune*, ten thousand people came on October 7, 1856, to hear speeches for Frémont by Friedrich Kapp (president of the German Republican Committee), Friedrich Münch, Gustav Struve, and Friedrich Hecker. A few days later Dr. Reinhold Solger of Boston addressed a mass meeting in Philadelphia, warning that a victory by Buchanan could mean the annexation of Cuba, and that represented the same strategy that was at work in the extension of slavery to Kansas. Solger attached special significance to the German vote: "Never, indeed, was a more glorious privilege conferred upon any number of men than that to the exercise of which the German citizens of the United States are being called at this great moment, holding, as they do in their living hands, the scales of the world's history for all time to come."⁷ In other cities, audiences heard speeches by Carl Schurz, Friedrich Hassaurek, Julius Froebel, Friedrich Kapp, and Gustave Koerner.⁸ Adolf Douai recalled having given numerous stump speeches in Boston, Hartford, New Haven, New York, Hoboken, Newark, Philadelphia, Reading, Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton. For him the Republican election campaign was a "revolution," which would have been entirely successful, if voting fraud had not occurred in Pennsylvania. "Practically without money in a period of five months success was possible by means of voluntary and dedicated electioneering work by American abolitionists and German Forty-eighters."⁹

The individual efforts of German Forty-eighters increased in impact by the active work of the Turner organizations (*Turnvereine*). After a beginning of a single club in Cincinnati in 1848, the numbers grew quickly to seventy-four with membership of 4,500 by 1855.¹⁰ The Turner clubs also followed the consistent position of the Forty-eighters in their radical opposition to slavery. In Boston the Turners demonstrated their involvement by sponsoring a festival for about 2,000 people outside the city. Speakers included Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson, who asked the audience to "consider the sufferings of the free settlers in Kansas, of which a large number [were] Germans." He urged them to "seek redress for the outrages thus inflicted upon their fellow countrymen by casting their votes for John C. Frémont." Other speakers included Adolf Douai, Gustav Struve, and Dr. Karl Friedrich Kob. As president of the German Frémont Club of Boston, Kob took on the task of leading the campaign effort of the Germans in the Boston area.¹¹

Like many German Frémont supporters, Kob was a Forty-eighter. Originally from the East Prussian village of Arys (today Orzysz in Poland), Kob had studied medicine at the University of Königsberg (1840–45). Later, serving as a surgeon, he joined the revolutionary army of Schleswig-Holstein in its uprising against Denmark (1848–50). In exile he continued his work as physician in Hartford and in 1855 moved to Boston with his wife (an immigrant from Holstein in Germany) and a three-year-old daughter.¹² Still only thirty-five years old, he was too young to abandon the lofty causes he had fought for in Germany. The year 1856 provides ample evidence of his active political engagement.

For their aggressive political involvement German Republicans had to expect serious backlash. The great influx of immigrants from Germany—in a single year

215,000 Germans arrived in 1854—generated a powerful opposition to foreign influence.¹³ The secretive members of the nationalistic movement against foreigners were the Know-Nothings (the designation signaled that members identified themselves by pretending to know nothing). The movement threatened foreigners in many ways, especially through restrictions on citizenship and voting rights. Under pressure from the Know-Nothings, the Massachusetts legislature considered a severe limitation of voting rights and demanded a waiting period of at least seven years after arrival. Douai and Kob testified against such restrictions at meetings of the committee considering these measures. German politicians had to take such nativistic reactions seriously.¹⁴

Kob clearly took a radical position and, together with his colleague Douai, also radical on many social issues, resolved to ignore the danger of backlash. Wasting no time, within three weeks after the election, and not dwelling on the disappointment of Frémont's defeat, they embarked on a plan to organize Germans on a national basis to resist the tyranny of the proslavery administration. On the basis of recent events, they asserted confidently that Germans could be united into a solid block of voters, and on November 30 they published their proposals in the *Pionier*, a socialist journal edited by Karl Heinzen. Acting on a proposal made by the Frémont Club no. 5 of Boston on September 24, the authors proposed specific steps to establish a central committee, a structure that had links to local organizations, a news organ in German and English to represent views to the general public, and a convention to discuss details of organization and implementation.¹⁵ The signers requested reactions, and it took only a few days for the *Atlas* of Milwaukee, edited by Bernard Domschke, to publish a negative response in the name of the local Republican Club's executive committee.¹⁶ A negative response also came from Eduard Schläger in the *Illinois Staatszeitung*. According to Douai, eastern states, Ohio, and Michigan applauded the Boston initiative. The strong opposition from Wisconsin and Illinois forced Douai, however, to write detailed analyses to counter the objections raised. Douai was forced into a defensive posture, and the public exchange dragged into January of the following year.¹⁷ The frustration caused by such dissensions undoubtedly forced Kob to rethink his personal involvement. In the early days of 1857 he began to explore other options.

Even as Douai was engaged in defending the Boston initiative, Kob turned to the New England Emigrant Aid Company for help with a new proposal. The records of the executive committee for January 2, 1857, discussed Dr. Kob's request for aid to "establish a first class German Free State Paper in this city [i.e., Boston]." Because of limited funds the committee voted to ask Unitarian minister Rev. Edward E. Hale "to use his influence in the community to accomplish Dr. Kob's wishes." During the committee meeting of February 20, Thomas H. Webb, committee secretary, reported for Hale on the progress of the discussions with Dr. Kob. The proposal now appeared in a revised form. The home of the German paper to advocate Free State principles and to direct immigration to Kansas was to be not in Boston but in Kansas. The committee was clearly pleased to invest money in this direct involvement in Kansas affairs. The investment helped the newspaper where it was most needed and made it a vehicle of communication on location. Subsequent meetings in March focused on the details of implementation. The purchase of German type for \$300 gained approval. Contacts with Lawrence (George W. Brown of the *Herald of Freedom*) explored the

availability of an appropriate press in Kansas. The committee also approved sending Dr. Kob to Kansas to make preparations, and later, if resources permitted, to travel to Germany. Though not explicitly stated in the minutes, the trip to Germany would entail active promotion of immigration to Kansas. A detailed pamphlet or guide book to explain the advantages of settling in Kansas became part of Kob's project.¹⁸ Having won the financial support of the company, Kob immediately embarked on his Kansas mission.

When Kob arrived in Lawrence in April, he began a tour of Kansas settlements to collect information for a guidebook. He worked efficiently; within a month he was back in Boston, and the guidebook was ready for printing. During this short period Kob had gathered personal experiences about the attractions and requirements for settlers in Kansas. The focus was on the perspective of a German settler who would require information, for example, about costs and the availability of land, livestock, and generally needed merchandise. Thomas H. Webb's English guidebook was already in its twelfth edition, and Kob was able to draw from this work numerous relevant facts and data.¹⁹ Kob's original contribution was the vivid description of settlements and, specifically the German individuals or communities. In a number of instances he was able to identify names of persons who would be prepared to aid fellow countrymen. More so than Webb's guidebook, Kob's text emphasized the important political role that the German settlers could play:

May each one keep in mind that every settler in Kansas is participating, even if passively, in the great struggle against slavery and thus indirectly taking part in the most significant development of the American states. The more we succeed in resisting slavery and driving it back, the closer we come to our final goal—its total abolition. Each battle against slavery is at the same time a service to humanity and freedom.²⁰

When Kob returned to Boston, the executive committee of the New England Emigrant Aid Company learned that Kob was prepared to submit his "pamphlet of information for German immigrants, which it is desirable to be issued with as little delay as practicable." It was reported that the Kansas Aid Committee would be willing to defray one half of the expense. The company then voted to cover the balance of the cost.²¹ The final product of this effort, *Wegweiser für Ansiedler im Territorium Kansas* (*Guide for Settlers in the Territory of Kansas*), was printed by G. B. Teubner in New York; Kob's preface shows the date May 26, 1857.

The financial participation of the Kansas Aid Committee, also a Massachusetts organization, shows the scope and interconnectedness in efforts to influence events in Kansas. Kob's promotion of a national center for German Republicans coincided with a move to create a national coordinating body for Kansas aid groups. A conference of July 9, 1856 in Buffalo, New York, established the National Kansas Committee with a central office in Chicago. The fifty-seven delegates from twelve states took to heart Gerrit Smith's angry admonition that "you are looking at ballots, when you should be looking to bayonets; counting up voters, when you should be mustering armed and none but armed emigrants . . ." For him the only remedy for the wrongs of Kansas was "the action of armed men." The final resolution appeared to tone down the harsh rhetoric by stating that the attempt to impose slavery on Kansas had to be defeated

“at whatever cost.”²² William Fredrick Milton Arny, appointed by the convention as the chief agent of the national body, soon became the National Kansas Committee’s most visible representative. An ad at the back of Kob’s guidebook announces the formation of a joint real estate company between Kob and Arny in Lawrence and Atchison, Kansas. Although this establishment of a partnership between German and American advocates of the Kansas cause was short-lived, it reflects the intense and wide-ranging communications, planning and collaboration during the crucial phase of the Kansas crisis.²³

Like Kob, Arny had worked for the Republican party and Frémont. He also favored resolute action in Kansas. In his function as chief agent of the National Kansas Committee Arny made numerous trips from Chicago to Kansas, during which he often transported relief goods. At times the transports included arms. When Arny, along with committee members Thaddeus Hyatt and Edward Daniels, visited Washington to plead the National Kansas Committee cause, Buchanan placed the blame squarely on the North:

At this crisis, the North, instead of sending in armed men, who went about boasting of their ability to protect themselves, should have sent in order loving and law abiding citizens; should have sent in peace-seeking men, who would have promoted concord by moral agencies—by Bibles rather than by Sharp’s rifles. . . . In response to the question whether in light of the present dark reign of terror . . . any change in this policy of the administration is to be expected, President Buchanan responded: “No, sirs! There will be none!”²⁴

In light of the administration’s unyielding stand against the immigrants from the North, there was a growing feeling among Kob’s and Arny’s associates that only arms would make it possible for a Free State to prevail. The progressive radicalization had been taking place since the dramatic events of the spring and summer 1856: the sack of Lawrence, Charles Robinson’s arrest, and John Brown’s engagements at Pottawatomie, Black Jack, and Osawatomie. The need for armed resistance became part of the record in the financial statements of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. On March 11, 1857, Arny sent John Brown food and clothing and wrote: “Anything I can do further for you, please let me know . . .”²⁵ Kob also began his work as editor and publisher of his newspaper, *Kansas Zeitung*, with a frame of mind that was prepared for armed conflict.

At the same time, changes in Kansas show that the proslavery forces were losing ground. The Atchison *Squatter Sovereign*, a Kansas paper that up to this point had aggressively promoted the Southern cause, even encouraging such actions as the sack of Lawrence, was sold, and on May 9 its printing shop became the home of a newspaper that favored a state free of slavery. The new proprietor was Samuel C. Pomeroy, an agent of the New England Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas. As early as the middle of July, the same press served Kob’s German newspaper, the *Kansas Zeitung*. (Subtitle: *Ein Organ für freies Wort, freien Boden und freie Männer*—an agent for free speech, free soil, and free men). On July 22, Kob offered an “Appeal to the American People” to explain the mission of the German language paper.

The *Kansas Zeitung*, a German weekly free state paper, will appear regularly every Wednesday in Atchison, K[ansas] T[erritory]. The main object of this paper is (besides helping to build up Kansas a free state, to diffuse knowledge and political news among the German settlers, mechanics, and business men, throughout the territory) to give the millions of German citizens in the States and the emigrants who come to our shores from Europe, a vivid and true picture of our land so blessed by nature, to show them that here is a broad field and a speedy reward for their labor, and that they will find all conditions for future happiness, which a congenial and healthy climate, a fertile soil, and an energetic, intelligent, and industrious population under a new and liberal government can afford. Not committed to any political party—we will support all measures which bear the stamp of the broad, liberal and true Jeffersonian Democracy. We appeal in our precarious and costly undertaking to the generosity of American citizens to give us their support by taking our paper; they will help in this way to sustain the German Kansas pioneer paper.

Atchison, K.T., July 15, 1857²⁶

The editorials and articles in German addressed specific interests and needs. The paper would attempt to represent German intellect, German customs and German art in a way that earned respect; on this basis the Germans would emerge with their useful and unique qualities as a model among the heterogeneous elements in the state. Although his long-range prognosis for a Free-State status was positive, Kob foresaw difficulties and a need for decisiveness. In an article about Lawrence, where a confrontation seemed imminent, the author saw the problem in the fact that citizens were not radical enough. He commented: “We are convinced that if two years ago we had been really serious in hanging the border ruffians immediately, as soon as they were caught, if need be even Governor Shannon, and had shot some of the attackers, Kansas would now be a free state.”²⁷ In a later issue of his paper Kob looked back on his personal experiences in the German revolution. There were many resolutions to aid the revolutionary cause, but these did not prevent Austria and Prussia from sending armies to put down the uprising. From that Kob had learned his lesson: “We no longer believe in resolutions. If the free states organized volunteer companies and simply sent President Buchanan the list of the 20,000 members, in which case the Kansas issue would be decided in twenty-four hours.”²⁸ In general, Kob aligned himself with the radical wing of Kansas politics, taking sides with General James Lane, rather than with the moderate Charles Robinson.

Kob participated actively in statewide political meetings. On August 26, 1857, four hundred to five hundred persons in favor of a slave-free Kansas met at Grasshopper Falls (today Valley Falls). The delegates chose Kob as one of the secretaries of the convention. In his speech to the convention Kob asserted that the participation of the Germans was based on the assumption of equality in every respect; he saw the struggle analogous to that of the peoples of Europe. Passive resistance had failed. Kob supported taking part in the upcoming election but saw the necessity of warning the Democrats of the administration and Missouri not to join forces to undermine the election. If they did that, people would certainly rise up in opposition. That would be a cause for revolution.²⁹ The deliberations of the convention resulted in

an "Address to the American People on the Affairs of Kansas," which demanded fair elections. "We are organized for defense." If it came to some form of intervention, the proclamation warned that "a war must ensue, protracted and bloody, between Missouri and Kansas; it may be extended all along the line to the Atlantic coast. A dissolved Union and a broken government may be the result." James Lane signed as chairman. Among the names of other thirteen signers were the familiar names of Dr. Charles F. Kob, W. F. M. Army, and Thaddeus Hyatt.³⁰

Kob's *Kansas Zeitung* reported regularly on the activities of the Turner clubs. The Turner club of Leavenworth formed a militia to prevent Missouri citizens from taking part in the upcoming elections.³¹ With some pride, Kob reported that the first well-armed company of a Kansas volunteer army was located in Leavenworth under the auspices of the *Turnverein*. The organizational structure of the Turner battalion would include, according to Kob's report, 150 men with the officers: Haas (captain), Petz (lieutenant), Ranst (lieutenant), Thelen (standard-bearer), Hasenkamp (sergeant), Tafel (sergeant), Seeland (corporal), and Denzler (corporal). Other German companies in preparation were planned for 130 men. The need for weapons was serious, but the Turner clubs had already succeeded in capturing a number, including a canon, from the border ruffians. General Lane had inspected the company and was impressed.³²

Free State candidates won a conclusive victory in the election of January 4, 1858, and the defeat of the proslavery constitution indicated that the tide had definitely turned. There was no longer any doubt about a clear majority. It was only a matter of time before the federal government had to accept this fact and admit Kansas as a free state. Anticipating this result, in the summer of 1857, Amos Lawrence wrote to Ephraim Nute, a Unitarian minister in Lawrence: "We look upon the great question as now settled, and all political movements in Kansas as having chiefly a local interest."³³

On February 28, 1858, the *Kansas Zeitung* appeared for the last time with Kob as editor, but it continued under L. Soussman, who promised to foster the political principles on which the paper was founded. On April 10, Kob moved to Leavenworth. In October, 1858, he became a successful candidate for the Kansas legislature, but an accident prevented him from taking office. An ad offering his services as a physician now stressed that he would devote time exclusively to his work as a physician.³⁴ He still remained active on the school board and was a founding member of the Kansas Medical Society.³⁵ Obituaries of 1861 looked back on a man who gained respect in his community and in Kansas.

Funeral of Dr. Kob. — The funeral of Dr. C. F. Kob was attended, yesterday afternoon, from his residence on Second Street. The friends of the deceased, and a large number of citizens, joined in the procession, which was very imposing. The members of the Medical and Surgical Association, to which the deceased belonged, were mounted on horseback, and attended the remains to the place of interment. A band of music led the procession, and its mournful dirges and death-marches added much to the solemnity of the occasion.

Upon the summit of Pilot Knob the last resting place was selected. Slowly the long cavalcade wound its way up the ascent, and as the sun declined in the West, and its beams fell softly and slantingly upon the

scene, the remains were quietly sepulchered, there to sleep undisturbed, until the final roll call of the dead.

Thus has Dr. Kob passed from among us. He had received a liberal education in another land, and the sprightliness of his wit, the vivacity of his conversation and his intellectual superiority, which displayed itself in everything he undertook, won him many friends in this the home of his adoption. He had his faults (as who has not?) but these will soon be forgotten, and naught will remain save the fragrant memories of his virtues.

The resolutions of the Leavenworth College of Physicians and Surgeons, on the death of Dr. C. F. Kob, were unavoidably crowded out of yesterday's issue. They were adopted at a meeting held on Monday evening, of which Dr. S. W. Jones was President and Dr. L. P. Stiles, Clerk.

The resolutions pay a deserved tribute of respect to the deceased, as an esteemed member of his profession and a worthy citizen, and express deep sympathy with his family and friends.

(The Leavenworth Daily Times, March 6, 1861, vol. 7, no. 17)

Death of Dr. Kob. – Dr. Charles Frederick Kob died at his residence in this city at 5 o'clock yesterday morning [Sunday, March 4?] of inflammation of the brain. His age was forty years and nine months.

Dr. Kob was native of Koenigsberg, Prussia, was a thoroughly educated physician and in 184[9] acted as first surgeon in the Schleswig-Holstein war against Denmark. He came to Kansas from Boston in 1857, and soon after commenced the publication in this city of the *Zeitung*, a daily and weekly German newspaper. In the fall of 1858, he was elected to the Legislature, but his leg having been broken by an unmanageable horse, he was prevented from taking his seat in the House.

By his brilliant mind, his scholarly tastes, and his skill in his profession, Dr. Kob gained an extensive reputation.

He leaves a wife and one child to mourn his loss.

*(Lawrence Republican, March 14, 1861,
reprinted from the Leavenworth Conservative)*

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The origins and early evolution of the Republican party, the German Forty-eighters' involvement in the campaign of 1856, and Kob's immersion into Kansas Free State politics provide a suitable introduction and context for August Bondi's autobiography. Bondi's life and experiences as a youth in Austria parallel those of Kob in Schleswig-Holstein. Although Bondi's description of John Brown's battles in Kansas precede the publication of the guidebook, Kob's network of radical Free Staters reflects the significance of the impulses that the Forty-eighters brought with their revolutionary experience for John Brown's mission. American and German radicals hand in hand with John Brown changed the history of Kansas, and to understand how this occurred, Bondi's narrative is certainly the most articulate and revealing documentary source.

Although Jewish, Bondi received his early education in a Catholic school administered monks of the Piarist order. When the revolution broke out in March 1848 he joined the Academic Student Legion, a revolutionary organization that supported Hungary's uprising against Austrian rule. His autobiography is unique not only as a first-hand narrative of the 1848 revolution but also as a record of the revolution as an educational instrument. Bondi was a keen observer of pivotal events in a historical process. The education in revolution formed the ideological background for his participation in Kansas affairs.

This education began in earnest when Bondi was only a school boy of thirteen years. His Hungarian tutor "often deprecated the outrages of absolutism and state-church." Two years later, on March 12, 1848, he heard the declarations that signaled the beginning of the revolution in Vienna, the students' demand for freedom of conscience and press, along with the requirement to teach and learn without interference. As the demands for freedoms grew louder in front of Vienna's Council Hall, the demonstrators met with gunfire. Twelve demonstrators were dead. Hearing demonstration leaders speak, Bondi "became imbued with hatred of spiritual and governmental tyranny" and was "fanaticized with sympathy for the downtrodden of the globe." Bondi recalled a heated discussion in which he defended the laboring classes of Vienna and deplored that the Italians in Lombardy and Venice were victims of Austrian military aggression. He thought that it was a mistake to stand "idly by while the Imperial army throttled Italy; that after Italy's defeat our turn would be next."³⁶ This was for him a painful lesson for future revolutions.

In June the Austrian army defeated the insurgents in Prague, and to counter the attack of that force against the Hungarians under Kossuth, Bondi was prepared to fight with the "Vienna Legion" in Hungary. Since the futility of such a venture was not difficult to foresee, Bondi's parents were able to persuade their son to accept an alternative in the form of emigration to America. In September, after the Austrian army had handed the Hungarians a decisive defeat, but just before it reentered Vienna, the Bondi family left. In a short period of less than five intense months young Bondi gathered the crucial lessons that affected his American life.

We youngsters from the barricades and struggles of the revolutionary movements of Germany, Austria and Hungary, who had there been initiated into politics, were eager to grasp the opportunity which would prove our important political influence in our new home.³⁷

At first it "was not sympathy with the Negro slave" that caused Bondi to look to Missouri Senator Thomas H. Benton, who had led a campaign to prevent the extension of slavery. At this time Bondi's political views did not focus on slavery but rather "the degradation of labor." Only several years later, in 1855, did the "curse of slavery" crystallize in his mind as a primary concern. An article by Horace Greeley in the *New York Tribune* finally persuaded Bondi that "freedom loving men should rush to Kansas and save it" from that curse. Greeley's fervent admonitions touched the revolutionary part of Bondi's soul.

Men and brethren! There is imminent danger that Kansas will be lost to freedom, but as yet it is danger only. She is not lost, but is sorely beset, and

those who can should fly to the rescue. Thousands of hardy pioneers who do not cower before work and hardship ought to find homes on her broad expanse . . .

(New York Daily Tribune, January 27, 1855)

The Anti-slavery movement is no longer at the mercy of spasmodic and irregular forces. It has got a prodigious momentum from its own action that secures it against obstruction from opposing influences forever hereafter. It cannot be arrested or again subordinated to other political issues.

(New York Daily Tribune, March 6, 1855³⁸)

Bondi's education in revolution and its interpretation in the American context reveal familiar patterns. Kob received his baptism in fire in the North, in Schleswig-Holstein, far removed from Bondi's Vienna. After initial adjustments as a physician in Hartford and Boston, Kob very quickly encountered a broad spectrum of German-Americans. In contrast, Bondi appeared to be a lone outsider in his limited circle of St. Louis labor class acquaintances. Despite their totally different paths, they arrived in Kansas with comparable missions. They both favored radical and swift actions against the border ruffians; they emphasized that delay would be fatal. Stressing the massive failures in Europe proved to be an effective rhetorical and propagandistic resource. Bondi and Kob both used it effectively to draw other German (Central European) emigrants to join them. Bondi won over Jacob Benjamin and Theodore Wiener. Kob had a strong following in Atchison and Leavenworth, where he resided, and also in Lawrence, where he won a partner in Dr. Moritz Hartmann. As we will see below, another recent emigrant, Charles Leonhardt, applied a similar strategy, referring to his revolutionary experience. Charles Kaiser also belonged to this circle of German veterans of revolution.

In his unpublished "Reminiscences" Bondi recalls the pleasure of first meeting "Dutch Charley," as Kaiser was known in Kansas:

Kaiser had a claim three or four miles from our hiding place and had become acquainted with Captain Brown during the 'Wakarusa War.' He was about thirty-three years old and native of Bavaria, had long resided in Hungary, where he had served through the whole of the revolutionary war of '49. His face was marked with saber cuts and lance thrusts. He was extremely well pleased to find in me a member of the old Vienna Legion. He, Wiener, and myself became very intimate in a few minutes, Kaiser was full of fun; no matter how serious the occasion, he was on hand with jokes.³⁹

A carpenter named Charles Kaiser (presumably the same person) became involved with a German socialist organization (*German Social Reform Society* and the *Socialistic Turners*), which in 1851, with the support of these two organizations, attempted to form a party, first designated as the Radical Free Soil Party and then later named the German Free Soil Democracy of New York. The platform, which Kaiser helped to formulate, demanded "land reform measures in the most radical manner." It stressed its strict opposition to slavery in "in whatsoever shape." It seems reasonable to assume that this Kaiser emigrated eventually to Kansas and found the

radicalism of John Brown akin to his own.⁴⁰ Although relatively little is known about Kaiser with certainty, his commitment to fight and sacrifice his life alongside John Brown suggest also a kinship with the other German radicals.

The detailed consideration of Kob's and Bondi's texts leads us to an important question about the ways in which Kob's political career intersects with the account of August Bondi's days with John Brown. Kob's *Wegweiser* shows a network of supportive Americans and Germans who would be willing allies of immigrants to Kansas, and in this context he remembers John Brown's famous encounter with proslavery forces at Osawatomie.

Osawatomie. Twenty miles north at the mouth of Pottawatomie Creek into the Osage River lies Osawatomie. This town was founded in 1855 and is doing well, despite the many troubles that have afflicted it. It was here that the old, courageous [John] Brown fought with only thirty-four brave men against 400 "knights" of slavery. Inflicting death on forty-two men and wounding 100, he forced them to flee to Missouri. In his small crowd of heroes there were five Germans, one of whom, along with a noble Hungarian, unfortunately lost their lives. They did so, however, with honor, showing their love for freedom. One of Brown's own four sons died a valiant death here.⁴¹

Kob depended on stories of others or on newspaper accounts whereas Bondi described this event from the perspective of an eyewitness. Kob referred to 400 "knights" of the proslavery attackers; Bondi was told that there might be 500 or 800 Missouri men.⁴² Kob thought that Brown's troop consisted of thirty-four men to Bondi's thirty-five. Both accounts report the loss of Brown's son, Frederick. Kob referred to the death of one German and one Hungarian; Bondi identified only Charles Kaiser, a German, as a victim of the battle. Because Kaiser had participated in the Hungarian revolution, Kob calls him a "Hungarian." It is possible that the two persons mentioned in Kob were one and the same person?

A newspaper report might have been the cause of Kob's confusion:

. . . the prisoners were subjected to very cruel treatment, and two of them, one named Williams, and the other 'Dutch Charley,' were taken out of the camp and shot by their infuriated enemies. The latter was a Hungarian who had fought under Kossuth, and since his removal to this country, had lived in Kansas and taken a very active part with the Free State party. He was present at the party of Black Jack, and after the capture of the proslavery party was appointed to guard the prisoners, one of whom was a man named Coleman. This Coleman was at the battle of Osawatomie, and after the capture of the Free State men, recognized Dutch Charley, i.e., Charles Kaiser. He demanded that Dutch Charley be delivered up to him, and taking him out shot him dead.

Kob's figure of 100 casualties on the proslavery side is not confirmed in Bondi's text;

the latter mentioned seeing “two wagons loaded with what looked like dead men, as legs and arms were hanging out.”⁴³

Perhaps the significance of Kob’s narrative is less the accuracy of the details than the rhetoric of his strongly sympathetic perspective. For him Brown’s men were heroes who fought with honor for the sake of freedom. In this battle Germans played a significant role, though it is impossible to verify the figure of five Germans. Bondi’s account mentioned only Jacob Benjamin and Charles Kaiser, besides himself. Bondi does not mention another member of the Brown company, Dr. William Wales Updegraff, a member of a distinguished Mennonite family that emigrated from Krefeld in the seventeenth century. Originally, the family name was Op den Graeff from from Swammerdam, Holland.⁴⁴ Kob also reveals a plan to establish a new city name Guttenberg, under the leadership of George Deitzler [Kob writes his name Dietzler], approximately twenty-five miles west of Humboldt. Part of Kob’s plan was the strategic political location of the town.

In western Texas there is already a strong, prosperous German anti-slavery settlement of 50,000–80,000 Germans. If we are successful in establishing German settlements in southern Kansas, we will be able to extend our hands to our brothers in Texas in a matter of a few years, and be able to build a belt of freedom around those unfortunate southern states afflicted with slavery.⁴⁵

George Washington Deitzler, born in Pennsylvania from a German background, became one of the most prominent Free State leaders of Lawrence next to Charles Robinson. Like Charles Robinson, he was a moderate politician and served in the Kansas legislature. He was the expert on military affairs, and in April 1858 he went to Boston in to acquire weapons in order to defend Lawrence against incursions. In 1856, Deitzler joined Robinson and Ephraim Nute in an effort to establish a university in Lawrence (for this project Amos Lawrence committed an initial investment). Kob considered him a German and rejoiced at his election during the 1857 elections.⁴⁶ As a political ally of Adolf Douai in Boston, Kob was well informed about the struggles of Germans for a free state in Texas. Douai, a radical abolitionist, who had worked hard in Texas to build an anti-slave coalition of Germans in 1852 to 1856, and established a newspaper (*San Antonio Zeitung*) for that purpose, but, encountering considerable hostility, was eventually forced to leave.⁴⁷ Where Douai had failed, Kob was hoping build a solid bridge to defeat the southern expansion.

During a relatively short visit in Kansas to prepare his guidebook, Kob was resourceful in establishing potential contacts to serve the immigrants. For the new city of Hyatt, named after Thaddeus Hyatt, the president of the National Kansas Committee. Although Hyatt was in Kansas to participate in the 1857 Grasshopper Falls conference and signed the “Address to the American People,” Arny was a key partner to organize in the town, and he became its first mayor.⁴⁸ The location of the town plans near Osawatomie and Arny’s later provisions to make the location a connecting point for roads in the area reflected political aims in a larger context of settlement policy. Arny’s partnership with Kob in the real estate business meant the

establishment of Free State towns that could be part of the “belt of freedom” Kob referred to with respect to Guttenberg.

Kob is given credit for attempting to establish a town named Bunker Hill near Atchison and Ingraham thirty miles west of Humboldt. The *Kansas Zeitung* reported that the real estate company of Kob was establishing the city of Ingraham in honor of the American naval officer Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham, who freed Martin Kos[z]ta, a former Hungarian revolutionary, from the hands of the Turks.⁴⁹ These particular communities had short lives; they were essentially “paper towns.” Nevertheless, the effort to establish them was clearly part of a plan to strengthen the strategic position against slavery. Thaddeus Hyatt sympathized with the aggressive abolitionist aims of John Brown. After Brown’s death, he started a relief fund for Brown’s family. In 1860, he served in prison for three months because of his refusal to testify in the United States about the Brown case.⁵⁰

In his narrative about Emporia, Kob introduces another German radical, Charles Leonhardt.

The valley of the Cotton[wood] River, which joins with the Neosho six miles below the newly-founded town **Emporia**, offers equally attractive features. The area is very attractive; timber and creeks are abundant. Mr. Leonhard[t] and 4 other Germans have staked out claims nearby. One could not wish for more from the soil. There is even a newspaper being published here. Each German settler may turn to Mr. Dietzler [Deitzler], the founder of the town, or to Mr. Leonhard[t].⁵¹

Like Kob and Bondi, Charles Leonhardt (full name: Charles Frederick William Leonhardt) also claimed to have learned important lessons from the European revolutions. His original plan for immigration called for settling in Texas. As it turned out, he resided at first in Massachusetts, where he tried to make a living as a construction worker, but then was able to make use of his interrupted university training to teach French and German, then later he served as an instructor in a Plymouth gymnasium, which he established. Immediately after his arrival in Kansas, he became involved in politics and represented the Emporia district at a Free State convention of Topeka.⁵² The newspaper of Emporia, *The Kansas News*, reported on his speech at he meeting of June 9. Leonhardt said:

After listening to these speakers, my spirit has gone back to Europe, and my mind recalls scenes in which I have been an actor on bloody fields. I allude to these things not on personal grounds, but because the struggle here is similar one. As representative from the 6th district, I have a duty to perform. . . . I see among the freedom loving men here, there are two parties. One of them says “wait,” but the other says “go on.” So it was in the Hungarian revolution. When we could have beaten the Austrians, a portion said, “wait till we are stronger.” We waited until the Russians came, and we were overthrown. Here they say, “wait to see what your governor will do; he promises us railroads and many other things.” I have not much faith in him. His acts are suspicious. “Timeo Dan[a]os et dona fere[n]tes.” (I fear the Greeks though they come with presents.) When we get ready for

railroads, we will build them ourselves. We foreign-born citizens heard the wail of Freedom in Kansas—we were bound to listen to that cry. I speak for the adopted citizens when I say we are with you in the fight. We will not shrink. We are Americans by choice and are proud of our chosen land. The people of the 6th district wish to put the carriage in motion, and they ask of others to help them. They wish to organize under the state government. They do not wish to “wait.”⁵³

The same admonition was also voiced by Kob and Bondi with the minor difference of geographic location. In Kob’s argument the culprits were the Prussians; for Bondi they were the Austrians. Both regretted that the revolutionaries did not exploit the advantages of their initial successes.

At a Topeka convention of July 15 and 16, 1857, Leonhardt was, according to the *Herald of Freedom*, a Hungarian, who “spoke in the same strain [as Daniel Foster], and urged the forming of county organizations, and all the political machinery of towns and cities, and make Kansas a glorious, free Republican independent state.” Leonhardt discovered at this time his talent for making speeches and, together with Daniel Foster, a Unitarian minister who had come to Kansas with the intention of joining John Brown, he traveled back to the east coast to raise funds for the Kansas cause. He claimed to have had at least thirty-six speaking engagements. Foster became his friend and referred to him as “Colonel Leonhardt” and “an exile from his fatherland for liberty’s sake, one of the patriots of the revolution of 1848.”⁵⁴ In Kansas Leonhardt became an active member of General Lane’s militia and his Danites, a secret society whose members had to swear willingness to give up their lives to make Kansas a free state.⁵⁵ In 1859, Leonhardt became acquainted with John Brown, who trusted him and confided his plans for attacking Harper’s Ferry. Richard Hinton suspected that Leonhardt inadvertently revealed the plans to a journalist and thereby assured the failure of that venture.⁵⁶

Leonhardt probably represented the most radical member of Kob’s network. Although there can be no doubt about the former’s sincere commitment to the Free State cause, his claim to be a genuine Forty-eighter is questionable. The writings and records he left behind document years of service in the Prussian army during the revolutionary years and even show that he was part of troops that ended the uprising in Schleswig-Holstein.⁵⁷ His travel to London falls in a period when the Hungarian revolution was over, but much discussed in England. The claims that he fled from Hungary together with Kossuth and served with General Dembinski and General Klapka are also questionable; Kossuth’s flight and the campaigns of Dembinski and Klapka were taking place at a time when Leonhardt was serving officially in the Prussian army. Even as a myth, simply the claim, whether true or not, of participation in the Hungarian revolution has significance. At least two members of John Brown’s fighters, Charles Kaiser and August Bondi, displayed a sincere commitment to the Hungarian cause. In Lawrence, even a slavery advocate made claims to have been a veteran of the Hungarian revolution.⁵⁸

When Louis Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarians, arrived at New York’s Staten Island, he was greeted by a salute of guns. A torchlight parade included the Turner Society of New York.⁵⁹ His speaking tour in 1851 to 1852 throughout the country was widely publicized. James H. Lane, then lieutenant governor of Indiana, introduced

Kossuth to the state legislature. John Brown did not fail to take notice. Although Kossuth was unwilling to articulate a clear stance against slavery, John Brown defended him against critics who expected an abolitionist stand from him. Brown believed that he was “doing more to instruct our young people and to indoctrinate them in the true republican principle than any man has done since the revolution.”⁶⁰ To be a veteran of that Hungarian experience meant suitability for the heroic struggle in Kansas.

Kob's text about the town of Humboldt reveals him as a shrewd planner and politician. He emphasized that the association and elected officials for building this town was “equally divided between Germans and Americans.” Kob could assert this view on the basis of his most recent personal involvement. He was present, after all, when the German settlers had arrived from Hartford and intervened for them in making the transition from Lawrence to Humboldt. It was at this time, in March 1857, that he became acquainted with Dr. Moritz Harttmann, the president of the Humboldt City Association. This was the beginning of a partnership in matters relating to the planned German newspaper and the future of German settlements. On the basis of past experience, he shared with Harttmann the conviction “that the mixed population contributes best to the rapid development of towns.”

On February 20, 1858, Reverend Serenbetz, the leader of the Humboldt settlers, could report the positive developments that had occurred in less than a year. According to him, Humboldt promised to become a vibrant city, a thriving center of commerce, trading primarily with the “rich” Cherokee Indians and later with Arkansas, New Mexico, and Texas. There were now twenty-five houses. In the election of January 4, 1858, Serenbetz reported with confidence that eighty-three votes went for the cause of the Free State. He conceded that the Americans had difficulty pronouncing the names of the German streets. In the same letter Serenbetz also asked Kob to get the word out to his eastern friends that there was a need for German settlers, especially craftsmen such as potters, tailors, cobblers, and coach-builders. (Street names, later to be changed into English names; included the names of the Forty-eighters were Tritschler and Blum [i.e., Wilhelm Adolf Trützschler and Robert Blum].)⁶¹ Although the Humboldt settlement represented a conservative religious community, it was aligned with Kob's political aims in supporting his vision of a “belt of freedom.”

All these men instinctively recognized the significance of John Brown's missionary zeal. Brown, on his part, valued the experiences the revolutionaries brought from Europe, and the awareness of the lessons they brought to Kansas may have influenced him to a degree in moving against proslavery people without any hesitation. For the men who sided with John Brown, the leaders in Lawrence, Charles Robinson, George W. Deitzler, George W. Brown, and Ephraim Nute, were much too moderate. (All were founding members of the Unitarian Society of Lawrence.)⁶² George W. Brown showed his opposition to Kob when he reported in his *Herald of Freedom* with obvious glee, but erroneously, that Kob had been defeated in the election of 1858.⁶³ Although the Lawrence citizens were intent on defending themselves, even with the use of arms, they tried to avoid confrontations with the federal authorities, and they did not approve of the aggressive incursions into Missouri. The Pottawatomie killings by Brown's men became a controversial issue among moderates.⁶⁴ These moderates believed that the overwhelming majority of Free State citizens was a guarantee that the state would eventually secure legitimacy and peace. They considered the voting booths the suitable places to resolve the conflict. On this point there was a clear line

of division, but in these times of frequently violent confrontations, the interests and views of the moderates and radicals often converged.

In historical memory John Brown has survived as the symbol of radical and decisive action in the Kansas crisis. He acted in line with the experience of the Forty-eighters. Kob viewed him and his German followers as heroes. Bondi and Leonhardt expressed disapproval of Brown's designs on Harper's Ferry and his plans for freeing slaves, but Bondi stressed, nevertheless, his positive legacy in Kansas.

Old Capt. Brown was a good, square man, a man steadfast to principles which he had accepted as just and righteous, and if the border ruffians had not developed a tiger-like inhumanity, the Harper's Ferry raid could never have taken place. The free state men of Kansas owe to John Brown gratitude for their success. He and his handful kept together in Taway Camp in May of 1856, accomplished at Black Jack, June 2, 1856, he proved there that the Border Ruffians could be met in the field and defeated with proper energy and pluck. He saved the free state cause then and there from unavoidable defeat which would have been its fate if that action had not been fought or if victory had not been won.⁶⁵

The moderates' position was different, and disagreement about Brown's legacy persists even today. If we consider the question only from the perspective of the German Forty-eighters, however, Bondi's view was precise and just. Kob, Bondi, and their radical allies contributed to making Brown a mythical hero of emancipation. Even if Brown failed to bring about a nation-wide insurrection at Harper's Ferry, his execution transformed his struggle into an enduring legacy.

There have been vigorous challenges to the validity of that heroic image and, by implication, the rejection of any moral justification of the actions Kob and Bondi supported. The result has been an acrimonious, retrospective debate between the conservatives who would allow the use of force only as a defensive measure and those who believe that a revolutionary crisis justifies extraordinary military initiatives. In this case, the debate has centered on a single event of 1856, the so-called Pottawatomie massacre.⁶⁶ If we take into account the tensions and conflicts between conservatives and radicals on this or other related events, in the camp of the conservatives the name of Charles Robinson becomes prominent. He was the leader of the Free State settlement from the very beginning. Because of the unprecedented and rapid influx of immigrants from northern states Robinson confronted an unstable and constantly changing political situation. When the Border Ruffians attacked and destroyed Lawrence's Free State Hotel and the printing presses on May 21, 1856, and when a number of Free State leaders, including Robinson, were imprisoned by the federal authorities, the purely defensive policy was difficult to justify.

Without waiting for approval, John Brown took matters into his own hands and led a campaign of killings to frighten proslavery forces. The Pottawatomie killings, which Bondi describes only in vague terms, took place under Brown's direction. Whether those killings, clearly not a direct response to persons involved in the Lawrence attacks, could be justified morally and politically was a question that Robinson answered in different ways at different times. Before the Missouri attack on Lawrence, during the earlier dramatic confrontations of the Wakarusa War in

December 1855, Robinson could still insist on a defensive posture. With this view he was in disagreement with Lane, who was eager to take the offensive.⁶⁷ John Brown come to Lawrence with his sons and offered to help, but it became evident that he was not satisfied with a passive response to Border Ruffian attacks. Robinson was for him “a perfect old woman.”⁶⁸ During a public meeting in Lawrence during this crisis Brown protested about the wisdom of a treaty with the state authorities represented by Governor Shannon, but he was not allowed to explain his point of view. Brown left in disgust because the “broken-down politicians . . . would rather pass resolutions than act.”⁶⁹ According to one newspaper report, Brown proposed immediate advance against the “invaders, drive them from the soil, or hang them if taken.”⁷⁰

Robinson’s moderate approach was based, on the other hand, on the proposition that the Free State party could “outlast” the proslavery attacks and incursions. He was intent on avoiding provocation in face of the possible intervention of federal authorities on the side of the Border Ruffians. In light of the radical position, Robinson was fighting a war on three fronts. Robinson calculated, in light of the massive immigration, that Free State Kansas was destined to prevail. In August 1857 he declared that he had no doubts about the triumph. “From the census returns I am satisfied there is not a district in the Territory in which we have not a large majority of voters.”⁷¹ In the summer of 1857 the New England Emigrant Aid Company was convinced that the Free State cause had triumphed and ceased its aid to Kansas. Amos Lawrence resigned as treasurer.⁷²

John Brown’s views were not very different on this particular question. Considerably earlier, in February 1857 Brown asserted in an interview that “. . . as Missouri had undertaken to make a slave state of Kansas and failed . . . Kansas should make a free state of Missouri.”⁷³ At this early stage Brown already contemplated the extension of the struggle beyond Kansas. For Brown the crisis had to be seen in national terms, and that conflict could be settled only militarily. He had studied Napoleon’s military campaigns, and when he made a business trip to Europe briefly in 1849, he showed interest in the battlefields of Napoleon, which he visited. He reflected on the mistakes the general had made, and he focused on alternate strategies. Brown also read the life of Oliver Cromwell, probably because he could be a model for combining religious zeal with realistic military planning. Hugh Forbes, a veteran of the Italian revolutions of 1848 and 1849 and trusted agent of Mazzini and Garibaldi, was familiar with the plans of the European revolutionary organizations and leaders. Based on his experience irregular warfare (guerrilla fighting), he wrote a bulky *Manual*. In early summer 1857 Brown paid Forbes to condense his book into English. In planning for the future, Brown was clearly looking beyond Kansas.⁷⁴

Prominent Kansas politician General James H. Lane represented a strategy that was not purely defensive. Although not an abolitionist, Lane urged his followers to take actions to drive the proslavery settlers out of Kansas. Bondi participated in a meeting in which Lane “baptized” the fighters against the Border Ruffians as Jayhawkers:

. . . after a short speech, he enrolled all present (about 150) as the first members of the Kansas Jayhawkers. He explained the new name in this wise: As the Irish Jayhawk with a shrill cry announces his presence to his victims, so must you notify the proslavery hell-hounds to clear out or vengeance will

overtake them. Jayhawks, remember, “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,” but we are his agents. So originated the name, Jayhawks (corrupted Jayhawkers), afterwards applied indiscriminately to all Kansas troops.⁷⁵

Although there is no evidence that an Irish bird of this name ever existed, we can accept Bondi’s word that this “first” use certainly could have been the powerful catalyst for the mythical creature that later acquired a will of its own.⁷⁶ In Lane’s formulation the Jayhawker was under divine guidance to clear out the “proslavery hell-hounds.” The justification of political and military campaigns with the Bible was not foreign to John Brown but alien to conservatives like Robinson and George W. Brown, the editor of the *Herald of Freedom*. Both Robinson and Brown belonged to the Unitarian church of Lawrence, a liberal organization, whose members, with strong support from the New England Emigrant Company, influenced events in the 1850s. They tended to favor non-violence.

George W. Brown, who welcomed John Brown to join the struggle in Lawrence initially and introduced him to Robinson, almost immediately reversed his view of the man and rejected his impulsiveness, which Captain Brown exhibited in the Wakarusa confrontation:

A small military company was organized at once, and the command was given to Old Brown. From that hour he commenced fomenting difficulties in camp, disregarding the commands of superior officers, and trying to induce the men to go down to Franklin and make an attack upon the Proslavery forces encamped there. The Committee of Public Safety w[as] called upon several times to head off his wild projects . . .⁷⁷

Whereas the editor of the Lawrence-based *Herald of Freedom* rejected Brown almost from the beginning and did not waver subsequently, Robinson’s evaluation was weighed down by contradictions. The problem began with Robinson’s letter of September 13, 1856, when, responding apparently to a request from John Brown, he wrote about the captain in generous terms:

History will give your name a proud place on her pages, and posterity will pay homage to your heroism in the cause of God and humanity. Trusting that you will conclude to remain in Kansas, and serve “during the war” the cause you have done so much to sustain. . . .⁷⁸

About more than twenty years later Robinson was still able to express very positive sentiments:

The soul of John Brown was the inspiration of the Union armies in the emancipation war, and it will be the inspiration of all men in the present and distant future who may revolt against tyranny and oppression; because he dared to be a traitor to the government that he might be loyal to humanity. To the superficial observer John Brown was a failure. So was Jesus of Nazareth. Both suffered ignominious death as traitors to the government,

yet one is now hailed as the savior of a world from sin, and the other of a race from bondage.⁷⁹

Robinson lived to regret his excessive generosity, which then made it all the more difficult for him to destroy the heroic image that he had helped to promote. In 1883 David N. Utter initiated a lively debate after Robinson's eulogy to Brown, and the controversies, and new evidence about the Pottawatomie killings forced Robinson to review the events now in the distant past. He wrote to Amos Lawrence that "until the testimony of Mr. Townsley appeared, many Free State men apologized for the massacre on the ground that the men killed were worthy of death for their crimes. With these apologies I sympathized . . ." ⁸⁰ Robinson became convinced that the "massacre" of Pottawatomie did significant damage to the cause that it was supposed to promote. The result was more bloodshed and war. In this reversal the hero and martyr became suddenly a villain; the reversal took Robinson back to his original, conservative strategy to outlast the proslavery forces rather than to defeat and destroy them.

The inconsistency in the person of Robinson reflects hostilities and conflicts that only increased in intensity through retrospection. Robinson's biography indicates that at least in one period of his life he was inclined to accept and tolerate the validity of certain radical actions in the context of revolutionary circumstances. The engagements of Pottawatomie, Black Jack, and Osawatomie took place at a time of Robinson's imprisonment by the federal authorities as traitor. At that time Kansas could not be certain that Robinson's strategy would prevail. Robinson must have reflected seriously on the possibility that revolutionary situations might require extreme measures. Thus, for a brief period in 1856 the distinction between conservative and radical must have become blurred. Robinson's concession to the radical contribution bypassed the question of guilt for Pottawatomie; the crisis of 1856, a crisis of survival for the Free State settlers, suspended for many strict moral considerations. Many believed, apparently even Robinson, that at this critical point in time the end justified the means.

The unresolved controversy about who may take the law into his own hands, when, how, and for what cause is interwoven in an unresolved form in the fabric of Kob's and Bondi's texts and subtexts. The texts show that the German network was not necessarily aware of Brown's religious guidance. Kob and Bondi focused on freedom for Kansas; they did not become followers of Brown's mission beyond Kansas. Bondi at least did not think that Brown's plan to free the slaves in the South was realistic, and Kob's conception of a "belt of freedom" did not envision offensive military campaigns. The texts, nevertheless, share a strong admiration for Brown's zeal and idealism, and they promote his heroic image. For Kob and Bondi the conviction that slavery was wrong and had to be abolished, and therefore the revolutionary struggle, even in the form of the Pottawatomie killings, was a just one. If John Brown required justification for his mission in Kansas, the radical German Forty-eighters were willing to provide it.

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Notes

¹ John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants* (New York: Harper & Row, [first published in 1964] 1986), p. 54.

² Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2004), p. 31.

³ George W. Julian, "The First Republican National Convention," *The American Historical Review* 4 (1899): 313–22.

⁴ William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852–1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 325–41.

⁵ The original letter was dated October 7, 1850, *Weekly Chicago Democrat* on July 19 and *New York Daily Tribune* on July 15. The text of Humboldt's letter is available in a critical edition by Ingo Schwarz, *Alexander von Humboldt und die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), pp. 275–77; Frémont's book is available at <http://www.longcamp.com/report.html>.

⁶ Gienapp, pp. 414–15 and 441.

⁷ *Atlas* of Boston, Oct. 18, 1856.

⁸ Ernest Bruncken, "German Political Refugees in the United States during the Period from 1815 to 1860 (1815 to 1860)," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter* 3–4 (1903–4): 53–54, reprinted in Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Forty-Eighters (1848-1998)* (Indianapolis: Max Kade, 1998), pp. 52–53.

⁹ Adolf Douai, "Lebensbeschreibung," manuscript deposited with the Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, p. 180.

¹⁰ Bruce Levin, *The Spirit of 1848. German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 91–92. Cf. Justine Davis Randers-Pehrson, *Adolf Douai, 1819–1888: The Turbulent Life of a German Forty-Eighter in the Homeland and in the United States* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 249–78.

¹¹ *The Atlas* of Boston, Sept. 12, 1856; *The Atlas* reported on August 27 that Kob participated in a Boston event organized for the friends of Frémont.

¹² For general information on Kob's life see the obituaries in the *Leavenworth Daily Times*, March 6, 1861 and the *Lawrence Republican*, March 14, 1861. *The Lawrence Republican* reports that in 184[9] Kob was "first surgeon in the Schleswig-Holstein war against Denmark." This would have been a high rank for man of only about twenty-nine years of age. I have not been able to verify this claim in German military records. Kob's studies are verified in the Koeingsberg student records for the years 1840 to 1845. *Amtliches Verzeichnis des Personals und der Studierenden auf der Königl. Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Königsberg: Hartungsche Hof- und Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1835–1921). Kob married Emilie Horst of Holstein. On June 20, 1851, she had arrived in New York with her father Barnard Horst, a merchant, her mother, Minna, and five brothers and sisters. According to information made available to me by Judith Ellen Johnson of the Connecticut Historical Society Museum, her father died on March 29, 1852. The information is based on the Charles R. Hale Collection index of headstone inscriptions and newspaper death notices for Connecticut.

¹³ Howard B. Furer, *The Germans in America (1607–1970): Chronology & Fact Book* (New York: Oceana, 1973), p. 43.

¹⁴ Douai, "Lebensbeschreibung," pp. 175–79.

¹⁵ The following persons signed the proclamation: Dr. Kob, Dr. Finois, C. Schmidt, Dr. Douai, and A. Babo. *Der Pionier*, September 24, 1856.

¹⁶ *The Atlas* of Milwaukee, December 13, 1856.

¹⁷ See articles of January 11 and 18 in *Der Pionier*, 1858.

¹⁸ New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Microfilms, reel no. 7, records if meetings, from January 2 to May 29, 1857, reel no. 9, journal of accounts, pp. 31–58. See p. 645 on reel 7 for payments to John Brown on February 18 [to cover visit] to Boston (Cf. Oates, p. 194) and on March 28 to Charles Leonhardt.

¹⁹ Thomas H. Webb, *Information for Kansas Immigrants* (Boston: Mudge, 1855ff.).

²⁰ Kob, *Wegweiser*, p. 75 in this volume.

²¹ New England Emigrant Aid Company Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Microfilms, reel no. 7, records if meetings, May 22 and 29, 1857.

²² Ralph V. Harlow, "The Rise and Fall of the Kansas Aid Movement," *American Historical Review* 41 (1935): 15–16; convention results were reported in the *Boston Atlas* of August 18. The first appeal for aid to forward supplies went out in October, 56, according to a letter by Arny and Thaddeus Hyatt, quoted in the *New York Daily Tribune* of October 11; Arny arrived in KS a few days later, see report of Oct. 24 in

the *New York Daily Tribune*; Arny reported on the destitute conditions he found there, published in the *Boston Atlas*, on November 1, 56. Although Arny's Chicago records were destroyed in the great Chicago fire, much can be reconstructed in newspaper records.

²³ Wilhelm Kempf became Kob's real estate partner (see ad in Kob's frequent ads in his *Kansas Zeitung* and in the *Wegweiser*). He was also involved in the military preparations to protect the ballot boxes against fraud. Kob is reported to have "laid out" the town, another ghost town. According to the *Freedom's Champion*, it was on Independence Creek, about ten Miles from Atchison and twenty-five miles from St. Joseph. Information supplied by Rita L. Noll, *The Early Settlements of Atchison county* (Atchison: ACKGS, 1997), p. 35. Kempf was also active in the *Turnverein* militia. See n. 32 below.

²⁴ September 4, 1856, *Boston Atlas*.

²⁵ Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, *Life and Letters of John Brown* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [first printed in 1885]), p. 362;

²⁶ *Kansas Zeitung*, July 22, 1857. This newspaper is available online at http://www.kckcc.edu/territorial_news/territorial_news. Cf. Eleanor L. Turk, "The Germans of Atchison, 1854–1859: Development of an Ethnic Community," *Kansas History* 2 (1979): 146–56.

²⁷ *Kansas Zeitung*, July 22, 1857. Since Moritz Harttmann was the agent for Lawrence, it is conceivable that the author of this view is not Kob. Cf. Frank Baron and G. Scott Seeger, "Moritz Harttmann (1817–1900) in Kansas: A Forgotten German Pioneer of Lawrence and Humboldt," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 39 (2004): 14–16.

²⁸ *Kansas Zeitung*, February 3, 1858.

²⁹ *Kansas Zeitung*, September 2, 1857.

³⁰ The document was published with the date August 26, 1857. The signatures are on p. 7. See Territorial Kansas Online. <http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/cgiwrap/imlskto/index.php>.

³¹ *Kansas Zeitung*, December 30, 1857.

³² *Kansas Zeitung*, January 20, 1858. For confirmation of the accuracy of this newspaper report, one may consult the muster roll for the "Volunteers for the Protection of the Ballot Box," Leavenworth County. Kansas State Historical Society, "History, Military, Oversize 3, #102905." This source, poorly photographed, is supposed to show Wilhelm Kempf, Kob's real estate partner, as the captain.

³³ Samuel A. Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom: The New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Crusade* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 251. See n. 72 below.

³⁴ *Leavenworth Zeitung*, November 20, 1858.

³⁵ *Leavenworth City Directory*, 1859-1860; 1860-1861; *Herald of Freedom*, February 19, 1859; cf. Baron and Seeger, p. 16.

³⁶ Bondi, August, *Autobiography of August Bondi, 1833-1907* (Galesburg, Il: Wagoner Printing Co., 1910), p. 104 in this volume.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁸ The *New York Daily Times*, on Jan. 6, 1855, was more specific in encouraging German immigration:

"... the true policy of those associations in Massachusetts and New York is not especially to induce new England or New York settlers to emigrate, but to turn to Kansas the great currents of German immigrants. . . . The Bavarian, the Rhineland, the Prussian, the Bohemian know what is tyranny. Some have themselves felt the lash and the fetters; and all have felt the shame of slavery. They have too long seen one class absorbing the unearned means of another class; they have too long struggled against the close bonds of a political mastership, to wish to behold the same system on this free land. Slavery in Austria and slavery in Kansas will not seem to them two so different institutions. . . . The Germans in America, where the question has been presented by itself, and where they have understood it, have been on the side of liberty. . . . Why should not advantage be taken of all these favorable circumstances to lead this immigration into the Nebraska-Kansas territories! The Germans are pouring into the country; they are good laborers, fitted in some practical course, to direct these men into this new country, where the great battle of freedom is being fought!"

³⁹ Bondi, "Reminiscences," p. 28, part of the Utter articles, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. Bondi also has published segments of his reminiscences in the article "With John Brown in Kansas," *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society* 8 (1904): 275–89. Kaiser was involved in the Free State movement as early as December 1855, when he joined forces that were freeing Branson, who had been taken prisoner during the Wakarusa confrontations. See report of Colonel S. N. Wood. Robinson, p. 186.

⁴⁰ Levine, p. 150–51; *New York Daily Tribune*, August 26 and September 9, 1851.

⁴¹ See Kob, *Wegweiser*, p. 55 in this volume.

⁴² In a letter of September 7, to his wife, John Brown refers to 400 enemy men. He had twenty-six to thirty men on his side. He thought that his group had killed and wounded seventy to eighty men. Sanborn, pp. 317–8. Kob is entirely inaccurate when he makes this battle out to be a victory. In this case, John Brown was forced to flee, but the Border Ruffians were not.

⁴³ See the *Weekly Chicago Democrat*, Sept. 13, 1856; cf. Sanborn, pp. 290, 296, and 301 (the figure of forty to fifty wounded and thirty-one killed.) pp. 314–23.

⁴⁴ <http://members.aol.com/LCGSgen/updegraff.htm>.

⁴⁵ Kob, *Wegweiser*, p. 80 in this volume.

⁴⁶ *Kansas Zeitung*, November 7, 1857.

⁴⁷ Randers-Pehrson, pp. 183–216.

⁴⁸ See the website of Territorial Kansas. Lawrence R. Murphy published his account of exploration: Indian Agent in New Mexico: *The Journal of Special Agent W. F. M. Army, 1870* (Santa Fe: Stagecoach Press, 1967). After 1861 Army served in the administrations of Lincoln and Johnson in Indian affairs.

⁴⁹ *Kansas Zeitung*, April 17, 1858, Baron and Seeger, p. 15.

⁵⁰ Johnson, p. 215–16, 265; the Kansas States Historical Society has the Hyatt papers.

⁵¹ Kob, *Wegweiser*, p. 79 in this volume.

⁵² Todd Mildfelt, *The Secret Danites: Kansas' First Jayhawkers* (Winfield, Kansas: Central Plains Books, 2003).

⁵³ *The Kansas News* of Emporia, Kansas, June 20, 1857. On another occasion Leonhardt said about his European experiences: "I had received the bloody baptism of fire on some of the European battle fields in the eventful years of 1846 to 1849 inclusive when Germany, Poland and Hungary attempted to throw off the galling yoke of the tyrants. Great as these events have been . . . I am compelled to place them in background, when compared with the might uproar and toils of the great anti-slavery tumult here . . ." Mildfelt, pp. 14 and 17.

⁵⁴ Mildfelt, p.18. Leonhardt and Foster cooperated to establish Russel, eventually to become a paper town. Charles Richard Denton, "The Unitarian Church and 'Kansas Territory,' 1854–1861," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 30 (1964): 307–38 and 455–91, especially 484–85.

⁵⁵ Mildfelt, p. 25.

⁵⁶ Richard J. Hinton, *John Brown and His Men* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1894), pp. 253–57.

⁵⁷ Leonhardt probably arrived in the United States on May 22, 1854. A Carl Leonhardt is listed as being twenty-six years old. Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby, *Germans to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports, 1850–1855* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), vol. 7, p. 138. (his year of birth is given elsewhere as May 13, 1827. See Mildfelt, p. 13. Periods of military service in the Prussian army: April 1 to 20, March 1, 1848; May 11 to August 22, 1848; April 11 to October 11, 1949; December 20, 1850 to January 29, 1851. Completed service on November 1, 1851.—Departure to London in December 4, 1849 to September and returning on November 16, 1850. Kansas State Historical Society, Leonhardt, Coll. 415. There are conflicting reports in various sources about Leonhardt in Hungary. His associations with Kossuth, Dembinski, and Klapka could not be confirmed. See István Hajnal, *A Kossuth-Emigráció Törökországban* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1927), vol 1, Dénes Jánossy, *A Kossuth-Emigráció Angliában és Amerikában. 1851–1852* (Budapest, Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1940 and 1948, two vols., Alfonsz Danzer, *Dembinski Magyarországon* (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1874), Georg Klapka, *Memoiren von Georg Klapka: April bis October 1849* (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1850).

⁵⁸ Sara Robinson, *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life* (Boston: Crosby and Nichols, 1856), p. 87.

⁵⁸ *Republik der Arbeiter*, December 13, 1851. "As if intoxicated, the people were in a frenzy at the sight of Kossuth; their enthusiasm bordered on delirium." Because of this uproar, Kossuth was unable to address the crowd. John H. Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America. 1851–1852* (Buffalo, New York: East European Institute, 1973), p. 80.

⁶⁰ Louis DeCaro Jr., *A Fire from the Midst of You: A Religious Life of John Brown* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), p. 199.

⁶¹ Baron and Seeger, p. 20, note 23; *Kansas Zeitung*, February 3, 1858.

⁶² Denton, p. 456.

⁶³ *Herald of Freedom*, October 9, 1858. Cf. October 30, 1859 issue of the same paper.

⁶⁴ Johnson, pp.183–185.

⁶⁵ Bondi, *Autobiography*, p. 150 in this volume.

⁶⁶ This focus avoids the issue of allowing blacks into Kansas. John Brown was angered by the fact that Free State politicians were interested in preserving Kansas only for whites. James Redpath, *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860), p. 103.

⁶⁷ Don W. Wilson, *Governor Charles Robinson of Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1975),

p. 34.

⁶⁸ Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), p. 109.

⁶⁹ Etcheson, p. 109. Cf. *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 109. William A. Phillips, *The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and Her Allies: A History of the Troubles in Kansas from the Passage of the Organic Act until the Close of July 1856* (Boston: Phillips, Samson and Co., 1856), p. 222.

⁷⁰ Charles Robinson, *The Kansas Conflict* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), pp. 208–9.

⁷¹ Robinson, p. 356. During the discussions, the conditions for the upcoming elections were the main topic. Cf. Wilson, p. 52.

⁷² Russel K. Hickman, “Speculative Activities of the Emigrant Aid Company,” *The Kansas Historical Quarterly* 4 (1935): 254–5.

⁷³ William A. Phillips, “Three Interviews with Old John Brown,” *Atlantic Monthly* 44 (1879): 742.

⁷⁴ Hinton, pp. 146–152. Hugh Forbes, *Manual for the Patriotic Volunteer on Active Service in Regular and Irregular War. Being the Art and Science of obtaining and Maintaining Independence* (New York: De Witt & Davenport, 1855²), 2 vols. Contrary to what Hinton writes, a translation was not necessary; the two-volume work existed in English as early as 1855. The payment to Forbes was perhaps primarily for training Brown’s men.

⁷⁵ Bondi, pp. 148–49.

⁷⁶ Describing events of December 1857, Bondi’s text is interesting because it supplies the earliest known report on the use of the designations of Jayhawkers and Jayhawk. Cf. Mildfelt, pp. 26 and 72.

⁷⁷ This excerpt comes from an article of *Herald of Freedom*, October 29, 1859. Quoted in James C. Malin, *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1942), pp. 20–1 and also in Redpath, p. 86 and Robinson, 264.

⁷⁸ Sanborn, pp. 330–31.

⁷⁹ Sanborn, pp. 324–25. Henry David Thoreau also compared Brown to Jesus. Cf. Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence, *Captain and the Crusade against Evil: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), p. 172–73. Thaddeus Hyatt wrote to John Brown on November 14, 1857: “Your courage, my brother, challenges the admiration of men! Your faith, the admiration of angels! Be steadfast to the end!” Malin, pp. 286–87.

⁸⁰ Robinson, p. 483. Robinson quotes from James Townsley’s confession about his role in the killings, pp. 265–67.