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# Victims of Downing Street: Popular Pressure and the Press in the Stoddart and Conolly Affair, 1838-1845

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Victims of Downing Street:

Popular Pressure and the Press in the Stoddart and Conolly Affair, 1838-1845

by

Sarah Emily Kendrick

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by  
Professor Johnathan Pettinato  
Department of History

Spring 2016

## Abstract

During the summer of 1842, Emir Nasrullah of Bukhara, in what is now Uzbekistan, beheaded Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stoddart and Captain Arthur Conolly, two British officers sent to his kingdom on a diplomatic mission. Reports of the officers' deaths caused an uproar across Britain, and raised questions about the extent to which Britons abroad were entitled to government protection. Historians have generally examined the officers' deaths exclusively in the context of the Great Game (the nineteenth century Anglo-Russian rivalry over Central Asia) without addressing the furor the crisis caused in England. By focusing too narrowly on the relevance of this crisis to the Anglo-Russian relations, scholars have overlooked the way Britons of the 1840s interpreted the crisis. This thesis argues that in order to understand the Stoddart and Conolly crisis fully, historians must also consider the British response to it, both in the press and in the form of a popular campaign. Seen in this light, the Stoddart and Conolly crisis is significant not merely as an event in the history of the Great Game, but also as an incident which raised lasting questions about the extent of the government's responsibility to and for its agents.

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I am also grateful for the Copeland funding that allowed me to travel to London in order to access archival materials for this project at the British Library and the National Archives. The week I spent reading letters written by and about Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly was easily the highlight of this project, and the information I obtained has greatly improved the result. The staff of the British Library Asian and African

Studies Room were staggeringly helpful, and I greatly appreciate their willingness to answer my many questions.

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Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my family, to whom I owe far more than a line in my thesis acknowledgements. I cannot find words to express my thankfulness for their love and support in this and every aspect of my life.

## A Note on Transliterations and Titles

The primary sources consulted for this project transliterate key place names, ethnic identifiers, and titles in a number of ways, and their preferred transliterations are rarely those accepted by convention today. Because the differences are uniformly minor, I have chosen to adopt modern spellings of towns and terms for ethnicities for my own text, though I have not altered the spellings when I quote from primary sources. For most names and titles, because they are largely unfamiliar to the twenty-first century reader, I have adopted the most common spelling in the primary sources, again maintaining original spellings in direct quotations from those sources. I have made an exception to this rule with the title “emir,” however, because a familiar modern spelling exists. Below is a list of key locations, terms for ethnicities, and titles, as I have chosen to spell them, along with their more common manifestations in primary source material and, where appropriate, a definition.

The meanings of terms such as “Central Asia” and “Turkestan” vary by author, and are not always clearly defined. For the purposes of this project, I have defined Central Asia as including the khanates of Kokand and Khiva and the emirate of Bukhara, but not Afghanistan. Some scholars do treat Afghanistan as part of Central Asia. However, for the period with which I am concerned, it was subject to different British policies than the Uzbek khanates and Bukhara. Therefore, for the sake of precision, I have chosen not to include it in my definition of Central Asia. The modern countries of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, and the Chinese province of Xinjiang, are also frequently incorporated into definitions of Central Asia. I have excluded them here, not



because I believe they ought to be categorized differently, but simply because they did not enter significantly into early Victorian British foreign policy. In the newspapers of the day, the terrain between Orenburg and Khiva was treated as a wasteland; it is unfortunately far beyond the scope of this project to question that understanding.

**Bukhara** Bokhara. Located in modern south-central Uzbekistan, both the name of an emirate and the name of that emirate's capital city.

**Emir** Ameer, Amir. The Emir of Bokhara is sometimes referred to as its king in British sources. He is also sometimes called a khan, though this term more accurately applies to the rulers of Kokand and Khiva.

**Nayeb** Wolff translates this term as "lieutenant." The nayeb Abdul Samut Khan was most important official of the emir's court in the experiences of Stoddart, Conolly, and Wolff. His primary role seems to have been that of military advisor to the emir, and it is a role he seems to have acquired on the basis of knowledge and experience rather than other factors. See Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the Years 1843-1845, to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845), 200

**Topchi bashi** The Bokharan chief of artillery, who takes over some of the responsibilities of the Qush-begi when necessary. See Nikolai Khanikoff, *Bokhara: Its Amir and Its People* (trans. Baron Clement A. de Bode,

London: James Madden, 1845), 245.

Qush-begi        Goosh-Bekee. The vizier, the administrative head of the region  
(Kush-beghi)    immediately surrounding the city of Bokhara. See Nikolai Khanikoff,  
*Bokhara: Its Amir and Its People* (trans. Baron Clement A. de Bode,  
London: James Madden, 1845), 242f.

## Introduction

Imprisoned and forbidden to write, Captain Arthur Conolly, of the British East India Company, used the margins and blank pages of a Christian prayer book to surreptitiously record his experience as a prisoner of the emir of Bukhara. His situation was dire; he and fellow prisoner Lieutenant Colonel Charles Stoddart, of the British Army, had been prisoners of the emir of Bukhara since December of 1841. Both men were in poor health, and Conolly describes Stoddart as “half naked and much lacerated.”<sup>1</sup> On 11 March 1842, he wrote that he and Stoddart

prayed together, and then said... let him [the emir of Bokhara] do as he likes. He is a demon, but God is stronger than the devil himself, and can certainly release us from the hands of this fiend whose heart he has perhaps hardened to work out great ends by it. And we have risen again from our knees with hearts comforted as if an angel had spoken to them, resolved, please God, to wear our English honesty and dignity to the last within all the misery and filth that this monster may try to degrade us with.<sup>2</sup>

Conolly had arrived in Bukhara in December of 1841, having departed for Central Asia from Afghanistan in the fall of 1840. Commissioned with the unenviable task of encouraging friendly relations among the rival Uzbek khanates of Khoqand and Khiva, Conolly travelled to Bukhara on Stoddart’s invitation. Stoddart had been imprisoned and released several times since his arrival in Bukhara in 1838. However, he was enjoying a position of favor in the Bukharan emir’s court during the summer of 1841, and promised Conolly that the emir would treat him with similar distinction. Within days of Conolly’s

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Conolly, “Diary (1840-1842), and Extracts of the Last Letters, of Captain Arthur Conolly,” British Library Add MS 38725, London.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

arrival in Bukhara, however, Stoddart had been arrested once again, and this time Conolly was arrested alongside him. The following summer, both were beheaded at the emir's order when it was discovered that they had attempted to communicate with the outside world without the emir's permission.<sup>3</sup>

When Stoddart and Conolly arrived in Bukhara, the emirate was controlled by the Mangit dynasty, the first non-Chinggisid dynasty to rule in Bukhara since Chinggis Khan's Mongol armies conquered it in the thirteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The emir was Nasrullah Khan, a younger son of the previous emir who had gained the throne by conspiring against his elder brother and murdering him, along with four other brothers,<sup>5</sup> on the basis of which his subjects called him "Amir the Butcher."<sup>6</sup> Under Nasrullah, Bukhara became significantly more autocratic than the neighboring khanates of Khiva and Khoqand. Nasrullah established a standing military, including the artillery for which he later compelled Stoddart to recruit soldiers, which he used both to consolidate his own power within Bukhara and to menace neighboring states. Bukhara competed with Khoqand for supremacy in Central Asia throughout the first half of the nineteenth century; under

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<sup>3</sup> For this version of Stoddart and Conolly's imprisonment and death, see Fitzroy MacLean, *A Person From England: And Other Travelers* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), 80-82; Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kondansha USA, 1994), 230-236, 278f.

<sup>4</sup> Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 180.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the Years 1843-1845, to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845), 190. See also Nikolai Khanikoff, *Bokhara: Its Amir and its People* (London: James Madden, 1845), 295-302.

<sup>6</sup> Yuri Bregel, "The New Uzbek States: Bukhara, Khiva, and Khoqand: c. 1750-1886," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, eds. Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 397.

Nasrullah in 1842, its armies succeeded in capturing the capital of Khoqand.<sup>7</sup> Though the success proved short-lived, Bukhara remained Central Asia's most significant trading center in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Bukhara existed at the outer reaches of British imperial influence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but Stoddart and Conolly were far from the first British visitors to it. A century before Stoddart and Conolly's imprisonment, a merchant known as George Thompson visited Bukhara, hoping to establish a trade relationship between it and Britain. Thompson's venture failed, but an account of it was published in a monograph about British trade in Persia and around the Caspian Sea.<sup>9</sup> Ninety years later, another Briton, Alexander Burnes, visited Bukhara while working for the East India Company. In the intervening years, Bukhara had received other European guests, including another British traveller: the East India company veterinarian William Moorcroft, who arrived in Bukhara hoping to purchase some of the region's famous horses.<sup>10</sup> Although Moorcroft's stay in Bukhara was omitted from his posthumously published travel diary, Burnes authored a lengthy account of his stay in the city, which sold some nine hundred copies on its first day in print.<sup>11</sup> On his return to Britain after his journey's conclusion, he was lauded in the academic societies of the day and welcomed

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<sup>7</sup> Yuri Bregel, "The New Uzbek States: Bukhara, Khiva, and Khoqand: c. 1750-1886," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, eds. Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 397.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

<sup>9</sup> Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea: With a Journal of Travels from London through Russia into Persia; and Back Again through Russia, Germany, and Holland* (London: 1753), 345-357.

<sup>10</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 90f.

<sup>11</sup> James Lunt, *Bokhara Burnes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 168.

into the most elite social circles both in Britain and in France.<sup>12</sup> Though several Britons visited Bukhara before him, then, Burnes seems to have played a more significant role than they in familiarizing the British public with Bukhara's history and culture.

The point of departure for this thesis has been the handful of histories that discuss the deaths of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly in detail. All of these works place Stoddart and Conolly in the context of British policy in Central Asia, and of the political agents, such as Burnes, who advanced it. For some historians, Stoddart and Conolly comprised a noteworthy chapter in this narrative; indeed, Fitzroy Maclean, who published *A Person from England: And Other Travelers* in 1958, devoted an entire ninety-three page chapter to the episode.<sup>13</sup> M.E. Yapp discussed Stoddart and Conolly at some length in a chapter of *Strategies of British India*, in which he combined analysis of the Anglo-Russian rivalry with scrutiny of Stoddart and Conolly's characters and temperaments.<sup>14</sup> Peter Hopkirk, though he chose not to dedicate an entire chapter of *The Great Game* to the story, did report the events in considerable detail in the context of more general British ambitions in Central Asia and Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> For Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, authors of *Tournament of Shadows*, however, Stoddart and Conolly merit only much briefer discussion—a few pages here and there, when most relevant to British fortunes elsewhere in Asia.<sup>16</sup>

As their similar contextualizations of Stoddart and Conolly would suggest, these works rely largely on the same body of sources relating to the officers and their fate. One

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<sup>12</sup> James Lunt, *Bokhara Burnes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 166-171.

<sup>13</sup> Maclean, *A Person From England*, 17-110.

<sup>14</sup> M.E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 381-418.

<sup>15</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*.

<sup>16</sup> Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

of the most important published sources for these accounts was the *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara*, published in 1845 by the Reverend Dr. Joseph Wolff. Wolff knew Conolly before the latter joined Stoddart in Bukhara, and responded to Grover's public plea for someone to travel to Bukhara to determine the truth of rumors about the officers' execution. His *Narrative of a Mission* recounted his journey to and from the emir's court between late 1843 and early 1845, and is generally used to as the source of details regarding Stoddart and Conolly's final months in Bukhara, the facts of which remained uncertain in Britain until Wolff's return.<sup>17</sup> Maclean, Yapp, and other authors who have recently written about Stoddart and Conolly also rely heavily on official government documents on the case, most of which are now held by the British Library and the National Archives in London. These include the letters of Colonel Sheil, the British ambassador to Tehran and London's primary source of official information on the case, as well as letters to and from the Foreign Office in London and a collection of confidential papers (consisting mostly of correspondence) produced by the East India Company.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*.

<sup>18</sup> Foreign Office Series 60, The National Archives, Kew, England, contains all official Foreign Office correspondence relating to Persia for the period in question. Communication between Bukhara and India was minimal due to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan; as a result, most of the government's information on Bukhara and the Uzbek khanates came through Persia. The British Library's holdings on Bukhara are more disparate, but include the volume of confidential papers mentioned here, some of which are transcriptions of Foreign Office letters; see "Further Papers Respecting the Detention of Lieutenant-Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly at Bukhara," British Library, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/2, London. The most important non-official document is Conolly's prison journal, which is also held by the British Library; see Arthur Conolly, "Diary (1840-1842), and Extracts of the Last Letters, of Captain Arthur Conolly," British Library Add MS 38725, London.

Therefore, when scholars from the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have written about Stoddart and Conolly in Bukhara, they have produced narratives of limited scope, focusing only on the events in Bukhara as understood by the British government in London. Though significant, this account of Stoddart and Conolly's fate in Bukhara represents only a portion of the story's significance, and neglects a large body of primary sources relating to the response to the officers' deaths in Britain.

Among the sources that are underutilized in this narrative are the two publications by Captain John Grover, a British army officer who knew Stoddart personally and launched a public campaign to discover the truth of his and Conolly's fate in Bukhara. In 1843, Grover published a pamphlet entitled *An Appeal to the British Nation*. He argued that, contrary to the official version of the crisis, which had been confirmed in Parliament by Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, the emir of Bukhara had not killed the British officers, both of whom remained at Bukhara awaiting release.<sup>19</sup> He presented the same argument in his book *The Bokhara Victims*, published in the spring of 1845, which also included a lengthy account of his efforts to persuade the British Foreign Office of the importance of his cause, his many communications with the press on the matter, and the leading role he took in facilitating Dr. Wolff's journey to Bukhara on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf.<sup>20</sup> Also absent from recent scholars' work are the multitude of newspaper and periodical articles which appeared in papers across Britain, repeating the latest reports from Tehran,

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<sup>19</sup> John Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation in Behalf of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, Now in Captivity in Bokhara* (London: Hatchard and Sons, 1843). For Peel's confirmation of Stoddart and Conolly's death, see Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. vol. 66, col 635 (15 February 1843).

<sup>20</sup> John Grover, *The Bokhara Victims* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845).



Lahore, Bombay, or Constantinople about the officers' fate. Many of these articles reflect either implicitly or explicitly on the appropriate response of the British government to this crisis. Both Grover's writings and these newspaper articles were frequently critical of the government's lack of action in the Stoddart and Conolly crisis.

There is, in fact, another face to the history of Stoddart and Conolly that is almost entirely absent from the sequence of events that Maclean, Hopkirk, Meyer, and Brysac present: the response the crisis occasioned in Britain. Stoddart's imprisonment initially produced relatively little concern in Britain outside his own family; in fact, it was not until rumors that both men were dead began to circulate that public outcry began in earnest. When contradictory reports began to circulate in the weeks and months after the government originally confirmed the officers' execution, what had begun as a tragedy quickly developed into a controversy. Captain John Grover, a friend of Colonel Stoddart, offered to travel to Bukhara himself to determine the true fate of the officers.<sup>21</sup> When the Foreign Office, under Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, refused to sanction his proposal, Grover despaired of being able to help his friend. However, the Reverend Dr. Joseph Wolff, a missionary who had travelled to Bukhara previously, offered to travel to Bukhara without official status from the Foreign Office, and Grover agreed to help him raise funds for the journey.<sup>22</sup> Grover therefore formed a committee, which held public meetings in high-profile lecture and concert halls in London to raise awareness for the officers' fate, and to solicit contributions to fund Wolff's expedition. Throughout the doctor's journey, Grover was his primary correspondent, and regularly forwarded summaries, extracts, or copies of his letters both to the Foreign Office and to the major

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<sup>21</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 48f.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-69.

London newspapers for publication. Largely due to his persistence, the fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly were kept more or less consistently before both the Foreign Office and the newspaper-reading public throughout the lengthy crisis.

It is this second aspect to the tragedy of Stoddart and Conolly that this thesis examines. I argue that to view the Stoddart and Conolly crisis only as an incident in the Great Game—the Anglo-Russian rivalry over Central Asia—is to overlook completely its impact in Britain. The crisis was widely covered in the press, and Grover and Wolff obtained further publicity for it through their campaign. Despite considerable diversity in the press' views of the appropriate government response to the crisis, Grover, Wolff, and commentators in the press were united by a common desire to determine the extent to which the British government bore responsibility for the well-being of its agents abroad. By examining the Stoddart and Conolly affair in this British context, we gain insight into the nature of the early Victorian press and the role of evangelicalism and the missionary in Victorian society. The British aspect of the Stoddart and Conolly affair also raises the question of the government's responsibility for its citizens abroad, which continued to trouble Victorian Britain long after this crisis had ended.

For the purposes of this thesis, I have divided the Stoddart and Conolly affair into two phases. The first began when the initial reports of Stoddart's imprisonment in Bukhara reached the British press in late 1839 and concluded in mid-1843. This phase largely lacked leadership, although several members of the House of Commons occasionally inquired into the government's efforts to secure Stoddart and Conolly's release. In general, however, calls for government intervention in the officers' fate and inquiry into the extent of government responsibility for it came from the press in the form

of anonymously authored news articles. The first and second chapters of this thesis are concerned with this first phase of the crisis.

The first chapter addresses the role that Stoddart and Conolly's Christian faith and moral character played in establishing the government's responsibility toward them: as loyal officers and men of exemplary character, they were deemed a source of national pride, and it was therefore a national obligation either to secure their release or to seek restitution for their deaths. Although not all articles that describe the officers' character or faith explicitly use these factors to call for government action on their behalf, the connection is often made very clear.

The second chapter examines the political context of Stoddart and Conolly's imprisonment and execution. A significant subset of the press coverage during the first phase of the crisis associated the officers' fate with British policy in Afghanistan. Most of these sources concur that the First Anglo-Afghan War impacted the emir's treatment of the officers, even indirectly causing their deaths, but in general only those that supported the invasion of Afghanistan advocated military intervention on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf.

The second phase of the crisis, which I address in my third and fourth chapters, overlapped slightly with the first, beginning in July of 1843, when Captain John Grover began advocating for Stoddart and Conolly, and ending in mid-1845, when Dr. Joseph Wolff returned from his journey to Bukhara. Grover's leadership, the subject of the third chapter of this thesis, dramatically altered the primary focus of the debate surrounding Stoddart and Conolly. In the early years of the crisis, commentators focused primarily on evaluating the government's responsibility to and for its agents. Grover, by contrast,

began by questioning the reports that Stoddart and Conolly had been executed, and therefore directed his attention primarily to discovering the truth about their fate. He publicized his campaign through the formation of a committee that held public meetings, the publication of a pamphlet and a book, and communication with the press and Foreign Office. Due to his influence and persistence, the Stoddart and Conolly affair generated much more, and much more consistent, public attention than it had prior to his involvement.

The fourth chapter examines Joseph Wolff's role in the transformation of the public discourse on the Stoddart and Conolly affair. Wolff played a significant role in shaping the conversation. His dramatic stories and sensational descriptions lent a drama to Grover's campaign that Grover's own activities, limited primarily to letter writing, could not rival. As a traveller to Bukhara, Wolff also contributed to preexisting orientalist literature on Central Asia, in that he wrote about the characters and cultures of the populations he met as he travelled, reinforcing stereotypes of "Eastern" despotism and cruelty and contributing to the burgeoning field of ethnology. Perhaps most importantly, as a well-known Christian missionary, Wolff brought to Grover's cause an audience Grover likely could not have attracted on his own.

## Chapter One:

### Christianity and Character: Stoddart and Conolly as British Heroes

Shortly after the first reports of Stoddart and Conolly's executions began circulating in the British press, the *London Evening Standard* carried a lengthy article recounting Stoddart's career. The article concluded:

Deeply devout in his principles and conduct, unshaken under his severe trials, and even acknowledging in then a spiritual blessing, after a short but eventful career, his arduous duties are closed at the age of 36, beloved and mourned, not only by his relations, but by a large circle of friends, as a sincere Christian, and a soldier devoted to his Sovereign and country.<sup>1</sup>

Such favorable depictions, of which there were many in the press coverage of Stoddart and Conolly's imprisonment and execution, were not merely intended to heighten the tragedy of their deaths. On the contrary, newspaper articles uniformly portrayed both men as loyal citizens, moral men, and devout Christians, characterizations that were integral to the development of a sense of the British government's responsibility for their well-being. Non-newspaper sources indicate that some information on the men's characters was excluded from the press accounts with the intention of strengthening the argument for a governmental obligation toward them. Nevertheless, the information that did see publication in the press was reinforced by other contemporary sources on the crisis, particularly Wolff's and Grover's publications. This chapter, then, will examine the construction of Stoddart's and Conolly's characters in the press in order to understand the

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<sup>1</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 9 February 1843.

role these descriptions played in press analysis of the government's responsibility toward them.

Newspaper articles about the early days of the crisis (prior to any suggestion that Stoddart and Conolly might have been executed) generally mention character traits while discussing the most recent information about the officers' captivity, rather than as an independent point of interest for readers or as an explicit attack on the government's handling of the situation. An early instance of this occurred in July of 1840, when reports began circulating in the press that the Russian government had attempted to secure Stoddart's release from Bukhara. Stoddart's Russian advocate was a general then leading a military assault against the khanate of Khiva. Aware that Russia and Britain were competing for influence in Central Asia, Stoddart refused his assistance. According to one version of the events, he reasoned that "if his own countrymen would not liberate him he would not be indebted to strangers."<sup>2</sup> Although the author of the article did not reinforce this quotation explicitly with his own evaluation of the government's treatment of Stoddart, later articles about the same incident suggest an implicit agreement with Stoddart's criticism, describing Stoddart's behavior as "patriotic."<sup>3</sup> Other articles published before Stoddart's death became public knowledge use similar language; the *Norfolk Chronicle*, for example, described him as a "gallant and meritorious officer."<sup>4</sup>

Such portrayals contrasted sharply with the emir's treatment of him (and of Conolly, who was imprisoned with Stoddart in Bukhara from December of 1841), also frequently discussed in the press. According to the *London Evening Standard*, for

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<sup>2</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 4 July 1840.

<sup>3</sup> *Morning Post*, 9 September 1840.

<sup>4</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 26 June 1841.

example, the emir compelled Stoddart to help him prepare the city of Bukhara for a possible invasion during the Russian march on Khiva by sending men to dig a grave outside the door of his prison cell, with the message that the grave would be Stoddart's if he failed to cooperate.<sup>5</sup> Another report suggested that Stoddart had been exhibited in the Bukharan bazaar "for the bigoted Mahomedans to spit upon."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the gravest insult came with the reports that Stoddart, who had travelled to Bukhara to secure the freedom of the emirate's slaves, had himself been pressed into slavery by the emir, and was helping to strengthen the Bukharan military.<sup>7</sup> When asked about the truth of these rumors in the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston (who was Foreign Secretary when they first appeared in 1840) confirmed that the government believed them to be true, and his response was widely reported in the press.<sup>8</sup> The wide circulation these reports enjoyed presaged the later, more developed orientalism of the ethnological observations Wolff made during his journey to and stay in Bukhara (addressed in a subsequent chapter).

Following Stoddart and Conolly's execution, newspapers articles about their fate praised their character and Christianity more explicitly and therefore relied less on the sort of implicit contrasts mentioned above. For example, one early report of Stoddart and Conolly's deaths adopted a nearly hagiographic tone in its description of the importance of Conolly's moral character in enabling both men to endure imprisonment in Bukhara:

Well was it for Arthur Conolly that he had long accustomed his mind to lean for support on the never failing prop of Christian faith in every exigency. Well was it for Stoddart, that in the hour of his greatest need, a

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<sup>5</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 24 March 1840.

<sup>6</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 24 March 1840; *Falmouth Express and Colonial Journal*, 18 January 1840.

<sup>7</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 28 March 1840.

<sup>8</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 28 March 1840; *Morning Post*, 28 March 1840; *London Evening Standard*, 28 March 1840; *The Champion*, 29 March 1840.

friend should, in so unlooked for a manner, have been raised up to sustain his drooping spirit, and animate him afresh for the fearful conflict between human frailty and Christian duty.<sup>9</sup>

The *Morning Chronicle* was not the only paper to carry this report, which it attributed to the *Delhi Gazette*, and which circulated in other papers in Britain as well.<sup>10</sup>

Stoddart, too, received numerous commendations in the press as a man of devout Christian faith, as the quotation with which this chapter began suggests. Nevertheless, even before news of the executions began to circulate, newspapers printed articles stating that Stoddart had actually converted to Islam during his imprisonment in Bukhara. In some cases, this report occasioned remarkably little concern. One version stated, for example, that as of the spring or early summer of 1840, Stoddart had been released from prison, “and save doing penance as a Mussulman, is comfortable enough.”<sup>11</sup> Subsequent commentary on this event (which neither anyone in the press, nor Grover, nor Wolff contested) took a far less casual approach. The same article that described the support Conolly offered to Stoddart also called on readers not to condemn Stoddart for his wavering faith, reminding them that the conversion was forced, and that his decision to value life above faith was natural, if not commendable. In any case, this article observed, Stoddart’s lapse was momentary: he later renounced the forced conversion and returned to Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to describing his faith, many newspaper articles lauded Stoddart’s character more generally. According to one article, his “mental requirements, his nobility

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<sup>9</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 May 1843.

<sup>10</sup> Notably the *Evening Chronicle*, 12 May 1843.

<sup>11</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 4 July 1840; *Evening Chronicle*, 6 July 1840.

<sup>12</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 May 1843. Grover also went to great lengths to rehabilitate Stoddart’s image as a Christian; see Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, footnote on 13-15.



of soul, his generous chivalry, aided by his commanding stature and soldierly bearing” collectively served to make him a well-liked and well-respected figure in Persia when he served as an envoy there.<sup>13</sup> The *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* delved even further into his past, stating that he “was a favourite not only among his school fellows of his own years, but of his seniors.”<sup>14</sup>

This emphasis on Christianity and morality (including patriotism) developed in the context of early Victorian British religion. Victoria came to the British throne in 1837, and Stoddart and Conolly arrived in Bukhara shortly thereafter, as a wave of evangelical fervor was transforming England. Originating in the early eighteenth century Methodist movement begun by the Wesley brothers, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century evangelicalism had influenced both the Anglican Church and Nonconformists (Protestant Christian non-Anglicans) alike.<sup>15</sup> Across all denominations, Victorian evangelicalism emphasized a dual focus on one’s own conversion and the evangelism of others.<sup>16</sup> Evangelicals valued the influence of faith on the individual’s character and private life, but also emphasized the need to share one’s faith and allow it to impact public choices. As a result, the Victorian period saw the rise of numerous organizations and movements to address social ills, including the mistreatment of factory workers, the frequently unacceptable housing conditions of the poor, alcoholism, and

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<sup>13</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 May 1843.

<sup>14</sup> *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, 25 February 1843.

<sup>15</sup> J. Douglas Holladay, “English Evangelicalism, 1820-1850: Diversity and Unity in ‘Vital Religion,’” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51:2 (1982): 157. Accessed 3 February 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42974720>.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Van der Veer, “The Moral State: Religion, Nation, and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India,” in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, ed. Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 21.

perhaps most notably, slavery and the slave trade.<sup>17</sup> These causes also found representation in Parliament, where many evangelicals were liberal Tories who championed a variety of economic and social causes, including free trade and the abolition of the slave trade and slavery.<sup>18</sup> Among the most famous evangelical Parliamentarians was William Wilberforce, one of the leaders of the abolition campaign.<sup>19</sup> Evangelicalism was also represented in the Victorian military, and the Victorian hymnody demonstrates the church's willingness to use martial metaphors to describe its mission in the world. For many Victorian military men, the metaphor extended beyond hymns sung on Sunday morning, and into their real responsibilities as soldiers.<sup>20</sup>

The movement to abolish the slave trade and slavery had particular significance for Stoddart and Conolly, both of whom travelled to Central Asia in part to encourage local rulers to release some portion at least of their enslaved populations. The anti-slavery movement was not a long-established cause in Britain when they were given their assignments; in fact, although the slave trade had been outlawed in 1807, Parliament only abolished slavery itself in 1833, five years before Stoddart arrived in Bukhara. Early generations of the British abolition movement recognized that the slavery practiced around the Atlantic Ocean differed significantly from the slavery practiced around the

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<sup>17</sup> For a survey of these and other causes championed by Victorian evangelicals, see Julie Melnyk, *Victorian Religion: Faith and Life in Britain* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2008), 86-103.

<sup>18</sup> Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 205-208.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-208.

<sup>20</sup> J. R. Watson, "Soldiers and Saints: The Fighting Man and the Christian Life," in *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture*, ed. Andrew Bradstock, Sean Gill, Anne Hogan, and Sue Morgan, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 19.

Indian Ocean, for example, or in Central Asia.<sup>21</sup> Despite these differences, the 1830s saw the increasingly powerful abolitionist movement demanding that all forms of slavery be universally condemned. This more comprehensive view of all slavery as morally wrong was advocated with particular force at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, which was held in London during the summer of 1840.<sup>22</sup> Unifying this position and its earlier counterpart was the conviction that slavery in any form was a moral blight in the British Empire. Abolition therefore benefitted not only the enslaved, who presumably wished for freedom, but also the enslavers and their rulers, who were ultimately responsible for perpetuating slavery's moral evils.<sup>23</sup>

However, when in 1838 the British envoy in Tehran, Sir John McNeill, received instructions to send an officer to Bukhara to address the situation of that country's

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<sup>21</sup> As B.D. Hopkins has noted, the paradigms of trans-Atlantic slavery cannot be applied to slavery as practiced in other parts of the world. See B.D. Hopkins, "Race, Sex, and Slavery: 'Forced Labour' in Central Asia and Afghanistan in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 42:4 (2008), 631; see also Gwyn Campbell, "Introduction: Abolition and Its Aftermath in the Indian Ocean World," in *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1. A well-developed scholarship exists on the differences between Indian Ocean slavery (with which British abolitionists of the early nineteenth century would have been far more familiar than with its Central Asian counterpart) and trans-Atlantic slavery; for an introduction to Indian Ocean slavery in the nineteenth century see Gwyn Campbell, "Servitude and the Changing Face of the Demand for Labor in the Indian Ocean World, c. 1800-1900," in *Indian Ocean Slavery in the Age of Abolition*, eds. Robert Harms, Bernard K. Freamon, and David W. Blight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 23-36. Central Asian slavery remains comparatively understudied, and Hopkins's article cited above is the best introduction to it. Hopkins argues that Central Asian slaves could obtain higher status than slaves in the trans-Atlantic system; in fact, children born to a slave mother and a slave owning father inherited their father's status, rather than their mother's. See B.D. Hopkins, "Race, Sex, and Slavery: 'Forced Labour' in Central Asia and Afghanistan in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 42:4 (2008), 635, 637.

<sup>22</sup> Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 267f.

<sup>23</sup> Hilary M. Carey, *God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801-1908*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 62.

enslaved population, the motivation was not a sense of moral outrage. We will consider the political significance of Bukhara's slaves in the Anglo-Russian Great Game rivalry over Central Asia in the next chapter. For now, it is important to note that in his written instructions to Lieutenant Colonel Charles Stoddart, McNeill acknowledged the British government's support for universal abolition. Nevertheless, "considerations of humanity... would alone be insufficient to induce the Ruler of Bokhara to depart in this respect from the customs of his country."<sup>24</sup> Rather, Stoddart was to explain to the emir the threat of Russian invasion, and to rely on his self-interest to secure the slaves' release. McNeill made it clear that Britain's concern for the situation was no less self-interested than he expected the emir's to be; he instructed Stoddart not only to attempt to secure the release of the Russian slaves, but also to emphasize the benefits of British rule in comparison to Russian. Muslim states enjoyed far greater freedom under British control than under Russian, McNeill argued, and therefore the emir would be wise to court British influence rather than facing the risks of a Russian invasion.<sup>25</sup>

Thus although it might seem reasonable to assume that Stoddart's mission developed out of British moral outrage over slavery and the slave trade, McNeill's instructions to Stoddart make it clear that the primary motivation was in fact the political advantage of the British Empire in the region. The few details Grover offers regarding Stoddart's Christian faith are insufficient to determine the extent to which Stoddart personally believed in the cause of abolition.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mr. John McNeill to Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stoddart, 10 July 1838, British Library, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, London.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> For Grover's defense of Stoddart's Christian faith, see his extended footnote in *The Bokhara Victims* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845), 13-15.

Conolly, on the other hand, was personally a devoted abolitionist and in fact a friend of William Wilberforce—a fact that tends to corroborate the characterizations of him that appeared in the press during his imprisonment and after his execution.<sup>27</sup> He had joined the East India Company at the age of sixteen, and had since devoted much of his energy to plans to eradicate slavery in Central Asia, believing that its eradication (along with the bringing of Christianity and “civilization” to Asia) should be one of Britain’s primary imperial aims. John William Kaye, who published a series of biographical essays entitled *Lives of Indian Officers*, included Conolly among his subjects as an indication of the influence the individual moral character of a British officer might have in India.<sup>28</sup>

Not content to contribute indirectly to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, Conolly sought to play an active part in it. Having travelled in Central Asia for the first time in 1830,<sup>29</sup> he requested to be sent to Turkestan a second time in 1838, on this occasion with the specific intention of inducing the region’s rulers to abandon the slave trade.<sup>30</sup> Although his proposal met with early approval, the plans were reconsidered in the light of Russia’s failed 1839 expedition to Khiva, which caused British involvement in Central Asia to appear temporarily less urgent.<sup>31</sup> Eventually, however, Conolly secured permission to travel to Khiva and Khoqand. His orders were to strengthen ties between the British and the khanates and between the two khanates

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<sup>27</sup> B.D. Hopkins, “Race, Sex and Slavery”, 650, n. 63.

<sup>28</sup> Kathryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character: The Illusion of Authority*, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2009), 10.

<sup>29</sup> John William Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers, Illustrative of the History of the Civil and Military Services of India*, vol. 2 (London: A. Strahan and Co., 1867), 71.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 83f.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 96f.

themselves. He was granted permission to travel to Bukhara if other efforts to secure Stoddart's release failed, and if it seemed likely that his presence there would be useful.<sup>32</sup>

Of course Conolly did travel to Bukhara at Stoddart's request, only to join him in prison days after his arrival there. In light of his failure to achieve the goals of his mission, it is worth noting one argument which the press scrupulously avoided making in favor of the government's obligations toward Stoddart and Conolly: the argument that they were skilled diplomats making valuable contributions to British policy on Central Asia. In fact, there is strong evidence to the contrary for both officers. Captain Grover, who knew Stoddart personally, stated that, in his opinion, Stoddart was temperamentally very poorly suited to diplomatic work, being "a man of impulse, with no more power of self-control than an infant."<sup>33</sup> Evidence from the India Office Records dating to Stoddart's service under British envoy John McNeill in Persia anecdotally confirms this.<sup>34</sup> In late 1837, Ali Mahomed Beg, a Persian working for the British government, was detained between Herat to Tehran, and taken to the nearby Persian camp, where Stoddart was then staying. Hearing of the situation, Stoddart immediately marched to the tent of the Persian Prime Minister, where he asked Ali Mahomed, in front of an assembled company of breakfasting dignitaries, where his seized baggage was being held. Learning that it was in the tent of a Persian official called Hajee Khan, Stoddart entered into what

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<sup>32</sup> Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers*, 102.

<sup>33</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 4.

<sup>34</sup> For the following account, see John McNeill to Viscount Palmerston, 28 December 1837, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, British Library, London. As far as I have been able to determine, it never made its way into the press—certainly not in connection with Stoddart's mission to Bukhara. It also seems to be absent from scholarship dealing with the period, although it is possible that M.E. Yapp had this incident in mind when he commented on Stoddart's suitability for the Bukhara mission. See Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 410.

poor Ali Mahomed described later as an “altercation” with that official. Hajee Khan then ordered Ali Mahomed to be seized and confined, and released him only after interrogating and threatening to kill him.

The incident inspired a spate of correspondence between Sir John McNeill, Palmerston, and the Persian authorities. McNeill narrowly avoided having to sever diplomatic relations with the Shah completely because of it. Stoddart seems to have escaped relatively unscathed, in spite of Persian calls that McNeill “inflict severe punishment” on his agent.<sup>35</sup> The only indication that the episode affected Stoddart’s career occurs in McNeill’s instructions to him regarding the mission to Bukhara. In them, he urged Stoddart “to guard against that proneness to take offence where no insult was offered or intended,” as, McNeill observed, many Europeans were too quick to take offence at the behavior of Asian populations, with whose customs they were generally unfamiliar.<sup>36</sup> Nowhere does McNeill hint at any reluctance to send such a potentially volatile officer alone on a diplomatic mission.

Conolly struggled to achieve success as a diplomat not because of a fiery temper, but because of his idealistic vision for Central Asia under British influence. His biographer, John William Kaye, wrote, in an essay about Conolly that bordered on hagiography, that Conolly believed the British invasion of Afghanistan to be more “a grand Anti-Slavery Crusade than... a political movement, intended to check-mate the designs of another great European power.”<sup>37</sup> Alexander Burnes, an officer of the East

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<sup>35</sup> John McNeill to Viscount Palmerston, 27 February 1838, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, British Library, London.

<sup>36</sup> John McNeill to Lieutenant Colonel Stoddart, 10 July 1839, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, British Library, London.

<sup>37</sup> Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers*, 83.

India Company who had travelled extensively in Central Asia and Afghanistan, took a distinctly skeptical view of Conolly's moral ambitions for British influence there. Captain Conolly was a likeable man, he wrote, but "flighty," and overly optimistic about British prospects in Central Asia. "[H]e is to regenerate Toorkistan, dismiss all the slaves, and looks upon our advent as a design of Providence to spread Christianity," according to Burnes.<sup>38</sup> Burnes repeatedly expressed astonishment that Conolly was permitted to undertake the mission that led to his arrival in Bukhara.<sup>39</sup> M.E. Yapp has argued that the latter's success in recruiting support for his mission was the result of great personal religious conviction and charisma, and described him as, in this regard at least, an historical version of Dostoevsky's fictional hero Alexei Karamazov.<sup>40</sup>

Although Conolly succeeded in gaining support for his diplomatic ventures among British officials, he was far less successful in obtaining the support of the Central Asian rulers to whom he was sent. Conolly was the third officer the British sent to Central Asia on an anti-slavery commission. The second, Lieutenant Richmond Shakespear, was sent to Khiva when it appeared that the first such envoy, Captain James Abbott, had failed in his mission to secure the release of the city's Russian slaves.<sup>41</sup> Shakespear succeeded where Abbot had failed, and led a caravan of freed Russian slaves out of Khiva and back to Russia.<sup>42</sup> Conolly's brief extended beyond the release of Russian slaves to the total abolition of slavery, in addition to which he was to encourage the khanates of Khiva and Khoqand and the emirate of Bukhara to abandon their

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<sup>38</sup> Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers*, 98.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 403.

<sup>41</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 217-219.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 222-225.



longstanding rivalry in the face of the Russian threat. Neither the khan of Khiva nor the khan of Khoqand mistreated Conolly, but they wanted no part of his mission.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Conolly's only lasting contribution to British position and policy in Central Asia was the coining of the term "the Great Game," by which the Anglo-Russian rivalry over the region is still known.<sup>44</sup>

Neither anything resembling Burnes's criticism of Conolly, nor any hint of the debacle involving Stoddart and Hajee Khan, ever made their way into the press. Newspapers also largely avoided reporting the events of Stoddart's arrival in Bukhara, which, like the Hajee Khan incident, reflected poorly on his diplomatic skill. On the rare occasion that a newspaper decided to print the story of Stoddart's entry into Bukhara, the commentary attempted to justify his behavior by caustically satirizing the demands of Bukharan etiquette. According to one article that adopted this approach, when Stoddart first met the emir, he failed to realize that "it was imperative on all mounted bipeds to alight from their horses and do obeisance to the relative of the sun, moon, and stars (in what degree of consanguinity I am not able to learn)."<sup>45</sup> If Stoddart's fatal mistake was to fail to conform to such patently absurd requirements, then his imprisonment would have seemed correspondingly unreasonable.

However, both Grover and Nikolai Khanikoff, a member of a Russian diplomatic mission that visited Bukhara during Stoddart and Conolly's imprisonment, provide accounts of Stoddart's behavior on his arrival in Bukhara. Their reports suggest that he

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<sup>43</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 234f.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>45</sup> *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 22 August 1840.

repeatedly violated Bukharan customs.<sup>46</sup> Stoddart arrived safely in Bukhara on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1838, and proceeded immediately to a brief and somewhat tense interview with the Bukharan vizier.<sup>47</sup> On the following day, the vizier asked Stoddart to return for a second interview. This Stoddart refused to do, stating that in his own country, the vizier would be expected to return his visit before asking him to make another.<sup>48</sup> The following morning, the first day of Ramadan, Stoddart received a message saying that the emir wished to speak with him, and that he should go to the Registan (the central square of the city) and wait for further instructions there.<sup>49</sup> Stoddart did so, but contrary to instructions remained defiantly on horseback when the emir appeared, and made no other acknowledgement of his presence than a military salute. According to Grover, the emir stared briefly, and did not engage Stoddart in conversation.<sup>50</sup> He later sent a message requesting an explanation of Stoddart's behavior, which Stoddart once again justified as in keeping with English customs. "The Ameer then sent to say," Grover reports, "that he was perfectly satisfied with his conduct; and invited him immediately to come to the palace."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 5-9; Alexey V. Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bokhara in 1842 and the Fate of the English Emissaries Charles Stoddart and Arthur Conolly," *Almagest* 4, no. 2 (2013): 51-53.

<sup>47</sup> Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bokhara," 51; Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 5f. McNeill had sent Stoddart with communications to the Bukharan vizier, but had addressed them to an individual who no longer occupied the position of vizier by the time Stoddart arrived in Bukhara. The new vizier resented the slight, but nevertheless allowed Stoddart to remain in Bukhara.

<sup>48</sup> Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bokhara," 51.

<sup>49</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 5-7.

<sup>50</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 6f; Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bokhara," 51. Grover's account and that prepared by a Russian diplomatic mission that later visited the city disagree as to whether he was to be permitted to ride a horse to the Registan, and then requested to dismount, or whether he was expected to travel entirely by foot.

<sup>51</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 7.

Stoddart continued to insist on conforming to British rather than Bukharan custom once he arrived in the emir's palace. He objected sharply when a member of the court asked if he wished to make "servile supplications" to the emir.<sup>52</sup> He shook off the attendants who, according to Bukharan custom, would have accompanied him into the emir's presence when he was presented to the court, out of a fear that they would compel him to bow or prostrate himself in front of the emir. When he pulled away from the attendants, a nearby official began to suspect him of concealing a weapon with which he might injure the emir. Stoddart hit the man when he attempted to search his clothing, and rushed in to speak with the emir alone. Despite this extraordinary sequence of events, Stoddart left the emir's palace confident in his position in Bukhara, and, according to the Russian diplomat Nikolai Khanikoff, spent the remainder of the day locating addresses of the Russian slaves he hoped to free.<sup>53</sup> On the following day, however, Stoddart was summoned back into the presence of the vizier, where he was immediately arrested, threatened with execution, and imprisoned.<sup>54</sup> Later that night, Stoddart was transported to a dry well, in which he was imprisoned with two thieves and a murderer, and where he stayed for approximately two months.<sup>55</sup>

It seems likely that newspapers omitted this narrative, as well as the Hajee Khan incident and Conolly's excessive idealism, from their accounts of the tragedy as a means of protecting the officers' character. Seen in the light of Stoddart's repeated blunt refusal to conform to Bukharan social norms, the emir's behavior seemed far less unpredictable

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<sup>52</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 7.

<sup>53</sup> Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bokhara," 52. See also Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 8f.

<sup>54</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-16. See also Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bokhara," 52f.

than it might if Stoddart were the reasonable, well-liked man the papers portrayed. Unflattering evidence of this kind might weaken the argument in favor of government intervention in Stoddart and Conolly's fate, and therefore had no part in the press' largely positive depictions of the officers. In describing both officers, therefore, the papers printed only reports and descriptions that tended to portray both men as Christians and loyal ambassadors of the empire.

The translation of these characterizations into explicit calls for government action was only partial in the early stages of the crisis; a coherent and unified appeal to the government only emerged when Captain Grover assumed the role of Stoddart and Conolly's primary advocate in Britain. Nevertheless, the groundwork for this transition was laid both in public sentiment generally and in the specific terms of the newspapers' reporting on Stoddart and Conolly prior to Grover's involvement.

The key development in public sentiment, like many other social shifts influential in the early years of the Stoddart and Conolly affair, originated in the rise of Victorian evangelicalism. Among the innovations of this movement was a new sense of national honor that embraced social, economic, and foreign policy under Victoria's rule. The role of national or imperial honor in ending slavery in Britain has already been discussed. Boyd Hilton, in his history of late Hanoverian British economic thought, addresses the economic aspect of this national honor, which emphasized "frugality, professionalism, and financial rectitude."<sup>56</sup> Peter van der Veer distinguishes between Victorian economic

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<sup>56</sup> Hilton, *The Age of Atonement*, 7.

policy and this sense of national honor, however, suggesting that the latter extended beyond the former.<sup>57</sup>

Though rare at this early stage in the crisis, calls for government intervention in Stoddart and Conolly's fate do exist which explicitly connect the officers' character to the government's responsibility toward them. One article, carried in both the *Evening Chronicle* and the *Morning Chronicle* and apparently taken from the *Delhi Gazette*, argues that:

[a]s Christians, we have grounds for thankfulness that the honour of our religion has been thus upheld by to such worthy votaries; but, as Englishmen, how humiliating that a petty barbarian of Central Asia should thus presume to set at nought our power—that *he* should triumph unpunished—that *they* should perish unavenged.<sup>58</sup>

This was not the only occasion on which a paper called for military intervention on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf, but, as the next chapter will show, such calls tended to occur more frequently among papers that supported British military involvement in other parts of Central Asia, particularly Afghanistan.

Both papers that advocated military engagement and those that did not observed closely the government's own commentary on its proper role in obtaining Stoddart and Conolly's release. When a member of the House of Commons enquired about the government's progress in negotiating with the emir, Palmerston indicated that all efforts had failed up to that point. Both Palmerston's rhetoric and his questioner's reflected the way in which the question had been discussed in the press. Monckton Milnes, who prompted Palmerston to discuss Stoddart and Conolly on this occasion, described Stoddart as "gallant" and inquired into the government's progress on fulfilling its promise

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<sup>57</sup> Peter Van der Veer, "The Moral State," 22.

<sup>58</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 May 1843; *Evening Chronicle*, 12 May 1843.

to secure his release.<sup>59</sup> Palmerston observed in his reply that the treatment Stoddart had received from Emir Nasrullah was unjustifiably harsh, and that his refusal of Russian assistance was “very honourabl[e] and nobl[e].”<sup>60</sup> Some press accounts of this exchange report Milnes’s question in far more sharply worded terms than the official account of the parliamentary proceedings for that day records. According to the *Morning Chronicle*, for example, Milnes described Stoddart as having been subjected to the “grossest indignities,” and compelled to accept the status of a slave.<sup>61</sup> Whether or not they included these harsh words attributed to Milnes, accounts of parliamentary discussion about Stoddart and Conolly’s fate enjoyed wide circulation in the press, indicating that even those papers that did not call for military intervention in the crisis nevertheless inclined to the view that the government had some responsibility for the officers.

Early discussion of the Stoddart and Conolly affair, therefore, was littered with references to Stoddart and Conolly’s personal character as devout Christians and men of character whose loyal service to the empire merited praise. Much of what the press reported was corroborated by other sources, although these other sources also indicate that some information was omitted from the press reports, leaving Victorian readers with a much more favorable impression of the officers’ contribution to British policy in Central Asia (and in Stoddart’s case, of his character as well) than these other sources could confirm. While these flattering depictions did not always appear in the immediate context of a call for direct government interference in their fate at Bukhara, they

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<sup>59</sup> Hansard’s *Parliamentary Debates*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. vol 56, col. 777 (22 February 1841).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 28 March 1840. See also *Morning Post*, 28 March 1840.

capitalized on the unique sense of national honor that evangelicalism had inculcated into British society, and made government intervention in the crisis appear highly desirable.

While the discussion of Stoddart and Conolly's character and Christian identity was frequently associated with only an implicit call for government action, discussion of Britain's military involvement in Central Asia tended to produce much more explicit discussion of the government's responsibility toward the officers. Not only did some papers demand military action on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf, but they also actually accused the government of causing the officers' deaths by implementing a misguided policy in Afghanistan. This political context of the Stoddart and Conolly affair, and its implications for the press' understanding of the government's role in resolving the situation, will be the topic of the next chapter.

## Chapter Two:

### Political Pawns: The Impact of the First Anglo-Afghan War

In January of 1843, the *Newcastle Journal* decried a “criminal policy” enacted by the British government that had “caused the name—the hitherto respected name—of Englishman, to be execrated...and every enemy of the British name to be received with open arms.”<sup>1</sup> The policy in question was the decision to invade Afghanistan in 1839 in order to create a buffer state friendly to Britain between India and Russia. Its dramatic failure and the subsequent expulsion of the British from Afghanistan had implications stretching far beyond Afghanistan. The initial success of the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838-1842) provided what some considered an opportunity to secure Stoddart and Conolly’s release, but this was followed by a catastrophe that played a role in the officers’ deaths. Conolly himself, in the prison journal he kept at the end of his life, traced the beginning of his and Stoddart’s final fall from the emir’s favor to the arrival of news regarding the collapse of British authority in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> As this chapter will show, the press widely viewed Stoddart and Conolly’s fate as a product of British failure in Afghanistan; indeed, conservative-leaning papers that opposed British interference in Afghanistan blamed the British government, rather than the Bukharan emir, for the officers’ death precisely because of the failure of the Afghan invasion.

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<sup>1</sup> *Newcastle Journal*, 21 January 1843.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Conolly, “Diary (1840-1842), and Extracts of the Last Letters, of Captain Arthur Conolly,” British Library Add MS 38725, London.



In order to understand the rationale behind British involvement in Afghanistan (and indeed in Bukhara itself), it is necessary to understand that throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Britain was becoming increasingly fearful of Russia's intentions toward its Indian empire. William Moorcroft, an East India Company veterinarian charged with the care of the Company's cavalry horses, and possibly the first British visitor to Bukhara since the late Middle Ages, wrote frequent reports about the Russian presence in Central Asia. Although he admitted that it was a commercial presence, he recognized the ease with which the Russian military might become involved. As a result, he repeatedly warned the British government to guard India's northwestern frontier, which he feared would become the Russian entrance into India from Central Asia and Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> Moorcroft's concern was not mere alarmism, as Russian trade with Central Asia had increased dramatically since the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Nor was he alone in his concern. In October 1829, Colonel de Lacy Evans published a book entitled *Practicability of an Invasion of British India*, alerting the government to the possibility of invasion from the northwest.<sup>5</sup> Although this work was not consistently well received, the following January Ellenborough authored a dispatch inspired by it, similarly proposing a plausible threat to British India through Central Asia.<sup>6</sup>

In general, British Central Asian policy of this period rejected conquest in favor of economic influence, though military control was never entirely eliminated as a

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha USA, 1994), 90f.

<sup>4</sup> M.E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 388.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England, 1830-1902* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 201f.

possibility.<sup>7</sup> Iran, ideally, would serve as a barrier insulating India from Russian aggression but as British influence declined there in the late 1830s, this role was increasingly ascribed to Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup> By the late 1830s, Afghanistan had developed into a region of particular concern, menaced by both Persia (particularly at Herat in the west) and Russia.<sup>9</sup> Foreign Secretary Palmerston (1841-1846) and Prime Minister Melbourne agreed that control over Afghanistan was vital to Britain's Indian interests, and that either Britain or Russia would eventually control Afghanistan completely.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, a plan was developed to oust Afghanistan's current ruler, Dost Muhammad, and replace him with Shah Shuja, the grandson of a former Afghan ruler.<sup>11</sup> Not all thought this a wise course of action, however, including the eventual British envoy to Shah Shuja's court, Alexander Burnes. Burnes had stayed in Kabul for extended periods and had reported frequently during that time that Dost Muhammad was eager to develop a lasting relationship with the British government. For example, when a Russian soldier, Captain Vickovich, appeared in Kabul, Dost Muhammad asked Burnes how (or if) the British would have him received. Burnes recommended the Russian be welcomed, but also that the British be made aware of his intentions, with which request Dost Muhammad willingly complied.<sup>12</sup> Burnes advocated that the British not replace Dost Muhammad, but instead work closely with him to keep Russian influence at bay in Afghanistan.

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<sup>7</sup> J. A. Norris, *The First Afghan War: 1838—1842*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 40.

<sup>8</sup> Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 209.

<sup>9</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 195.

<sup>10</sup> Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England*, 36.

<sup>11</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> Patrick Macrory, *Signal Catastrophe: The Story of the Disastrous Retreat from Kabul 1842*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966), 55f.

Nevertheless, Burnes and other experts in the region predicted that if the British chose to replace Dost Muhammad with Shah Shuja, they would have little trouble doing so.<sup>13</sup> The Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, preferred this course of action to attempting to work with Dost Muhammad because of the animosity that existed between Maharajah Ranjit Singh, an established British ally ruling over a Sikh kingdom in the Punjab, and Dost Muhammad.<sup>14</sup> In order to avoid jeopardizing Britain's relationship with Ranjit Singh, Auckland chose to court his support for British involvement in Afghanistan by proposing that they work together to replace Dost Muhammad with Shah Shuja, to whom Ranjit Singh objected less.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the summer of 1838 was spent in arranging treaties between Britain, Shah Shuja, and Ranjit Singh in advance of the invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> In the initial plans for the invasion of Afghanistan proposed by the British, Britain contributed only an officer corps and advisors to Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja. However, from the earliest negotiations with Ranjit, Macnaghten acknowledged that Britain might be willing to take a more active part in the invasion, and the maharajah consistently pushed for as much British involvement as possible.<sup>17</sup>

As the Army of the Indus (as the invasion force was known) prepared for the march to Kabul, rumors began circulating to the effect that the tsar was preparing to launch an expedition to Khiva and Bukhara.<sup>18</sup> It was under these circumstances that Lord Palmerston instructed Sir John McNeill, the British envoy to Persia, to send an agent to

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<sup>13</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 185.

<sup>14</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 117.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 189f.

<sup>16</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 188f.

<sup>17</sup> Macrory, *Signal Catastrophe*, 71-73.

<sup>18</sup> John McNeill to Charles Stoddart, 10 July 1838, British Library, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, London.

Bukhara to apprise the emir of Russian intentions, and to do anything possible to forestall a Russian invasion. McNeill chose Stoddart for the task, as Stoddart had successfully represented McNeill and the British government to the shah's court during the Persian siege of Herat (eastern Afghanistan) in the summer of 1838, and was therefore not too far distant from Bukhara.<sup>19</sup> On instruction from Palmerston, McNeill had directed Stoddart to inform the shah that if Persian forces succeeded in taking Herat, Britain would be forced to declare war against Persia. The shah agreed to withdraw his forces, and in a letter to Palmerston, McNeill observed that Stoddart had executed his mission particularly well.<sup>20</sup>

In the previous chapter, I described Stoddart's entry into Bukhara and his numerous altercations with the Bukharan emir, Nasrullah, and his officials, which resulted in his arrest and imprisonment. While Stoddart was confined in the bug-infested well that the emir used to imprison particularly nefarious criminals, the Army of the Indus was marching toward Kabul. The logistical challenges of the trek were enormous: alpine passes impeded the progress of the troops and accompanying supplies, and local rulers demanded large bribes to allow them to continue on their way.<sup>21</sup> To make matters worse, camels, rather than ponies, had been purchased as the primary pack animals. Ill-suited to the steep terrain and frequently unable to differentiate the poisonous from nonpoisonous among the unfamiliar herbage, many of the camels died early in the

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<sup>19</sup> *Reading Mercury*, 18 February 1843.

<sup>20</sup> John McNeill to Viscount Palmerston, 11 September 1838, British Library, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, London.

<sup>21</sup> Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 88.

invasion.<sup>22</sup> The British officer corps of the mission had prepared more for a military parade than for an invasion, as some of the junior officers had brought as many as forty servants with them.<sup>23</sup>

Notwithstanding initial difficulties, the first phase of the Afghan conquest succeeded when Shah Shuja was able to claim the city of Kandahar, then under the control of a brother of Dost Muhammad, without violence. The city's ruler fled as the Army of the Indus approached, and its citizens welcomed the shah and his forces.<sup>24</sup> The next city, Ghazni, proved more difficult. A small team placed explosive charges on the city's gates, thus gaining the army entrance into the city. In the ensuing battle, the British sustained fewer than two hundred casualties and gained significant food stores, while the city's defenders suffered over five hundred deaths.<sup>25</sup> Dost Muhammad struggled to rally his forces following the British victory at Ghazni. By the beginning of July, 1839, Shah Shuja and the Army of the Indus were at Kabul. Like Kandahar, Kabul surrendered without a struggle.<sup>26</sup>

The first suggestions of British military intervention in Stoddart's fate date to this period, when the British occupation of Afghanistan seemed most likely to succeed. Macnaghten himself, having crossed the Indus to invade Afghanistan, advocated crossing the Oxus as well, in order to invade Bukhara and secure Stoddart's release. A mere brigade, he argued, of the Army of the Indus's forces in Afghanistan would be sufficient

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<sup>22</sup> Macrory, *Signal Catastrophe*, 86f.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 82, 85.

<sup>24</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 195.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

for the task.<sup>27</sup> His proposal never gained support in the military,<sup>28</sup> but some in the press believed that an invasion of Bukhara was desirable not only to achieve Stoddart's release, but also to advance Britain's standing in the region. The *Wexford Conservative*, for example, suggested that before any such plan could be considered, Britain and her allies needed to strengthen their hold on Afghanistan; having done so, they should invade Bukhara promptly. In this view, decisive action against Emir Nasrullah in response to his treatment of Stoddart and Conolly would inspire Britain's allies and demonstrate her power to her enemies, as well as fulfilling the government's obligation to seek justice for her abused envoy.<sup>29</sup> The *Morning Post* was more skeptical of the government's ability to compel Nasrullah to release Stoddart, and described the means at British disposal to force his cooperation as limited.<sup>30</sup> At the beginning of February of 1841, an article circulated widely in the press indicating that Macnaghten's plans had been rejected, and that the Army of the Indus would not invade Bukhara to secure Stoddart's release.<sup>31</sup>

There were several avenues by which the press might have obtained information of this type regarding British foreign policy. Personal connections between government officials and individual journalists were one of the most powerful keys to accessing information about British Foreign affairs in the early nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Other sources

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<sup>27</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 110f.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>29</sup> *Wexford Conservative*, 5 December 1840.

<sup>30</sup> *Morning Post*, 9 September 1840.

<sup>31</sup> See for example *London Evening Standard*, 6 February 1841; *Dublin Evening Post* 9 February 1841; *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser*, 10 February 1841.

<sup>32</sup> Laurence Fenton, *Palmerston and the Times: Foreign Policy, the Press and Public Opinion in Mid-Victorian Britain*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 36f; Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 170.

of information in London included government offices, official documents, and gossip.<sup>33</sup> Information on Stoddart and Conolly from non-domestic sources was even more difficult to acquire, however. The telegraph only began to be used for transmitting international news in the 1850s, well after the Stoddart and Conolly crisis had ended, and was even slower to impact the transmission of news from outside the West.<sup>34</sup> Non-official news from distant Bukhara therefore took weeks or months to reach London, and often no longer accurately portrayed Stoddart and Conolly's state by the time it appeared in British newspapers.<sup>35</sup> A more fundamental problem was that no newspaper had a foreign correspondent in Bukhara, and therefore the press was entirely dependent on government information and on information about Bukhara gathered by correspondents in other cities.<sup>36</sup>

It is frequently difficult to discern which of these sources a given article about Stoddart and Conolly might have used. In general, only those articles that recounted parliamentary debates explicitly stated the origin of the information they contained, though foreign correspondents were also mentioned occasionally.<sup>37</sup> It is therefore almost impossible to determine, for example, how the author of the article cited above as stating

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<sup>33</sup> Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, 170.

<sup>34</sup> *Newspapers Politics, and English Society*, 221.

<sup>35</sup> The most striking example of this was Stoddart and Conolly's deaths, which occurred on or around 17 June 1842. More than three months later, Stoddart and Conolly were still described as the "present captives" of the Bukharan emir in the press (*London Evening Standard*, 7 October 1842). Only in January of 1843 did reports of their execution begin to appear in the press; see for example *London Evening Standard*, 16 January 1843.

<sup>36</sup> For instance, a newspaper correspondent living in Constantinople was the source of one early report that Stoddart and Conolly had been executed. *Derbyshire Courier*, 21 January 1843.

<sup>37</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 16 February 1843 and *Essex Standard*, 20 January 1843.

that Britain would not invade Bukhara via Afghanistan obtained his information.<sup>38</sup> The same may be said for the vast majority of articles written about Stoddart and Conolly prior to Grover's involvement in the crisis, after which time a large number of articles on the topic identify him as the source of the information.<sup>39</sup>

However Britain's disinclination to invade Bukhara may have become known to the press, there was no such certainty regarding Russia's intentions in the region. In October of 1839, reports of a Russian expedition bound for the khanate of Khiva, which bordered Bukhara, reached Kabul and deeply troubled the leaders of the occupying force there.<sup>40</sup> The Russian force justified its attack on Khiva by announcing its intention to liberate enslaved Russians. This was precisely the argument British leaders had feared Russia would make in reference to an attack on Bukhara. The expedition leaders also proclaimed their desire to render the trade routes safer, and to reinforce the strength of Russian economic influence in the region.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, Russian intentions seem to have extended beyond the ambitions they proclaimed publically. In early March of 1840, Russian Foreign Minister Karl Nesselrode acknowledged that Russia had aimed to replace the Khivan khan with his brother.<sup>42</sup> Russia's avowed purposes alone were sufficient to alarm Macnaghten, however, who considered sending a force to meet the Russians.<sup>43</sup> His superiors told him repeatedly to focus his efforts on securing Shah Shuja's power in Kabul, rather than sending forces to attempt to meet the Russian threat. Auckland allowed him to demand an explanation from

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<sup>38</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 6 February 1841.

<sup>39</sup> See for example *Morning Post*, 29 July 1844.

<sup>40</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 297.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.



the Russian forces by sending a representative to them, but sending an armed force was out of the question.<sup>44</sup> The Russian expedition to Khiva failed, however, overcome by an unusually cold steppe winter, and was forced to retreat to the Russian base at Orenburg significantly depleted.<sup>45</sup>

As long as the Russian forces advanced toward Khiva, the Bukharan emir, Nasrullah, feared that Russia might invade Bukhara as well. In response to this threat, he released Stoddart from prison and assigned him the task of recruiting men into the Bukharan artillery. As I noted in the previous chapter, this event caused an outcry in the British press, and many papers carried articles expressing horror at the thought of a British diplomat enslaved by the ruler of another country. The issue was raised in Parliament as well, where Foreign Secretary Palmerston condemned Nasrullah's treatment of Stoddart. Contemporary newspaper reports dating to the end of March added that the emir demanded Stoddart choose between this and execution.<sup>46</sup> In Parliament, Palmerston himself confirmed that Stoddart had entered the emir's service.<sup>47</sup> Despite the furor this incident generated, Stoddart's new position as a recruiter for the emir's artillery was evidence of his temporarily increased status at the Bukharan court, and some newspapers reported in this light.<sup>48</sup>

The Russian advance on Khiva thus inadvertently benefitted Stoddart by encouraging Nasrullah to exploit his talents in anticipation of a possible Russian attack. The commander of the expedition also attempted to use the campaign intentionally for

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<sup>44</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 312f.

<sup>45</sup> Gerald Morgan, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia: 1810—1895*, (London: Frank Cass, 1981), 49.

<sup>46</sup> See for example *London Evening Standard*, 24 March 1840.

<sup>47</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 28 March 1840.

<sup>48</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 6 February 1841.

Stoddart's benefit, and therefore sent a message to the emir of Bukhara when he arrived outside of Khiva, demanding Stoddart's release. Although much of British policy in Central Asia and Afghanistan was intended to limit the threat Russia posed in the region, the two countries were not at war, and still cooperated on some issues. The previous chapter noted that Stoddart rejected Russian assistance in this case, to great acclaim in the British press. However, M.E. Yapp, who has written extensively on the history of modern South Asia and the Near East, has argued that the emir would have refused to release Stoddart even had he been disposed to accept Russian assistance.<sup>49</sup>

It is certainly true that Nasrullah refused to allow Stoddart and Conolly (who had joined Stoddart in Bukhara in December of 1841) to leave Bukhara two years later, when Lieutenant Colonel Konstantin Butenev requested that they accompany his diplomatic mission back to Russia, and then proceed to England.<sup>50</sup> This mission had arrived in Bukhara during the summer of 1841, in response to the emir's request that a team of Russian geologists evaluate his country's natural reserves.<sup>51</sup> The Russian Supervisor of the Mining Engineers Corps instructed the team to learn as much as possible about regional trade and prices, with the objective of strengthening Russian commercial presence there,<sup>52</sup> and if possible, to seek Stoddart and Conolly's release.<sup>53</sup> Butenev's

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<sup>49</sup> Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 412.

<sup>50</sup> Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bukhara," 57f. It seems that Yapp mistakenly conflates these two instances, as he associates Stoddart's refusal of Russian assistance with the Butenev mission. However, British papers explicitly associate this refusal with the mission to Khiva; see for example *Dublin Morning Register*, 6 July 1840. In addition, the chronology of Yapp's version of events is problematic. Butenev received his orders only in February of 1841 (Postnikov 34), while British papers carried reports of Stoddart's refusal to accept Russian aid as early as the summer of 1840.

<sup>51</sup> Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bukhara," 34.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-38.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 39f.

mission had too little power in Bukhara to secure this final objective, however, and departed Bukhara without Stoddart and Conolly in April of 1842.<sup>54</sup>

The next international episode to influence Stoddart and Conolly's treatment in Bukhara was the collapse of British authority in Afghanistan, a crisis that actually began before the Butenev mission's return to Russia. On the morning of 2 November 1841, more than two and a half years after the Army of the Indus arrived in Kabul, Alexander Burnes and his brother, who was with him in Kabul, found their home surrounded by a throng of Afghans. Burnes's servants warned him of rising tensions in the city, and even that there were reports of a plot to kill him.<sup>55</sup> He initially hoped to calm the crowd simply by speaking to them, but it quickly became a mob too large and too angry to control. Burnes sent a messenger to the British cantonment secretly, to plead for troops, but they arrived too late to be of help. Burnes's offers of money in exchange for his own safety and that of his brother were met with shouted demands that the two should come down from the balcony of his home into its garden. The few guards who were already there fired into the crowd. A stranger to the Residency, who had made his way to the balcony, finally convinced Burnes and his brother to accede to the mob's demands, promising that once they were off the balcony he would make certain they reached safety. When they reached the ground floor, however, their escort shouted to the crowd. Both brothers were dead in a matter of moments.<sup>56</sup>

Following Burnes's death and the riots of that day, British power in Afghanistan slipped rapidly away. Macnaghten attempted to gain the support of neighboring chiefs, in

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<sup>54</sup> Postnikov, "The Russian Mission to Bukhara," 48.

<sup>55</sup> Macrory, *Signal Catastrophe*, 153f.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

an effort to regain control of the situation.<sup>57</sup> On 11 December 1841, Macnaghten rode out from Kabul to discuss a treaty with several Afghan chiefs.<sup>58</sup> The treaty Macnaghten proposed declared that the British would retreat to India, either with or without Shah Shuja, according to his preference. Dost Muhammed would return to Afghanistan from India. The chiefs who heard the agreement accepted it, though they quickly followed their acceptance with proposals for changes to it (including the offer that Shah Shuja might remain king, provided that he permitted his daughters to marry the chiefs' sons, and that he treated the chiefs themselves with greater respect going forward).<sup>59</sup> The situation worsened for the British when Macnaghten attempted to negotiate independently with Akhbar Khan, who was one of the discontented chiefs and Dost Muhammad's son. Akhbar Khan used one of their meetings to trap Macnaghten,<sup>60</sup> killing him and one other British representative, and imprisoning two others.<sup>61</sup>

The British left their camp at Kabul on 6 January 1842. Akhbar Khan and an "escort" joined them on their march the following day, claiming that their mission was to protect the British on their march toward Jalalabad. In reality, Akhbar Khan began his assistance by attempting to renegotiate the terms of the treaty signed on 11 December, and he eventually imprisoned several of the leading British officers. Only a few actually

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<sup>57</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 372.

<sup>58</sup> The nature of the political power wielded by these chiefs and the bases from which they drew their support is well beyond the scope of this project, but it is integral to a thorough understanding of Britain's failed invasion of Afghanistan. For an introduction to the role of ethnic and tribal groups in Afghan politics in the decades preceding the First Anglo-Afghan War, see Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 4-38.

<sup>59</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 374f.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 375-377.

<sup>61</sup> Macrory, *Signal Catastrophe*, 195-197.

reached Jalalabad; indeed, for a time the British thought only one man—Dr. William Brydon—had survived the disaster at Kabul. The rest died, either due to the extreme cold or because of the resistance the retreating British met from the Afghans, or were taken prisoner by Akhbar Khan.<sup>62</sup> Akhbar Khan did protect his British prisoners, though their condition was far from luxurious.<sup>63</sup> They were of value to him as negotiating leverage, but it also seems that he treated some of them, at least, with a care beyond that of mere political interest.<sup>64</sup>

According to the prison journal Conolly kept during his final imprisonment, he and Stoddart learned of the British defeat in Afghanistan near the end of November of 1841. When the emir first confronted them with the reports he had received from Kabul, Stoddart and Conolly were skeptical of their truth, and told the emir so. The emir (rightly) believed the reports, however, and the results soon showed in his treatment of his British prisoners. Convinced that Stoddart and Conolly “had been cut off from [their] support” when the British were expelled from Kabul, the emir began accusing Stoddart, Conolly, and the British government of conspiring against him with the rulers of Khoqand and Khiva.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, he confined both officers to a single prison cell. Both men were plagued by illness, and Conolly’s journal contains a graphic description of the sores that covered Stoddart’s body and the pain they caused him. They were deprived of

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<sup>62</sup> Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 378-381.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Norris, *The First Afghan War*, 415.

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Conolly, “Diary (1840-1842), and Extracts of the Last Letters, of Captain Arthur Conolly,” British Library Add MS 38725, London.

their outer layers of clothing, despite the cold temperatures, and were not permitted to change what clothing they were allowed to keep for weeks and in fact months on end.<sup>66</sup>

In late August of 1843, a detailed account of Stoddart and Conolly's execution reached British papers, along with British envoy to Tehran Justin Sheil's statement that he believed both the information and its source to be highly credible.<sup>67</sup> Saaleh Mahomed, the source in question, had accompanied Conolly to Bukhara in late 1841, having served several other British agents in Central Asia before Conolly took him on.<sup>68</sup> He was imprisoned when Stoddart and Conolly were, though separately from them. When several of Stoddart and Conolly's servants were executed at the emir's order, Saaleh Mahomed avoided joining them because he shared his captors' Muslim faith.<sup>69</sup> When the others were executed, he was released, and allowed to live wherever he was able in Bukhara.

Meanwhile the emir's treatment of Stoddart and Conolly worsened. Shortly after Saaleh Mahomed's release, one of Nasrullah's officers discovered that Stoddart had obtained paper and a pencil, though the emir had explicitly forbidden both British officers from writing anything unless the emir or one of his officials directed them to do so. Stoddart was beaten repeatedly over the following several days, but he refused to reveal to whom he had written or how he had obtained the materials. The emir therefore ordered that he be beheaded, and that Conolly be given his choice of conversion to Islam and execution. Although Saaleh Mahomed did not witness their executions himself, one of the executioners informed him that this is precisely what occurred, and that Conolly

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<sup>66</sup> Arthur Conolly, "Diary (1840-1842), and Extracts of the Last Letters, of Captain Arthur Conolly," British Library Add MS 38725, London.

<sup>67</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 23 August 1843.

<sup>68</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 23 August 1843.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

chose execution rather than conversion. Saaleh Mahomed refused the executioner's offer to show him the men's heads, but he did see the freshly mounded graves where, according to the executioner, their bodies had been buried. Having assured himself that the officers were dead, Saaleh Mahomed left Bukhara, and after staying briefly in Khiva, proceeded to Tehran, where he told his story to Colonel Justin Sheil, the British ambassador there.<sup>70</sup>

Within days of Saaleh Mahomed's information appearing in the press, a member of the House of Commons asked Prime Minister if the government believed the report, and if so, what action might be taken against the emir in response. Peel gave a lengthy reply—this exchange constitutes by far the longest parliamentary discussion of Stoddart and Conolly—in which he recounted the various diplomatic attempts the government had already made to secure the officers' release. He refused to discuss any actions the government might take now that their deaths seemed certain, but stated his belief that “in some way or other punishment would reach the Government” that executed them.<sup>71</sup> This last phrase received several different interpretations in the press. According to the *Reading Mercury*, Peel intended to punish the emir for Stoddart and Conolly's deaths,<sup>72</sup> while the *Worcester Herald* stated disapprovingly that he had expressed no such objective.<sup>73</sup>

The articles describing Peel's comments in the House of Commons did not suggest that he connected Stoddart and Conolly's deaths with British policy in Afghanistan or elsewhere, nor did they make such a connection in their own analysis.

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<sup>70</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 23 August 1843.

<sup>71</sup> Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. vol. 71, col (1010-1012).

<sup>72</sup> *Reading Mercury*, 26 August 1843. See also *Chester Chronicle*, 1 September 1843.

<sup>73</sup> *Worcester Herald*, 2 September 1843.

Instead, they placed the blame entirely on the Bukharan government. A competing understanding of the executions soon developed, however, which argued that Nasrullah merely acted as a logical analysis of British policy in Afghanistan required.<sup>74</sup> The *Newcastle Journal* observed, in an article dated 21 January 1843, that Stoddart and Conolly were executed because “[t]he people of Central Asia have seen that the appearance of Englishmen at Cabool was followed up by the invasion of that territory...and they have chosen to profit by the lesson.”<sup>75</sup>

Several weeks later, the *London Evening Standard* offered a more specific report on the role of Afghanistan in Stoddart and Conolly’s deaths. According to this version of events (many conflicting versions circulated in the months that followed), Nasrullah executed Stoddart and Conolly after receiving a letter from several Afghan chiefs, including Akhbar Khan, the son of Dost Muhammad who played such a key role in compelling the British to abandon Kabul. In this letter, the chiefs demanded that Nasrullah either execute Stoddart and Conolly himself or send them to Kabul. Forced to act (and presumably not wishing to have his independence from Britain doubted by those who had so recently overthrown British rule), Nasrullah ordered that Stoddart and Conolly be beheaded.<sup>76</sup>

The retreat from Afghanistan received politically polarized reactions in the British press, as a failure of policies enacted by a Whig government. Because Stoddart and

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<sup>74</sup> Several earlier articles, including one published in November of 1839, reference both the invasion of Afghanistan and the treatment of Stoddart (and later Conolly) at Bukhara. In contrast to the articles discussed here, these did not explicitly connect the two. See *Morning Post*, 9 November 1839, and *London Evening Standard*, 7 October 1842 for early instances.

<sup>75</sup> *Newcastle Journal*, 21 January 1843.

<sup>76</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 9 February 1843.



Conolly came to be posthumously associated with the Afghan crisis, their deaths also took on a distinctly political flavor in some papers. The *London Evening Standard*, for example, described the “detestation” with which Central Asia regarded Britain as a result of her “momentary” losses in Afghanistan, under the influence of which the emir had executed Stoddart and Conolly.<sup>77</sup> The *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* reviled the “custom of sending daring individuals of some intelligence on nearly desperate political undertakings.” As victims of this “Whig misrule,” Stoddart and Conolly had been “sacrifice[d] to the Moloch of Whig foreign policy.”<sup>78</sup>

While the Whigs received most of the blame for the officers’ deaths, Sir Robert Peel and the Conservatives were not entirely exempt. An article in the *Evening Chronicle* extended some of the responsibility for the tragedy to Peel by observing that Peel believed the Russian threat at Bukhara to be grave, and therefore could not reasonably argue that Stoddart and Conolly’s mission was purposeless.<sup>79</sup> Such claims were to become particularly important as the debate regarding the government’s responsibility to Stoddart and Conolly heated. If their mission was in fact necessary, then, some argued, surely the government had a greater responsibility to ascertain their fates or attempt to secure their safety.

Peel complicated the arguments for government responsibility by stating, in a Parliamentary debate in August of 1843, that Conolly was not actually in the

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<sup>77</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 16 February 1843.

<sup>78</sup> *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 18 February 1843. Moloch was a Canaanite god mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, to whom children were regularly sacrificed. See Leviticus 20:2-5.

<sup>79</sup> *Evening Chronicle*, 10 May 1843.

government's service when he was arrested in Bukhara.<sup>80</sup> A similar claim had been made about Stoddart, though by February of 1843 the *London Evening Standard* was rightly contesting this assertion.<sup>81</sup> Peel was correct in that, as an officer of the Indian government, Conolly was not under the direction of the Foreign Office in London.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, he had received permission from India to travel to Bukhara in an official capacity, as the previous chapter noted. Inaccurate as Peel's statement was, it seems to have temporarily called into question the degree of government responsibility for Stoddart and Conolly's protection.

Most papers seem to have concurred, then, that the policy of the British government in Afghanistan was at least partially responsible for the deaths of Stoddart and Conolly. This conviction contributed significantly to the sense that the government had a particularly strong obligation to attempt to secure their release either through military means, as Macnaghten proposed, or through diplomatic avenues. The government's failure to take these steps was the more serious because both officers were commonly depicted as possessing excellent Christian characters and representing, on a personal level, key values of the British Empire.

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<sup>80</sup> Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. vol. 71, col (1010-1012). See also *Morning Post*, 25 August 1843.

<sup>81</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 9 February 1843.

<sup>82</sup> Interestingly, despite Conolly's affiliation with the government of India, most of the calls for government action seem to have been directed toward London and the Foreign Office. One exception occurs in the *Evening Chronicle*, 28 August 1843. The Indian Government did contribute to diplomatic efforts to secure the release of both Stoddart and Conolly, but it was not the primary focus of public or press outrage at government inactivity.

### Chapter Three:

#### A Quest for the Truth: Captain John Grover's Campaign

Even as Peel confirmed the reports of Stoddart and Conolly's execution in the House of Commons, the press was publishing accounts suggesting that Saaleh Mahomed's narrative might not be the end of Stoddart and Conolly's story. The history of the officers' stay at Bukhara had been littered with misinformation and conflicting reports almost from the beginning, with papers publishing claims that Stoddart had been released and was en route to Kabul as early as January of 1840.<sup>1</sup> Saaleh Mahomed's nearly eyewitness account of the double beheading did nothing to stamp out such rumors. On the same day it printed Peel's remarks in the House of Commons, the *Morning Post* published another article stating that hajjis from Central Asia traveling through Constantinople on their way to Mecca believed both officers still to be alive. The article concluded, "[i]t is really time that the Government should take some steps to ascertain the truth of this matter, and in the event of its being certain that they have not been put to death, to adopt some immediate measures for their liberation."<sup>2</sup>

Captain John Grover, an army friend of Colonel Stoddart, took precisely this view of the Stoddart and Conolly affair. In light of the failure of both the press' calls for government involvement and the inquiries of members of the House of Commons to prompt the government to action on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf, Grover concluded that some other form of action would be necessary in order to convince the government

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<sup>1</sup> *Evening Mail*, 10 January 1840.

<sup>2</sup> *Morning Post*, 26 August 1843.

to intervene. However, because he was unconvinced by the evidence pointing to Stoddart and Conolly's execution, he believed that it was first necessary to determine just what had become of the officers. He launched multiple interconnected initiatives to discover the truth, beginning with a failed attempt to secure a government endorsement for his own expedition to Bukhara. Subsequent, more successful efforts to induce government intervention in the crisis included regular contact with the press; regular contact with the Foreign Office, and with Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen (1841-1846), specifically; the formation of a "Stoddart and Conolly Committee," which hosted public meetings and funded Dr. Wolff's journey to Bukhara; and the publication of a booklet of about fifty pages and a book of several hundred pages. This chapter will explore each of these attempts to involve the government in the crisis in turn, arguing that by orchestrating them, Grover provided a unified voice and a definite structure to the general outcry at Stoddart and Conolly's fate that the movement had previously lacked.

Grover founded his campaign for government action on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf on the conviction that the true fate of the officers remained a mystery. The doubt Grover entertained about Stoddart and Conolly's fate ran contrary to the government's official position, as supported by evidence from the British ambassador in Tehran.<sup>3</sup> Until the summer of 1843, the press, too, seemed full of information that opposed Grover's view. In the months following the first reports of the executions, newspapers across Great Britain continued to confirm the initial report of the executions and to report additional details throughout the winter and spring months of 1843, drawing from sources in

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. vol. 66 col 635 (15 February 1843).

Constantinople, Tehran, and Delhi.<sup>4</sup> Sir Robert Peel confirmed the report in Parliament that February,<sup>5</sup> and in March the official military obituaries, published in some papers, listed Colonel Stoddart (though not Captain Conolly) among the deceased.<sup>6</sup>

Grover began to publically question Stoddart and Conolly's deaths after reading a newspaper report that suggested that the government had pronounced Stoddart and Conolly dead too hastily, and that the officers were in fact still alive in the emir's prison.<sup>7</sup> The earliest articles stated that this new rumor emerged in Mashhad (modern Iran) among the Jewish community there,<sup>8</sup> although it was later reported to have reached Ludhiana, in Punjab, as well.<sup>9</sup> In England, newspaper editors printed these reports with caution, warning readers against placing complete trust in either version of the events. As one article in the *Hertford Mercury and Reformer* observed, "[b]oth countries are so far removed from British influence as to make all intercourse difficult and dangerous, and to render all intelligence doubtful and uncertain."<sup>10</sup>

Distance notwithstanding, Grover found these reports far more credible than the earlier evidence that the officers were dead. As he later explained to Aberdeen's secretary in the Foreign Office, he doubted the credibility of Stoddart and Conolly's fellow prisoner in Bukhara, Saaleh Mahomed, who was the source of the report that Stoddart and Conolly had been killed (although Colonel Sheil, then envoy in Tehran, had

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<sup>4</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 16 January 1843; *London Evening Standard*, 30 January 1843; *Morning Chronicle*, 12 May 1843.

<sup>5</sup> *Morning Post*, 16 February 1843.

<sup>6</sup> *Morning Post*, 2 March 1843.

<sup>7</sup> Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation in Behalf of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, Now in Captivity in Bokhara*, (London: Hatchard and Sons, 1843), 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 May 1843.

<sup>9</sup> *Morning Post*, 5 June 1843.

<sup>10</sup> *Hertford Mercury and Reformer*, 10 June 1843.

identified him as a reliable individual). Furthermore, Grover argued, even if Saaleh Mahomed was truthfully reporting the information he had received, the fact remained that he had not witnessed the execution himself, nor had he seen any definitive evidence of it. He had failed to confirm the testimony of the guard who told him of Stoddart and Conolly's deaths, and Grover therefore deemed him doubly unreliable.<sup>11</sup>

Concluding that the British government "had really no precise information on the subject" of Stoddart and Conolly's fate in Bukhara, Grover began preparing to travel to Bukhara himself to learn what had actually taken place.<sup>12</sup> In late June of 1843, he visited the Foreign Office seeking approval for the journey, which he intended to make entirely at his own expense. He was only willing to do so, however, if the British government would allow him to go in uniform as an officer of the British army. For Grover, this was a question of safety: unless able to clearly identify himself as a traveller authorized by the British government, he feared he would be mistaken for a spy.<sup>13</sup> Despite the contradictory news reports, the Foreign Office saw no reason to disbelieve the initial report that Stoddart and Conolly had been executed, and as a result, would not sanction Grover's proposed mission. Nevertheless, the Foreign Secretary would permit him to undertake the journey if he would forego the protection of a British officer's uniform.<sup>14</sup> Grover refused this offer angrily, writing later that a private citizen would only survive the journey from England to Bukhara by pretending to be insane.<sup>15</sup> This comment accompanied a scathing account of his interactions with the junior officials with whom he dealt during his visit to

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<sup>11</sup> Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, 9f.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 49; 57-60.

<sup>14</sup> Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, 19f.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

the Foreign Office and of Lord Aberdeen, who initially refused to meet with him personally.<sup>16</sup>

Lord Aberdeen did eventually meet with Grover, and the two corresponded extensively between the time Grover became involved in the Stoddart and Conolly affair and Wolff's return from his journey to Bukhara. Thus Aberdeen played a significant, if somewhat unwilling, role in Grover's campaign. He had not occupied the position of foreign secretary in 1838, when Stoddart had received his orders to travel to Bukhara, however. The Whig government led by Lord Melbourne, with Lord Palmerston in charge of the Foreign Office, had been replaced in 1841 with a conservative government led by Sir Robert Peel. As Peel's Foreign Secretary, Aberdeen pursued a foreign policy very different from that of Palmerston, part of which involved terminating British interference in Afghan politics, much to Peel's satisfaction.<sup>17</sup> Despite widespread fear of Russian intentions toward British India, the Foreign Office largely cooperated with Russia under Aberdeen's leadership. The largest foreign policy question the two nations shared during this period involved not Central Asia or India but the fragility of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>18</sup> On this question, at least, Russian and British interests intersected; both nations benefitted from a stable, if weak, Ottoman Empire.<sup>19</sup> As a result, Aberdeen largely accommodated Russian interests regarding both the Ottoman Empire and other issues, though he remained cautious in his handling of Anglo-Russian relations.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>16</sup> Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, 3-20.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 157.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel John Butcher, "Lord Aberdeen and Conservative Foreign Policy, 1841-1846" (PhD diss., University of East Anglia, 2015), 144.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 144; 152.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

Aberdeen accepted the expansion of Russian trade in Central Asia without threat of retaliation, provided Russia never directly menaced British interests in the region.<sup>21</sup>

Aberdeen initially took little action regarding Stoddart and Conolly's imprisonment, following a precedent set by Palmerston before him. Stoddart had sent a spate of letters to Palmerston and Macnaghten throughout the first half of 1841, reporting that the emir was interested in concluding a treaty with Britain, and asking both for official approval of a treaty and for a variety of gifts for the emir.<sup>22</sup> Foreign Office records show that Palmerston requested the cooperation of the London Horticultural Society in obtaining one of the gifts—a box of seeds from English plants—and that Palmerston himself replied to several of Stoddart's letters at once in early August.<sup>23</sup> Little else seems to have been done under Palmerston's watch, and Stoddart and Conolly faded still further from view during the first years of Aberdeen's secretaryship. Although Nasrullah had written to Queen Victoria in March of 1841 seeking to establish a "covenant of friendship," Victoria's reply was drafted only in December of 1842.<sup>24</sup> By

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<sup>21</sup> Butcher, "Lord Aberdeen and Conservative Foreign Policy," 153.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stoddart to Viscount Palmerston, 17 February 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 82, Kew, England; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stoddart to Viscount Palmerston, 8 March 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 82, Kew, England; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stoddart to Viscount Palmerston, 9 March 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 82, Kew, England; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Stoddart to Viscount Palmerston, 15 March 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 82, Kew, England.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Mr. Backhouse to the Secretary of the Horticultural Society, 25 June 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 84, Kew, England. For Palmerston's letter to Stoddart, see Viscount Palmerston to Lieutenant-Colonel Stoddart, 3 August 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 82, Kew, England.

<sup>24</sup> Emir Nasrullah to Queen Victoria, 14 March 1841, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 82, Kew, England. Queen Victoria to Emir Nasrullah, 3 December 1842, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 92, Kew, England.



the time the letter had been completed, however, news of Stoddart and Conolly's execution had already spread, and therefore it was never sent.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the Foreign Office's lackluster response to communications from Bukhara, Aberdeen hoped to persuade Grover that his proposed expedition was unnecessary by demonstrating that the Foreign Office had already attempted every possible means of helping Stoddart and Conolly. He therefore invited Grover to examine the Foreign Office's records on the subject. Grover was appalled by the lack of effort these records seemed to show, viewing them simply as more concrete evidence of the government's lack of concern for Stoddart and Conolly.<sup>26</sup>

Even worse than the impact of the actions not taken, Grover argued, was the potential impact of those that had been taken. He was particularly outraged by a letter addressed to the emir of Bukhara from Lord Ellenborough. In this letter, Ellenborough refuted the emir's charge that the British had sent Stoddart and Conolly to conspire against him, describing Stoddart and Conolly as "innocent travellers...not employed by their government in such designs."<sup>27</sup> Reading this letter in front of a Foreign Office employee, Grover accused the Foreign Office of making matters worse for the officers. Nasrullah, he argued, would understand the term innocent traveller to mean that Stoddart and Conolly were not actually employed by the British government at all. The men had claimed from the beginning that they were agents of their government; the emir, already skeptical of their authenticity, would understand this letter to mean that the British

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<sup>25</sup> Maclean, *A Person from England*, 56.

<sup>26</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845), 40f.

<sup>27</sup> Ellenborough to the Khan of Bokhara, 1 October 1842, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 93, Kew, England.

government disowned Stoddart and Conolly as her representatives, making them out to be liars.<sup>28</sup>

Unwilling to accept Aberdeen's terms for his proposed mission to Bukhara and further convinced of the government's disinterest in his friend's plight, Grover was compelled to find another means of discovering the truth behind the rumors regarding Stoddart and Conolly's fate. It was at this point that he met the Reverend Dr. Joseph Wolff, who had visited Bukhara in the early 1830s as a missionary to the city's Jewish population. Wolff agreed to travel to Bukhara on Grover's behalf, and was willing to do so without any official government sanction, trusting that his status as a clergyman and his previous trip to Bukhara would protect him. He asked only that someone travel with him, or else offer to fund his journey, which he calculated would cost a total of £500.<sup>29</sup> Grover seized this opportunity to obtain support for his friend and for Captain Conolly, and immediately took on the role of Wolff's publicist and first financier.

Rather than undertaking the entire task alone, Grover called a public meeting for 7 September 1843 at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in order to raise some of the necessary funds.<sup>30</sup> This choice of location is noteworthy. Beginning in the eighteenth century, taverns increasingly catered to patrons of varying social status by offering private rooms for the use of societies and organizations,<sup>31</sup> and it seems likely that Grover took

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<sup>28</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 41f. See also Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation*, 30-35.

<sup>29</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 6 July 1843; *London Evening Standard*, 22 July 1843.

<sup>30</sup> See for example *Morning Chronicle*, 8 September 1843. Many iterations of this article appeared in papers across Britain. For another instance, see *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 September 1843. Shorter notices on the subject also appeared in some papers; for an example, see *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, 13 September 1843.

<sup>31</sup> James Van Horn Melton, *Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 229f.

advantage of such a space. However, the nineteenth century saw a decline in the social respectability of tavern drinking,<sup>32</sup> and it is worth noting that this initial meeting about Wolff's expedition seems to be the only event open to the general public to have occurred in a tavern. Grover's choice of venue certainly would have limited the type of individual who attended the event. Subsequent events related to Grover's campaign were held in more reputable spaces that were often used for lectures and concerts, the implications of which I will explore in my next chapter.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of the limitations of the venue he chose, Grover apparently regarded this first meeting as a success. According to a report from the *Morning Herald* that Grover later published in *The Bokhara Victims*, his book-length work on the Stoddart and Conolly affair, between eighty and one hundred men attended this meeting, among them names the author expected his reader to recognize.<sup>34</sup> One of the attendees, a Mr. J.S. Buckingham, suggested that a committee be formed to support Wolff's mission.<sup>35</sup> His motion was carried, and Buckingham himself eventually became a member of the resulting committee.<sup>36</sup> Although at least one attendee later wrote to a newspaper to say that he found Grover passionate but ultimately unpersuasive, Grover's cause seems to have enjoyed the general support of his audience.<sup>37</sup> At the conclusion of the meeting, when he requested subscriptions to fund Wolff's expedition, he received around £100.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Melton, *Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, 249.

<sup>33</sup> See for example *Morning Post*, 12 October 1843 and *London Evening Standard*, 1 May 1845.

<sup>34</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 315.

<sup>35</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 8 September 1843.

<sup>36</sup> "First Report of the Committee of the Stoddart and Conolly Fund," National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 109, Kew, England.

<sup>37</sup> *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 9 September 1843.

<sup>38</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 321.

As the date of Wolff's departure approached, the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, as it was officially called, hosted another public meeting to publicize its activities, this time in the opulent Hanover Square Rooms.<sup>39</sup> Both Grover and Wolff spoke at length at this meeting, and detailed accounts of their comments appeared in multiple London papers the following day.<sup>40</sup> The article in the *Morning Chronicle* described the attendance at this meeting as disappointing.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the Committee's subsequent efforts to raise funds for Wolff were successful. According to a pamphlet published by the committee, a copy of which Grover sent to Aberdeen in the Foreign Office, the committee had succeeded in raising nearly £800 by January of 1844.<sup>42</sup>

The press proved extremely willing to publicize the activities of the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, and as president of that committee Grover ensured that the London newspapers received full information on both the committee's activities and on the progress of Wolff's journey to Bukhara. Once Wolff departed for Bukhara, he supplied Grover with a steady stream of letters describing his progress, the individuals he met as he travelled, and the rumors about Stoddart and Conolly's fate he was able to collect in each new city. Grover then submitted these letters, or extracts and paraphrases of them, to

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<sup>39</sup> *Morning Post*, 12 October 1843. See also Henry C. Lunn, "The Hanover-Square Rooms," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 16 (1875): 741f, accessed 7 February 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/335288>. According to Lunn, this was primarily a performance space used for concerts.

<sup>40</sup> See for example *Morning Post*, 12 October 1843; *Morning Chronicle*, 12 October 1843; *London Evening Standard*, 12 October 1843.

<sup>41</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 October 1843.

<sup>42</sup> "First Report of the Committee of the Stoddart and Conolly Fund," National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 109, Kew, England.

London papers, from which they spread to other parts of Britain.<sup>43</sup> This practice kept the Stoddart and Conolly affair consistently before the public, allowing Grover to maintain popular interest in his cause.

As the principle liaison between the Stoddart and Conolly Committee and the general public, Grover benefitted greatly from the steadily increasing role of the press in the lives of a growing number of British citizens. In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, interest in political affairs increased dramatically among the middle and lower classes, a reality which was reflected in the newspapers of the day.<sup>44</sup> The papers in circulation represented a wide array of political views, and often exerted pressure on the government or on government policy, sometimes successfully.<sup>45</sup> In some cases, editors were not afraid to call on readers to demonstrate publically to demand changes in government policy.<sup>46</sup> The topics that received the greatest publicity in the early 1840s were either domestic (the Chartist movement, or the controversy over the Corn Laws) or of more dramatic international scope than the Stoddart and Conolly crisis (the First Anglo-Afghan War, for example).<sup>47</sup> The imprisonment of two officers in a kingdom well removed from even the most distant reaches of the empire was not a matter to generate daily front-page headlines. As a result, government officials were likely to be far more concerned about those issues that obtained the greatest coverage in the press. Nevertheless, Grover's reports on the activities of the Stoddart and Conolly committee and the progress of

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<sup>43</sup> For a selection of newspaper articles based on Wolff's letters, see *Morning Post*, 14 December 1843; *Morning Post*, 29 July 1844; *London Evening Standard*, 1 January 1845.

<sup>44</sup> Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and English Society, 1695-1855*, (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 196f.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 196f.

<sup>46</sup> The *Times* did so during the winter of 1830-1831, for example. *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 198, 215ff.

Wolff's journey to and from Bukhara received wide attention, appearing in London and regional papers alike.

The papers, then, were willing to publish Grover's articles, but who read them? Grover's efforts must have benefitted at least moderately from an 1836 reduction in the tax on newspapers. These stamp duties had been raised in 1815, resulting in the failure of papers which received neither government nor opposition support. The 1836 reduction represented only a partial solution to the problem (the stamp duties were eliminated completely in 1855), but it did allow editors to reduce the cost of their papers slightly.<sup>48</sup> The average working man was still unable to afford a newspaper, in most cases—but as Grover's primary intention, particularly in the early days of the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, was to raise funds to finance Wolff's expedition, it is doubtful that he worried over his failure to reach the poorer classes.<sup>49</sup>

Still, access to the printed news was not wholly determined by one's ability to afford an evening paper in early Victorian Britain. For those who could not afford, or chose not to purchase, their own newspapers, there were reading rooms and coffee shops that provided a selection of papers for patrons to read. Coffee houses were well-established phenomena in England by the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>50</sup> and proliferated in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Approximately a dozen operated in London immediately after the end of the Napoleonic Wars; by the early 1840s (and the height of

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<sup>48</sup> A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c. 1780—1850*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 19-23.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>50</sup> Melton, *Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, 240.

the Stoddart-Conolly affair), there were 1600 or more in London alone.<sup>51</sup> Many of these establishments offered very inexpensive coffee—far cheaper than a daily paper, even after the 1836 tax decrease—and the opportunity for any customer to read any newspaper available. One such establishment reportedly served between 1600 and 1800 customers daily, a success which the owner credited partially to the availability of newspapers at his establishment.<sup>52</sup>

Thus Grover’s careful cultivation of the press’ interest in Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly would have brought their fate to the attention of a significant population of newspaper readers. However, Grover was not the only contributor of articles relating to Bukhara and the British officers there. Reports that emerged in other parts of the empire gradually made their way back to Britain, and were duly reprinted in newspapers there. In November of 1843, for example, the *London Evening Standard* published a

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<sup>51</sup> Aspinall, *Politics and the Press*, 28; Aytoun Ellis, *The Penny Universities* (Secker and Warburg, 1956), 223; Melton, *Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, 248f. The latter two authors both state that coffee houses were in decline by the end of the eighteenth century. Aspinall, on the other hand, argues that they continued to thrive well into the nineteenth, on the basis of evidence given by three London coffee house owners to the House of Commons Select Committee on Import Duties. (See Great Britain, Select Committee on Import Duties, *Report from the Select Committee on Import Duties; Together with the Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix, and Index* [London: The House of Commons, 1840.]) Markman Ellis partially resolves this conflict by arguing that although coffee houses continued to exist in the nineteenth century, they underwent such a significant change “that they no longer conformed to the coffee-house ideal.” See Markman Ellis, *The Coffee House: A Cultural History*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004), 212. Because I have read the relevant sections of the House of Commons report, but have been unable to locate a comparable source for Ellis and Melton, I have chosen to accept Aspinall’s judgment on this question. However, it should be noted that this is an area of ongoing controversy.

<sup>52</sup> Aspinall, *Politics and the Press*, 28.

report which it credited to the *Bombay Gentleman's Gazette*, stating that Stoddart (though not Conolly) was alive and well, though apparently still in Bukhara.<sup>53</sup>

Often, when Grover prepared Wolff's letters for publication in the newspapers, he submitted an additional copy of the same material to the Foreign Office, so that Aberdeen would be aware of the committee's activities. The Foreign Office's involvement in determining Stoddart and Conolly's circumstances in Bukhara was never sufficient to satisfy Grover or the Stoddart and Conolly Committee. When the Stoddart and Conolly Committee was formed, its members agreed to invite the Foreign Office to support their intention of sending Wolff to Bukhara. In keeping with this objective, Grover consistently reported to Aberdeen the content of Wolff's letters (which he then sent to the papers for publication). Aberdeen, or more frequently his secretary, Henry Unwin Addington, acknowledged these letters, but only occasionally initiated contact with Grover. When he did so, it was often in order to invite him to read a dispatch recently received from British officials in Persia that pertained to Stoddart and Conolly's case, and therefore would be of interest to Grover.<sup>54</sup> A review of this correspondence strongly suggests that the efforts of the Stoddart and Conolly Committee compelled the Foreign Office to address the fate of its officers in Bukhara more frequently than it had prior to the committee's formation. However, more frequent communication about Stoddart and Conolly does not seem to have produced a change in the government's handling of Stoddart and Conolly's case; official records offer no indication that the government made additional efforts to secure more accurate information about their fate.

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<sup>53</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 8 November 1843.

<sup>54</sup> See for example Lord Aberdeen to Captain Grover, 1 March 1844, National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 109, Kew, England.



Grover's persistent correspondence with Aberdeen may have affected the East India Company's understanding of the importance of the Stoddart and Conolly crisis. A volume of confidential papers now archived in the India Office Records at the British Library includes some 128 pages of correspondence, largely culled from Foreign Office records, relating to Stoddart and Conolly's captivity.<sup>55</sup> However, the earliest of these documents dates to 1844. Thus, government officials who consulted only this volume would have had no information about Stoddart and Conolly from the period before Wolff set off for Bukhara. Stoddart's numerous letters to the Foreign Office, written in the first half of 1841, and Emir Nasrullah's letter to Queen Victoria are all absent from this collection. Because Grover's campaign represented the single largest change in the nature of the Stoddart and Conolly affair, the apparently sudden interest in it reflected in the India Office Records as of 1844 may indicate that Grover's campaign had prompted the East India Company to pay greater attention to Stoddart and Conolly's situation.

While Grover corresponded privately with the Foreign Office with the hope that the information he provided would induce it to act definitively on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf, he communicated with the press in order to create public support for his campaign and public outrage over Stoddart and Conolly's fate. The two forms of correspondence seem neatly compartmentalized: the newspapers brought public attention and financial gifts to the cause, while regular contact with government officials (ideally, at any rate) brought government support. Somewhat ironically, it is among the government documents that we find the most concrete evidence of the efficacy of Grover's public efforts. As I have previously noted, Grover sent Aberdeen a copy of the committee's

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<sup>55</sup> British Library, India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1, London.

report in January of 1844, which included a list of those who had subscribed funds to the cause.<sup>56</sup> Many of the subscriptions are small—some under a pound<sup>57</sup>—but the number of subscribers indicates the effectiveness of the Committee’s public appeal, despite its ambiguous impact on the British government.

In forming the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, publishing Wolff’s letters in the press, and communicating with Aberdeen, Grover focused primarily on learning the truth about the officers’ fate in Bukhara, rather than on assigning blame or responsibility for whatever that fate might have been. However, in the two publications he authored about the crisis, Grover stated explicitly where he believed the fault lay in Stoddart and Conolly’s deaths. The first of these publications, a pamphlet entitled *An Appeal to the British Nation*, appeared in late summer of 1843. Grover intended it primarily as a source of publicity for his campaign, as he believed that Stoddart and Conolly’s fate had attracted insufficient attention in Britain. In it, he accused the government of doing too little to assist its agents abroad, and of not realizing the potential implications of Ellenborough’s description of Stoddart and Conolly as “innocent travellers.”<sup>58</sup> A review of this work in *The Examiner* expressed surprise at Grover’s contention that Stoddart and Conolly were still alive, but ultimately found his argument persuasive.<sup>59</sup>

The second publication, *The Bokhara Victims*, Grover’s full-length book about his campaign, was published after Wolff’s return from Bukhara with confirmation from the

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<sup>56</sup> “First Report of the Committee of the Stoddart and Conolly Fund,” National Archives, Foreign Office Series 60, vol. 109, Kew, England.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Grover, *An Appeal to the British Nation*. For the scene in which Grover imagines the impact of the “innocent travellers” remark on Stoddart’s (and Conolly’s) fate, see pages 30-35.

<sup>59</sup> *The Examiner*, 19 August 1843.

emir himself that Stoddart and Conolly were dead.<sup>60</sup> From its first pages, this book reveals Grover's conviction that the British government's failures lay at the heart of the officers' execution. In the dedication to Queen Victoria, Grover wrote,

My objective in presuming to dedicate the following to your Majesty, is the hope of directing your majesty's attention to the cruel sufferings and alleged murder of two British officers, who were sent on an important diplomatic mission, on your Majesty's service, and who appear to have been abandoned in an unaccountable manner, by your Majesty's government.

I consider it my duty to state to your Majesty, that the circumstances attending this extraordinary case are degrading to the British nation, and are of a nature to dim the lustre of your Majesty's crown.<sup>61</sup>

The sense of national shame stemming from Stoddart and Conolly's abandonment recurs in Grover's work. A French general whom Grover met in Algiers in 1840 suggested that perhaps Stoddart and Conolly had been intentionally abandoned by the British government;<sup>62</sup> the Russian authorities he consulted later in his campaign concurred.<sup>63</sup> To Grover, who believed that the British soldier's ability to trust his commanding officer implicitly was the source of British military success, such accusations were humiliating.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the deplorable behavior of the British government, Grover argued, the Bukharan emir was relatively magnanimous to Stoddart and Conolly. According to Grover, Nasrullah waited nearly four years, in Stoddart's case, to receive official confirmation from the British government that the officers were in fact verified agents of

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<sup>60</sup> Grover believed even after Wolff's return that the officers were alive, and suggested that they had been taken to Samarkand. His conviction does not seem to have been widely shared. Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 273.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, v-vi. The argument that the government played a role in Stoddart and Conolly's death extended even to the appendix, which contains the following entry under "A": "Anxiety, extraordinary of the British Government to establish a Belief of the death of their envoys, 188." See Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 363.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 45f.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 27f.

the British government, and even set up post offices to facilitate communication between Bukhara and Britain.<sup>65</sup>

*The Bokhara Victims* was favorably reviewed in a number of publications. Grover's descriptions of governmental nonchalance of Stoddart and Conolly's fate disturbed reviewers, leading to renewed condemnations of the government's handling of the crisis and calls for greater government involvement in similar situations going forward. One reviewer accused the government of "play[ing] an Iscariot part,"<sup>66</sup> while another inquired, "Will the government of a great nation like England suffer its honor to be thus bearded and trampled upon with impunity—its power to be treated with mockery and contempt—and the traditions of its glory to be buried under the scorn of a barbarian sovereign...?"<sup>67</sup> There was no hesitation to join Grover in laying the blame for the crisis entirely at the government's feet; in fact, two articles recommended alternate titles for *The Bokhara Victims* that more clearly indicated the government's role in the crisis. One review therefore bore the title "The Victims of Diplomacy," while another, even more directly, suggested that the book would have been more aptly titled "Victims of Downing Street."<sup>68</sup> The authors of these articles also praised Grover for his commitment to discovering the truth, and for bringing the government's failures to light.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Grover, *The Bokhara Victims*, 234f.

<sup>66</sup> *Morning Post*, 22 April 1845.

<sup>67</sup> "The Bokhara Victims," *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* 74: 293 (May 1845), 130, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/4415567?accountid=15131>.

<sup>68</sup> "The Victims of Diplomacy," *Ainsworth's Magazine* 7 (January 1845), 396-400, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/4309611?accountid=15131>; *Morning Post*, 22 April 1845.

<sup>69</sup> See for example "The Victims of Diplomacy," 400.

Not all looked on Grover's efforts so favorably, however. A review in a London literary periodical accused him of adopting an unsuitably bombastic tone, which led reviewers to question the trustworthiness of his judgment.<sup>70</sup> The *Edinburgh Review*, which published a staggering nearly forty-page rebuttal of Grover's work, also attacked Grover personally in its analysis of his book. Although genuinely interested in Stoddart and Conolly's well-being, the *Review* argued, Grover treated government officials with insufficient respect and allowed his self-importance to color his narration of the crisis.<sup>71</sup> (In the *Review*'s words, Grover was "not a man to hide his light under a bushel.")<sup>72</sup> More significantly, however, the *Review* argued that Grover had grossly misrepresented the facts of the government's treatment of Stoddart and Conolly. Noting the Queen's letter to Nasrullah, which Grover omitted in his account, and several other omissions and cases of faulty logic, the article accused Grover of being determined to believe that the government had treated Stoddart and Conolly badly regardless of the facts of the case.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the *Review*'s negative response to Grover's book (and to Grover personally) it seems clear that the campaign Grover initiated significantly transformed the way the Stoddart and Conolly crisis was presented to the public. His persistent use of the press, his two publications, and the committee he formed all placed Stoddart and Conolly's fate before the public far more regularly than had been possible when publicity was dependent solely on the receipt of some new piece of intelligence from Tehran. Grover had not rejected the themes in earlier press coverage of the Stoddart and Conolly

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<sup>70</sup> "Reviews of New Books: The Bokhara Victims," *The Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, and Sciences, &c.*, 19 April 1845.

<sup>71</sup> "The Bokhara Victims," *The Edinburgh Review* 82 (July 1845), 165, 135, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/6856234?accountid=15131>.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

affair; compelling the government to take up its proper role in resolving the crisis was central to his campaign. Grover's campaign was somewhat limited in its appeal, however, as his tavern committee meeting hinted. His partnership with the missionary and traveller Joseph Wolff provided the additional interest—and indeed drama—Grover's movement needed to reach a larger audience. Wolff's contribution will be the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter Four:

### Dr. Joseph Wolff: Writer, Ethnographer, Missionary

Born in Bavaria in 1796 to Jewish parents (his father was a rabbi),<sup>1</sup> Joseph Wolff converted to Catholicism at the age of twelve. He later travelled to Rome, where he enrolled in a missionary training college. While a student there, he was introduced to the pope, who called Wolff his “son” and offered Wolff the opportunity to hear lectures in the pope’s own seminary. Struck by his kindness, Wolff patted him on the shoulder and requested his blessing.<sup>2</sup> His presumption caused an uproar in his college, and when in the ensuing debates it emerged that, although Wolff respected the pope, he did not believe in his infallibility, Wolff was expelled from the college.<sup>3</sup> Increasingly disillusioned with Catholicism and with nothing to keep him in Rome, Wolff accepted an invitation from the evangelical banker Henry Drummond to continue his missionary training in England, where he eventually became an Anglican clergyman.<sup>4</sup>

Because of his unusual background, Wolff seems at first glance an unlikely candidate for a mission to rescue two servants of the British Empire in Central Asia. In fact, however, he was uniquely well-suited to the mission to Bukhara. In the 1820s and

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Wolff, *Sketch of the Life and Journal of the Rev. J. Wolff, Missionary to Palestine and Persia* (Norwich: Jarrold and Son, 1827), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Wolff, *Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D., LL.D., Vicar of the Isle Brewers, Near Taunton; and Late Missionary to the Jews and Muhammedans in Persia, Bokhara, Cashmeer, etc.* (London: Saunders. Otley, and Co., 1861), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Wolff, *Sketch of the Life and Journal*, 14f.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Leach, “From Bavaria to Bokhara to Isle Brewers: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Dr the Revd Joseph Wolff, DD.,” *Asian Affairs* 38: 3 (2007): 320, 328, accessed 26 October 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03068370701538456>.

1830s, Wolff travelled widely as a missionary to Jews and Muslims in Turkey, the Caucasus, Palestine, Persia, Central Asia, and India.<sup>5</sup> Wolff's second missionary tour, which occurred in the early 1830s, included a visit to Kanpur, in India, where Wolff met Arthur Conolly, of whom he formed an extremely favorable opinion.<sup>6</sup> Wolff also travelled to Bukhara during the same missionary tour. He had two objectives there: to convert the city's Jewish population to Christianity, and to attempt to discover a connection between the Bukharan Jews and the Biblical Lost Tribes of Israel, of whom he believed the Bukharan Jews to be descendants.<sup>7</sup>

Having travelled to Bukhara, and knowing Captain Conolly personally, Wolff was perfectly positioned to travel to Bukhara once more, this time on the behalf of Grover's Stoddart and Conolly Committee to determine the truth of the conflicting reports about the officers' fates. Wolff's contribution to Grover's mission was twofold: the drama of his journey to Bukhara and his frequent letters about it provided Grover with material to supply to the press as the Foreign Office, thereby keeping Stoddart and Conolly in the public eye, while Wolff's identity as an amateur ethnographer and an experienced Christian missionary attracted a broader audience than Grover's strictly political message could have drawn.

Wolff first offered publically to travel to Bukhara in a letter dated 2 July 1843, which appeared first in the *Morning Herald* and after circulated in other papers as well. The letter took the form of a plea addressed to British Army officers, one or more of whom Wolff hoped to inspire either to join him for the journey to Bukhara, or else to pay

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<sup>5</sup> For a brief introduction to Wolff's missionary travels, see Leach, "From Bavaria to Bokhara to Isle Brewers."

<sup>6</sup> Leach, "From Bavaria to Bokhara to Isle Brewers," 35.

<sup>7</sup> Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours*, 2.



Wolff's expenses if he undertook the trip alone.<sup>8</sup> This initial appeal was unconnected with Grover's campaign, but Grover contacted Wolff immediately after it appeared, and the two men worked closely together from that point forward.

Wolff, like Grover, distrusted the reports of Stoddart and Conolly's execution circulating in the press in mid-1843, particularly the comparatively detailed account of Saaleh Mahomed, which British ambassador to Tehran Justin Sheil had endorsed. As he explained in a letter to Grover, parts of which Grover submitted to the London papers for publication, Wolff found it improbable that Saaleh Mahomed would have heard of the execution only from one of the executioners, as other Bukharan executions of which Wolff was aware had been public events.<sup>9</sup> The method of execution seemed even more unlikely, as Wolff had understood that Bukharan executions generally relied on poisons or strangulation (though he later learned that Nasrullah had indeed instituted a policy of replacing strangulation with beheading).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Wolff's mission to Bukhara, like Grover's campaign in Britain, focused more on discovering the truth about Stoddart and Conolly's fate than on allocating the blame for it. He wrote frequent letters to Grover on his journey toward Bukhara, describing his progress and making careful note of the rumors about Stoddart and Conolly circulating at each of his stops. Although he became increasingly pessimistic about his chances of finding the officers alive, he refrained from declaring absolutely that they were dead until he reached Bukhara itself.<sup>11</sup> It was only after his return to England, when he published his account of the mission to Bukhara in book form, that he addressed

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<sup>8</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 59f. See also *London Evening Standard*, 6 July 1843.

<sup>9</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 31 August 1843; Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 159, 174.

<sup>10</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 31 August 1843; Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 174.

<sup>11</sup> See for example *Evening Chronicle*, 31 January 1843; *Morning Post*, 6 May 1844.

the extent to which he believed the government to be responsible for Stoddart and Conolly's deaths.<sup>12</sup>

The letters Wolff sent to Grover were not merely the raw material of his published narrative, awaiting elaboration and commentary, though they did serve that purpose. As I discussed in the previous chapter, these letters also gave Grover new material with which to maintain public interest in his campaign through the press, and to repeatedly draw the attention of the Foreign Office to Stoddart and Conolly's fate. The content and tone of Wolff's correspondence lent itself particularly well to this task. Wolff had a flair for the dramatic that was evident even on the page, and the excerpts and paraphrases of these letters that Grover published in the press included sensational stories and predictions about the mission's future as well as reports of Wolff's progress and the rumors he gathered about Stoddart and Conolly. Such dramatic tales played an even more significant role in Wolff's book on the mission.

The use of these anecdotes as a means of capturing public interest developed out of a larger movement within nineteenth century orientalist discourse. In his history of orientalism, Said describes the orientalism of the early nineteenth century as a predominantly scholastic phenomenon that produced numerous scholarly publications and academic societies.<sup>13</sup> In the writings of early Victorian travellers to the Levant, however, Alessandro Olsaretti found that many travelogue writers favored depictions of "picturesque" or "carnavalesque" scenes to more traditionally erudite content.<sup>14</sup> Despite

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<sup>12</sup> See Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 267f.

<sup>13</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 96, 99.

<sup>14</sup> Alessandro Olsaretti, "Urban Culture, Curiosity, and the Aesthetics of Distance: The Representation of Picturesque Carnivals in Early Victorian Travelogues to the Levant,"

the relevance of some of Wolff's content to the field of ethnology, his narrative is more a specimen of picturesque language used to create a sense of distance between subject and object, than a work of intellectual orientalism.<sup>15</sup>

Wolff imbued his letters to Grover with the sense that he and his mission were constantly threatened. Several days before his arrival in Bukhara, Wolff wrote a letter to the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, which he concluded by saying, "In six days it will be decided whether Stoddart and Conolly are alive, or whether I shall be allowed to leave the town [of Bukhara] again. In six days I shall enter Bokhara."<sup>16</sup> In a similar letter, written slightly earlier in the journey and addressed to a group of European societies advocating social reform, Wolff stated that he feared he might not return from Bukhara, and urged his readers to use his death as motivation for eradicating slavery completely in Bukhara. The emotional appeal of this self-sacrifice was augmented by the paragraph that followed, which urged his wife's family to take pity on his widow and son if he were killed in Bukhara.<sup>17</sup> Wolff's use of dramatic language and his frequent sense of foreboding that the mission might spiral out of his control emphasized the narrative's essentially nonacademic (though still unquestionably orientalist) nature, and capitalized on what Olsaretti terms the "vulgar curiosity" of nineteenth-century Britain about the East.<sup>18</sup>

Wolff's *Narrative of a Mission* expressed many of the same fears his letters voiced, though with the addition of more stories that emphasizing the cultural distance

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*Social History* 32 (2007): 247, accessed 7 February 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4287450>.

<sup>15</sup> Olsaretti, "Urban Culture, Curiosity, and the Aesthetics of Difference," 249.

<sup>16</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 167.

<sup>17</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 28 June 1844.

<sup>18</sup> Olsaretti, "Urban Culture, Curiosity, and the Aesthetics of Difference," 247f.

between Britain and Bukhara and the risk Wolff undertook in travelling there. Describing the death of one of Conolly's servants, Youssuf (Joseph), Wolff mused, "I could [n]ot help thinking that there was another *poor Youssuf* who might shortly share the fate of his more dignified predecessor. Strangling, I learnt also, was abandoned by the present King—that was one comfort, for I have a strong antipathy to hanging—and slaughtering with a knife substituted in its room."<sup>19</sup> Wolff rendered the cultural differences between Bukhara and Britain particularly striking in his subsequent description of his arrival in Bukhara. Thousands of people representing many of Bukhara's numerous ethnicities gathered to witness his entry into the city, he wrote. People congregated even on the roofs of houses to watch his party enter the city; among those who remained in the city streets were some of the city's mullahs, who spoke respectfully to him, and women in veils, who shouted that an English ambassador had arrived.<sup>20</sup>

Both the dramatic stories and Wolff's sense of foreboding are manifestations of the powerful nonacademic curiosity about the East that Olsaretti identifies as common in mid-nineteenth century travelogues. Still, there was sufficient paranoia in Wolff's predictions to render some of his contemporaries suspicious of his reliability as a source of information. In January 1845, the *Evening Mail* suggested not once but twice that Wolff had misrepresented his stay in Bukhara, and that the emir would have allowed him to leave whenever he chose to do so.<sup>21</sup> The *London Evening Standard* repudiated this story the following month as an attempt to "weaken the sympathy every Englishman must feel for this noble-minded man" (though the *Standard* does not state why this would

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<sup>19</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 174.

<sup>20</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 187.

<sup>21</sup> *Evening Mail*, 6 January 1845 (separate articles on the first and second pages).

be desirable).<sup>22</sup> It is true that Wolff seems largely unable to assess accurately the motivations of the Central Asians with whom he interacted, and his characterizations of individuals are therefore best treated with some skepticism. However, there seems little reason to doubt that the events of Wolff's journey to and from Bukhara occurred essentially as he described them, even if he indulged in occasional embellishments.

In any case, Wolff's skeptics seem to have been a minority, based on the reception of *Narrative of a Mission* when it appeared in print in mid-1845. Wolff published the volume by subscription, meaning that future purchasers advanced money to cover publication costs. According to the *London Evening Standard*, Wolff's subscribers included former Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston and Prince Albert himself, which constituted a quiet endorsement of some part of Wolff's mission at least, though not necessarily of Grover's vitriolic political rhetoric.<sup>23</sup> The many reviews of Wolff's book were largely favorable, but they frequently avoided the political implications of his mission, a topic that (as I have discussed previously) had already become heated earlier the same year with the publication of Grover's monograph about his campaign.<sup>24</sup>

Instead of reevaluating the government's role in the Stoddart and Conolly affair based on the new evidence Wolff provided, reviewers mined the work for ethnographic insights into the populations Wolff encountered during his travels. They found a considerable amount of it to discuss; although Wolff provided ample material to satisfy

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<sup>22</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 12 February 1845.

<sup>23</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 10 July 1845.

<sup>24</sup> For a rare review which did address the government's role in the crisis relative to Wolff's effort, see "Narrative of the Mission of Dr. Wolff to Bokhara," *The New Quarterly Review: Or, Home, Foreign and Colonial Journal* 6:1 (July), 166-206, accessed 22 February 2016, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2549512?accountid=15131>

what Olsaretti termed the “vulgar curiosity” of nonacademic Victorian orientalism, he also recorded many observations typical of the more scholarly orientalist study of ethnology. Thus *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal* observed that “[w]hatever may be thought of the policy of Dr Wolff’s mission to Bokhara, or of Captain Grover’s motives in promoting the inquiry,” the information Wolff gathered during travels provided fresh insight into the “savage state” of Bukhara, for which British readers would be grateful.<sup>25</sup>

Wolff’s monograph in fact contained many instances of the ethnological observations *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal* noted. These types of descriptions of individuals and cultures developed out of a particular manifestation of British orientalism which had gained wide currency by beginning of his journey to Bukhara: the fields of physical anthropology and ethnology. The field of physical anthropology, established by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and became closely intertwined with the field of ethnology through the writings of European travelers.<sup>26</sup> In England, this school of classification, which ultimately valued the western European model of culture and progress above any other possibility, was led by James Cowles Prichard. In his research, which culminated in the five-volume magnum opus entitled *Researches into the Physical History of Man*, he sought to establish the degree of relationship between human populations.<sup>27</sup> The completed work accounted for even relatively unknown ethnicities, including the Uzbeks of Bukhara, in a global chain of relations based largely on linguistic data. Prichard did

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<sup>25</sup> “Dr Wolff’s Mission to Bokhara,” *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal* 88 (1845): 146, 150, accessed 22 February 2016,

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/2575608?accountid=15131>.

<sup>26</sup> Shapiro, ‘The history and development of physical anthropology’, 373

<sup>27</sup> Prichard, James Cowles. *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*. Volume I-V. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1844.

not espouse these theories alone; by the late 1840s and early 1850s there were several other major scholars (Charles Hamilton Smith, Robert Latham, and Robert Knox, to name only a few) conducting similar research.<sup>28</sup>

Wolff's travel narrative was intertwined with the development of ethnology in Victorian Britain in two ways. First, Prichard, though the leading ethnologist of his generation, was an armchair ethnologist, basing his research largely on information culled from earlier publications. Thus he was largely dependent on the writings of those who had travelled, as Wolff did, to the areas about which he wrote. In his discussion of Bukhara and the Uzbeks, Prichard references the writings of Alexander Burnes and John Wood, and cites two German travellers, Zwick and Schill, in his description of the Turkmen inhabitants of the region.<sup>29</sup> These works included observations on the physical appearance (including skull shape) and character of the populations they described—precisely the type of information on which Prichard founded his research.

Secondly, Prichard and the travel writers whose insights he borrowed shared common orientalist views of the cultures and peoples they described. Racism in the modern sense of the word, as the idea of categorizing populations based on shared ancestry and common heritable traits, did not emerge until the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>30</sup> Yet all of these writers were united in a sense of superiority to and separation from their Central Asian subjects. Wolff's descriptions of the Central Asians he met frequently accord well with the more general characterizations entire populations that Prichard provides.

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<sup>28</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 114.

<sup>29</sup> Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, vol. IV, 355.

<sup>30</sup> Edward Beasley, *The Victorian Reinvention of Race: New Racisms and the Problem of Grouping in the Human Species* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1f, 11.

Prichard (quoting Wood and Burnes) described the Uzbeks as “brave and intelligent, but cruel and rapacious.”<sup>31</sup> Wolff would offer more individualized characterizations based on his own experience, of course, but he would hardly have disagreed with “cruel” and “rapacious” as descriptors of the Bukharan elite.<sup>32</sup>

Wolff’s prejudices are particularly prominent in his descriptions of the individuals he met in Bukhara. The emir of Bukhara was a despot, to summarize Wolff’s analysis, and the nayeb, Abdul Samut Khan, was a conniving, greedy, lying murderer.<sup>33</sup> Prior to Wolff’s arrival in Bukhara, the nayeb’s identity was a source of confusion. Sir Stratford Canning sent information to the Foreign Office in February of 1844, indicating that Stoddart himself had adopted the name Abdul Samut Khan, having become a Muslim and been appointed Chief of Artillery by the emir of Bukhara.<sup>34</sup> In a report dated several days after these. Wolff described Abdul Samut Khan as Stoddart’s host in Bukhara.<sup>35</sup> Wolff’s identification of Abdul Samut Khan’s identity was the correct one, as he found when he arrived in the city, but his role in Stoddart and Conolly’s history was far less clear. In the first full account of Stoddart and Conolly’s execution to appear in the British press, Wolff identifies Abdul Samut Khan as a “sincere and excellent friend of the British nation.”<sup>36</sup> The nayeb had wept as he recounted to Wolff his efforts to protect Stoddart and Conolly from the emir’s plans to have them executed. He had attempted to purchase their freedom

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<sup>31</sup> Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, vol. IV, 352.

<sup>32</sup> See for example Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 269.

<sup>33</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 268f.

<sup>34</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 8 February 1844. For a less detailed version of the same report, see *Morning Post*, 6 February 1844. This version identifies Stoddart or Abdul Samut Khan as the “commandant of a fortress,” rather than chief of artillery, but the two articles nevertheless seem to be based on the same report out of Trebizond.

<sup>35</sup> *Morning Post*, 14 March 1844.

<sup>36</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 July 1844.



for one hundred thousand tillahs, but even this did not persuade the king to release them. Apparently as a result of this, the king had begun withholding his wages and plotting to kill him. In retaliation, the nayeb told Wolff that he would be willing to support a British invasion of Bukhara for the right price (an offer Wolff emphatically refused).<sup>37</sup>

According to his instructions from the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, Wolff was free to return to England as soon as he had determined definitively Stoddart and Conolly's fate. Initially, Wolff was told that he would be able to leave only a few days after writing officially to Grover for the emir on 5 May 1844, in order to confirm Stoddart and Conolly's deaths.<sup>38</sup> Shortly after receiving this promise, however, Nasrullah imprisoned Wolff in retaliation for the imprisonment of the Bukharan ambassador in Persia, of which Nasrullah had just received reports and which had been arranged by the British ambassador at Tehran.<sup>39</sup> As a prisoner of the emir, however, Wolff was forced to stay in the nayeb's home. Prolonged close proximity convinced Wolff that the nayeb, rather than the emir, was ultimately responsible for Stoddart and Conolly's deaths. On one occasion, Wolff was enraged by what he perceived as the nayeb's failure to protect him from the threatening behavior of the emir, and fiercely accused him of having orchestrated the executions. In that moment, the nayeb admits to a leading role proudly.<sup>40</sup> Wolff publically denounced the nayeb from the first pages of his book, because of this exchange, calling him a "bloodhound,"<sup>41</sup> a "foul miscreant,"<sup>42</sup> and a "villain."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 203f.

<sup>38</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 July 1844.

<sup>39</sup> *Evening Mail*, 2 August 1844. See also Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 227.

<sup>40</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 247.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 257

Wolff's final analysis of his mission to Bukhara is consumed with discussion of British prestige in the region. In conversation with the emir and his ministers, Wolff had frequently emphasized the military power and moral superiority of Britain.<sup>44</sup> Now, speaking to the British themselves, he wrote that Britain was able to punish Bukhara militarily for the treatment Stoddart and Conolly received, either by attacking from Sind or by enlisting the assistance of the Persian military.<sup>45</sup> To fail to do so, Wolff argued, would be to risk "all the moral influence [Britain] now possesses" in the region; furthermore, it would encourage other Central Asian states to imitate Bukhara's behavior.<sup>46</sup> The prospect of forfeiting this influence to the likes of Emir Nasrullah and Abdul Samut Khan made the loss still greater: not only were these men morally impoverished, in Wolff's analysis, but they also belonged to a culture fundamentally inferior to British culture.

Given Wolff's deep-seated distrust of the Bukharan authorities, it is worthwhile to examine the precautions he took for his own safety prior to his arrival in the city. Wolff was willing to undertake the journey to Bukhara with minimal government protection for two reasons: his prior experience of the region and his status as an ordained religious authority. Because he had travelled in the Near East and Central Asia previously, he was familiar with the hospitality customs he would encounter,<sup>47</sup> he was known to the Jewish communities along his route,<sup>48</sup> and he held a passport given him by the emir of Bukhara

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<sup>44</sup> For an example of the former, see Wolff, *Narrative*, 257f. For the latter, see Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 226.

<sup>45</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 267f.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> See for example *London Evening Standard*, 13 October 1843.

<sup>48</sup> See for example Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 298f.

during his previous stay there.<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, however, Wolff believed that his identity as an ordained Christian missionary offered his greatest security. This confidence had a spiritual dimension (he believed that he was doing the will of God, and that God would protect him from or expose him to physical harm as He deemed right), but there was also a pragmatic element to his reliance on his position. By traveling in the character of a Christian “derveesh,” Wolff hoped to protect himself against the accusations of spying that had brought about Stoddart and Conolly’s deaths. A cleric carrying a Bible would be seen as an unlikely spy, he hoped, and therefore he would not be suspected of harboring political motives for visiting the region.<sup>50</sup> He would also benefit from the respect customarily accorded to religious authorities in the region.<sup>51</sup> Wolff could honestly adopt the character of a cleric with the knowledge that the memory of his previous journey to Bukhara, in addition to reports of his missionary work elsewhere in the region, would confirm that this was in fact his true identity. Grover, by contrast, would have required letters from the British government certifying that he was a British officer, and not a spy. By providing him with such letters, however, the Foreign Office would have been investing his mission with too official a character for the government’s comfort.

Thus Wolff’s willingness to undertake the mission to Bukhara was essential to Grover’s success in compelling the Foreign Office to respond to the rumors of Stoddart and Conolly’s execution. Unwilling to travel to Bohkara himself without official authorization from the British government, Grover had reached an impasse in his project prior to receiving Wolff’s letter offering to undertake the journey. Without an agent

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<sup>49</sup> Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 63.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

willing to travel to Bukhara in order to corroborate or refute the various rumors filtering into the Foreign Office and the British press, Grover's ability to continue bringing the issue before Lord Aberdeen was limited, and his concerns were easily dismissed. With Wolff "in the field" as a new source of potentially more reliable information, however, Grover was able to command greater attention within the Foreign Office.

Though Wolff travelled to Bukhara without the official sanction of the British government, he did not travel entirely without its support. Lord Aberdeen agreed to aid Wolff as much as he was able (though he maintained that Stoddart and Conolly were likely dead), and contacted British ambassadors in the cities through which he would travel on his behalf.<sup>52</sup> Wolff described these efforts on his behalf gratefully in the papers prior to his departure from England.<sup>53</sup> He also frequently praised the generosity of the British representatives who received him along his route in his letters to Grover, and these notes of appreciation generally found their way, in whole or in part, into the papers as well.<sup>54</sup> Wolff expressed gratitude to Colonel Sheil (who had passed to London one of the earliest reports of the executions) particularly in many of these letters, although he still found space to be critical of some aspects of Sheil's treatment of him.<sup>55</sup>

The press took particular interest in the extent of the government's support for Wolff's mission. The *Morning Chronicle*, reporting on a public meeting about Wolff's proposed mission with disappointingly low attendance, attributed the apparent apathy of the public to the government's lack of leadership.

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<sup>52</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 5 October 1843; Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 110.

<sup>53</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 October 1843.

<sup>54</sup> For example, see *Morning Post*, 14 March 1844.

<sup>55</sup> *Evening Mail*, 12 April 1844; see also *The Evening Chronicle*, 26 April 1844. For an example of Wolff's criticism of Sheil, see Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 302f.

We believe the truth to be, that the public, not seeing the government (which is the proper party to act in the matter) take any active steps for the restoration of those officers, or at any rate for ascertaining their fate, are persuaded that the results of a personal mission are so hazardous, that under the circumstances all thought of such an undertaking had better be abandoned.<sup>56</sup>

In spite of this, most comments in the press about the government's involvement with Wolff's mission suggest that the "non-official" support, consisting mostly of aid offered by British envoys, was viewed favorably. Wolff himself seems to be responsible for much of this favorable view with his repeated praise of the government officials he encountered. In some cases, news reports divide the credit for the mission's predicted success between Wolff and the government. As Wolff was travelling through Persia on his way to Bukhara, the *London Evening Standard* reported that Wolff could not have arrived safely in Tehran without Aberdeen's assistance, and that because of it, Wolff might finally succeed in resolving the conflicting reports about them.<sup>57</sup> Reporting on Wolff's progress toward Bukhara in November of 1843, however, the *Morning Post* commented that "neither the British government nor the India Company have contributed" to the payment of Wolff's expenses for the trip.<sup>58</sup> The *Evening Chronicle* makes the same observation, and then states that the government's failure to support Wolff's mission was "a disgrace to the British name throughout Europe."<sup>59</sup>

Wolff's contribution to Grover's campaign extended beyond his ability to travel to Bukhara. He was comfortable in the role of a public figure, both in person and in print, having both preached and published extensively by the time he offered to travel to Bukhara. Several of Wolff's many published memoirs have already appeared as sources

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<sup>56</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 October 1843.

<sup>57</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 11 April 1844.

<sup>58</sup> *Morning Post*, 27 November 1843.

<sup>59</sup> *Evening Chronicle*, 27 November 1843.

in this thesis. The number of audiences to which he spoke were no less impressive than the number of books he published. According to one memoir, his audiences outside of Britain included Muslim clerics and British residents in Lucknow, a group of British officials in Calcutta, and the United States Congress.<sup>60</sup> Although Wolff seems never to have published his sermons, he did mention their contents in his writings. Many of them emphasized the imminent return of Christ, a topic he frequently addressed during his travels, both when speaking to Christian audiences and as a form of evangelism.<sup>61</sup>

As an ordained minister and a missionary, Wolff commanded a privileged status in early Victorian society as a Christian missionary, which he used to draw attention to Stoddart and Conolly's plight. Missionaries—particularly those who were capable self-publicists, as Wolff seems to have been—were treated as celebrities in Victorian society.<sup>62</sup> Their reports of their activities enjoyed wide circulation, either as books or in periodicals published by missionary societies. One such book, authored by a missionary to Polynesia, sold approximately 40,000 copies between 1837 and 1840.<sup>63</sup> Wolff was clearly capable of using his writing to promote himself, if the number of volumes he published can be taken as an indication. Further evidence of his popularity lies in the wide geographical distribution of the papers that carried information about his decision to

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<sup>60</sup> Wolff, *Travels and Adventures*, 412, 429, 517.

<sup>61</sup> See for example Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours*, 46, 242; Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 54, 90. During his first visit to Bukhara, Wolff predicted that Christ would return in the year 1847. When he returned on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf a decade later, an official of the emir's court enquired about his earlier statement. Wolff responded that he was less certain of the precise date than he had been previously, as the scriptural basis for his mathematical calculations was ambiguous, but that he still expected that the second coming would occur soon. See Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours*, 131, and Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission*, 198.

<sup>62</sup> Anna Johnston, "British Missionary Publishing, Missionary Celebrity, and Empire," *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 32 (2005): 21.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 27f.

travel to Bukhara on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf. These included papers published in Waterford, Ireland;<sup>64</sup> Leeds, England;<sup>65</sup> southern Wales;<sup>66</sup> and Inverness, Scotland<sup>67</sup> as well as in London, where Grover lived, and the surrounding areas.

The evidence of Wolff's influence on Grover's campaign takes concrete form when we note the change in the venue of the public meetings connected with Grover's campaign. The first meeting, which established the Stoddart and Conolly Committee, occurred in the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London. Because he and his family were living in Bruges, Belgium, at the time, Wolff was absent, but he had committed to travelling to Bukhara before it occurred.<sup>68</sup> The meetings that Wolff attended, in contrast to this initial gathering, were held in far grander spaces than the Crown and Anchor. The first, which occurred shortly before Wolff's departure for Bukhara, took place in the Hanover-Square Rooms, an opulent space built in 1833 and generally used for concerts.<sup>69</sup> In its account of this meeting, the *Morning Chronicle* noted disappointedly that the room was "not half full" and that the overwhelming majority of them were women.<sup>70</sup> Whatever inferences this might introduce about the author's misogyny, it is worth noting as a

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<sup>64</sup> *Waterford Mail*, 15 July 1843.

<sup>65</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 15 July 1843.

<sup>66</sup> *Silurian, Cardiff, Methyr, and Brecon Mercury, and South Wales General Advertiser*, 16 September 1843.

<sup>67</sup> *Inverness Courier*, 20 September 1843.

<sup>68</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 22 July 1843.

<sup>69</sup> Lunn, "The Hanover Square Rooms," 741.

<sup>70</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 12 October 1843. According to a contemporary source, the Hanover-Square facilities could accommodate a thousand occupants. Thus even half full the room contained a larger audience than had attended Grover's first meeting. Anonymous, *Random Recollections of Exeter Hall, In 1834—1837* (London, James Nisbet and Co., 1838), 13.

contrast to the first meeting, which occurred in a space catering to primarily male clients<sup>71</sup> and whose attendees were described as “gentlemen.”<sup>72</sup>

The public meeting held on Wolff’s return to Bukhara marks an even more significant departure from the relatively humble origins of Grover’s committee. When it was completed in 1831, the large room at Exeter Hall seated four thousand occupants. In subsequent years, however, additional levels of seating were added to accommodate even larger audiences.<sup>73</sup> In 1840, Exeter Hall hosted the World Antislavery Convention, at which both noted abolitionist Thomas Clarkson and Prince Albert spoke.<sup>74</sup> When Wolff returned to England, it was in the large room of Exeter Hall that he presented the results of his journey. Once again many of the attendees were women, but on this occasion every seat was taken.<sup>75</sup> Such a grand and prestigious venue marks a striking contrast to the Crown and Anchor, and speaks to both the size and type of audience Wolff was able to command. His involvement in Grover’s campaign thus not only furthered Grover’s efforts to gain the attention of the Foreign Office and the press, but it also fundamentally altered the composition of the audience most likely to attend Grover’s events and contribute financially to his campaign.

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<sup>71</sup> Melton, *Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, 231.

<sup>72</sup> *Morning Post*, 8 September 1843.

<sup>73</sup> Anonymous, *Random Recollections of Exeter Hall, In 1834—1837* (London, James Nisbet and Co., 1838), 7-10.

<sup>74</sup> F. Morrell Holmes, *Exeter hall and Its Association* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881), 78, 82.

<sup>75</sup> *London Evening Standard*, 1 May 1845. See also *Morning Advertiser*, 1 May 1845.



## Conclusion

Stoddart and Conolly largely vanished from the press following Wolff's return from Bokhara. Several books were published, however, in which their story was told. Sir John William Kaye wrote extensively on Conolly in his *Lives of Indian Officers*, which appeared in 1867, for example.<sup>1</sup> In 1899, F.H. Skrine and E.D. Ross, a former member of the Indian Civil Service and a professor at University College, London, respectively, published a history of what was by then Russian Turkestan. The volume begins with Alexander the Great's expedition into southern Central Asia, but also includes a chapter mentioning Stoddart and Conolly entitled "Amīr Nasrullah, A Bokhāran Nero."<sup>2</sup>

This thesis has argued that the discussion of Stoddart and Conolly's execution and imprisonment among their British contemporaries centered not on the events of their time in Bukhara but on a campaign to establish the extent of the government's responsibility for the tragedy and, in many cases, to prompt the government to respond accordingly. If this was indeed the motivation of Grover, Wolff, and the many nameless authors of articles published in British papers, then we may reasonably conclude that they failed in at least part of their mission. They succeeded in establishing a remarkably unanimous consensus that the government bore some responsibility toward Stoddart and Conolly, and indeed that it actually bore some responsibility for their deaths. But they failed to

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<sup>1</sup> Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers*, 67-144.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Henry Skrine and Edward Denison Ross, *The Heart of Asia: A History of Russian Turkestan and the Central Asian Khanates from the Earliest Times* (London: Methuen and Co., 1899).

inspire the type of government response they felt the tragedy to require. It is true that Peel's government granted Stoddart's sisters a government pension of £150 in 1844,<sup>3</sup> but this was minor compared to the response desired by some of Stoddart and Conolly's advocates. Macnaghten, as we have seen, hoped to launch a campaign from Afghanistan to secure their release,<sup>4</sup> a stance that others adopted after Macnaghten's death when reports of Stoddart and Conolly's execution reached Britain.<sup>5</sup> The British government seems never to have seriously considered either these or Grover and Wolff's later pleas for military action against Bukhara, and as a result Stoddart and Conolly's executioners—or murderers, as they were consistently termed in the press—faced no penalty for their actions.

Not only did the guilty go unpunished, but the man Wolff determined to be the primary villain in the affair, the infamous Abdul Samut Khan, was effectively posthumously rewarded for his role in the deaths of the officers. In 1883, the nayeb's son wrote a letter to the Government of India, requesting that the government pay him the sum his father loaned to Captain Conolly during the latter's imprisonment at Bokhara. According to this letter, Abdul Samut Khan had been executed by the emir of Bokhara shortly after Stoddart and Conolly met their end, on the rather extraordinary grounds that he had been too generous in his treatment of them. Although Wolff had described him as

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<sup>3</sup> Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. vol. 85, col 980 (24 April 1846).

<sup>4</sup> See for example *Evening Chronicle*, 9 September 1840.

<sup>5</sup> *Lancaster Gazette*, 11 February 1843.

the primary cause of Stoddart and Conolly's deaths (more so even than the emir himself), the British government acceded to the request and reimbursed the nayeb's son.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the significance of the British campaign on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf surely does not lie in its long-term success. Its immediate achievements in creating and maintaining public interest in the fate of the officers were, this thesis has argued, admittedly noteworthy. They grew out of a collaboration between remarkable men who benefitted from an array of preexisting social structures, from the coffee house as a source of news to the aura of celebrity that accompanied a successful missionary in Victorian society. Still, these successes, however remarkable, were partial and transient.

The lasting significance of the Stoddart and Conolly affair lies in its role as an early phase of a debate revisited throughout Victorian history (and indeed since that time) regarding the extent of the government's obligation to protect its citizens abroad. The same question of responsibility that shaped this crisis emerged repeatedly in subsequent years, on several occasions in contexts that have remained prominent episodes in British history. A mere five years after Wolff returned to England, for example, Parliament found itself embroiled in the Don Pacifico affair. Don, or David, Pacifico was a Jewish British subject living in Greece who became the victim of an anti-Semitic mob which, the spring of 1847, entered his home and damaged or stole property and money collectively valued at over £30,000.<sup>7</sup> The Greek court persistently refused to reimburse Pacifico for his losses for several years, and it was only in 1850, when the British naval fleet in the Mediterranean assembled outside Athens, that the situation was resolved. In July of 1850,

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<sup>6</sup> Simla Foreign Department, "Abdullah Khan's Claim for 3,000 Bokhara Tillas," British Library, India Office Records L/PS/7/35 847-870, London. See also Simla Foreign Department, British Library, India Office Records L/PS/7/38 453-455, London.

<sup>7</sup> Dolphus Whitten, Jr., "The Don Pacifico Affair," *The Historian* 48 (1986): 257.

Palmerston gave a speech in Parliament justifying the use of military action to end the standoff: “a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England, will protect him against injustice and wrong.”<sup>8</sup>

More than thirty years after the Don Pacifico affair, the British government once again faced crisis involving British citizens abroad. In early 1884, General Charles George Gordon received orders to go to the Sudan, where the British public hoped he would be able to salvage British interests in what was rapidly becoming a desperate situation.<sup>9</sup> By December of the same year, Gordon found himself trapped at Khartoum, besieged by the forces of the Mahdi. Gordon, like Stoddart, was offered the opportunity to depart for England—though in Gordon’s case, this came not from an intermediary power, but from his opponent, the Mahdi, himself, who respected Gordon both as a soldier and as a devout practitioner of his faith. Like Stoddart, Gordon felt that his duty to his country required that he remain where he was. In the end, the Mahdi’s forces attacked Khartoum shortly before a British relief force arrived, and Gordon was beheaded. He was given no quiet grave for a second Saaleh Muhammad to visit, however: his head was mounted on a pole and displayed outside the Mahdi’s tent. The British public were outraged at this humiliation of a national hero, and once again blamed the British government for the death of a British envoy at the hands of a foreign power. In some

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<sup>8</sup> Dolphus Whitten, Jr., “The Don Pacifico Affair,” 266. Unfortunately, the volume of Parliamentary debates in which this speech is to be found (Hansard CXII) is absent from Wooster’s collection.

<sup>9</sup> John H. Waller, *Gordon of Khartoum: The Saga of the Victorian Hero* (New York: Antheneum, 1988), 322f.

responses to the crisis, Gladstone's nickname initials, G.O.M. (standing for "Grand Old Man") were reversed to M.O.G.: "Murderer of Gordon."<sup>10</sup>

Both Gordon's death and the Don Pacifico affair involve themes that emerged decades earlier in the Stoddart and Conolly crisis. Gordon, like Stoddart and Conolly, was held up as an honorable man and officer, and therefore as a figure whom Britain ought to have protected. Christianity, evangelicalism specifically, was central to this story, as it had been in the Stoddart and Conolly affair. The public outcry following Gordon's death resembles, on a larger scale, the outcry that the rumors of Stoddart and Conolly's execution prompted. Even Palmerston's claim that British citizens abroad had the right to expect the protection of their government seems to be a more forcefully articulated version of the conclusion some commentators on the Stoddart and Conolly affair reached years earlier.

The Stoddart and Conolly affair thus constituted an early instance of a problem that recurred throughout the Victorian era. Yet previous scholarship has failed to consider it in this light. Most scholars have discussed Stoddart and Conolly much as conservative newspapers did in the wake of the British retreat from Kabul: as more or less innocent victims of a tragedy they had no hand in creating. The fate of Shah Shuja's government in Afghanistan, like the fate of the failed Russian expedition to Khiva and Anglo-Russian competition in Central Asia generally, undeniably influenced the treatment Stoddart and Conolly received at Bukhara. We cannot understand even their presence in the region outside the context of those events. However, to limit inquiry into their fates to the ebb

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<sup>10</sup> Anthony Nutting, *Gordon of Khartoum: Martyr and Misfit*, (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966), 311.

and flow of British interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia is to ignore entirely the debate that surrounded them in Britain.

This debate on the government's responsibility toward Stoddart and Conolly was initially conducted in the press and in Parliament without the guidance of any single leader. Rather, multiple voices offered varying evidence in relation to two key issues: the extent to which Britain's defeat in the First Anglo-Afghan War was the cause of the officers' deaths, and the role of their character and Christianity in determining the appropriate response to their fate. Although the political persuasion of a paper influenced its treatment of the British retreat from Kabul—the conservative papers opposed British interference in Afghanistan and were therefore quick to note its failure—papers of all political slants tended to agree that the British government bore a responsibility to the officers it sent abroad, though they might disagree about what that responsibility entailed.

As a personal friend of Colonel Stoddart, Grover felt that discussion in the press and in Parliament was accomplishing too little, and stepped forward to create and lead an organized campaign on behalf of his friend and his friend's fellow-prisoner. Though his early, solitary efforts to generate interest in Stoddart and Conolly at the Foreign Office failed, he obtained considerably greater influence once backed by the Stoddart and Conolly Committee and Dr. Wolff. With this support, Grover was able to advocate his cause regularly in the press. He sent much of the same information to the press and the Foreign Office, and was more successful in gaining Aberdeen's attention than he had been when he proposed to travel to Bukhara. Grover thus succeeded with the committee's support where he had failed alone. His publications, which provided the fullest

articulation of his convictions regarding the government's responsibility for Stoddart and Conolly's deaths, benefitted from this success, and were widely reviewed and approved.

Grover's campaign would never have gained such momentum, however, had Wolff not agreed to join forces with him. His letters heightened the drama of Grover's campaign and provided Grover with material to send to the newspapers, while the memoir he published on his return to Britain capitalized on both the ethnological theory of the day and the general interest in distant lands. More significantly, however, Wolff brought with him a degree of celebrity as a well-travelled missionary (and an accomplished self-publicist), attracting the attention of evangelical Christians who might not otherwise have supported Grover's campaign.

While this thesis contributes to a greater understanding of Victorian-era debates regarding the government's responsibility to its citizens abroad, and to the role of public pressure and press involvement in these debates, there is unquestionably more work to be done. Of particular importance to this thesis is the notable lack of scholarship on Britons and other Europeans captured, imprisoned, or killed in Central Asia that relies on non-British sources.<sup>11</sup> Postnikov's commentary on sources culled from Russian archives suggests that there may well be a wealth of material there that is currently little used in English-language scholarship on this topic. More disturbing than the underuse of Russian sources is the complete absence of any reference to Bukharan archival sources in

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<sup>11</sup> I am, unfortunately, only able to speak to the absence of such work in English. It is of course possible that Russian or Uzbek scholars, or scholars of other nationalities, have addressed these questions, and that their work simply has not been translated into English.

published material on Stoddart and Conolly.<sup>12</sup> Without such materials, scholars have no means of evaluating the vitriolic claims made by Stoddart, Conolly, Wolff, and others about the Bukharan leadership, and only limited understanding of the role regional politics played in Stoddart and Conolly's treatment.

Although I unfortunately could not address the underuse of Russian and Bukharan sources in this thesis, the consideration of Stoddart and Conolly in a domestic British context, as well as in the context of the Great Game, represents a positive step toward a fuller understanding of the Stoddart and Conolly crisis. As this project has demonstrated, an examination of sources rarely used in the standard histories of the crisis—particularly newspaper articles and Grover's writings—reveals that the Stoddart and Conolly affair took on a broader significance than simply its possible impact on British policy in Afghanistan. The popular response to Stoddart and Conolly's deaths began with little more than the expression of similar sentiments in newspapers across Britain. Under Grover's guidance, however, it developed into a movement that capitalized on the power of the press and missionary celebrity to draw supporters. In all phases of the crisis, the disparate components of the movement were united in the conviction that Stoddart and Conolly had been abandoned by the government they served—that they were as much the “Victims of the Downing Street” as they were victims of the Bukharan government.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See Andreas Wilde, “Creating the Façade of a Despotic State,” in *Explorations in the Social History of Modern Central Asia (19th - Early 20th Century)*, ed. Paolo Sartori, Brill's Inner Asian Library, Volume 29 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 272, n. 21. It is difficult to determine the precise contents of the archives Wilde mentions in this note, but it seems possible that they contain material that could illuminate some aspects of Stoddart and Conolly's treatment in Bukhara.

<sup>13</sup> *Morning Post*, 22 April 1845.



## Annotated Bibliography

### *Primary Sources*

Anonymous, *Random Recollections of Exeter Hall, In 1834—1837* (London, James Nisbet and Co., 1838)

This volume contains description of a few of the many speakers to present at Exeter Hall, where the last Stoddart and Conolly Committee public meeting was held. Although the accounts of the speakers provide interesting insight into the many ways the building was used, this work is relevant to this thesis primarily for its physical description of Exeter Hall.

“The Bokhara Victims.” *The Edinburgh Review* 82 (July 1845), 132-171. Accessed 21 January. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/6856234?accountid=15131>.

This lengthy review of Grover’s book is highly negative. The author accused Grover of logical inconsistencies and of failing to ascertain the truth of some of the information he received. He also attacked Grover personally, arguing that Grover overemphasized his own role in the Stoddart and Conolly campaign. That Grover had acted out of genuine goodwill the author allowed, but no more. While this type of review seems to have been the exception, it is important to note that not all who encountered Grover’s campaign were persuaded by his arguments.

“The Bokhara Victims.” *New Monthly Magazine and Humorist* 74: 293 (1845), 130-135. Accessed 21 January 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/4415567?accountid=15131>

This is a comparatively short, favorable review of Grover’s work. The author allows for some of the uncertainties relating to Stoddart and Conolly’s fate (for example, the question of whether or not they were in the government’s employ while they were at Bukhara), but concludes with each possible variant that the government was still obligated to act on behalf of its citizens.

British Library. India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/1. London

This volume contains transcriptions of letters culled from the Foreign Office Archives, copies of which were presumably provided to the East India Company for reference for Company officials. The correspondence in this volume covers a wide array of subjects. The letters relevant to this thesis discuss Stoddart’s work in Persia, prior to his mission to Bukhara. Also included in this volume is a transcription of the letter in which McNeill provided Stoddart with his orders for the Bukhara mission.

Conolly, Arthur. "Diary (1840-1842), and Extracts of the Last Letters, of Captain Arthur Conolly." British Library. Add MS 38725. London.

This file contains a transcribed copy of Conolly's prison diary, which he wrote in the margins of a prayer book that had escaped the attention of the emir's guards. The text of the diary entries are interwoven with letters to Conolly's brother, John, and includes both an account of the treatment Stoddart and Conolly received from the emir in the final months of their lives and an informal list of bequests Conolly made in anticipation of his execution. This typescript copy also contains an introductory letter from Victor Salatzky, who delivered it to Conolly's sister in 1862. It concludes with a transcription of Saaleh Mahomed's account of Stoddart and Conolly's deaths.

"Dr Wolff's Mission to Bokhara." *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal* 88 (1845): 146-150. Accessed 22 February 2016.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/2575608?accountid=15131>.

This review is typical of reviews of Wolff's work in that it explicitly refrains from commenting on the political import of his mission to Bukhara. Grover's publication of *The Bukhara Victims* was quite controversial, and this article avoids broaching similar themes in Wolff's work in order to avoid revitalizing the debate that Grover's work began.

Foreign Office Series 60, volumes 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 88, 92, 93, 94, 101, 103, 109, and 110. The National Archives, Kew, England.

Foreign Office Series 60 contains all Foreign Office correspondence relating to Persia, including letters to and from diplomats stationed in Persia, correspondence between Foreign Office officials and other government offices and officials, and correspondence between Foreign Office officials and private citizens. Because Stoddart had been stationed in Persia prior to his mission to Bukhara, and because most official intelligence about the situation in Bukhara flowed through Persia, this series is the principal archival source for government information about Stoddart and Conolly. These volumes include, among other things, letters to and from Stoddart while at Bukhara, several letters from Nasrullah to Victoria, the drafted response from Victoria to Nasrullah, and numerous letters from Grover to Lord Aberdeen.

"Further Papers Respecting the Detention of Lieutenant-Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly at Bukhara." British Library. India Office Records L/PS/20/A7/2. London

This volume consists of 128 pages of transcribed letters, all of which pertain to the Stoddart and Conolly crisis. Although the volume is part of the India Office archives, the letters reprinted here actually originated in the Foreign Office, and were presumably copied for the benefit of India Office personnel. It is worth

noting that none of the letters included in this collection were written prior to 1844, although of course the Stoddart and Conolly crisis began in 1838, when Stoddart was first imprisoned. Despite the word “Further” in the title of this collection, there seems to be no parallel collection of documents covering the earlier years of the crisis.

Grover, John. *An Appeal to the British Nation in Behalf of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, Now in Captivity in Bokhara*. London: Hatchard and Sons, 1843.

This work was Grover’s first significant effort to raise awareness of the fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly. Grover was a personal friend of Stoddart, though he had never met Conolly, and was therefore deeply committed to making every possible effort to secure the release of both men. As in his later publication, Grover charges the British government with making no meaningful effort to secure their release. Not only, in his opinion, has the government failed to obtain definitive information about the men’s survival or execution, it has also drafted and possibly even sent letters which, Grover fears, might have prompted the emir to execute Stoddart and Conolly. However, both Grover and Wolff, who had offered to make an expedition to Bokhara by the time this volume was published, deny all reports that Stoddart and Conolly have in fact been executed. The goal of the publication is to raise monetary support for Wolff’s proposed expedition, which Grover estimates may cost a total of £500.

Grover, John, *The Bokhara Victims*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1845.

This volume includes the accusations leveled at the British government (and individual figures within it, most notably Lord Aberdeen) in Grover’s earlier publication. Published after Wolff’s return to England, it recounts his journey to Bokhara and his experience there in addition to Grover’s own efforts for Stoddart and Conolly in England. In addition to the copious evidence it offers of Grover’s insistence on the government’s guilt in the Stoddart-Conolly affair, this volume is useful for the information it provides on the support Grover’s campaign received. In some of the numerous appendices, Grover recounts the meetings held to generate support for his cause; he estimates that eighty to one hundred individuals attended the first meeting, and records the names of several of the more prominent attendees.

Hansard’s *Parliamentary Debates*. 3<sup>rd</sup> series. Volumes 56, 71, 85.

Stoddart and Conolly were mentioned relatively rarely in Parliament, and their position in Bukhara was never a matter of lengthy debate. However, on several occasions members of Parliament requested information about the officers from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister’s comments in reply provide insight into the government’s knowledge of the crisis at that point in time. They also provide an indication of the government’s perspective of popular opinion regarding Stoddart and Conolly; some statements are largely matter-of-fact, while others

show a greater sensitivity to public sentiment.

Hanway, Jonas. *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea: With a Journal of Travels from London through Russia into Persia; and Back Again through Russia, Germany, and Holland*. London: 1753.

This volume contains an account of the earliest British visitors to Bukhara in the modern period of which I am aware. The visitor in question was George Thompson, who travelled to Bukhara hoping to establish a trade connection between that country and Britain. He failed to achieve his mission, and his visit is frequently forgotten because it predated the Great Game rivalry between Russia and Britain.

F. Morrell Holmes, *Exeter Hall and Its Association* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881), 78, 82.

Holmes's volume about Exeter Hall recounts a number of the major events held in the space. The Stoddart and Conolly Committee is not mentioned, but Holmes does discuss the meeting of the World Anti-Slavery Convention there in 1840. The scale of this event and the importance of the speakers who attended gives a sense of the cultural prominence of this space in London society.

Kaye, John William. *Lives of Indian Officers, Illustrative of the History of the Civil and Military Services of India*. Volume 2. London: A. Strahan and Co., 1867.

This two-volume work consists of a series of biographies of British officers who served in India. Conolly was one of the subjects about whom Kaye wrote, and the lengthy chapter about him frequently took on a hagiographic tone. Kaye presents Conolly as a courageous and self-sacrificing officer of devout faith, and in this regard his depiction of Conolly concurs with the press' portrait of that officer. Kaye's account is particularly useful because it contains information that is difficult to find elsewhere (Burnes's view of Conolly, for example, and details about Wolff's stay at Conolly's home in Kanpur).

Khanikoff, Nikolai. *Bokhara: Its Amir and Its People*. Translated by Baron Clement A. de Bode. London: James Madden, 1845.

Khanikoff was one of the members of the 1841 Russian embassy led by Butenev to Bokhara, and the author of the embassy's report on the situation of Stoddart and Conolly. This work is a thematic description of life in Bokhara, addressing the geography of the kingdom in considerable detail, followed by descriptions of its various populations, its economy, and its governance. Stoddart and Conolly are mentioned in the work, but only very briefly; Khanikoff's comments about them are essentially confined to his official report. The date of publication in Britain is significant; this is one of three sizable volumes (the other two being Wolff's account of his expedition and Grover's *The Bokhara Victims*) published in 1845

alone. Thus, although it does not offer direct information about Stoddart and Conolly, it nevertheless serves as a commentary on British interest in the region in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.

“Narrative of the Mission of Dr. Wolff to Bokhara.” *The New Quarterly Review: Or, Home, Foreign and Colonial Journal* 6 (1845): 166-206. Accessed 22 February 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2549512?accountid=15131>

This review of Wolff’s account of his journey to Bukhara is unique in that it addresses the political implications of his mission, where other reviewers preferred simply to focus on the ethnographic data the volume contained. The review is highly favorable, applauding Wolff for his work on Stoddart and Conolly’s behalf. The review concludes with a pointed remark about the fact that Wolff, in travelling to Bukhara, took up a task that no one in the government was willing to accept.

Pritchard, James Cowles. *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*. Volume I-V. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1844.

This highly structured volume catalogues physical, personal, and psychological traits of numerous Asian populations. Pritchard’s description of the Uzbeks, included in the fourth volume, includes a brief history of their origins and descriptions of character and personality gleaned from Alexander Burnes and others. Pritchard also discusses the Turkmen (or Turkomans) in this volume, noting the points in which they differ from the Uzbeks. He compares the facial features on the two groups, once again drawing on Burnes for his information.

Simla Foreign Department. “Abdullah Khan’s Claim for 3,000 Bokhara Tillas.” British Library India Office Records L/PS/7/35 847-870. London.

This record consists of an appeal made by Abdullah Khan, the son of Nayeb Abdul Samut Khan, to the British government. Abdullah stated that his father, who was by this time deceased, had loaned the sum of 3,000 tillahs (the Bukharan currency) to Captain Conolly, but had never been repaid. Abdullah therefore requests that the British government repay the debt, arguing that his father was executed by the emir of Bukhara for being too generous to the British prisoners while they were at Bukhara. The record notes that Wolff held a very different view of the nayeb’s behavior toward Stoddart and Conolly (in fact, Wolff accused the nayeb of arranging their deaths), but the record contains no final decision about the appropriate response to this request.

Simla Foreign Department. “Abdullah Khan’s Claim for 3,000 Bokhara Tillas.” British Library India Office Records L/PS/7/38 453-455. London.

This record indicates that the British government did indeed accede to Abdullah

Khan's request that he be reimbursed for the sum of money his father loaned to Captain Conolly. This is frankly a somewhat surprising outcome, in light of Wolff's testimony about Abdul Samut Khan, but it may indicate doubts about the reliability of Wolff's testimony.

Skrine, Francis Henry and Edward Denison Ross. *The Heart of Asia: A History of Russian Turkestan and the Central Asian Khanates from the Earliest Times*. London: Methuen and Co., 1899.

This volume provides an overview of Central Asian history that begins with Alexander the Great and ends with a portrait of Central Asia under Russian control at the end of the nineteenth century. Because this volume was published at a relatively late date, it can provide little insight into how Britons viewed Bukhara during the years of the Stoddart and Conolly crisis. However, the inclusion of a chapter entitled "Amir Nasrullah, A Bokhāran Nero," which discusses the Stoddart and Conolly affair, is worthy of note.

"The Victims of Diplomacy." *Ainsworth's Magazine* 7 (1845), 396-400. Accessed 21 January 2016. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/4309611?accountid=15131>.

This brief review of Grover's *The Bokhara Victims* is highly favorable. The author concludes by stating that Grover has done the public a great service with his determined campaign on Stoddart and Conolly's behalf. The title of the article actually articulates Grover's sentiments more forcefully than does the title he chose for his own book, an immediate indication of the reviewer's support for his cause.

Wolff, Joseph. *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the Years 1843-1845, to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845.

Where Grover largely confines his 1845 publication to the activities of the Stoddart and Conolly Committee in Britain, Wolff reports exclusively on his expedition to Bokhara. The result of the mission is not what Wolff and Grover had hoped: Stoddart and Conolly had indeed been executed by the emir, as the first reports had indicated—before any serious attempt to rescue them was begun. During his stay in Bokhara, Wolff gained firsthand experience of the fate Stoddart and Conolly had met there. He, like them, was imprisoned (though not in the dried well into which Stoddart was first thrown), and like them was forced to bribe the powerful Abdul Samut Khan, an official in the emir's court, in order to survive. Though Wolff clearly feared for his life on more than one occasion, he was eventually released, and was honored by the emir before his departure from Bokhara. Wolff's account offers a more complex account of who is to blame for Stoddart and Conolly's mistreatment in Bokhara than does Grover or the newspaper narrative. Grover faults the British government alone, and the newspapers portray the emir as a vicious tyrant, while Wolff recognizes some

degree of validity in both of these perspectives and acknowledges the power of others in the emir's court as well.

Wolff, Joseph. *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and Other Sects*. Philadelphia: Orrin Rogers, 1837.

This early publication by Wolff has a less direct bearing on Stoddart and Conolly than does his 1845 publication. However, this volume recounts Wolff's first visit to Bokhara, on the experience of which he decides that he is the man best equipped to attempt to learn Stoddart and Conolly's fate. Wolff first visited Bokhara because he hoped to discover some of the ten lost tribes of Israel there among the city's Jewish population. As a Christian convert from Judaism himself, he was particularly eager to evangelize Jewish populations. This volume also recounts Wolff's friendship with Arthur Conolly when the latter was living in India. Wolff developed a deep respect for Conolly's Christian faith, and the two worked together to coordinate debates with local Muslim authorities. This relationship was the inspiration for Wolff's later determination to return to Bokhara to discover what had become of Stoddart and Conolly, and to attempt their rescue if possible.

Wolff, Joseph. *Sketch of the Life and Journal of the Rev. J. Wolff, Missionary to Palestine and Persia*. Norwich: Jarrold and Son, 1827.

This early memoir of the life of Joseph Wolff narrates his early life in greater detail than do either *Narrative of a Mission* or *Researches and Missionary Labours*. Wolff does discuss an early missionary journey here, but this volume is primarily useful in this thesis because of the information it includes about Wolff's early life. Born in Bavaria and raised in a Jewish home, Wolff converted first to Catholicism and the eventually to Anglicanism. His background makes him a rather unlikely candidate for a mission with an explicitly British imperial tone.

Wolff, Joseph. *Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D., LL.D., Vicar of the Isle Brewers, Near Taunton; and Late Missionary to the Jews and Muhammedans in Persia, Bokhara, Cashmeer, etc.* London: Saunders, Otley, and Co., 1861.

This memoir is less specific in its focus, providing a general overview of Wolff's life rather than a detailed narration of a specific episode. Like *Sketch of the Life and Journal*, this volume is relevant to this thesis because of the insight it provides into Wolff's early years.

### ***Secondary Sources***

Aspinall, A. *Politics and the Press c. 1780—1850*. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

Aspinall's work is the classic guide to the development of the English press during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His particular concern is the involvement of the government in the press, through direct limitations on the types of material published, subsidies, etc. Because the press plays such a significant role in the way I have chosen to frame this project, Aspinall's work is particularly significant to my research as a means of better understanding the forces shaping the presentation of material about Stoddart and Conolly in newspapers. This volume's utility is somewhat limited in that its primary focus falls several decades before the beginning of the Stoddart-Conolly affair, but the concluding chapters nevertheless contain valuable information.

Barker, Hannah. *Newspapers, Politics, and English Society, 1695-1855*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2000.

Barker's volume addresses the changes the British press underwent in the century and a half following the adoption of new legislation that allowed newspaper editors to publish with greater freedom than ever before. She concludes with the adoption of another legal change in 1855: the abolishment of the newspaper tax, which further enhanced the press' freedom from government control. Only the final chapter of this work addresses the period of British history relevant to this thesis, but this chapter provides an excellent introduction to the relationship between the press and the government in the first half of the nineteenth century. Barker argues that the increasing freedom the press enjoyed allowed newspapers to advocate (sometimes to the point of calling for public agitation) government reform without penalty from the government.

Beasley, Edward. *The Victorian Reinvention of Race: New Racisms and the Problem of Grouping in the Human Species*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Beasley argues that, in the 1850s and 1860s, Victorian Britons dramatically reinterpreted the concept of race. Prior to this period, the term "race had been used of any group of similar people, without the implication that they shared a common descent or common heritable traits. This changed in the mid-nineteenth century, however, when race took on a more deterministic character and was increasingly, though not invariably, used to distinguish between "superior" and "inferior" groups of people. This is significant to my research because it indicates that although the ethnographic tradition to which Wolff contributed in his *Narrative of a Mission to Bukhara* did attempt to classify groups of people, it was not racist in the way the term was used later, or as it is used now.

Bourne, Kenneth. *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England, 1830-1902*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

This volume consists of two parts. The first half is dedicated to a history of Victorian foreign policy, while the second half consists of a selection of primary source documents. The chapter on Palmerston's tenure as head of the Foreign



Office is most relevant to this thesis. In this chapter, Bourne focuses particularly on the significance of France and Russia in British foreign policy. British policy in regions that lacked political power in their own right is viewed here in terms of its impact on or significance to more powerful states.

Brantlinger, Patrick. *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Brantlinger's monograph discusses Victorian conceptions of race and racial categories with regard to a number of different populations, ranging from the Tasmanians to the Irish. He argues that there were inherent conflicts in Victorian views on race. On one hand, race was inherited and therefore was viewed as unchangeable; no individual born into a lesser race could hope to attain the same state as someone born into a superior race. On the other hand, Victorians prided themselves in their "civilizing missions," which sought to raise "lower races" to higher standards. As a part of this conversation Brantlinger analyzes the development of the field of physical anthropology; it is this aspect of this volume that is most relevant to this thesis.

Bregel, Yuri. "The New Uzbek States: Bukhara, Khiva, and Khoqand: c. 1750-1886." In *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden, 392-411. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Bregel traces the development of the khanates of Khiva and Khoqand and the emirate of Bukhara following the decline of the Chinggisid dynasties that had ruled those states since the medieval period. While most of the sources on Central Asian history used here represent a British imperial perspective on the region, Bregel writes primarily about the development of these states, referencing the British and Russian empires only as they impact the Central Asian states in which he is primarily interested. He relies more heavily on Russian sources than do other histories represented in this bibliography, and his work is therefore useful as a counterbalance to their Anglocentric bias.

Brown, Lucy. *Victorian News and Newspapers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

In contrast to Barker, Brown focuses her analysis of the British press specifically on the Victorian period. She examines the various factors that influenced the making of the news during this period, from the physical production of a newspaper to the sources from which information was obtained and the way this information was transformed into a news article. Particularly relevant for this thesis was Brown's commentary on the sources of news relating to foreign affairs, which are rarely identified in articles about Stoddart and Conolly. Brown argues that one of the most important sources for such information was the personal contacts a journalist made within the government, although other sources of information (government offices and official documents, for example) were also

used. This information is particularly relevant to the first phase of the crisis, prior to Grover's involvement, after which Grover and Wolff became the primary suppliers of information about Stoddart and Conolly.

Butcher, Samuel John. "Lord Aberdeen and Conservative Foreign Policy, 1841-1846." PhD diss., University of East Anglia, 2015.

This dissertation examines British Foreign Policy under Lord Aberdeen between 1841 and 1846. Butcher first considers Aberdeen himself, as an individual and in his political context, after which he proceeds to a geographically organized study of his foreign policy. Particular stress is laid on relations with France and Russia, which countries Butcher sees as determining factors in much of British foreign policy. When discussing Russia, Butch focuses specifically on Anglo-Russian tensions in Asia, though his primary interest is the Ottoman Empire, not Central Asia. This chapter provides useful information on the differences between Aberdeen's and Palmerston's Russian policies.

Campbell, Gwyn, ed. *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. London: Routledge, 2005.

This edited volume discusses abolition movements throughout the Indian Ocean world, from Mauritius to Iran to India. The authors consider abolition initiatives as originating in local populations and governments, rather than as something imposed by European imperial powers. Campell's definitions of slavery and unfree labor are useful in beginning a conversation about the diversity of nineteenth century slavery practices, imperative for an accurate understanding of the slavery that Stoddart, Conolly, and others were tasked with ending.

Carey, Hilary M. *God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801-1908*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

In this volume, Carey addresses the role of the Christian church and missionaries in the nineteenth century British Empire. She argues that the result of this involvement was a highly diverse Christianity that had lost some of the restrictions that had controlled in Britain. For my purposes, her commentary on the morality of the British Empire is particularly significant. She describes the common cause evangelicals of all stripes found in seeking to make the British Empire as moral as possible. The abolition of the slave trade, she notes, was an instance of successful collaboration among various groups of evangelicals to establish a higher moral standard for the British empire.

Cowan, Brian. *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Cowan's monograph explores coffee's rise from an unfamiliar exotic good at the beginning of the seventeenth century to a popular beverage in Britain in the

eighteenth. Cowan rejects the argument that the acceptance of coffee coincided with the transition from the early modern period into the modern period, arguing instead that the popularity of coffee must be explained within the context of a pre-industrial society. Coffeehouses are, in his view, a means of understanding the structure of early modern British society.

Drescher, Seymour. *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Anti-Slavery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Drescher's volume is a comprehensive history of abolition movements in the western world between the late eighteenth century and the 1920s, though Drescher begins by examining much older forms of slavery, including those of classical Rome, medieval Europe, and the early Islamic world. Drescher inquires into the forces that rendered slavery morally abhorrent even when it remained a practically viable model, as well as into the role empire played in both encouraging and dismantling slavery. His discussion of British emancipation, the immediate context for Stoddart and Conolly's missions to Central Asia, is particularly relevant to my research.

Fenton, Laurence. *Palmerston and the Times: Foreign Policy, the Press and Public Opinion in Mid-Victorian Britain*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.

Fenton argues that Palmerston was generally extremely successful in gaining the support of the British press throughout his political career, a fact which contributed to his popularity as a public official. *The Times*, however, treated him with animosity. What Palmerston and *The Times* shared, according to Fenton, was an understanding of the implication of public opinion in British politics. *The Times* (and other nineteenth century newspapers, for that matter) claimed to represent public opinion, and opposed Palmerston; Palmerston, meanwhile, recognized the role that public opinion had in the success or failure of his career. The portion of this volume relevant to my study discusses the importance of government connections for the press in obtaining information about the British government's relationship to foreign powers.

Elbourne, Elisabeth. "Religion in the British Empire." In *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* ed. Sarah Stockwell, 131-156. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

In this essay, Elbourne analyzes the historiography of the relationship between Christianity and the British Empire. She finds two overlapping historiographical traditions, one analyzing Christian institutions (churches, missionary societies, etc.) and one considering the less structural and more personal elements of faith and emotion. I have relied on her insight into the position of missionaries in the empire. She argues that missionaries not only evangelized, but also participated in social reform campaigns (such as the abolition movement), and even played a role in the development of British policy in an imperial territory on a local level.

Ellis, Aytoun. *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee Houses*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1956.

This is not a particularly academic volume; the author mentions few of his resources and makes no use of footnotes or endnotes. Most of the discussion revolves around the types of intellectual and social engagement that took place in coffee houses from their earliest appearance in England until the end of the eighteenth century. The final chapter, devoted to the decline of the British coffee house, was most relevant to this project. In it, Ellis states that coffee houses had mostly vanished by the beginning of the nineteenth century (though as I have noted, this is a contested point).

Ellis, Markman. *The Coffee House: A Cultural History*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004.

Unlike other histories of the coffeehouse discussed here, Markman Ellis's volume incorporates discussion of non-British coffeehouses into his volume. His account begins in the seventeenth century and concludes with an epilogue on Starbucks. He emphasizes the cultural and societal impact of the coffeehouse, which often served throughout its history as a space for political debate. His commentary on the decline of coffee houses in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is particularly relevant for my research.

Harms, Robert, Bernard K. Freamon, and David W. Blight, eds. *Indian Ocean Slavery in the Age of Abolition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

This edited volume explores the nature of slavery in the Indian Ocean World, focusing primarily on the nineteenth century. Contributors describe the nature of Indian Ocean slavery (which differed from trans-Atlantic slavery significantly); Islamic views of slavery and slavery practices, as well as Islamic abolition movements; and the impact of abolition movements on the Indian Ocean world. Indian Ocean slavery is relevant to this thesis as a parallel to Central Asian slavery, which is considerably less researched than Indian Ocean slavery, and as the form of non-trans-Atlantic slavery with which the British abolitionists of the 1830s and 1840s would have been most familiar. Gwyn Campbell's essay on the nature of Indian Ocean slavery between 1800 and 1900 provides helpful background to abolitionists growing demands, as of the 1830s and 1840s, that all forms of slavery be condemned as immoral.

Hilton, Boyd. *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

Hilton argues that the rise of evangelicalism in the early nineteenth century did more than simply generate missionary societies and social reform organizations; it also brought about a new way of considering Britain's economic policy. As reimagined under evangelical influence, the ideal national economy valued

frugality and honorable conduct in the economic sphere, as well as specific policies such as free trade and the use of a gold standard. Hilton's work is necessarily focused specifically on the impact of evangelicalism on British economics. Nevertheless the underlying principle of national honor, which Hilton exposes as a foundation of this philosophy, also applies to the foreign policy of the early Victorian era and specifically to Stoddart and Conolly's missions to Central Asia and popular evaluations of the appropriate government response to their deaths.

Holdsworth, Mary. *Turkestan in the Nineteenth Century: A Brief History of the Khanates of Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva*. Oxford: Central Asian Research Centre, 1959.

Holdsworth provides a remarkably detailed account of the political, economic, legal, and military affairs of the khanates of Bokhara, Kokand, and Khiva based principally on Soviet scholarship. She directs relatively little of her energy toward British presence in the region in the early stages of the Great Game, focusing instead largely on the period following the Russian conquest of the region in the mid-nineteenth century. Holdsworth's account addresses questions regarding internal politics and daily life in this region that seem to be neither asked nor answered elsewhere. For example, her research allows her to comment on the literacy of the populations of the khanates, as well as the role of intellectuals in the governance of each. Most useful for my purposes is the information she provides on the structure of the government in Bokhara; official titles are often referenced in passing, particularly in the writings of Wolff and Grover, with little or no explanation of the duties or responsibilities of the position on question.

Holladay, J. Douglas. "English Evangelicalism, 1820-1850: Diversity and Unity in 'Vital Religion.'" *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51 (1982): 157. Accessed 3 February 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42974720>.

Holladay explores the meaning of "vital religion" in the context of Victorian society, arguing that it presented itself in society in a variety of social reform organizations and philanthropic endeavors. He suggests that different elements of the Victorian evangelical community saw these organizations and endeavors as means to different ends, however; those who belonged to the Anglican Church were little inclined to see them as tools for significant cultural change. Nonconformists (non-Anglicans), however, recognized the potential power of these institutions as instruments of social change. For the purposes of this thesis, Holladay's emphasis on the diversity of Victorian evangelicalism is significant.

Hopkins, B.D. "Race, Sex and Slavery: 'Forced Labour' in Central Asia and Afghanistan in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century." *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 4 (2008): 629-671. Accessed 13 September 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20488036>.

Hopkins' work analyzes the nature of slavery in Bokhara and surrounding kingdoms in the decades preceding and including Conolly's expedition to

Bokhara. This study is a means of “bridging the gap,” so to speak, between the literature on British abolition movements of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Britain, on the Atlantic, and India on the one hand and the Central Asian situation on the other. Hopkins describes the tasks for which slave labor was employed in Bokharan society, the slaves’ social status, and the experience of slaves who managed to purchase their own freedom. This is an essential study for my project because of the significance of Bokharan slavery to Conolly’s mission in Bokhara, and because of the widespread interest in the issue among most of the British commentators on the region.

Hopkirk, Peter. *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*. New York: Kondansha USA, 1994.

Hopkirk provides a sweeping narrative of British and Russian activity in Central Asia and Afghanistan between the dawn of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. His is a work of popular history, with minimal citations and comparatively little analysis of the events he reports. However, he successfully portrays the many fronts on which the British were competing throughout this period. He addresses the fates of Stoddart and Conolly in some detail, and while the information he discusses is valuable in its own right for this project, his work is useful particularly because of his ability to place the Stoddart and Conolly affair in the context of other events of the same period.

Johnston, Anna. “British Missionary Publishing, Missionary Celebrity, and Empire.” *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 32 (2005): 20-43.

Johnston’s article examines the intentional cultivation of public attention and even celebrity by missionary societies and individual missionaries during the Victorian period. Focusing on the London Missionary Society particularly, she argues that the society encouraged its missionaries to write frequent reports, which were then published in a variety of newsletters and magazines each designed to appeal to a specific audience. She also examines the careers of individual successful missionaries, who, she argues, were successful largely because of their ability to promote themselves as public figures.

Leach, Hugh. “From Bavaria to Bokhara to Isle Brewers: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Dr the Revd Juseph Wolff, DD.” *Asian Affairs* 38: 3 (2007), 322-328. Accessed 26 October 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03068370701538456>.

Leach provides a brief bibliography of Dr. Joseph Wolff, the evangelical missionary who travelled to Bukhara to determine what of the many rumors about Stoddart and Conolly’s death or ongoing imprisonment there might be true. Although not written for academics, this primer on Wolff’s life is useful as a guide to the numerous travel narratives and memoirs Wolff published. The narrative is structured chronologically, with little analysis.

Lunn, Henry C. "The Hanover-Square Rooms." *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 16 (1875): 741-742. Accessed 7 February 2016.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/335288>.

Lunn's brief article consists of a history of the Hanover-Square Rooms, a performance venue in nineteenth century London generally used for concerts. Lunn describes an opulent space in which renowned musicians sometimes performed. King George III himself attended balls held in Hanover-Square, according to Lunn. This information is relevant to the Stoddart and Conolly crisis because one of the public meetings of the Stoddart and Conolly was held in this space.

Lunt, James. *Bokhara Burnes*. London: Faber and Faber, 1969.

Lunt's work is a biography of Alexander Burnes, who was unquestionably the most famous early Victorian visitor to Bokhara. Lunt is not solely focused on Burnes's time in Bokhara, however. Following his departure from Bokhara, Burnes commented on several occasions on Conolly's ambitions for his mission in Central Asia and Bokhara, and on Stoddart's imprisonment there. As Britain's most knowledgeable commentator on Bokharan affairs, his opinion was widely perceived to be of significance, though the government often refused to follow his advice. His murder, which occurred when the British were pushed out of Kabul, was part of the series of events that seems to have led at last to Stoddart's and Conolly's executions.

Maclean, Fitzroy. *A Person from England: And Other Travellers*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1958.

Maclean begins his work with a lengthy chapter recounting the events of the imprisonment and execution of Stoddart and Conolly, as well as the efforts made after their deaths to learn what had become of them. Unlike Hopkirk, Maclean does not write about these events as one piece of a larger narrative, though he does discuss other events (for example, the British defeat in Afghanistan) as influencing the outcome of the Stoddart-Conolly affair. He narrates these events from a distinctly governmental perspective, with no reference to popular portrayal or public response. As a result, his focus is quite different from the one I have adopted. However, he provides valuable (if indirect, given his propensity not to cite specific sources) insight into governmental perspectives on the crisis. His information was invaluable to me in the drafting of my Copeland Fund grant proposal.

Macrory, Patrick. *Signal Catastrophe: The Story of the Disastrous Retreat from Kabul 1842*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966.

Macrory's volume is a history of the first Afghan war (despite the title, the narrative actually begins with the British arrival in Kabul). As the newspaper

articles referencing Stoddart's imprisonment make clear, the events of this war were intimately interwoven with the treatment Stoddart (and eventually Conolly as well) received at the hands of the emir in Bokhara. From the British perspective, the wild fluctuations in Stoddart's standing (imprisoned with murderers in one news report, released and training the emir's artillery seemingly days later) seem arbitrary. However, correlated with the success and faltering of British efforts to restore Shah Shujah to the throne in Kabul, these abrupt changes make considerably more sense. From the emir's perspective, victorious British forces in Afghanistan pose a potential threat to his sovereignty; British military weakness in Afghanistan is evidence that he need not worry about offending the British with his mistreatment of their envoy.

Melton, James Van Horn. *Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Melton's volume chronicles the development of a new type of "public" during the Enlightenment, a public whose role was to observe and evaluate. The idea of public as audience, Melton argues, was an innovation of the Enlightenment. His account includes evidence from England, France, and Germany, and addresses a variety of public practices, including reading, writing, the performing arts, and even drinking. In relation to this thesis, his chapter on drinking is most salient. Because, as Melton notes, the tavern was a somewhat less respectable place to gather in the nineteenth century than it had been in the eighteenth, Grover's decision to hold the first meeting of the Stoddart and Conolly Committee in the Crown and Anchor Tavern is noteworthy, with implications for the audience Grover would be able to draw.

Meyer, Karl E. and Shareen Blair Brysac. *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

The account of Stoddart and Conolly offered by Meyer and Brysac is perhaps most similar to that of Hopkirk, though Hopkirk addresses the affair at considerably greater length. Like Hopkirk, Meyer and Brysac treat the Stoddart-Conolly affair as one episode among many in the British bid for influence in Central Asia. Again like Hopkirk, and also like Maclean, their account is almost wholly driven by official sources and the basic narrative that Wolff and Grover provide (though without the harsh commentary that accompanied it). Meyer and Brysac write at some length about the First Anglo-Afghan War, as well as about earlier British visitors to Bokhara. Their account thus provides valuable information about the phase of the Great Game of which the Stoddart-Conolly affair was a part.

Morgan, Gerald. *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia: 1810—1895*. London: Frank Cass, 1981.



Morgan begins his history of the Great Game (a term coined by Captain Conolly himself, by all accounts) early in the nineteenth century, and thus offers far greater detail about the gradual intensification of the rivalry over Central Asia than do those historians (like Evgenij Sergeev) whose histories begin with the Russian military conquest of Central Asia. The details of this early history, though often treated as relatively inconsequential, are critical to an understanding of why Stoddart, Conolly, and men like them traveled to seemingly inconsequential regions such as Bokhara. Fear that Russia might invade India from the north made Afghanistan, Bokhara, and other regions like them critically important in the geopolitical game the British sought to play. Morgan is unconcerned with Stoddart and Conolly, but he offers a useful history of the conflict in which they played a role, and of its broader implications for Britain and Russia.

Melnyk, Julie. *Victorian Religion: Faith and Life in Britain*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2008.

Melnyk argues that it is impossible to understand the Victorians without understanding their religion and its manifestations in their culture. She presents the complexity of Victorian religious expression, which involved many denominations and sects, and attempts to illustrate religion's impact on British culture and its meaning for those who participated in it. Her chapter on "Religion and Reform," which discusses the many reform movements that developed out of Victorian evangelical fervor, is particularly relevant for my understanding of the descriptions of Stoddart and Conolly's Christian character, as well as for the context of Wolff's celebrity in Britain.

Noelle, Christine. *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)*. Richmond, England: Curzon, 1997.

Unlike the other histories of the first Anglo-Afghan War I consulted during my research, Noelle's volume takes a deliberately Afghan perspective. She frames the war not in the context of British imperial ambitions or the Anglo-Russian rivalry of the Great Game, but in terms of Afghanistan's own political structure. In her narrative, the British-led Army of the Indus appears on the Afghan border just as Dost Muhammad was attempting to solidify his control over Afghanistan, having deposed the previous ruling family with his ascent to the throne. This work is useful as a counterbalance to other histories of the Anglo-Afghan war, which recognize the many differing opinions within the British government and the East India Company regarding the wisdom of invading Afghanistan, but do not discuss similar complexities among the Afghans themselves.

Norris, J. A. *The First Afghan War: 1838—1842*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Norris's history of the first Afghan War, like Macrory's, provides essential information about the context in which the Stoddart-Conolly affair occurred.

Unlike Macrory, Norris chooses not to focus on a specific episode in the war, and the detail he provides about the background and initial stages of the conflict are invaluable for my purposes. Because the British fared poorly in the conflict, the emir became convinced that there would be no repercussions for his abuse of Colonel Stoddart (and eventually Captain Conolly). At one point during the conflict, British newspapers reported that Stoddart and Dost Mohammed, the ruler the British had removed from power in Afghanistan, were both imprisoned in Bokhara. At a later date, the same papers reported that, while Colonel Stoddart remained in prison, Dost Mohammed had been released and was in favor with the emir. Such circumstances illustrate the central role that British activity in Afghanistan seems to have played in the Stoddart-Conolly affair.

Nutting, Anthony. *Gordon of Khartoum: Martyr and Misfit*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966.

Nutting's volume is a history of the life of General Gordon, who was killed at Khartoum, with particular reference to Gordon's place within Victorian society. Of interest for this thesis particularly is the section on Gordon's death, which parallels in some respects the deaths of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly.

Olsaretti, Alessandro. "Urban Culture, Curiosity, and the Aesthetics of Distance: The Representation of Picturesque Carnivals in Early Victorian Travelogues to the Levant." *Social History* 32 (2007): 247-270. Accessed 7 February 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4287450>.

Olsaretti argues that early Victorian travelogues manifested a form of orientalism that emphasized (nonacademic) curiosity about distant lands. Said had written otherwise, having claimed that early nineteenth century orientalism was a predominantly academic phenomenon. Olsaretti argues, however, that the travelogues he examined show a delight in recording picturesque events and scenes that had little bearing on academic orientalism, but that correlated to changes in British culture that shifted carnivalesque elements out of British high society. This encouraged travellers to depict picturesque or carnivalesque events as exotic or other when they encountered them elsewhere, as such events now seemed unfamiliar. Wolff's narrative of his mission to Bukhara relied on a similar dramatic appeal of the other, although his writing also contained elements of academic orientalism.

Parry, Jonathan. *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Parry's volume covers the years 1820-1886, and examines Liberalism's role as the principal political movement of much of the Victorian period. He argues that Whig and Liberal governments responded to the upheaval of the early nineteenth century, brought on by economic development, a changing social order, and mass migration, by seeking to cultivate a stronger attachment between Britons and their

government, and by creating an environment in which the differences between people were superseded by a common belief in the rule of law. The focus of this volume is domestic politics, and therefore it pays relatively little attention to foreign policy, particularly for the period with which my research is concerned. However, Parry offers insight into the lasting impact of Peel's government which is relevant to this thesis.

Porter, Andrew, editor. *The Nineteenth Century*, volume 3 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

I have relied principally on two essays from this volume, both of which were written by Andrew Porter: "Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism," and "Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire." Both essays provide a sweeping introduction to the particular manifestations of their title themes in the British empire of the nineteenth century, without focusing too closely on a particular region. While neither essay speaks specifically of the British in Central Asia, they both touch on themes relevant to Grover and Wolff's efforts to learn of Stoddart and Conolly's fate. "Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism" mentions the demographics of early nineteenth century social reform movements, while "Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire" discusses the relationship between the missionary and imperial politics.

Postnikov, Alexey V. "The Russian Mission to Bokhara in 1842 and the Fate of the English Emissaries Charles Stoddart and Arthur Conolly." *Almagest* 4, no. 2 (2013): 33-59.

Postnikov's work serves primarily to make available in English new information previously lying untranslated in Russian archives. His history of Stoddart and Conolly's captivity adds relatively little to what was already known from Grover and Wolff, but his access to the Russian sources greatly increases available information about the official Russian position toward Bokhara. The 1841 Russian embassy under Butenev arrived in Bokhara at the request of the Bokharan emir, who had approached the Russian government several years earlier about sending geologists to Bokhara to explore potential mineral riches in the country. This was the primary stated goal of Butenev's mission, though the participants clearly sought to ascertain that Russia, rather than Britain, became the foremost power in the region. Butenev was under orders to attempt to secure the release of the British officers if possible, but the emir refused to turn them over to him.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Said's classic is, of course, indispensable to anyone interested in any component of the history of imperialism. Although this volume generally lacks evidence specific to the 1840s, I would argue that Said's claims about western assumptions of passivity in the east can be generalized to include the period I discuss and the specific geography of Bokhara. Indeed, underlying assumptions that the British

should be the active force in Central Asia and Bokhara, and the Bokharans, passive responders, may help to explain the furor that Stoddart and Conolly affair created. These circumstances were an inversion of British expectations about their interactions with the east, and it was this quality that made Stoddart's and Conolly's imprisonment and execution so troubling to some British citizens. The government's refusal to take on an active role—by launching a military campaign, or even by sending someone to Bokhara in the government's name to learn of the men's fate officially—only worsened the situation.

Shapiro, Harry L. "The history and development of physical anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 61 (1959), 371-379. Accessed 3 October 2015.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/667203>

Shapiro traces the development of the field of physical anthropology from its origins in seventeenth century biological classifications. The field of physical anthropology (along with ethnology, which Shapiro treats as closely connected) only began to emerge at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, however, and Shapiro notes that explorers and missionaries helped to lay the groundwork for the ethnologist's activities. Shapiro argues, in short, that the fields of physical anthropology and ethnology emerged out of the intellectual and social context of the early nineteenth century.

Soucek, Svat. *A History of Inner Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

*A History of Inner Asia* is a sweeping account of Inner Asian history which begins in the seventh century and concludes with several chapters on contemporary post-Soviet Central Asia, Mongolia, and Xinjiang. Soucek devotes a chapter to "Bukhara, Khiva, and Khoqand in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries," in which he describes the replacement of the old Chinggisid dynasties with new ruling families and the gradual increase of Russian influence in the region. Soucek is relatively unconcerned with British influence on Bukhara, Khiva, and Khoqand, which had little lasting effect, and instead focuses primarily on the internal development of these states.

Tidrick, Kathryn. *Empire and the English Character: The Illusion of Authority*. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2009.

Tidrick provides a series of case studies relating to the role of character in the administration (though not explicitly in the acquisition) of the British Empire. She seeks to understand how the British saw themselves in the context of their imperial power, particularly with regard to the use of military force. She argues that military forces was treated as an tool of last resort not only because it was morally questionable, but because the administrators of the empire believed that it ought to be unnecessary to their success. Tidrick's first chapter, which addresses the role of evangelicalism in imperial administration, is particularly relevant to my research.

Van der Veer, Peter. "The Moral State: Religion, Nation, and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India." In *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, edited by Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, 15-43. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

In this essay, van der Veer argues that religion played a key role in the formation of both modern Britain and modern India. This position leads him to consider the role of evangelicalism, specifically, in the British Empire. He argues that the evangelicalism reached far beyond the walls of any church or network of churches into the policies and laws of Imperial Britain, and therefore significantly influenced the regions that came under the Empire's control. While van der Veer is not specifically interested in Central Asia, it seems clear that the same forces at work in the British government in London and the East India Company would have impacted the agents those bodies sent as their representatives into Central Asia.

Waller, John H. *Gordon of Khartoum: The Saga of the Victorian Hero* (New York: Antheneum, 1988), 322f.

Waller's biography seeks insight into Gordon's character, as well into his political career. Thus he begins not by describing his origins or his career as a young officer, but by describing what fellow officers, government officials, and even Queen Victoria herself thought of him. The portion of this volume most relevant to this work is, of course, the account of the siege of Khartoum, which has striking parallels to the Stoddart and Conolly affair.

Watson, J. R. "Soldiers and Saints: The Fighting Man and the Christian Life." In *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture*, edited by Andrew Bradstock, Sean Gill, Anne Hogan, and Sue Morgan. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Watson analyzes the relationship between Christian faith and empire during the Victorian era through the lens of hymnody. In this analysis, the recurrence of martial themes, the frequent use of the imperative, and historical examples of British military men known for their faith indicates the extent to which the concepts of soldier and saint were intertwined in Victorian society. More specifically, Watson relies particularly on the hymns of Charles Wesley, the Methodist founder and prolific composer of hymns, although hymns by Sabine Baring-Gould, William Walsham How, and others. Watson's historical examples include Captain Hedley Vicars, Sir Henry Havelock, and General Gordon.

Whitten, Dolphus Jr. "The Don Pacifico Affair." *The Historian* 48 (1986): 255-268.

Whitten's article offers an extensive, detailed timeline of the Don Pacifico affair. He draws extensively on the Parliamentary debates on the subject, but also cites newspaper articles and personal letters from government officials. Thus his

narrative focuses on the British government's perception of the crisis, which he portrays as an instance of nationalistic fervor.

Wilde, Andreas. "Creating the Façade of a Despotic State." In *Explorations in the Social History of Modern Central Asia (19th - Early 20th Century)*, edited by Paolo Sartori, 267-298. Brill's Inner Asian Library, Volume 29. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

The subject of this article is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Wilde is one of relatively few authors writing in English who works with Bukharan primary sources. His article is useful as an indicator of what the Bukharan archives (now located in Tashkent) contain.

Yapp, M.E. *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

Yapp provides an extensive history of British interests in Iran and Afghanistan during the first half of the nineteenth century. Two chapters focus specifically on Central Asia, covering the years 1838-1842 between them. Stoddart and Conolly figure heavily in the second of these two chapters, in which Yapp analyzes both their missions and their temperaments. Yapp questions the decision to send Stoddart to Bukhara, for example, observing that McNeill had less volatile officers at his command; he also compares Conolly to Alexei Karamazov, the hero of Dostoevsky's masterpiece *The Brothers Karamazov* (see 403, 409f). While Yapp's political analysis is astute, his consideration of Stoddart and Conolly's characters is the most unique part of his work, and for the purposes of this thesis also the most useful.