



# Political Discourse and Ideological Polarisation in the Narrative of the Tintin Comics

Abhay Shetty

Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Management, Manipal Institute of Technology, Jaipur, India

Received: 25 Jul 2022; Received in revised form: 15 Aug 2022; Accepted: 21 Aug 2022; Available online: 28 Aug 2022

©2022 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open access article under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Abstract**— *The inherent nature of the graphic novel to engage with a wide range and number of recipients makes the Tintin Comics an immensely popular work of literature, being a popular example of European comics. A combination of Hergé's personal political views, strict ideological instructions from initial publishers Le Petit Vingtième and the political landscape of Europe during the time the comics was written, paved the way for the political narrative of the series. A closer inspection of the diverse narratives of the series exposes a world-view of the creator and politically influenced character arcs of all the major members of the storyline. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the major aspects that governed European politics during the 20th Century and the effect the conflicts that several of these opposing ideologies had on the continent and the world. This paper also discusses the way the Tintin comics, in concern with the themes of imperialism and colonialism, communism, totalitarianism (fascism and dictatorships) and anti-Americanism through relatable characterisation of worldly issues that struck a chord with the readers, regardless of age and generation.*

**Keywords**— *Tintin, Politics, Ideology, Imperialism, Revolution, Fascism, Communism, Anti-Americanism, Europe, Comics, Hergé*

While analysing the works of Hergé and the overlying political sentiment of the 24 Tintin comic books, it is prudent to comprehend the popularity of the series. The first Tintin album, Tintin in the Land of the Soviets was created by Hergé in 1929, as a part of the children's supplement of the conservative Belgian newspaper, Le Vingtième Siècle. Since then, more than 250 million copies have been sold and the comics have been translated into more than 110 languages<sup>1</sup>. A deeper study into how Tintin emerged as a household name is essential and traces its explanation to the ability of comics and graphic novels to be a part of popular culture, more so than traditional

novels, in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. (Duncan, Smith, & Levitz, 2015)

The graphic novel has contributed a significant amount to the world of literature and further developed the domain of popular literature (Christiansen, 2000). Culturally speaking, the interplay between words and images and their co-existence in panels has provided the bibliophile, from an occasional reader to a literary scholar, an insight into a complex form of graphic expression which has been of great importance in the development of the iconography of modern culture. Analysis in the field of the cultural significance of graphic novels and comics, in which these forms of literature are considered not only as a mass culture but also as aesthetically interesting text, capable of engendering meaning on a variety of levels.

The theory that graphic novels and other forms of popular literature affect mass culture also has a reverse effect – where the culture and events of the time structure

<sup>1</sup> <http://en.tintin.com/essentiel>. This is the website that provides specific details about the Tintin Comics, such as the number of languages it has been translated to as well as the total number of copies sold.

the way authors wish to express themselves through their works. This phenomenon is most notably seen in the Franco-Belgian style of comics (also known as *bandes dessinées*, derived from the original description of the art form as "drawn strips"), which includes the likes of Tintin and Asterix, (Forsdick, Grove, & McQuillan, 2005).

What must be kept in mind while discussing the politics inherent in the Tintin universe, is that the era during which Hergé penned down the stories of the daring, young reporter, Europe was in turmoil, with the existence of differing ideological beliefs in several parts of the great continent. From the Soviets in the east, to the fascists and totalitarians in Italy and Germany and the imperialists in the west (which included his own country Belgium, alongside like the likes of Great Britain and France), this diversity of governance did not coalesce well and inevitably led to friction among countries, which is one of the major contributing factors of World War II, which killed millions and decimated the possibility of peaceful co-existence in the world. There were several great changes in Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well, including the end of colonial rule as well as a rapid transformation of European cultural landscapes and economies through migration, and the structural violence of global capitalism (McKinney, 2011). These served as subject matter for the *bandes dessinées* variant of comics and graphic novels, which acted as a source of reassurance, by representing traditional European values.

This sentiment is inherent to the Tintin comics and the way certain narratives pan out. Without being overly critical to Hergé's personal belief system, this paper discusses the effect said belief system had on the overall discourse of the series and mechanisms in which these ideologies made its way to the public and transfigured itself to propaganda. Most Franco-Belgian comics romanticised the colonial dominance of West European countries as it represents the authority and superior standing of these countries, the sentiment revolving around which is destructively problematic. The series often discusses the political and cultural opinions imperialist states had towards the third world, namely Africa, Latin America and Asia, as is represented in *Tintin in the Congo* (Hergé, 2005[1931])<sup>2</sup>, *Tintin: Cigars of the Pharaoh* (Hergé, 1971[1934]), *Tintin: The Blue Lotus* (Hergé,

1983[1936]), *Tintin in Tibet* (Hergé, 1962 [1959]), *Tintin and the Picaros* (Hergé, 1976) and many others.

Another aspect of the series that is dealt with in detail in this paper is the creation of new countries, to target a political ideology, by Hergé himself. This is an effective measure in which the author does not directly target a particular country with his critique but makes it clear to the reader using an intrinsic form of social satire. All these characteristics of the comic series do not present itself directly on each panel, once the reader digs deeper into the narrative will they excavate the ideology of Hergé. This has effectively made the comic series appealing to all ages, from children to adults, from passive readers to active academicians. (Heer & Worcester, 2009)

### Hergé and Tintin – Influences and Ideology

Georges Prosper Remi was born on the 22nd of May 1907 and spent his childhood in the Etterbeek municipality in Brussels, which he later characterised as "dominated by a monochrome grey" (Assouline & Ruas, 2009) while lamenting at the fact that it was extremely dull. Hergé started working for *Le Vingtième Siècle* (The Twentieth Century) as a reporter-photographer and illustrator after returning from military service in 1927. He published the first Tintin comic in 1929, under the pen name Hergé, in *Le Petit Vingtième* (The Little Twentieth). A conservative Roman Catholic newspaper based in Brussels, *Le Vingtième Siècle* described itself as a "Catholic Newspaper for Doctrine and Information" (Thompson, 2011). In addition to expressing a conservative Catholic philosophy, the newspaper exuded an overall far-right and fascist ideology, due to the political affiliations of the editor Norbert Wallez. Being an editor of the leading Belgian newspaper at the time, Wallez took major strides in exposing conservative propaganda to Belgians of all ages, especially children, through the newly established Tintin comic series (Goddin, 2008).

At the end of the 1920s, there were three popular political and religious ideologies that defined the social, cultural and political landscape of Belgium— liberalism, socialism and Catholicism (Assouline & Ruas, 2009). The Catholics were known for exerting their dominance in society, by being members of political parties as well as devout followers of their faith. This faith was the link keeping together the population of Belgium, which was divided between Flemish speakers and French speakers. This struck a chord with Hergé, as he came from a family with a French-speaking father and a Flemish-speaking mother (Assouline & Ruas, 2009).

---

<sup>2</sup> for all Tintin comics citations, two years are mentioned. The former refers to the year of publication in English and the latter, denoted in [] brackets, refers to the year of original publication by the author.

After taking responsibility of *Le Petit Vingtième*, Hergé would abide by every instruction given to him by Norbert Wallez and allowed the comics to contain explicit political messages in them, including but not limited to fascist and anti-Semitic sentiments (Assouline & Ruas, 2009). When Hergé had chalked out a desired narrative path for the Tintin comic series, he had planned for Tintin's adventures to start in the United States of America. He later had to alter the linear flow of the series by incorporating the inputs from Norbert Wallez about inaugurating the series with Tintin visiting the land of the Bolsheviks, to create a work of anti-Soviet propaganda, even though Hergé had not visited the Soviet Union, which resulted in several factual inaccuracies in the storyline. *Tintin in America* (Hergé, 1973[1932]) was released in 1931, as a work of anti-American propaganda, being extremely critical of the American methods of capitalism and industrialisation and echoed the views of the Belgian public that the American life was a threat to Belgian society (Farr, 2001). In this way, Hergé incorporated his own political belief system and the desire of Wallez to glorify orthodox, right-wing ideologies into a comic series meant for children (Assouline & Ruas, 2009).

With every passing year working in *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Hergé identified as a staunch, right-wing loyalist and was ideologically close to the traditional right wing that was dominant in Belgium at the time. The 1920s was welcoming to the fundamental principles of right-wing politics and ideologies and it was believed that it was a world view uniformly shared by the European landmass as well as several other parts of the world. As a conservative, he was a royalist of the Belgian monarchy, something he remained throughout his life, even after the death of Leopold II of Belgium (Assouline & Ruas, 2009).

Such sentiments were popular in Belgium at the time, and Hergé's early works were permeated with patriotism, nationalism and discipline. Also, it is clear with the depiction of the Soviets in *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* (Hergé, 1989 [1930]) that there was a pre-conceived anti-communist sentiment in Belgium, which resonated with the readers as well. In addition to this, Hergé propagated Wallez's political views to young readers, which also contained fascist and anti-Semitic views. Another aspect which aided the nationalist spirit of the nation was the glorification of Belgium's colonial past, as depicted in *Tintin in the Congo* (Hergé, 2005[1931]).

The most striking aspect of the series is the representation of the main protagonist, Tintin. Knowing the creator's past as a member of the Boy Scouts, it is not surprising that Tintin is an adventure enthusiast, a reporter who travels the world to explore different cultures.

(Dunnett, 2009) sheds light on the characterisation of Hergé's protagonist. Although constructed around the attributes of a Boy Scout, (Hunt, 2002) describes Tintin as a young man with an almost blank face. We can notice that his facial features are extremely minimalist, with dots representing his eyes and mouth. This lack of detail stretches even further as the reader has no personal background on Tintin; there is no visual or textual representation of his family or even his last name, which according to Harry Thompson meant that Tintin "did not appear to be burdened with a personality" (Thompson, 2011). With this, Hergé wished to develop a character arc based simply on the present timeline of his stories and not on his background, which is essentially what the American graphic novel, like the various publications of Marvel and DC Comics did. Hergé represented Tintin as an average, young, European male, which helps the reader associate with the character even better. This form of realism may have helped the cause of proliferating Hergé's political beliefs and the spreading of orthodox Christian values to every household in Belgium, and, given time, the rest of the world.

Deviating from the characterisation of the main protagonist of his series, Hergé, after a lack of detail to the Soviet geography, history and culture in *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* (Hergé, 1989 [1930]) (which boils down to the fact that Hergé never visited the Soviet Union and did not know much regarding the Russian lifestyle and the political form of governance since the October Revolution of 1917 (Peeters & Farr, 1988)), made it a point to do in-depth research on the countries and regions of the world he wished to base his next graphic novel in. Hergé focussed on the attention to detail and put a great deal of effort to research into the subtleties of real objects such as automobiles and buildings in the visual depiction of the city of Shanghai in *The Blue Lotus* (Hergé, 1983[1936]) (see Figure 1). This is in direct contradiction with the descriptions and physical features of Tintin in the comics, which is now the iconic face of Franco-Belgian graphic literature.

The adventures of Tintin and his friends reflect not only a world, its history and geography, but a whole society with its codes and rituals. What Hergé successfully accomplished was the creation of an international language that people from across the world could associate and empathise with. (Dunnett, 2009) goes on to suggest that "Hergé's outlook overlapped both thematically and temporally with broader national and European values which stemmed from the narrower cultural milieu of Belgian society in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century".

### Imperialism and the Degradation of the Third World

Several European countries, despite being considerably weakened after World War I, maintained their stronghold in the global community by controlling and overseeing large colonial territories. Belgium was known to have occupied the African state of Congo. When Tintin visited the country of Congo, he emanated an aura of superiority. In contrast to this, the natives were represented as young, friendly, naïve and lazy children, who required constant attention and prodding in the correct direction by the superior white man to get them to work, (Apostolidès, 2010), (see Figure 2).

The early works of Tintin point to the fact that the main protagonist was burdened by Hergé to impose the Western doctrine to the rest of the world and effectively convert other nations to follow the same nationalist sentiments of Belgium. This is a political ploy that led to widespread colonisation in the 16th Century, which was then considered a metric for economic standing and prosperity. From Figure 2 and throughout the novel, it can be noted that, in Africa, being a white man was considered more than enough reason to be venerated. The encounters Tintin faces in the African savannahs and wilderness depict the pre-conceived truisms that Europeans held towards the third world – Coco, Tintin's local servant, was assigned menial tasks like preparing meals and carrying Tintin's equipment, crocodiles were referred to as "frightful beasts", the Aniota tribes' dresses were "ridiculous", the Pygmies were "timid, like all of his race" (Hergé, 2005[1931]).

In the Congo, Tintin taught the native children about the wonders of Belgium, in the classroom of a Christian missionary, many of which were established in Congo on the orders of the Belgian monarch, Leopold II (Dunnett, 2009). Seeing the problematic nature of that narrative, later issues of Tintin in Congo (Hergé, 2005[1931]) featured the reporter discussing mathematics to the Congolese children. Despite active measures to reduce the propagation of racist discourse, the fact remains that Hergé echoed, quite accurately, the pride of the Belgian state for its imperialist history.

Colonial Congo was marred by the Congo Free State, a project undertaken by King Leopold II, which was meant to improve the lives of native inhabitants but took an ugly turn. The monarch exploited the region for its natural resources and used the money for construction projects in Belgium. His administration bore witness to murder, torture and systematic brutality, which included the selling of thousands of Congolese citizens into slavery. Tintin represented a particular take on colonialism, which corresponds to both the paternalistic ethos of the post-

Leopold Belgian Congo, as well as some of the notorious aspects of Leopold's Free State (Dunnett, 2009). The paternalistic nature of the white man in Africa was represented by the difference Tintin made in terms of resources, technology, intellect and power in Congo. The comic also served as a source of religious propaganda, when it came to the depiction of the missionaries set up by Belgian citizens, in the attempt to hoodwink natives into converting to Christianity. Behind the mask of education and prosperity existed the conversionist ideology of right-wing orthodox Catholics, who effectively brainwashed the natives into believing that Christianity is the superior religion and Belgium is the superior nation. As a note to the readers, Hergé put Tintin in difficult and life-threatening situations throughout the comic, where he would always pray for his survival to God and his wish would come true (see Figure 3).

When we next turn to Latin America, Hergé had developed considerably as the creator of Tintin comics, when he created Tintin and the Picaros (Hergé, 1976). The storyline of the comic was developed around a group of South American revolutionaries, influenced by the great Latin American revolutionaries such as Fidel Castro and Che Guevara (Farr, 2001). According to Oliver Dunnett, "The representation of Latin American countries was that of being in a continuous state of revolution and counter-revolution. This reflected a trend in the region that Hergé may have been aware of – as between 1930 and 1934, fourteen of the twenty Latin American countries experienced revolution" (Dunnett, 2009).

To create a compelling narrative surrounding the political instability in Latin America, Hergé created a fictional country called San Theodoros, a banana republic controlled by ever-changing military governments, which became an independent state in the early 1830s. This narrative depicts similarities to the real-life revolutionary General Simon Bolivar, which is unknown to the casual reader. Bolivar was a rational politician too, as he expressed his reservations about Latin American countries being able to govern themselves. But Hergé, through the portrayal of a statue of Al General Olivaro, Libertador of San Teorodo who had won independence for several Latin American nations from the hands of Spanish colonialists (Wiarda, 2003), informed the readers of the political state of affairs in Latin America.

Bolivar's reservations regarding the instability of Latin American countries were expressed by Hergé, by the creation of generals in Tintin: The Broken Ear (Hergé, 1975 [1937]) and Tintin and the Picaros (Hergé, 1976) who sought to emulate his revolutionary mindset. The general and his Picaros would constantly involve



themselves in coups to determine who would govern San Theodoros, and this highlights the farcical counter-productiveness of the explosive politics of mid-20th century Latin America (Dunnett, 2009). In this setup, Tintin involves himself in an attempt to affect some form of positive change in a politically toxic nation.

The concept of totalitarianism is portrayed in the depiction of San Theodoros in Tintin and the Picaros (Hergé, 1976). The country is shown as cities with beautiful roads, contrasted by the depiction of slums and poverty-stricken families. Modernity and comfort meet with surveillance and pretense, a considerable amount of which stems from the fear of a political coup against the current government. The novel deals with the conflict between the militant government of General Tapioca and General Alcazar and his band of guerrillas, the Picaros, determined to overthrow the corrupt government through a “revolution without bloodshed” (Hergé, 1976). General Alcazar overthrows General Tapioca, which is treated by Hergé as the end of one corrupt government and the beginning of another, by the contrast in two different panels, one when Tintin reaches San Theodoros where a sign reads “Viva Tapioca”, and the other when he leaves, where a similar sign reads “Viva Alcazar” (Hergé, 1976).

The ideology of the ethics of revolution is represented in a bad light, where the ruling party after a successful coup forms a totalitarian government that is money-driven, oppressive and corrupt. This political dystopia is juxtaposed with the European model of political governance and Hergé wishes the readers to believe that it is only through this model that peaceful politics can exist.

### Representation of European Politics

Although Hergé merely complied with the demands of his influential editor when producing works that echoed a right-wing ideology, he was forced to defend himself before several critics and detractors during interviews. A summary of his varied responses is that the first Tintin album was released when he was twenty-two years old and bore witness to “the sins of his youth”, as he had grown up in a right-wing, Catholic environment. The depiction of the Soviet Union in Tintin in the Land of the Soviets (Hergé, 1989 [1930]) was inspired by the general atmosphere of Belgian newspapers, which propagated that being a Marxist meant denouncing the Catholic Church, which was unacceptable. Hergé had also been horrified by the events that transpired during the October Revolution (Theobald, 2017), which involved an armed insurrection by Bolshevik Party led by Vladimir Lenin in 1917, followed by the execution of the Romanov Royal family

the next year. Unable to visit the Soviet Union, he obtained an overview of the nation from Moscou sans voiles (“Moscow Unveiled”), a book written by Joseph Douillet, who was a Belgian diplomat to the Soviet Union. (Farr, 2001) also noted that Hergé freely lifted whole scenes from Douillet’s account. In addition to this, there were several factual errors in the comic which suggests ignorance of the author. Blatant errors can be seen, such as references to bananas, Shell petrol and Huntley & Palmers biscuits, which did not exist in the Soviet Union at the time, as well as errors in Russian names by adding the Polish “-ski” suffix instead of the Russian “-vitch” (Theobald, 2017).

To the rest of Europe, the Soviet Union constituted a danger that was poorly assessed, due to two differing opinions on the governance of the communist system. Some parties overestimated the Soviet achievements to be able to maintain a socialist policy during an era of turmoil and emerge victorious, while others judged the Soviet Union as a catastrophic entity about to implode. The Bolshevik regime remained in power much to the surprise of several Western governments. By unifying several individual states to form the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks could not be deemed as a satellite state that would dissolve in a few years, by means of pressure from West European strongholds. Tintin in the Land of the Soviets (Hergé, 1989 [1930]) aimed to decimate that sentiment and remind the impressionable readers in Belgium that challenging the natural order of the Catholic Church by not believing in the existence of God and opposing the right wing’s ideology of conservative nationalism will bear no fruit and such a system is inherently corrupt and will soon implode on its own volition.

Tintin was created to conduct investigations on the state of the contemporary world. A retrospective reason for Tintin to travel across the world may stem from the fact that Hergé believed in the supremacy of Belgium in the geopolitical spectrum, by looking elsewhere in the world for a reflection on the functioning and the effective state of Belgium, which is traditionally a right-wing sentiment of nationalism. A liberal right-wing preacher would comment on the glorious state of his country and tell his citizens of the wonders his country has to offer. A radical right-wing preacher would try to enforce nationalism upon the people. Hergé falls in the middle of this dichotomy vis-à-vis his methods of romanticising his country through the eyes of Tintin. The first few albums of the series were radical in their execution, about nationalistic sentiment – it was achieved at the cost of belittling other nations and parts of the world. A more effective way to do so was by highlighting the faults of

dictators and destructive ideologies, which Hergé implemented by the creation of two fictional countries in Europe – Syldavia and Borduria.

Fascism developed in Italy and Germany due to an existing economic crisis and the countless problems that arose from there. This narrative dealt with changing conflict structures in West European societies and their mobilization by political parties, which eventually led to fascism (Dolezal, 2008). By promoting a youth movement, fascism was gaining grounds, and despite the glaring problems of the system, seemed to be promoting a solution to the moral denigration of West Europe. It can be observed that Tintin is the symbol of the youth movement, which is propagated by the right-wing movements (Apostolidès, 2010). In direct contrast, the depiction and actions of Tintin in *King Ottokar's Sceptre* (Hergé, 1958 [1939]), who strived to protect the monarch of the peaceful nation of Syldavia against the evil conspiracy of the bordering nation of Borduria, shows a shift in the political atmosphere of the Tintin comic series, wherein Hergé acts as a liberal political advisor, instead of the staunch right-wing propagandist that was evident in the first three albums of the Tintin series.

The most politically charged Tintin novel, *King Ottokar's Sceptre* (Hergé, 1958 [1939]) was published in 1939, shortly after the Anschluss, which was when Adolf Hitler and Nazi-ruled Germany annexed Austria. The novel was written to challenge the core principles of fascism, which was then seen as a threat to European stability. At this point, Hitler had directly challenged the neighbouring countries of Germany, which included Belgium. The expansionist actions of Hitler affected Hergé personally too, as the German occupation of Belgium in May 1940 led to the dissolution of *Le Vingtième Siècle*. Hergé, however, continued producing comic strips for *Le Soir*, a French daily newspaper in Brussels (Dunnett, 2009).

The annexation of Austria by Germany is alluded in *King Ottokar's Sceptre* (Hergé, 1958 [1939]) – the attempt to annex the peaceful nation of Syldavia, a fictional Balkan state created by Hergé and inspired by Montenegro in terms of population and cartographic location, by Borduria, which was operated by a violent and expansionist government, thus alluding to Nazi Germany without explicitly and cartographically exposing the same. Syldavia represented the countries of Austria, Albania (which was also annexed by Italy) and, to an extent, Belgium. Due to the expansionist nature of Italy and Germany, Borduria was designed as a satirical reference to both the countries, with the naming of pro-Bordurian agitator "Müstler" from the surnames of Nazi leader

Adolf Hitler and Italy's National Fascist leader Benito Mussolini (Lofficier & Lofficier, 2011). Despite the Eastern European location, the similarity between Syldavian King Muskar XII and Leopold III of Belgium can point to the fact that Syldavia was also a metaphor for Belgium as well (Peeters & Farr, 1988).

Despite being pacifist and democratic, Hergé, in this narrative, delves into the dangers that democracies face when standing up against totalitarian governments. The novel is an idealised narrative where the annexation does not take place, due to the intervention and heroics of Tintin in the eleventh hour. Even though Austria was annexed, the flow of the novel dictates that there is always hope for the ultimate surrender of radical political movement.

### Anti-Americanism

The end of World War I progressively made European nations realise the United States of America had overtaken them and was enforcing their own values. Fears of the American takeover was strong in Belgium as orthodox Catholics believed that the technological and materialistic society was on the verge of conquering the Old World.

The concepts of fascism looked to the past for inspiration, as opposed to the principles of materialism that was flaunted by the United States of America after World War I. A universal hatred for the New World resulted in the unification of large masses of people and lead to the ultimate establishment of a fascist order in certain European countries. According to Jean-Marie Apostolidès, "The glory of the past was to become the antidote to the current decadence and offered an alternative to the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which were rejected unconditionally. Unregulated capitalism was abhorred even more than communism to the extent that capitalism represented the loss of qualitative values – the end of 'moral civilisation' – in favour of the reign of the quantitative." (Apostolidès, 2010)

The goal of creating *Tintin in America* (Hergé, 1973[1932]) was to degrade the American political ideology of capitalism and materialism. Even though Hergé wished to structure this novel around the Native Americans who had been given a negative image by American films, Wallez and his demand of exposing the American ways made the crime syndicate of Chicago a priority. Tintin is seen going after the evil corporations who manufacture genetically modified food (Lacorne, 2005) and the oil industry, which stops at nothing to acquire oil-fields, to the extent that corporations would usurp territory belonging to the Redskins. The narrative of

anti-American propaganda extends to the depiction of the crime syndicate and the effective corruption in the governance of the country, effectively reminding Europe that materialism and greed leads to political corruption.

Anti-Americanism is further depicted in *Destination Moon* (Hergé, 1959 [1953]) and *Explorers on the Moon* (Hergé, 1959 [1954]), where the conflict between Borduria and Syldavia changes from referring to Nazi Germany and its victims to be the epicenter of an East-West struggle, analogous to the Space race between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. To clarify (Screech, 2005), Hergé did not consider Syldavia to be a satellite Soviet state, rather a neutral European country devoted to research. Anti-American propaganda is revealed when it is realised that the primary detractor to Professor Calculus's project is an American businessman of the rival party. There exists an underline theme of the preservation of European values, which is developed from radical right-wing propaganda, to being able to identify a common enemy and critiquing their form of governance.

### Final Thoughts

As an end-product of concentrated research by Hergé, we notice that the Tintin narrative is set amidst the turmoil of real-world political discourses. The series wished to inculcate a sense of unique political perspective in every reader, even though it may not have started that way. Through the course of this paper, we have argued that Hergé had matured as a political mouth-piece, from being a blatant right-wing propagandist and a perpetrator of racism and ethnic stereotyping to the liberal political advisor status he held in later albums. This paper also discussed how political discourse has governed the narrative flow of a majority of Tintin comics and how it is necessary to understand the political background of several Tintin albums to actually comprehend the message Hergé was propagating. With specific attention given to Latin America, Africa, politically unstable parts of Europe and the United States of America, this paper covers the major areas of geopolitical discourse that Hergé chose to provide a commentary on, which effectively helped the readers learn more about the problems the world was facing, during an age without television (initially) and access to easy information on world problems. Through the eyes of Tintin, a European everyman, Hergé taught the readers the wrong-doings of several political leaders and the necessity to end political conflict and propagate the need to have a Unified Europe in the 21st century.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Apostolidès, J.-M. (2010). *The Metamorphoses of Tintin, Or, Tintin for Adults*. Stanford University Press.
- [2] Assouline, P., & Ruas, C. (2009). *Hergé: The man who created Tintin*. Oxford University Press.
- [3] Christiansen, H.-C. (2000). *Comics & culture: analytical and theoretical approaches to comics*. Museum Tusulanum Press.
- [4] Dolezal, M. (2008). *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*.
- [5] Duncan, R., Smith, M., & Levitz, P. (2015). *The power of comics: History, form, and culture*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- [6] Dunnett, O. (2009). Identity and geopolitics in Hergé's Adventures of Tintin. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 10(5), 583-598.
- [7] Farr, M. (2001). *Tintin: The Complete Companion*. London: John Murray.
- [8] Forsdick, C., Grove, L., & McQuillan, L. (2005). *The Francophone bande dessinée* (Vol. 265). Rodopi.
- [9] Goddin, P. (2008). *The Art of Hergé, Inventor of Tintin: Volume I, 1907–1937*. Last Gasp of San Francisco.
- [10] Heer, J., & Worcester, K. (2009). *Arguing comics: Literary masters on a popular medium*. Univ. Press of Mississippi.
- [11] Hergé. (1958 [1939]). *Tintin: King Ottokar's Sceptre*. London: Egmont.
- [12] Hergé. (1959 [1953]). *Tintin: Destination Moon*. London: Egmont.
- [13] Hergé. (1959 [1954]). *Tintin: Explorers on the Moon*. London: Egmont.
- [14] Hergé. (1962 [1959]). *Tintin in Tibet*. London: Egmont.
- [15] Hergé. (1971[1934]). *Tintin: Cigars of the Pharaoh*. London: Egmont.
- [16] Hergé. (1973[1932]). *Tintin in America*. London: Egmont.
- [17] Hergé. (1975 [1937]). *Tintin: The Broken Ear*. London: Egmont.
- [18] Hergé. (1976). *Tintin and the Picaros*. London: Egmont.
- [19] Hergé. (1983[1936]). *Tintin: The Blue Lotus*. London: Egmont.
- [20] Hergé. (1989 [1930]). *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*. London: Methuen.
- [21] Hergé. (2005[1931]). *Tintin in the Congo*. London: Egmont.
- [22] Hunt, N. R. (2002). Tintin and the interruptions of Congolese comics. *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, 90-123.
- [23] Lacorne, D. (2005). Anti-Americanism and americanophobia: A French perspective. In D. Lacorne, *With Us or Against Us* (pp. 35-58). Springer.
- [24] Lofficier, J.-M., & Lofficier, R. (2011). *Tintin*. Oldcastle Books.
- [25] McKinney, M. (2011). *History and politics in French-language comics and graphic novels*. Univ. Press of Mississippi.
- [26] Peeters, B., & Farr, M. (1988). *Tintin and the World of Hergé*. Methuen.
- [27] Screech, M. (2005). *Masters of the ninth art: bandes dessinées and Franco-Belgian identity* (Vol. 3). Liverpool University Press.
- [28] Theobald, J. (2017). *The media and the making of history*. Routledge.
- [29] Thompson, H. (2011). *Tintin: Hergé and His Creation: Hergé and His Creation*. Hachette UK.
- [30] Wiarda, H. J. (2003). *The soul of Latin America: The cultural and political tradition*. Yale University Press.





Fig.1. A panel depicting, in great amount of detail, the Chinese city of Shanghai, in *The Adventures of Tintin: The Blue Lotus* (Hergé, 1983[1936]).



Fig.2. The systematic hierarchy between Europeans and native Africans, as a way of depicting the growing difference between the first and the third worlds, something that was normalised during the imperialist era (Hergé, 2005[1931]).





Fig.3. Calling God for protection as a direct reference to the supremacy of the Christian belief system, something that the Tintin Comics strived to propagate during the early 1930s (Hergé, 2005[1931]).