

The Michigan Journal of History

VOLUME XV



Cover Photo:

Snapshot from Stanley Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*. Public Broadcasting Service, September 2, 2015. Featured in the Appendix of Jessica Selzer's "THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY: VIOLENCE, BLACK IDENTITY, AND LEGACY," 459.

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear readers,

When I was first approached by our former Editor-in-Chief and asked to fill his shoes for this year's edition of the *Michigan Journal of History*, I never imagined the sheer amount of work that goes on behind the scenes in compiling and publishing the journal. What you are holding in your hands right now is the product of countless of long nights, large coffees, and *Slack* DMs. Nevertheless, I could not be prouder of our final result, and our dedicated and inspired team of editors behind it all.

We received a record number of submissions this year, and our editors deliberated long and hard to select the most interesting, insightful and original undergraduate research for the 18th edition of our publication. I think they succeeded in doing so, and I hope that upon reading, you will agree. We strived to maintain *MJH*'s reputation by publishing a diverse collection of papers, each highlighting new and exciting history from places which may or may not be familiar.

I would be remiss if I did not properly give credit where credit is due. To that extent, I'd like to once again thank our amazing editorial staff, our advisor Professor Hussein Fancy and the University's extraordinary Department of History. I would also like to thank our counterparts at the *Society of Undergraduate Humanities Publications*, whose guidance throughout the publication process was invaluable.

Now without further ado, we hope you find the following pages inspiring and educational.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Paradowski, Editor-in-Chief

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RECLAIMING THE CITY: URBAN RENEWAL AND POLICING IN DETROIT 1967-1977

KENNETH ALYASS

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

On January 14, 1973, then Mayor of Detroit, Roman Gribbs spoke at a groundbreaking ceremony for the Renaissance Center, a series of interconnected skyscrapers on the riverfront of Detroit. He remarked that the project represented the "beginning of a vast revitalization of our riverfront which will stretch from bridge to bridge (from Belle Isle to the east, to the Bridge to Canada to the west)."¹ Financed by the Ford Motor Company, the Renaissance Center was the largest privately funded construction project in history to that point, and the urban neoliberal impulses the project embodied generated similarly giddy responses amongst the region's business elite. Developers were eager to invest in Detroit's downtown at a discount, and notable investors like Max Fisher, Robert Surdam, and Henry Ford II, poured

¹ "Downtown Renaissance Is Underway," *Detroit News*, January 14, 1973.

millions of dollars into the inner city. A sense of revanchism boosted this jump on the vacuum of disinvestment and disarray left behind in postindustrial Detroit, and business elites proposed an idea to make the city anew with investments through private-public partnerships that emphasized massive downtown buildings as a form of revitalization. These men, their companies, and city officials consciously mapped out a different Detroit; a city not made for the hundreds of thousands of largely Black working-class residents, but for white collar professionals.

As the private sector embarked on its plan for downtown redevelopment, the city instituted a series of police reforms that would turn the Detroit Police Department (DPD) into the most violent police force in the nation. By the early 1970s Detroit notoriously had the highest number of civilian killings by police per capita.² The most infamous of these initiatives was “Stop The Robberies, Enjoy Safe

² Anti-STRESS Lawsuit, Box 5, Folder 26, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Streets” (STRESS). STRESS utilized reviving law enforcement tactics such as foot patrol, constant surveillance, and decoy squads. This new method of policing was replicated in city after city across the country.³ By 1973 STRESS was responsible for 6,000 arrests, 24 deaths, and nearly 5 years of hyper-intensified policing of Black working-class communities.⁴

The creation of STRESS was the outgrowth of a more muscular and militaristic approach to urban policing that began in 1965 following the Watts Rebellion. President Lyndon Johnson responded to what was then the largest urban uprising of the decade by investing millions of federal dollars as well as military equipment into urban police departments.⁵ “Criminology” and “criminal justice” experts began gaining legitimacy during this era, and the technocratic practitioners of these fields gave rise to new ideas, theories, and tactics

³ Frank Rizzo’s police force in Philadelphia and New York City’s BOSSI unit are similar examples.

⁴ Report of the Police-Community Relations Commission to the Common Council, Box 5, Folder 22, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

⁵ Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Harvard University Press, 2016).

that permeated discussions and policies designed to reduce the ever-increasing crime rates and to establish “law and order”.⁶ These new methods of policing were directly aimed towards policing the inner city and corresponded with the latest effort to “revitalize” Detroit’s downtown. White collar suburbanites refused to work in areas that had high crime rates as well as a Black majority. To entice white professionals to work in Detroit, the city utilized intensive policing to “reclaim” the city, sanitizing it for suburbanites and pushing Black and poor working-class whites further into the margins.

⁶ “United States Crime Rates 1960 – 2017,” accessed November 12, 2018. <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/uscrime.html>; Crime rates steadily rose in the 1960s, however, it is important to understand that the way law enforcement agencies collected crime statistics changed in the 1960s, and that crime rates were much higher in the early 1900s than in the latter half of the century. See Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” *The Journal of American History* 97, no. 3 (2010): 703–34. Several theories try to explain rising crime rates, these stem from environmental lead levels to unprecedented levels of suburbanization that had more kids born than in earlier baby booms. However, a more compelling argument states that as industrial restructuring decimated urban communities, entry level employment in factories disappeared from the urban landscape, which left millions of youth unemployed and marginalized. See Scott Kurashige, *The Fifty-Year Rebellion: How the U.S. Political Crisis Began in Detroit* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017).

Using STRESS as a case study, this paper argues that intense policing tactics were directly linked to urban renewal in the 1970s and sought to reshape downtown Detroit to “make the city safe” for white collar workers and investment. This paper also examines the Black community’s response to STRESS. Black activists consciously understood that this was one of many efforts to stymy the shift of Detroit’s racial geography. Under the leadership of Marxist lawyer and Wayne State University Law School graduate, Kenneth Cockrel, a grassroots movement of Black activists established a powerful anti-STRESS campaign that attacked the racism of both the DPD as well as business elites designs to facilitate racial and spatial segregation via privatized urban renewal.

Historiography

This thesis is situated between three historical literatures: postwar redevelopment, post-1967 Detroit, and carceral studies. Historians have payed close attention to the effects redevelopment

policies had on American cities after World War II, and many use Detroit as a case study to understand how these policies played out on a local scale. The history of policing and criminalization in cities has also been thoroughly documented. This thesis brings these three literatures together to understand them in conjunction. Redevelopment became one of main means to shoring up Detroit's problems after 1967. Major transformations in the Detroit Police Department (DPD) also occurred at the same business elites and city officials pursued new redevelopment strategies. To understand how the city changed from 1967 to the late 1970s, one must understand redevelopment and policing in the context of each other. First, a brief overview of these literatures is required.

Since 2012 and corresponding with the publication of Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, and the Black Lives Matter Movement, research in carceral studies has exploded.⁷ Historians have researched

⁷ Michelle Alexander and Cornel West, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012);

the history of the police for decades, but recent scholarship views policing, prisons, and security policy in the framework of the carceral state.⁸ What exactly is the “carceral state” and where does that language come from? According to Elizabeth Hinton, the carceral state is defined as “all the formal institutions of the criminal justice system.”⁹ In the 1970s, French philosopher Michel Foucault first named the term “carceral archipelago,” which he referred to the usage of surveillance systems and technology to implement social control and discipline populations. This usage and conceptualization of individuals, bodies, and their rights, he argues, is a relatively new phenomena that developed around the same time as the European Enlightenment in the 18th century.¹⁰ Inspired by Foucault’s idea, historians have expanded

“How Black Lives Matter Changed the Way Americans Fight for Freedom,” *American Civil Liberties Union*, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight>.

⁸ Christopher Lowen Agee, “Crisis and Redemption: The History of American Police Reform since World War II,” *Journal of Urban History* (April 2017): 6–8.

⁹ “Booked: The Origins of the Carceral State,” *Dissent Magazine*, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-origins-carceral-state-elizabeth-hinton>.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1995).

the concept, and have explored how social programs, corporations, prison building, the conservative right, liberals and neoliberalism, drug policy, culture, prison and police reform, race and ethnicity, and a host of other topics can be understood through the framework of the carceral state.¹¹ Urban historians have also recently begun understanding urban

¹¹ Among the numerous articles and books written, here are a select few: Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, “Welfare Crises, Penal Solutions, and the Origins of the ‘Welfare Queen,’” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 756–71; Jin-Ann Lin and Liang-Chuan Chen, “The Modern Vernacular Reassessed: The Socioarchitectural Origin of the Taipei Walkup Apartments,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 908–26; Timothy Stewart-Winter, “The Law and Order Origins of Urban Gay Politics,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 825–35; Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); S. Mitrani, “Reforming Repression: Labor, Anarchy, and Reform in the Shaping of the Chicago Police Department, 1879-1888,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 6, no. 2 (June 2009): 73–96; Samuel Walker, “Reexamining the President’s Crime Commission: The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society after Ten Years,” *Crime & Delinquency* 24, no. 1 (January 1978): 1–12; Matthew D. Lassiter, “Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California’s War on Narcotics during the 1950s,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 787–807; Elizabeth Hinton, “Creating Crime: The Rise and Impact of National Juvenile Delinquency Programs in Black Urban Neighborhoods,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 808–24; Robert T. Chase, “Cell Taught, Self Taught: The Chicano Movement Behind Bars - Urban Chicanos, Rural Prisons, and the Prisoners’ Rights Movement,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 836–61; Yohuru Williams, “Between a Rock and Hard Place: Delaware Prison Reform and the Urban Landscape, 1961-1977,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 772–86; Nick Juravich, “Back to the

history in the context of what carceral state scholars called the “punitive turn” in policing at the end of the 1960s. Despite the multitudes of research being done, there are still unanswered questions about how the carceral state has impacted urban space.¹²

For decades historians have studied federal, state, and locally initiated urban redevelopment and the impacts it has had on the communities most directly affected it.¹³ “Urban redevelopment” or “urban renewal” as planners referred to it, occurred in post-1945 United

Future: New Histories of New York in a New Age of Inequality,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 943–50.

¹² Heather Ann Thompson and Donna Murch, “Rethinking Urban America through the Lens of the Carceral State,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (September 2015): 751–55.

¹³ Among the numerous articles and books written, here are a select few: Rebecca K Marchiel, “Urban Decline: The Staying Power of a Postwar Story,” *Journal of Urban History*, n.d., 6; Brian D. Goldstein, *The Roots of Urban Renaissance: Gentrification and the Struggle over Harlem* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017); Samuel Zipp, “The Roots and Routes of Urban Renewal,” *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 3 (May 2013): 366–91; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit: With a New Preface by the Author*, 1st Princeton Classic ed, Princeton Studies in American Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Eric Avila and Mark H. Rose, “Race, Culture, Politics, and Urban Renewal: An Introduction,” *Journal of Urban History* 35, no. 3 (March 2009): 335–47; James M. Lloyd, “Fighting Redlining and Gentrification in Washington, D.C.,” *Journal of Urban History* 42, no. 6 (January 2015), 1091–1109.

States and mainly targeted low-income neighborhoods, often with African American majorities.¹⁴ Specifically, title II of Federal Housing Act of 1949 initiated these developments.¹⁵ These major projects cleared land for highway construction, public and private housing developments, parks, and other spaces they hoped would improve the space and living conditions. The policy of urban renewal is particularly of interest to urban historians because it marks a major increase of federal involvement in shaping urban space. Despite their intents, planners and city officials wreaked havoc upon these communities, and

¹⁴ “Urban renewal” and “urban redevelopment” are often used interchangeably. I argue that although in quotidian conversations you could use them to mean similar things, “urban renewal” is the term that planners and officials used to describe federally funded projects from the 1950s to the 1960s. “Urban redevelopment” is the term that private developers used to describe private-public investments in demolition and construction projects. The language around “urban renewal” invokes an idea that the space is depilated or improperly utilized, while “urban redevelopment” paints an idea of transitions and improvement. “Urban redevelopment” also utilizes the language of the marketplace. See “Urban Renewal and Redevelopment - Urban Sociology - IResearchNet,” *Sociology* (blog), accessed April 3, 2019, <http://sociology.iresearchnet.com/urban-sociology/urban-renewal-and-redevelopment/>.

¹⁵ Alexander von Hoffman, “A Study in Contradictions: The Origins and Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Housing Policy Debate* 11, no. 2 (January 2000): 299–326.

the projects built rarely met the expectations of the public.¹⁶ One strand of the literature on urban redevelopment posits the agency and influence of urban planners played the formative role in how these projects took shape and why they failed. Historians of urban planning of this period claim that the planners intended to benefit the city residents, but because they viewed their work through a middle-class lens, they underestimated the amount of damage large scale demolition had on communities.¹⁷ Another part of the literature examines urban redevelopment in the context of postwar liberalism.¹⁸ It argues that urban redevelopment played a major factor in suburbanization of the United States post-1945 and would make African Americans better “citizens” if they had better housing.¹⁹ Both the federal government and real estate developers pursued subsidies for large scale suburban

¹⁶ Avila and Rose, “Race, Culture, Politics, and Urban Renewal.”

¹⁷ June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

¹⁸ Karen R. Miller, “‘Better Housing Makes Better Citizens’: Slum Clearance and Low-Cost Housing,” in *Managing Inequality: Northern Racial Liberalism in Interwar Detroit* (NYU Press, 2015), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1287jbc.11>.

¹⁹ This is also when the ideology of the homeownership became prominent in American culture.

developments, so much so that historians argue the federal government subsidized the mostly white suburbs via federally backed mortgages.²⁰ To get from the city to the suburb and vice versa, highways carved up cities. Historians argue that redevelopment projects mostly served to facilitate suburbanization by constructing the infrastructure necessary and attempt to alleviate the problems caused by suburbanization, such as population and businesses moving from the city to the suburbs.²¹ Detroit is a major case study for both these arguments and the processes of urban redevelopment.

The transformation of Detroit from one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the United States to the most pressing example of urban decline did not occur over one year, but 1967 is a useful start to describe a new era in the city's history and development. Thomas Sugrue, one of the foremost historians on Detroit, argues that the city

²⁰ David M. P Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

²¹ Thomas Sugrue and Joe Darden wrote comprehensive books on this topic: Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Joe T. Darden, ed., *Detroit, Race and Uneven Development* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

declined due to processes such as deindustrialization, suburbanization, segregation, and the way capitalism produces inequality and how that is compounded in urban spaces.²² His analysis stops at 1967, the year when the largest urban uprising up to that time occurred. Historians since Sugrue have attempted to understand the city's history in the wake of the uprising. The largest strand of this literature looks at the effect's deindustrialization had on the city's economic base. It argues that Detroit, like other formerly industrial heavy cities, relied on heavy industry, in Detroit's case the auto industry, to provide the economic foundation for other businesses and the city's tax base. When the auto industry suffered in the 1970s, the city acutely felt the effects and reduced services in response to declining tax revenue. The loss of jobs and taxes compounded with high crime and a shift of federal funding and priorities to the suburbs, historians argue, created the crisis in Detroit. The city's drained coffers could not respond adequately, and as a result the poverty rate increased.²³ Recently, however, historians of

²² Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.

²³ Tracy Neumann, *Remaking the Rust Belt: The Postindustrial Transformation of North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016);

the carceral state have paid more attention to the way policing and mass incarceration impacted city residents. This new literature argues that to understand post-1967 Detroit, historians must understand what impacts the “punitive turn” in policing had on urban space. Mass incarceration put thousands of Detroit residents in prisons and jails, and the War on Drugs embroiled Detroit in a violent illicit economy.²⁴ This paper agrees with the carceral state historians and argues that redevelopment and policing should be understood in conjunction together. By analyzing the changes in policing, the criminalization of entire communities, and placing it within the context of redevelopment, this

Andrew R. Highsmith, “Beyond Corporate Abandonment: General Motors and the Politics of Metropolitan Capitalism in Flint, Michigan,” *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 1 (January 2014): 31–47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144213508080>; Sidney Fine, *Violence in the Model City: The Cavanagh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riot of 1967* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007); Kurashige, *The Fifty-Year Rebellion*; B. J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*, Rev. ed (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989); Francis Desiderio, “‘A Catalyst for Downtown’: Detroit’s Renaissance Center,” *Michigan Historical Review* 35, no. 1 (2009): 83–112.

²⁴ Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017); Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History.”

paper examines a sorely unexplored history of urban America in the late 1960s and 1970s.²⁵

Urban Renewal and Detroit

Urban renewal policies originate from early twentieth century zoning laws. In an effort to control the flow of working class immigrants in the busy streets of Midtown Manhattan and establish gainful urban development, New York City business interests and elites successfully fought for the 1916 Zoning Resolution.²⁶ The resolution regulated and limited the height of buildings, the amount of “yards, courts and other open spaces,” and what industries could be built on a specific plots of land.²⁷ Shortly after New York’s resolution, zoning laws and land-use practices became commonplace across the nation.

²⁵June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

²⁶ David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 64.

²⁷ City of New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment, “Building Zone Resolution,” July 25, 1916.

Controlling the development of cities put an immense amount of power in the hands of those who owned the most capital and gave city administrations and business elites an influential tool to shape the racial and ethnic geography of urban spaces.

Urban renewal projects first begun in Detroit in the 1940s. And from their inception they negatively impacted black communities. One article written in 1962 read that 57% of individuals affected by urban renewal in Detroit were black despite being only 26% of the population. The author noted that urban renewal and slum clearance appealed to cities because of an improved tax base and an incentive to urge individuals who moved from the city to the suburb, to move back to the city. Urban renewal projects in part attempted to stem population loss from suburbanization by attempting to change suburbanite's perception of the city and provide them with living arrangements like the ones they purchased in the suburbs. Arthur Johnson, then executive secretary of the Detroit Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), told the reporter that the

NAAPC would endorse urban renewal, only if it did not discriminate.²⁸ The projects did, however, continue to discriminate. They demolished more housing than they built, and most black residents could not afford what little housing remained.

The 1948 Gratiot Redevelopment Project became the most infamous and controversial of Detroit's urban renewal projects. This 129-acre urban renewal project demolished Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, two majority African American neighborhoods. Thousands of Black residents moved throughout the city, although some chose to stay, the neighborhood community was fundamentally lost. In its place, the city constructed Lafayette Park, a series of high rises designed to "modernize" urban living. Although federal funding mandated a certain number of apartments for low income residents, white middle-class residents occupied most of them. The project became the inspiration for

²⁸ "Is Urban Renewal Blight or a Boom to the Negro?," *The Detroit Courier*, September 15, 1962.

multiple other urban renewal zones in the decades to come.²⁹ In 1962, a sociologist at Wayne State University concluded in a study on urban renewal and racial segregation in Detroit that “it can be said that urban renewal in Detroit...will....result in a substantial replacement of low income Negro families by middle income families principally white.”³⁰

Urban renewal exacerbated racial tensions between the police and Black residents. The displacement of thousands of citizens caused social disorder, and in response, the city attempted to quell the perceived problem of Black lawlessness by introducing a “Stop and Frisk Law” in 1965 and created Tactical Mobile Units (TMUs) that policed “high crime” areas of the city’s east and west sides.³¹ As capital flight bled auto jobs from Detroit, Black youth unemployment went up

²⁹ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit: With a New Preface by the Author* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁰ Albert Mayer, *Public Housing, Urban Renewal and Racial Segregation in Detroit*, June 1962, NAACP Detroit Branch papers, Box 64, Folder 9, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

³¹ Mark Jay and Philip Conklin, “Detroit and the Political Origins of ‘Broken Windows’ Policing,” *Race & Class* 59, no. 2 (October 2017): 33.

from 16.5% in 1954 to 26.2% in 1965.³² The combination of urban renewal's destructive effects on the Black community, high unemployment, and intensified policing constructed the racially charged political atmosphere that birthed the 1967 Rebellion and the rise of more punitive policing tactics.

Stop The Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets (STRESS)

In response to the “long, hot summer” of 1967, policy makers, law enforcement officials, and journalists who associated Black urban youth with criminality concluded that a “war” on crime was needed to reduce crime rates and bring an end to the “anarchy and chaos” prevalent in urban centers.³³ President Richard Nixon in his 1970 State of the Union address said that “...there is one area where the word “war” is appropriate...it is in the fight against...the criminal elements

³² Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983), 49.

³³ Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 13.

which increasingly threaten our cities, our homes, and our lives.”³⁴

Policy makers sought to connect “War on Poverty” programs with law enforcement initiatives such as police training, research programs, and reforms intended to suppress, rather than mitigate, criminal activity.³⁵

The overlapping of poverty relief and anti-crime programs transformed the way that lawmakers and the public viewed poverty and crime, and in many respects turned the “War on Poverty,” which was more of a minor skirmish than a war, into a “War on the Poor.” In turn, urban areas (and particularly communities of color) became more strongly associated with lawlessness and crime. A generation of “law and order” politicians, many of whom were police or police-affiliated, seized upon the fears of the so-called white “silent majority” and used calls for containment and increased policing to propel themselves to office.³⁶ The pervasiveness of white fear and the highly racialized

³⁴ Richard Nixon, “Declare and Win the War Against Crime,” accessed September 1, 2017,

http://www.ontheissues.org/Celeb/Richard_Nixon_Crime.htm.

³⁵ Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 13.

³⁶ Michelle Alexander and Cornel West, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012), 40-58. See these works for more on the criminalization of Blackness: Muhammad,

rhetoric of “urban crisis” made the passage of the federal Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 possible. This bill, in part, produced the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), which distributed millions of dollars of grants to law enforcement agencies across the nation.³⁷ Michigan, for example, received \$15,678,000 from the LEAA in 1971 alone, and from that largesse, a corresponding \$35,000 grant helped fund the creation of STRESS, which LEAA called the “most dramatic program currently in operation.”³⁸

Although Commissioner John Nichols ran the DPD while STRESS was operative, Detroit’s previous police commissioner, Patrick V. Murphy, set several critical precedents during his short

Khalil Gibran, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2011); Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy* (Pantheon Books: New York, 2016); Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³⁷ Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, 82 Stat. 197, 90th Congress (1968).

³⁸ Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 3rd Annual Report of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Fiscal Year 1971, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972, 170-173.

tenure that paved the way for the unit's formation. Murphy, a graduate of City College of New York's Master of Public Administration program and the FBI National Academy, was a part of a new generation of law enforcement officials and theorists who were reimagining how the state deals with crime. Prior to serving in Detroit, Murphy served as the Director of Public Order and Safety at the National Urban Institute, a liberal think tank established by Johnson's administration in 1968. He conducted policing reform research at the institute but was quickly appointed to serve as the director of the LEAA. Murphy, though, was never confirmed due to a bogged down, lame duck Senate. Incredibly well liked and received by Detroit police officers, during his brief tenure as Commissioner he emphasized "police professionalism and higher education."³⁹ He set in motion a series of reforms that stressed a different type of policing, focused on using innovative technology, police professionalism and education,

³⁹ Griffith, John, "Police Officers Hail Successor to Spreen," *Detroit Free Press*, December 13, 1969; "Murphy Lauded as a Pro," *Detroit News*, December 12, 1969; "Decoy Work Played Minor Role in STRESS Operations?" *Detroit Free Press*, February 18, 1974.

intensive surveillance, and improved patrol operations. Murphy, therefore, came to a police department that had a history of police brutality and racism, but helped equip it with the tools and tactics capable of repressing the Black community and sanitizing the downtown area while simultaneously providing the veneer of professionalism and “science,” which theoretically could be used to insulate the department from community and external criticism.⁴⁰

STRESS, the brain child of District Inspectors Gordon R. Smith and James D. Bannon, was announced on January 13, 1971, and was referred to as a “decoy and surveillance unit.”⁴¹ STRESS units utilized surveillance and decoy tactics, which are perhaps best understood as entrapment methods, to blend into the areas they operated. Officers disguised themselves as old women, hippies, old men, businessmen, gas station attendants, store clerks, and “average

⁴⁰ “Murphy Goal: Best Force in the U.S.” *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1969; “New Top Man in Police Gets Innovator Tag.” *Detroit Free Press*, December 15, 1969.

⁴¹ “Detroit Under STRESS,” 30, Box 5, Folder 23, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

people on the street.”⁴² John Nichols, in a statement about STRESS, described the theory behind the unit by remarking that STRESS was based on the concept of “deterrence,” in that STRESS operations were designed to reinforce and strengthen the potential risk of apprehension of potential robbers. Officers, for example, would present themselves as potential victims “elderly...infirm...[and] the vulnerable,” to both bait and increase the risk of arrest for petty criminals. STRESS officers “merged” with the environment, drove unmarked cars that were not usually driven by police and operated during the day and night in areas that had high rates of street crimes. Officers in the unit were also granted unprecedented leeway and could use their own discretion when it came to putting officers in disguises and on the street.⁴³ The officers had immense control all situations, and the legitimization of their tactics gave them a degree of power that was often manipulated and helped foster corruption. For example, many of the people apprehended

⁴² “The Little Lady May be a Cop: Disguised Policemen to Fight Detroit street Crime,” *Detroit News*, January 13, 1971.

⁴³ Detroit Police Department Public Information Center News Release, Box 5, Folder 35, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

by officers in the unit may have not been attempting to rob the decoy officer despite being charged with the crime. There were dozens of instances where victims of STRESS operations argued that only a minor conflict had occurred between themselves and the officer, at least until the officer pulled out a gun and tried to explain that they are a part of the DPD and placed them under arrest.⁴⁴ But how could someone know for certain that they were officers? Disguising as STRESS officers become so common that the department had to release glow-in-the-dark IDs to prevent fake STRESS officers.⁴⁵

STRESS operations targeted the group of citizens that city and business leaders viewed as most detrimental to their urban renewal and redevelopment efforts – low income communities; particularly those of color. STRESS officers conducted “intensive, constant search for crimes about to happen” in predominantly Black and immigrant working-class areas: Cass Corridor, Downtown, New Center, and east

⁴⁴ “Protests Police Actions,” *Michigan Chronicle*, February 3, 1973; “STRESS Beatings Rubbish Backlog,” *Michigan Chronicle*, 1973.

⁴⁵ “Undercover Police To Get New IDs,” *Detroit News*, 1972; “Robbers Find It Easier to Play Cops,” *Detroit Free Press*, 1973.

and west of Woodward Avenue, within the half circle that is Grand Boulevard.⁴⁶ In high-crime areas “STRESS officers have the authority to stop practically everybody and anything that moves...generally with their guns out.”⁴⁷ STRESS emphasized all-encompassing surveillance of Black and immigrant communities and aimed to create a police-state like environment as a means to lowering crime rates. And it worked according to department statistics. According to the DPD, crime rates dropped significantly in the four years that STRESS operated. Reported robberies, for example, dropped from 20,820 in 1971, to 17,254 in 1972. However, robbery-motivated killings continued to rise, which strongly suggests that residents were either reporting fewer robberies to the police or that the police data was flawed.⁴⁸ The DPD overestimated

⁴⁶ Detroit Police Department Public Information Center News Release, Box 5, Folder 35, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University; “Detroit Under STRESS,” 12, Box 5, Folder 35, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

⁴⁷ “Supercops of Detroit are Praised, Criticized,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 4, 1973.

⁴⁸ Alex Elkins, “Battle of the Corner: Urban Policing and Rioting in the United States, 1943-1971,” (PhD diss., Temple University, 2017), 554.

the impact of the squad on reducing overall crime rates. In the same time, Detroit's population also dropped and the DPD increased traditional policing such as beat patrols. The correlation of the squad's tactics with lowering crime rates was shaky, since numerous factors came into play when estimating crime reduction. STRESS also claimed to have made significant inroads in taking guns and criminals off the street, reporting that they had seized over a thousand guns and made hundreds of felony arrests. But while crime rates allegedly dropped, they did so while the city's murder rate was on the rise, including that of the police departments. DPD became the most violent police department in the country and had the "highest number of civilian killings by police per capita in the nation."⁴⁹ At 7.7 killing per 1000 people in 1972, twenty-two of the twenty-four men killed by STRESS were Black, and the majority of fatal killings were attributed to only ten

⁴⁹ Anti-STRESS Lawsuit, Box 5, Folder 26, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

officers, with Raymond Peterson killing nine people during his time in STRESS.⁵⁰

The killing of Clarence Manning Jr. was emblematic of STRESS's relationship to the Black community and of how the unit functioned. Manning, his brother Clyde, and their friend, Johnson, spent the evening of May 28, 1971, at the Columbia Bar in downtown Detroit. Leaving after midnight, the trio drove from the bar to Clyde's home. While on route, two police officers in a cruiser pulled them over, claiming to have spotted a broken brake light. After searching their car and their bodies and finding no weapons or drugs, the officers released the men. Once they left, Johnson dropped Clyde off at his home, and then returned to the bar with Manning to pick up his mother-in-law and wife. At this point, the night turned sour. On their way back, they stopped in front of the Edison Garage near Cass Park, the center of the vice district in Detroit's Cass Corridor. Manning, having to relieve himself, urinated in front of the garage, and was approached by a

⁵⁰ Ibid.

“bearded white hippy dressed in old clothes.” The “hippy” was verbally aggressive and said something that provoked Manning. Johnson tried to get Manning’s attention, but Manning became so focused on the “hippy” that he ignored his friend and took a few steps towards the “hippy.” In a matter of seconds eighteen shots rang out - seven of which blasted through Manning’s body. Johnson fled in fear, driving the car two blocks away, and abandoned it. He then ran the remaining six blocks to the Columbia Bar. Once there, Johnson, his wife, and mother-in-law, took a cab back to the scene, and on their way, they saw a police officer. They stopped and explained that their friend, Manning, had just been shot. The officer, who possibly knew about the incident, promptly arrested for “assault with intent to rob being armed.”

Confused and scared, Johnson, until that point, had no idea that the “hippy” who killed his friend was Michael Worley, a decoy STRESS officer, and that three other officers, Raymond Peterson, Richard Worobec, and Marvin Johnson, also shot Manning from afar.⁵¹ In fact,

⁵¹ “Detroit Under STRESS,” 14-17; Anti-STRESS Law Suit, Box 5, Folder 26, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

further analysis of the incident showed that before Johnson drove off, Manning had run to the car to take cover. All four STRESS officers convened in front of the garage and fired at him, claiming that he had a gun. But Manning did not have a gun. And the area where they incident took place was “very well lighted by the lights over the Edison Garage.” Executed by a fatal shot to the chest by Raymond Peterson, Manning, a twenty-five-year-old employee of the City Library of Detroit, became one of over a dozen STRESS killings that year.⁵²

Reaction to STRESS

When a *Washington Post* reporter who was covering STRESS asked Kenneth Cockrel about the declining crime rates attributed to STRESS operations, Cockrel, with a characteristic rhetorical flourish, replied, “Shit!” His language mocked the statistics and the boasting of the DPD. He, and others in the city, did not believe that the slight reduction in crime rates were attributed to STRESS. Doubt permeated

⁵² Ibid.

the air about the statistics, and even the vice president of the Detroit Police Officers Association, James Carnes, skeptically remarked, “I read the statistics...there possibly has been a reduction.”⁵³

The Black community knew from the beginning that STRESS was designed to exacerbate pre-existing hostile relations between the community and the police. They experienced intense police brutality, with officers harassing, beating up, robbing, and killing Blacks in urban areas across the nation. But portraying Black urbanites simply as victims does not paint the entire picture. The Black community, with assistance from Labor Defense Coalition (LDC), became instrumental in dismantling STRESS. The campaign mobilized and organized the Black community to fight against STRESS operations on various fronts. The LDC investigated incidents, educated the people, and filled a lawsuit.⁵⁴ But this campaign also showed the intense stratification of race in Detroit. While a majority of Black Detroiters opposed STRESS,

⁵³ “Detroit, ‘Everycity, U.S.A., ‘Looks to Future-and Hopes,” *The Washington Post*, February 20, 1973.

⁵⁴ Mark Binelli, “The Fire Last Time,” *The New Republic*, April 6, 2017.

in 1973, “78 percent [of whites] favor STRESS, with only 15 percent disapproving and 7 percent being undecided.”⁵⁵ One female supporter of the unit, for example, remarked in highly racialized terms that without STRESS, “no neighborhood will be worth a whit and young criminals will rove the streets. Detroit will turn into a jungle...”⁵⁶ Although it was not noted by the reporter, this STRESS supporter was almost certainly white, and her comment spoke directly to white fear of Black youth and the association of blackness with criminality and savagery. Essentially, she was arguing that without STRESS, Detroit will become majority black who will bring with them a culture of poverty and criminality.

The Black community fought back against STRESS, its racism, and its crimes against the public. On September 23, 1971, after two black teenagers, ages fifteen and sixteen, were killed by STRESS,

⁵⁵ “More Blacks Now Oppose STRESS,” *Detroit News*, May 25, 1973; Black Detroiters’ opinion on STRESS vacillated throughout its existence. At first, a sizeable group of Black residents supported intensive policing, but as it became evident that STRESS tactics often led to the killing of Black residents, opinion quickly shifted to denounce the program.

⁵⁶ “Contrary Contact,” *Detroit News*, March 23, 1972.

The State of Emergency Committee, formed, and over 4,000 people marched to a call for the abolition of STRESS.⁵⁷ The committee was made up of a group of Black leaders representing organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Guardians of Michigan (a Black police officers organization), and the Wolverine Bar (an organization of Black attorneys). Radical groups also joined the fray, including the Republic of New Africa (RNA) and the Detroit Branch of the National Committee to Combat Fascism.⁵⁸

The committee worked to “unite forces in the black and other oppressed communities” to fight oppression in whatever form and to form a Black united front against STRESS and police brutality.⁵⁹

Coalitions between groups with different philosophical and tactical approaches were rare, and the groups formation shows just how

⁵⁷ “4,000 Join in Orderly Protest Against STRESS Killing of Pair,” *Detroit News*, September 24, 1971.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*; Anti-STRESS Law Suit, Box 5, Folder 26, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

⁵⁹ Georgakas and Surkin, *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying*, 170–86.

pressing this issue was to all members of the Black community, regardless of class or status. The galvanizing force behind much of this activity, though, was Kenneth Cockrel, who abandoned his long-shot mayoral campaign to help lead the fight against STRESS.⁶⁰ Described as tall, intense, and with an afro, Cockrel worked in a “sober blue-striped shirt but no tie.”⁶¹ He led a broad coalition of lawyers previously associated with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers who were now focusing their efforts on dismantling STRESS.⁶² Supported by the NAACP, UAW Local 600, AFSCME Local 26, and other militant Black organizations, they argued that STRESS “serves no legitimate social purpose” and that the “entire operation of STRESS is illegal” and the antithesis of policing.⁶³ The lawsuit investigated STRESS killings, the origins behind the squad, and how it functioned,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² “Supercops of Detroit are Praised, Criticized,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 4, 1973.

⁶³ Steve Babson, *Working Detroit: The Making of a Union Town* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 174; Anti-STRESS Lawsuit, Box 5, Folder 26, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

as well as supported the families of those impacted by STRESS killings. One of their most prominent ventures was to publish pamphlets and educational material to inform people about STRESS. They published “Detroit Under STRESS,” a booklet that outlined what STRESS is and how it fit into existing police tactics and urban renewal attempts. There was a clear understanding that STRESS was one of many tactics aimed at restoring the city by securing it.⁶⁴

Revanchist Policies, Detroit Renaissance, and Reclaiming the City

Around the same time that STRESS officers killed Clarence Manning Jr. and the Rochester Street Massacre occurred, construction crews began clearing the Detroit riverfront in to facilitate the construction of the Renaissance Center.⁶⁵ Intended to revitalize the economy of Detroit, the building functioned as both a symbol and

⁶⁴ “Detroit Under STRESS,” 56-57, Box 5, Folder 23, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

⁶⁵ “Detroit Will Be Reborn Along the River,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 17, 1973.

tangible efforts to shape a different Detroit.⁶⁶ Historian Tracy Neumann emphasizes in that 1970s and 1980s, city officials “drew new mental maps of downtown.”⁶⁷ And in Detroit these mental maps imagined an expanded downtown cleansed of crime, industrial markers, and decay. Developers and city officials attempted to target young urban professionals, a class of people that grew up in suburban white working-class households but worked as white-collar employees. Private partners and public officials were not designing and building an area for working class African Americans and other minorities, but a downtown that towered with offices and filled with parks and plazas.⁶⁸ Their efforts aimed to create a sanitized version of the city, and the Renaissance Center was the symbol of that vision. The center functioned in many ways as a “city within a city.”⁶⁹ The structure’s philosophy emphasized control and security of the space within and

⁶⁶ “How the Renaissance Center Changed the Landscape of Detroit,” *Detroit News*, September 29, 2001; Francis Desiderio, “‘A Catalyst for Downtown’: Detroit’s Renaissance Center,” *Michigan Historical Review* 35, no. 1 (2009): 83–112.

⁶⁷ Neumann, *Remaking the Rust Belt*, 108.

⁶⁸ Darden, *Detroit, Race and Uneven Development*, 45–47.

⁶⁹ Desiderio, “A Catalyst for Downtown’: Detroit’s Renaissance Center.”

around the building. The Renaissance Center was inaccessible without a car, and its concrete brutalist architecture made it an incredibly cold, unfriendly and detail-less building. It also had its own security force which operated in a “command center” near the front of the building.⁷⁰ It was a “fortress like” structure that was consciously separated from the rest of the city. It created a “safe and sanitized environment for a predominantly white middle and upper class clientele.”⁷¹

In the aftermath of the 1967 Detroit Rebellion, business elites and city officials formed Detroit Renaissance, a non-profit organization that focused on the redevelopment of Detroit through urban renewal.⁷² The organization operated in two ways: first by finding and coordinating funding for business ventures, and second, by researching and publishing strategies to “revive” the city.⁷³ In one of its earliest

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Detroit Renaissance three-year reports, 1973-1979, Detroit Renaissance Records, Box 6, Folder 1, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University; “Citizens Rap Gribbs’ Plan for Development Agency,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1972.

⁷³ “Detroit Renaissance,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 27, 1971; “City’s Rebirth Needs Auto Moguls’ Help,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 15, 1971.

studies, the organization polled white and Black Detroiters and suburbanites about their “perception” of the city. 83% of white suburbanites agreed to the statement, “there is no real reason for me to go downtown, everything I want is out here in the suburbs.” When asked if they agreed with the statement, “When I think of Detroit after dark, I think of muggers and bandits around dark corners waiting to jump people,” 71% of suburban residents surveyed agreed. When asked if they agreed with the statement, “It’s just a matter of a few years before Detroit will be run by the blacks,” 61% surveyed agreed.⁷⁴

The study concluded by asserting that “if the white citizen can be convinced of his safety downtown, this study indicates he would increase his participation in Detroit’s activities,” and that in the long run “the number one issue...is a real and demonstrable reduction in street crime and a virtual guarantee of personal safety...to the white Detroiters and suburbanites, it is safety downtown after dark.”⁷⁵ The

⁷⁴ Detroit Image & Attitude Study, May, 1971, Detroit Renaissance Records, Box 5, Folder 36, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

study acknowledged that in order to pursue the redevelopment plans business elites and city officials had in mind, they had to provide amenities that served white suburbanites, reduce crime or at least the perception of it, and quell Black autonomy in Detroit. By attempting to pursue these goals business elites began a massive project guided by neoliberal impulses that began a series of construction projects in the 1970s that continue to today. Although the Renaissance Center was the largest of these projects, they ranged from building apartments and condos to constructing baseball stadiums and convention halls. Investors looked at the building as an emblem of safety, in response to the aftermath of the 1967 Rebellion. Roger M. Williams, one of the Renaissance Center's chief architects during its explained that "cities," and especially Detroit, "have...the image of being unsafe places. To reverse that, we have to give people city environments where they feel safe."⁷⁶ Being safe did not just mean tearing down decrepit buildings and building high rises, it meant more police, and removing the elements that made white consumers and business interests fearful of

⁷⁶ Roger Williams, "Saving Our Cities," *Saturday Review*, May 14, 1977.

the inner city. It also meant removing Blacks, particularly Black youth from the area. Against this background, STRESS functioned in conjunction with urban renewal. A “fostering of racial tension and division” to “make the streets safe” functioned as way to answer white fear and promote urban renewal, not critically analyze and mitigate crime and inequality.⁷⁷

Conclusion

In December of 2017, Dan Gilbert, founder of Quicken Loans and billionaire who's building projects in Detroit have been subsidized largely by taxpayers, announced that he was going to build a \$900 million-dollar skyscraper that would become Detroit's tallest building. Governor of Michigan Rick Snyder and Mayor of Detroit Mike Duggan joined Gilbert in breaking ground on the site in the middle of downtown. The building planned to have luxury apartments, offices,

⁷⁷ “Detroit Under STRESS,” 14-17, Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Box 5, Folder 26, Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

restaurants, and “an observation deck that will provide sweeping vistas across metro Detroit...”⁷⁸ But in a city where nearly 40% of its citizens lives below the poverty line, who can afford luxury apartments?⁷⁹

Recent development and ideas about the “revitalization of Detroit” posit that the city has to rebrand itself to stave off decline. Part of the reason for doing so they argue is to attract “the right” population back into the city. This approach mimics the ones that took place from the 1960s to the 1990s. During this time, the city, following national trends regarding changing law enforcement policies and theories and the rise of the carceral state, initiated a series of police reforms, the most dramatic of which was STRESS. It became the most effective measure in not only policing and sanitizing the inner city but creating an uproar from the Black community that eventually led to the election of Detroit’s first Black mayor, Coleman Young, and the disbanding of

⁷⁸ “Gilbert, Duggan, Snyder Headline Groundbreaking for Detroit’s New Tallest Skyscraper,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 2017.

⁷⁹ “Census: Detroit Income Rises, Poverty Rate Doesn’t Improve,” US News & World Report, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/michigan/articles/2018-09-13/census-detroit-income-rises-poverty-rate-doesnt-improve>.

STRESS in 1974. Understanding the redevelopment efforts, policing, and post-industrial visions of the 1960s and 1970s is imperative in understanding how city officials and private developers have reshaped and reconfigured Detroit to attract white-collar professionals, in turn harming and marginalizing working-class Black communities. This paper has argued that understanding the rise of the carceral state coupled with neoliberal post-industrial development in the 1960s and 1970s helps explain urban government's response to the postwar urban crisis and economic shifts. In Detroit's case, history repeats itself, as the city's center becomes enveloped in redevelopment and gentrification today, the rest of Detroit suffers unnecessarily.

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THE SACRIFICE FOR CULTURAL TOLERANCE: ASIAN WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN

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Is it more important to protect the rights and cultures of minority groups or to protect the rights of individuals? For Britain in the late half of the 20th century to the present day, this question has been the key battleground through which debates surrounding multicultural policies have played out. In June 2000, The Home Office released a controversial report which stated that “we must value our diversity... [but] we must not excuse practices that compromise the basic rights accorded to all people”.¹ Crucially this report was the first official recognition by the State that greater intervention was needed within minority communities. More specifically, this report was

¹ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, “The Truth about Forced marriages”, *The Guardian*, last modified July 2, 2000. Alibhai-Brown is a prominent member of the advocacy group Southall Black Sisters and discusses the significance of this claim from the Home Office in this British newspaper article.

targeted at addressing the need to end the practice of forced marriages within South Asian communities. This marked a significant shift in the way the British government sought to manage its multicultural society. It was a move away from a pluralist approach that granted special privileges to minority cultures, to a more individualized approach which recognized that within minority communities there existed other forms of discrimination and isolation, specifically within the relationships between men and women.²

In order to understand how this report and the subsequent shift of the State's multicultural approach produced such a polarized debate in Britain, it is first necessary to understand the legacy of British multicultural society. Doing this will first require an examination of the term multiculturalism and the way in which Britain decided to manage its diversity. This assessment will make evident that tensions between group rights and individual rights can be seen most clearly through the relationships between men and women within minority groups. More

² Ibid.

specifically, it will address the question regarding how multicultural policies within Britain affected the rates of domestic violence towards women within minority communities. While some argue that multicultural policies directly threaten the rights of minority women by allowing domestic violence to continue under the guise of ‘cultural defense’, others warn against the racist rhetoric that arises from attributing violence towards women to a specific minority culture. Significantly, there remains a division of opinion within groups of minority women themselves. The work of the Southall Black Sisters (SBS), a female black activist group in London, clearly illustrates the tension between protecting group rights and individual rights. From working with many women who have suffered not just from the traditional practice of forced marriages but from other forms of domestic violence, the SBS argue that multicultural policies threaten the rights of individuals within South Asian communities. Although the argument put forward by SBS and other feminist critiques of multiculturalism is largely convincing, it is also important to consider the disadvantaged position of minority communities within British

society. Ultimately, the solution to this tension is far more complex than simply one side against the other.

Historical Context

Firstly, it is necessary to outline the global process through which Britain became a diverse ‘multicultural’ society and to define exactly what is meant by the terms ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’. As Rita Chin highlights in her book, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe*, multiculturalism was a long process that stemmed from post -World War Two immigration and the loss of British colonies.³ The resulting mass migration both from the Caribbean and the Sub-continent of India marked a reversal in migratory patterns from emigration to immigration, and created huge diversity within British society. This process of mass migration produced a ‘multicultural’ society in Britain. Here, the term

³ Rita Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2017), 23.

‘multicultural’ refers to a society with a diverse collection of cultures “on the ground”.⁴ This forced the British government to begin discussing policies of ‘multiculturalism’. The term ‘multiculturalism’ slightly differs from ‘multicultural’ because it refers to the specific policies implemented by a state in order to manage a multicultural society.⁵ Initially, the British government aimed to deal with the issue of a multicultural society behind closed doors. However, the impact of the 1950s race riots, most notably the Notting Hill Riot in 1958, marked a decisive turning point in which multiculturalism entered the public sphere. These riots gave rise to the message that it was unreasonable to assume that different races could coexist peacefully and sparked the first serious discussions about limiting immigration.⁶ However, as we will see in the latter half of the decade, anti-racist activism from immigrant groups combined with the state’s desire not to

⁴ Stuart Hall, as cited in Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism*, 18. Chin cites the work of Stuart Hall to specifically define the terms of multicultural and multiculturalism as they play out in Britain and European societies post World War Two.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism*, 57-58.

appear racially discriminatory on a national level, produced a new way of articulating diversity. This shift from a discussion of racial difference to discussions of cultural difference was arguably the key influence on multiculturalism in Britain from the 1960s.⁷

The 1965 Race Relations Act in Britain was a key aspect of multicultural policy. It was essentially an attempt at compromise by the state. Having limited immigration from within the Commonwealth with the 1962 Immigration Act, the government attempted to counteract this decision by enforcing policies of non-discrimination for already settled immigrants so that they no longer felt like second-class citizens.⁸ However, the very concept of race relations assumed that there was a clear division within ethnic communities based purely on race and stereotypical assumptions about minority cultures. Moreover, the policies the government implemented in order to manage the needs of these different communities are at the very core of why the debate over group rights versus individual rights has become so heated. The British

⁷ Ibid, 90.

⁸ Ibid.

government began to implement methods of cultural pluralism; allowing privileges to certain groups in order to protect minority cultures. Such practices harkened back to old colonial policies where the governing body relied on existing hierarchies within specific cultural groups in order to manage their needs.⁹ Chin, and many feminist activists from the group SBS recognize that cultural pluralism methods ignored the ways that these group hierarchies affected individual rights. Those who assumed the roles of leader and spokesperson between these minority communities and the government were mainly conservative, male and, far from representing the needs of the group. Ultimately, such tactics perpetuated the tradition of male domination over women.¹⁰

Although the 70's and 80's saw a push back from immigrant communities regarding the policy of dividing minority groups based on

⁹ Ibid; Pragna Patel, "Third Wave Feminism and Black Women's Activism," in *Black British Feminism*, ed. Heidi Safia Mirza, (London: Routledge, 1997), 263.

¹⁰ Chin, *Crisis of Multiculturalism*, 216; Patel, "Third Wave Feminism and Black Women's Activism," 263.

assumptions about different ethnicities, the concept of race relations produced a long-lasting legacy with problematic consequences. Through a process referred to as ‘essentializing’, the state grouped together different communities based on stereotypical assumptions of culture, which denied agency to individuals within these groups. Cultural rights often took priority over individual rights. In the case of South-Asian immigrant women living in Britain, this had a particularly damaging consequence when it came to issues of domestic violence.

In addition to the practice of forced marriages, two high profile honor killings in 2001 and 2002 in Britain provoked a polarizing debate about cultural tolerance and the protection of group rights over individual rights. In 2001, Iqbal Zafar allegedly killed his wife Nuziat Khan after she attempted to file for a divorce against him. In 2002, Abdulla Yones killed his daughter Husher after he discovered that she was having a relationship with a Christian boy. The British police immediately labelled these crimes as ‘honor killings’ committed by men from a clearly backwards culture. However, these cases represent a far more complex set of social issues. On the one hand,

black British feminists have argued that the British government has continuously adopted a “politics of cowardice” in allowing for these cultural practices to continue in order to appear tolerant towards minority cultures.¹¹ Some feminists have gone even further in claiming that men have used the idea of a ‘cultural defense’, purely to justify the perpetuation of violence towards women.¹² On the other hand, many warn of the danger of imposing Western values on minority immigrants and treating other cultures as backwards.¹³ By taking both sides of the debate into consideration, it becomes clear that deciding whether it is more important to promote group or individual rights is not a simple task. In a society with huge cultural diversity, the very process of

¹¹ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, “The Truth About Forced Marriages”.

¹² Susan Moller Okin, “Part 1: Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?,” in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*, eds. Joshua Cohen, Matthew Howard, and Martha C. Nussbaum, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 9-25; Nilda Rimonte, “A Question of Culture: Cultural Approval of Violence Against Women in the Pacific-Asian Community and the Cultural Defense,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1311-1326.

¹³ Homi K. Bhabha, “Liberalism’s Sacred Cow,” in *Is Multiculturalism Bad For Women?*; Rahila Gupta, “A Veil Drawn Over Brutal Crimes,” *The Guardian*, October 3, 2003.

articulating exactly what 'culture' is, complicates balancing the rights of the individual and the rights of the group.

The Role of the Southall Black Sisters and advocating Individual Rights

The key figures who advocate the need to protect individual rights within multicultural Britain provide a feminist critique of multicultural policies. The vast majority of these figures are members of the Southall Black Sisters. The Southall community itself emerged as a predominantly South Asian immigrant community from the 1950s. The majority of these immigrants were Sikh men who spoke little English and from the start experienced a large amount of institutionalized forms of racism primarily through housing and the workforce.¹⁴ Countless employers made the decision to exploit this minority population by lumping South Asian immigrants on the late-

¹⁴ Institute of Race Relations and Black Rights, *Southall: The Birth of a Black Community* (UK: Russell Press, 1981), 8-9.

night shifts that Britons didn't want. Interestingly, this produced an unwarranted consequence as it forced these immigrant communities to join together and become organized in unions. Furthermore, access to housing for immigrants was so limited that many cases arose of multiple families occupying the same house which led to health and hygiene problems. As the number of immigrants began to increase, Southall became a pseudo- ghetto community, one which the government would rather ignore. However, this continuous neglect of their community only served to strengthen community ties and resulted in Southall becoming a real stronghold for the South Asian/ black immigrant population.

The role of women in the Southall community changed in the 1960s when many of the wives of already settled male immigrants began to arrive in Britain. These women joined the workforce because their husbands' wages were not sufficient enough to support them. These minority women, similar to their husbands, were often lumped together with other Asian women who could not speak English and were placed in the lowest paying jobs with the worst hours and working

conditions. Unlike their male counterparts, however, they were not involved in the growing unionization among their community and their voices remained unheard. Therefore, from the very beginning of their arrival, minority women experienced a unique form of oppression which left them vulnerable to both racial and gender discrimination.¹⁵

It was in this context that the Southall Black Sisters emerged in 1979. The initial catalyst for its creation was the police brutality used against protesters from the Southall community on April 23, 1979. These protesters were marching in response to a National Front demonstration outside the town hall of Southall. Although the initial founders remark that this struggle against racism was a large influence in their organization, ultimately, these founders based their campaign on recognizing the plight of minority women.¹⁶ They wanted to highlight that in this struggle against racism, there was no mention of

¹⁵ Ibid, 17.

¹⁶ Mandana Hendessi, "In Conversation," in *Against the Grain: A Celebration of Survival and Struggle* (Middlesex: Southall Black Sisters, 1990), 10-13. This source tracks the birth and development of the Southall Black Sisters. It includes sections written by each of the founding members as well as an introduction to their overall goals and achievements.

the oppression of women within these communities. Their initial focus was to campaign against, and raise awareness of, domestic violence in immigrant communities. During the early years, there were also divisions within the organization about where the organization should go- should it be a primarily political organization that raised awareness or should it be predominantly service based?¹⁷ Tensions also arose with their partner, the Brent Refuge. The Brent Refuge is a center where women can stay to avoid situations of domestic violence. SBS and the Brent management often collided over the structure and overall goals of this refuge. While the refuge often treated these women as ignorant victims of their community, the main goal of SBS was to educate and empower them to live independently without the fear of guilt from their community.¹⁸ In 1983 the group received GLC (Greater London Council, the overall administrative body for London at this time) funding and were finally able to set up an official base to provide services such as legal support and counselling for women in situations

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Muneeza Inam, "Opening Doors," in *Against the Grain: A Celebration of Survival and Struggle*, 25-30.

of domestic violence. Today the group continues to offer these services as well as publicly campaign against situations of domestic violence in immigrant communities.

Although the SBS recognized that all cultures and religions act in some way to subordinate women, they focus on the particular plight of Asian women in Britain for two main reasons. In *Black British Feminism*, Pragna Patel, a member of SBS, argues that firstly, culture and religion play a particular role in the subjugation of Asian women in Britain because their ‘culture’ is in the position of protecting a minority identity from a hostile majority culture. Secondly, she highlights that language barriers and racism also put Asian women in particularly vulnerable position.¹⁹ Despite emphasizing the need to protect the rights of individuals within Asian communities and specifically the rights of women to be free from practices of domestic violence, the SBS’s advocacy on this issue is altogether more complex. In illustrating the problem of domestic violence, they are simultaneously

¹⁹ Patel, “Third Wave Feminism and Black Women’s Activism,” 256-257.

attempting to combat the stereotypes of their community. As Patel highlights, many women have avoided speaking out about domestic violence for fear of dishonoring their family or community.²⁰ However, the fundamental goal of the SBS is to contradict the constructions of Asian family life by white Britons. These constructions include the belief that Asian women are inherently submissive, while also viewing the family as a safe unit through which the women can escape the surrounding racist society. Crucially, Patel argues that these stereotypical constructions of Asian communities deny the existence of power relations between men and women and also deny minority women a voice.²¹

The Southall Black Sisters have published a number of reports relaying the way multiculturalism in Britain has specifically affected minority women. These reports are useful in analyzing the way black feminists specifically reacted to and critiqued the way the British government attempted to manage its multicultural society. In the

²⁰ Ibid, 261.

²¹ Ibid.

reports ‘Multiculturalism in Secondary Schools: Managing Conflicting Demands’ and ‘Report on Cohesion Faith and Gender’, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and Pragna Patel both argue respectively that the methods of British multiculturalism have a directly damaging effect on minority women. Their critique points to the practice of dealing with minority communities through communications with an assumed community leader, most of whom were conservative males with no concern for women’s rights. Both also highlight that this practice denies the existence of power hierarchies, especially those between men and women within these communities.²² Alibhai- Brown argues specifically that the relationships between the State and the community leaders led to a deliberate attack on women’s organizations and the perpetuation of domestic violence under the guise of protecting a minority culture. She claims that in an effort to appear culturally

²² Yasmin Alibhai -Brown, “Feminist Critique of Multiculturalism,” in *Multiculturalism in Secondary Schools: Managing Conflicting Demands, Final Report*, ed. Sukhwant Dhaliwal and Pragna Patel (UK: Working Lives Research Institute and Southall Black Sisters, 2006), 11-13; Pragna Patel and Ugni Sen, *Cohesion Faith and Gender, Final Report* (UK: Southall Black Sisters, 2010). These reports are available for download on the Southall Black Sisters website and provide the main source of primary material for this work.

sensitive, the British government effectively turned a blind eye to violence against women within minority cultures.²³ Patel emphasizes that these policies perpetuated violence and gender hierarchies and also helped to further divide minority communities. Moreover, she makes the point that these divisions within communities were made on assumptions about cultural traditions and religions which worked explicitly to subjugate the power of women.²⁴

The SBS published a further report titled ‘The Report on Domestic Violence, and No Recourse to Public Funds’. Similar to the report discussed previously, this report also highlights the damaging effects of the British cultural pluralism methods for minority women. In the report, the SBS argue that The Domestic Violence bill (offering public funds to women escaping from situations of domestic violence) needs to be extended to all minority women, regardless of their immigration status. It demonstrates that although the government recognizes that minority women may be at greater risk of situations of

²³ Alibhai-Brown, “Feminist Critique of Multiculturalism,” 11-13.

²⁴ Patel and Sen, *Cohesion, Faith and Gender*.

domestic violence, they will not extend recourse to public funds to women with immigration issues. These immigration issues include situations in which women who have immigrated to Britain for marriage but have not yet been granted permanent residence in the UK because they are still within a year of that marriage. Crucially, SBS emphasizes that this represents a direct violation of basic human rights as it directly discriminates against women of certain races.²⁵ This notion of violating human rights is critical to our understanding of the tension between group rights and individual rights and brings us back to the fundamental questions: at what point do the cultural practices of a minority group infringe upon the freedoms of an individual? At what point can we impose Western ideals of ‘universal rights’ on minority groups? These ideas of basic human rights become more significant when we reconsider the complex issues and debates regarding the 2001 and 2002 honor killings and the notion of ‘cultural defense’.

²⁵ Southall Black Sisters, *Domestic Violence, Immigration and No Recourse to Public Funds: A Briefing to Amend the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill* (UK: Southall Black Sisters Website, 2004).

Overall, the reports of the SBS clearly demonstrate the tension between individual rights and group rights. For this group, protecting the rights of the individual, specifically women in Asian communities, takes priority. Their extensive research and personal experience suggest that in adopting a pluralist approach to multiculturalism, the British government directly affected the lives of minority women and allowed violent practices to continue. However, it is also important to investigate a fundamental aspect of this conflict that these reports also reveal: the ways in which the British government's essentialized and largely stereotypical views of minority cultures influenced its multiculturalism policies in the late 20th century. This legacy of race relations is arguably responsible for the complexity of this issue because while minority women are undoubtedly suffering from cases of domestic violence, they are in the unique position of also bearing the identity of an oppressed minority struggling against a long history of racism.

The ‘Cultural Defense’

In her article “*Individualizing Justice through Multiculturalism: The Liberal’s Dilemma*”, Lambelet Coleman also explores the tension between feminism and multiculturalism and between individual rights and group rights through an examination of cases in the U.S where ‘cultural defense’ was used by the defendant. Although Coleman’s writing discusses cases within the U.S legal system, her central argument can also be applied to Britain. She describes what she calls ‘The Liberal’s Dilemma’- the challenge of balancing cultural plurality and the protection of minority cultures with a commitment to upholding the universal rights of all human beings.²⁶ The term ‘cultural defense’ is the idea that someone (most often a man) from a different culture who has committed a crime should be treated differently under the law according to their cultural background and practices. . This idea implies that one should not assume that all

²⁶ Doriane Lambelet Coleman, “Individualizing Justice through Multiculturalism: The Liberal’s Dilemma,” *Columbia Law Review* 96, no. 5 (June 1996): 1093-1167.

immigrants desire to assimilate Western values. Coleman's article is convincing in the way it suggests that allowing the use of 'cultural defense' adopts a practice of discrimination both against the defendant and the victim, who in the majority of cases are women and children.²⁷ In allowing special treatment for the defendant of a different culture, the victim (in this case a woman from a minority culture) is also being denied the same protection that women in the majority culture would receive. This is a direct violation of the American (and also British) legal doctrine, which allows equal protection under the law regardless of race or gender. The use of 'cultural defense' in cases of domestic violence in minority communities is a key critique of multiculturalism for a number of feminists, as we can see in the edited works of Susan Moller Okin "*Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*".

Okin's arguments reflect many similar themes to that of SBS and Coleman. Firstly, similar to the SBS, she argues that the fundamental problem with multiculturalism is that governments regard

²⁷ Ibid.

immigrant populations as monolithic cultures. In doing this, they fail to recognize that these cultures inhibit extreme differences of power between men and women, which has often led to the oppression of women within minority groups. Also, like the SBS and Coleman, who favor the protection of individual rights over collective rights, Okin argues that multiculturalist policies in Western Europe are an antithesis to liberal values and that allowing privileges to certain minority groups directly denies individual freedoms. Secondly, Okin focuses on the comparison between the public and private social spheres to illustrate more clearly the ways in which the management of cultural diversity directly harms women. Okin identifies that the majority of 'culture' exists within the private sphere and the home. Not only does this mean that the role of women is particularly important to the preservation of culture, but also that many cultural practices are therefore ignored by the state, avoiding getting involved in these internal conflicts. She also goes as far to argue that all cultures are inherently patriarchal in this way as they use the repression of women in the home, especially

regarding their sexuality, as a justification for repressing their power in the public sphere.²⁸

Although Okin critiques all cultures in allowing for the existence of violence against women, her critique is particularly harsh towards non-Western minority cultures. She specifically argues that women from minority cultures are granted far fewer freedoms than Western women, and that there is a double standard within Western cultures that denies the same level of protection to women in minority groups.²⁹ Although Okin is arguably justified in her assertion that all cultures are inherently patriarchal and that multiculturalist policies can specifically harm minority women in the case of domestic violence, there are problematic flaws in her argument. In response to Okin's introduction, Azizah Al. Hibri and Lila Abdu-Lughod argue that Okin has adopted a discourse which constructs a largely essentialized and

²⁸ Okin, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?," 9-24. In Okin's book, she offers her own introductory section providing her argument that multiculturalism has a negative effect on minority women. The vast majority of the book, however, consists of written chapters from other academics that explore this question and critique Okin's introduction. These critiques of Okin's work will be discussed in this section of the essay.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

monolithic image of minority cultures.³⁰ This discourse is paradoxically the very thing she is trying to criticize with regard to multicultural practices.

Azizah Al. Hibri argues that not only did Okin make stereotypical and generalized claims about certain religions, but that many of these claims were factually incorrect given her sole use of secondary sources rather than original religious texts.³¹ Furthermore, Al-Hibri suggests from the title of her chapter “Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/ Minority Women?” that Okin’s views on feminism and the position of minority women are filtered through the lens of western ideals. Consequently, Okin falls in to the trap of ‘othering’ foreign cultures that appear to conflict with Western principles.³² Lila Abdu-Lughod also draws upon the long standing tradition of Western ‘othering’ that reinforces ideas of Western

³⁰ Katha Pollitt et al., in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*.

³¹ Azizah y. Al-Hibri, “Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/ Minority Women?,” in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*, 42. The conflicts between western (white) feminists and minority (women of color) feminists is a constant theme that appears throughout the debate on how multiculturalism impacts minority women and is a conflict that is arguably left unresolved.

³² *Ibid.*, 41.

superiority in her critique of Okin's book.³³ Crucial to this is a discourse that constructs an image of immigrant cultures (predominantly Muslim) that inherently oppresses the women of their culture. She claims that arguments such as Okin's place such a large emphasis on honor crimes, yet fail to acknowledge the complexities of the term 'honor' within other cultures and deny minority women their own moral values and agency.³⁴ She claims that the idea of honor within other cultures is far more complicated than the Western cultures would assume. Again, one can see here how the very act of defining a 'culture' plays a significant role in complicating this debate over individual versus group rights. The notion of honor involves complex relationships between men and women and the entire community while also denying the fact that women themselves often strive to uphold these values. Okin's argument that certain cultures have a greater tradition for repressing their women therefore appears to be obscured by what Abu-Lughod critiques as a long tradition of justifying Western

³³ Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 122.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 115-119.

imperialism based on assumptions of gender roles within certain cultures.³⁵

Southall Black Sisters, Coleman and Okin all argue that the fundamental problem that arose through the British practice of multiculturalism was that it divided minority cultures along racialized stereotypes that failed to recognize existing power hierarchies. In an effort to be culturally tolerant, the British government allowed for appointed leaders to deal with group conflicts internally, which in turn denied the agency of individual actors within the groups. Ultimately, this practice led to a perpetuation of gender discrimination most clearly seen through cases of violence towards women. However, it is also important to note that even those who advocate fiercely for the rights of the individuals, and specifically minority women, are aware that the situation is more complex. The relationship between minority women and their minority culture varies with every individual and it is important to consider divisions of opinion among women from

³⁵ Ibid, 22.

minority cultures when questioning whether group or individual rights are more important.

The Dilemma of Multiculturalism

The SBS, who arguably spearheaded the black feminist critique of multiculturalism in Britain, also recognize the potential problematic consequences of denouncing cultural practices within their community. In their published work, *Against the Grain*, which traces and celebrates the history of the black feminist struggle in Britain, Gita Saghal notes that many of the founding members of the SBS rejected the idea of publicly speaking out about problems of domestic violence. She writes that many of these earlier women feared that attacking practices such as forced marriages would reinforce racist stereotypes from the wider British society.³⁶ Pragna Patel also illustrates this tension in her chapter in *Black British Feminism*, where she describes how the main challenge of the SBS was at once to win support for the

³⁶ Saghal, “Fundamentalism and the Multi-Cultural Fallacy,” 16-25.

struggle against domestic violence while at the same time breaking down stereotypes of the South Asian community.³⁷ Crucially, the members of the SBS were aiming to ensure the rights of some but not at the expense of others. We can see evidence of how the SBS sought to counter this tension through their slogan “black women’s tradition, struggle not submission.”³⁸ With this slogan SBS highlighted both the problem of female subjugation in their community, but also dispelled the social construction of a ‘submissive’ Asian woman.

This tension between advocating the rights of individuals whilst simultaneously ensuring that the rights of others are not threatened is at the very heart of what Rita Chin calls ‘the crisis’ of multiculturalism, and what Lambelet Coleman refers to as the ‘liberal’s dilemma’. Returning to the discussion of the 2000 Home Office report, it is now clear that the subsequent debates are altogether more complex than simply condoning acts of violence within a minority community. This complexity is further enhanced when considering arguments and

³⁷ Patel, “Third Wave Feminism and Black Women’s Activism,” 257.

³⁸ Ibid.

reactions to these debates surrounding honor killings from the other side. These arguments suggest how a long history of Western colonialism and imperialism can influence the ways in which society constructs the term ‘honor killing’ and warns of the dangers of reinforcing racist stereotypes when denouncing different ‘cultural practices’.

The very concept of the term ‘honor crimes’, as Lila Abu-Lughod argues, can be problematic. She quotes an article from Letti Volpp in which she asserts that violent behavior is blamed on a culture only when that culture is a minority culture, either racially or nationally.³⁹ While she argues that the policing of domestic violence should certainly be improved and that this is a certain benefit to raising awareness of domestic violence within immigrant communities, the problem comes with ‘culturalizing’ domestic violence.⁴⁰ For Abu-Lughod, accusations of honor crimes are merely a way of reinforcing the image of immigrant cultures as backwards in order to justify

³⁹ Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?*, 127.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 115.

Western imperialist actions. Rather than understanding the complexities of the cultures within, Western ‘democracies’ are far too quick to establish domestic violence as a problem of immigrant traditions rather than admit that violence towards women is a problem within Western cultures as well.⁴¹ Crucially, she claims that attributing the label of “honor crimes” actually puts women further at risk in certain cultures because it further ostracizes the community and creates more animosity.⁴² What is worth noting here is that while she does recognize that violence towards women may be increasing in minority communities, she places it as a direct result of a community where its members are constantly struggling against racism, both in an overt form as well as institutionalized in the housing, school and labor systems.⁴³

In her article in the British paper *The Guardian*, “A Veil Drawn Over Brutal Crimes”, Rahila Gupta gives her own opinion on the public response to the ‘honor killings’ of Nazuit Khan and Heshu

⁴¹ Ibid, 118-119.

⁴² Ibid, 115.

⁴³ Ibid, 113-143.

Yones which echo the arguments of Abu-Lughod. She notes that the police were quick to label these killings as honor killings, suggesting that this sort of murder is the problem of a particular culture: Asian culture. She argues that the use of language by a large portion of the British public to describe these seemingly backward cultural practices creates a discourse that assumes Southeast Asian women want to incorporate British values, and that black female activists are only inspired to speak out because they have been influenced by British values. In doing so, society is reinforcing stereotypes and “promoting a racist agenda rather than gender equality”.⁴⁴ However, she also stresses that ‘culture’ is not an excuse for murder. Similar to Coleman’s argument, Gupta argues for what she calls for a move away from treating cultural communities differently with regards to domestic violence crimes. She also appears to be advocating to an extent for individual rights through her claim that violence against women is not the problem of one race or religion and should therefore not be treated differently. However, her argument for individual rights is far less

⁴⁴ Gupta, “A Veil Drawn Over Brutal Crimes”.

explicit than the previous authors and unlike them, she directly demonstrates how in condoning certain cultural practices the British state is promoting a racist rhetoric.⁴⁵

Homi K. Bhabha also discusses the dangers of critiquing multiculturalism from a firmly ‘western liberal’ standpoint. In his response to Okin in the edited work *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Bhabha agrees with Okin that there is considerable tension between feminism and multiculturalism.⁴⁶ However, he continues by suggesting that Okin’s feminist approach to this tension is somewhat restricted for two key reasons. Firstly, through placing so much focus on the patriarchal effects of culture in the criminal system with regard to ‘cultural defense’, Okin “against her own best advice” has allowed herself to “produce ‘monolithic’, although gender- differentiated, characterizations of minority migrant cultures”.⁴⁷ Secondly, Bhabha argues that the manner in which Okin has constructed the conflict

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bhabha, “Liberalism’s Sacred Cow,” 79.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

between multiculturalism and feminism serves primarily as an evaluation of minority cultures from a Western viewpoint.⁴⁸ This second point is perhaps the most valuable in illustrating the key argument of those who advocate for group rights. As Bhabha suggests, it is important when dealing with issues of group rights from a minority culture to put these issues in to context of the lives of those carrying a minority identity. Without contextualizing the constant discrimination that shapes the lives of minority cultures, one cannot justify essentialized judgements of these cultures.⁴⁹ Similarly to Gupta, Bhaba argues that Western culture is too quick to assume that migrant communities want to adapt Western values and that women from minority cultures are always the subjects of oppression within their culture who crave Western liberation.

Conclusion

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 80.

What becomes apparent after a discussion of all these authors is this: British policies for managing a multicultural society have undoubtedly produced a heated conflict between individual rights and group rights as well as between feminism and multiculturalism. However, what is also clear is that these tensions are far more complex than just a two-sided debate. It is not simply a fight between those who argue that multicultural policies in Britain threaten women's rights and those who argue that minority cultures need to be protected. If one goes back to the original 'controversy' regarding the recognition of forced marriages as a problem and the decades of activism from the Southall Black Sisters, it is hard to deny the argument of the black feminist critique of multiculturalism in favor of individual protections. Through personal experience, as well as documented reports and studies, these black women provide a hugely convincing argument emphasizing the damaging consequences that British multiculturalism has had on the lives of Asian migrant women. However, as we have seen, the Southall Black Sisters themselves have noted divisions within their own community of Asian women on the topic of critiquing multiculturalism.

Moreover, there is some significant overlap amongst the arguments of all the authors referenced in this study that is worth examining if we are to consider any possible solution to this conflict. What they all seem to agree on is that the fundamental approach to managing a multicultural society is through nondiscrimination. That is to say that there should be no differential treatment of different communities purely based on assumptions of culture and ethnicity that are largely inaccurate. What the Southall Black Sisters appear to suggest as a solution is the idea of ‘mature multiculturalism’.

This concept of ‘mature multiculturalism’ suggests a possible solution to the liberal’s dilemma in that it explicitly claims that “we must value our diversity... [but] we must not excuse practices that compromise the basic rights accorded to all people.”⁵⁰ It is the idea that certain cultural practices, such as violence against women, is something that should not be ‘tolerated’ by anyone and should not be treated

⁵⁰ Alibhai-Brown, “The Truth About Forced Marriages”. References to the concept of ‘mature multiculturalism’ can also be found in Alibhai -Brown, “Feminist Critique of Multiculturalism,” in *Multiculturalism in Secondary Schools*.

differently within different cultures. “Murder is murder” and violence against women is violence against women; a violation of human rights for all women, regardless of race class or culture. Therefore, although it is important not to venture too far down the road of Western ‘liberation’ and civilizing missions, multiculturalist policies should not willfully ignore the existing power hierarchies within minority communities, specifically within the relationships between men and women. In conclusion, it is clear that British multicultural policies have produced damaging consequences for Asian migrant women. In an attempt to appear culturally tolerant, the British government turned a blind eye to the perpetuation of violence towards women, specifically through practices such as forced marriage. Although it is important to recognize the position of minority cultures and not to assume superiority over certain traditional practices, individual rights must also be considered. What is most important is that we consider how society defines and constructs an image of a certain culture. If we are to uphold the rights of individuals, we must first tackle the racialized and

essentialized stereotypes of minority communities that have been the foundation of multiculturalism.⁵¹

⁵¹ The overarching conclusion of this work cannot be contributed to one specific author's work but provides an attempt at a cohesion of them all. It also aims to offer a solution to what Rita Chin named 'The Crisis' of Multiculturalism.

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POLITICS, AMERICA, AND SEX: WHAT COULD GO WRONG? THE ORANGE COUNTY RIGHT WING AND THE BATTLE OVER PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

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On November 9th, 2016, while the national press focused on a quite tumultuous presidential election, a subtler revolution took place. For the first time in 80 years, my home county of Orange County, California voted for a democratic presidential candidate (by 39,000 votes).¹ A similar process repeated itself in the 2018 midterms: the Democrats gained control all four House seats in Orange County and flipped all seven Republican held seats.² This dent in the Right's political monopoly over Orange County suggests a reversal of its

¹ Seema Mehta, "Orange County Voted for a Democrat for President for the First Time since the Great Depression," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/trailguide/la-na-election-aftermath-updates-trail-orange-county-turns-1478716018-htmstory.html>.

² Adam Nagourney, "A Democratic Rout in Orange County: Cisneros's Win Makes It Four," *The New York Times*, November 18, 2018, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/17/us/politics/cisneros-orange-county-democrats.html>.

staunch conservative nature. During such a tumultuous period in one of the most infamous political regions, I sought to fathom the development of my county's conservative nature. However, when conducting preliminary research, I became aware of a fascinating ideological battle within Orange County during the 1960s, centered around a contentious debate of "progressive education". Amongst a population of 1.4 million in 22 cities, with 361,890 children enrolled in public K-12 districts by 1970, this curriculum battle revealed the depth of political influence upon educational policies.³ This all but forgotten incident in Orange County's history presents an intriguing case study in the development of this notoriously republican zone, before Nixon's Silent and Reagan's Moral Majority took the national stage.

Understanding this niched political battle—one of the first waged by the nascent right wing—requires a deeper appreciation for the area of Orange County itself, and its conservative reputation. The

³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing 1970: Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, California* (Washington D.C., U.S. Census Bureau, 1972), 12.

editors of *Post-Suburban California: The Transformation of Orange County Since World War II* describe Orange County in terms of a “suburbia city”.⁴ Not merely a haven for white flight and suburban safety from urban decay, this region intentionally interweaves industrial and residential housing over a large expanse of space, linked by the private automobile.⁵ Orange County’s commitment to private industry and its religious, middle class white population created the perfect recipe for a more reactionary environment in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶ By 1960, 40% of the California’s Republicans lived in Orange County; in every presidential election from 1948 to 1968, 63% of the population voted republican.⁷ Yet Carey McWilliam’s germane assessment still

⁴ Adam Nagourney, “A Democratic Rout in Orange County: Cisneros’s Win Makes It Four,” *The New York Times*, November 18, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/17/us/politics/cisneros-orange-county-democrats.html>.

⁵ Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in The Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004), 46-47; Rob, Kling, Spencer Olin, and Mark Poster, eds. *Post-Suburban California: The Transformation of Orange County Since World War II* (University of California Press, 1991), 18.

⁶ Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 158.

⁷ *Ibid*, 112; “CQ Voting and Elections Collection,” *CQ Press*, accessed October 30, 2018,

rang true: “Southern California [was] politically insane.”⁸ Up until Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial race in 1966, half of Orange County's voters still registered with the Democratic party.⁹ Democrats that voted for Reagan earned the name “ticket splitters,” as party polarization did not exist in such an extreme manner.¹⁰ Despite Goldwater's 1964 Republican nomination, which demonstrated the depth of Orange County republicans' grassroots mobility, this region did not fully support the Radical right at the onset of their emergence.¹¹ But by the late 1960s, right wingers (both Radical and ultraconservative fortified

<http://library.cqpress.com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/elections/document.php?id=avg1948-1CA2&type=hitlist&num=0>.

⁸ Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1973), 274.

⁹ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 205.

¹⁰ Gladwin Hill, *Dancing Bear: An Inside Look at California Politics* (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1968), 219.

¹¹ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 12; Ira Shor, *Culture Wars: School and Society in the Conservative Restoration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25; In *Culture Wars: School and Society in the Conservative Restoration*, historian Ira Short addresses the common misconception that only the Radical right and conservative factions opposed communism. However, he deduces that the “New Left” did not support the communist revolution around the world, although they still retained populist ideas. By the 1960s, there was no single “red menace,” but conservative forces were more aggressive in labeling the communist enemy (25). Nevertheless, anti-communist sentiments existed on both sides of the aisle.

their presence in Orange County).¹² These societies mostly clung to the label of “anti-communist,” which refers to opposition to internationalist movements and state control.¹³ Two major bastions of their ideology delineate how these groups would later attack progressive education: their commitment to limited government interference, and a dedication to preserving private “morality”.

Before launching into the woes of Orange County’s curriculum wars, one must familiarize themselves with the “enemy”: progressive education. Herbert Kliebard’s *The Struggle for American Curriculum: 1893-1958* remains the authority on this subject, and chronicles progressive education’s various implementations from the

¹² As defined in an “Inquiry into the Effect of the Radical right and Ultra-Conservatives on Public Education,” George H. Crosson Jr. delineates a subtle difference between Radical rightists and ultra-conservatives. The former in the 1950s-1960s believed that a grand communist plot had already taken root amongst the government, and it was their duty to expose it. The latter did not believe a communist plot was afoot, but that inept politicians were easy target, and “too soft” on communism; this would make it easier for communism to take root in all levels in government (5-6). In this paper, due to the great plethora of Right groups in Orange County, the terms “right wing”, “Radical right”, and “the Right” will be used interchangeably.

¹³ The term “state control” is a reference to any form of government control, whether by the United States government, California State government, or local government; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 43.

early 20th century to the 1960s. One of the most cataclysmic events to ever hit the United States, the Great Depression subsequently weakened American faith in capitalism and engendered progressive educators to sedulously advocate their educational goals.¹⁴ This new form of education upended more traditionalist forms of schooling, particularly the emphasis on drills: the memorization of various historical and classic literary facts, and the “3 R’s” (“reading, riting [sic], and [sic] rithmetic [sic]).¹⁵ The overarching ambitions of progressive education originated from its “founding father” John Dewey.¹⁶ In *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), Dewey recapitulates his argument that education serves “as a shaping, forming modeling activity—that is, a shaping into the standard form of social activity.”¹⁷ This pithy synthesizes progressive education’s conviction that education and the “real world” don’t remain mutually

¹⁴ Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 71.

¹⁵ Max Rafferty, *Suffer Little Children* (New York, New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1963), 136; Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 71.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁷ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1916), 28.

exclusive; education becomes a mechanism by which to cultivate social change.¹⁸

Great waves of anti-progressive education sentiment swept through the Cold War period, crashing onto the national and Californian stage. These attacks predicated themselves around a few crucial deductions from these Radical right groups: that progressive education sponsored notions of socialism, and promoted wayward morals unsuited to the American lifestyle. The contentious debate over progressive education during the time of the Red Scare seeped into the local level, including Orange County. Some Orange County parents already critiqued the new “experimental” nature of progressive education in the primary and secondary schools.¹⁹ Complaints addressed progressive education’s commitment to conformity (or “adjustment”) which supposedly degraded the intelligence of the child,

¹⁸ Peter F. Carbone Jr., *The Social and Educational Thought of Harlold Rugg* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1922), 23.

¹⁹ “To Max Rafferty from Mrs. J. M. Dieter,” August 14, 1970, Department of Education, Max Raffety F3752: 773, Box 30 Folder D, California State Archive.

essentially reducing them to obedient “serfs”.²⁰ In the national setting, other forms of progressive education generally withstood the more radical factions of society; yet in Orange County, their tenacity in reiterating progressive education’s commitment to communism and its threat to the individual demolished a fundamental cog of this pedagogical structure.²¹ Vociferous right wingers swarmed public speaking areas, successfully campaigned to elect anti-progressive school board members, and greatly diminished progressive education programs in their districts. Through the analysis of news coverage provided by the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Orange County Register*, along with first person accounts through letters and journalists’ work, it comes to light that progressive education in Orange eventually succumbed to the Right’s criticism.

²⁰ Zora V. Smoyer, “Our Modern Education: To the Post-Intelligence,” *Orange County Register*, 1952 Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 4, Orange County Archives.

²¹ Stuart J. Foster, *Red Alert! Educators Confront the Red Scare in American Public Schools, 1947-1954* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2000), 181.

But how did these Orange County right wingers succeed when others in the country failed?²² What about *their* rhetoric led to their fruitful reward? To produce a careful study of this particular historical moment, we will concentrate on two major “battlegrounds” over which these right-wing associations contested over progressive education: social studies curriculum and sex education in the 1960s. Right-wing clusters protested social studies curriculum that supposedly promoted an anti-American attitude and emphasized a one world government, which eventually led them to reject a 1965 eighth grade history textbook, *Land of the Free: A History of the United States*. However, the Right’s campaign against *Land of the Free* ultimately failed, with city leaders and educators finding their anti-socialist views paranoid and pandering.²³ However, their luck shifted with sex education. The Radical right capitalized on the private nature of Orange County citizens by gearing their argument to increasingly personal issues. By

²² Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 103.

²³ Archie Shamblin, “CTA Pattern Repeated In Conservative Probes,” *The Register*, May 26, 1965, NewspaperArchive®, <https://newspaperarchive.com/santa-ana-register-may-26-1965-p-36/>.

delineating the inherent threat sex education posed to the individual—and their moral principles—they eventually gathered enough backing to effectively eradicate most forms of sex education in the county by 1969. While the Right did not immediately succeed with regards to removing progressive education, their claims of progressive education’s threat to personal morality and family life (not solely their anti-socialist rhetoric) crucially appealed to this County which prided itself on privatization and religious ethics.

I do not aim to narrate the rise of the Right in Orange County but to uncover the rhetoric they employed to eventually remove progressive education. In interpreting Orange County’s exceptional curriculum battle within the larger national context, I rely on Jonathan Zimmerman’s *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* and Andrew Hartman’s *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School*, which examine the consequences of right-wing

populism on progressive education from the 1940s to the 1970s.²⁴

Although some remnants of progressive education still exist in private and charter schools, this type of “revolution” ended.²⁵ *Whose America?* references conservatives’ stake in the “culture wars” from the 1950s to the 1980s, which took issue with education promoting more multiculturalism and “inclusion,” specifically in textbooks.²⁶

Progressive education held an important role in these wars, especially amongst topics of religious and social studies instruction which attempted to “demythologize” American history.²⁷ Using an epistemological and theoretical lens, Hartman argues that 1950s and 1960s schooling became a battleground of the Cold War, where in the face of communist threat, education became more conservative and anti-left.²⁸ Yet Zimmerman and Hartman maintain that progressive

²⁴ Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 6; Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 6.

²⁵ Tom Little and Katherine Ellison, *Loving Learning: How Progressive Education Can Save America’s Schools* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 27.

²⁶ Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁸ Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 6.

education's demise truly arose from matters of necessity. Critics like conservative intellectual Arthur Bestor found progressive education lacking: it could not adequately prepare children for instruction in science or math.²⁹ During a period when American supremacy relied on their domination over the USSR in the arms and space race, training the next generation for a technological and scientific world became of the utmost importance.³⁰ These sentiments reified in the 1958 National Education and Defense Act, which endorsed academic funding to enhance math and science courses in the public schools, and simultaneously defunded programs progressive education lauded (like vocational education).³¹ Addressed in Zimmerman's and Hartman's work, whilst the extreme right wing attacked progressive education, they did not solely cause its downfall. I intend to add to their discourse around rhetorical strategies utilized by conservative groups and the

²⁹ Arthur E. Bestor, "'Life-Adjustment' Education: A Critique," *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors (1915-1955)* 38, no. 3 (1952): 414, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40220906>.

³⁰ Ronald Lora, "Education: Schools as Crucible in Cold War America," in *Reshaping American Society and Institutions: 1945-1960* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 246.

³¹ Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 176.

subject of “culture wars” with regards to social studies and sex education. However, I wish to supply a much more localized lens in analyzing Orange County’s encounter with progressive education. I also disagree with Zimmerman’s and Hartman’s assertion that extreme Right views—which fixated on threats of internal communist subversion—did not gain much traction.³² These right-wing sentiments *did* find an audience in Orange County, due in part to the area’s commitment to privatization and Judeo-Christian tenets. I intend to analyze these features with aid from Lisa McGirr’s *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. In offering a comprehensive examination into the rise of the Right in Orange County, McGirr contributes the Right’s rise to intense grassroots mobilization in the 1960s and their proclivity for privatization (specifically around Goldwater’s 1964 republican nomination).³³ Her analysis of Orange County’s populist movements certainly informs my argument, but I do not plan to add to her analysis of how Orange County reinvented the nature of

³² Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 132.

³³ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 43; *Ibid*, 12.

Republicanism for the rest of the nation. Elaine Lewinnek's article "Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles" supplicates McGirr's enquiry into grassroots mobilization-particularly among white conservative women during the Cold War era, specifically with regards to progressive educational policies.³⁴ Although Orange County does receive mention, most of her argument confines itself to the theory of "historical fundamentalism" and women's role in this educational strife.³⁵ Lastly, Natalia Petrzela's *Classroom Wars: Language, Sex, and the Making of Modern Political Culture* specifically addresses Orange County's handling of sex education in the 1960s-1970s, and the region's unique commitment to morality and religious fundamentalism.³⁶ However, this only encompasses a portion of her analysis, for she places these events within the context of national trends. In determining how the right wing dissolved progressive

³⁴ Elaine Lewinnek, "Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles: *Land of the Free*, Public Memory, and the Rise of the New Right," *Pacific Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (February 2015): 48, <https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2015.84.1.48>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁶ Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, *Classroom Wars: Language, Sex, and the Making of Modern Political Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7.

education in Orange County, I aim to merge *Suburban Warriors*'s political study on Orange County's unique conservative situation, combined with Petrzela's, Zimmerman's, and Hartman's evaluation of progressive education's evolution during the Cold War.

Social Studies and *Land of the Free*

“A subversive monstrosity”: *Land of the Free*'s Introduction³⁷

“[America] offers the broadest educational opportunity, thus enabling every person to make the most of this ability. Along with this movement, past generations of Americans have handed on a set of institutions and ideals, inspiring and fortifying.”³⁸ This statement from *Land of the Free: A History of the United States* (1965) reifies progressive social studies' aim to inspire students to further social advancement. History classes sought to inform students of their civic

³⁷ Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 55.

³⁸ John W. Caughey, John Hope Franklin, and Ernest R. May, *Land of the Free: A History of the United States*, vol. 1 (Pasadena: Franklin Publications Inc., 1967), 618-619.

duty to better their environment through critically analyzing their country and its historical atrocities, injustices in federal and foreign policy, and economic discrepancies.³⁹ The 1939 California Teachers' Association manual outlines how to aid students to "[have] skill in finding...materials in the solution of social, civic, economic, and ethical problems faced in a democracy," all in an effort to promote good citizenship and civic responsibility.⁴⁰ Since the 1940s, social studies textbooks encountered assailment, with state and national organizations (usually Right-leaning) citing their alleged espousal of communist causes.⁴¹ These views emerged in Orange County, propagated by the Radical right over the American history textbook,

³⁹ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 170.

⁴⁰ California Teachers' Association, "Appreciating Democracy: A Unit of Work for Junior and Senior High Schools" (California Teachers' Association Southern Section, 1939), Pamphlet box of materials on the California Teachers Association: Box 1, Folder 27, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley; California Teachers' Association, "California Educational Policies and Plans Committee Consulting Groups: Discussion Outline 'Education and the Economic Success of the Individual,'" 1941, Pamphlet box of materials on the California Teachers Association: Box 2, Folder 5, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

⁴¹ Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 100.

Land of the Free. These groups amassed support by stoking fears that this version of progressive education fostered socialist tendencies.

Social studies reformation and history textbook alteration encompassed an important facet of Zimmerman’s “culture wars” of the 1960s and 1970s, when progressive educators sought to encourage a more “realistic” (and subsequently more unfavorable) depiction of the United States.⁴² In the 1960s, progressive educators responded to civil rights activism and a new interest in intersectional histories by rewriting American history textbooks in an increasingly multilateral way.⁴³ This effort to create a more inclusive, multicultural social studies pedagogy intensified when the California State Curriculum commission adopted new guidelines in 1964 to fashion a more accurate representation of minorities in textbooks.⁴⁴ These guidelines prompted UCLA Professor John Caughey, John Hope Franklin and Ernest May to author *Land of the Free* for eighth grade history classes.⁴⁵ Symptomatic

⁴² Ibid, 58.

⁴³ Ibid, 114.

⁴⁴ Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 57.

⁴⁵ Caughey, Franklin, and May, *Land of the Free*.

of progressive education ideologies, the textbook endeavored to incite critical thinking amongst its readers, specifically by delineating America's blunders and economic discrepancies:

A fifth of American families earn too little decent food, clothing and housing. In a nation so rich, such a condition should not exist. Nor should the cities where most Americans live be slum ridden and inadequate in transportation, schools and public service. And the countryside...is being stripped of its resources and beauty at a prodigal rate.⁴⁶

In addition to identifying America's "errors," *Land of the Free* also challenged students to undertake these "great responsibilities," naming the "unfinished business" of making "our cities better places in which to live, to make equal rights a reality, to bring the United States closer to...the Land of the Free."⁴⁷ However, progressive educators' bid to create awareness around America's societal ills sparked outrage amongst right-wing groups.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 1:619.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Radical right assault on social studies curriculum existed for many years; typically, the criticism revolved around history texts' leftist leanings.⁴⁸ In the 1930s, Harold Rugg (a prominent progressive educator) faced the wrath of organizations like the Sons of the American Revolution, who accused his textbooks of communist teachings.⁴⁹ In late 1940s California, the book *Building America* launched an avalanche of Radical right attacks. Anti-communist organizations like the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC) and the 1941 Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California launched investigations into textbook subversion and communist messages.⁵⁰ *Land of the Free* joined the long list of textbooks suspected of socialist leanings; in her extensive research, Lewinnek documents the demonstrative response *Land of the Free* generated in the suburban areas of southern California, directed by

⁴⁸ O.K. Armstrong, "Treason in the Textbooks," *The American Legion Magazine*, September 1940, 71, The American Legion Digital Archive.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Senate of the State of California, Senate Investigating Committee On Education, *Third Report Senate Investigation Committee on Education: Textbooks* by Goodwin J Knight, Harold J Powers, and Joseph A Beek, 1948, S. Rep., 115.

white-conservative women.⁵¹ Various Right ensembles (both in Orange County and statewide) attempted to halt this book's adoption, referencing its unfavorable-and thereby socialist-stance.⁵²

Despite the intense animosity, the vociferous right-wing opposition did not succeed in removing the text. Orange County citizens and educators observed the Right conducting "false charges of progressive education," and making outlandish accusations.⁵³ Anti-socialist sentiment did endure in this conservative Cold War area but failed to eradicate *Land of the Free*. From the book's publication in 1965 to its revision in the last months of 1966, Radical right wing followers in Orange County utilized an anti-socialist rhetoric to criticize the text, specifically referencing the un-patriotic attitude towards important American heroes and events, in addition to its

⁵¹ Lewinnek, "Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles," 52.

⁵² Helen Johnson, "County Board to Study Controversial Textbook: Petitions Call 'Land of Free' Unpatriotic, Request Its Removal," *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156041996/93FAB43011324714PQ/1?accountid=14496>.

⁵³ Jack Boettner, "Grand Jury Criticizes County School Board: Report Says Undue Times Spent on Local District Problems Such as Sex Education," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.

internationalist views by its endorsement of the ACLU, UN, and UNESCO.⁵⁴ In 1967, after an investigation into the complaints by the California Curriculum Commission, protestors resumed lambasting the text, despite its reinstatement.⁵⁵ But even after the book's stay of execution, right-wing assemblies in Orange County continued to demand its removal until 1969, naming its socialist propaganda, despite evoking criticism from other citizens and the California Teachers' Association, whom assailed the Right's presence in public education.⁵⁶ The story of *Land of the Free* from 1965 to 1966, its revision, and its debasing until 1969, exposes the Right's failure to destroy this form of progressive education. Fear of socialist subversion predominantly

⁵⁴ Lewinnek, "Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles," 52; Dick Turpin, "New History Textbook Gets Severe Criticism," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1966, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155442761/3BCC0EE6B20B4928P/48?acountid=14496>.

⁵⁵ "Foes May Take 'Land of the Free' Ruling to Court," *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1967, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155692264/833B36DC7C6F498DPQ/54?acountid=14496>.

⁵⁶ Jack McCurdy, "CTA Defends Textbook: Teachers Issue Rebuttal to 'Land of Free' Critics," *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155785705/C3D4333F5CE647B9PQ/52?acountid=14496>.

featured in Orange County, but the Right's allegations failed to convince the county of *Land of the Free's* innate threat. While progressive social studies lived on, quite a different result would emerge with progressive sex education.

1965-1966: The Right's Rhetorical Offense to *Land of the Free*

Condemnation of progressive education textbooks existed for many years; however, the American Legion defended the notion that *Land of the Free* “evoked more adverse criticism than almost any other text ever adopted for commissary use in the public schools.”⁵⁷ Echoing other right-wing complaints of that time, their “resolution” to remove *Land of the Free* documented the inherent “socialist” approach to American history.⁵⁸ These right-wing fears suited post-war Orange County, which intrinsically opposed left leaning politics that supported socialism or government interference. Spouting the necessity of a limited government, anti-communist organizations like the John Birch

⁵⁷ American Legion, “From Edward Sharkey to Mr. Max Rafferty,” September 18, 1968, Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:812, Box 31, Folder G, California State Archive.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Society oversaw an increase in membership, along with a host of other groups like the Americanism Education League, the Freedom Club, or the American Birthright Committee.⁵⁹ Events like Fred Schwarz's 1961 School of Anti-communism in Anaheim attracted thousands, which hosted talks on "Communism and Youth" and the "Communist Program for World Conquest".⁶⁰ One may elucidate the methods by which the Right attempted to dismantle progressive social studies curriculum through their attack on *Land of the Free* from 1965 to 1966. Specifically, they referred to *Land of the Free's* apparent socialist intention through its anti-American attitude and lauding of international

⁵⁹ Bill Becker, "Right-Wing Groups Multiplying Appeals in Southern California," *New York Times*, October 29, 1961, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/115274281/D365178ECEA94A0BPQ/37?accountid=14496>.

⁶⁰ "Freedom of Information Act Documents: CACC-Fred Schwarz-HQ-2," sec. Program for Orange County School of Anti-Communism, Online Archive, accessed September 18, 2018, https://archive.org/details/foia_CACC-Fred_Schwarz-HQ-2?q=Orange+County+School+for+Anti-Communists; "Anti-Red Meets Drawing Big County Crowds," *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1961, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/167833549/82A80A3329B04563PQ/36?accountid=14496>.

super governments; these subjects proved sensitive for the already conservative Orange County.

Land of the Free faced the firing squad in the late 1960s, accused of “anti-American” and communist principles; a common tactic utilized by right-wing groups with previous social studies textbooks. In 1949, HUAC’s “100 Things You Should Know about Communism: Communism in Education” proclaimed that any form of education that did not portray America as “the light and hope of the world” contained communist propaganda.⁶¹ Victim to a Catch 22, how could progressive educators instruct students on America’s faults-like slavery or lynching- in a positive portrayal? Lewinnek defines this rhetoric as “historic fundamentalism”: a theory, endorsed by many suburbanites, that history contains “sacred” texts, and that alternative historical interpretations are “blasphemous.”⁶² Acting within the theory of historic fundamentalism, some Orange County parents utilized the

⁶¹ U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, *100 Things You Should Know about Communism Series* (Washington, 1949), 62, <http://archive.org/details/100thingsyoushou1949unit>.

⁶² Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 50.

National Anti-Communist League of America's 1961 Elementary Textbook Evaluation Guide: mirroring HUAC, it presented parents with a list of negative words and phrases, which if written in the text, revealed the textbook's communist intentions (words like "slavery," "racial minority," "upper class," and "welfare").⁶³ Following HUAC's reasoning, other extreme organizations linked the connection with anti-American attitudes to communist beliefs; "slanting" the textbooks to produce a "false history" supposedly revealed a Marxist substructure.⁶⁴ Such sentiment surfaced in the Orange County *Land of the Free* debate, with parents declaring the text "lacked historical fact" and "[denies] our great American heritage."⁶⁵ At school board meetings, right-wing crowds explained how the book essentially debased American heritage

⁶³ National Anti-Communist League of America, "Elementary Textbook Evaluation Guide" (National Anti-Communist League of America, 1961), 2–15, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 4, Orange County Archives.

⁶⁴ "A Scheme for Brainwashing," *Fullerton News Tribune*, October 18, 1965, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 5, Orange County Archives.

⁶⁵ "Court Dismisses Downey Suit on Controversial History Book," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155994523/A640989D0C124B51PQ/49?aaccountid=14496>.

by criticizing past historical events.⁶⁶ In 1966, the Pro American Group led by Mildred Hyatt asserted that the text demeaned the significance of the Declaration of Independence (referencing how the text remarks that “the next twenty-seven paragraphs [of the Declaration]...were specific complaints against the tyranny of George III. Some were exaggerations; some are not quite fair...”).⁶⁷ The group also professed that the text “belittled” various American heroes (referencing how the text reminds readers that Paul Revere rode the shortest route and other riders also informed of British invasion).⁶⁸ In 1966 the Orange County Land of the Free Protestors, led by Rose Martin, stormed board meetings with a petition of 3,000 signatures, alleging that the book “project[ed] negative thought models and promot[ed] propaganda alien

⁶⁶ “Text Trouble Cited by History Author,” *Orange County Register*, October 11, 1962, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 4, Orange County Archives.

⁶⁷ Caughey, Franklin, and May, *Land of the Free*, 1:130; Maury Beam, “‘Land of Free’ Textbook Blasted by Pro America Group,” *The Register*, June 14, 1966, NewspaperArchive®, <https://newspaperarchive.com/santa-ana-register-jun-14-1966-p-3/>.

⁶⁸ Caughey, Franklin, and May, *Land of the Free*, 1:134; Beam, “‘Land of Free’ Textbook Blasted by Pro America Group.”

to the American ideal.”⁶⁹ Numerous right-wing groups professed that *Land of the Free* established a socialist viewpoint due to its excess of historical distortions and its failure to foster patriotism.⁷⁰

According to the Orange County Right, *Land of the Free*'s socialist background evidently derived from its anti-American prose in addition to its more blatant endorsement of big government and internationalism. Anti-internationalist views became a major point of contention amongst right wingers since the 1950s, particularly when pitted against progressive education's commitment to group cooperation.⁷¹ Dewey proposed that progressive education should harmonize the individual with the “real-world” to stimulate cooperation amongst fellow men.⁷² Practically, this translated into classroom

⁶⁹ Helen Johnson, “Round 4 Coming Up for ‘Land of the Free’: Board Agrees to Hear Further Discussion in Textbook Dispute at Oct. 10 Meeting,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155928980/F50BFB6B012848E7PQ/59?aaccountid=14496>.

⁷⁰ Alice Pilson, 1965, Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:842, Box 4, Folder H California State Archive.

⁷¹ Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 87.

⁷² Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 54.

settings which stressed effective means of class discussion and an internationalist mindset, alluded to in *Land of the Free*.⁷³ For example, the text resolved that “UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] has helped define the standards of freedom and fairness toward which all nation ought to strive. Many other UN agencies have done important work.”⁷⁴ In 1965 and 1966, some of the aforementioned groups referenced *Land of the Free*’s celebration of the UN and the post-WWII commitment to a more interconnected world, even when the text noted the UN’s goal to fight the common enemy of communism.⁷⁵ The United States National Commission for UNESCO dismissed John Birch Society allegations that California textbooks supported a one world mindset, but right-wing bands continued to unravel *Land of the Free*’s celebration of an

⁷³ California Teachers’ Association, “Suggestions for Associates of the California Educational Policies and Plans Committee,” October 1940, Pamphlet box of materials on the California Teachers Association: Box 2, Folder 7, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

⁷⁴ Caughey, Franklin, and May, *Land of the Free*, 1:592.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 1:595; *Ibid*, 1:619.

internationalist socialist movement.⁷⁶ America's Future Textbook Evaluation Committee in Orange County proclaimed that the book praised the UN, "[going] so far as to say that eventually the U.N. will lead to a World State."⁷⁷ Orange County parents like Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Engle expressed their concern over the "socialist" slant of the textbook, in addition to citizen Alice Pilson's belief that the textbook praised "'socialistic projects'" and "'The People's World.'"⁷⁸ This fear of a socialist "international government" catered to Orange County's well established fear of federal control. A dedication to privatization remained a mainstay of Orange County, with the establishment of organizations like the California Free Enterprise Association, founded by conservative businessman Walter Knott, who championed private enterprise and less government regulation in the economy. In Orange

⁷⁶ Allan Nelson, "The United States National Commission for UNESCO to Dr. Rafferty," October 26, 1964, Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:841, Box 33, Folder G, California State Archive.

⁷⁷ "Evaluation Panel Rejects Fourth of School Textbooks," *Orange County Register*, June 22, 1964, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 5, Orange County Archives.

⁷⁸ Pilson, 1965; Mr. and Mrs. Bruce D. Engle, 1966, Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:842, Box 33, Folder H, California State Archive.

County, school districts like that of Anaheim and Newport already publicized their refusal to adopt UNESCO educational guidelines, believing this demonstrated allegiance to a great socialist government; evidently swearing “loyalty to a “godless” world government would result in national suicide.”⁷⁹ Radical rightists specifically indicated *Land of the Free*’s appraisal of world governments, thereby highlighting social studies’ commitment to a “socialist, one-world viewpoint”.⁸⁰

In 1965 and 1966, right-wing organizations weaponized an anti-socialist position to allege that *Land of the Free* contained anti-Americanism and a dedication to a “one-world government”.⁸¹ Both of

⁷⁹ Dr. Terrell L. Root, “Comments on the UNESCO Convention and Recommendation on Discrimination Against Education Before Newport Harbor Elementary School Board,” n.d., Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 4, Orange County Archives; Anaheim City School District Board of Education, “Resolution of the Board of Education: Anaheim City Elementary School District,” June 12, 1962, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 4, Orange County Archives.

⁸⁰ “An Apathetic Approach,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156379392/F15FA7FEB5EE4BFEPQ/40?accountid=14496>.

⁸¹ McCurdy, “CTA Defends Textbook: Teachers Issue Rebuttal to ‘Land of Free’ Critics.”

these arguments verified *Land of the Free*'s and progressive education's socialist undertones which could "'brainwash"' children.⁸² Yet the arguments did receive acknowledgement and encouraged the State Curriculum Commission to revise the text.

A Massive Overhaul: The Revision of *Land of the Free*, January 1967 From 1965 to 1966, the Orange County right wing attempted to expose *Land of the Free*'s socialist intentions to justify its removal. But not the only objectors, a state "Land-of-the-Free Committee" gathered various complaints from Californians to produce "Critical Appraisal of *Land of the Free*," which accused the book of "destroy[ing] pride in America's past" and "indoctrinat[ing] toward communism."⁸³ This encouraged the State Curriculum Commission to launch a panel of historians (led by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Max Rafferty) to evaluate possible changes and corrections to the

⁸² "A Scheme for Brainwashing."

⁸³ Land-of-the-free Committee, 8; Land-of-the-free Committee, "Critical Appraisal of 'Land of the Free' (Basic Eight Grade History Textbook)," 1966, 1, Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:842, Box 32, Folder A, California State Archive.

text.⁸⁴ Collecting letters and protests from individuals, they produced “Criticisms of the *Land of the Free*,” where they noted citizens’ concerns over a lack of patriotism and leftist leaning language.⁸⁵ Almost 10,000 people, including teachers and historians, assessed *Land of the Free* and sent their revisions to Dr. Russel Parks of the State Curriculum Commission (also the Superintendent of the Fullerton Elementary School District in Orange County). In January of 1967, the State Curriculum commission adopted the text, decreeing its accuracy.⁸⁶ The second edition of *Land of the Free* came into use, distributed by the California Curriculum Commission, to all of California’s eighth graders.⁸⁷ Now a supplementary text, school districts could decide whether to employ the book or not; according to

⁸⁴ Max Rafferty, “To Dr. Dumke from Max Rafferty,” August 1, 1966, Department of Education, Max Rafferty, F3752:842, Box 33, Folder H, California State Archive.

⁸⁵ John W. Caughey, John Hope Franklin, and Ernest R. May, “Criticisms of Land of the Free” (Bureau of Textbooks and Publications Distribution California State Department of Education, July 25, 1966), Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:842, Box 32, Folder B, California State Archive.

⁸⁶ Mrs. Thompson Rolland, “Readers’ Forum,” *Pasadena Star News*, January 18, 1967, Newspaper Archive®, <https://newspaperarchive.com/star-news-jan-18-1967-p-12/>.

⁸⁷ Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 59.

Raffety “the book now contain[ed] some of the most scathing denunciations of communism [he] had ever seen.”⁸⁸

But despite the state’s approval of the text, the Radical Right continued to demand the book’s removal. Lewinnek almost applauds these right-wing organizations’ ability to keep “fighting”.⁸⁹ Even with the book’s adoption, from 1967 to 1969, they continued to protest against this socialist text, threatening legal action and demanding answers from the various school boards. However, others doubted the veracity of their contentions. Unlike the issue of sex education, these arguments failed to gain enough validation, almost becoming laughable in the eyes of other Orange Countians.

⁸⁸ “Controversial 8th Grade Text Gets Final Ok,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1967, ProQuest Historical Newspaper; Helen Johnson, “Disputed Text in, but Use Up to School Districts,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1967, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155661279/B78F143BE6274D99PQ/50?accountid=14496>.

⁸⁹ Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 77.

1967-1969: “No Amount of Minor Revisions Could Alter Its

Basically Subversive Trend”⁹⁰ In the post-revision years, *Land of the Free* still faced intense accusations from the Right end of the political spectrum. In 1968, the Orange County Board of Education decided to launch a study about the impact of the *Land of the Free* on the population, at the behest of the rancorous Land of the Free Protestors who packed the local school board meetings.⁹¹ Particular school districts, like Downey, protested the fact that the state forced schools to adopt a “politically slanted” textbook, and threatened a lawsuit.⁹² Publius & Associates of Pasadena distributed the film “Education or Indoctrination” to school districts and parents, which erroneously reported that the *Land of the Free* sought to put the “[communist] party line in textbooks” in a “diabolic campaign to capture the minds of the American youth.”⁹³ School boards and parents did listen to the Right’s

⁹⁰ “Board to Seek Study on ‘Land of Free,’” *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156106518/5C0E60C7727E4A85PQ/1?acountid=14496>.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² “Foes May Take ‘Land of the Free’ Ruling to Court.”

⁹³ Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 75.

claims, but many rejected their anti-socialist paranoia, declaring that “most of the critics showed a willingness to use obvious forms of propaganda.”⁹⁴

The fear of subversion did not convince the entire county of *Land of the Free*'s socialist objectives.⁹⁵ The Radical right and ultra-conservatives of Orange County encountered a losing battle with social studies curriculum. A July 1969 grand jury found the Orange County Board of Education erroneously conducted a “barbershop poll” on *Land of the Free*, only acting in the interests of a few right-wing board members.⁹⁶ In 1968, the superior court dismissed the Downey Board of Education's argument that they could ban *Land of the Free* from

⁹⁴ David Shaw, “County School Friction Laid to Political Stress,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156097604/CAE2BFF183AB4BE6PQ/3?acountid=14496>; McCurdy, “CTA Defends Textbook: Teachers Issue Rebuttal to ‘Land of Free’ Critics.”

⁹⁵ Shaw, “County School Friction Laid to Political Stress.”

⁹⁶ Jack Buettner, “Grand Jury Criticizes County School Board,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156291314/EE3E3FCC49C64ABDPQ/9?acountid=14496>.

classrooms due to its anti-American and communist nature.⁹⁷ Some citizens criticized the Right opposition, and the Orange County Board of Education's duplicity in providing the Right a platform to spout their ideas.⁹⁸ Furthermore, in 1968, the California Teachers' Association actually distributed a pamphlet to teachers ("*Land of the Free* and its Critics") so they could properly rebuke right winger's allegations. It professed that Right complaints bore racist ideologies, and that most who criticized the book failed to actually "read the text itself".⁹⁹ The extreme Right undoubtedly caused a stir, but their effort to stamp out progressive education faced hardships and opposition.¹⁰⁰

Lost the Battle, But Won the War The Right's attempt to eradicate the progressive *Land of the Free*-stretching from 1965 to 1967-ultimately failed. *Land of the Free* reinforced progressive education's aim of asking children to critically assess the faults of their society, like

⁹⁷ "Court Dismisses Downey Suit on Controversial History Book."

⁹⁸ Shaw, "County School Friction Laid to Political Stress."

⁹⁹ McCurdy, "CTA Defends Textbook: Teachers Issue Rebuttal to 'Land of Free' Critics."

¹⁰⁰ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 12.

the poor treatment of immigrants in the 1920s, or Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb.¹⁰¹ This led right wingers to believe that this new form of historical teaching damaged American patriotism and encouraged socialist attitudes.¹⁰² From its publication in 1965 to 1966, right wingers employed well known rhetoric to expose its socialist conspiracy, referencing its anti-American expressionism and its idolization of an internationalist world view. After state revisions in 1967, various organizations resumed protesting the book's adoption, which came to no avail, for the book remained in usage. Whilst this anti-socialist diatribe faced criticism and failed to rid of this specific feature of progressive education, a new challenger emerged. In the late 1960s the Orange County Right now attacked progressive sex education, which proved a much more private-and therefore more sensitive-topic amongst the population. Sex education struck a deeper chord in Orange County, and its commitment to family values and

¹⁰¹ Caughey, Franklin, and May, 1:591; Ibid, 1:419.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Christian ethics; a definite advantage for the right wing's assault against progressive education.

Sex Education

Sex Education: Orange County and Anaheim FLSE Program In 1968, Superintendent of the Anaheim School District Paul Cook received a clandestine phone message from a concerned citizen: "The persons responsible for introducing this sex program into the schools are sadists and sex perverts and should be lined up against a stone wall and shot."¹⁰³ This radical viewpoint exemplifies Orange County's right-wing populism which predicated itself on defending the notions of family, nation, and God.¹⁰⁴ In the late 1960s, the battle of sex education in Orange County-specifically in Anaheim-demonstrated a Radical right victory over progressive education programs. By arguing that this

¹⁰³ Natalia Mehlman, "Sex Ed... and the Reds? Reconsidering the Anaheim Battle over Sex Education, 1962-1969," *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2007): 203.

¹⁰⁴ Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 187.

form of progressive education posed a direct threat to the personal life of the individual (and children), the right wing gained much more reception in this matter than with *Land of the Free*.

Beginning in the 1940s, progressive sex education sought to foster social improvement by promoting independent thinking, economic efficiency, and personal development.¹⁰⁵ Namely, through a 1950s educational method called “Life-Adjustment.” The Federal Security Agency Office of Education outlined Life Adjustment’s purpose to “equip all America youth to live democratically with satisfaction to themselves and profit to society as home members, workers, and citizens.”¹⁰⁶ The “Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth” 1951 instructor materials outlined various programs to aid with the ethical, moral, and mental health of the child; specifically, with a stress on home and family life, which encompassed sex education.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Little and Ellison, *Loving Learning: How Progressive Education Can Save America’s Schools*, 157; Carbone, *The Social and Educational Thought of Harold Rugg*, 134.

¹⁰⁶ Federal Security Agency: Office of Education, “Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth. Bulletin 1951, No.2.” (United States Government Printing Office, 1951), 9, ED543614, ERIC, http://archive.org/details/ERIC_ED543614.

¹⁰⁷ Federal Security Agency: Office of Education, 10.

Sex education constituted a significant proportion of Life Adjustment.¹⁰⁸ This pedagogy also described sex education in terms of promoting a strong family structure, asking students to “appreciate family life and make it successful” by understanding the duties of a husband and wife through home-economic and biology classes.¹⁰⁹ In 1964, the more professional Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) advocated for sex education for all children.¹¹⁰ Their teacher study guides fixated upon helping children understand the moral gravity of sex education, but extolled Life Adjustment’s dedication to the role of the family and society.¹¹¹

Historian Natalia Petrzela in *Classroom Wars* defines California’s important role in setting the standards of sex education

¹⁰⁸ Little and Ellison, *Loving Learning: How Progressive Education Can Save America’s Schools*, 157; Federal Security Agency: Office of Education, “Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth. Bulletin 1951, No.2.,” 61.

¹⁰⁹ Federal Security Agency: Office of Education, 61.

¹¹⁰ Harold I. Lief M.D., *Letter to New Members*, 1970, http://archive.org/details/TNM_SIECUS_sex_information_and_education_council_20180308_0243.

¹¹¹ Lester Allen Kirkendall, “SIECUS Study Guide No. 1: Sex Education” (New York, Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S., 1970), 11, http://archive.org/details/SexEducation_667.

through the country.¹¹² In Anaheim, progressive curriculum leaders Paul Cook, and nurse Sally Williams took it upon themselves to introduce the trend setting Family Life Sex Education courses (FLSE) into the K-12 schools. Inaugurated in 1965, this program consisted of a four-and-a-half-week-long course (at alternating grade levels), set up in a Socratic style structure, where students could ask almost any question of the teacher; subjects included reproduction, pregnancy, social adjustment and family structure.¹¹³ A *Los Angeles Times* student questionnaire revealed that most participants appreciated the program and found it beneficial, since the Anaheim course covered everything from “social and cultural problems of adolescence... [to] family structure, dating, moral conduct, and problem solving.”¹¹⁴ At the start of the program, almost 92% of Anaheim parents approved of it, with

¹¹² Petrzela, *Classroom Wars*, 129.

¹¹³ Mary Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 24–25; Herman Wong, “Source of Controversy: Sex Education in Anaheim: View From the Classroom,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 8, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156201402/48C215A70DB541F6PQ/46?accountid=14496>; Mehlman, “Sex Ed... and the Reds?,” 213.

¹¹⁴ Wong, “Source of Controversy.”

less than 1% opting to remove their children from the program.¹¹⁵ The enrolled students proclaimed their appreciation of the teacher's candor, attempting to dispel the myth that they talked about "'dirty'" subjects.¹¹⁶ A few years after the introduction of Anaheim's FLSE classes, other Orange County school districts began to enact similar curricula, from Fullerton, to Huntington Beach, to Placentia.¹¹⁷

Similar to social studies curriculum, this version of progressive education came under heavy fire. Reeling from Barry Goldwater's defeat in 1964, Petrzela argues that Orange County Rightist set their sights on a new target: that of sex education.¹¹⁸ McGirr supports this conclusion, determining that schools now became the place of political contests, attacked by the Right due to their evident

¹¹⁵ Steve Emmons, "Issue of Sex Education Stalks School Elections: Controversy Prompts Power Struggle in Orange and Tustin: Top Issue in Anaheim," *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper; Vi Smith, "Sex Education Gains Acceptance in County," *Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/155961182/1D152F6C9FF4375PQ/44?accountid=14496>.

¹¹⁶ Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 70.

¹¹⁷ Smith, "Sex Education Gains Acceptance in County."

¹¹⁸ Petrzela, *Classroom Wars*, 145.

socialist background and debauchery. Zimmerman and Petrzela chronicle the various communist accusations hurled against national sex education programs but fail to realize why Orange County sex education faltered, despite sex education's survival in the rest of the nation. With an urge to re-examine morality, Orange County right wingers did act within the context of anti-communist rhetoric, but now pursued a very personal affair: that of religion and family.¹¹⁹ This proved effective in Orange County. The Post-war period saw an influx of white individuals (typically from the Midwest) lured by promises of jobs and housing. These individuals also brought their religion to Orange County, creating a landscape dotted with Protestant and Catholic churches (a combined 53.4% of the whole population).¹²⁰ In a district where the primary newspaper (the *Santa Ana/Orange County Register*) extolled the importance of God and the ten commandments in daily life, the Radical right could realistically appeal to an already

¹¹⁹ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 95.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 34; Kling, Olin, and Poster, *Post-Suburban California*, fig. 7.2.

Judeo-Christian population.¹²¹ McGirr argues that the particular religious character would later contribute to Orange County's important role in the Silent and Moral Majority in the 1970s and 1980s. The Christian Anti-Communist Crusade and the Mothers Organized for Moral Stability enticed the religious factions of the county, decreeing that communism proved antithetical to Christianity and God.¹²² Even though a 1969 poll found that 71% of all Americans permitted this form of education, particular right-wing actors-among them the John Birch Society and the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade-advocated the view that sex education gave rise to an "immoral state."¹²³ With the lethal combination of God, family, and country, radical opponents of sex education specifically appealed to Orange County citizens'

¹²¹ "Editorial Page," *The Register*, January 18, 1966, NewspaperArchive®, <https://newspaperarchive.com/santa-ana-register-jan-18-1966-p-16/>.

¹²² "Freedom of Information Act Documents: CACC-Fred Schwarz-HQ-2," pt. Dr. Fred Schwarz Testimony to the United State House Committee on Un-American Activities, May 29, 1957, Online Archive, accessed September 18, 2018, https://archive.org/details/foia_CACC-Fred_Schwarz-HQ-2?q=Orange+County+School+for+Anti-Communists.

¹²³ Mrs. Charles Howe, "Mrs. Charles Howe to Governor Ronald Reagan," April 30, 1969, Department of Education, Max Raffety F3752: 773, Box 30, Folder H, California State Archive.

personal matters which encouraged the dismantling of progressive sex education by 1970.¹²⁴

Through stitching together works like Petrzela's studies on Orange County's sex education, a plethora of newspaper reports, and journalist Mary Breasted's on the ground reporting on the fall of sex education in 1960s Anaheim (*Oh! Sex Education*) presents a clear narrative of this second battle over progressive education curriculum. Akin to the social studies controversy with *Land of the Free*, Orange County right-wing groups cited sex education's promotion of federal control and socialist leanings. Yet the fight against sex education succeeded where the one against *Land of the Free* faltered. Taking a much more personal approach, the Orange County Right also utilized Orange County's commitment to Christian morality by charging that sex education violated the privacy of family affairs and religious virtue. From 1965 to 1968, right wingers condemned this form of education in both school board meetings and public settings, referencing both

¹²⁴ Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 79.

socialist subversion and immoral teaching.¹²⁵ In 1969, these extreme views culminated in the Spring school board elections, where these organizations successfully placed candidates on the school boards, campaigning on the promise to preserve children's morality.¹²⁶ From 1969 to 1970, sex education programs, like those in Anaheim, were either outright removed or rendered weak and ineffective at the behest of the newly elected school board.¹²⁷ In the latter half of 1960s, the Radical right efficaciously removed an important part of progressive education curriculum. The extremists actually won the day, due in part to their claims of socialist control and their reiteration that sex education posed a threat to citizens' private lives and morality.

¹²⁵ Helen Johnson, "School Official Split on 2 Issues in Sex Hearings," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156086511/EE3E3FCC49C64ABDPQ/21?accountid=14496>.

¹²⁶ Herman Wong, "Sex Education Fight Comes to a Boil Again in Anaheim," *Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156173752/C44EF060863F447FPQ/19?accountid=14496>.

¹²⁷ Mehlman, "Sex Ed... and the Reds?," 227.

1965-1968: The Threat of Federal Control with a Virtuous Twist

With *Land of the Free* dissolving into the background, the contentious battle of sex education took its place. Orange County hosted a unique series of events in which these radical criticisms of progressive education attracted a sizable audience and shattered a prominent aspect of this pedagogy; a feat not necessarily accomplished in the rest of the county. But unlike the social studies debacle, the right wing successfully dealt a crippling blow to this version of progressive education by indicating how it personally violates the student and the family.¹²⁸ Critics of the right wing perceived the much more personalized nature of this attack, noting that when a group like the John Birch society “seize [on] the emotional sex issue, they automatically get a larger audience for their views.”¹²⁹ With fears of communist subversion dwindling, citizens saw that the Right “needed

¹²⁸ Wong, “Source of Controversy: Sex Education in Anaheim: View From the Classroom.”

¹²⁹ Douglas Robinson, “Sex Education Battles Splitting Many Communities Across U.S.,” *New York Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, accessed June 24, 2018, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156431542/79EC230ECB88491APQ/31?acountid=14496>.

a new target:” sex education.¹³⁰ From the mid 1960s (when Anaheim started its FLSE program in 1965) until the school board elections of 1969, the Radical right maintained that like *Land of the Free*, Life Adjustment’s sex education promoted socialist tendencies through federal interference. However, their victory emerged from their assertion that sex education successfully violated the private sphere of the home by “pitt[ing] students against parents” and sponsored notions of immorality.¹³¹ Facing opposition, these organizations evoked interests amongst the Orange County population, intimidating progressive education proponents.

Similar to their indictments against *Land of the Free*, Radical right groups strove to expose a socialist underbelly to the sex education programs, mainly by highlighting SIECUS’s “communistic” intentions and abuse of federal power. This mission came under the purview of a

¹³⁰ Sharon E. Fay, “Immaturity in Sex Education Scored,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.

¹³¹ Kenneth Lamott, “Max Rafferty Is Not a Mad Messiah of the Right-He Is More Disturbing Than That,” *New York Times*, September 1, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspaper.

belligerent organization called the California Citizen's Committee (CCC), led by Jim Townsend. A vitriolic individual, Townsend argued that SIECUS deliberately wanted to "communize" students, and to "make the children 'loyal to the world, not to the United States'." Journalist Mary Breasted recorded various 1960s Anaheim School Board meetings in which the CCC stormed in, accusing educators of employing SIECUS materials that promoted a socialist outlook.¹³² Ironically, board members like Royal Marten pointed out that Anaheim didn't exclusively utilize the SIECUS materials, but referred to them for supplementary purposes.¹³³ With the CCC, other organizations concluded that SIECUS violated the parents' right of telling their children about sex. Therefore, it signified both a federal institution overstepping its boundaries while simultaneously promoting their own forms of ideology.¹³⁴ Undoubtedly, a sign of a socialist government. In the words of Huntington Beach school trustee Matthew Weyuker, "sex education belongs in the home and church, where a family's own

¹³² Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 32.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 39.

¹³⁴ McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 230.

morals can be taught...how do we know whose morals are being taught in the classroom?"¹³⁵ Pro-Birch, right-wing journalists Sam Campbell and John Steinbacher of the *Anaheim Bulletin* published scathing attacks on sex education that mirrored this sentiment: "My conviction is that when you talk about sex instruction, you are talking about the family. When you are talking about the family, you are talking about the home. When you are talking about the home, you are talking about the country."¹³⁶ Campbell's delineation of these particular spheres speaks to his conviction that the most private sector-the family-anchors the entire fate of the nation. But with the introduction of SIECUS materials, other parents of the late 1960s believed that this federal organization now put the power of teaching sex (a previously private and family affair) into the hands of the state funded public-school

¹³⁵ Herman Wong, "Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat," *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156434613/EE3E3FCC49C64ABDPQ/23?accountid=14496>.

¹³⁶ Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 137.

teachers, thereby usurping the role of the private household.¹³⁷ This action represented a socialist government's invasion of the American people's most protected domain.

Hartman concluded that in the anxious Cold War America, issues of morality became a common topic in education reformation, with intellectuals stating that "American education can contribute to a moral, intellectual, and spiritual revolution."¹³⁸ In addition to anti-socialist rhetoric, the key to this anti-progressive education argument lied in its targeting of a very personal and private matter; specifically the topic of Christian virtue and student morality.¹³⁹ Radical right groups cited sex education's failure to properly instruct students on true morality and Christian matters.¹⁴⁰ With citizens Bob Bennet and Elinor

¹³⁷ Linda Mathews, "Battle Lines Being Drawn Over Sex Education," *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156062403/78917C7BB8F24608PQ/28?acountid=14496>.

¹³⁸ Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 120.

¹³⁹ Petrzela, *Classroom Wars*, 145–46.

¹⁴⁰ Gordon V. Drake, *Is the Schoolhouse the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Christian Crusade Publications, 1968), 6–20, <http://archive.org/details/isschoolhousepro00drak>.

Elder of Orange County writing to the California Superintendent of Public Instruction in the late 1960s, continuously referencing their “Christian consciousness” and the cruciality of the church in the educational process, the threat to Christian virtue clearly resonated in the very Protestant and Catholic Orange County.¹⁴¹ From her reporting at Anaheim Board meetings, Breasted observed how the CCC and Anaheim Antis (another Radical right groups) based many of their pro-religion arguments on the pamphlet “Is the Schoolhouse the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?” written by Gordon Drake of the Christian Crusade.¹⁴² Distributed to citizens through door to door campaigns and at board meetings, this pamphlet banked on citizen’s religious commitment, by alleging that sex education proved antithetical to any religious teachings, and drove a wedge between the family, school, and

¹⁴¹ Elinor Elder, “From Miss Elinor L. Elder to Max Rafferty,” October 16, 1970, Department of Education, Max Rafferty F3752: 773, Box 30, Folder E, California State Archive; Bob Bennet, “To Dr. Max Rafferty from Bob Bennet,” October 4, 1970, Department of Education, Max Rafferty Files, F3752:746, Box 35, Folder B, California State Archive.

¹⁴² Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 72.

church.¹⁴³ Paradoxically, 1964 SIECUS president Mary Calderone noted that the public school and church should work together to properly instruct sex education, not against one another.¹⁴⁴ Regardless, right-wing tactics proved effective, convincing citizens that these programs “[were] Godless.”¹⁴⁵ In addition to the religious affront, the Antis followed the pamphlet’s affirmation that SIECUS material disseminated pornography and smut, which would spoil the virtuous nature of the student.¹⁴⁶ Besides voicing their concerns at board meetings, Mrs. Pipping, Ms. Howe, and Mrs. Burns of the Antis hosted workshops in 1968 on the depraved nature of sex education, with the permission of the Orange County Board of Education.¹⁴⁷ They advocated Drake’s conviction that sex education taught students corrupt lessons, with their graphic and explicit language replacing the

¹⁴³ Mathews, “Battle Lines Being Drawn Over Sex Education.”; Drake, *Is the Schoolhouse the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?*, 20.

¹⁴⁴ Mary S. Calderone, “Sex Education and the Roles of School and Church,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 376, no. 1 (March 1968): 53–60, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271626837600106>.

¹⁴⁵ Wong, “Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat.”

¹⁴⁶ Drake, *Is the Schoolhouse the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?*, 26.

¹⁴⁷ Petrzela, *Classroom Wars*, 141; Johnson, “School Officials Split on 2 Issues in Sex Hearings.”

respectable information about sex children would receive from their parents.¹⁴⁸ The program apparently “encouraged children to go out and experience sex [and] stimulat[ed] them erotically” (referencing FLSE’s instruction in basic sexual biological functions of the human body).¹⁴⁹ Even with the open discussion structure of the FLSE course, many students ironically noted that the classes proved “boring,” since the “dirty talk” lost its taboo identity.¹⁵⁰ Far from promoting immorality, FLSE and SIECUS teaching materials spend an inordinate amount of time discussing how to improve family life and social morality, instructing students that sex education should “provide an appreciation of the positive satisfaction that wholesome human relations can bring in both individual and family living.”¹⁵¹ But the right-wing rhetoric from the CCC and Antis resonated among Orange County in the late 1960; the Anti’s workshops in 1968 drew in curious participants, and parents

¹⁴⁸ Wong, “Source of Controversy: Sex Education in Anaheim: View from the Classroom.”

¹⁴⁹ Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 100.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 70; Wong, “Source of Controversy: Sex Education in Anaheim: View From the Classroom.”

¹⁵¹ Kirkendall, “SIECUS Study Guide No. 1: Sex Education.”; Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 111.

turned out in droves to hear them and the CCC speak at board meetings.¹⁵²

However, these right-wing views did not immediately convince the entire county of Life Adjustment's inherent danger. Similar to the social studies arguments, sex education critics also encountered opposition from 1965 to 1969. At board meetings, parents and students spoke up to affirm that the classes did not violate any immoral acts and did not contain inappropriate material.¹⁵³ Teenagers enrolled in the courses refuted the Antis and Townsend, willing to offer their support of this progressive policy and to dispel harmful rumors.¹⁵⁴ *The Los Angeles Times* followed other's outrage at the Orange County Board of Education's permission to give these "extremists" a voice in their board meetings.¹⁵⁵ The same 1969 jury that found the Orange County Board of Education paid too much credence to the *Land of the*

¹⁵² "An Apathetic Approach.;" Mehlman, "Sex Ed... and the Reds?," 226; Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 170.

¹⁵³ Wong, "Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat."

¹⁵⁴ Mehlman, "Sex Ed... and the Reds?," 230.

¹⁵⁵ Shaw, "County School Friction Laid to Political Stress."

Free uprising also found that the sex education hearings “got out of hand” at the bequest of pro-Bircher school board trustee Dale Rallison.¹⁵⁶ However, Petrzela argues the Radical right’s persistence, organization, and their commitment to “personal issues” led to a breakdown in unity amongst the more liberal factions in society.¹⁵⁷ Despite this “vocal, organized minority [that] got in the way,” the *LA Times* conducted a survey of 30 districts, where anonymous proponents of sex education came to the same conclusion: resistance proved futile.¹⁵⁸ In an interview with Breasted, Anaheim FLSE founder Paul Cook explained that the Radical right groups would downgrade parents who defended sex-education, making them “wild with fear, shame, embarrassment, and hostility.”¹⁵⁹ Proponents found it more productive to tread lightly around the subject of sex education, fearful the topic could ignite right-wing fury.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Boettner, “Grand Jury Criticizes County School Board: Report Says Undue Times Spent on Local District Problems Such as Sex Education.”

¹⁵⁷ Mehlman, “Sex Ed... and the Reds?,” 214.

¹⁵⁸ “An Apathetic Approach.”; Wong, “Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat.”

¹⁵⁹ Breasted, *Oh! Sex Education!*, 124.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

While advocates of *Land of the Free* found the Right's arguments ridiculous and ineffective, the rhetoric that addressed anti-socialism and the confidential matter of family structure and morality led to "an organized protest by a minority of parents [that was] spectacularly successful in reversing sex education expansion."¹⁶¹ This would prompt the destruction of this mode of Life Adjustment, signaling the eventual downfall of progressive education in Orange County.

The Pivotal Elections: Spring and Summer 1969 School board elections—designed to remain bipartisan—became a hotspot for right-wing dispute over progressive sex education.¹⁶² Even though the conservative *Orange County Register* still reported on the necessity of teaching sex education, Radical right groups became "unusually vocal" in the school board elections of 1969.¹⁶³ Yet, did their techniques prove

¹⁶¹ Wong, "Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat."

¹⁶² Donald S. Jordan, "Party Politics Decried," *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156148749/EE3E3FCC49C64ABDPQ/5?accountid=14496>.

¹⁶³ Associated Press, "Politics, Like Sex, 'Optional' At School," *The Register*, April 23, 1966, NewspaperArchive®, <https://newspaperarchive.com/santa-ana->

effective? Contrary to the national battles over progressive education waged by the right wing, in Orange County, these radicals succeeded in dismantling this form of Life Adjustment. This feat arose from the Radical right's victory in the Anaheim School Board and Orange County School Board elections in 1969, where a pro-moral rhetoric dominated the discourse.

In 1969, 33 school districts hosted elections for school boards. Despite calls from citizens and school board members who pleaded to retain a non-partisan election, the school setting hosted a deeply divided Right vs. Left battle.¹⁶⁴ Many Radical right organizations—including the John Birch Society, the CCC, and the Antis—supported candidates who wished to remove FLSE programs.¹⁶⁵ Anaheim became a key race, already imbued with a history of politically contentious school elections. Before the issue of sex education in April of 1964, the

[register-apr-23-1966-p-6/](#); Wong, "Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat."

¹⁶⁴ Orange County Parents for Local Control, "Orange County Parents for Local Control Mission Statement," 1963, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 1, Orange County Archives; Mehlman, "Sex Ed... and the Reds?," 208.

¹⁶⁵ Wong, "Sex Education Fight Comes to a Boil Again in Anaheim."

Magnolia Parents Committee and Save our Schools Committee lambasted Magnolia School Board Members (a subsection of Anaheim) who accepted the resignation of school principals that wished to retain the progressive “phonics” form of education.¹⁶⁶ Alleging this style of first grade education (which asked the children to sound out words) did not prove to be academically rigorous, these committees gathered 2,500 signatures to recall school board members.¹⁶⁷ In the third recall election in four years, the parents emerged victorious by 646 votes. This trivial skirmish foreshadowed the eventual pitting of “neighbor against neighbor over ‘right wing’ and ‘left wing’ issues.”¹⁶⁸ Sex education encompassed a majority of the dialogue surrounding the April 16th,

¹⁶⁶ Dick Turpin, “Seven School Principals Quit Over Reading Issue,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/168495459/A01C488D78F34B45PQ/3?acountid=14496>; Kathleen Weiler, *Democracy and Schooling in California: The Legacy of Helen Heffernan And Corinne Seeds* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 173.

¹⁶⁷ Turpin, “Seven School Principals Quit Over Reading Issue.”

¹⁶⁸ “Magnolia School Recall Wins by Slim Margin: Unofficial Returns Show 3,504 Votes for and 2,858 Against Ousting Three Trustees SCHOOL,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1964, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/168550099/326870AFD8744E35PQ/10?acountid=14496>.

1969 Anaheim School District Board of Education election, which opened up two spots on the five-person board. The conservative frontrunners Robert Bark and James Barnell did address the seemingly socialist leaning of sex education, but vitally evoked the pathos of promising to preserve the innocent morality of the child. The aforementioned right-wing groups backed these candidates, “claiming documentation of classroom ‘immorality’,” and the candidates’ promises to remove the immoral SIECUS materials.¹⁶⁹ This rhetoric worked. Bark and Barnell barely achieved victory on April 16th.¹⁷⁰ They now joined incumbents Edward Hartnell, Royal Marten, and John Barton; in a few short months they would drastically change the nature of Anaheim’s FLSE program.¹⁷¹

The Radical right also achieved victory in the Orange County special school board elections of August 26th, 1969. Winning with only

¹⁶⁹ Wong, “Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat.”

¹⁷⁰ Steve Emmons, “Challenges to Sex Education Fall Short in School Elections,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156157751/C44EF060863F447FPQ/3?accountid=14496>.

¹⁷¹ Wong, “Sex Education Fight Comes to a Boil Again in Anaheim.”

2,055 votes over the moderate Richard Acton, Dr. Doris Araujo took the fifth seat in the Orange County Board of Education.¹⁷² She now tipped the scales to a more conservative board, along with John Birch member Dr. Dale Rallison and Clay Mitchell, along with extremely reactionary Superintendent Robert Peterson.¹⁷³ Her victory came with endorsement from the California Republican Assembly and the John Birch Society, whom anonymously leafleted on her behalf. Vitialy, Araujo appealed to the very personal aspect of educational policies, campaigning on a promise to listen to the complaints of other citizens, and criticized the previous board for not taking the hearings on textbook censorship and sex education seriously.¹⁷⁴ She further canvassed on her ability to enact a “woman’s viewpoint with concern

¹⁷² Helen Johnson, “Conservative Winner in School Board Race,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156151563/A268B94172749EBPQ/5?accountid=14496>.

¹⁷³ Helen Johnson, “Conservative, Moderate Seek Fifth Seat: Vote Will End County School Board Split,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156240554/A0EADF1D432D4912PQ/1?accountid=14496>.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

for children and education”; in this manner, she directly appealed to the new class of white, republican, female activists that Lewinnek argues developed during the mid 1960s.¹⁷⁵ Related to the election results in Anaheim, the Orange County Board now began to reevaluate sex education programs, even though they had no legal authority to mandate curriculum in specific districts.¹⁷⁶

The seemingly insignificant political victories of republicans in the Anaheim and Orange County School Boards wrought considerable upheavals to progressive education in Orange County. Now with a more conservative majority, the Radical right owned various mouthpieces on the boards.¹⁷⁷ Where they failed in reforming social studies education with *Land of the Free*, they would succeed with sex education.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid; Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles,” 52.

¹⁷⁶ “Senator Seeks Local Control of Textbooks,” *The Register*, April 6, 1965, NewspaperArchive®, <https://newspaperarchive.com/santa-ana-register-apr-06-1965-p-24/>.

¹⁷⁷ Shaw, “County School Friction Laid to Political Stress.”

“Practically Worthless”: A Casualty of Progressive Education

1969-1970¹⁷⁸ In only a few short years, sex education programs, which once proliferated across the county with high approval ratings, became products of the past. In Orange County, this important pillar of Life Adjustment collapsed under the weight of Radical right curriculum changes, now made possible by the right-wing’s victory in 1969 school board elections. In Anaheim, the board removed all SIECUS materials from classrooms (despite their lack of use) and rendered it almost impossible to schedule FLSE programs. With almost 33,000 children enrolled before 1969, now only 9,000 children enrolled in the program. Scared of parents’ wrath, fewer teachers volunteered to instruct the courses.¹⁷⁹ In the fall semester of 1969, the FLSE program in the Anaheim School District was outright dissolved; the same pattern occurred in the Huntington Beach and Tustin School Districts.¹⁸⁰ FLSE

¹⁷⁸ Mehlman, “Sex Ed... and the Reds?,” 227.

¹⁷⁹ Emmons, “Sex Education---New Direction Emerging.”; Jack Boettner, “Anaheim Board Limits Sex Education Classes,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspaper, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/docview/156302111/C30C4919CD9447EEPQ/1?ac-countid=14496>.

¹⁸⁰ Wong, “Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat.”

program founder and Anaheim Superintendent Paul Cook resigned following the election.¹⁸¹ Only four of the 33 districts still attempted to initiate new courses, but committee studies found that these programs “never got off the ground”; the right wings’ attack “restric[ted] the study of sexual growth”.¹⁸² Even until the 1970s, the CCC sought to eradicate any remnants of this program, issuing pamphlets and speaking at board meetings. The CCC and Telephone Taxpayers Committee urged voters to reject a 1970 bond measure that supposedly funded sex education programs, although no evidence linked the bond funds to those programs.¹⁸³ Petrzela infers that the Antis “watered down” the post 1969 sex education courses so much that they proved “worthless” in actually educating students about safe sex or Life Adjustment strategies.¹⁸⁴ Issues of health did not come to light, and most of the courses (if they still existed) presented a sheltered view that adolescent sexuality “was a bump on the road toward the nuclear

¹⁸¹ Emmons, “Sex Education---New Direction Emerging.”

¹⁸² Wong, “Sex Education in County Schools Is in Retreat.”

¹⁸³ Boettner, “Sex Education Held Key to Approval of Issues on Financing.”

¹⁸⁴ Mehlman, “Sex Ed... and the Reds?,” 227.

family.”¹⁸⁵ Themes of abstinence became predominant in the classroom by the early 1970s. This practice of progressive education could no longer accomplish the goals of Life Adjustment in helping students master their physical and mental health.¹⁸⁶

Zimmerman concluded that since the 1940s, the extreme Right believed that sex education “was an attempt by the communists to destroy American morality.”¹⁸⁷ However, he contends that even with local protests throughout the country, these extreme views mostly fell upon deaf ears.¹⁸⁸ But in Orange County, a quite extraordinary transformation took place. From about 1965 to 1970, suffering the backlash from their failed reform of social studies curriculum, right wingers successfully campaigned and lobbied to remove sex education: a crucial structure of the progressive Life Adjustment education. Organizations like the CCC stated that these courses promoted a socialist ideology, due to SIECUS usurping the role of the parents in

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 229.

¹⁸⁶ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 210.

¹⁸⁷ Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 194.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 195.

this private matter, and the promotion of a one world child. However, the most valuable asset for these Radical right groups came from reiterating that sex education threatened the individual, their family and personal morality. Campaigning on behalf of persevering children's morality by removing sex education, conservatives gained seats on the Anaheim and Orange County Boards in 1969, despite opposition. Board members then voted to remove or severely hinder many of these FLSE programs, leaving them feeble and vain. Contrary to national trends, the Radical right of Orange County actually succeeded in destroying a vital facet of progressive education; accomplished by their campaign on anti-socialism, but more crucially, their evocation of personal matters of religion and morality.

Conclusion: “Where no one has gone before.”

Since their proliferation in the 1950s and 1960s, anti-communist organizations situated themselves in Orange County and

came to dominate the political climate.¹⁸⁹ During the era of Soviet arms buildup, the space race, and an ideological war, “schools served as an instrument of national security.”¹⁹⁰ The Orange County Radical right burdened themselves with removing any leftist threat to their country. Therefore, they aimed to severely weaken the “leftist” progressive education, particularly by evoking their commitment to individual matters of family and morality.

Proposed in the early 20th century, progressive education encouraged children to develop judicious opinions of their country and to improve their personal well-being. Like their national counterparts, the Radical right in 1960s Orange County seized upon the opportunity to condemn features of progressive education: particularly social studies curriculum (via the censorship over the *Land of the Free* textbook) and the recently commissioned sex education program. With *Land of Free*, they contended that it promoted anti-American notions

¹⁸⁹ Lucia Moust, “How Extremists Attack the School,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1969, Alfred Schoepe Papers (1963), Box 8, Folder 4, Orange County Archives.

¹⁹⁰ Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 56.

and a socialist, internationalist viewpoint. Despite their squabbling, groups like the Land of the Free Protestors did not successfully ban the book. Yet with the battle over sex education, organizations like the California Citizens Committee and the Antis objected to these programs' immoral teachings in addition to its pro-government stance. They did secure victory with these concepts, by successfully electing anti-progressive education members to various school boards in 1969, which subsequently diminished sex education programs in districts.

Progressive education endured until the 1970s, when a majority of the proponents faded away; Hartman determined that eventually progressive education “failed” with the rise of the “Cold Warriors” and more conservative educational policies.¹⁹¹ But he and Zimmerman resolved that the extreme right-wing opposition did not produce immediate educational amendments. By scrutinizing the story of *Land of the Free* and sex education from newspaper reports and eye-witness accounts, one recognizes how the Radical right successfully

¹⁹¹ Little and Ellison, *Loving Learning: How Progressive Education Can Save America's Schools*, 50; Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 201.

dismantled large portions of progressive education (specifically that of Life Adjustment sex education). Their victory did face setbacks, for they proved unable to remove *Land of the Free* from the schools. Nevertheless, by perfecting the methods of reaffirming their commitment to anti-socialism and virtue, they essentially eliminated sex education in Orange County—an exploit not necessarily seen in the rest of the country.

The remnants of Radical right Republicanism still endure in Orange County, but now face internal opposition. Victim to the “blue flu” this region’s political future still remains in question.¹⁹² National and state elections certainly remain indicative of greater political changes, but local issues-i.e. education-divulge the understated intellectual shifts among a population. In an endeavor to examine a nationally renowned conservative area and its evolution to that state, I realized that studying a specific, narrow issue illuminated the grander

¹⁹² Gustavo Arellano, “An Obituary for Old Orange County, Dead at Age 129.,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-arellano-orange-county-obit-20181107-story.html>.

political changes of the country. Orange County in the coming years will remain a closely watched district; perhaps we may understand its new transformation the same way we could fathom its past political shifts in the 1960s.

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“BUT HE CAN’T WORK IN STOCKTON”: *EL MALCRIADO* AND THE UNITED FARM WORKERS’ SHIFTING BORDER POLITICS

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***Abstract:** Despite the organization’s claims to the contrary, this paper reveals that the United Farm Workers (UFW) supported anti-immigrant rhetoric and action during its heyday from 1965-1975. Overall, UFW organizers’ and farm workers’ responses to immigrant labor lacked cohesion. My analysis of the union’s widely-read newspaper, *El Malcriado*, demonstrates temporal and geographic shifts in both bottom-up (union members and supporters) and top-down (Cesar Chavez and other UFW leaders) rhetoric regarding the influx of immigrant labor. These shifts between animosity and acceptance coincide with shifts in preferred strategies for winning union contracts: from community building to strikes to national boycotts to legal elections. Despite the union’s appeals to Mexican nationalism and their historical understanding of the exploitation of workers of Mexican descent, popular and official rhetoric often excluded immigrants from the union’s conceptual base. Meanwhile, anti-immigrant campaigns actively propelled the expulsion, or deportation, of hundreds of immigrants both undocumented and with green cards. Why? Chavez and the UFW crafted anti-immigrant policies when they believed those actions were key to the most effective strategies for building farm worker and union power. Ultimately, however, the UFW’s anti-immigrant policy strengthened the divide between the union’s conceptual base of domestic, legally settled, Mexican-American workers, and the growing population of immigrant laborers, referred to disparagingly as “green carders,” or “illegals” and “wetbacks.” By 1975, when the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA)*

granted (by omission) union votes to undocumented workers, the UFW was forced to bear the consequences of prior strategies that excluded such a rapidly growing demographic.

According to the United Farm Workers' (UFW) official website, "no labor leader and organization championed immigration reform earlier and with more consistency than Cesar Chavez's UFW."¹ As early as 1973, the website claims, Chavez opposed prohibitions on hiring undocumented workers, paving the way for cofounder Dolores Huerta's loud support for amnesty in the 1980's. The page's authors intend to promote funding for the United Farm Workers and to discredit those who "falsely claim the UFW is or has been against undocumented workers": those people, they argue, misinterpret UFW rhetoric and action against undocumented strikebreakers as a stance against undocumented workers in general.² In his book *Beyond the Fields*, a survey of the UFW's impact on American labor and immigrant rights activism, Randy Shaw supports the organization's official memory:

¹ "Cesar Chavez and UFW: longtime champions of immigration reform," *Ufw.org*, last modified May 11, 2010, <http://ufw.org/Cesar-Chavez-and-UFW-longtime-champions-of-immigration-reform/>.

² *Ibid.*

“the UFW’s problems around immigration arose entirely from the use of undocumented workers as strikebreakers;” Chavez supported amnesty for undocumented workers, Shaw writes, because, in his own words, “when a workforce is not afraid, it bargains for itself.”³

In this paper, I argue that Chavez failed to champion undocumented bargaining power prior to 1975, that the United Farm Workers did in fact support anti-immigrant action, and that such action was the result of shortsighted strategy. While the union’s widely-read newspaper, *El Malcriado*, provided a forum for discussion on the inclusion of immigrant labor in the organization’s conceptual and physical base, Chavez’s preferred strategies for winning union contracts ultimately shaped the UFW’s rhetoric and policy regarding worker migration from Mexico. To prove this thesis, I analyze primary historical documents issued by UFW staff, volunteers, supporters and members via *El Malcriado*, as well as secondary scholarly sources that

³ Randy Shaw, *Beyond the Fields: Cesar Chavez, the UFW and the Struggle for Justice in the 21st Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 198.

describe shifts in the organization's strategies and reproduce informal quotes to shed light on union ideology at the top.

Farm Work in California

By the United Farm Workers' heyday in the mid 1960s to 1970s, the union's terrain encompassed the most productive agricultural region in the world.⁴ Following the turn of the nineteenth century, growing southwestern agriculture produced a seemingly endless demand for labor. Making racist assumptions that Mexican workers were less willing to strike or stand up for themselves, and relying on them returning to Mexico where the cost of living was cheaper, government and private agents collaborated to lure men to El Norte, "the land of plenty."⁵ Between 1917 and 1921, 71,000 Mexicans entered the United States, most to work on farms alongside white,

⁴ Frank Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2011), 26.

⁵ Justin Akers Chacón and Mike Davis, *No One Is Illegal* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2006), 126.

African-American, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Filipino, and Mexican-American laborers.⁶ Many returned home or to Mexicali seasonally and others were on the move for years before returning to Mexico, but some workers chose to settle their families and their cultures in more fertile areas, forming transnational “outposts of Mexico.”⁷ It was precisely the latter communities that the UFW would first organize.

In 1935, agricultural workers were left out of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which granted collective bargaining rights to employees of major industries; but economic leaders had not forgotten about agriculture. While negotiating the NLRA, the United States government also negotiated the importation of Mexican farm labor via the Bracero Program. The Program filled the vacuum left by white workers who moved to cities for unionized factory jobs and restructured the “social relations of agricultural capitalism” following a

⁶ Marshall Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30; Akers Chacón and Davis, 132.

⁷ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 29.

series of major agricultural strikes.⁸ According to Deputy Director of Farm Placement Don Larin, Mexican temporary workers were a perfect “negotiating chip” against the local workforce forced to accept the same low wages.⁹ So too, were undocumented workers, who outnumbered bracero border-crossers by the end of the 1940s.¹⁰

Contractors encouraged undocumented immigration from Mexico by promising jobs even when they could not promise work permits. Unlike the braceros, undocumented workers were free to move and work where they could, but could not escape their “indentured status.”¹¹ Since undocumented workers are highly susceptible to intimidation (growers can threaten to call immigration in response to any undesired conduct), “illegalized” migrant labor became the “preference of U.S. capital,” especially once strikes and public backlash pushed the government to end the Bracero Program in the

⁸ Akers Chacón and Davis, *No One Is Illegal*, 132; *Ibid*, 140, 136.

⁹ *Ibid*, 142.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 146.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 146.

1960s.¹² In order to maintain the flow of agricultural labor coming from Mexico, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) tread lightly: by the mid-1970s, INS had only 74 agents in the entire state of California, a force supposedly created to deport hundreds of thousands of immigrants; when immigrants were detained, many of them purchased green cards from agents or, if deported, applied for a border crossing card that allowed them to re-enter.¹³ In 1944, an INS agent told a State Department official that the Service was “concentrating on those who were not engaged in the harvesting of perishable crops;” five years later, a commissioner testified before Congress that it was the “duty of the agency to protect valuable and necessary crops.”¹⁴ Cesar Chavez, founder and leader of the United Farm Workers, recognized this grower-government conspiracy.¹⁵

¹² Ibid, 147.

¹³ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 494.

¹⁴ Akers Chacón and Davis, *No One Is Illegal*, 144.

¹⁵ “Tomatoes: ‘The rotting ones,’” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 18 (1965): 3.

Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers

Chavez, the son of Mexican immigrants and formerly a farmworker himself, learned to organize while working for renowned community organizer Saul Alinsky's Community Service Organization (CSO). While working at CSO, one of Chavez's duties was to help immigrants become citizens.¹⁶ When he confronted an INS official to demand that the agency offer citizenship tests in Spanish, the official implied Chavez was a communist; in response, Chavez told CSO's board that INS were "Gestapos" inciting fear to further persecute their community.¹⁷ Before founding the UFW, Chavez was a fierce advocate for Mexican immigrants. Chavez also believed that the Bracero Program posed a major threat to the power of local farm workers: "the jobs belonged to the local workers," he claimed. "Braceros were brought only for exploitation... forced to work under conditions the local people wouldn't tolerate."¹⁸ He heard countless complaints of

¹⁶ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 87.

¹⁷ Shaw, 194.

¹⁸ Ibid. 194-195.

workers who had lost jobs to braceros, promised them that their collective power could win those jobs back, and led them to engage in civil disobedience that ultimately pressured growers to hire locals directly from the CSO office.¹⁹

The CSO, however, did not want to invest the resources necessary to form a union, so Chavez took matters into his own hands.²⁰ With the help of Dolores Huerta and the explicit intention of organizing farm workers and their families, Chavez founded the National Farm Worker Association (NFWA) in 1962. The Association was originally not a union but a service-based organization with a focus on building community power. By the time the NFWA merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee to create the UFW, however, both organizations were leading fights to win collective bargaining agreements and union contracts that would allow farm workers to demand higher wages and benefits in the long-term. The

¹⁹Ibid, 195; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 84.

²⁰ Ibid, 195.

UFW would grow into the first successful union for farm workers, whose primary strategies were strikes and consumer boycotts.

El Malcriado: The Voice of the United Farm Workers

The NFWA, soon renamed United Farm Workers, also created new modes of communication for their community and supporters nationwide: a radio station and a newspaper, *El Malcriado*.²¹ Though technically a separate entity, *El Malcriado* began publication in the NFWA office in 1965, and editors generally consulted NFWA/UFW staff prior to publication.²² *El Malcriado* sold ads to local bakeries, lawyers and auto shops to cover the cost of printing.²³ Before the operation was well-staffed, Chavez translated the entire paper into Spanish and wrote many editorials himself.²⁴ The paper covered all organizational activities, news related to farm worker organizing and,

²¹ Ibid, 87, 110.

²² Ibid, 130.

²³ Ibid, 133.

²⁴ Ibid, 133.

in later years, other movements for civil and economic rights. The paper was a huge success, evidenced by both support and opposition: farm workers trying to organize a union in Mississippi asked for copies of each edition to aid their effort, while union opponents in Delano wrote that they intended to buy every copy of the “horrible publication” so farm workers would not be able to read it.²⁵

According to historian Frank Bardacke, “unlike Lenin, [Chavez] did not want a newspaper that developed a political line but one that could indirectly teach a point of view, and if enough people were influenced by this alternative way of understanding the news, those readers would form a community.”²⁶ While top union officials occasionally wrote for *El Malcriado*, members, curious farm workers and supporters across the country contributed a quarter of the material published.²⁷ Therefore, the paper contains bottom-up perspectives in the form of copious letters to the editor, and top-down communications,

²⁵ “What the people are thinking,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 26 (1965): 13.

²⁶ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 130.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

in the form of both journalistic observation and direct quotes from Chavez and other union organizers. By mid-summer 1965, as the FWA was converting into a union, differences between Chavez's strategy and *El Malcriado* content had intensified.²⁸ This study will examine distinctions between shifting official policy and community discourse regarding migrant labor.

Mobilization of Mexican National Identity and Borderlands

History

In its early days of organizing, the UFW consistently used symbols of Mexican nationalism and revolutionary history to rally support for *La Causa* in California and across the country. Marches often incorporated Mexican Catholic iconography, the Virgin of Guadalupe, as a symbol of strength for the Mexican poor, and as a reference to the radical currents of Catholic Social Action.²⁹ Picket

²⁸ Ibid, 145.

²⁹ Ibid, 214.

captains during the Delano grape strike gave speeches on Mexican history to keep morale high and remind strikers of the power in unity; they presented their demands as a Plan of Delano modeled after Mexican Revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata's Plan de Ayala.³⁰ The Mexican Revolution was both a model and a *raison d'être*: "blood was shed and dust cleared... so that it could be possible in the future that one would live assured that in the end he had taken part in defining his own destiny;" thus, Mexican farm workers ought to define the conditions of their labor.³¹ Chavez borrowed the title *El Malcriado* from a Mexican revolutionary paper; the paper's artwork and text frequently compared organized farm workers to Mexican revolutionaries: "men with the spirit of Zapata... women with the spirit of Adelita."³² In one issue, the editors defended strikers' display of the Mexican flag in response to an offended reader: "Citizens of both countries have joined the strike... proud of their rich Mexican

³⁰ Ibid, 221; Ibid, 198.

³¹ "Viva la Causa," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 3 (1965): 2.

³² "What the people are thinking," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 17 (1965): 10; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 128.

heritage.”³³ These appeals to farm workers’ “Mexican-ness,” however, did not always include support for the Mexican immigrants crossing into union territory. Though Chavez was praised as the godfather of the Chicano movement for Mexican national power within U.S. territory, he opposed open borders.³⁴

Alongside the history of popular revolt in Mexico, *El Malcriado* editors considered a history of the border “fundamental” to understanding the exploitation of farmworkers.³⁵ The paper’s first volume included a recurring section called “two centuries of slavery.”³⁶ The history constructed therein was well-informed and comprehensive: readers learned of huge landholdings consolidated in the hands of few, eventually white, settlers in California, of how the shift toward cash crops in the mid-nineteenth century created a rising demand for labor.³⁷

³³ Ibid, 10.

³⁴ Ibid, 225.

³⁵ “Historia del Campesino en California,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 2 (1965): 13.

³⁶ “Dos siglos de esclavitud – historia del campesino,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 5 (1965): 9.

³⁷ “Historia del Campesino en California,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 2 (1965): 13; “Historia del Campesino en California,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 3 (1965): 13; Ibid, 9.

Labor was racialized: after all, although white farm workers did exist, “whites didn’t want to risk their health doing this work.”³⁸ According to *El Malcriado*, Mexico surrendered California to the United States only after “hordes of aggressive foreigners... seized the opportunity provided by the ignorant and docile Indian to make them into servant labor;” the rhetorical blame assigned to indigenous workers would extend also to Chinese, Japanese and later Mexican workers, both of whom were legally relegated to a position of subservience.³⁹

Additional articles explained that the prevalence of temporary contracted and undocumented Mexican labor was the result a grower-government collaborative “program of lies and fraud.” A cartoon grower declared, “we’re telling the government there’s no local labor that is any good.”⁴⁰ The paper recognized that “wetbacks” were doing most of the work because “they had been imported to keep the wages

³⁸ “Dos siglos de esclavitud – historia del campesino,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 7 (1965): 13.

³⁹ Reference, for example, the 1913 Alien Land Act barring “aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning land or the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement that created the Bracero Program; “Dos siglos de esclavitud – historia del campesino,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 5 (1965): 9.

⁴⁰ “Tomatoes: ‘The rotting ones,’” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 18 (1965): 3.

down,” that the undocumented workforce was especially malleable because it “conceivably, can be intimidated easily or deported if it gets too ‘uppity.’”⁴¹ What was missing, however, was a history of resistance. Editors hoped that local labor, by taking action that subservient populations had supposedly not taken in the past, would have enough power to create a new history. Despite a well-documented understanding of exploitation across borders, that action did not prioritize solidarity between local and imported members of the oppressed class.

The United Farm Workers and Immigrant Labor: Rhetoric and Action

From 1965-1975, among the UFW’s most powerful years, organizers’ and farm workers’ responses to immigrant labor (both documented and undocumented) lacked cohesion. *El Malcriado* was a

⁴¹ “Huron is a hole in the ground,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 17 (1965): 13; “The Braceros and the Growers,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 10 (1974): 8.

forum where varied understandings and potential strategies for dealing with new immigration came forward. At times, both top-down and bottom-up interlocutors demonstrated anti-immigrant rhetoric and action. A critical discourse analysis of those voices covered by *El Malcriado*, alongside scholarly research on union policies and actions, reveals that the strategic prioritization of winning union contracts ultimately shaped the UFW's policy regarding worker migration from Mexico.⁴² From its inception, *El Malcriado* insisted that “the only way that poor farm workers can ever beat the rich growers, and to make the rich ranchers pay good wages, is if all farm workers get together in one big union.”⁴³ As the UFW's broader strategy for winning contracts shifted from community building to field strikes to national boycotts to legal elections, its stance on immigration shifted between antagonism and pleas for unity. Decisions to include immigrant labor also varied geographically, based on local UFW leaders' perception of the most

⁴² Teun A. Van Dijk, “Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Japanese Discourse* 1 (1995): 17.

⁴³ Ronald L. Mize and Alicia C.S. Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 47.

effective means of building power. Ultimately, the UFW's anti-immigrant policy strengthened the divide between immigrant labor, referred to disparagingly as "green carders," or "illegals" and "wetbacks," and the union's conceptual base of domestic, legally settled, Mexican-American workers.

In 1965, when the organization was first gaining clout, *El Malcriado* glorified the narrative of migrant farmworkers from Mexico. The caption to a cover of smiling men carrying "huelga" signs reads: "The group, all citizens of Mexico, lives in Merida, Yucatan. They were brought to the US by ship to work in the grapes for Sierra Vista. Many thousands of miles from home, these brave men refused to work where there was a strike."⁴⁴ Bringing strikebreaking green card holders over to the strikers' side was the paper's strategy: "We must convince them to join us, to help us build our union. They too will profit from the higher wages."⁴⁵ In taking action, melon strikers in Texas had blocked an international bridge to stop truckloads of strikebreakers,

⁴⁴ "The Cover: Men of Yucatan," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 22 (1965): 6.

⁴⁵ "Melons in Texas," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 46 (1966): 5.

while other workers explained their strategy to Mexican nationals. In a heartening display of transnational cooperation, made possible by the site of the struggle, Mexican unions created their own picket lines to dissuade crossing.⁴⁶

Still, by 1966, the paper's content began to "restrict the expansive definition of who was welcomed by the UFW."⁴⁷ An article titled "Rotten Deal in Tomatoes: government gives away our jobs" creates a discursive divide between "us": local farm workers, and "them": workers imported from Mexico as braceros. Although the content of the article sympathized with the latter's plight, scholars Alicia Swords and Ronald Mize argue that the writers, *El Malcriado* staff, clearly "did not consider braceros as 'workers'—or at the very least not 'our workers'; they are characterized in the ad as simply a weapon in the growers' arsenal."⁴⁸ Braceros and other immigrant workers were described as objects, rather than subjects who could

⁴⁶ Shaw, 195; "Texas Border Arrests," *Delano Newsletter* 1, no. 3 (1966): 4.

⁴⁷ Mize and Swords, 48.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

potentially join the union and make demands of their own. The rhetorical divide continued in 1967: a “scabs can’t cross the border” headline demonized border-crossers by insinuating that they held a “scab” identity even before they stepped onto a field in the United States.⁴⁹ An article on the same page encouraged Mexican-Americans to “fight it” if they were ever labelled “M for Mexican” on a traffic ticket.⁵⁰

El Malcriado emphasized the problem of immigrating strikebreakers throughout 1967, in a comic entitled “La Dolce Vita.” The serial depicts men in Mexico, portrayed as sympathetic but naïve and easily fooled, who are contracted to work as “scabs” in a struck field. There, strikers try and fail to win them over.⁵¹ Though the last episode of the comic in June 1967 claims the story will be continued, no subsequent issue contained an episode. Will the strikebreakers get deported? Will they join the strike? Symbolic of the UFW’s uncertain

⁴⁹ “Scabs can’t cross border,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 62 (1967): 6.

⁵⁰ “M is for Mexican,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 62 (1967): 6.

⁵¹ “La Dolce Vita,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 60 (1967): 27; “La Dolce Vita,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 63E (1967): 23.

stance on immigrant labor, all readers knew is that “new dangers await them.”⁵² UFW organizer Epifanio Camacho reiterated the immigrant strikebreaker as helpless victim motif. He wrote: “these men are victims not only of themselves but also of the cruel patron,” and momentarily lamented the fact that he didn’t have “more experience in discussing our struggle with people who have different opinions about it.” However, Camacho’s inability to convince Mexican scabs to join the union was not presented as a major concern, since “under a new regulation, green card holders who come to the United States as strikebreakers [would] be deported.”⁵³ Since the strategy appeared winnable in comparison, deporting rather than organizing strikebreakers became union policy. During the Guimarra vineyard strike of 1967-1968, Chavez led a march of 150 union supporters to the federal building to demand that INS deport non-citizen workers from struck fields.⁵⁴ The protests worked: INS, claiming this had nothing to

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ “They have to work,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 63 (1967): 12.

⁵⁴ Justin Feldman, “Reinventing Cesar Chavez,” *Counterpunch*, last modified April 3, 2013, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2013/04/03/reinventing-cesar-chavez/>; Joseph Nevins, “The Boycott Legend Sacrifices the Movement: Cesar

do with UFW pressure, arrested more than 500 undocumented workers in one week in Kern County.⁵⁵ The UFW began to submit regular lists of green card-holding strikebreakers to Immigration.

At the same time, the union made public statements that it was not against green card holders in general.⁵⁶ While excluding any immigrant working a struck field, the UFW's conceptual base still included Mexican immigrants in 1967. *El Malcriado* frequently portrayed immigrant stories as UFW stories: for example, a piece on "ways to get cheated when crossing the border" asked farm worker members to contribute their own experiences, insinuating that the UFW's popular base included recent immigrants themselves; even more explicitly, contributors reassured readers that "you cannot lose any of your papers or any of your rights if you join a union" and

Chavez and the Renewed Case for Radical Democracy," *NACLA*, last modified January 14, 2014, <https://nacla.org/news/2014/1/14/boycott-legend-sacrifices-movement-cesar-chavez-and-renewed-case-radical-democracy>.

⁵⁵ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 285.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

offered immigration support in UFW service centers.⁵⁷ Although *El Malcriado* staff writers generally used the term Mexican-American to describe members of the UFW's base, many editorials and letters published in first person simply referred to their community as Mexican, or as belonging to the "Mexican race."⁵⁸

El Malcriado displayed a broader animosity toward green card holding and undocumented newcomers beginning in the summer of 1967. An article entitled "Green-carders flood Stockton: he can shoot pool but he can't work in Stockton" described domestic workers' anger as they competed for jobs given to green carders from Mexico.⁵⁹ In a letter to the paper, a reader wrote that his Mexican-American community had "no means of demanding our rights because there are many wetbacks doing the work for the shells of peanuts... those of us who arrived legally have to work with our whole families just to

⁵⁷ "Ways to get cheated when crossing the border," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 57 (1967): 24; "Help with immigration problems," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 62 (1967): 7.

⁵⁸ "That's the way it should be," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 60 (1967): 3.

⁵⁹ "Green-carders flood Stockton," *El Malcriado* 1, no. 60 (1967): 10.

survive.”⁶⁰ In March 1968, moments after acknowledging that closing the border was “not their objective,” union official Robert Bustos argued: “when a man really lives in Mexico and comes here to take our jobs that’s another story.”⁶¹ Though Randy Shaw and the UFW claim that the union’s antagonistic position was directed only at scabs, accusatory rhetoric and discriminatory action extended beyond struck fields.

Since official UFW statements, published in *El Malcriado* or in policy, did not present an anti-immigrant stance explicitly, the union’s tendency to throw newly arrived immigrant workers under the bus was conveyed in more subtle ways. In 1968, referencing INS’ refusal to deport green carders working in struck fields, an article entitled “*Migra se mejora*” (“The border control is improving”) stated: “if the *migra* is going to be like this, get rid of it, we don’t need them.”⁶² This phrasing suggests that if the *migra* did succeed in

⁶⁰ “The people’s page,” *El Malcriado* 1, no. 62 (1967): 2.

⁶¹ “Greencard abuse could close border,” *El Malcriado* 2, no. 3 (1968): 6.

⁶² “*Migra se mejora... ojala*,” *El Malcriado* 2, no. 6 (1968): 5.

deporting strikebreakers, the agency would be appreciated, despite its record of harassing and abusing both immigrants and Mexican-Americans in California.⁶³ Instead of prioritizing the protection of those groups, the UFW opted to take any steps that pragmatic leaders thought could help them win union contracts. Robert Bustos, for example, argued that “since the growers insist on using the green-carder against his own interests and the interests of resident farm workers, there is a real danger that the border can be closed.”⁶⁴ In other words, don’t blame the union, blame the growers, but the UFW had to take a stance against the labor being shipped in from Mexico. These workers, the UFW contended, could and should be excluded from the country and from their base.

A subsequent letter to the editor called “A green carder answers back” exposed confusion within the union’s base regarding their stance on immigration. The writer was a union member, a striker, and a green card holder. He wrote, “I didn’t read *El Malcriado*

⁶³ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 285.

⁶⁴ “Greencard abuse could close border,” *El Malcriado* 2, no. 3 (1968): 6.

carefully enough to know what to say [when a scab told me you were against us].” Of course, reading the paper carefully would not have provided an unambiguous policy, but the writer was sure that the union only advocated for deportations “because the fool who breaks the strike is a scab, not because he is a green carder.”⁶⁵ Regardless of whether top union officials agreed, the writer saw himself and other Mexicans with green cards as an essential component of the union’s base. In fact, mixed crews of citizen, green card holding and undocumented labor were quite successful when they struck together. In 1970, one such crew in Salinas decided to strike Pic-n-Pac strawberry fields against Chavez’s recommendation to hold off. As a result, multiple growers signed UFW contracts.⁶⁶ Beyond that, “Mexican farm workers could no longer be excluded from the cultural and political life of the town.”⁶⁷ They had demonstrated their power, which scared the growers. Curiously, Mexican power scared Chavez as well: he re-assigned emerging leaders Eliseo Medina and Marcos Muñoz, both Mexican

⁶⁵ “A green carder answers back,” *El Malcriado* 2, no. 7 (1968): 14.

⁶⁶ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 364.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 383.

immigrants, to the cities because of their potential allegiance with the Salinas strikers.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the UFW sent a task force to find any undocumented workers in the Central Valley under UFW contract and replace them with legal Mexican-Americans.⁶⁹

In 1970, UFW strategy shifted to prioritize the consumer boycott; this new focus perpetuated the scapegoating of undocumented and immigrant labor. Chavez had won over cities across the US, and the success of the boycott allowed all 10,000 Central Valley table grape workers to benefit from union contracts.⁷⁰ In response, the UFW leader named boycott organizers “the heroes of the farmworkers’ struggle for liberty.”⁷¹ So where did those toiling in the fields fit in? They continued to picket, largely symbolically, providing an idyllic picture of resistance to be employed by urban organizers in generating nationwide sympathy. When the strikes failed, the UFW needed to show that setbacks were not a result of poor strategy or low participation;

⁶⁸ Ibid, 390.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 417.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 336.

⁷¹ Nevins, “The Boycott Legend Sacrifices the Movement”.

otherwise, the boycotters might lose faith in the union. Strikes were lost, Chavez claimed, due to the influx of Mexican strikebreakers. In 1971, the *Riverside Press-Enterprise* quoted Chavez arguing that a win in Coachella would depend on “how much cooperation we can get from the Border Patrol.”⁷² Again, his stance on immigrant labor went beyond internal dialogue: he continued to pressure INS to arrest strikebreaking immigrants, and implored sympathetic Congressmen to increase funding for deportations.⁷³ In 1973, the UFW endorsed tough immigration restrictions.⁷⁴ Multiple UFW offices in both the fields and the cities continued to picket and petition INS and Border Patrol.⁷⁵

In May of 1974, Chavez called on UFW offices in border states to begin a full-fledged “Campaign Against Illegals.” The union’s executive board no longer found it necessary to limit public attacks to immigrants who were actively working a struck field. They proposed “a massive campaign to get the recent flood of illegals out of California...

⁷² Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 443.

⁷³ Ibid, 417-418, 489.

⁷⁴ Shaw, 196.

⁷⁵ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 442; Feldman.

even more important than the strike, second only to the boycott. If we can get the illegals out of California, we will win the strike overnight.”⁷⁶ This plan was more than a “Campaign Against Scabs.” Not only were undocumented immigrants breaking strikes, Chavez wrote, they were “displacing farm workers from their jobs in the U.S., and depressing agricultural wages.”⁷⁷ Chavez had fallen into the growers’ trap: he focused his ire on a singled-out sector of the farm-working community and described the immigrant as un-organizable “other.” In response to Chavez’s demands, volunteers tracked down thousands of undocumented workers at work and at home, reported them to the INS and made note if the agency failed to act; hundreds were deported.⁷⁸

El Malcriado said nothing of these developments for months, perhaps anticipating pushback from the union’s base and supporters.

⁷⁶ Frank Bardacke, “UFW and the Undocumented,” *International Labor and Working Class History* 83 (2018): 166; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 488.

⁷⁷ Bardacke “UFW and the Undocumented,” 166; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 489.

⁷⁸ Bardacke “UFW and the Undocumented,” 166; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 489.

Instead, the paper published Chavez arguing that “we can’t blame the illegals – they are only the tools, used by others to try to destroy our movement.” He did not, however, apply this understanding by attempting to build solidarity with the undocumented victims of systematic exploitation. Instead, he advocated for deportation as if there were no other option, “even though it pains us because they are our brothers.” As in past publications, the undocumented worker was discussed with sympathy: Chavez claimed that “the exploitation of the illegals is of great concern to the local farm workers.”⁷⁹ However, Chavez’s solution to the problem of their employment was not to support undocumented workers in ending their own exploitation, but rather to physically remove them from the list of obstacles to farmworker unionization. Many local union chapters agreed: in a later issue, the Kansas City UFW wrote that enforcement of immigration

⁷⁹ “Huelgistas charge growers use ‘illegals’ to break strike,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 6 (1974): 14.

laws was key to “eliminate the exploitation of all farm workers—alien and domestic.”⁸⁰

Some 1974 articles do offer alternatives to immigrant worker exclusion. One tells the “story of an illegal” scab, worked like a “slave,” who joins the strikers.⁸¹ In a letter to the editor, union member Aurelio Santos writes: “these illegals are our brothers in soul and ideas and they are willing to join our union, if only they weren’t intimidated.”⁸² It is unlikely that Aurelio would approve of Chavez’ strategy to intimidate them further. Alternatives also existed in action. In Watsonville, where about 90 percent of apple pickers were undocumented, the UFW supported a strike; INS arrived at their picket, and strikers chanted “abajo con la migra” (“down with immigration authorities”) until the agents left.⁸³ *El Malcriado* readers were reminded that both Braceros and undocumented workers had been used

⁸⁰ “Kansas City UFW calls for ‘illegals’ investigation,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 10 (1974): 7.

⁸¹ “Story of an illegal,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 6 (1974): 20.

⁸² “Selma contractor exploits illegals,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 6 (1974): 18.

⁸³ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 483.

to pit “the Mexicanos against the ‘Chavistas’ in a classic divide-and-conquer scheme.”⁸⁴ Some field offices complained that the union’s leadership was doing just that. An official in Delano wrote that workers “did not want to report illegals, their brothers”; boycott staffers in Florida and Atlanta were fired for objecting to the expulsion campaign.⁸⁵ When the Mexican-American Centro de Acción Social Autónoma came out against the UFW’s immigration policy, they opened the floodgates of leftist critique.⁸⁶ The National Lawyers Guild was next, and Chavez accused them of being CIA agents and called them rats.⁸⁷

As opposition to his anti-immigrant campaign grew, Chavez became increasingly dismissive of critique and of the subject in general. In one interview with *El Malcriado*, in which he reluctantly agrees to talk about his stance on “illegals,” he condemned the left as having “no experience in labor matters.” He also condemned the

⁸⁴ “The Braceros and the Growers,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 10 (1974): 8.

⁸⁵ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 504.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 505.

⁸⁷ Feldman.

immigrant laborers, repeating the fact that “many of the illegals, really, are strikebreakers,” as if that justified action against any undocumented worker. To maintain his moral high ground, Chavez hid behind the stories of domestic workers who had come to him saying, “look, we got to do something about illegals because they’re taking our jobs.”⁸⁸

While these stories were undoubtedly true, they failed to explain why the union didn’t focus on engaging immigrant laborers. Chavez offered no strategy or recommendations for organizing them.

While his “Campaign Against Illegals” got underway, Chavez publicly denied charges that the UFW supported the deportation of millions and repeated that INS was a grower prop.⁸⁹ In private, however, Chavez took a much clearer, harder stance. In a letter to a staffer, he wrote: “we’re against illegals no matter what because if they’re not breaking the strike they’re taking our jobs ... we have a choice to be for the illegals and against our workers or be for our

⁸⁸ “UFW leader talks with El Malcriado,” *El Malcriado* 7, no. 10 (1974): 11.

⁸⁹ Shaw, 197.

workers and against the illegals.”⁹⁰ Chavez drew a line in the sand, right through the middle of his base. César’s line may have been rhetorical, but by the end of 1974, his cousin Manuel had established a physical “wet line” in the Arizona desert. Manuel Chavez brought hundreds of lemon strikers and other supporters to camp along the border with Mexico and act as the “UFW Border Patrol.”⁹¹ Their strategy was strikingly similar to that of the conservative Minutemen Project started in 2004: Mexican labor officials have recounted beatings, even claiming the UFW murdered and castrated border-crossers, and an Arizona county court convicted two UFW border patrolmen of aggravated battery; striking *limoneros* threw rocks at scabs and suspected scabs alike.⁹²

Not until the passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA) in 1975 did the UFW shift its approach to undocumented and green-card labor. The law was a major win for the

⁹⁰ Bardacke, “UFW and the Undocumented,” 166; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 492; *Ibid*, 504.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 495; Bardacke, “UFW and the Undocumented,” 166.

⁹² *Ibid*, 500; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 501, 496.

UFW, the first and only to protect unionization in the fields.⁹³ Since the ALRA would allow undocumented workers to vote in union elections, UFW board members scrambled to address the divide they had created. They could make a legal case for the exclusion of undocumented workers, but this strategy would take years in court. During the debate, Chavez displayed his fiercest anti-immigrant outlook, insisting: “we don’t want chattels as members... even if we win elections with them, we don’t win.”⁹⁴ Richard Chavez, Cesar’s brother, argued instead that the union should start a campaign of inclusion to win over as many undocumented workers as possible before elections.⁹⁵ Richard’s idea stuck. Chavez wrote a public letter, portraying their past record as a mistake: “we have, at times, fallen into the trap of allowing the exploiters to divide us,” he said, but now “los visitantes” (“the visitors”) would be welcomed.⁹⁶ He called for “amnesty for all illegal

⁹³ Ibid, 486.

⁹⁴ Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farmworker Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 126.

⁹⁵ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 510.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 511.

workers” and proclaimed the value in organizing them: “if the growers can import illegal workers to exploit them, then we can organize illegal workers to liberate them.”⁹⁷ Exemplifying the discrepancy between internal and public rhetoric, Manuel Chavez reluctantly agreed: “We won’t ask whether the worker is illegal or not, but if we lose the election, then we will blow the whistle on him!”⁹⁸ The new strategy appeared to focus on securing UFW power in the fields rather than liberating illegal workers.

In any case, it was too late. The growers got to the workers before the UFW had a chance; they told undocumented workers that the UFW would fire them if they won the contract, and it wasn’t hard to believe.⁹⁹ Most undocumented workers voted against the UFW, so the union lost most elections.¹⁰⁰ The areas where the UFW did make substantial gains correlated to those where they had not campaigned as

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Garcia, 125.

⁹⁹ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 514.

¹⁰⁰ Bardacke, “UFW and the Undocumented,” 168.

actively for deportations.¹⁰¹ After 1975, the union terminated the “Campaign Against Illegals,” and called border patrol only on strikebreakers. However, the UFW maintained their reputation of being a Mexican-American, or *pocho*, union. After Cesar Chavez’s death in 1993, the UFW (by then a shell of its former self) took a more active pro-immigration position and advocated for comprehensive immigration reform.

...

The UFW under Chavez’s leadership aimed to form a powerful union for farm workers by any means necessary. Rather than an indicator of his own “racism and xenophobia,” as Randy Shaw points out, Chavez’s anti-immigrant rhetoric and action was “part of a strategy to build the power of Latino workers.”¹⁰² What conditions shaped Chavez’s and other leaders’ perception of the most effective strategy? First, they attempted to replicate prior victories. The first major battle

¹⁰¹ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 515.

¹⁰² Shaw, 197.

that the NFWA won was the fight to get braceros out of the fields; thus, even before they were a union, the UFW was “optimistic about their ability to force the federal government to close the border.”¹⁰³ INS’ rapid response to the union’s initial calls for increased enforcement further rationalized the strategy of immigrant exclusion. In 1974, once Chavez believed “farm workers were relatively powerless in any direct confrontation with their bosses,” he did not hesitate to offer boycott staff the obvious scapegoat: “illegals is the iron-clad argument for the boycott.”¹⁰⁴ Although Chavez prioritized the boycott because of its success, the decision proved detrimental to union power: not only did he assume that Mexican migration could be curbed, he also assumed that boycotters’ energy was everlasting. However, while farm workers could not afford to pick and choose their battles, the boycotters could. Only after the lettuce boycott failed did the union stop funneling disproportionate resources into the strategy.

¹⁰³ Feldman.

¹⁰⁴ Bardacke, “UFW and the Undocumented,” 168; Ibid; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 491.

There is evidence that migrant Mexican workers, both undocumented and legal, were harder to organize. They moved frequently from farm to farm, and therefore had less incentive to fight for a union contract that would only benefit them in the short term.¹⁰⁵ Chavez dismissed alternatives to exclusion which would have required a massive campaign to organize new immigrants. That is, until exclusion itself became a legal struggle after the passage of the ALRA. Chavez had failed to predict the extent and importance of rising Mexican migration. The influx of foreign labor in the 1960s was only the beginning of a decisive demographic shift, and the undocumented population extended far beyond scabs. Moreover, Chavez's conceptual base of Mexican-Americans was not a pure reflection of reality: by 1974, over half of UFW members were immigrants with and without documents.¹⁰⁶ In places where Mexican workers were the majority, anti-immigrant actions destroyed hopes of unity between them and the

¹⁰⁵ Hector Galan, prod., "Episode #2 – The Struggle in the Fields," *Chicano! History of the Mexican-American Civil Rights Movement*, Galan Incorporated Television and Film, 1996, <https://brown.kanopy.com/video/chicano-episode-2-struggle-fields>.

¹⁰⁶ Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 493.

settled Mexican-American community they joined in the fields. After the first round of ALRA elections, the union felt the consequences of shortsighted strategy.

Not welcoming “the newcomers,” writes historian Frank Bardacke, was Chavez’s “greatest historical failing”—that and “his commanding role in the destruction of his own union’s farm worker leadership.”¹⁰⁷ Union leaders perpetuated the grower-sponsored division between “illegal” and “legal” workers by sidelining proposals for solidarity and supporting the removal of immigrant labor. Even while Chavez and readers of *El Malcriado* understood the tendency of the state to side with the employing class, they saw “strategic” efficiency in reform that further marginalized some farmworkers for the benefit of others. It is no wonder that the UFW website does not champion (or even acknowledge) Chavez’s exclusionary approach to immigration. Popular knowledge of the UFW silences the history of Chavez’ shortsightedness, focusing instead on his and Huerta’s later

¹⁰⁷ Nevins.

support for pro-immigrant legislation while ignoring the fundamental limits of their approach to labor and migrant justice.

What is at stake in exposing the shortcomings of UFW organizing strategies? The purpose of this paper is not to delegitimize the United Farm Workers' successes or to convince readers that labor organizing is fundamentally divisive. The purpose is not to dissuade farmworkers from engaging in militant workers' struggle. Rather, the purpose of this paper is to critically analyze UFW action and rhetoric under Cesar Chavez's leadership, in hopes that those engaged in labor struggles today will build on this history, shed the confines of exclusionary strategies and work towards an international, truly liberating movement of the working class.

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***“THIS BEAUTIFUL PROMISE LAND”*: NICODEMUS AND
THE FUTURE, 1877-1880**

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“All Colored People that want to Go to Kansas, On the 5th of September 1877, can do so for \$5.00.”¹ Accompanied by flowery descriptions of the wonders of the Solomon Valley and distributed on handbills across Kentucky, this matter of fact message helped spur the migration of three hundred and fifty Black Kentuckians to Nicodemus, Kansas, in the fall of 1877. Exhausted from a journey of over two weeks, many were shocked to realize upon arrival that the paradise they had been imagining was little more than a collection of dug-outs. Some tried to kill the man who had led them there; others just left. However, most overcame their initial disillusionment and stayed to develop the

¹ Kenneth Marvin Haqmilton, “The Settlement of Nicodemus: Its Origins and Early Promotion,” in *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas* (Rocky Mountain Region: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, 2004), 6.

town.² The first and most prominent western colony intended for an all-Black population, Nicodemus flourished from 1877 until 1888, when it became clear that it would not become the home of a railroad station, a prerequisite for economic development. Before the town's collapse, many nationally saw Nicodemus as a symbol of the Black community's capacity for self-governance and self-sufficiency.³

Though in many ways unique, the establishment of Nicodemus is just one of the many ways in which Southern Black communities imagined a future for themselves outside the South during this period. As Reconstruction ended and the relative protections it had offered Black communities disappeared, many Black communities across the South found themselves subject to increasing political

² Gregory D. Kendrick, "Introduction," in *Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas* (Rocky Mountain Region: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, 2004), iii-1; Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *African American Women Confront the West: 1600-2000* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 117.

³ Hamilton, 1-35; Glen Schwendemann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1968).

violence and economic coercion. A desire to migrate was a common response to this upheaval. Voluntary migration is inherently an expression of a belief about the future; it usually implies that the migrant believes that their destination, their future, will in some way be better than the present they are leaving behind.

In this paper, I will first consider the context in which Nicodemus was established, examining the futures outside of the South that Southern Black communities imagined in the 1870s. These futures all reflected a desire for independence and most of them were also united by the difficulty their creators had in translating them into reality. However, as I will next discuss, Nicodemus was one of the few exceptions. Nicodemus' founders envisioned their community as a place where Black people could achieve self-sufficiency through economic prosperity. Apart from its focus on individual rather than communal development, this conception was largely consistent with the predominant futures imagined by Southern Black communities. However, translating an imagined future into reality requires compromise and adjustment. In an attempt to achieve the prosperous

Nicodemus they had envisioned, the town's promoters changed the audience for which depictions of the town's future were intended in the late 1880s, shifting from targeting specifically the Black community to appealing to both White and Black working class men. As part of this effort, the town's promoters, particularly its newspapers, also used arguments about how Nicodemus' future would unfold to attract migrants.

Southern Black perspectives on migration in the 1870s

After the Civil War, many Southern Black communities had an optimistic outlook on the future, believing that they would be able to prosper in the South. However, that optimism had begun to crumble by the early 1870s, as political violence was on the upswing throughout the South.⁴ Testifying before a congressional committee on Black migration in 1880, Henry Adams, a former Union soldier, described a

⁴ Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (n.d.), 1-68.

pattern of oppression that had unfolded in many towns throughout the South. He recounted how in his home of Shreveport, Louisiana, local whites had responded to the Black community's political organizing by killing Black men. They also curtailed the community's cultural life, imposing a curfew on church meetings and even preventing the community from gathering to hold funerals.⁵ Many communities that had escaped such acts of violence or coercion also simply had not experienced the economic prosperity they had anticipated. Few Black men had been able to buy land, which many viewed as a crucial prerequisite for independence. By the late 1870s, few Black men in Louisiana or Mississippi owned land or even their own homes.⁶

These conditions led many Southern Black people to conclude that their lives would never improve if they remained in the South. In 1874, Adams had helped to organize a committee that sent 150 men

⁵ United States, *Report and testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Causes of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States: in three parts* (Washington: Govt. Printing Off., 1880).

⁶ Painter, 1-68.

including himself to investigate the conditions of local Southern communities. Throughout his travels, Adams noted that the people he encountered seemed to have given up all hope of a better future. He himself concluded that African Americans' only option for improving their lives was leaving the South. In his testimony before the committee, he stated that that there was no way they could achieve progress in a region controlled by their former enslavers.⁷ Other leaders concurred. Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, a prominent promoter of migration to Kansas, believed that African Americans should leave the South to demonstrate to Southern whites how much they depended upon Black labor, returning to the region once conditions were better. He believed that equality would be possible in the distant future, stating that, "Mebbe it'll be different a hundred years from now when all the present generation's dead and gone, but not afore..."⁸

⁷ Ibid, 84-86.

⁸ "'Pap' Singleton. The Moses of the Negro Exodus. Concerning the Colored Colonists in Kansas.," n.d., <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/211642/page/22>.

Of course, not all African Americans believed that prosperity was impossible in the South. Prominent abolitionist Frederick Douglass argued that change was possible in the South and that African Americans should stay there. He and others worried that mass migration would make the federal government less interested in reform, worsening conditions for those who remained. However, it is unclear how representative Douglass was of the sentiments of Southern Black communities. Despite his fame and many white people's perception of him as a leading member of the Black community, he was no longer engaged with the lives of working-class Black Southerners. At the very least, his anti-migration stance put him in the minority among Black leaders.⁹ However, while Southern Black leaders may have concurred on the need to leave the South, they diverged on where they imagined African Americans building a future. Three distinct visions of the future emerged in the 1970s: colonization in Liberia, planned migration to Kansas, and unplanned mass migration westward. Despite their

⁹ Robert G. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan: Black Migration to Kansas 1879-80* (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), 233-238; Painter, 26.

differences, all these options were characterized by a desire for independence.

Colonizing Liberia was not a new idea. The white-run American Colonization Society (ACS) had been funding the migration of former slaves to Liberia since 1820, and the colony had become an independent nation in 1847. However, due to a combination of the society's racist rhetoric and the immediate post-war optimism of Southern Black communities, the society initially had difficulty attracting prospective migrants in the South. In the late 1860s, the society adjusted its messaging, swapping out its emphasis on the need to rid the United States of African Americans for a focus on the importance of Black self-rule, and mounted an advertising campaign across the South.¹⁰

These steps made migration to Liberia seem more appealing to many, including Henry Adams and the committee to which he

¹⁰ William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control 1861-1915* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 138-148.

belonged. Adams felt that a return to Africa had been ordained, telling the congressional committee that “God of high heaven will put a curse should we continue to live with our former masters and ex-slaveholders, who are not enjoying the same rights as he has ordained that we shall enjoy in our own native soil; for God says in His Holy Work that he has a place and land for all his people, and our race had better go to it...”¹¹ Others agreed, viewing Liberia where, as Adams put it, “our forefathers come from”, and as a country that belonged to them and where they could govern themselves.¹² As James Green, founder of the Liberian Emigration Association in Texas, argued, “I want the negroes to go back to their own country, which is Africa... Let the negro go where he will in a white man’s country he will... have no more chance than a cat in hell without claws.”¹³ The opportunity Liberia offered for self-rule led many Southern African Americans to

¹¹ Painter, 84.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, 141.

see it as a place where they would be able to recognize their potential, free from racism.¹⁴

By the late 1870s, interest in migration to Liberia had spread like wildfire. Adams claimed in an 1877 letter to the ACS that his committee had the names of 69,000 people interested in immigration.¹⁵ However, organizational and financial woes meant that few potential colonists could reach Liberia. Adams' committee could not even raise the funds to send scouts through the ACS. In 1878, a newly founded Black-run organization working to transport migrants to Liberia, the Liberian Exodus Joint-Stock Steamship Company, ran into similar problems. Eager to reach Liberia, hundreds of potential migrants thronged to the company's headquarters in Charleston. While the fledgling company managed to buy a ship and transport 206 of the migrants, they were unable to finance any other voyages. Those who did manage to make it to Liberia also quickly realized that success was

¹⁴ Ibid, 85-97; Cohen, 138-148.

¹⁵ Painter, 89.

not as easy there as they had expected, particularly without adequate money or supplies.¹⁶

Disheartened by the difficulty of travel to Liberia, many turned to migration to Kansas as a more obtainable goal. Many African Americans in border states near Kansas had viewed migration there as an attractive option as early as the late 1860s, though the first major effort to organize migration came with “Pap” Singleton’s formation of the Edgefield Real Estate Association in Tennessee in 1874. Singleton had previously founded the Tennessee Real Estate and Homestead Association in 1869 to encourage Black land ownership in Tennessee; however, realizing that land was too expensive to be realistically attainable, he shifted his attention to Kansas, where the Homestead Act allowed each adult citizen to claim 160 acres of land for only a \$10 filing fee. He helped establish two settlements with migrants from Tennessee, the Baxter Springs and Dunlap colonies, between 1875 and 1878. Between them, the two colonies had at least 1100 residents.

¹⁶ Ibid, 84-102; Cohen, 149-167.

Singleton's promotion of Kansas also encouraged others to migrate. Nicodemus was founded in 1877 by Kentucky migrants, and there was a failed attempt by others from Kentucky to build a colony in 1878.¹⁷

Though Kansas could not offer the same kind of self-rule free from the influence of white people that attracted many to Liberia, potential migrants did believe that they would be free from oppression there. The charter of one of the colonies Singleton helped form praises of Kansas as a place "...in which we might be able to secure homes for our families and enjoy the blessings of liberty."¹⁸ Many African Americans believed that since it was relatively undeveloped, the West would be free from the racism of the South. Additionally, Kansas' legacy of anti-slavery efforts convinced many that the state would protect their rights.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid, 168-175; Painter, 110-147.

¹⁸ "Material Relating to Benjamin Singleton," 1883-1874, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/225712>, 47.

¹⁹ Mary M. Cronin, "A Chance to Build for Our Selves: Black Press Boosterism in Oklahoma, 1891-1915," *Journalism History* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 71.

Like those who wanted to go to Liberia, many saw migration to Kansas as something that would benefit the larger Black community. At a May 1877 meeting Singleton organized in Nashville, Tennessee to promote migration, speech after speech focused on the need for Black people to remember “their duty” to their race and to unite together to build a more prosperous future.²⁰ Many of his advertisements struck a similar tone. One, signed by “Benjamin Singleton, A True Friend of his Race,” proclaimed, “Let us live together as a Band of Brethren and become united...”²¹ Many felt that the Black migrants could form an economically prosperous community in Kansas. A description of Kansas’ benefits at an 1872 national convention of African Americans focused on the fact that it was “a new State,” that its climate was supposedly extremely conducive to farming, and that the state’s economy was booming.²² Many advertisements struck a similar tone,

²⁰ “Address by Huston Soloman, Superintendent of Meeting,,” n.d., <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/211642/page/25>.

²¹ Benjamin Singleton, “Peace and Harmony,” n.d., <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/217993>.

²² “Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Causes of the Removal of the Negroes from the Southern States to the Northern States,” XII-XIII.

proclaiming the availability and high quality of land. An 1877 article by Singleton emphasized that Kansas had “some excellent selections of land and plenty of fine water, with a healthy climate. There is abundant room for all good citizens and no room for loafers or bummers. We want all good people there, who are willing to live by the sweat of their own brow.”²³ The message was that if one was willing to work hard, economic success was practically guaranteed. While Singleton himself often deemphasized political rights, viewing economic prosperity as more important, the two were intertwined in the lives of Southern African Americans, who often suffered from both political violence and economic coercion. Singleton’s emphasis on economic security and the ability to own land were thus just as much an expression of a desire for independence as they were an explicit appeal for political rights.

This early migration to Kansas largely took the form of organized colonies; groups of settlers from Kentucky or Tennessee would plan to move together to Kansas to start a settlement. However,

²³ Benjamin Singleton, “News From Kansas,” March 19, 1877, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/211642/page/98>.

in early 1879, a massive flood of unplanned migration began. In what would become known as the Exodus, a total of roughly six thousand “Exodusters” from all throughout the South streamed toward the West with the aim of reaching Kansas.²⁴ Unlike the earlier colonists, these migrants had few resources with which to support themselves and no exact plan for where to settle. What they did have was a strong belief that their journey West was almost predestined to occur.²⁵ Many also believed that the government would provide free transportation to Kansas in addition to free land and supplies when they arrived.²⁶ The strength of the Exodusters’ faith made it difficult for local and state authorities to dissuade them from making their journey, even as thousands of destitute African American migrants piled up in cities like St. Louis. The mass exodus only petered out when riverboats began to refuse to stop for Exodusters, stranding them along the Mississippi and leaving them to make their way back home.²⁷

²⁴ Painter, 184.

²⁵ Athearn, 5.

²⁶ Ibid, 10-81.

²⁷ Painter, 196.

The reasons these migrants felt compelled to travel to Kansas echoed the motivations of earlier settlers. While individual reasons varied, many seemed to be motivated by some mixture of desires for political liberty and economic prosperity, with a particular interest in free land. What set the Exodus apart was not their reasons for migrating, but rather the intensity of the anxiety and panic these migrants felt about their future in the South.²⁸ Minnesota Senator William Windom noted that the Exodusters “seem to regard themselves as refugees from some impending calamity rather than as emigrants seeking new homes.”²⁹ A dizzying array of rumors abounded among the Exodusters. Many believed that slavery-like conditions would soon be imposed upon them; while it is not clear exactly what prompted these fears, they were likely linked to Louisiana’s drafting of a draconian new state constitution and to political violence in 1876 and 1878. Stories abounded that Jefferson Davis had returned to power or that the fifteenth amendment was going to be repealed and slavery

²⁸ Athearn, 5-254.

²⁹ Painter, 179.

reinstated south of the Ohio river. One rumor even claimed that President Hayes had ordered the extermination of all African Americans remaining in the South after March of 1880. These fears were widespread and entertained even by those who were relatively well-informed. In early 1879, Adams and his compatriots shifted away from working toward migration to Liberia to focus on Kansas partially because they were sincerely concerned that African Americans' freedom of movement within the South was soon going to be curtailed.³⁰

Exodusters were not simply pushed out of the South by fears of what the future there held; many also saw Kansas in a mystical light. Many associated Kansas with the legacy of John Brown, viewing the entire state as being infused with freedom. One song likely sung by Exodusters had the refrain "Farewell, dear friends, farewell. We are on our rapid march to Kansas, the land that gives Birth to freedom."³¹ The

³⁰ Athearn, 5-254; Painter, 184-193; Report and Testimony, 166.

³¹ "Extending Our Voices to Heaven," n.d., <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/218451>.

association of Kansas with freedom was very tangible. John Solomon Lewis, a migrant from Louisiana, recounted in 1879 that “When I landed on the soil... I looked on the ground and I says this is free ground. Then I looked on the heavens, and I say them is free and beautiful heavens... I says to myself I wonder why I never was free before?”³² Another Louisiana Exoduster wrote to Kansas’ governor that they were eager to arrive in Kansas “because of the sacredness of her soil washed by the blood of humanitarians for the cause of freedom.”³³ Some even attributed the state special powers, as in the case of a blind migrant stated that he had made the journey because “Ise had a vision from de Lord, and he tells me to go to this yer Kansas and I shall git back my sight.”³⁴

The Exodus, planned settlement in Kansas, and migration to Liberia all reflected a shared desire for a future where one could shape one’s own destiny, free from racial oppression. Another similarity

³² Painter, 4-5.

³³ Ibid, 159.

³⁴ Athearn, 88.

between them was the difficulty of realizing them. Both those who wanted to go to Liberia and Exodusters mainly found their dreams unrealizable. The exceptions to this were the three successfully planned settlements in Kansas: Singleton's Baxter Springs and Dunlap colonies, and Nicodemus, the only one to initially market itself exclusively to the Black community, and the most famous of the three.

The early development of Nicodemus: 1877-1880

On April 18, 1877, seven Kansans formed the Nicodemus Town Company (NTC). Six were former slaves from Kentucky and Tennessee who had migrated to Topeka in 1874, likely attracted by Singleton's advertising. The seventh and only white founder, W.H. Hill, was a land speculator who had previously founded another town, Hill City, in the same county where Nicodemus was to be located. The founding was a financial venture; the incorporators bought the undeveloped land where the town was to be located and divided it into lots that they needed to sell to migrants to turn a profit. However, the

Black founders also intended Nicodemus to be their home, moving there with the first group of migrants from Topeka in the spring of 1877. Apart from a small group of 75 migrants from Mississippi in 1879 who were likely Exodusters, all the other early migrants were groups from Kentucky. By 1880, the area's total Black population was between 500 to 700. Nicodemus' founders attracted this migration by distributing handbills and travelling from town to town to encourage groups to come to Nicodemus.³⁵

The future Nicodemus promised its migrants was clearly a future intended for Black people. Its advertisements were addressed to "The Colored Citizens of the United States", to "All Colored people", or even to "our colored friends of the Nation," and referred to Nicodemus as "the largest colored colony in America!"³⁶ Like other

³⁵ Schwendemann, 11-29; Hamilton, 1-35.

³⁶ Nicodemus Town Company, "To the Colored Citizens of the United States," July 2, 1877, Kansas Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/208456>; Nicodemus Town Company, "All Colored People That Want to Go to Kansas, on September 5th 1877, Can Do So for \$5.00," 1877, Kansas Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/702>; W.R. Hill, "Advertisement for Nicodemus, Kansas," April 16, 1877, Kansas Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/210499>.

futures Southern Black communities imagined for themselves outside the South, the image promoted of Nicodemus emphasized independence. According to its founders, Nicodemus was a paradise where Black migrants would be able to prosper and become self-sufficient. Differing slightly from the rhetoric of Singleton and others, however, advertisements promoting Nicodemus focused more on the potential for individual prosperity than for communal uplift.

The town's very name carried connotations of prosperity and rebirth. Many historians have argued that the name Nicodemus is a reference to an abolitionist song about an enslaved African prince named Nicodemus who had predicted the end of slavery. A circular promoting Nicodemus featured a version of this song.³⁷ Adapted into an advertisement, the song referenced Nicodemus' prophetic powers and featured the chorus, "Good time coming... Run and tell Elija to... meet us... in the Great Solomon Valley..."³⁸ This song depicts

³⁷ Rosamund Rodman, "Naming a Place Nicodemus," *Great Plains Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (n.d.): 49–62.

³⁸ Hamilton, 5.

Nicodemus as the place where African Americans would realize the freedom that the prince predicted they would one day achieve.

Scholar of religious studies Rosamund Rodman has objected to this interpretation. She claims that the town name instead refers to the biblical character of Nicodemus, who sought to learn from Jesus at night. Many enslaved African Americans viewed themselves as similar to Nicodemus, since they were also only able to engage with religion, or the Bible, secretly. Nicodemus has been associated with the idea of rebirth or conversion; by coming to Christianity in the same way that Nicodemus did, many enslaved people felt that they were able to cast off the identity of slave that had been forced upon them and claim an identity of their own making. As two of the founders of Nicodemus were preachers, it is likely that they would have known this common biblical interpretation. Rodman thus argues that the founders intended the name Nicodemus to imply that through coming to Nicodemus migrants would be able to abandon their pasts and be reborn.³⁹

³⁹ Rodman, 49–62.

Given that there is evidence that the founders of the settlement would have been familiar with both meanings of Nicodemus, it seems likely that they drew upon both in changing the name. After all, both the story of the enslaved prophet and of religious rebirth similarly imply that the town of Nicodemus was a place where Southern African Americans could be free.

By freedom, however, the founders were not mainly referring to social and political equality. There is only one known instance in which the advertisement of the town promised racial equality. While recruiting at a Baptist church, Hill boasted that Black and White people lived as equals in the region. However, this was only one part of his pitch and was sandwiched between promises about the ready availability of land and the presence of wild game and supposedly tamable wild horses.⁴⁰ Rather than equality, the promotion of the town tended to emphasize how the town's physical features guaranteed economic success. A September 1877 circular promised that for only

⁴⁰ Schwendemann, 7.

five dollars, settlers would be able to travel to Kansas and find “an abundance of choice lands”.⁴¹ Going into more depth, an earlier July 1877 circular promoting Nicodemus stated that “We are proud to say [the Solomon Valley] is the finest country we ever saw.”⁴² It detailed that the valley’s soil was “of rich, black, sandy loam”, that there was plenty of water available, and that there was “an abundance of fine Magnesian stone... [and] there is also some timber; plenty for fire use, while we have no fear but what we will find plenty of coal.”⁴³ The circular sought to assure migrants that Nicodemus would be able to meet any need they might imagine.

However, the advertisements did not simply depict the land surrounding Nicodemus as suitable for farming. They glorified the area as being like Eden. As the inaugural May 1876 issue of the Nicodemus Western Cyclone crowed, “If there is paradise on earth, it is certainly

⁴¹ Nicodemus Town Company, “All Colored People That Want to Go to Kansas, on September 5th 1877, Can Do So for \$5.00.”

⁴² Nicodemus Town Company, “To the Colored Citizens of the United States.”

⁴³ Ibid.

here.”⁴⁴ The NTC’s ownership certificate, which features a picture of two horses tilling a bucolic field, reflects the same sentiment.⁴⁵ A 4/16/1877 circular claimed that the land was so perfect that it seemed “designed for the Colored Colony” and “invite[d] our colored friends of the Nation to come and join with us in this beautiful Promise Land”.⁴⁶ Even the circulars which stuck largely to more practical descriptions of the land, referred to the town as being “beautifully located... in the great Solomon Valley”.⁴⁷

This conception of Nicodemus was not simply advertising copy; it was also, at least to an extent, echoed by the settlers themselves. When recounting how Hill had selected the town site, early Nellie Craig described how “...As the sun was dropping below the western horizon, Hill was admiring the beauty of the Western sunset. He lingered until night had settled around him. Then the tired man lay

⁴⁴ Hamilton, 35.

⁴⁵ “Benjamin ‘Pap’ Singleton Scrapbook- Insert,” n.d., Kansas Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/211642/page/12>.

⁴⁶ Hill.

⁴⁷ NTC, “To the Colored Citizens of the United States.”

down to rest and think. He was awakened the next morning by the sun shining upon his face. He had found the perfect place.”⁴⁸ Craig’s narrative dwells upon the environment of Nicodemus but not to demonstrate the land’s viability for making a living. Rather, she displays a similar enchantment with the physical environment of Nicodemus as the Exodus did with Kansas as a whole. In her eyes, the Solomon Valley was almost fated to be Nicodemus’ location. In reality, it is likely that Hill, an experienced surveyor, had simply located Nicodemus in the most practical location available. However, the fact that Craig believed this alternative story enough to retell it suggests that she truly believed it.⁴⁹

By depicting the town as a paradise, Nicodemus’ founders communicated that the physical environment of the town would allow settlers to achieve the prosperity and rebirth promised by the town’s name. A practical description of the land and surrounding natural resources would have been sufficient to depict the town as suitable for

⁴⁸ Hamilton, 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 4-5.

farming. Going beyond that with hyperbolic descriptions focused on the town's beauty and its physical wonders suggested that potential migrants would be able to thrive in a more holistic sense. They would not only prosper financially in Nicodemus; they would be able to realize all the benefits of freedom.⁵⁰ The town's promoters made this connection clear in the July 1877 circular. After describing how Nicodemus was located in "the finest country we ever saw," the circular featured the reworked song about Nicodemus recounting how there was a "Good time coming... in the Great Solomon Valley".⁵¹ This juxtaposition implies that it was the physical environment of "the Great Solomon Valley" that would allow migrants to be free.

The founders' promotion of the town's cultural life further stressed that Nicodemus was a place where one could build a life rather than just make a profit. An April 1877 circular announced that "a

⁵⁰ Cronin, 75; David M. Emmons, *Garden in the Grasslands; Boomer Literature of the Central Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 1-66.

⁵¹ NTC, "To the Colored Citizens of the United States."

church edifice and other public buildings will be erected.”⁵² The founders seemed to be trying to establish Nicodemus as a paragon of morality. As the circular went on to explain, “No saloons or other houses of ill-fame will be allowed on the town site within five years from the date of this organization.”⁵³ Migrants would be able to live a full, morally upstanding life in Nicodemus. However, while the founders may have wanted migrants to feel that they would be part of a community in Nicodemus, their advertising conveyed a message of individual prosperity, not communal uplift. Unlike with Singleton’s promotion, there were no advertisements for Nicodemus that focused on how settling in the town would help unite or otherwise benefit the Black community. Promotion of Nicodemus was focused upon how individuals would prosper and realize their full potential, not how the Black community overall would be uplifted.

This message succeeded in attracting migrants to the town. However, once they arrived, it became clear that the future they had

⁵² Hill.

⁵³ Ibid.

been promised would be difficult to achieve. The migrants lacked financial resources and supplies; they brought only a handful of horses to the colony, for example, forcing early settlers to use cows to till the fields. These troubles were compounded by missteps in planning, as some of the groups of migrants had arrived too late in the year to plant crops. Migrants struggled to feed themselves and to solicit aid. These troubles, as well as a desire to avoid an influx of Exoduster refugees, led the town to stop advertising in the early 1880s.⁵⁴

Promotion of Nicodemus after 1886

By the late 1880s, Nicodemus was beginning to thrive. The town had developed a robust business district: in the spring of 1887, it had four general stores, a grocery, two druggists, three land companies, a lawyer, two hotels, two livery stables, a blacksmith shop, and a harness and boot repair store. Residents' faith in their town's future appeared to be strong; farmers were doing well enough to be able to

⁵⁴ Hamilton, 1-35.

invest in improving their land and their communities. However, the town was not simply an improved version of what it had been a decade earlier; its character had shifted. Half of the town's businesses were now owned by white men. Historian Claire O'Brien suggests that the town's business elite was truly integrated, socializing together and working together to plan for the town's future. They assembled an interracial committee to try to attract a railroad station to the town; they also formed an exactly half Black and half white baseball team. Even if the town elite was integrated, however, the town overall was still majority Black. Many of its social institutions, such as the church group the Daughters of Zion and the Grand Benevolent Society, remained all Black.⁵⁵

The town's more stable status in the late 1880s meant that many residents were once again interested in promoting the town. In 1887 and 1888, two separate groups were formed to attract migrants:

⁵⁵ Schwendemann, 29; Hamilton, 1-35; Clare O'Brien, "'With One Mighty Pull': Interracial Town Boosting in Nicodemus, Kansas," *Great Plains Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1996): 117-30.

the Emigration Association, and the Nicodemus Immigration Union, to which the town's business owners belonged.⁵⁶ The town's two newspapers, the *Western Cyclone* and the *Nicodemus Enterprise* were the other main source of promotion during this period.⁵⁷ The *Cyclone* was owned by Hill, who had bought it to promote the bid of his other town, Hill City, for the county seat. It was caught in a feud with the *Enterprise*, which was run by a former editor of the *Cyclone* and which often used its pages to attack Hill. Despite this animosity, both papers had similar content.⁵⁸ Like newspapers in Black communities throughout the West, the *Cyclone* and the *Enterprise* were relentlessly positive about all aspects of their town, often blurring the line between fact and fiction. The hope was that as people back East read the

⁵⁶ Hamilton, 24-32; O'Brien, 117-130.

⁵⁷ For this paper, I examined digitized issues of both papers. The Readex "African American Newspapers, 1827-1998" database has 44 digitized issues of the *Nicodemus Cyclone* from between 12/30/1887 and 9/7/1888 and 15 digitized issues of the *Nicodemus Enterprise* from between 8/17/1887 and 12/23/1887.

⁵⁸ Norman L. Crockett, *The Black Towns* (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), 87-89; Hamilton 1-35.

newspapers or individual articles that had been reprinted in Eastern newspapers, they would be motivated to migrate.⁵⁹

However, just as the town had changed, so had the way it promoted itself. While the future Nicodemus promoted itself as offering, the framing was different. Nicodemus no longer depicted itself as specifically for Black people, instead directing its advertisements at poor people of all races. Additionally, the town's promoters did not simply depict Nicodemus to show potential migrants what future they could have; they also used arguments about how Nicodemus' future would unfold to promote the town.

Both the *Enterprise* and the *Cyclone* were conscious of both the importance of promoting Nicodemus and their role in that promotion. A March 1888 issue of the *Cyclone* noted slyly that "The editors of Kansas deserve special praise for their untiring efforts in advancing the State from her infancy up to the present time."⁶⁰ A Mrs.

⁵⁹ Cronin, 72.

⁶⁰ *The Western Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, Readex.

Helen Lavell put it more elegantly in a poem in a May 1886 *Cyclone* about the newspaper's role, commanding the newspaper to "...blow: little cyclone, Continue to blow, In every direction, Let every man know."⁶¹ The newspapers both realized that not only was promoting Nicodemus important to the town's success but that being perceived as good at promotion was key to their own survival. They each often featured editorials arguing for their own importance and their advantages over circulars or pamphlets. As an April 1888 issue of the *Cyclone* argued, "one good 'write up' in a regularly printed paper is worth ten earloads of posters [or] pamphlets... A paper is the mirror of your town by and through which our eastern neighbors see us."⁶²

The newspapers showed a similar image of Nicodemus in their "mirror" as the town's founders had in the 1870s, depicting the town as a lush paradise where migrants could become self-sufficient. In editorials like the one in a September 1887 *Enterprise*, which referred to Kansas as "the paradise of earth! the Eden of the world! the diadem

⁶¹ *The Western Cyclone*, May 20, 1886, Readex.

⁶² *The Western Cyclone*, April 13, 1888, Readex.

of Columbia...”, the newspapers emphasized Nicodemus’ natural beauty.⁶³ However, if the content was the same, the intended audience was different. Nicodemus was no longer being promoted only to the Black community. Between 1887 and 1880, the newspapers featured only two articles which were explicitly addressed to Black people: an article in a November 1887 *Enterprise* which noted that “There is quite a fever among the Colored People of Chicago to secure homes...” and that land was readily available in Kansas, and an editorial in a January 1888 *Cyclone* which encouraged “young colored men” to prove their worth in Nicodemus.⁶⁴ There were no references to Nicodemus as a “colored colony” like in the town’s earlier circulars.

By the late 1880s, Nicodemus was envisioned as a town where both Black and White poor men could thrive. This entailed a rewriting of the town’s history; several articles recounted the story of Nicodemus’ founding or of settlement in Kansas more generally

⁶³ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 28, 1887, Readex.

⁶⁴ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, November 16, 1887 Readex; *The Western Cyclone*, January 20, 1888, Readex.

without emphasis on race. A May 1886 *Cyclone* explained that the residents of Nicodemus had sought a land where “[they could] breathe the pure air of God’s liberty independent of the bossism of the average eastern landlord...”.⁶⁵ The article depicted a desire for economic prosperity as the predominant factor in the town’s settlement without any reference to how racism had motivated the economic coercion many Nicodemus residents had experienced or even mention that most early migrants had been Black. It was not that this new vision of Nicodemus excluded Black people. A November 1887 *Enterprise* declared that “Kansas don’t discriminate on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude” in the same breath that it announced that in Graham County “the poorest man can secure a home for himself”.⁶⁶ Rather, it was that the focus of promotion was no longer on how Nicodemus would help Black people specifically realize their potential. Instead of being addressed to “All colored people,” articles

⁶⁵ *The Western Cyclone*, May 27, 1886.

⁶⁶ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, November 16, 1887, Readex.

now began with “Poor Man’s Paradise!” or “KANSAS FOR POOR PEOPLE”.⁶⁷

This shift likely occurred for pragmatic reasons. For the town to thrive, it had to have a large enough population to secure a railroad station. By easing travel between Nicodemus and the wider region, a railroad station would ensure that Nicodemus stayed relevant to Kansas commerce. Historian Kenneth Hamilton argues that the town’s promoters were concerned that it would be difficult to attract many Black settlers with the means to settle in the town. By using a race neutral appeal and addressing anyone who felt frustrated by their prospects in the East, they could reach a wider pool of migrants, making it more likely that they would find enough interested settlers who could afford to migrate.⁶⁸

In their efforts to promote Nicodemus to a broader audience, the newspapers also used the future as a tool, drawing upon arguments

⁶⁷ *The Western Cyclone*, February 3, 1888, Readex; *The Western Cyclone*, March 16, 1888.

⁶⁸ Hamilton, 17; O’Brien, 122.

of how Nicodemus would develop to make the town appear more desirable. The newspapers often acknowledged that some issue, whether drought or political turmoil, had been plaguing Nicodemus. As a September 1887 *Enterprise* put it, Kansas “has been teaching her children a lesson in economy by cutting down her bountiful gifts for the past three years.”⁶⁹ However, they always claimed that the issue had been resolved and that Nicodemus would now experience a consistent upward trend of growth. The September 1887 *Enterprise* announced that after the past three years of drought, “the people of Kansas are now prepared to withstand exhilarating tide of prosperity... Oh, Kansas of 1888! thou art the fairest of the fair!”⁷⁰ An August 1887 *Enterprise* had been similarly enthusiastic about what the future held for Nicodemus, writing, “Glorious town... What inspired hand can write your future, who can estimate your wealth ten years from today?”⁷¹

⁶⁹ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 28, 1887, Readex.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, August 24, 1887.

Explaining why this progress was so certain to occur was another opportunity for promotion. The newspapers often asserted that Nicodemus' growth was more authentic than the speculation driven booms other towns were experiencing. A September 1887 issue of the *Enterprise* boasted that "Nicodemus has a boom, not a boom of [the] mushroom variety, but a genuine old fashioned healthy boom, the variety that lasts long."⁷² A February 1888 *Cyclone* similarly stressed that, "Unlike Southern Kansas this section has never 'boomed'. The growth has been steady and natural."⁷³ The argument was that the town's growth was linked to the suitability of the town's characteristics, which were, according to a March 1888 *Cyclone*, its "excellent water, enterprising citizens, good schools, churches... [and] farming lands that surpass any in the beautiful South Solomon Valley."⁷⁴ This supposedly distinguished Nicodemus from other locations whose reported booms were all due to hype, an ironic

⁷² *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 14, 1887, Readex.

⁷³ *The Western Cyclone*, February 24, 1888.

⁷⁴ *The Western Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, Readex.

distinction considering that the purpose of the newspapers' rhetoric was to shift how Nicodemus was perceived.

One of the features the March 1888 *Cyclone* noted a key to Nicodemus' growth was its "enterprising citizens". Both newspapers used this idea to challenge the reader to play some role in aiding the town's growth. In one of the few editorials addressed to Black migrants, a January 1888 *Cyclone* wrote that,

The question has been frequently put to us by young colored men seeking to better their condition, where is there an opening?... Now will you come, and help us build up a booming little town or are you content to lead a flunky's life and do no good for yourself or [anybody] else? Here you will encounter none of the prejudice you complain so bitterly of in the south... Come out here and help us to turn up these beautiful prairie farms and assert your American manhood.⁷⁵

The editorial attempted to prod those interested in Nicodemus by tying together a willingness to move westward and masculinity.

⁷⁵ *The Western Cyclone*, January 20, 1888, Readex.

The *Cyclone* also directed its challenge toward current Nicodemus residents, noting in a February 1888 issue that "...northern Kansas is exerting herself as never before to advertise for and induce immigration to come our way. Farmers, be prepared to do your part in this praiseworthy enterprise... Exert yourself... and when the immigrant reaches us next spring and summer we will be able to show him indeed a land of milk and honey."⁷⁶ This article called upon farmers to help ensure that Nicodemus' actual state matched the image the newspapers were selling to those back East. Whether addressing potential migrants or current residents, the newspapers depicted progress as something the reader could aid to motivate their audience to contribute to Nicodemus' development.

However, the newspapers were careful not to depict Nicodemus' growth as being in any real danger. Rather, they often strenuously suggested that the town's progress was so guaranteed that readers should migrate soon to be sure that they did not miss out. A

⁷⁶ *The Western Cyclone*, February 3, 1888, Readex.

February 1888 issue of the *Cyclone* recounted how a rich investor had recently bought a great deal of property in the town, noting that “His head is level now is the time to catch on,” and asking, “Who will be next?”⁷⁷ In March of 1888, after a description of how “Nicodemus... has had no unhealthy boom”, the *Cyclone* advised potential migrants, “Don’t wait, delay will prove dangerous.”⁷⁸ Like with the challenge to improve the town, this message was aimed at local readers as well. The final issue of the *Enterprise* in December of 1887 advised readers to “Stick out for your property in Nicodemus... For just as sure as one season follows another, Nicodemus will be ‘the town’ of Graham county.”⁷⁹ Even as the paper itself folded, its editors attempted to communicate complete confidence in the town’s prospects. Similarly, a September 1888 issue of the *Cyclone* stated that “We are sorry to see several of our business men making preparations to move to this proposed new town... With a thickly settled surrounding, already established in business and as reliably informed the extension of the

⁷⁷ *The Western Cyclone*, February 10, 1888, Readex.

⁷⁸ *The Western Cyclone*, March 30, 1888, Readex.

⁷⁹ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, December 23, 1887, Readex.

Stockton road in the near future Nicodemus and her business men have nothing to cause them alarm... Don't get frightened hold on to your property and be ready to enjoy the real boom that will surely come."⁸⁰

The town's purported growth could thus be used both to challenge readers to contribute and to warn them not to miss an opportunity.

Conclusion

Nicodemus was just one among many futures Southern Black people imagined for themselves during the 1870s. Whether they were fantasizing about colonization of Liberia, were planning to found a settlement in Kansas, or were part of the Exodus of 1879, many Southern Black people envisioned leaving the South during the 1870s. Like these predominant visions of the future, Nicodemus was advertised by its founders as a place where migrants could find

⁸⁰ *The Nicodemus Enterprise*, September 7, 1887, Readex.

independence. While the vision promoted of Nicodemus departed slightly from the rhetoric of some Black leaders like Singleton in its focus on individual prosperity rather than on the wellbeing of the overall community, the founders of Nicodemus did intend the town to be a home specifically for Black migrants.

Though Nicodemus may have been only one of the many imagined futures, it was one of the only visions that any headway was made toward realizing. That meant that some migrants did achieve the self-sufficiency they coveted. However, as Nicodemus demonstrated, enacting a planned future often requires adjustment. To keep Nicodemus thriving, the town's promoters felt they had to compromise the intent of the founders' initial vision. When the town shifted in the late 1880s from defining its audience by race to defining it by class, it sacrificed some of the singularity of the founders' vision for practicality. While Nicodemus remained a community welcoming of Black migrants, it no longer spoke exclusively to them.

However, the promotion of Nicodemus during this period was a story not only of revision but of ingenuity. Aware of the need to promote the town to a wider audience, the town's two newspapers used the future itself as a tool. The newspapers tried to use what they reported as Nicodemus' guaranteed growth to inspire readers to come to or stay in Nicodemus. They used their predictions to motivate their audience, attempting to both scare and challenge them.

Despite all these efforts, the visions contained in the pages of the *Enterprise* and the *Cyclone* never came true. As it became increasingly clear in the early 1880s that Nicodemus would never receive a railroad station, the town began to fade away. While a few families have remained in Nicodemus to the present day, most of the town gradually dispersed.⁸¹ Some moved to neighboring towns that had been luckier in their negotiations with the railroads. A few joined back-to-Africa movements and were actually successful in migrating.⁸² Others moved to Oklahoma, which had begun to rival Kansas as a

⁸¹ Hamilton, 1-35.

⁸² Crockett, 175.

center of Black migration westward. Still a territory, Oklahoma offered more opportunities for Black self-governance than Kansas had. For a period in the late nineteenth century, some Black leaders even advocated for Oklahoma to become an exclusively Black territory. While that never occurred, many predominantly Black towns flourished in Oklahoma and some of Nicodemus' former residents like Edwin P. McCabe found that the territory offered them the success that had been elusive in Kansas.⁸³ Whatever vision of the future they chose to latch on to, by the end of the nineteenth century most of Nicodemus' residents had drifted away in search of new "Promise Lands".

⁸³ Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier* (New York City: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 145-163.

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A STUDY IN KASHMIR: PARTITION TO SPECIAL STATUS

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Introduction

The Kashmir Problem has been a contested issue within the region of northern India since Partition in 1947. Kashmir was accessioned to India in 1947 by its Hindu king, Maharaja Hari Singh, yet it did not formally adopt its state constitution until 1956. Along with the ratification of Kashmir's constitution, Prime Minister Nehru gave the state "special status" in Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and gave the state special autonomy within the document. Kashmir's special status, as well as tensions at the border, remain to this day. Why was there a delay in formally adopting Kashmir's constitution? What was the purpose of additionally granting Kashmir special status, while most of the other states within the dominion of India did not have one? What made Kashmir's conflict escalate to the point of reaching a global

stage? These questions reveal the roots of the “Kashmir Problem” and influence the state of geopolitics in the Indian subcontinent today.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir was accessioned to India by Maharaja Hari Singh in October of 1947 through the “Instrument of Accession”; in which the rulers of the former princely states of Britain chose whether they would accede to Pakistan or India.¹ However, the constitution of the state was not formally ratified until 1956, the same year Article 370 was added to the constitution. For nearly ten years, Jammu and Kashmir had legally been a part of India, yet had not adopted, nor created, a state constitution. This paper will demonstrate that the creation and ratification of the state constitution in relation to the adoption of Article 370 into the Indian Constitution was a direct result of the conflict over Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan beginning with the events of Partition in 1947. The events of Partition not only split the Indian subcontinent into multiple nations,

¹ Khagendra Chandra Pal, “The relations between the Indian Union and the State of Jammu and Kashmir,” in *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 4 (1953): 333-346.

but created the border tensions centered in Kashmir, which escalated from a boundary dispute to a full-frontal conflict. The delay in the ratification of Kashmir's constitution was caused by the demand for a plebiscite by Pakistan following the tribal invasions of 1947-1948, as well as the U.N.'s eventual intervention.

While it is often argued that the internal politics between India and Pakistan greatly contributed to the conflict surrounding Kashmir, the global context of the newly developed international politics following World War II also influenced the Kashmir problem. The contrasting ideologies of capitalism and communism found during the Cold War also occurred within the context of decolonization throughout the world. After World War II, former colonies began to strengthen their own independence movements, as they were forced to fight for the freedom and self-determination of their European colonizers, yet were not granted the same natural rights as their European counterparts. With the colonies demanding independence, Western European countries slowly began to withdraw their administrative and political power, though often taking decades to fully

do so. With new governments forming throughout Asia, Africa and South America, and given the vulnerability of the former-colonial nations to the influence of the Soviet Union, the newly formed U.N. was concerned as it perceived the spread of communism as a threat to democratic society.² This made it essential for the former Allied nations to ensure productive and bilateral international relations with former colonies, India and Pakistan being among the first. This influenced the international perspective of Kashmir, expanding the concerns over the region from simply a regional problem given the Soviet Union's growing influence in Asia.

Influence of Partition and Colonization

In order to understand how the events of Partition affected the state of Jammu and Kashmir, it is essential to understand the ideologies which contributed to the split of the Indian subcontinent into three

² Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

separate nations, divided by religion. In 1935, the British viceroy of India passed the Government of India Act, which granted increased autonomy to the provinces of British India. However, this act failed to enthruse Muslims in provinces where they were a minority.³ The Muslim League, a political organization led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah which sought to protect the rights of the Muslim minority in India and later Pakistan, began to demand a separate electorate for the Muslim population, in order to ensure fair representation in the provincial government. The League eventually gained popularity, especially during World War II, when Indian soldiers were sent to fight for the British, with the promise for eventual independence from colonial rule. With the popularity of the Muslim League increasing among the Muslim population, the demands for their rights also increased, culminating at the Lucknow Pact of 1941, where Mohammad Ali Jinnah first proposed, and later adopted, the two-state theory. This theory proposed that the Indian Muslims were always a distinctive and

³ Sugata Bote and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, 3rd ed (London: Routledge, 2011).

separate community that had resisted assimilation into the Indian environment. As a result, Muslims should have their own homeland in the Muslim majority areas in the Indian subcontinent. The two-state theory also began to gain traction among groups in India after multiple instances of communal riots and violence. This created a division between the ideologies of communalism and nationalism, which was rooted in the broader debate of what consisted as being truly “Indian”. This division was also felt in Kashmir between the ruling Hindu elite and the majority-Muslim population before, during, and after Partition.

India achieved independence from Great Britain through the Indian Independence Act of 1947. The Indian subcontinent was split into three regions in accordance to their respective Muslim or Hindu populations: modern-day India, East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) and West Pakistan.⁴ These boundaries were created around areas with concentrated Muslim populations, namely the states of Punjab, Bengal and Kashmir. At the time of this partition, there was intense violence

⁴ Ibid.

between Hindus and Muslims, as well as large migrations of people attempting to exit or enter India, making for further complications at the border.⁵ The partitions of Bengal and Punjab were particularly violent, yet their resulting boundaries were “evenly” split, creating East and West Pakistan.

The Jammu and Kashmir presented a different problem, as Maharaja Hari Singh, the Hindu king of Kashmir, was indecisive concerning which dominion the state should accession to.⁶ For over a hundred years, Kashmir had been ruled by the minority Hindu Dogra kings with a majority Muslim populace. The Maharaja wanted to retain his control over the Kashmiri kingdom, yet the majority of his constituents wanted freedom from his autocratic rule.⁷ The choice between India and Pakistan was partially rooted in the question of which country would grant the Kashmiri people individual freedoms, as

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy* (Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire: Roxford Books, 1991).

⁷ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Community, and the History of Kashmir* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

well as a democratic and representative government that Kashmiris would be in charge of.

In October of 1947, tribal groups from Pakistan invaded the Indian Kashmir Valley in an attempt to take control of the land and ensure that it would come under Pakistani control. In response, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession in order for Kashmir to become a part of the dominion of India. The Maharaja and Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, viewed this invasion as being sponsored by the newly formed Pakistani government in order to force Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. The Maharaja needed reinforcements to defend Kashmir and accessioning Kashmir to India would provide the province with the resources needed to fight off the tribal invaders. With the Maharaja's accession, the state was now legally a part of India. The Maharaja was able to request assistance to drive off the tribal invaders, and Nehru was able to legally send in the Indian Army to take back control of the Valley while ensuring the

military aide was legally obtained.⁸ This legal condition documenting Kashmir's accession to India would later play an important role in India's argument against Pakistan at the intervention of the U.N. security council.

During this period of fighting, now known as the First Kashmir War, a portion of Kashmir broke off from the rest of the state to become a self-governing Pakistani state. This area became known as Azad (free) Kashmir, as it saw itself as free from the autocratic rule of the Maharaja. By 1948, the fighting had begun to cease with the Indian military taking back control of Srinagar, Kashmir's capital. From then on, the Kashmir Valley was militarized by the (largely Hindu) Indian Army. With the army's continuous presence in the valley, multiple Muslim majority settlements were attacked by these forces, as they were suspected of colluding with Pakistan.⁹ This increase in anti-

⁸ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

⁹ Kuldip Singh Bajwa, *Jammu and Kashmir War (1947-1948) – Political and Military Perspective* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2003).

Muslim violence by the Indian army marked the beginning of a precipitous drop in Kashmiri Muslim support for union with India.¹⁰

The public's dissent with the Maharaja's rule, as well as increasing communal violence at the newly formed border, led Nehru to take certain actions within Kashmir to ensure that it remained pro-India. In order for Kashmir to have support in remaining with India, Nehru needed to ally with a popular Muslim political leader in Kashmir, which he found in Sheikh Abdullah. Abdullah, who was initially popular among the Muslim population of the state, was hated by the Maharaja and his allies as Abdullah opposed the Maharaja's rule in 1939.¹¹ This led to Nehru having to manage a strained political relationship between the two men and factions.

Internal Politics of Kashmir

¹⁰ Mahesh Shankar, "Nehru's legacy in Kashmir: Why a plebiscite never happened," in *India Review* 15, no. 1 (2016): 1-21.

¹¹ Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*.

The essence of the Kashmir conflict lies in the internal politics of India and Pakistan, derived from the complexity and disorganization of the events of Partition. The conflict of Kashmir symbolized the post-partition struggle that contested the identities of India and Pakistan along their religious and secular lines. Kashmir challenged the secular nationalism of India, as well as the religion-centered Pakistan, due to its unique history of being a state led by Hindu rulers with Muslim subjects.¹² Jammu and Kashmir was one of the few states where the religious minority was in power, and to this day, it remains the only state in India with a majority Muslim population.

Prior to Partition, Kashmir was already under political strife. The Pakistani Kashmiri Muslims saw the Maharaja's control of Kashmir as a denial of Kashmiri Muslim's right to exist, as well as a refusal to their natural right of self-government. During the development of the national independence movement, Sheikh Abdullah lead the "Quit Kashmir" agitation campaign against the Maharaja of

¹² Ibid.

Kashmir in May of 1946, in order to urge for self-rule in Kashmir, as well as to institute a democratic and representative form of government. The goal of this agitation was to do away with the Maharaja and turn Kashmir into a democratic-republic by giving the people the right to self-determination.¹³ For Abdullah's activism, he was exiled and jailed by the Maharaja's government, though he was later released on the orders of Nehru.¹⁴ Despite Abdullah's anti-Maharaja policies, Nehru recognized that he held the belief that Kashmir should remain within India for the needs of foreign affairs, communication and defense, while prioritizing the Kashmiri people's freedom over accession. This made Abdullah a powerful ally for Nehru, particularly considering his popularity. Abdullah's perceived preference to India gave concern to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League in Pakistan, as he felt that Abdullah would be a proxy to the Indian government's tactics to retain Kashmir. Some Muslim subjects in Kashmir shared this

¹³ Josef Korbel, "Danger in Kashmir," in *Foreign Affairs* 32, no. 3 (April 1954): 482-490.

¹⁴ Jawaid Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964: Select Correspondence between Jawaharlal Nehru and Karan Singh* (New Delhi: Viking, 2006).

concern, as they feared that their voices would be erased from broader discourse about the region. Abdullah's rising status also perturbed the Maharaja, as he felt that his long-held power over Kashmir would dwindle as Abdullah became more politically and socially influential throughout the state.

It is important to note that Nehru had a personal interest in Kashmir's accession to India. Nehru was a native Kashmiri Hindu, with implied connections to the Kashmiri Hindu community within the state, as well as a close friend of the Maharaja and his family. In a series of letters addressed to Nehru from Abdullah and other Kashmiri Muslim politicians, he was consistently referred to as "Panditji", a title reserved for Kashmiri Hindus in, and outside of, Kashmir.¹⁵ Through these letters, it was revealed that Nehru had rather close ties with the Maharaja and his family, as they often sent each other gifts after vacations, as well as regular invitations to personal dinners and events.¹⁶ When the letters did not contain pertinent national

¹⁵ Korbelt, "Danger in Kashmir."

¹⁶ Ibid.

information, Nehru would often refer to the Maharaja and his family by their private nicknames.¹⁷ Nehru's personal interest in Kashmir was tied to his common identity with the ruling Hindu elite, as well as a sentimental connection to the land, as evidenced by the discussion of multiple estates owned by his family.¹⁸ Nehru's connection to Kashmir would play an important role within the political turmoil involving the state, especially with his reaction to tribes from Pakistan invading Kashmir during the U.N. Security Council meetings from 1948-1949.

With the violence beginning to dwindle between Pakistan and India, Prime Minister Nehru of India and Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan began negotiations between the two states in 1948, with Pakistan demanding that India hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. This plebiscite would call for a direct vote from the electorate in Kashmir to determine whether the state should belong to India or Pakistan, making this a "mutually acceptable and fair" path out of the conflict.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

However, Nehru was still angered by what he viewed as a state-sponsored invasion of Kashmir by Pakistan and wanted the U.N. to punish the former accordingly. As a result, both nations appealed to the United Nations for a fair solution to the Kashmir problem. This marked the first inter-state conflict to be discussed by the U.N. Security Council and was clouded by the lens of the Cold War as well as strategic and ideological imperatives in South Asia and the Middle East.

The Kashmir Problem became one of the U.N. Security Council's first forays into managing and intervening in international affairs, setting a potential precedent for future conflicts. Kashmir's significance to the realm of international politics was not lost on the United Nations and the U.S., considering the growing power of the Soviet Union as well as India and Pakistan's foray as newly independent nations after centuries of British control. The result of the Security Council's debates regarding Kashmir would signify Western Europe's rate of success with decolonization, as the Indian subcontinent was one of the first former colonies to be decolonized

following World War II. A resolution in the conflict between Pakistan and India would also establish the United Nations as a strong international body, able to manage international affairs and conflicts surrounding the decolonization of the rest of the colonies formerly held by nations in Western Europe. Additionally, the impending resolution in Kashmir would also pave the way for the growing tensions of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, particularly with the Soviet's sphere of influence on the continent of Asia.

To ensure that an escalation of war did not take place while the negotiations for the conditions of the plebiscite were being debated, a ceasefire agreement was drawn to define a boundary within the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This boundary would temporarily mark the effective limit of the sovereignties of the two states while the Security Council investigated the accession concerns. India and Pakistan could not cross the boundaries in order to initiate warfare over the disputed region, effectively ending the First Kashmir War with a stalemate. This de-facto border was not crossed until the Second War in Kashmir in 1965 and was later re-designated as the "Line of Control" following the

Simla Agreement in 1972, which was to be controlled by the Indian and Pakistani military.

The Kashmir problem was viewed as a territorial dispute by the United Nations Security Council instead of a struggle listen to the wishes of the Kashmiri people because of growing tensions with the Soviet Union.²⁰ At the Security Council meetings conducted in early 1948, India continued to blame Pakistan for its “aggression”, and for allegedly sponsoring the invasion into Jammu & Kashmir.²¹ Pakistan called the legitimacy of Kashmir’s accession to India into question, as India claimed that all of Jammu and Kashmir (including Azad Kashmir) was a part of India due to the Maharaja’s accession in 1947. The majority of India’s argument for the proper punishment of Pakistan was based on the legality of Kashmir belonging to India. However, India’s argument was tainted by Nehru’s emotional connection to Kashmir, the wider military context of how Kashmir was acceded, and

²⁰ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

²¹ Rakesh Ankit, “Britain and Kashmir, 1948: “The Arena of the UN”,” in *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 24, no. 2 (2013): 273-290.

his desire for the UN to pass a “moral judgment” on Pakistan to gain “justice” for Kashmir.²² Nehru and the Maharaja wanted to blame the entire conflict on Pakistan. Therefore, according to Nehru, the UN refused to acknowledge the wider context of the influence of Partition on the entire subcontinent, as its interest was with the effects of the early years of the Cold War.²³

The UN Security council, notably agreeing with Pakistan’s demands, suggested that the issue of Kashmir would be solved through a plebiscite in Kashmir, which would allow the people to decide which state they wanted to accession to. The accession would be held under the supervision of the UN after the “restoration of order” within the state, namely the removal of the tribesmen from the region.²⁴ Promising to hold the plebiscite in front of the United Nations Security Council, India asked for Pakistan to retract its forces, both tribal and national, from the Valley. However, Nehru did not want Pakistan to be a part of

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ankit, “Britain and Kashmir, 1948.”; Shankar, “Nehru’s legacy in Kashmir.”

any electoral process concerning the plebiscite. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's first Governor-General, viewed the conditions set by India for plebiscite as "humiliating" for Pakistan as well as hypocritical – the Indian military would be able to remain in Kashmir while Pakistan had to retract.²⁵ Jinnah was also concerned about the conduct of the plebiscite; if the oversight of the process was entrusted to Sheikh Abdullah, the electoral process would likely be manipulated by Nehru to consolidate Indian control over the region. As a result, Jinnah and the Pakistani delegation demanded that the Indian military also withdraw from the state and that the Abdullah administration give way to a "caretaker" administration that would remain neutral within the context of the Indo-Pakistan dispute and would fairly administer the plebiscite.²⁶

The Indian army remained in Kashmir and the plebiscite was continuously delayed throughout the 1950s due to apprehensions about the practicability of it, therefore angering the region's Muslim residents

²⁵ Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964*.

²⁶ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

and electorate. Despite his promises to a plebiscite, Nehru never formally called for a vote to take place, nor did he enact any legislation or administration necessary for a plebiscite. According to his letters with Karan Singh, the son of the Maharaja, Nehru was concerned about growing support in the region to accede to Pakistan, particularly due to the unpopularity of the royal Hindu rule.²⁷ A loss of the Hindu elite's power in ruling the state would impact Nehru's influence in retaining Kashmir's legal attachment to India, because of the drop in the Kashmiri people's support for India. This fear influenced him to place Sheikh Abdullah, an anti-Maharaja politician and activist in Kashmir, to lead the new state government in 1948 and work with the Maharaja to control the anti-India sentiment. However, after the Security Council debates, Nehru continuously delayed the fulfilling of his promise until in 1954, when he called off the plebiscite. This official repeal of the long-promised plebiscite was partly influenced by alliances formed at the UN Security Council meeting, particularly between Pakistan and the United States. Nehru's official denial of the plebiscite followed the

²⁷ Ankit, "Britain and Kashmir, 1948: "The Arena of the UN"."

U.S.-Pakistan Military Pact, which officiated the two nations as allies during the Cold War.²⁸

The U.S – Pakistan Military Pact further confirmed Nehru’s sentiment that the U.S. and the U.N. were primarily concerned with establishing political relationships with former colonies in order to contain the spread of communism, as opposed to granting justice to India from Pakistan’s “aggression”.²⁹ During the Security Council debates, it was difficult for Western Nations not to consider the internal politics and the border disputes in the Indian Subcontinent without the context of the Soviet Union’s growing power due to the Soviet’s growing influence in China in the late 1940s. The boundary conflict between India and Pakistan could not only be considered in the lens of religious conflicts influenced by years of British colonial rule by the U.N. and the U.S., but also with the newly brewing conflicts between

²⁸ Korbelt, “Danger in Kashmir”.

²⁰ Ankit, “Britain and Kashmir, 1948.”

²⁹ Shankar, “Nehru’s legacy in Kashmir.”

the United States and the Soviet Union in the context of the nuclear age.

International Significance of the Conflict: The Cold War

It is impossible to discuss the Kashmir conflict without emphasizing the politics of the Cold War, as they were a massive factor in the United Nations and United States' strategy. Beginning in 1948, communist leaning parties were gaining power within China, with the country eventually becoming a communist nation in 1949. This increase in potential Soviet Union allies within the continent of Asia was a direct threat to the United States' policy of containment, in which the United Nations, allied with the U.S., attempted to prevent the spread of Soviet control and influence around the globe. Nehru and his small group of supporters within the left leaning parties in India self-identified as socialists but remained neutral between the two world powers. However, Nehru also had frequent communications with Joseph Stalin, unintentionally threatening the Western Nations.

India's aversion to ally itself with the United Nations and the United States stemmed from its long-held hostility over British colonization, as well as Britain's role in the partition of India as administrators.³⁰ Simultaneously, Pakistan was debating on which world superpower it wanted to align itself with. The nation had originally intended to remain neutral between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in order to benefit from a positive relationship with both nations. However, seeing India's supposed leanings towards the Soviet Union, Pakistan instead decided to improve its relationships with the U.N. and the United States.³¹ The development of Pakistan's relationship with the Western Nations was viewed extremely negatively by India as it played into Nehru's belief that the US. and U.N. were focused on developing bilateral relationships with potential allies rather than solve the Kashmir problem. This growing relationship would increase Indian hostility towards the United Nations, as Indians believed that the U.N.'s decision to abstain from punishing Pakistan, and instead push

³⁰ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

³¹ Bajwa, *Jammu and Kashmir War (1947-1948)*.

for an unbiased plebiscite, signified a bias towards creating a political relationship instead of “granting justice”.³² On the other hand, the UN had pressing concerns about the geopolitical impact of their decisions surrounding the region, given the power struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States was also rooted in their needs for natural resources in newly decolonized nations.

In terms of geographical politics and advantage, Kashmir was an extremely strategic location within the Indian subcontinent as it was centered in the Himalayan mountain range.³³ The mountain range served as a buffer between the Soviet Union and the rest of South Asia, as both land and water invasions were extremely difficult, particularly during the winter months. With improvements in aviation technology, access to the rest of Asia was increasingly simplified, as the Soviets could send weapons of mass destruction to the Indian subcontinent using contemporary state-of-the-art planes. Considering the advent of

³² Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964*.

³³ Chitrlekha Zutshi, “An ongoing partition: histories, borders, and the politics of vivisection in Jammu and Kashmir,” in *Contemporary South Asia* 23, no. 3 (2015): 266-275.

nuclear weapons after the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, increased access to weapons would be dangerous to world order, particularly with the growing hostility between India and Pakistan.

Protecting oil reserves in the Middle East was also an important prerogative in ensuring that at least Pakistan would side with the United States during the Cold War. If the Soviet Union were to gain influence in the Indian subcontinent, the superpower would also have easier access to the Middle East. If the Middle East were to ally itself with the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Nations would lose access to cheap oil reserves. This, in turn, would negatively impact the nations' economies, as well as their weapons industry, which had been booming during and after the war. Soviet access to these oil reserves would also fuel its own weapons industry, leading to the nation sending more weapons of mass destruction throughout their network of influence. This increased weapons funding to newly formed communist nations would ultimately lead to the spread of communism throughout the Asian continent, as well as into the continent of

Africa.³⁴ If South Asia were to align with the Soviets, they then had easier passage and influence into the Middle East as well as Africa. The spread of communist ideology into vulnerable nations would directly conflict President Truman's doctrine of containment against the Soviet Union, making the promises of his Truman Doctrine more difficult to fulfill.

For the U.N and the U.S, assuring that the Indian subcontinent did not fall to communism was crucial considering the increased influence of the Soviet Union in Asia. The growing relationship between the United States and Pakistan, which culminated in the Military Act of 1954, was a particularly strategic decision which further exemplified the U.S. concerns of the Soviet's influence throughout Asia. Since India was showing leanings towards the Soviet Union under Nehru's leadership, securing Pakistan's commitment to democracy would provide a reasonable buffer between the Soviet Union's influence into the rest of the Indian subcontinent. Therefore,

³⁴ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

settling the dispute between these two young and politically fragile nations was essential in ensuring that the rest of the Asian continent would not align with communism.³⁵ Given Kashmir's strategic military and political position—centered between India and Pakistan in the heart of the Himalayan Mountain Range—the Western Allied nations wanted to ensure that this critical geography remained under some influence of non-communist nations. With Pakistan's alliance, the U.S. would be able to fund military aide and interventions, in the case that the Soviet Union attempted to spread into the Indian Subcontinent and the Middle East. However, this political maneuvering of building relationships to benefit the United States' control of land and oil reserves in the Middle East irritated Nehru.

Road to Special Status

³⁵ Mahesh Shankar, "Nehru's legacy in Kashmir: Why a plebiscite never happened."

One of the reasons behind Nehru's eventual denial of a plebiscite presented itself at the U.N. Security debates surrounding the conflict in Kashmir. These debates allowed multiple nations, such as Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, Czechoslovakia and the United States, to gather together for the first time since the League of Nations in order to solve a conflict. The Security Council also provided an opportunity for the former allied nations to acknowledge the threat that the Soviet Union posed to the continent of Asia. Furthermore, by coming together on the international stage, these nations could forge individual alliances in order to further their own geopolitical interests. This formation of political alliances compounded Nehru's increased hostility towards the Western nations.

Throughout multiple communications between the Maharaja's son, Karan Singh, and Nehru, it became increasingly clear that Singh was unhappy with Pakistan's budding relationship with the United States. The Maharaja's goal was to maintain a certain amount of political control over Kashmir, while Nehru's goal was to ensure that Kashmir remained with India. Both the Maharaja and Nehru believed

that the decisions made at the United Nations Security Council were a political ploy to ensure their indirect control over the subcontinent, as well as to ensure the Western Nations' cheap access to oil in the Middle East. They believed that creating political allies was more important for the U.N than the punishing Pakistan for its supposed funding of tribal invasions into Kashmir.³⁶ Nehru in particular believed that the U.N. favored Pakistan's goal for a plebiscite, instead of holding it accountable for attempting to disrupt a legal accession. His belief was maintained throughout the 1950s despite the "arm twisting" that led to the signing of the Instrument of Accession in 1947.³⁷ Seeing the alliances forming within the context of the growing tensions of the Cold War further cemented this sentiment, and Nehru believed the U.N. would not be able to oversee the plebiscite in an unbiased manner.

After the plebiscite was denied, Maharaja Hari Singh, his son Karan Singh, Sheikh Abdullah and Jawaharlal Nehru began drafting

³⁶ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

³⁷ S.O., "The Kashmir Problem: End of a Stalemate?," in *The World Today* 9, no. 9 (September 1953): 393-399.

Kashmir's constitution as a formal Indian state.³⁸ Since Jammu and Kashmir had been a princely state under British colonial rule, the Maharaja and his family wanted to retain a certain amount of autonomous power that came from their 100 year rule in order to ensure that their influence wouldn't be obliterated once the Indian constitution was ratified. Their desire to retain political power was despite the Muslim-majority population and their unpopularity among their constituents, as well as Sheikh Abdullah. Tensions between the growing popularity of Sheikh Abdullah and the unpopularity of the Maharaja contributed to the increased delay of the creation of Kashmir's state constitution. Nehru was caught in between the two men, as he wanted to retain the Hindu elite in Kashmir so as to have the state remain legally accessioned to India, and he needed Sheikh Abdullah's popularity in order to spread a pro-India stance throughout the Muslim constituents. Due to India's failure in demilitarizing Kashmir and its refusal to give Muslims the right of self-determination,

³⁸ Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964*.

Kashmiri Muslims became increasingly dissatisfied with the Indian National Government, Sheikh Abdullah among them.

Concerned with Abdullah's growing influence and dissent with Nehru, Karan Singh removed Abdullah from office and had him immediately arrested in 1953 on the grounds of "conspiracy against the state" for his alleged links with Pakistan, upon which he was jailed for eleven years.³⁹ This controversial removal, despite Abdullah's majority in the Kashmir Congress, was known as the "The Kashmir Conspiracy Case," given Abdullah's continued support for a plebiscite to be held.⁴⁰ Sheikh Abdullah and his supporters firmly believed that Nehru had been complicit in his engineered removal and arrest on false charges. This arrest further alienated the Kashmiri population from Nehru and Maharaja, whom they began to see as corrupt due to his promises of a plebiscite that was never held.⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

With Sheikh Abdullah successfully removed, the drafting of the Kashmiri constitution continued. Since Kashmir was the only state who would have its own independent constitution, Article 370 was ratified in 1956, where the Indian constitution granted Kashmir “special status”, and to ensure that the Maharaja would be able to keep Kashmir relatively autonomous from the national constitution. This “special status” exempted the state of Jammu and Kashmir from complete applicability of the Indian constitution, and granted the state its individual constitution.⁴² Broadly speaking, this meant that central Indian legislative forces were limited in the state, and that other constitutional powers granted by the nation could only be applied with the concurrence of the state government. This benefited the Maharaja as his power wouldn’t be completely limited by the national government. Therefore, some constitutional forces would not be formally adopted into the government of Kashmir, making the region controversial within the state of India.

⁴² Indian Const. art. CCCLXX.

Given the Indian military's control over the region, as well as the dissatisfaction with the Indian national government's failure to complete a plebiscite and Sheikh Abdullah's engineered arrest, the decision to give Kashmir "special status" remains a controversial topic to this day. At the time, the special status allowed for the Maharaja to retain some political control over the region, a testament to the minority elite's continued rule over the Muslim population. To keep Kashmir with India constitutionally, the Maharaja wanted his influence to remain intact within the region and the dominion of India. Article 370 served to ensure the satisfaction of Nehru and Maharaja Hari Singh, at the cost of the continued militarization within Kashmiri Muslim communities.

Conclusion

The conflict over Kashmir began as a result of the contesting identities within the border conflict between India and Pakistan, but it escalated with the intervention of the United Nations. The civil entry of

the United Nations into the conflict eventually resulted in Nehru's denial of a plebiscite for the Kashmiri population. This intervention was in part influenced by Nehru's personal attachment to the state, evidenced by his passionate appeal to the U.N to ensure Kashmir remained with India.⁴³ With the spread of Soviet influence dangerously hanging over its head, the United Nations viewed the Kashmir conflict as a territorial dispute, while India saw it as an act of aggression by Pakistan. Pakistan on the other hand argued that the region of Kashmir should be given a choice on where it wanted to be aligned. The combination of the internal strife of Kashmir at the newly created border, as well as the influence of the newly created United Nations in the wake of the Cold War, contributed to the increased complexity and international importance of the conflict.⁴⁴

⁴³ Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964*.

⁴⁴ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political-Social-Cultural, From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2008).

The First Kashmir War set the stage of delaying Kashmir's state constitution as it ushered in the conflict between Pakistan and India over how Kashmir was to be divided. India and Pakistan were initially, with the supervision of the United Nations, planning to conduct a plebiscite which would put the question to the Kashmiri people. However, these plans were scrapped as Nehru became increasingly frustrated with the conduct of the U.N. Security Council Debates and the growing political relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan. After the U.S. and Pakistan formally acknowledged their relationship with the enactment of the U.S.-Pakistan Military Pact, Nehru decided to do away with the plebiscite, as he believed it would not be fairly administered considering the profound influence the U.S. had on the U.N in the years following World War II.

Even before the Partition, the Muslim Kashmiri people wanted self-determination and representation in their government, once they did away with the Maharaja's rule. This increased dissatisfaction was pivotal in Kashmir being granted "special status" by Article 370 in the constitution of India, which remains to this day. As Kashmir is the only

state in India to have a Muslim majority population, it was essential that the state receive some sort of status that would ensure that the Hindu-dominated national government would not enact legislation that would infringe on the Muslim majority population yet ensured the region would remain in the dominion. This assured the Indian national government that if Kashmir was given more autonomy, the public dissent with India would not intensify, even though the state remained militarized by the Indian army. The granting of special status was also initially a way of ensuring the influence of the Maharaja on Kashmir.

Along with the internal politics in Kashmir, the Kashmir Problem was profound considering the influence of the Cold War. With China turning to communism in 1949, the United Nations feared that communism would spread throughout Asia and find its way into the Middle East, causing the Western Nations to lose access to oil reserves that fueled their weapons and methods of transportation. Given the strategic location of Kashmir, it was essential for the United Nations to develop positive relations with both Pakistan and India in order to create a buffer between the Soviet Union and the oil reserves. This

Cold War lens held by the Western Nations irritated Nehru, who wanted justice for Pakistan's alleged funding of tribal invaders in the First Kashmir War, thus influencing his decision to not hold a plebiscite in Kashmir.

The events leading from the partition of India within the state of Kashmir still have ramifications today. In 1964, the Second War for Kashmir began, following the return of Sheikh Abdullah as the Chief Minister of the State. With his unlawful imprisonment for eleven years, Abdullah, like many in the Kashmiri Muslim population, began to turn away from the idea of uniting with India. He continued his policy of "freedom before accession" in his activism throughout Kashmir and vehemently opposed the continued militarization of the state. Jammu & Kashmir would see multiple skirmishes and wars throughout the rest of the 20th century, most notably the 1999 Kargil War.⁴⁵ To this day, Kashmir remains militarized by the Indian military. Communal violence still occurs frequently, most recently and infamously in the

⁴⁵ Alaid, *Jammu & Kashmir 1949-1964*.

assault of an eight-year-old Muslim girl belonging to a nomadic tribe in Kashmir. The events of Partition still influence the internal politics and sentiments within Kashmir to this day. The resentment of Nehru's denial of a plebiscite by Kashmiri Muslims still remains and is one of the blemishes on his reputation as the first Prime Minister of an independent India. This conflict remains incredibly complex and considering the colonial history of the subcontinent and the decades of tensions brewing after Partition, it cannot be solved with a set of Security Council debates. The Kashmir Problem is not an issue that can only be seen within the context of decolonization, the Cold War and Partition, but must be seen as a dispute that still continues, and will continue, to directly affect the lives of Kashmiris.

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**NON-ALIGNED FEMINISM: REPRESENTING A “THIRD
WORLD” IN THE U.N. COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN, 1947–1951**

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When the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convened for its third annual session in 1949, it did so in Beirut. Here, on the coast of the Mediterranean, fifteen women—representing states including Venezuela, the Republic of China, Haiti, India, the United States, and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—set out to continue the project they had begun at their first session two years earlier: “to raise the status of women, irrespective of their nationality, race, language or religion, to equality with men in all fields of human enterprise, and to eliminate all discriminations against women in provisions of statutory law and under maxims or rules, or interpretations

of customary law.”¹ US representative Dorothy Kenyon would later remember the “background of great beauty, blue Mediterranean, snow peaks and fruit trees in blossom everywhere.”² Both the unifying language and beautiful setting, however, belied the tensions that underpinned the Commission’s work. The Cold War was escalating, and the CSW was far from immune to mounting geo-political antagonisms. When Soviet representative Elizavieta Popova arrived in Beirut, she greeted her colleagues by criticizing “so-called democratic countries” and extolling “the privileges enjoyed in her country and in Czechoslovakia.”³ In response, Indian representative Lakshmi Nandan Menon “wished to make it clear that India, although a member of the

¹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council, *Report of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Economic and Social Council*, E/281/Rev.1 (25 February 1947), 12, undocs.org/E/281/Rev.1.

² Dorothy Kenyon, transcript of speech “East and West Meet” delivered at the Atlantic City General Federation of Women's Clubs, 12 May 1949; Dorothy Kenyon Papers, 1850-1998 (Box 21, Folder 3, 11pp.), Sophia Smith Collection, Women's History Archive, search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_details|1460366.

³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the forty-fourth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.44 (6 May 1949), 2, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.44.

United Nations, was under no obligation to accept the pattern of life evolved in the Soviet Union.”⁴

Taking Menon’s remark as a point of departure, this study explores whether “Third World feminism” existed in the Commission on the Status of Women—the first major intergovernmental body devoted to women’s rights—prior to the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).⁵ This may appear an anachronistic aim, given that states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America did not begin to think of themselves as members of an independent cohort with shared and “non-aligned” interests until the mid 1950s.⁶ However, by analyzing the

⁴ Ibid, 3.

⁵ Nitzza Berkovitch, *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 16. See pp.105–109 for a brief institutional history of the CSW.

⁶ The term “Third World” was coined in 1952 by French economist Alfred Sauvy regarding states unaligned with either the United States or the Soviet Union. Many of these states formed alliances at the Bandung Conference for Afro-Asian solidarity in 1955. The Non-Aligned Movement was officially born in Belgrade in 1961. (See Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael Watts, and Sarah Whatmore, eds., *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, (Hoboken: Wiley, 2009), 754.) Although anachronistic, this paper uses “Third World” to refer to the states in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East represented on the CSW between 1947 and 1951 (no African countries were represented during this period). I do so both for the sake of clarity and given my argument that a Third World identity began to emerge in the CSW as early as 1947.

minutes from each of the Commission's one hundred meetings between its first session in 1947 and its fifth in 1951, I argue that representatives of countries that would come to be called the "Third World" resisted both the hegemonic posturing of the Soviet representative and the universalist pretensions of Western representatives as early as 1947.⁷ By establishing a self-conscious identity as "small" countries with common interests, advocating interplay between the international and the local, and foregrounding women's national and political identities, they challenged the idea of a universal feminist framework. Indeed, while the CSW was certainly a "Cold War battleground", as historians have argued, it was not defined purely by a US-Soviet faceoff; to claim that it was is a misleading consequence of the dualistic thinking of the time.⁸ Rather, the Commission on the Status of Women reflects the full transnational

Indeed, recent studies have begun to consider non-alignment within a wider historical context; for example, see Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné, and Nada Boškovska Leimgruber eds., *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi, Bandung, Belgrade* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

⁷ United Nations documents E/CN.6/SR.1 through E/CN.6/SR.100.

⁸ Helen Laville, "Gender and Women's Rights in the Cold War," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, edited by Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), 530.

complexity of the Cold War, which was defined by interactions between the First, Second, and Third Worlds.⁹

By considering representatives from the nascent Third World as political actors at the first five sessions of the CSW, this essay challenges the historiographic assumption that Cold War hegemony was not challenged in the Commission until the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the 1960s. Helen Laville has argued that Cold War rivalries undermined international collaboration until NAM allowed “women from outside the east-west coalitions of the cold war [...] to bring a new understanding of women's rights to international forums”—a new understanding that transcended the hegemonic American and Soviet models of womanhood.¹⁰ Laura Bier, however, has traced the rise of “new, gendered visions of identity and solidarity” in Third World forums beginning in the 1950s.¹¹ Bier claims that the

⁹ For the purposes of this paper, I define the First World as the capitalist west (chiefly the United States), the Second World as the Soviet bloc, and the Third World as states in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

¹⁰ Laville, “Gender and Women’s Rights in the Cold War,” 534.

¹¹ Laura Bier, “Our Sisters in Struggle,” in *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser’s Egypt* (Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 2011), 99. See also Nova Robinson, “Arab Internationalism and Gender:

international spaces born of decolonization like the 1955 Bandung Conference on Afro-Asian solidarity created a “state feminism ... that was simultaneously local, national, and transnational in scope.”¹² Why should we assume that this “Third World feminism” was not articulated in the CSW for another decade?¹³ Nova Robinson’s analysis of the Commission’s 1949 session in Beirut suggests that Third World feminism did, in fact, play a part in the early CSW. Representatives of the Women’s Committee of Lebanon, Robinson argues, “advocate[d] broadening the UN definition of women’s rights,” leading us to rethink the Middle East as “positioned at the center of global processes such as

Perspectives from the Third Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 1949,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48, no. 3 (August 2016): 578–583, doi.org/10.1017/S0020743816000544. Robinson points out that international women’s organizations had existed for decades, with eleven “Arab” and “Eastern” women’s conferences between 1928 and 1944 (579).

¹² Bier, “Our Sisters in Struggle,” 100.

¹³ My analysis of the Commission’s first five sessions leads me to define “Third World” or “non-aligned” feminism as a feminist philosophy shared by women of non-aligned countries, who advocated interplay between the international and the local, foregrounded women’s national and political identities, and challenged the idea of a universal or hegemonic feminist framework. See note 70.

the development of international women's rights norms" as early as 1949.¹⁴

While Robinson focuses on one women's group, one region, and one year, this essay turns attention to the representatives from Asia and Latin America, as well as the Middle East, who sat on the CSW between 1947 and 1951. This essay will first consider how they resisted Soviet hegemony; second, how they challenged western universalist pretensions; third, how they created a Third World women's rights framework. By looking beyond US-Soviet tensions, we see a "non-aligned" feminism emerging in the CSW by the half-century mark.

"No Iron Curtain Between Women": Resisting Soviet Hegemony in the CSW

Danish representative and Commission Chairwoman, Bodil Begtrup, opened the CSW's second session in 1948 by claiming that

¹⁴ Nova Robinson, "Arab Internationalism and Gender," 580-81.

“there was no ‘iron curtain’ dividing women on the particular questions which concerned them. They could show the world that they were united among themselves, and that their influence was an influence for peace.”¹⁵ Perhaps Begtrup’s remarks were not so much an expression of naïveté, but rather an enjoiner to her fellow representatives to put aside their national agendas in the interest of cooperation. It would seem that she was unsuccessful. By the end of the year, in December 1948, the *New York Times* published a story with an eye-catching headline: “Dorothy Kenyon Says Women’s ‘Equality’ With Men in Russia Is One of Slavery.”¹⁶ In response to Soviet claims about gender equality, Kenyon,

¹⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the first meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.20 (7 January 1948), 2, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.20.

¹⁶ “Dorothy Kenyon Says Women’s ‘Equality’ With Men in Russia Is One of Slavery,” *New York Times*, December 16, 1948, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1948/12/16/96441772.pdf>. Although she condemned Popova’s politicization of women’s rights, Kenyon did the same by decrying Soviet gender equality. In fact, Helen Laville argues that the US pursued a purely nationalist agenda in the CSW, paying lip service to women’s rights only to bolster their propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union. See Laville, “Protecting Difference or Promoting Equality? US Government Approaches to Women’s Rights and the UN Commission on the Status of Women, 1945–50,” *Comparative American Studies: An International Journal* 5, no. 3 (September 2007): 291–305, <https://doi.org/10.1179/147757007X228190>.

the US representative to the CSW, pointed out how few positions of “real power” were occupied by women in the Soviet Union. She also criticized the politicization of women’s rights in the Commission, noting that “non-Russian delegates were placed on the defensive” during the February session.¹⁷ Representatives of Third World countries consistently resisted the Soviet hegemonic posturing to which Kenyon was responding. By the Commission’s fifth session in 1951, they had established a self-conscious identity as “small” countries with common interests. This progression suggests an irony at the heart of the Cold War—geopolitical rivalries created a space conducive to transnational cooperation among Third World countries and their representatives.

¹⁷ Kenyon expressed similar frustrations in a letter to Danish representative Bodil Begtrup, dated April 1, 1948: “What a state the world is in. [...] The United States is in a terrible state of confusion about everything. Perhaps I ought to go and have a talk with Mr. Stalin. But since I was not particularly successful with [Byelorussian representative] Uralova and Popova this last time, it is just possible that I could do nothing with him!” See Dorothy Kenyon, letter to Bodil Begtrup, April 1, 1948; Dorothy Kenyon Papers, 1850-1998 (Box 57, Folder 1, 3pp.), Sophia Smith Collection; Women's History Archive, search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_detail|1741880.

By defending their national women's rights frameworks against Popova's critiques, representatives of Third World countries resisted the hegemonic posturing of the Soviet representative as early as 1948. Popova set up the Soviet Union as a universal model by claiming that "the position of women was a true measure of the democracy of any country, and in that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was an inspiring example to all democratic countries."¹⁸ When Popova proceeded to deliver a string of pointed criticisms of women's rights in her colleagues' states, representative Isabel Urdaneta jumped to the defense of Venezuela, noting that "the Venezuelan Constitution guaranteed free education to men and women alike" and "women occupied posts in the diplomatic and consular services as well as in all the civil services of the State."¹⁹ The Chinese and Mexican representatives followed suit by respectively "clarifying" and

¹⁸ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.25 (7 January 1948), 8, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.25.

¹⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the fifth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.24 (7 January 1948), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.24.

“rectifying” Popova’s claims about their countries.²⁰ Indian representative Shareefah Hamid Ali joined in, condemning “the repeated introduction of the Koran and of Shariat law into the discussion. It was as if she were to accuse the United Kingdom of being medieval because it did not allow women in the House of Lords,” she said, adding that “since India became independent, the women of India were attaining equal rights in every possible direction.”²¹ In an attempt to stem Popova’s flow of misinformation, Mexican representative Amalia de Castillo Ledon suggested that each representative should only be permitted to provide information regarding the status of women in her own country.²² By contesting Popova’s claims, however, Third World representatives not only corrected erroneous information, but also resisted the construction of their individual countries as blank slates in

²⁰ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.25 (7 January 1948), 7-8, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.25.

²¹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the seventh meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.26 (13 January 1948), 4, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.26.

²² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.25 (13 January 1948), 8, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.25.

need of a hegemonic women's rights framework. Both Urdaneta and Hamid Ali's responses highlight the modernity and liberality of their countries, suggesting that they required Popova's "inspiring example" no more than a "developed" country like the United Kingdom.

By challenging Popova's claims, the Third World representatives further affirmed both national and regional identities. Defending their countries' respective women's rights frameworks against Popova's "inspiring example" implicitly foregrounded nationality over an "international gender-based identity."²³ They established themselves first and foremost as national representatives. That being said, Ledon "observed that Mrs. Popova's statements concerning women's educational status in Latin America were greatly exaggerated" and noted that "criticism of the situation in Latin American countries should take the form not of indictments but rather that of

²³ See Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2002), 7. Laville "seeks to challenge the idea of an international gender-based identity" by considering the centrality of national identity in American women's organizations during the Cold War.

helpful suggestions.”²⁴ Syrian representative Alice Cosma defended Egypt against Popova’s criticisms, claiming that if there had been a delay in education reform, “the reason lay in the difficulties encountered by the countries of the Near East whose efforts in recent years had been directed to the achievement of their emancipation.”²⁵ Regarding economic equality, Cosma added, “she felt that Syria and the Arab world had a great deal to be proud of, as women had equal pay for equal work, full freedom to dispose of their income and property, and legislation to protect motherhood.” Here we see representatives’ affirmation of regional identities alongside national ones—Ledon defends Latin America, Cosma the Near East and “Arab world.” Although these international affirmations are framed defensively given the combative framework established by Popova, they suggest increasing solidarity among Third World representatives.

²⁴ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.25 (13 January 1948), 10-11, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.25.

²⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the fifth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.24 (7 January 1948), 3-4, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.24.

Indeed, by the Commission's third session (1949), resistance to Popova's hegemonic posturing had become overt, with representatives of Third World countries now on the offensive. Popova again set the stage by delivering a prolonged monologue upon her arrival in Beirut, noting that "although the theory of equality in political rights had been proclaimed in the so-called democratic countries, the position in Spain, Greece, Switzerland, India, the United States of America, and others, was far from satisfactory."²⁶ It was at this meeting that India's new representative, Lakshmi Nandan Menon, stated that "India, although a Member of the United Nations, was under no obligation to accept the pattern of life evolved in the Soviet Union." Cecilia Sieu-Ling Zung, the representative of the Republic of China, would make a similar point regarding a Soviet draft resolution on the political rights of women.²⁷ How could the Commission, Zung asked, "declare itself satisfied with the way in which the Soviet Union put into practice the principle of

²⁶ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the forty-fourth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.44 (6 May 1949), 2, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.44.

²⁷ UN document E/CN.6/93.

equality of rights between men and women, when it was not in a position to judge how far equality really existed in the Soviet Union”²⁸ Here, both Menon and Zung made explicit what had until this point remained implicit: they and their countries—given their capacity as representatives—had no interest in accepting the Soviet Union’s women’s rights framework. This resistance was not only on the principle of national self-determination; Menon would later contest Popova’s premise of Soviet exceptionalism. “A country whose economy was not fully developed,” Menon noted, “was not necessarily as backward as countries whose people did not enjoy civil freedom, where most women were compelled to work against their wish and to entrust their children to public institutions”—in other words, not as “backward” as the USSR.²⁹ Menon thus subverts the distinction between “developed” and

²⁸ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the forty-fifth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.45 (5 May 1949), 4, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.45.

²⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the forty-ninth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.49 (6 May 1949), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.49.

“developing” countries, resisting the USSR’s assertion both of the Third World as “backward” and the Soviet Union as an “inspiring example.”

By calling attention to Popova’s hegemonic pretensions, representatives of Third World countries attempted to remove the Commission’s discussions from a framework defined by national rivalry. Minerva Bernardino, representative of the Dominican Republic, emerged as a fierce proponent of collaboration, doggedly highlighting demonstrations of national self-interest on the Commission stage. Following another of Popova’s diatribes—in which she cited “many examples of discrimination against women” in her colleagues’ countries and claimed that “in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ... the full exercise of women’s rights was safeguarded by law and by the establishment of the requisite living and working conditions”—Bernardino jumped to the defense of neither her country nor Latin America.³⁰ Instead, she noted that “the USSR representative had

³⁰ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-seventh meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.87 (14 May 1951), 7, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.87. Popova cited Bolivia, South Africa, the US, Canada, Australia, the U.K., Mexico, Greece, and Guatemala.

apparently mistaken the functions of the Commission,” and, as summarized in the meeting’s notes:

She appealed to Mrs. Popova to change her tactics and attempt to encourage the development of women’s rights instead of using the Commission as a forum for aggressive criticism of countries in which women did not enjoy the same rights as in the USSR. [...] Admitting that much remained to be done in her own country and many other Latin American countries, she expressed her willingness to accept *stimulation and encouragement* from the Commission, while rejecting harsh criticism such as that of the USSR representative (emphasis added).³¹

Here, Bernardino pushes back against “the use of women’s status as a measure of the progress and prestige of the nation-state,”³² reminding her colleagues of the collaborative and constructive nature of their mandate. Bernardino further noted that “the enfranchisement of women could no longer be considered from the standpoint of its possible advantage to Governments, but must be regarded as an act of simple justice.”³³ In

³¹ Ibid, 9.

³² Laville, “Gender and Women’s Rights in the Cold War,” 529.

³³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-fourth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.84 (10 May 1951), 7, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.84.

reference to a draft resolution submitted by the Lebanese, Mexican, and US representatives, she suggested that the word “advantage” be replaced with “need” or “some other expression which would convey the idea of obligation.”³⁴ Bernardino sought not only to convey obligation, but—implicitly—to transcend the weaponization of women’s rights, which US and Soviet propaganda were increasingly coopting both within and without the CSW.³⁵

In fact, by the Commission’s fifth session (1951), representatives of Third World countries began to present their national women’s rights frameworks as models—counterpoints to the hegemonic pretensions of the Soviet Union. Ledon highlighted progress made in Mexico, including the Minister of Education’s decision to open “housewifery centres” so that women would have time to pursue their education.³⁶ Ledon’s subtle reference to “innovation” with

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See Laville, “Gender and Women’s Rights in the Cold War” on the 1959 “kitchen debate” between Vice-President Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

³⁶ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-third meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.93 (4 June 1951), 10, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.93.

internationally transferable potential was made explicit by Bernardino, who, regarding reports on the status of women in private law, said “it was unfortunate that there was no reference to the Dominican Republic in the chapter on family relations, since the Dominican Code was very advanced in that respect.”³⁷ Here, Bernardino does not frame the modernity and liberality of her country defensively, as Urdaneta and Hamid Ali had at the Commission’s first session, but instead highlights an aspect of her national women’s rights framework as worthy of consideration in the development of international rights norms. Her comment foreshadowed a prolonged discussion about whether the CSW’s draft convention on the political rights of women should reference the 1948 Bogotá Convention on women’s rights.³⁸ Popova argued that it should not, commenting that “in 1949, there had not been

³⁷ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.96 (4 June 1951), 21, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.96. See UN documents E/CN.6/165 and E/CN.6/166 on the status of women in private law.

³⁸ UN document E/CN.6/L.47 drafted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Resolutions, which had drawn on the Dominican draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.31), draft convention in the Secretariat’s memorandum (E/CN.6/160), and the provisions of the Bogotá Convention (E/CN.6/143).

a single woman representative in the Parliament of the Dominican Republic. Those facts [sic] illustrated the situation prevailing after the Bogotá Convention, which clearly had not effectively solved the problem.”³⁹ A woman had, in fact, been elected to Parliament in 1949, Bernardino responded, and “the Dominican Republic had often elected women to that high office.”⁴⁰ The question underpinning both this specific face-off and the overall debate about referencing Bogotá—which spanned multiple meetings—was whether a Third World women’s rights framework could serve as a model for the Commission.

By the end of the Commission’s fifth session (1951), representatives of Third World countries—led by Bernardino—had begun to develop a self-conscious identity as “small” countries with shared interests. When Bernardino forwarded a draft resolution suggesting that women be included in UN missions to the Trust Territories, “she had no doubt of the support of the small countries who

³⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-seventh meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.97 (4 June 1951), 5, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.97.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

had no interests at stake, but she appealed to the big countries to set aside personal consideration and adopt the draft resolution.”⁴¹ When the resolution encountered opposition, Bernardino “appealed to the small countries to support it since the great Powers which administered Trust Territories would not adopt it for reasons well known to everyone.”⁴² A few days later, Lebanese representative Angela Jurdak Khoury adopted Bernardino’s language to advocate a convention based on Bogotá, saying that she “spoke for the women of the *smaller states*, who had either been granted no rights at all or who were only permitted to participate in municipal affairs.”⁴³ Khoury thus expanded regional identities—affirmed as early as the Commission’s second session in 1948—to encompass the women of all “small” countries, imagined in opposition to those of both “the great Powers” and “developed” nations.

⁴¹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninetieth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.90 (16 May 1951), 7, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.90. See UN document E/CN.6/L.41 for the draft resolution.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-seventh meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.97 (4 June 1951), 6, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.97.

Furthermore, by advocating a convention based on Bogotá, Khoury supported the idea that a women's rights framework developed in Latin America could serve as a model for the Commission's work, thus transcending the Soviet "example." Here, we see the beginnings of a self-conscious Third World resistant to a universal women's rights framework as laid out by the Soviet Union.

Countries "Big" and "Small": Resisting Western Universality in the CSW

The early United Nations was ideologically grounded in post-war ambitions for universality, epitomized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Commission on the Status of Women was no exception. At the Commission's fifth session, Charlotte Mahon, a representative of the International Alliance of Women, expressed satisfaction with the UN pamphlet "The Role of Women in Political

Life.”⁴⁴ She hoped it was “only the first of many,” for “while recognizing that nations differed widely in governmental structure and in educational and cultural background ... [c]ertain questions were equally applicable to a highly educated new voter in Europe or to an African tribesman.”⁴⁵ Such universalist aspirations dismissed diverse local conditions in the name of comprehensive post-war liberality. In 1951, Lina Tsaldaris, representative of Greece, clearly expressed resistance to the universalist pretensions of the post-war West, as summarized in the meeting’s notes:

Political structure, laws and customs differed so greatly from one country to another ... that any person foreign to the country ... could not render any real service; she thought that political education could be given only by the women’s organization of the countries concerned.... She thought it would be advisable to organize conferences attended by eminent women and also regional conferences, to avoid giving the impression that the methods and principles adopted

⁴⁴ One of the non-governmental organizations represented on the Commission; others included the World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Council of Nurses. Specialized agencies were also represented, including UNESCO and the World Health Organization.

⁴⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-fifth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.85 (10 May 1951), 10-11, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.85.

in the exercise of political rights were being transplanted from one country into another.⁴⁶

Representatives of Third World countries made the same arguments throughout the CSW's first five sessions. They advocated interplay between the international and the local through regional conferences and alliances with local women's groups. The representatives also resisted the conceptual construction of the Third World as a space for universal feminist frameworks to be imposed in the name of global progress.

Representatives of Third World countries highlighted the essential role that regional conferences should play in the implementation of the CSW's rights framework. By doing so, they enforced the necessity of amending universal aspirations to specific conditions. At the Commission's first session, the Chinese and US representatives proposed regional women's conferences as a "concrete

⁴⁶ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.86 (10 May 1951), 8-9, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.86.

means of putting the Commission's principles into practical effect."⁴⁷ The proposal was supported by Hamid Ali, as well as Alice Cosma of Syria, who said it was "of special value to the countries of the Middle East."⁴⁸ Regional conferences were clearly seen as a way of turning the CSW's theoretical rights frameworks into an on-the-ground reality by bridging theory and practice. Furthermore, Hamid Ali, "speaking as a representative of the East, proposed the appointment of regional committees" and noted that "a conference of 22 Asian countries had already met in India, and this might provide the nucleus for the regional committees."⁴⁹ This was the Asian Relations Conference, which convened the leaders of Asian independence movements with the intention of affirming common goals and transnational solidarity in 1947.⁵⁰ One might interpret the Asian Relations Conference as laying the

⁴⁷ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the fifteenth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.15 (19 February 1947), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.15.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the first meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.20 (7 January 1948), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.20.

⁵⁰ See Carolien Stolte, "'The Asiatic Hour': New Perspectives on the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, 1947," in *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War*, eds. Mišković et al., 57-75.

groundwork for NAM by creating a collaborative space outside East-West hegemonies. That Hamid Ali cited the Asian Relations Conference as an example for the CSW highlights her hopes for, as Bier writes of Bandung, “exchanges and networks [that] were part of what made possible the sorts of imaginings that overflowed the boundaries of the nation-state.”⁵¹ Furthermore, it suggests that she recognized the necessity of putting international theory in dialogue with local—or regional—practice.

The Commission’s third session in Beirut (1949) sought to concretely put the local and international into dialogue. Not only did the Commission aspire to implement their rights framework in the Middle East, but also to examine the progress made by Lebanese women in the interest of informing that framework. “The Commission would be called upon to examine general questions of interest to all countries and to Lebanon in particular,” remarked H el ene Lefauchaux, the French representative and Commission Chairwoman, at the Commission’s first

⁵¹ Bier, “Our Sisters in Struggle,” 101.

meeting in Beirut. “She referred to the important part played by the women of Lebanon in the past, stressing that in the Middle East women had certain opportunities in regard to status which would be studied with special interest; in particular, the right to administer their own properties.”⁵² Lefauchaux positioned herself carefully. Her first sentence suggests that the CSW would improve the status of Lebanese women, while the second acknowledges that Middle Eastern women would also have contributions to make to the Commission’s universal framework. The Commission’s object was not to impose, Lefauchaux implied, but to give and take, implementing women’s rights internationally by drawing on regional feminisms. In this way—at least in theory—the local informs the universal as much as vice versa. Indeed, in one of the Commission’s final meetings in Beirut, a representative of the Lebanese government “assured the members of the Commission that, both by their discussions and by the influence they had exercised on the different individuals and groups with which they had come in contact, they had largely fulfilled

⁵² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the thirty-ninth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.39 (21 March 1949), 2, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.39.

the hopes of the Lebanese Government in extending its invitation to the Commission to meet at Beirut.”⁵³ Here, she highlights the same vectors of exchange established by Lefauchaux when she opened the session: give (by “influence”) and take (through “discussion”).

A more controversial approach to localizing international feminisms was through UN advisory services. Representatives of the Third World stressed the importance of collaboration with local women’s groups so as not to impose universalist frameworks on local conditions.⁵⁴ As early as the Commission’s first session, the Syrian representative forwarded a proposal that called for members of the CSW to be sent on missions to Member States “in order to make known and stimulate interest in the work of the Commission and to assist in

⁵³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the fifty-sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.56 (18 May 1949), 8, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.56.

⁵⁴ See Kim Berry, “Lakshmi and the Scientific Housewife: A Transnational Account of Indian Women’s Development and Production of an Indian Modernity,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 11 (2003): 1055–68. Berry argues that US advisory services projected an American model of womanhood onto Indian women.

compiling the information required.”⁵⁵ At the fifth session, the representatives of Lebanon, Mexico, and the US proposed a more comprehensive draft resolution on Advisory Services for Improvement of the Status of Women.⁵⁶ Advisory services, US representative Olive Remington Goldman said, would be provided to national governments only upon their request, and “should cover many phases of the status of women, not just political rights.”⁵⁷ In response, Elena Mederos de Gonzalez, representative of Cuba, stressed the role to be played by local women’s groups. She “was convinced of the usefulness of the expert advisory services, but urged that when the Commission gave final form to the draft resolution it should be careful not to imply or suggest that women needed external help in order to reach the standards to which they claimed to have a right.”⁵⁸ Fortuna Augustin Guery of Haiti made a

⁵⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the fifteenth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.15 (19 February 1947), 10, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.15.

⁵⁶ UN document E/CN.6/L.27.

⁵⁷ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-fifth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.85 (10 May 1951), 6-7, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.85.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

similar point when she noted that “if the aid given to under-developed countries were to prove really effective, the whole question must be the subject of thorough study in which representatives of indigenous interests capable of supplying material and moral assistance should co-operate.”⁵⁹

In addition to stressing the necessity of collaboration at the local level, representatives from Third World countries resisted the conceptual construction of the Third World as a space for universal feminist frameworks to be imposed in the name of global progress. In March 1948, the *New York Times* reported from Beirut that “the fight for women’s suffrage has begun in earnest in the Arabic world of the veil and the harem as a result of the women’s meetings here,” citing the Lebanese Premier’s decision to grant women full political equality.⁶⁰ Kenyon would echo this a few months later, when in a letter to the *Times*

⁵⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-ninth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.99 (4 June 1951), 7, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.99.

⁶⁰ “Lebanese Premier Pledges Voting Rights for Women,” *New York Times*, March 29, 1949, timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1949/03/30/84554275.pdf.

she wrote, “Women everywhere should be stirred by the latest news from Syria. For in Damascus, oldest living city in the world, and throughout that entire country, Arab women at the next elections are to go to the polls and vote.”⁶¹ Unlike the preceding *Times* article, Kenyon does not rhetorically construct the “world of the veil and the harem” as a space on which the Commission’s rights framework can be made tangible. By casting the Syrian women’s victory as a victory for “women everywhere,” however, she continued the West’s universalizing project. Mihri Pektas, representative of Turkey, implicitly resisted such generalizations when, at the Commission’s fourth session, she said that “many people abroad still associated Turkish women with the veil and the harem, but even to her generation they had been things of the distant past.”⁶² Khoury may have followed suit—albeit more subtly—when, “pointing out the strong impetus that the holding of the Commission’s

⁶¹ Dorothy Kenyon, “Woman Suffrage in East: Syrian Law Regarding Arabian Voting Hailed as Entering Wedge,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1949, timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1949/09/21/92662708.pdf.

⁶² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fourth session: summary record of the sixty-sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.66 (18 May 1950), 5, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.66.

fourth session [sic] in Lebanon had given to the development of women's rights in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, she suggested that the following year's session should be held in a similar focal point of a region such as Scandinavia, the Pacific or Central Europe, where it would help to stimulate the development of women's rights."⁶³ By suggesting regional conferences in Scandinavia or Central Europe, Khoury encouraged dialogue between the local and the international, but also pushed back against the construction of the Third World as the only region in need of feminist development.

Her Nation: Creating a Third World Rights Framework in the CSW

When the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women assembled for the first time in February 1947, the Representative of the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Affairs, Jan Stanczyk of Poland,

⁶³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-ninth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.99 (4 June 1951), 5, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.99.

delivered opening remarks to the fifteen assembled representatives.⁶⁴ “In building up the structure of the United Nations,” Stanczyk noted, “one should not forget women’s contribution to international co-operation and understanding. It was they who attempted to ease and correct, especially in times of war, the injustices and inequalities brought about in most cases by men.”⁶⁵ Here, women are explicitly cast as peace-bringers, placid foils to the violent tendencies of men. Time itself is gendered, with men implicitly representing a history of war and women the potential for a peaceful future. Indeed, Stanczyk’s remarks endowed the CSW—as well as “the woman” writ large—with the responsibility of not only aiding the United Nations in its mission to establish a peaceful world order, but also of bearing the symbolic weight of post-war harmony. The mandate of the CSW, by Stanczyk’s formulation, could not be clearer:

⁶⁴ The nations represented at the first session of the CSW were Australia, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (or White Russia), the Republic of China, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Guatemala, India, Mexico, Syria, Turkey, the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, the United States, and Venezuela. They were elected by secret ballot at a meeting of the UN on October 2, 1946 (as reported by “Vote Places Big 5 on 8 Fixed Bodies,” *New York Times*, October 2, 1946, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1946/10/03/88377099.pdf>).

⁶⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the first meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.1 (10 February 1947), 2, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.1.

to sustain peace by means of fostering women's rights throughout the world. This was, of course, a simplistic assessment of the political character of women, assuming that "she" transcended the nation state and that her very apolitical nature made her the ideal post-war politician.⁶⁶ In fact, representatives of Third World countries (particularly India) forwarded comprehensive conceptualizations of a women's rights that foregrounded women's national and political identities.⁶⁷ By doing so, they not only resisted Soviet hegemonic

⁶⁶ At the Commission's fifth session, Sutherland said "the joint Polish-USS.R. proposal made the error of implying that women, as women, had some special genius which could bring about peace. The fact was that women were divided by the same differences on political, social and economic issues as divided men" (United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-second meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.82 (30 April 1951), 15, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.82).

⁶⁷ In this regard, the Third World feminism articulated in the CSW parallels the "state feminism" that Bier argues played a central role in defining the post-colonial nation-state (see "Our Sisters in Struggle"). It also suggests, as Robinson argues, that the international feminist sphere was used to pursue national agendas within the Third World. Robinson claims Lebanese feminists recognized that "a strong international standard of women's rights, even if flawed, would aid their attempt to obtain more rights from, or to enforce those already promised by, the Lebanese state" ("Arab Internationalism and Gender," 579).

posturing and Western universalist pretensions, but created an anti-colonial, “non-aligned” framework for modern womanhood.

The positions of Third World representatives on the CSW were informed not only by Cold War hegemonies, but also by decolonization. At the Commission’s second session, representatives debated whether to single out non-self-governing territories (i.e. colonies) as needing to improve women’s access to education with particular urgency. While the British and French representatives claimed that access to education was no worse in the colonies than in many sovereign states, Indian representative Hamid Ali argued that the situation in non-self-governing territories was decidedly inferior, and in some territories even “deplorable.”⁶⁸ A year later, the debate had shifted to whether the same data should be solicited from non-self-governing states as from trust territories—that is, whether they should be subjected to the same oversight. India’s new representative, Menon, argued that it would “be

⁶⁸ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Second session: summary record of the twelfth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.31 (12 January 1948), 5, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.31.

an act of discrimination against the peoples concerned if the governments responsible for non-self-governing territories were not obliged to furnish the same information as the authorities in charge of administering trust territories.”⁶⁹ Although neither Hamid Ali nor Menon drew attention to their status as citizens of a state that had been “non-self-governing” until 1947, this clearly informed their advocacy in the CSW. Apparently Menon’s arguments were persuasive—by the end of the meeting, the Commission decided to draft two resolutions regarding information to be obtained from non-self-governing as well as trust territories, “taking account of the suggestions made by the representatives of the United States of America and India.”⁷⁰ That Adila Beyhom El-Jazaeri, representative of Syria, highlighted “the need for a text to cover the political rights of women in autonomous and independent countries” at the Commission’s third session suggests the

⁶⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the fortieth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.40 (4 May 1949), 7, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.40.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

extent to which the focus had shifted to securing the rights of women in trust and non-self-governing territories.⁷¹

Representatives from Third World countries also stressed the importance of political over social rights. Hamid Ali, who had been a leader in the Indian women's rights movement for over two decades, consistently advocated the supremacy of political rights throughout the CSW's first session.⁷² At one of the Commission's first meetings, disagreement ensued over whether women must be educated in order to vote. "The United Kingdom Government and most British women's organizations felt that education was the keynote in political progress in those countries where women had not yet been granted political equality," British representative Mary Sutherland expressed at the Commission's fourth meeting, "Full emancipation followed full and free

⁷¹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Third session: summary record of the forty-first meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.41 (4 May 1949), 4, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.41.

⁷² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Biographical Data on the Members of the Commission on the Status of Women*, E/406 (3 April 1947), 4-5, http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/291374/E_406-EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

education.”⁷³ Hamid Ali replied that “the Commission should first consider the matter of franchise and the political rights of women and then pass on to educational and social questions.” The tension between British imperialist philosophy and Indian anti-colonial pushback is clear. The former advocated the necessity of western education preceding political “maturity”; the latter argued for the imperative of enfranchisement. Australian representative Jessie Street agreed with Hamid Ali, remarking that “too much stress was placed on education vis-à-vis experience of life, and people living in backward countries knew as well as those who had had educational opportunities what was necessary for liberty, education, health services etc.” Guatemalan representative Sara Ramirez added that “the women of Guatemala had taken a greater interest in political affairs since they had been given the

⁷³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the fourth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.4 (12 February 1947), 4-5, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.4. See Helen Laville, “‘Woolly, Half-Baked and Impractical’? British Responses to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women 1946–67,” *Twentieth Century British History* 23, no. 4 (December 2012): 473–95, <https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwr043>. Laville argues that British representatives to the CSW were primarily concerned with protecting British national interests.

vote”⁷⁴ and Graciela Morales de Echeverria, representative of Costa Rica, explicitly “stressed the priority of political rights, which had not yet been granted to women of her country.”⁷⁵

By the Commission’s fifth session, representatives of Bernardino’s “big” and “small” countries disagreed as to the urgency of ratifying a draft convention on the political rights of women. Opposed by Popova, US representative Goldman, and British representative Sutherland, the proposal won support from the representatives of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and India, among others. The clash stemmed in part from disagreement as to whether a convention would be a productive means to achieving political rights for women. The Greek representative pointed out that when the question had been raised the previous year, the Economic and Social Council “had felt strongly that

⁷⁴ A few days later, however, Ramirez would express her support for Sutherland’s proposal because “her own country had proved that education was necessary...for women to be able to use the political rights that had been granted to them” (United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the ninth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.9 (14 February 1947), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.9).

⁷⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the ninth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.9 (14 February 1947), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.9.

increased political rights for women could be more effectively promoted through propaganda and education than by the adoption of a convention.”⁷⁶ Goldman, however, opposed the resolution because it would not be of use to American women. But Bernardino (supported by Menon) persistently advocated its adoption, for although “the provisions of a convention or a covenant did not become binding on the contracting parties until they had ratified them, it was equally true that the very existence of the convention could give the women of a given country sufficient moral support to induce their Government to ratify it.”⁷⁷ Haitian representative Guery attributed the advances made by Haitian women to “international pressure,” hence her support for the draft convention.⁷⁸ Their advocacy for political rights was successful, for on May 1, 1951, the Commission voted to adopt a convention on the political rights of women by an 11-0 vote with 3 abstentions.

⁷⁶ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-third meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.83 (9 May 1951), 12, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.83.

⁷⁷ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the eighty-fourth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.84 (10 May 1951), 10, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.84.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

In fact, representatives' advocacy of political rights sometimes transcended "the woman," suggesting that they were participating in the work of constructing post-colonial political consciousness writ large. This was foreshadowed as early as the second meeting of the Commission's first session, when Australian representative Jessie Street moved to have the first paragraph of the Commission's Terms of Reference read, "The function of the Commission shall be to prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting equal status and opportunities for women...."⁷⁹ Hamid Ali said she "preferred the original term 'women's rights' since in some countries even the status of men was such that to grant women equality of status would amount to practically nothing." Although Hamid Ali's suggestion foregrounded "the woman," it also indicated that—as the representative of a post-colonial state—she brought a more nuanced understanding of "status" to the Commission, complicating First World feminism by reminding her colleagues that women were often members

⁷⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the second meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.2 (11 February 1947), 4, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.2.

of a disadvantaged population that included men. Hamid Ali would proceed to defend universal suffrage when Sutherland asked whether it was beyond the scope of the Commission's mandate.⁸⁰ At the Commission's nineteenth meeting, Hamid Ali further advocated that "the codification of laws should be treated as an urgent matter."⁸¹ Chairman Begtrup asked her to prepare a resolution for inclusion in the session's final report to the Economic and Social Council. In that report, which was voted upon at their final meeting on 24 February 1947, Chapter XI, titled "Urgent Problems," includes Hamid Ali's recommendation regarding the codification of law in wording almost identical to that she had suggested. Here, we see the concrete impact a single representative had on the CSW's work and, by extension, on the post-war landscape. Hamid Ali's concerns were no doubt informed by the political situation in her own country, which would not be fully

⁸⁰ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the sixth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.6 (13 February 1947), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.6.

⁸¹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the nineteenth meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.19 (25 February 1947), 12, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.19.

independent from British rule for another six months, but the expression of those concerns contributed to the creation of a transnational rights framework that transcended feminist imperatives.

In addition to women's political identity, their right to nationality was a consistent point of discussion from the Commission's first session to its fifth, when a resolution for a convention on the nationality of married women was adopted. When in 1947 it was suggested that the focus be turned to domicile as opposed to nationality, Hamid Ali and Mexican representative Ledon highlighted that a "careful and detailed study was necessary on the important question of nationality."⁸² Multiple contentious meetings were devoted to this question over the next four years, featuring repeated confrontations between Popova, Sutherland, and Goldman over the rights of Soviet women who had married foreign husbands.⁸³ Ultimately, in 1951,

⁸² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *First session: summary record of the seventh meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.7 (14 February 1947), 3, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.7.

⁸³ Albion Ross, "U. S., Soviet Women Clash on Rights of Wives of Foreigners Under Russian Restrictions," *New York Times*, March 26, 1949, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1949/03/26/85636101.pdf>.

Bernardino and de Gonzalez, representatives of the Dominican Republic and Cuba respectively, forwarded a draft resolution on the nationality of married women.⁸⁴ “The right to a nationality,” Bernardino said, “was one of the most sacred human rights.”⁸⁵ An amended version of their draft convention on the nationality of married women, adopted on May 7th in a 12-0 vote with two abstentions,⁸⁶ proposed that “the International Law Commission undertake to complete the drafting of this convention in 1952.”⁸⁷ Not only did this vote represent the culmination of five years of work; it also established nationality as a central pillar of modern womanhood, suggesting—on the part of representatives of Third World countries—repudiation of both colonialism and Cold War hegemonies.

⁸⁴ UN document E/CN.6/L.27.

⁸⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, *Fifth session: summary record of the ninety-third meeting*, E/CN.6/SR.93 (4 June 1951), 18, undocs.org/E/CN.6/SR.93.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 22. The resolution is UN document E/CN.6/L.27/Rev.1. The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women was adopted in 1957.

⁸⁷ United Nations, Economic and Social Council, *Report of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Economic and Social Council*, E/1997/Rev.1 (28 May 1951), 15, undocs.org/E/1997/Rev.1.

Conclusion: Non-Aligned Feminism

This study has explored whether “Third World feminism” existed in the Commission on the Status of Women prior to the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement. By analyzing the minutes from each of the Commission’s one hundred meetings between its first session in 1947 and its fifth in 1951, this study has found that representatives of countries that would come to be called the “Third World” resisted both the hegemonic posturing of the Soviet representative and the universalist pretensions of Western representatives as early as 1947. By establishing a self-conscious identity as “small” countries with shared interests, advocating interplay between the international and the local, and foregrounding women’s national and political identities, they challenged the idea of a universal feminist framework.

Following the fifth session of the CSW, Eleanor Roosevelt’s “My Day” column in the *Ladies Home Journal* reflected on the Commission’s draft convention on political rights for women. “If

approved and ratified by member governments,” she wrote, “it should bring about great changes throughout the world. [...] There is one thing to remember, however,” she added, “and that is that when you have put things on paper you haven't actually accomplished anything. The people have to accept changes, and when you are changing age-old customs this is sometimes difficult of accomplishment [sic].”⁸⁸ An analysis of the “on-the-ground” outcomes of Third World representatives’ participation in the Commission is beyond the scope of this study; the results of their advocacy at the CSW would take time, span the globe, and involve countless additional actors. However, the historian cannot dismiss “putting things on paper” quite so readily as a contemporary observer like Roosevelt. By forwarding rights models based on their national frameworks, securing regional conferences and international conventions, and advancing comprehensive visions of women’s rights that were enshrined in Commission documents, representatives of Asian,

⁸⁸ Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day, May 25, 1951," *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition* (2017), www2-gwu-edu.ccl.idm.oclc.org/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?y=1951&_f=md001917.

Latin American, and Middle Eastern countries transcended resistance to hegemony and universalism—they created a “non-aligned” feminism at the nexus of international feminist discourse.

The Commission’s sessions between 1952 and the mid-1960s remain to be reevaluated in light of these findings, which suggest that representatives of the nascent Third World were bringing “a new understanding of women’s rights” to the CSW two decades earlier than existing scholarship suggests.⁸⁹ Cold War tensions continued to underpin the Commission’s work, as indicated by an April 1951 *New York Times* article that reported the Soviet and Polish representatives to the CSW had proposed “a new ‘peace’ declaration denouncing the war in Korea and the stepped-up military programs of the Western allies.”⁹⁰ However, the Commission’s first five sessions demonstrated that geopolitical rivalries did not always undermine its work. Instead, they played a key role in creating a space conducive to transnational cooperation among

⁸⁹ Laville, “Gender and Women’s Rights in the Cold War,” 534.

⁹⁰ “‘Peace’ Bid by Soviet Bloc Group Expected at Session of U.N. Unit on Status of Women,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1951, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1951/04/30/87044476.pdf>.

Third World countries and their representatives, who repudiated Cold War hegemonies both defensively and productively.

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“THE GREAT POPULAR HEART” IN CIVIL WAR NORTH CAROLINA

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***Central Argument:** North Carolinians from the western piedmont and foothills counties, which represent the geographic, economic, and political middle section of Antebellum and Civil War North Carolina, were motivated to join the Confederate army more often by the Confederate draft than inclinations towards Confederate Nationalism.*

***Abstract:** Throughout the 19th Century (and beyond) North Carolina was geographically, economically, and politically different than the rest of the south. While the elite, planter class dominated North Carolina politics throughout the Antebellum period and during the Civil War, they faced significant dissent from the Western half of the state. North Carolina’s piedmont and mountain counties throughout the antebellum period fought to loosen the eastern planters grip on power, and they were at times marginally successful. Those political tensions in Antebellum North Carolina did not melt away during the Civil War. Through the analysis of nineteen collections of letters by Civil War soldiers and their families from North Carolina’s western piedmont and foothills, this paper examines the tensions in Civil War North Carolina as experienced by the middling sections of the state.*

***Motivation:** The Civil War defines the history of North Carolina in part because the public landscape is littered by homages to the Confederacy. In the decades following the Civil War, public*

monuments to Civil War soldiers were erected in town squares across the piedmont and foothills. Today, these monuments continue to bring the struggles of the Civil War era to the minds of the peoples that walk past them. However, there is an important part of the Civil War's history that is forgotten-- the Civil War did not have the undying support of the "great popular heart" in North Carolina during the war as many Neo-Confederate reenactors or historians might conclude. The defense of these statues rests on the myth of a United North Carolina behind the Confederacy. I wrote this paper in order to deconstruct that myth.

“I have always believed that the great popular heart is not now, and never has been in this war. It was a revolution of the Politicians; not the people,” Governor Zebulon B. Vance wrote to UNC President and former Governor David Swain. Vance was reflecting on the plight of the Confederacy following Sherman’s capture of Atlanta in the fall of 1864, a moment when Confederate defeat became almost inevitable.¹ Elected colonel of the 26th North Carolina Infantry in 1861, Vance had led western piedmont North Carolinians in battle during 1861. Unlike the soldiers he commanded, Vance was a social

¹ Gordon McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina's Civil War Governor and Gilded Age Political Leader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 234.

and economic elite in North Carolina. His uncle served as a congressman during the antebellum period and his family owned slaves. But Vance was not an Eastern elite. He was from Buncombe County and was most connected to the Western part of the state. His background as a western North Carolinian, an elected leader in the Army, and a twice elected wartime Governor of North Carolina, lends him some ethos on the subject of North Carolinians' devotion to the Confederacy.² However, Vance was writing at a particularly dark moment for the Confederacy. North Carolina had seceded from the Union in 1861 as decided upon by a popularly elected convention, and 110,000 North Carolinians served in the Confederate Army. So, was Vance right? Were North Carolinians devoted to the Confederacy? This paper will explore this question through the analysis of nineteen collections of letters written by Confederate soldiers and their families from North Carolina's western piedmont and foothills.³

² William Link, *Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Blackwell: Wiley, 2018), 204

³ Specifically, this study sought letters from Forsyth, Davidson, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin, Davie, Rowan, Iredell, Catawba, Alexander, Wilkes, Caldwell,

During the antebellum period, North Carolina was known as the Rip Van Winkle state because of its sluggish economic growth. North Carolina's geography kept the state on the fringes of the larger American market economy and distinguished North Carolina from the rest of the South. The Outer Banks, unnavigable rivers, and shoddy roads, in part, accounted for North Carolina's economic sluggishness.⁴ While portions of eastern North Carolina were able to overcome these problems, western North Carolina had much more difficulty doing so. Further, fertile soil in eastern North Carolina was better suited to plantation style agriculture than the red clay and rocky soil which characterized the soil in the piedmont and mountains. As a result, eastern North Carolina was more tied into the slave economy than the west. The western piedmont agricultural production was comprised of a strange mix of plantation and subsistence agricultural systems. Slavery comprised anywhere between ten to twenty five percent of the total population in the western piedmont. A much smaller percentage of the

Watauga, Burke, McDowell and Ashe; Bibliography Section Entitled "Primary Sources" contains citations for all nineteen collections.

⁴ Link, 163-164.

population was enslaved in the mountain counties, but slaves accounted for as much as fifty percent of the population in some eastern North Carolina counties.⁵

Politically, North Carolina was divided between the east and west during the latter half of the antebellum period.⁶ That political division was largely a result of the economic differences outlined above. Eastern North Carolina aligned with the Democratic Party popular in the rest of the south which emphasized southern rights and conservatism. Western North Carolina more often aligned with the Whig party which emphasized economic growth through internal improvements. This political split is most evident in a decisive political issue which dominated the 1860 gubernatorial election in North Carolina. The Whig candidate for Governor, John Pool, endorsed a North Carolina taxation reform. This reform would tax slaves “ad valorem” or on their value. The Democratic candidate for governor, John W. Ellis, railed against “ad valorem” taxation. Democrats viewed

⁵ Ibid, 170.

⁶ Ibid, 190-193.

the “ad valorem” tax as a direct attack on slavery. The election was divisive and close, with the Democrats carrying the eastern plantation counties and the counties around Charlotte and the Whig candidate carrying the majority of piedmont and mountain counties. Ultimately the Democrat, Governor Ellis, won.⁷ Scholars have pointed to the “ad valorem” debate as evidence of an undercurrent of resistance to the slaveholding elite rearing its head in North Carolina. Historian Donald Butts wrote: “while united in their racism and in their acceptance these two groups disagreed violently as to who should rule in southern society.”⁸ Western Whigs called Governor Ellis an “aristocratic governor.”⁹ Piedmont and mountain North Carolinians were questioning the elite dominated political order in North Carolina, and that questioning bled over into the Civil War era.

⁷ Ibid, 197; Donald C. Butts, “Slave Taxation and the Gubernatorial Election of 1860,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (January 1981), 65.

⁸ Ibid, 44.

⁹ Ibid, 50. The quotation is cited by Butts. It was originally printed in the *Iredell Express* 3.30.1860.

In the winter of 1860-1861, North Carolinians turned their attention from “ad valorem” taxation to secession. Lincoln’s election had led South Carolina and the cotton states to clamor for secession. The political alignment of the “ad valorem” debates partially characterized the regional responses to secession in North Carolina. Before the Battle of Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s subsequent call for troops, the democratic, eastern portion of the state (and a few counties around Charlotte) supported secession. The Whiggish piedmont and mountain counties did not support secession. In February of 1861, a majority of North Carolinians voted against calling a convention to consider secession in a referendum.¹⁰ However, after Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s subsequent request for troops in April 1861, public opinion shifted. The General Assembly passed a bill which called for the election of delegates to a convention to consider secession. There was no popular referendum in April, but North Carolinians voted

¹⁰ Lecture PowerPoint, Dr. Harry Watson, “The Secession Crisis in North Carolina.” UNC Chapel Hill, History 366. Of the counties studied in this paper, all voted for Unionist delegates to the February secession convention (which did not occur because a majority did not vote for the convention) except for Catawba County and Burke County.

overwhelmingly for secessionist delegates, and on May 20th, 1861, that convention voted to secede from the Union.¹¹

110,000 North Carolinians fought for the Confederacy. At the time, only 115,000 North Carolinians could vote.¹² A vast majority of North Carolinians were enlisted soldiers, who for the most part, represented the non-elite in North Carolina. For example, of the nineteen families surveyed in this paper, only one owned slaves. Scholarly literature has often focused on the experience of slaveholding soldiers, as they were more likely to be literate and to leave behind documents. This study seeks to look beyond the slaveholding elite in North Carolina. As is evident in the “ad valorem” debates, there is an undercurrent of resentment in North Carolina politics for the slaveholding elite. That resentment bled into the Civil War years.

It is more probable than not that factors such as social class, political alignment, geographic location, and relationship to slavery

¹¹ Link, 199.

¹² Ibid, 201.

affected a southerner's relationship to the Confederacy. Enlisted soldiers from the North Carolina piedmont and foothills were from a similar geographic region, often did not own slaves (but might have), were generally not members of the elite class, and were reluctant to see North Carolina secede from the Union. These families represent the "great popular heart" Vance spoke of. This study will consider their experience in the Civil War. This study will explore several themes which the letters speak to, such as motivations for joining the Army, life in the army and life on the home front, desertion, absconsion and the home guard; and finally, their writings on peace.

Motivation

It is difficult to imagine why soldiers joined Civil War armies. Casualty rates in some battles were as high as thirty percent. Entire regiments could be decimated in the course of a single battle. For example, the 26th North Carolina (comprised of men from the western piedmont and foothills) lost 708 of its 800 soldiers during the battle of

Gettysburg.¹³ The realities of the Civil War were brutal. Writing home after the battle of Fredericksburg, James C. Zimmerman wrote: "I am still spard and able to send you a fiew lines to inform you the sad news that we was ingaed in battle."¹⁴ He wrote not of the thrill of battle or the glories of war, but of the sad reality. So why did 110,000 North Carolinians join the army?

James McPherson and Chandra Manning offer some insight into this question. McPherson argues that Americans were motivated to join the army *For Cause and Comrades* as the title of his book suggests.¹⁵ Manning argues that all southern soldiers, non-slave holding or not, were ideologically motivated by the cause of preserving slavery.¹⁶ Both of these arguments implicitly acknowledge a

¹³ "A Brief Regimental History," 26th Regiment - North Carolina, <http://www.26nc.org/History/history.html>.

¹⁴ Letter dated December 14, 1862, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/303>.

¹⁵ James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War was all Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Random House, 2007). As is evident from my argument, I do not think that either McPherson or Manning's findings do not

Confederate Nationalism which motivated poor and rich alike. This study does not seek to question their overall findings, but instead to explore the motivations of enlisted soldiers from the western piedmont and whether they are similar or different than the findings of McPherson or Manning.

This study is limited by the fact that none of the soldiers (except those drafted) wrote an explanation of why they joined the army. This section reads in-between the lines of the letters and attempts to evaluate why soldiers joined the army. For that reason, the conclusions reached in this section are a result of my interpretation of each collection of letters. Nothing here can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt; however, there are clear trends which are explored in this section.

Discussions of Confederate Nationalism often hinge on a false dichotomy between Confederate Nationalists and Unionists. This

appear to stack up in these collections of letters; however, this study is far less broad than either of theirs.

dichotomy does not account for southerners who were ambivalent about the Confederacy. The reluctance of North Carolinians to join the Confederacy indicates from the outset a lack of Confederate Nationalism. None of the soldiers in the letters analyzed in this study appear to be Unionists; however, few seem to be Confederate Nationalists either.

Those most often credited with Nationalistic fervor were 1861 volunteers. Only four soldiers from these nineteen collections of letters joined the Army in 1861.¹⁷ Of those four soldiers, none spoke much of their commitment to the Confederate cause. More often than not, it seems that duty played an important role in their decision to join the army. James Overcash joined the Confederate Army before the battle of Manassas. His father, Joseph, wrote him on June 10, 1861. He did not mention the Confederate cause-- he merely tells his son, “now you are in the servc of your State I want you to do your dutie as a Soldier that it

¹⁷ This is not a result of cherry-picking letters. I picked the first nineteen sets of letters I could find from the geographic area described in footnote 3. That geographic region was selected before the letters.

may be said of you and all the Rowan boys as it is now said of Col hill and his brave soldiers the first Redgment of NC not a man but was willing to do howl Duty I now say to you as the old man said to his son go if you must fite fight like a man and give credit to state to your County and to your friends.”¹⁸ This letter indicates that James fought because that was what a man was expected to do.

Only one soldier explicitly invokes Confederate nationalism. Alfred Walsh, whose letters appear in the Wilkes County Proffitt Family Letters, volunteered in 1861. On September 8, 1861, as an addendum to his letter, Walsh wrote: “Resolved that the flag of Suthern independence stand Wavern high over Evry of Suthern Soil Resolved that She may Evry flote as She did at Manasses.”¹⁹ This statement is the image of nationalism, through its evocation of the Southern flag, Southern soil, and Masasses. Walsh was motivated by nationalism, but

¹⁸ Letter dated June 10, 1861, in the Joseph Overcash Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/9226>.

¹⁹ Letter dated September 8, 1861, in the Proffitt Family Letters, #3408-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/280>.

he is in the decided minority amongst other soldiers surveyed in this study.

Notably, only one other soldier nationalistically commented on the Confederate Flag: William Brotherton of Catawba County. Writing to his mom on August 17, 1863, Brotherton drew a small picture of the Confederate Flag and wrote:

Hear is the Confederats Stats Flag of Americai Dear Mother yow can see some of my work if yow can see me this day one year Ago I left home I am in good Spirts as ever this flag has sail over Amany Battle feild oh if we cowl'd have peace once more in Our land And nation.²⁰

However, this comment is preceded by a letter in which Brotherton writes to his mother that the Confederacy was going to lose the war because of desertion.

A deep homesickness runs through William Brotherton's letters from January to September of 1863. However, sometime in September his father wrote a letter that inspired an impassioned

²⁰ Letter dated August 17, 1863 in the William H. Brotherton Letters, Private Voices database, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/10024>.

reaction. Brotherton's uncle had reported to his father that he was a coward. In response, William wrote that,

I am gowing to Send yow Apaper to let yow know that I am indepenat this paper will inform yow that Report is all falls I have got it sine by all my company who at camps after the chancellersvill fight And I want yow to let all my freinds know that this white bagde is all Alie And let all the folks it is One I am honord higher than that.²¹

For several months, Brotherton wrote similar notes back to his parents. He was ashamed to be called a coward. From statements such as those written above by William, one can conclude that he appears to be under a great deal of social pressure.

On the whole, Confederate Nationalism does not appear to drive the soldiers surveyed to enlist in the army. Additionally, these soldiers almost never discuss slavery. No soldier offers a defense of slavery nor writes that they fought in order to defend slavery. The references to slavery in these letters are limited to a few general types of remarks: either they asked about the slaves back home or compared

²¹ Letter dated September 1, 1863, in the William H. Brotherton Letters.

their treatment in the army to the treatment of slaves. The only soldier to indicate that they owned slaves was Franklin Setzer of Catawba County. All his comments were clichés like, “give a howdy to all both black and white” on November 11, 1863 or asking his wife if their slaves were completing their tasks or not.²²

Though Franklin Setzer was a slaveholder, he obviously did not want to be in the army. In a letter written on May 13, 1864, Setzer noted that “i think this war wil come to a close before werry long i hope and pray that i wil so that i can get home and liv like i wance lived.”²³ His comment that he would like things to be the way they once were indicates that he presumably wanted slavery to continue to exist. However, he never states that he joined the army to protect slavery. He joined in 1863, about the time the draft would have brought him into the war. Setzer does not express any ideologically motivation for

²² Letter dated November 11, 1863, in the Franklin A. Setzer Correspondence, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/288>.

²³ Letter dated May 13, 1864, in the Franklin A. Setzer Correspondence.

fighting in the army. He makes no reference to fighting to protect slavery, and in his letters home he expresses displeasure for fighting.

Protecting slavery was the sole purpose of the Confederate Government. But it would be wrong to conflate the collective motivation for going to war with individual motivations. A majority of North Carolina's soldiers were not a part of the economic or political elite, and many of them were politically aligned against those elite in the late antebellum period.²⁴ It is more likely than not that most (if not all) the soldiers surveyed supported slavery, and the majority of soldiers probably supported secession in 1861 (likely, in order to protect slavery). However, the question at hand is whether or not a majority of Confederate soldiers were *individually driven* by the desire to protect the Confederate Government or slavery to participate in the war. The necessity the Confederate Government saw for the draft suggests that the majority of individuals would not have joined the army without persuasion.

²⁴ Refer back to the "ad valorem" taxation debate as an example of this.

The Confederate draft is discussed frequently in the letters surveyed in this study. In many cases, it was a source of frustration for soldiers and their families. By 1864, almost all white males under the age of 45 were drafted into the Confederate Army, but the draft began affecting North Carolinians as early as 1862.²⁵ Martha Poteet, the wife of Private Francis Marion Poteet, wrote to her husband on January 21, 1864, that “men fom 18 to 50 has to go to the Armeey in a short time and the Men fom 16 to 60 has to be home gard.”²⁶ As the quote suggests, the Confederate draft was draconian. Additionally, those who absconded from the draft or deserted the army were ruthlessly persecuted by the Home Guards.

Early in the war, conscripts could avoid joining the army by hiring a substitute. Two soldiers in this study write about procuring a substitute. Robert Spainhourd, a Forsyth County farmer, wrote home

²⁵ Robert Cook, *Civil War America: Making a Nation 1848-1877* (London: Longman, 2003), 141, 162, 180. In fact, the Confederate draft was the draft in the history of the United States.

²⁶ Letter dated January 21, 1864, in the Poteet Family Letters, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/9373>.

twice asking his wife to find him a substitute. In a desperate plea, he wrote on July 11, 1862:

I want you to Writ as swon as you can an I Want you to try find me a substi if you can for a bout fore hundret dolers fore I dont lik the luks of the yankey and writ how the conscripts ar goin and weeter tha ar cald aut I dont no werth we ever com hom or not.²⁷

Spainhourd was in Salisbury, North Carolina when he wrote this letter. The Yankees he referred to were northern prisoners of war imprisoned in Salisbury. He implies here that seeing Yankees was enough to convince him that he did not want to be in the army. The Spainhourds, however, did not have the money for a substitute and Robert stayed in the army until his death during the Battle of Fredericksburg.

Finding a substitute was not always enough to avoid the draft. The Hege family of Davidson County wrote to their son, Constantine,

²⁷ Letter dated July 11, 1862, in the Robert Sprinhourd Letters, Private Voices database, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/10024>.

about finding him a substitute. On August 21, 1862, soon after he was conscripted, Constantine's father wrote to him:

As to hiring a substitute for you, it is a poor prospect for any of those who are trying to hire substitutes to find men who offer to hire at any sum... I was told today that they are unwilling to take substitutes. Joseph Delap told me the guards are going to have Emery Davis as conscript and he has a substitute.²⁸

The Hege's did find Constantine a substitute, but Constantine was not released from the army. Eventually, they sought the help of a Davidson County lawyer to help procure Constantine's release. That lawyer wrote to Constantine in the fall of 1863, "In a letter you sent a few days ago to your father, you wish to know how and what to do (having hired a substitute) to get out of the war." The lawyer believed that if Constantine could get a furlough, he might be able to get a Davidson County judge to release him-- but even that was not a sure solution.²⁹

²⁸ Letter dated August 21, 1862, in the Constantine Alexander Hege Papers, 1862-1863, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²⁹ Letter dated September 6, 1863, in the Constantine Alexander Hege Papers.

As Constantine's struggle indicates, the Confederate draft can be described as draconian. Outside the four 1861 volunteers, the rest of the soldiers surveyed in this study joined the army between 1862 and 1864, just as the draft was taking effect. In fact, according to historian Robert Cook, there was a "rash of volunteering" following the passage of the Confederate draft. The draft figures prominently in their letters, and even if soldiers were not drafted themselves, it seems likely that many volunteered to avoid the draft.³⁰ A young Forsyth county school boy, who was drafted in 1862, wrote to his mom in 1861 that "I think it is better to volunteer than to be drafted."³¹ He wrote this before the draft was initiated and before North Carolina seceded from the Union. A significant social stigma was attached to being a conscript—to be drafted was to be a coward.³² However, soldiers' advice to others at home signifies a more practical reason for volunteering before being

³⁰ Cook, 162.

³¹ Letter dated April 28, 1861, in the John Robert Lowrey Letters #5183-z, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³² Cook, 162. Information on the draft and quote by Cook. I attribute "the rash of volunteering" to the social stigma of being conscripted.

drafted. On February 28, 1863, A.J. Speath wrote to his family back home, offering advice about one of his friends:

if he wanted to come to the 57 Regt he would have to come right off but he did not know then if he would have to come or not If he has to go and dont try to get to some certin Regt he may be sent to one where he knows no boddy or is not acquainted with any one I would be glad if he could come to this regt but he can do as he chooses about it.³³

The logic here is, either volunteer and be with people you know or be drafted and run the risk of being in a unit without friends. Many of the letters surveyed contain this exact advice.

Soldiers from the western piedmont of North Carolina seem to be individually motivated to join the army by duty and the draft instead of Confederate nationalism and the preservation of slavery. The Confederate draft and the Confederate Government in general were created for the protection of slavery; that is not being contested. However, the observations noted here on individual motivations hold true. As we will see in the next section, both those that volunteered and

³³ Letter dated February 28, 1863, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers.

those that were drafted often did not wish to stay in the army very long once they got there.

Life in the Army and Life on the Home Front

The topics most frequently discussed by soldiers in these letters were army life and life back home. Often times, letters served as a soldier's only link to their known world-- home. Many of the men who wrote letters had never been far away from home before leaving for the army. Discussions of home were a psychological crutch which connected soldiers to the familiar; however, as the war progressed economic conditions on the home front seriously worsened and a tension between remaining in the army and returning home to help one's struggling family emerged. This section will explore the themes of life in the army and on the home front with an eye towards this tension between soldier's duty to fight and duty to family.

A young Davie County farmer, H. F. Rudasil, wrote to his wife on June 17, 1862: "A soldiers life tho it is the hardest life I recon

A man ever lived but I hope I will live to get home and see yo all one time moar.”³⁴ Contrary to expectations, soldiers openly discussed the difficulties of army life. Some of the difficulties soldiers commonly discussed were constant disease, a lack of food, and the fear of the battlefield. Discussions of one or all of these are almost ubiquitous in letters surveyed in this study. One letter that accurately represents a majority of soldiers' reflections on army life was written by James Zimmerman of Forsyth County who wrote that in the army “No one has any assurance of his life here a man had just as well prepair for death that is the only thing that will relieve one here they die one most every day and one dont know but what his time will be the next.”³⁵

The soldiers in this study did not describe battles very often, but when they did, the descriptions were laconic and grim. Following the battle of Manassas, Joseph Overcash wrote: “I hope we wl never se sutch a time a gain but it may come soone and may not come at al we

³⁴ Letter dated June 17, 1862, in the H.F. Rudasil Letter, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/12027>.

³⁵ Letter dated January 10, 1863, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers.

have al got enough of it for this time 20."³⁶ After witnessing fighting around Richmond in 1862, H.F. Rudasil of Davie County wrote, "I hope I never will get in to another but out chans is very good to get in to it and that be fore long the way that the balls and grape and canister come from the enemy I wood A thot it was im posable fur any of us to escape it."³⁷ The soldiers never spoke of the glories of battles in these letters, but they often spoke of never wanting to fight again much like Overcash and Rudasil.

The horrors of the battlefield were not the only dangers soldiers faced. Soldiers struggled off the battlefield with hunger, thirst, and sickness as well. Food was a common item discussed by soldiers (food was probably the most commonly discussed element of army life). Family members often wanted to know if their soldiers were eating enough. More often than not, soldiers complained of a lack of food. For example, Robert Spainhourd wrote to his wife, "we dont have plenty to eat as wee wold wish to have we Get beaf once a day and

³⁶ Letter dated August 21, 1861, in the Joseph Overcash Papers.

³⁷ Letter dated June 17, 1862, in the H.F. Rudasil Letter.

three crackers and fore ounces of salt a day for forteteen men.”³⁸ The Confederate Army often had trouble supplying food. At times, soldiers would report eating well for a few weeks, but more often soldiers wrote home to ask for additional food. Francis Marion Poteet of McDowell County was imprisoned in a guard house from February to May 1864 for desertion. In the guardhouse, he reached a point of severe desperation when his wife saved him with food she was able to mail. He wrote,

I had to Sell my Raisor and my coat to git Sumthing to eat and then have to doo with out Sumthing to half of my time when I got that box that you Sent me I was laying down and praying to my god that I had Sumthing that I could eat and tha was A box Come and tha Said it was the 49 Redgment and tha formi t up and called James Poteet.³⁹

Poteet sold both his razor and coat for food, a significant fact when one considers their importance. He probably needed them-- he just needed food more. Soldiers constantly asked for boxes from home to supplement their scant rations; for example, Thornton Sexton of Ashe

³⁸ Letter dated December 12, 1862, in the Robert Sprinhourd Letters.

³⁹ Letter dated March 17, 1863, in the Poteet Family Letters.

County wrote to home on May 9, 1863: "I haue not receved no mooney Sence I was at home i need somthing to eat Mity bad if i cood git it father if you can com bring mee an Marey a Box plese."⁴⁰ In the soldiers surveyed, almost all soldiers asked for boxes of food to supplement their scant supplies. Infrequent payments, like Sexton mentions, only made the problem worse.

The Confederate struggle to procure food was not only a problem in the later days of the war as economic conditions continued to worsen. As early as 1862, soldiers condemned the Confederate Government for failing to provide for the army. James C. Zimmerman wrote in the winter of 1862,

I dont think old Jeff Davis can feed us much longer and we will all have to starve or come home I would be glad if we could leave here and get some where we could get something good to eat and have something sent from home... our wages and wat we get wont begin to feed us we may spend all of our money as fast as we get it and eat our rashens and go hungry.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Letter dated May 9, 1863 in the Thornton Sexton Letters, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/289>.

⁴¹ Letter dated December 2, 1862, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers.

Zimmerman's comment reflects a common theme throughout the letters in this study. The lack of supplies made life in the army difficult and led soldiers to question the Confederacy.

Soldiers also relayed struggles to find clean water in letters sent back home. Before the battle of Manassas, Joseph Overcash's company experienced an extended period of time without access to fresh water. Parched, he relayed a story where his company drank muddy water: "we come to an old branch whair we just broke out of ranks and got some water that was thick with mud but we drunk of it like it was good."⁴² Overcash was not the only one to write about bad water. In a letter to his wife on September 8, 1862, Robert Spainhourd wrote: "the water is bad hit is as warm as the branch water is a bout hear."⁴³ This lack of water also certainly diminished morale and faith in the Confederate cause.

⁴² Letter dated August 21, 1861, in the Joseph Overcash Papers.

⁴³ Letter dated September 8, 1862, in the Robert Sprinhourd Letters.

Further, dirty water contributed to disease, another common theme throughout the letters in this study. Spainhourd's complaint of poor water precedes a letter reporting poor health. He wrote: "I have bin writ bad but I am on the mand rit Smart I think of the chiles an fevers."⁴⁴ Spainhourd's aforementioned statement is likely evidence that the lack of food and clean water contributed to the transmission of disease amongst soldiers. Soldiers often wrote home of disease. For example, Joseph Overcash wrote that

ther has a great many Sick and Died already by beaing Exposed to the rain and cold when on gard that was the caus of the most of their... There is Some 2 or 2 hundred on the Sick List now a good many of them are not expected to live.⁴⁵

Two hundred and two of the soldiers in Overcash's regiment were on the sick list. Regiments were typically a thousand men, so at the least, a fifth of the regiment were sick. For that reason, sickness was almost expected. Reflecting that expectation, James Zimmerman wrote: "we

⁴⁴ Letter dated September 8, 1862, in the Robert Sprinhourd Letters.

⁴⁵ Letter dated October 28, 1861, in the Joseph Overcash Papers.

all are expecting to take the mumps in a few days two has had them in our tent and the Measels are in our camp.”⁴⁶

As the discussions of food, water, and disease indicate, conditions in the army were rarely looked upon favorably. However, life on the home front was not much easier, as it was also affected by wartime economic struggles and disease. Soldiers constantly wrote home to assure themselves that their families were in good health and taking care of themselves financially. For example, Jesse Hill of Davidson County wrote home only a few weeks after joining the army, “So if you dont tak good cear of what you hav got as you will hav to Suffer take cear of your Self for I hav to do the best I can and you must do the Same until I come home I hop this dam war Stop this spring.”⁴⁷ Jesse clearly did not wish to be gone and in the army. He was concerned that his wife would not be able to provide for herself unless

⁴⁶ Letter dated September 4, 1862, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers.

⁴⁷ Letter dated January 19, 1864, in the Jesse Hill Letters 1864-1865, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/317>.

she took precautions against potential poor economic conditions while he was gone.

Poor economic conditions did arrive. Thornton Sexton of Ashe County wrote home on January 20, 1864:

you Stated that times wer very hard there it is the Same case here and I expect it is the case all over the confederacy we are not getting more than half enough to eat now I am afraid times are going to be a Great eal harder before the war ends...I was very Sorry to hear of So much Sickness through our Section of country I would glad to See you but the opertunity will not permit-of it- Soon I am afraid.⁴⁸

In Sexton and Hill's letters, a tension can be read between the lines. The soldiers wanted to be home helping their families through tough times but could not. This is an example of a common tension between one's duty in the army and duty to their families, which runs throughout the letters in this study.

This tension existed as early as 1861. On July 7, 1861, James Sherrill of Catawba County wrote home to his friend, James Robinson:

⁴⁸ Letter dated January 20, 1864, in the Thornton Sexton Letters.

I will tell you a Soldiers life is a hard life but I think I can Stand it Twelve months let it be as it may tell all of your friend to take good care of their crops for the times are hard now but I do Expect that they will be harder.⁴⁹

Sherrill was not writing home to his family, but he is concerned with his friends' preparation for the impending wartime economic struggle. On June 1, 1863, James Zimmerman's father-in-law was struggling, yet none of his sons were around to help. James wrote to his wife that:

i was sorry to here that your Pap was so poorly and had no one to do work on the farm It seams bad after he has worked hard and raised all his boy and needs them now to do and wait on him, in his helpless old age they have to be taken away.⁵⁰

The tension between duty in the army and duty at home took a toll on soldiers like Zimmerman and Sherrill, as well as others. Many soldiers wanted to leave the army to help back home, but most soldiers found themselves trapped in the army.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Letter dated July 7, 1861, in the James T. Robinson AND John H. Robinson Papers, 1827-1865, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/285>.

⁵⁰ Letter dated June 1, 1863, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers.

⁵¹ Almost every spring, AWOL leave statistics shot up as soldiers left the army to put in a crop back home.

James Sherrill said he could stand being a soldier for twelve months. I suspect many other 1861 volunteers felt the same, but soldiers (who were not killed or wounded in battle) served for far more than twelve months in most cases, even if they did not want to. William A. Tesh from Yadkin County mentioned in an 1864 letter that he reenlisted reasoning: “I reacon I must tell You our Regt has reenlisted For the war they will Keep us in anny how and we thought we had Just as well reenlist as not.”⁵² Similarly, Daniel Abernathy of Catawba County wrote that “they want the men to reinlist for the war and it causes grate confusion for the mens time is out this spring and they want to go home and they say they intend to go though some few has reenlisted.”⁵³ Once in the army, men could not leave easily. The draft not only brought men into the army, it also kept men in the Army for the duration of the war. The conscription acts drafted all men between

⁵² Letter dated February 8, 1864, in the William A. Tesh Letters, Private Voices Database, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/9922>.

⁵³ Letter dated February 14, 1864, in the Daniel Abernathy Letters, Private Voices Database, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/6160>.

certain ages irrespective of time already served in the army.⁵⁴ Both William Tesh and Daniel Abernathy, and others surveyed in this study, were forced to re-enlist whether they wanted to or not.⁵⁵

Desertion and the Home Guard

Francis Marion Poteet did not want to be in the army. A short time after his conscription in 1863, he wrote to his wife that “Sumtimes I think that I Will Runaway I would like for you to Rite to me about that tha is Eight ar ten will Come With me any time that I will.”⁵⁶ Though there is not documentation of his wife’s response, he writes on November 22: “you Rote to me to not Runaway you dont now nothing About hard times...if I nown that I had to stay in the army till the war ended I would as soon be Ded and I would any how if it wasant for you

⁵⁴ Cook, 162. The 1862 Conscription Act drafted all able-bodied males from 18-35.

⁵⁵ Katherine A. Giuffre, “First in Flight: Desertion as Politics in the North Carolina Confederate Army,” *Social Science History* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1997), 246.

⁵⁶ Letter dated November 3, 1863, in the Poteet Family Letters.

and my littel Children”⁵⁷ Francis wanted to desert, but his wife resisted. Despite her resistance, on January 7, 1864, Poteet did desert. Sometime after writing his letter, he received word that one of his children was severely ill and he left his camp at Kinston, North Carolina, and returned home. The child eventually died shortly before he returned to the army. Martha implies that the home guard was at least active around the time he was there when she wrote the “Raleigh gard never come back no moor I wish you could hav staid with me...I want to know what they don with you for runing away.”⁵⁸ Poteet was not home for long. His wife writes in her February 2, 1864 letter: “you did not stay at but 8 days and then went back.”⁵⁹ Lucky for him, his punishment was not as severe as others mentioned in the letters surveyed in this study. He was imprisoned for several months rather than receiving the death penalty. Based on his letters, we know that he was imprisoned for about five months. While imprisoned, Poteet noted that his mail was read by guards. As mentioned earlier, Poteet wrote

⁵⁷ Letter dated November 22, 1863, in the Poteet Family Letters.

⁵⁸ Letter dated January 7, 1864, in the Poteet Family Letters.

⁵⁹ Letter dated January 12, 1864, in the Poteet Family Letters.

that he did not have enough food. As mentioned earlier, he was forced to sell his razor and coat to buy food while imprisoned.⁶⁰

The plight of Francis Poteet was certainly not an anomaly in the Confederate Army. In the first place, Francis Poteet does not seem to have wanted to fight. After being drafted, he thought of running away. When he was needed by his family, he deserted. However, out of fear for the home guard who were active in McDowell County during the time he was home, he returned to war. He was punished severely for deserting, despite the circumstances. In the fall of 1864, Poteet was intent on running away again. However, his wife repeatedly asked him to stay in the army several times. For example, she wrote:

if you can get a furlow come home if you plase but if you cant get a furlow you cant do me any good to come but it would do me harm... I think it is very Mean that they dont let you come if you was a rich mans son you could come.⁶¹

Times were difficult for Martha. In letters to Francis, she mentions shootouts between deserters and the Burke County Militia. She

⁶⁰ Letter dated March 17, 1863, in the Poteet Family Letters.

⁶¹ Letter dated October 6, 1864, in the Poteet Family Letters.

describes 150 deserters hiding on South Mountain. She writes about how boys as young as sixteen are being conscripted into the home guard. Economically, she faced incredible hardships, constantly struggling with their landlord. In addition to all of the above, two of their children died during the war. Francis wanted to come home to help her. Yet Martha asked him to stay and do his duty.

The experience of the Poteet family during the war is a microcosm of the tensions on the Confederate home front, which is described in the letters surveyed. Other soldiers' experiences contained similar tensions. James C. Zimmerman openly discussed deserting in several letters. He decides not to, reasoning that "I would have to runaway and if I got home safe the malitia officers would be after me and to fight them that would not do so I have to bare with my lot until higher athorities releas me."⁶² Daniel Abernathy also noted on December 12, 1864, "I can see there is a good many prisners here that is deserters and men that did not report here according to order."⁶³ In

⁶² Letter dated February 15, 1863, in the James C. Zimmerman Papers.

⁶³ Letter dated December 12, 1864, Daniel Abernathy Papers.

the same letter discussed earlier in which William Brotherton drew a Confederate flag, he noted that "I think our chance Slim our men is Still desertin yet I think we will stay at this camps some time from the way they clearing off."⁶⁴ Almost all the soldiers in this study discussed desertion in a similar manner. If they did not openly discuss their own desire to desert like Poteet or Zimmerman, they noted that many of their comrades or friends deserted.

A few of the soldiers surveyed in this study were disgusted by desertion. John Robert Lowery, a member of Mallett's Battalion, noted his disdain for deserters. He was stationed at Camp Holmes near Raleigh; however, he made frequent trips to Burke, Wilkes, Yadkin, and other western piedmont counties to help round up deserters and absconders. In 1863, he wrote:

I suppose you would be glad to know what we are doing up here with the deeserters well I think we are doing nothing, and we never will catch them, for there are too many hiding places in these mountains, we have no caught any deserters yet, but have shot at several running, we have taken up several conscripts and old men for harboring... we have been among

⁶⁴ Letter dated August 17, 1863, in the William H. Brotherton Letters.

worse enemies than the yankies for the last fort night, for two thirds of Wilkes County are tories.⁶⁵

He frequently discusses shooting at deserters and absconders. Despite Lowery's low opinion of Wilkes County Tories, a Wilkes County soldier named William Walsh probably agreed with Lowerty. Walsh expressed a similar disdain for deserters in his county. He wrote on September 21, 1863:

I hear that the gard is playing a rough game with the deseres & conscrips in wilkes poor old fellows they wer not over half as smat as they thought they wer I guess it would have been the best for the men not to have runaway & conscip to have come out & kept peace in the country as much as I hope they will not leave a courdly desertes in the county & I want them to bring all the conscrips who are able to come.⁶⁶

Lowery and Walsh were the only two soldiers in this study to discuss deserters in this way. A far greater number were either ambivalent or openly discussed their own desire to desert.

⁶⁵ Letter dated April 27, 1863, in the John Robert Lowrey Letters.

⁶⁶ Letter dated September 21, 1863, in the Proffit Family Letters.

Home guards, like Lowrey's unit, persecuted families in more places than just Wilkes County. Martha Poteet once described a violent clash between the Burke County militia and McDowell County deserters. She wrote on November 24, 1864:

The Burk Melisha [1] is out this week after deserters they come up with the Johnsons and others and fired on them and they returned the fire and after firing a bout... rounds the deserters run in the time of the fray...they got three deserters and loud they killed some they seen them fall yesterday they went to Henry Deales hunting the Johnson and give hally a malling for his sas-sy talk times is very bad here now nbodys life is worth a days perches.⁶⁷

Several families discussed the home guard. Soldiers frequently asked family members about the guards' activity at home, and often warned their friends of the dangers of being caught by the home guard.

Soldiers feared the punishments deserters received. F.A. Bleckley, a Catawba County millwright, described one of the lightest sentence-- imprisonment. While on sick duty in Greensboro, he wrote:

⁶⁷ Letter dated November 24, 1864, in the Poteet Family Letters.

"I can see there is a good many prisners here that is deserters."⁶⁸

However, many soldiers described much harsher punishments.

Thornton Sexton from Ashe County wrote home several times to implore his family member, Jo, to come back to the Army:

I want you to tell Jo Sexton that he had better come back at quick as he can for he is reported absence with out leave...i want you to rite if no any thing of Marion or not and if you do and can give hime any word atall tell him to come back hear as quick as he can and tell him not to come under gard for if he does he will be Shot.⁶⁹

Soldiers often recounted punishments deserters received in their letters home. Alfred Proffit of Wilkes County wrote home: "A man was brandied on the left hip with a letter D for deserting he belonged to our CO."⁷⁰ Others recounted the executions of deserters. William Brotherton wrote on September 21, 1863: "I saw Aman Shot for desertin they tied him to A Stake and Shot him in the Brest pwt nine

⁶⁸ Letter dated December 18, 1864, in the F.A. Bleckley Letters, Private Voices database, <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/237>.

⁶⁹ Letter dated November 13, 1863, in the Thornton Sexton Letters.

⁷⁰ Letter dated June 4, 1863, in the Proffit Family Letters.

balls in him I was About 1 50 yards from him I Come Right wp to him after he was Shot.”⁷¹

Desertion was common in the Confederate Army. According to historian Katherine A. Giuffre, ten percent of North Carolina soldiers deserted over the course of the war.⁷² From the letters surveyed in this study, I suspect a much higher percentage wanted to run away. Jesse Hill of Davidson County never deserted, but he wrote that he wanted to. On March 16, 1864, he wrote:

I will be at home Som time for if tha dont giv me a ferlow if I dont run away I will be [??] about may or june for me ame is home but if tha use me for I wont run a way Som Sed that you and lily Sed you did not want me nor felt to run a way thatis all rite but I dont cear what you and her wants if I take the notion I am coming or be found atrying.⁷³

Though he’s a bit difficult to understand, Hill essentially tells his wife if that he wanted to run away, and that if he did not think he would be

⁷¹ Letter dated September 21, 1863 in the William Brotherton Letters.

⁷² Giuffre, 246.

⁷³ Letter dated, March 16, 1864, in the Jesse Hill Letters.

caught, he would run whether she liked it or not.

James Zimmerman also wrote that he wanted to desert. He wrote to his wife:

it donot seam that I will get to come home directly There is a good many like myself wants to come but as a fraid They cannot get through safe and then They are Liable to be Taken up when they get home If They ever attempt the like they never would get a furlow.⁷⁴

Zimmerman was disgusted by battle.

Neither Hill nor Zimmerman deserted; however, they obviously wanted to. Factors such as social pressure or the Home Guard kept North Carolinians in the army, but as noted earlier, ten percent of North Carolinians in the army deserted. Deserters and wannabe deserters should not be considered Confederate nationalists. The deserters or wannabe deserters mentioned in this section were not Unionists either; however, when the war became hard, they tended to express an ambivalence for the Confederate cause.

⁷⁴ Letter dated February 10, 1863, in the James Zimmerman papers.

Peace

On August 16, 1864, Marion Poteet wrote to her husband that she "would rather know that peace was Made than to own McDowell County it would be moor satisfaction."⁷⁵ Her sentiment in this statement developed out of the struggles her family faced during the war. By 1864, peace was on Marion and many other North Carolinians' minds. It is difficult to define what exactly soldiers meant by peace in their letters home. Peace is a nebulous term. Sometimes when soldiers discussed peace, they could have meant Confederate Victory. Other times it might mean peace on any terms. The goal of this section is not to argue that North Carolinians from the western piedmont had a definition of an acceptable peace. Instead, this section will highlight how often they thought of peace and will attempt to investigate what led North Carolinians to discuss peace.

When Governor Vance was campaigning for reelection in 1864, he visited troops in the field. William Tesh saw Vance on April

⁷⁵ Letter dated August 16, 1864, in the Poteet Family Letters.

3, 1864, and wrote to his wife: "Govenor Vance spoke to us Yesterday and I tell You he did make a good speech he told us the only way to get peace was to fight for it."⁷⁶ Vance suggested here that peace could only occur in victory, and Tesh agreed. After big victories, some soldiers wrote home expecting peace. Franklin Setzer thought that after the slaughter at Cold Harbor peace would come because Yankees had given up.⁷⁷ Alfred Walsh wrote that peace would come soon after May, 1862, because the Yankees were defeated around Williamsburg.⁷⁸ When an army won on either side, especially early in the war, the public jumped to conclusions that peace was not far off. Setzer and Walsh's remarks do not seem to be much more than eager soldiers jumping to conclusions.

More often than not, soldiers and family wrote home letters desiring an end to their struggles. Constantine Hege's father, Solomon, in what could be a rebuttal to Vance, wrote,

⁷⁶ Letter dated April 3, 1864, in the William A. Tesh Letters.

⁷⁷ Letter dated August 7, 1864, in the Franklin A. Setzer Correspondence.

⁷⁸ Letter dated May 11, 1862 in the Proffit Family Letters.

Oh what folly that the men in authority do not try to offer proposals otherwise than trying to murder to restore peace to our already ruined country. O, that God would constrain them to meet each other in a peace conferece, to make fair proposals to stop fighting and to live as God designed man should live here, that they may live in heaven hereafter.⁷⁹

References to peace generally follow a similar logic to that of Solomon's. Average North Carolinians just did not enjoy the fighting; however, the peace terms acceptable to men like Solomon were never outlined in any of the letters. Their conception of peace was a dream, not rested in any reality.

During the winter of 1864 and Spring of 1865, soldiers became aware that the war could not last much longer, so they wrote home that the end was near. For example, Francis Poteet wrote that "tha Say that peace will be made before white frost god sent it I dont see no sign of peace hear tha are fighting every day hear on picket."⁸⁰

Similarly, Jesse Hill wrote:

I can tel you that I am vary tiard of Staying here and Starving... the yankeys has sheld Peters burg all to peces and

⁷⁹ Letter dated June 11, 1863, in the Constantine Alexander Hege Papers.

⁸⁰ Letter dated October 4, 1865, in the Poteet Family Letters.

is Sheling every day I can tel you the men is all out of hart
offersers and all tha Say we cant hole them any longer.⁸¹

Both Poteet and Hill noted the destruction that eventually lead to the wars end. That destruction caused them to invoke the idea of peace in defeat. By 1865, all the soldiers still writing seemed hopeless. A few months later in April, after the Union engulfed the Confederate capital and destroyed what was left of the Confederate government's grip on power, the war ended in its fifth year.

Conclusion

Like all Americans, North Carolinians from the piedmont and foothills experienced incredible hardships during the Civil War. The war in many ways defines the history of the region. In the decades following the Civil War, public monuments to Civil War soldiers were erected in town squares across the piedmont and foothills. Today, these monuments continue to bring the struggles of the Civil War era to the

⁸¹ Letter dated January 6, 1865, in the Jesse Hill Letters.

minds of those that walk past them. However, there is an important part of the Civil War's history that is forgotten—the Civil War did not have the undying support of the “great popular heart” in North Carolina during the war as many reenactors or historians might conclude.

Before the War, North Carolinians engaged in a political battle in which western North Carolinians sought to question the political domination of the planter class. While North Carolinians did not question the existence of slavery, they did question the extreme control by the elite and advantages given to slaveholders in North Carolina. That tension manifested in the first votes for secession in North Carolina, when a majority of North Carolinians voted against secession. However, secessionists seized the political wave and changed the popular whims towards secession following Lincoln's call for troops. However, it was not long after the war started that the elite who dominated the Confederate government found it necessary to draft an army.

For that reason, more than any other, non-elite North Carolinians did not fight the Civil War happily. While the elite certainly supported the war until the very end, the people who bore both hardships and muskets did not always support the war after 1861, as discussed in this study. Social pressure and the draft forced a majority of North Carolinians into the army. While North Carolinians were in the army, they suffered from a lack of food, clean water, and supplies. Likewise, their families suffered tremendous economic hardships at home. Many deserted and many more expressed the desire to desert. Those that avoided the draft or deserted were relentlessly pursued by home guards. Early on and with increasing fervor throughout the war, North Carolinians clamored for peace because the war was so agonizing. The war was a revolution of the politicians (or by another name the elite) not the people. It was sustained by law, the weapon of politicians. That weapon forced North Carolinians to bear muskets in the service of the Confederacy for the duration of the war, no matter how desperate things became. Vance was right in 1864 when

he said "the great popular heart (has) never been in this war." The
great popular heart was never happily in the war; it was forced into it.

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THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY: VIOLENCE, BLACK IDENTITY, AND LEGACY

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Afros. Black Berets. Leather Jackets. Guns.¹

The Black Panther Party left an imprint with black power on the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. There's a certain edge to the Panthers that make them stand out from any other movement seen in black history of the United States. The Black Panthers had grown their presence in the Civil Rights Movement, ensuring that blacks had a voice to stand up and defend themselves, so they no longer were to submit themselves to the construct of social racism. The Party's primary missions were focused on diminishing police brutality, institutional racism, and social inequality.

Initially the founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale wanted the Black Panther Party to be an underground guerilla group that was not recognized in the public arena so that it could serve as the catalyst for a

¹ Appendix B: Figure 1.

greater revolution.² However, the attention the Party drew to itself resulted in the rise to making themselves known across the country, and even throughout the world. This attention initially started from police brutality against people of color. It seemed to the Panthers that the police were always seeking them out, like animals searching for prey.³ It came to the point where it appeared that the police were always heavily armed, ready to beat and arrest any moment without reason. More willing to take a stand for this, the Black Panther Party pushed self-defense in their programming and made a statement to improve their freedoms and no longer be considered “second-class citizens”.⁴ They would not allow these racial hate-crimes from the police. It was time for their fair treatment and their rightful liberties as inhabitants of this country.

² University of Illinois Board of Trustees, *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, ed. Judson L. Jeffries (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 227.

³ Interview of Esutosin Omowale Osunkoya, “Block by Block, Door-to-Door,” in *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, eds. Bryan Shih and Yohuru Williams (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 122.

⁴ Interview of Richard Brown, *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, 152.

The Panthers drew attention to themselves by carrying guns. It seemed like a mockery of police, to intimidate them with the weapons they had but it meant more. The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution justifies the right for any United States citizen to carry a gun.⁵ The right to carry a gun for self-defense purposes was made clear in the programming of the Black Panther Party. Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Party, read in Oakland, California law that any weapon carried on the individual cannot be concealed, that it must be visibly out in the open.⁶ The Black Panthers openly held guns, which was justified by both national and local legislation thus should not be questioned by the law or law enforcers. Carrying a gun was often considered iconic to the look of the Black Panthers because they made sure to always carry one with them.

Strapping blacks with guns did not start with the Black Panther Party, it started with Robert Williams. His book *Negros with Guns*

⁵ Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006), 354.

⁶ Stanley Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, Public Broadcasting Service, September 2, 2015.

argued that blacks should carry guns publicly in order to prevent bloodshed and educate blacks on self-defense and the purpose of these guns.⁷ Not only do guns aid with self-defense, it makes the Panthers more visible. He even connected to a personal anecdote where a man rammed into his car, but when he reported and showed the evidence to the police, the policeman claims not seeing anything.⁸ This was not only an issue with the police but with racism at the time-essentially denying a person their rights for justice based on their race.

Denying a person's human rights denies their very humanity, so how can blacks resolve this? Make their voice heard? Make their presence known? The answer is to do something radical and the power of disruption will make them known.⁹ The Civil Rights Movement at the time did not show the results that the Panthers wanted to see. There were sit-ins and nonviolent protests where protesters were taught that if an

⁷ Robert Williams, *Negros with Guns* (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1968), 6-7.

⁸ *Ibid*, 8.

⁹ Mark Engler and Paul Engler, "What Makes Nonviolent Movements Explode?," *Moyers & Company*, last modified December 29, 2014, 2018, <https://billmoyers.com/2014/12/29/makes-nonviolent-movements-explode/>.

officer wants to hit or arrest them, they are to not fight back. Civil disobedience and non-cooperation taught to not react violently if the police acted that way, but to the Black Panthers it was about doing more than turning the other cheek.¹⁰ Nonviolence resistance took far longer and who knows if they would ever get the results they wanted to see; they wanted to see impactful change happen, so the Panthers took matters into their own hands.

For the Black Panthers, it was important to them to make action happen-enforce the change themselves. They did this first by challenging the police, as it was the police who were able to get away with whatever they wanted to and acted as racial bullies.¹¹ The Panthers considered the police as pigs¹² and made sure that the rest of the nation knew that through their media efforts. It is difficult to testify in cases challenged against oneself if there are police officers' testimonies against your own, especially when race comes into play. This was provoking for them to

¹⁰ Emory Douglas, *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, 133.

¹¹ Brown, *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, 155.

¹² Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

think that the police should not have the upper hand just from their authority, especially for unjust action.

Uniformed militancy legitimized the Party. Self-defense to the Black Panthers was not only a means to an end to hate crimes but an organizing tool.¹³ At that time, if a person wore a black beret, a leather jacket, and often a gun, then it was clear they were affiliated with the Panthers. This kind of structure spoke to the seriousness of the Party, but that is what is unique about them because this kind of structure is not seen in any other movement before; this structure and togetherness built a united front.

There were other efforts by the Panthers that are not often acknowledged by scholars, because their efforts were overshadowed by their guns. The Panthers also implemented community building programs such as free clinics, breakfast programs, and medical research which were essential in the Party's campaign. This dueling duo of violence and social justice brought a strain to the Black Panther Party

¹³ Robyn C. Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 37.

movement. To outsiders, violence dominated every other effort of the Party, so this impacted how the rest of the world viewed them:

“There are always two people in every picture,” the celebrated Ansel Adams once observed, “the photographer and the viewer.” But what of the subject of both the photographer and the viewer’s gaze? The year 2016 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP), an organization that remains largely frozen in the popular narrative portrait of the 1960s as the most fearsome and violent of extremist organizations. ... the BPP remains one of the most misunderstood organizations of the twentieth century.¹⁴

This concept of the photograph marks the difference between the Panthers and the rest of the world, respectively the photographer and the viewer. “The photographer and the viewer” speaks on how a story is told and how it is perceived. The photographer snapshots a story into a single scene, meant to share that same story with whoever may view it. However, the viewer may interpret this story in an alternative way, something that the photographer cannot control. This is where the Black Panther Party faces its greatest obstacle: how to gain support for their cause when it appears that they endorse violence.

¹⁴ Shih and Williams, *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, xi.

There is a psychological distinction here of an ingroup and an outgroup. However, the existence of a division between these two groups results in conflict and therefore leads to this “misunderstanding” that leaves them “frozen” in time. The Panthers were the ingroup and everyone else was the outgroup. Therefore, the Black Panthers failed as a movement because they were misunderstood by the police, the government, their fellow people and remained to be, following their disbanding in 1982.

Outsiders could presume that the Black Panthers are unorganized or uncontrollable, when this was not the case. Foundational works such as the Ten-Point Program legitimized the seriousness of the Party and what they were fighting for.¹⁵ Having a clear outline of their aims and requests shapes them as a group with a clear purpose. The Ten-Point Program laid out the overall aims and mission of the Party which includes support and empowerment for blacks in the United States.¹⁶ The Program is titled “What We Want, What We Believe”. The Black

¹⁵ Appendix A: Ten Point Program

¹⁶ Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, 353-355.

Panther Party's primary goal was to eliminate police brutality and the murdering of black people.¹⁷ This is important to make clear to their opponents and supporters what it is they are fighting for. To the Panthers, there was a clear connection between the two: that police officers were racial profiling and assaulting black people which led to many unjust deaths.

The Party showed commitment to black militarization throughout their existence as a party, but they did so with caution.¹⁸ This caution is critical since it can impact the Party's overarching purpose of black equality. The push for black equality led to a black empowerment which changed black mentality in which the Panthers were a stepping stone. Although the Black Panther Party disbanded due to failure in eliminating racial oppression, the Party's efforts resulted in a new black identity and a cultural movement which was their biggest impact following their disbanding.

¹⁷ Ibid, 53.

¹⁸ University of Illinois Board of Trustees, *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, 218.

A United Front

The Black Panthers created a new cultural black identity through brotherhood and sense of community. The militancy structure and the organization of the Party created a stronger community which they called among themselves a brotherhood. Without a structure like this, blacks may not have drawn enough attention to really make a voice in the movement for racial equality.

There are Panthers who have committed to this Party since its beginnings, and because they have fought and struggled together side-by-side for years, they consider each other brothers.¹⁹ This brotherhood served as a united front for all blacks to come together. This communal feeling was emphasized even more when police began pitting evidence (some fraudulent) to drive Panthers out of their very homes like turning spouses against one another.²⁰ This led to the creation of “Panther Pads” where several Panthers would live together in a single apartment or house, building and creating that very community. They had to live

¹⁹ Interview of Steve Long, *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, 120.

²⁰ Ibid.

together to protect one another because at that point, they were all committed to movement that was becoming a real revolution.²¹

The Panthers refused to believe that their country and their government had any interest for their own good and wellbeing. The Panthers soon saw that within the United States, there was a “black colony and the “mother country,” showing a formation of an ingroup and an outgroup.²² In social psychology, ingroups and outgroups create an “us” versus “them” thinking which could then result in a kind of behavior to the other group enforcing this division.²³ Not only is the ingroup and outgroup categorization done biologically by race, but the Panthers have done it socially due to their race and the racial inequalities that they have dealt with. The Panthers have concreated this ingroup feeling from the militancy structure they endorsed.

²¹ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

²² Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland*, 29.

²³ American Psychological Association, “Ingroup vs. Outgroup Influences in Brain and Behavior,” *American Psychological Association*, 2017, accessed April 21, 2018, <http://www.apa.org/pubs/highlights/peeps/issue-94.aspx>.

Due to the Panthers uniformed manner, comparative to other movements of the past, there was a clear understanding of membership within the Panthers and if someone wore the beret, the dark shades, the leather jacket, and the gun, then outsiders even knew that person was a Black Panther.²⁴ The look or the brotherhood of the Black Panthers were not the only reasons some blacks joined the Party. The Party's full title was The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Many blacks feared for their lives each day-this alone created a fear-instilled community among people of color from the ongoing discrimination and prejudice put on them, especially by police officers.

With people knowing that the Panthers would instruct their members on self-defense through skills-based fighting and use of equipment, this assured people that they would be safe within a supportive community when joining the Panthers. Yet it had to be made clear that members of the Party were not to be careless when armed with a weapon. The Party's foundational work not only rested on the Ten-Point Program but also on the Rules of the Black Panther Party. The

²⁴ Appendix B: Figure 2

Rules explicitly state what members of the organization cannot do, especially to preserve the purpose of the Party and not distract both insiders of the Party and outsiders from its overall goals.²⁵ One of the rules states that “No party member will **USE, POINT, OR FIRE** a weapon of any kind unnecessarily or accidentally at someone.”²⁶ This means that the guns given to the Panthers are explicitly for self-defense, that they must not be used for any other motive. Establishing this was critical to keep the core of the movement clear, otherwise, the government and the media could exploit the Party from any error that a member creates.

There was more on the line, not just how the Panthers represented themselves as individuals but also their efforts in building up the black community. The Panthers started social change programs, which they called themselves “survival programs.”²⁷ This included

²⁵ Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, 356.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

serving free breakfast to children.²⁸ This specific programming helped children combat fatigue, hunger, or anything that could distract them from their studies in school. Programming like this physically helps build up the black community making their youth strong. Programs like these were exclusively volunteer-based; showing people that the Panthers were more than just the guns they carried.²⁹ The Panthers making a mark with a program like this also introduces the power of the Panthers to young black children. Showing the power of the Party to youth increases followers from a younger age group. In the Black Panther Party platform, people also wanted better housing, jobs, education, control over their communities and eventually peace.³⁰ These were all things that the black community saw as something that was of lower value or harder to obtain from the color of their skin. They felt that getting better hold of these things will empower them as a community make them more equality to their white counterpart. Programs like these even associate a positive

²⁸ University of Illinois Board of Trustees, *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, 196-197.

²⁹ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

³⁰ Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, 53.

reputation of do-good efforts for the Party.³¹ They serve a dual purpose not only to provide for the community but to continue to validate the Party.

Although legitimacy was important for how outsiders viewed the Party, the strength and the credibility of the Party helped with black self-image. The Panthers saw that it was more important of what they thought of themselves compared to what others thought of them. This is what led to that change in black mentality. Members of the Party saw it as a “coming of age” and a “coming of consciousness.”³² The Black Panthers wanted to transform themselves and wanted to show the world what they were made of. Primarily the sense of brotherhood emphasized this togetherness. This was seen through their common enemy being the police but what the police was doing to them was not a fair fight. Social activist Nelson Mandela once wrote, “Non-violent passive resistance is effective as long as your opponent adheres to the same rules as you do. But if peaceful protest is met with violence, its

³¹ Appendix B: Figure 3

³² Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland*, 42.

efficacy is at an end.”³³ This is critical to reflect on given that other Civil Rights movements have gone through with nonviolent protests. However, the opponent is not “adher[ing] to the same rules,” that police are using their weapons to abuse the Panthers and blacks altogether. From something like this, brotherhood and guns are essential to combat the police as a united front.

Swagger and Style

The Black Panther Party’s style drew attention to them as a result of their strut and the way they held themselves. The fashion, the togetherness, the uniform, the swagger was essential to the Party’s interaction with one another as members and with outsiders that anyone could tell who a Panther is. The appearance of the Black Panthers and blacks holding guns made a statement that increased the visibility of the Party nation-wide. They held themselves as fearless, ready for battle if

³³ David Hardiman, *Gandhi: In His Time and Ours* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009), 60.

necessary. They gave off this “in your face” kind of look, but this was rightfully so. They were angry, and they wanted that to be clear.

Their uniform was the way in which Panthers physically showed their association with the Party. Berets were an iconic piece of this uniform, one that historically has been used for a political fashion statement. Berets have been used in military uniforms since the late 19th century and for many movements represented nationalism and popular resistance.³⁴ Its simple design makes a statement of clear affiliation without drawing too much attention. A military group that used berets was the Green Berets, a special rank force of the United States army that started in the 1950s. This justified the militancy importance of the beret in American culture. Just before the Panthers, berets were also worn by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, revolutionaries who were the heads of the Cuban resistance and pushed for a Marxist government.³⁵ A year just

³⁴ Colin Bisset, “From Rembrandt to Che: the history of the beret,” *Radio National*, last modified September 26, 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/bydesign/from-rembrandt-to-che:-the-history-of-the-beret/5769668>.

³⁵ Rachel Lubitz, “The History of the Beret: How a Peasant’s Hat Turned into a Political Statement,” *Mic*, last modified June 21, 2016,

after the Black Panther Party formed, the Brown Berets came into the light. The Brown Berets were focused on Chicano equalities and rights.³⁶ These powerful militant groups and the fashions associated with them inspired the Panthers for their own collective look. Having a collective look is essential as well in a resistance movement, to show strength in numbers. The greater exposure to a kind of look that has this coolness to it can influence fashions and therefore develop greater support.

Another part of the Panthers' look was natural beauty. Black beauty by the Panthers was hugely emphasized through natural hair: afros. Seen frequently throughout media footage and snapshots of the Panthers, is the beret on top of the afro. Leaders of the Panthers promoted that the afro is something that they were born with and it is beautiful, so they should be proud of it.³⁷ This emphasis on embracing natural-born beauty makes the Black Panther even more attractive to join. Embracing natural beauty heightens self-image of black identity even more. This

<https://mic.com/articles/146546/the-history-of-the-beret-how-a-peasant-s-hat-turned-into-a-politicalstatement#.Oro23aWhZ>.

³⁶ Lubitz, "The History of the Beret: How a Peasant's Hat Turned into a Political Statement".

³⁷ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

lured all kinds of people to not just join the Black Panthers but to embrace natural beauty. This shows that ordinary people can make a difference and can be a part of something bigger, that their voice means something.

Movements also show great impact by its quantity in supporters. Numbers shows importance of power to the masses. Supporters played a big role in the attention of the Black Panther Party. The bulk of the Panthers were teenagers.³⁸ Young people are essential in movements as large as something like the Panthers to create solidarity in numbers. Having youth involved also allows for the Party and its values to last further than in a single generation, that there are multiple Panthers in the family unit, all throughout the community of different ages and walks of life.

The style of the Black Panthers and how they show up in photographs and footage gives an attitude, a sass that sticks through in everything they do. This pushed for a psychological change. This was cultural, symbolic, and social. This is where this attitude and thinking

³⁸ Ibid.

begins to become mainstreamed. It became a greater part of culture because people were drawn to it, wanted to become more like them. It became symbolic to mean something greater. It was important for Panthers and the black community to show themselves as fearless; their swagger showed that they will not back down. The Panthers' style grew to become a form of communication with one another, that they were tough and could handle anything that came in their direction. Their style and how they held themselves also became a way they communicated with outsiders, that they will not back down and do whatever it takes to get what they want.

The stylistic approach of the Black Panthers aligned with black militancy. This racial militancy in media portrayed the use of weapons as violent.³⁹ Their coolness and the violence that came along with it drew attention to them. It made them more visible and gained more support. Although uniformed and banded together, the Panthers and how the media portrayed them was essential to their cause becoming popular.

³⁹ Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 204.

The Panther In The Media

The Black Panther Party's contribution to the media and their branding served as the forefront to build the support for their cause. The Panthers permeated culture, where thugs and pimps became an attractive figure. The Panthers used the "pimp and the figure of the black nationalist" to strengthen black machismo with the thug image.⁴⁰ This image showed toughness, something important to show opponents to instill fear. The Panthers were not afraid to push the boundaries to show this. The Panthers were "packing" with weapons openly in capital buildings.⁴¹ This was broadcasted all over the country and it made the Panthers seem intimidating but also enticing to join. The way the Panthers held themselves could be interpreted as negative, but they converted it into a cultural embracing. People wanted to join the Panthers to become a part of something daring and powerful.

⁴⁰ Brian Ward, *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 225.

⁴¹ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

The media both through the Panthers' filtering and by other news outlets nationwide portrayed blacks angry with guns. Portrayal included people shouting with raised clenched fists, the Black Panther logo on flags, pins and shirts. How did this translate across the country? Photographs of the Panthers communicated as a "visual language that reflected the party and its politics and ideological perspective through the Ten-Point Platform and Program."⁴² People who cannot read and even young children who could not understand political commentaries could still see the power of the stories told by the illustrations that were printed in Black Panther newspapers. The Black Panther Party served as a symbol for the fight for black equality in America.⁴³ They thought themselves as the vanguard to this revolution and is the course for everyone else to follow.⁴⁴ The Party made this clear in their advocacy efforts as a leader in racial politics. Although the Panthers eventually

⁴² Emory Douglas, *The Black Panthers: Portraits from an Unfinished Revolution*, 136.

⁴³ Appendix B: Figure 4

⁴⁴ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

failed politically and socially, they won culturally because of their media efforts.

The media has also framed the Party in various ways, in some cases due to the government's contribution. The United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation was the Party's biggest antagonist. The FBI defined the Black Panther Party as "a black extremist organization ... [that] advocated the use of violence and guerilla tactics to overthrow the U.S. government."⁴⁵ This is an instance in where the Black Panther Party was misunderstood. The Party simply wanted their legal rights that they deserved but even a federal organization saw the Party as a scheme trying to overthrow its very government rather the Panthers wanted to reform it.

In comparison to other movements in the same era, the Black Panther Party challenged their "nonviolent" counterparts. This includes other Civil Rights Movement activists like Martin Luther King, Jr. Looking back at mainstream media at that time, there was great focus on

⁴⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Black Panther Party," *FBI Records: The Vault*, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://vault.fbi.gov/Black%20Panther%20Party%20>.

the great violence that was done both from the police and the Black Panthers. Concerns were that “racial militancy” would not interest any white people but rather anything that had the stamp of cultural pride was successful in starting a revolution.⁴⁶ All kinds of people stood behind the Black Panther Party. This was every person who joined this revolution wanted racial justice. The Party became a party for the people. The party did focus on black liberation, but it drew people to a focus on giving the power to the masses rather than to politicians.

In newspaper distribution, the Ten Point Platform is the first thing seen when opening the paper.⁴⁷ Regardless if with the Panthers or not, everyone knew what they stood for when reading that paper. There were images that conveyed emotion in telling stories. Although newspapers can circulate across the nation contributed to their propaganda, broadcastings of protests and rallies led to a revolution of culture. An aid in this revolution was music. The album “Up Against the Wall MotherF**ker!” became a cultural phenomenon. It was something

⁴⁶ Ward, *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle*, 163.

⁴⁷ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

that resonated well with blacks who experienced police officers yelling out these very words announcing a stick up. Due to racial profiling, many people of color resonated with this experience with the police. This confrontation impacted the way they interacted with law enforcement officers. It made them fearful living out their everyday when their world could come tumbling down from racism and the power of the police. The Black Panthers used the media as a voice for protest.⁴⁸ Protest chants like “Power to the People, Off the Pig” stuck easily from its catchy rhythm but also from its powerful meaning.⁴⁹ This chant not only demotes the police but intensifies the need for power to the people.

The Black Panthers even took their cause to an international level. While as political refugees from America, writer and Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver and his wife served on behalf of the Black Panthers as international diplomats. In places like Algeria and North Korea, Cleaver widely spread anti-American sentiment to support the Black Panthers.⁵⁰ This was problematic for the United States on a global

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

level with the Cold War tensions at the time. During the Black Panther Party's beginnings, over fifty countries gained their independence.⁵¹ Panthers were branching out to other groups who felt the same ingroup feeling in their own situations, but this was on a far larger scale. The Panthers saw this as an opportunity to use revolutionary leaders across the world to their leverage and build even more strength.

Failure from Disbandment

The Black Panther Party failed altogether because the Party disbanded. There were ongoing issues like counterintelligence and increased aggression. This brotherhood of Panthers, of people angry with guns, was an organizational building but also organizational destruction.⁵² Not only did this create a common sentiment and foster a community, the Party was built on rage blended with destructive weapons that can do some serious damage.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland*, 38.

The United States' F.B.I. Director at the time was J. Edgar Hoover. He made great strides to cripple the Black Panther Party.⁵³ He was most fearful of poor whites (young patriots) uniting with young blacks and together turning against the government.⁵⁴ Hoover also worried about a black messiah coming out of this and challenging the American government.⁵⁵ Politically, how would a nation (from the perspective of other nations watching) look divided internally between two races? This would fracture the power of the United States as a whole. This is critical in global politics especially with Cold War tensions going on at the time. If the United States did not appear strong internally then how could other nations depend on it in a potential outbreak of a nuclear war? Hoover saw the Party as a vanguard for a very violent and threatening revolution, so he used informants to take down the BPP internally. The FBI's counterintelligence led to distrust within the party, where individuals began to pit against one another.⁵⁶ This eventually

⁵³ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

destroyed the party. It would be impossible for the Panthers to remain as a united front when they did not even trust their brothers fighting next to them.

After coming out of jail, Huey Newton recognized that if the Black Panther Party's increased aggression and violence continued, it would not stand as an organization.⁵⁷ This was problematic and could be damaging to the Party and the Party's image if this was not handled carefully. Following Huey Newton's release from jail and Eldridge Cleaver's return to the States, there was a split in the Party. This presented vulnerability for the FBI to weasel into the Party and demolish it.⁵⁸ Having two factions of the Black Panther Party with two big leaders resulted in a clash of these factions.

The Party disbanded too because they were in a war against the police and the government, who they could not take down.⁵⁹ Firing squads and shoot-ins were made from the Los Angeles Police

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ University of Illinois Board of Trustees, *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, 218.

Department to take down the Panthers.⁶⁰ Racial profiling is a factor important to consider with law enforcement officers, especially with centuries worth of racism on top of that. It could be that combatting racism was impossible for one group to overcome with such a deep history of social racism. Although it was impossible for the Panthers to eliminate racism and discrimination by the police altogether, they made a dent in making the masses aware of their cause and making this dialogue with more people using their voice. Except how does this look for the Panthers going forward, did their violence overshadow their efforts for social change?

Leaving a Legacy

The Black Panther Party disbanded and therefore as a movement failed, because their main focuses of racism and police brutality continue to exist today. Although the Black Panther Party failed politically and socially, the Party started a cultural revolution on

⁶⁰ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

empowerment of black identity and cultural pride. The Black Panthers culturally changed and impacted a new black thinking.

The power of the Black Panthers led to a larger cultural success in the present day, as black power and identity is mainstreamed to the masses. This is done through fashion, film, music, movements, et cetera. Especially in recent years, references to the Black Panthers have become even more wide known. The independent film *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* resurfaced the focus on the Black Panther Party, which with this even put a spotlight back onto the Party and mainstreamed throughout the country.

Celebrity Beyoncé used a nation-wide broadcasted performance to contribute to this message. Back in 2013, Beyoncé blew away America with her Super Bowl Halftime Show with her and her dancers' uniforms being similar to the Black Panthers, with the berets and the armored uniforms.⁶¹ Again, there is that bad-ass attitude of “nothing can stop us now.” Beyoncé has been the catalyst for drawing attention back to this identity and way of thinking. Her popularity greatly

⁶¹ Appendix B: Figure 5.

mainstreams the messages she makes. The celebrity has become a leader of black culture in the 21st century and her fame mainstreams this, but due to this great widespread of black culture, is there even an ingroup and outgroup anymore? Diminishing this divide results in greater attention and embracing of this culture, but that does not mean that racism is eliminated. There continues to be a struggle for racial equality and other achievements in industries continue to make these struggles clear.

In 2018, the blockbuster *Black Panther* redirected attention to the Black Panther Party simply by paralleled name. However, this is not a coincidence; there are uncanny resemblances between the film and the Party. The throne of which T'Challa, the protagonist, sits on resembles the throne that Huey Newton sat on for Black Panther propaganda.⁶² The all-black cast shows this black dominance and again becomes mainstream. Even in red carpet photos, the actors dressed in royal African fashion embracing this cultural pride. What is also mainstream is the focus of black empowerment and due to social media, here is a

⁶² Appendix B: Figure 6.

great deal of attention to how there is now a black superhero that young black people can look up to.

The film focuses on an all-black colony Wakanda in the heart of Africa that is advanced in technology and follows similarly to the Panthers' black militancy and structure of interconnectedness and brotherhood. The film conveys the message of promoting black empowerment rather than giving weapons to those in areas of disparity and those who cannot defend themselves against the police. The antagonist of the film, Erik from Oakland, California (where the Black Panther Party was also founded), finds out that his late father was the Black Panther and sets out for Wakanda to avenge his father's death. Erik fights T'Challa for the throne and uses his newly gained power in Wakanda to send weapons back to his home in America to help 'his people' and arm them with weapons as he believes they rightly deserve to defend themselves. In a battle toward the end of the film, T'Challa kills Erik to stop his overtaking of Wakanda and to prevent further damage to the rest of the world in these weapons being sent to outside areas. This killing can be symbolic of this idea of using weapons to fight

against authority. However, the ending of the film where T'Challa allows Wakanda to share its resources with the world, specifically for black communities, shows focus more so on the empowerment of the black individual and the black community. This brings to focus the idea of uplifting the community rather than defeating the enemy (the police) with violence.

The violence used by the Black Panther Party may have led to further implications than they were intending. What if they did not use violence? What if they were nonviolent like others in the Civil Rights Movement? Martin Luther King Jr. today often is viewed in history as saintly while the Black Panther Party carries a different kind of legacy of bloodshed and violence. While Martin Luther King Jr. used nonviolent tactics and the Panthers had guns for self-defense, both were considerably impactful while fighting for their cause. However, this seems to impact the legacy that is carried with them, whether positive or negative.

The greatly misunderstood Black Panther Party simply rested on the responsibility of the perception and the framer. Militancy in the

Panthers' eyes was a sign of empowerment and establishing dominance whereas this was different from those who framed the Panthers from the outside. It is important to recognize that the Party's own framing failed (based on the United States government taking them down) because they did not change perspectives of their opponent. Although the Black Panthers worked towards were focused on depleting institutional racism and strived for equality, change did not go about externally but rather internally. With the Black Panther Party and their uniformed structure of community and portrayal through the media, change went about through the power of the people.

With cultural references to the Black Panther Party, we are no longer seeing blacks with guns, but rather we are seeing this cultural embracing. It is very clear that there is this focus on a new black identity and way of thinking, but black inequality is a struggle that has not ended. It is important to recognize that their own framing failed because the way in which others viewed the Panthers turned more negative than anything because the violence they used. However, there is more than the eye can see.

There is an Indian parable about three blind men and an elephant.⁶³ Each blind man approaches the elephant to feel what it is. The first blind man goes up to the side of the elephant, feeling the roughness of its skin and thinks it is a wall. The second blind man goes up to the elephant, feeling its trunk and thinks it a snake. The third blind man goes up to the front of the elephant and feels its tusk, thinking the creature is a spear. This parable nicely ties to the complexities of the Black Panther Party. While one could approach the elephant that is the Party and judge it from what they have seen, there is so much more to understand than just looking at a single part. This is why the Black Panther Party is misunderstood by the rest of the world, because outsiders are seeing a single story of the Party, not understanding the elephant as a whole.

⁶³ Although there are many variations of this parable, this specific reference is from the opening scene of *The Black Panther: Vanguard of the Revolution* by Stanley Nelson.

Appendix A

Ten Point Program: What We Want, What We Believe

1. We want freedom. We want the power to determine the destiny of our black community. We believe that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.
2. We want full employment for our people. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the white American business-man will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of our black community. We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100

years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over 50 million black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter for human beings. We believe that if the white landlords will not give decent housing to our black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day

society. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and in the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service. We believe that black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.
7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people. We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The

Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives us the right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails. We believe that all black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.
9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in a court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States. We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that black people will receive fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives a man the right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the black community

from which the black defendant came. We have been, and are being, tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the “average reasoning man” of the black community.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have been connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the law of nature and nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect of the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established shall not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute

despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such a government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Source: The Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party Ten Point Program, 1966. Referenced in Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: University Arkansas Press, 2006), 353-355.

Appendix B



Fig. 1

Source: Garrett Albert Duncan. "Black Panther Party." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2018.

Note: Figure 1 is an image of the co-founders of the Black Panther Party, Bobby Seale (left) and Huey Newton (right).



Fig. 2

Source: Photograph: Free Huey rally, *Power to the People: The World of the Black Panthers* by Stephen Shames and Bobby Seale. Referenced in Radhika Chalasani’s “Inside the Black Panther Party”, *CBS News*, accessed April 22, 2018.

Note: This rally was formed when Huey Newton (co-founder of the BPP) was charged for assault, murder and kidnapping of a police officer in 1967.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.



Fig. 3

Source: Snapshot from Stanley Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.

Note: This snapshot from the film emphasizes on how the Panthers expressed themselves and their work through the media.



Fig. 4

*Source: Snapshot from Stanley Nelson, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*.*



Fig. 5

Source: Beyoncé Knowles (@beyonce), *Untitled*, *Instagram*, February 7, 2016.



Fig. 6

Source: Jessica Chia, Marvel courts controversy with poster for new film Black Panther which bears uncanny resemblance to famous photograph of Huey P Newton, founder of the infamous militants, *DailyMail.com*, 2017.

Note: For both men in the images above, sitting in a throne symbolically resembles power. Huey Newton, one of the founders of the Black Panther Party, in the image on the left holds a rifle and a spear, in each hand. On the right, the Black Panther T'Challa also sits in his throne wearing the Black Panther suit, reflective from the Marvel Comics character the Black Panther. Historically the character the Black Panther was created years just before the Black Panther Party was founded. After the Party's formation, Marvel attempted to change the Black Panther's name to Black Leopard to avoid connotations with the Party.⁶⁵ This was a failed effort as the Party's popularity erupted.

⁶⁵ Clarkisha Kent, "On Black Panther, Black Leopard and the Politics of Being a Black Superhero," *The Roots*, last modified January 30,

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TWO LEFT FEET: THE BALANCING ACT OF LEFTIST INTERESTS IN THE SALFORD LABOUR PARTY, 1924-1929

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After four unsuccessful runs for Member of Parliament at Bradford West, Eccles, and Swansea, Ben Tillett finally won the 1917 by-election at Salford North. Although his tenure was often marked with tension between himself and the leaders of the Labour Party, Tillett is an apt representative of the party in its first quarter-century of existence. With loose ideological groundings, Tillett vacillated on a number of issues central to the Labour Party. He began as a teetotaling ‘Lib-Lab’ supporter yet later butted heads with the “temperance bleating martyrs” within the party.¹ He once supported an international brotherhood of socialists committed to peace yet later advocated for British entry into the First World War. He was the principal organizer

¹ Jonathan Schneer, *Ben Tillett: Portrait of a Labour Leader* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 2.

of the London dock strike of 1889 yet later denounced those involved with the General Strike of 1926.² Tillett embodied the varied interests associated with the Labour Party as it grew from a party that won two of the 587 seats in Parliament at the turn of the twentieth century to one that formed its first minority government after the 1923 general election with 191 seats. Three of those 191 Members of Parliament were from Salford, which was completely represented by Labour for the first time.

The excitement associated with Labour's rapid growth was quick to dissipate, however, as the Ramsay MacDonald-led government lost a vote of no confidence just nine months later. In a stunning turnaround, the 1924 general election witnessed the return of the Conservatives to government with 412 seats to Labour's 151, with all three seats from Salford flipping back to the Conservative Party. Given the common understanding among Marxist thinkers at the time that the growth of socialism – and thus the Labour Party – would be linear and

² *Ibid.*, 1-4, *passim*.

inevitable, the setback was disorienting and led to questions about the fundamental structure of the party. Despite its initial meteoric rise, Labour needed to adapt to maintain and cultivate its political power. By 1929, Labour was again able to form a minority government with 287 Members of Parliament, including all three seats in Salford. The rapid changes to the political scene, especially on the left, raised questions about the way in which Labour was able to reinvent itself after the defeat in the 1924 general election. More specifically, the changes raised questions about how Labour was able to grow into a national party capable of withstanding partisan attacks on its ability to govern as well as its radicalism, while weighing the interests of socially conservative trade unions and far-left socialist societies.

This paper looks at the relationship between the Salford Labour Party and the National Labour Party and the dynamics between the two. The Salford Party acted as Labour's active local presence in whipping votes and gathering support, but also as a feedback loop for developing Labour doctrine; their interdependence makes it impossible to separate the two in historical analysis. Salford, a city just south of

Manchester, had been one of the first areas in the United Kingdom, and thus the world, to industrialize. Focused chiefly on textiles in its early years, the speed at which the area urbanized caught the attention of Friedrich Engels as he sought to understand industrialization and its effects on society.³ Pulling no punches, Engels described Salford in 1844 as “a town of eighty thousand inhabitants, which, properly speaking, is one large working-men’s quarter, penetrated by a single wide avenue... it is an old and therefore very unwholesome, dirty, and ruinous locality.”⁴ By 1920, Salford remained a working-class city and often served as the prime example of a “slum” in England.⁵ Textiles were still its primary industry, but coal mines and rubber factories also dotted the region. Politically, the Labour Party had made strides as evinced by Tillett’s win, but Salford was still far from being a Labour

³ Andrew Davies, Steven Fielding, and Terry Wyke, “Introduction,” in *Workers Worlds: Cultures and communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939*, eds. Andrew Davies and Steven Fielding (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 2-3.

⁴ Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (London: Electric Book Company, 2000), 127-128.

⁵ Andrew Davies, “Leisure in the ‘Classic Slum,’ 1900-1939,” in *Workers’ Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-193*, 102.

stronghold despite the principally working-class electorate. Although Salford may not be comprehensively representative of Labour across Britain, it largely reflected the vicissitudes of the National Labour Party in the 1920s, both in policy and in outcome. Examining the minutes of the Salford Labour Party, the media coverage from *The Manchester Guardian*, and the Parliamentary Labour Party papers helps elucidate how Labour developed into the largest party in British politics in 1929. After the First World War, the Labour Party sought expansion as its primary goal and hence attracted a wide base of supporters that included those on the revolutionary left. This expansion proved costly in 1924 when they were voted out of government after a mere nine months because of questions surrounding Labour's relationship with the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. While the dissolution of the First Labour Government was undoubtedly a setback, it led to Labour centralizing its base around working-class and moderate socialist interests, which pushed the party over the edge and back into government in 1929.

Much of the literature regarding Labour in the interwar years focuses on the fall from its second stint in government and the resulting fragmentation that took two decades and a world war to heal.⁶ By focusing on the fall of Labour, historians place Britain within the broader story of mass politics and destabilization in interwar Europe.⁷ The experience of Salford in the 1920s reveals, however, that Labour did not easily succumb to far left influences or reactionary attacks that plagued other leftist parties on the European continent. It was able to deflect Conservative attacks against its ability to lead while resisting the Communist challenge on the left, and at two separate times,

⁶ See Ross McKibbin, "The Economic Policy of the Second Labour Government, 1929-31," *Past and Present*, no. 68 (August 1975), 95-123; Neil Riddell, *Labour in Crisis: The Second Labour Government, 1929-1931* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Robert Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump: The Labour Government of 1929-1931* (London, Macmillan, 1967); and Philip Williamson, *National Crisis and National Government: British Politics, the Economy and Empire, 1926-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) for an overview.

⁷ See Carl Hodge, *The Trammels of Tradition: Social Democracies in Britain, France, and Germany* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994); Gregory Luebbert, "Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Europe," *World Politics* 39, no. 4 (July 1987): 449-478; and Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) for examples.

commanded enough support from the national electorate to form a government.

Historiography

The historiography of the British Labour Party is wide-ranging and has covered everything from biographies of its leaders to analyses of the party within the larger labor movement. Two specific strands of literature are particularly relevant to the questions and time frame of this project. The first deals with the increasing influence that Labour wielded as a national party in parliament in the first half of the twentieth century. Its rise was often juxtaposed against the decline of the Liberal Party and placed within the larger argument of class consciousness. The second strand deals with the Labour Party on a more local level. It examines the grassroots of the party and looks beyond the political, intertwining the social, political, and economic realms of people's lives.

Ofentimes the first strand of literature, which looks at the rise of Labour at the expense of the Liberal Party, begins with a quotation from George Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England* claiming that the Liberal Party was no longer the leading party of the 'left' by the 1906 general election.⁸ Even though it is not a serious academic treatment of the topic, this book provides the basis for a lot of the historical debate about the timing of and reasons for the "death knell" of the Liberal Party.⁹ Early historical analyses point to the war as the turning point of Liberal unity as the party faced the split between the Asquith and Lloyd George coalitions, but Ross McKibbin claims that the schism alone could not have been the cause. He notes that this particular cleavage was no more ruinous than the split between Gladstone and Chamberlain, yet the party did not fall apart then.

⁸ For examples, see Keith Laybourn, "The Rise of Labour and the Decline of Liberalism: The State of the Debate," *History* 80, no. 259 (June 1995): 208, Ross McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910-1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 236; and John Fair, "Labour's Rise and the Liberal Demise: A Quantitative Perspective on the Great Debate, 1906-1918," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 58-73.

⁹ George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (St. Albans: Granada, 1966), 22.

Furthermore, the Labour Party also had inter-party disagreements over the war issue, hence it would not make sense that Labour would be the new home for dissatisfied leftists.¹⁰ McKibbin instead points to the rise of class consciousness and the involvement of trade unions in the Labour Party. The Liberal Party was unable to present itself as a party of the working class and thus was unable to win votes in an era with class consciousness permeating British society and uniting laborers. To McKibbin, this shift was a fundamental reshaping of the political landscape as it increasingly became about class rather than any other affiliation.¹¹

Later historians of the first strand of literature added nuance to McKibbin's argument. Although Keith Laybourn does mention the rise of class consciousness as a factor in the growth of the Labour Party up until the First World War, he largely blames the expanded electorate and the incompetence and inability of the Liberal Party to recognize the needs of its working-class voters. Thus, the swath of voters who

¹⁰ McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party*, 236-237.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 241-245.

defected from the Liberal Party to the Labour Party were looking to further “sectional” interests rather than help establish a true socialist party.¹² Matthew Worley argues that the Labour Party initially emerged and grew due to the organized working class, but the party itself was not a reflection of increasing class consciousness. The party’s loose definition of socialism allowed it to appeal to a wide range of people, and the Labour Party through the interwar years remained an odd amalgamation of interests. The Labour Party gained its base not through its appeal to a particular class, but through its core values of “equality, cooperation and social improvement.”¹³ Though Worley sought to integrate more local party politics and its relationship to the national party, he ended up mostly using specific local records to substantiate trends in the national Labour Party.

The second strand of literature emerged in the 1980s as historians sought to understand the underlying reasons for Labour

¹² Laybourn, “The Rise of Labour and the Decline of Liberalism,” 223.

¹³ Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate: A History of the British Labour Party Between the Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 219. Also see the introduction for a more detailed explanation of Labour’s growth.

growth in British municipalities rather than broad trends across the nation. Michael Savage was one of the first to do this in his analysis of the Preston Labour Party in North Lancashire.¹⁴ He concluded that the Labour Party and the Conservatives were more successful after the First World War because they were able to appeal to the workers' desire of economic, practical policies that would help them in their day-to-day lives while the Liberal Party failed to understand working-class needs.¹⁵ Savage's analysis was one of the first to look at an individual town and led to a number of different case studies that are not examined here, but follow a similar structure.¹⁶ Piecing these studies together, Stuart Ball, Andrew Thorpe, and Worley attempted to

¹⁴ Michael Savage, *The Dynamics of Working Class Politics: The Labour Movement in Preston, 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 188-189.

¹⁵ Savage, *The Dynamics of Working Class Politics*, 193-94.

¹⁶ There are too many to list here, but a representative sample includes: Andrew Flinn, "Labour's Family: Local Labour Parties, Trade Unions and Trades Councils in Cotton Lancashire, 1931-39," in *Labour's Grass Roots*, ed. Matthew Worley (Hants: Ashgate, 2005), 102-123; Andrew Thorpe, "'One of the Most Backward Areas of the Country': The Labour Party's Grass Roots in South West England, 1918-45," in *Labour's Grass Roots*, 216-239; and Kenneth Morgan, "Post-war reconstruction in Wales, 1918-1945," in *The Working Class in Modern British History*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 82-98.

synthesize local trends into a national story. While the Labour Party employed a “moral perspective that endeavored, simultaneously, to be relevant to the everyday concerns of its constituents,” the Conservatives often touted their patriotism and allegiance to national interests. Notably, both outlined their policies in terms of their “values or instincts rather than theoretical debate.”¹⁷ Local parties differentiated themselves from by appealing to not only class loyalties, but also cultural ones. These analyses of Labour at the local level revealed similarities between the Conservative Party and Labour Party that were previously undetected.

These individual accounts of towns and their working-class movements led to a separate conclusion that the Labour Party was not necessarily only looking for votes from the left and, at the grassroots level, the party was not wedded to socialist ideals but to improvements of everyday life. While the similarities between the Conservative and

¹⁷ Stuart Ball, Andrew Thorpe, and Matthew Worley, “Elections, Leaflets and Whist Drives: Constituency Party Members in Britain the Wars,” in *Labour’s Grass Roots*, 18.

Labour Parties are illuminating, these local studies fail to examine how the Labour Party won over electorates that traditionally voted Conservative. The existence of a Conservative-leaning working class meant that the idea of working-class solidarity was not strong enough to carry a national party, but also represented an obvious constituency that Labour could win over at the expense of the Tories. In his more recent works, Martin Pugh looks into the characteristics of working-class conservatism through the interwar era.¹⁸ Beyond the *similarities* shared by the Conservative and Labour Parties, Pugh pointed out *connections* between the two parties. While Labour received more defectors from the Liberal Party, the interwar era saw a number of politicians with Tory backgrounds and connections represent it in the interwar years. According to Pugh, their Tory connections were an advantage for the Labour Party when it came to conservative-leaning unions as they were able to establish common ground.¹⁹ Similarly,

¹⁸ Martin Pugh, "The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism, 1890–1945," *History* 87, no. 288 (October 2002): 518.

¹⁹ Martin Pugh, "Class Traitors': Conservative Recruits to Labour, 1900-30," *The English Historical Review* 113, no. 450 (February 1998): 42-46.

David Swift looks at how the Labour Party attempted to establish cultural connections within constituencies in order to win votes. Rather than focusing on the growth of socialism, the Labour Party appealed to the electorate through community outreach and an adaptation of party ideals to working-class traditions. These traditions often revolved around the public house, patriotism, sports, and gambling, which were all associated more with the Conservative Party than with socialism or the Labour Party.²⁰

Pugh and Swift opened the door for an investigation of the means and mechanisms behind the Labour political machine in the early twentieth century to recruit traditionally Conservative voters, but the topic remains relatively unexplored. Labour did not grow uniformly throughout England. Rather, its growth was piecemeal, non-linear, and contingent on pre-existing political traditions and institutions. While Pugh and Swift have outlined several national trends, there is still a

²⁰ David Swift, "Our Platform is Broad Enough and our Movement Big Enough' – The War and Recruits to Labour," in *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 81-126, *passim*.

lack of understanding of what happened on the ground as each locality had different experiences. Though the concomitant decline of the Liberal Party lends a simple theory to the growth of Labour, the Labour Party was not simply a replacement on the left, and often had to reach out to both Conservatives and Liberals in order to grow its base.

A Brief History of the Labour Party

The Labour Representation Committee was formed in 1900 in order to look out for the parliamentary interests of major trade unions and socialist organizations. By 1906, it was formally known as the Labour Party but was hardly a party of national influence. Although the question of when the Labour Party actually eclipsed the Liberal Party in influence is still widely debated today, there is no doubt that by the end of the First World War, the Labour Party was the face of the left and the main opposition to the Conservative Party.²¹

²¹ See Laybourn, “The Rise of Labour and the Decline of Liberalism” for a summary of the debate.

In the aftermath of the war, leaders of the Labour Party recognized that they had a unique opportunity as Parliament expanded the electorate through the Representation of the People Act of 1918, enfranchising all men over the age of 21 and most women over the age of 30. In addition, the Liberal Party had been torn apart over the war issue, with no reconciliation in sight between the Lloyd George and Asquith coalitions. At the 1918 Annual Labour Party Conference, the delegates voted to allow individual members to join the party rather than requiring affiliation to an affiliated body of the party. Arthur Henderson, then Secretary of the Party, noted that in order to increase their popularity with other sectors of the population — such as farmers — that had just gained the right to vote, “they could only do so by saying to every man and woman... ‘Come along with us, our platform is broad enough and our Movement big enough to take you all.’”²² Although the opportunity was certainly present, Henderson underestimated the amount of social upheaval that Britain would face

²² Labour Party (Great Britain), *Report of the Eighteenth Annual Labour Party Conference*, 1901.

in the interwar years and how his strategy would be affected by it. Because of wartime inflation and the disruption of trade routes through the Great War, the pound was no longer at the center of international finance and British manufactured products also lost their supremacy in the global market.²³ Furthermore, although class tensions were not as high as they were in Germany or other Eastern European nations, they were certainly existent as evidenced by the establishment and growth of the Communist Party of Great Britain through the early 1920s. The return from war and wartime inflation led to intractable problems such as unemployment and housing shortages, which necessitated ideas and solutions from the three major parties. Especially with the expansion of the franchise, these ideas and solutions were crucial in realigning the political scene throughout the interwar era.²⁴

Henderson's remark was expanded upon in a new party program, *Labour and the New Social Order*, which cemented Labour's

²³ Barry Eichengreen, "Postwar Instability," in *Golden Fetters: The Gold Standard and the Great Depression, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 100-124.

²⁴ Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 23-30.

strategy of keeping vague ideological positions in order to win over as many voters as possible. The new program aimed to win the votes of anyone and everyone who could have an interest in increased wealth distribution. Outlined in the program were the four pillars of the party moving forward: “Universal enforcement of the national minimum, democratic control of industry, the revolution in national finance, and the surplus wealth for the common good.”²⁵ There were two important foundations that were established with the enactment of the program. The first was a commitment to participating in the general electoral process and changing social structures through democratic means. The second was its deviation from the policies of the Liberal Party.

Although the Liberal-Labour partnership through the late nineteenth century allowed the labor movement to grow within the confines of an established party, the Liberal Party often subsumed the interests of Labour and restricted the growth of a separate identity.²⁶ Admittedly, the Labour Party still shared many positions with the Liberal Party, but

²⁵ Labour Party (Great Britain), *Labour and the New Social Order: A Report on Reconstruction* (London: National Labour Press, 1918), 5.

²⁶ Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 12-13.

it was an important step in establishing an “ideological base.”²⁷ While the Labour Party had begun as a party representing the interests of the organized working class in Parliament, it also included socialist organizations, such as the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party. These parties had distinctly different goals and ambitions than the trade unions. While the trade unions mainly sought to improve working conditions, the socialist organizations focused more on the nationalization of industry and the theoretical underpinnings of socialism.²⁸ Thus, the socialism that is described in *Labour and the New Social Order* was purposefully vague and capable of serving the interests of the radical leftist section of the party as well as the laborer who was simply trying to improve working conditions.

The initial response to this strategy was positive as Labour continued to gain seats in the House of Commons and expand its

²⁷ Quote from Arthur Henderson. Found in Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 13.

²⁸ Of course, the demarcations between the two groups were not always obvious. There were trade unionists who were a part of the Independent Labour Party and there were members of the Independent Labour Party that were no more left-wing than any other working-class Labour voter. See chapters 3 and 14 in David Howell, *MacDonald's Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) for an in-depth look at the identities within the Labour Party.

grassroots network through an increasing number of affiliated Divisional Labour Parties. One request to affiliate came from Salford as forty-three delegates voted to formally establish the Salford Central Labour Party on April 28, 1920. It oversaw three single-vote constituencies: North Salford, West Salford, and South Salford.²⁹ Of the three, Tillett was the only Labour representative until 1923. South Salford, which housed most of the city's engineering works and was "the city's heart industrially," did not even run a Labour candidate in the general election of 1922.³⁰ Although Labour's influence in Salford was still dwarfed by that of the Tories, the Salford Labour Party embraced the National Labour Party's strategy and continually sought out more groups to affiliate with the party. For the most part, these groups were local branches of major trade unions, but it also established connections with other societies that had tangential relations to the working class or socialist cause. According to its annual

²⁹ Delegate meeting minutes, Salford Labour Party Records (henceforth SLPR), April 28, 1920.

³⁰ "Manchester and Salford Divisions: XIII South Salford," *Manchester Guardian*, May 24, 1929.

balance sheets, the Salford Labour Party received just £16 in affiliation fees in its first year of existence but by 1922, it was receiving £218 and had increased the number of affiliated organizations from eight to fifteen.³¹

In 1921, the Salford Labour Party voted to enter a political alliance with the local Cooperative Party, which represented the interests of cooperative enterprises. Under the alliance, they would not run candidates against each other and combined their war chests to support each other financially when it came time for elections.³² On the far left, the Salford Labour Party also resolved “that a joint election committee be formed comprising delegates representing the Labour Party, Salford Unemployed Workers Committee, and the Communist Party to furnish a common plan of campaigns for the coming Guardians elections.”³³ At this point, the National Labour Party had already

³¹ SLPR, April 6, 1921; SLPR, May 2, 1923.

³² SLPR, February 18, 1921.

³³ SLPR, March 7, 1923. Also see SLPR July 21, 1921 as the Salford Labour Party sent in a letter of protest to the Home Secretary in support of jailed communists.

rejected Communist Party applications for affiliation and ruled that the local branch of the Communist Party would not be able to join the Salford Labour Party as well. Despite its desire to expand the party's reach as far as possible, the National Executive Council stopped short at accepting the Communists into the party noting that they would likely seek to latch onto Labour's growth like a parasite while in reality serving the Communist International's cause.³⁴ However, to the Salford Labour Party, which was less concerned with national politics, the communists simply represented another vote that could help the Labour cause locally.

Through 1923, Labour was simply trying to get as many votes as they could through by adapting its vague platform to various sectoral interests. It paid off as Labour gained an additional 49 seats across Britain in the 1923 general election, and for the first time in history, Labour controlled all three seats in Salford. The Salford Labour Party reported "as a result of the Elections, a big influx of members had

³⁴ SLPR, September 17, 1920.

accrued, which should strengthen the organisation considerably in the constituencies.”³⁵ Tillett proposed hosting a concert and dance in the Salford Free Trade Hall in celebration of the big win, and on February 22, 1924, Salford Labour gathered for a “grand victory carnival” with all the new MPs. The festivities would not last long, however, as all three would be voted out of office by the end of the year.³⁶

The First Labour Government

Stanley Baldwin and the Conservative Party called for another general election in 1923 despite having just formed a government in late 1922. Bonar Law, who resigned as Prime Minister due to poor health in May 1923, had been a champion of free trade. Baldwin, who took Law’s place as a Prime Minister, announced that he intended to enact protectionist legislation and sought an electoral mandate on the issue. The gamble backfired. Since no one party had gained an outright

³⁵ SLPR, December 19, 1923.

³⁶ Ibid.; “A Labour Victory Carnival,” *Manchester Guardian*, February 2, 1924.

majority in the 1923 election, there was some uncertainty as to what the next government would look like. Although the Conservative Party still won 251 votes to the Labour Party's 191, it did not receive the mandate it hoped for. Baldwin, unwilling to retreat from his views on protectionism, was consequently rejected by Parliament. The very next day, King George V invited Ramsay MacDonald to form a government.³⁷ That MacDonald would accept, however, was not a certainty.

In the aftermath of the election, when it seemed like a possibility that Labour would have the opportunity to either be part of the new government or lead one as a minority, there was a series of arguments in the Parliamentary Labour Party and National Executive Council about the political ramifications of each option.³⁸ While MacDonald thought that not taking on the challenge would seem as if they were shirking their duties, other leaders were apprehensive that the

³⁷ Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party*, 61.

³⁸ Meeting minutes, Parliamentary Labour Party papers (henceforth PLP), December 13, 1923.

limitations of a minority government would condemn Labour to certain failure. Despite the scattered misgivings, the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive Council voted to allow the formation of a minority Labour Government if offered the opportunity.³⁹ Thus, on January 22, 1924, MacDonald and his cabinet walked through Westminster dressed in ceremonial court attire, which engendered mixed reactions from within the party. The far left within the party felt that this was the instant in which MacDonald sold out to aristocratic interests — as the outfit was unbecoming atop working-class leaders such as MacDonald — while others felt that this was the culmination of the labor movement and the moment of arrival for the Labour Party.⁴⁰

Although the First Labour Government is often written off as a failed experiment, it did set the foundation for Labour to re-enter office in 1929, and also the way in which it did so. In building his cabinet, MacDonald sought a balance between the more radical

³⁹ PLP, January 9, 1924.

⁴⁰ Nicolas Owen, “MacDonald’s Parties: The Labour Party and the ‘Aristocratic Embrace,’ 1922-31,” *Twentieth Century British History* 18, no. 1 (January 2007): 15-16.

Independent Labour Party and the more socially conservative trade union leaders. Some, such as Frederic Thesiger, Viscount Chelmsford, and Charles Cripps, the First Baron Parmoor, were even part of the Conservative Party until the previous election. The makeup of his cabinet was a sign that MacDonald was simply trying to show the rest of the nation that the Labour Party could form a viable government without ruining the nation.⁴¹ This was an extension of his belief that Labour would make incremental progress until it became the majority party in Britain. Rather than trying to upend the political scene all at once, MacDonald sought to convince voters that a true, majority Labour Government was not out of the realm of possibility or a death knell of British politics.⁴²

Under the limitations of a minority government, the First Labour Government struggled to get much socialist legislation through Parliament. Rather, they focused on tangible means of helping the unemployed and the homeless. Even the most impactful piece of

⁴¹ Pugh, *Speak for Britain*, 174.

⁴² Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 77-78.

legislation that came out of this government, John Wheatley's Housing Act of 1924, was more of an amendment to previous housing subsidies enacted by a Conservative Government than a novel piece of legislation.⁴³ Despite spending years denouncing the Liberal inability to deliver on creating Lloyd George's "land fit for heroes to live in," the Labour administration was unable to bring itself to enact legislation to reach its purported goals outlined in *Labour and the New Social Order*.⁴⁴ In fact, at the first meeting of Labour MPs after the general election, the group voted to tackle unemployment and rent restrictions first, while leaving the issue of railway nationalization seventh on the list.⁴⁵ Although it was specifically highlighted in *Labour and the New Social Order*, nationalization of the railway industry was too contentious of an issue to actually push through Parliament.

Despite already controlling all three seats, the Salford Labour party continued to follow the same strategy of indiscriminate

⁴³ Kaethe Liepmann, "English Housing Policy Since the War," *The American Economic Review* 27, no. 3 (September 1937): 507-508.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 24.

⁴⁵ PLP, January 15, 1924.

expansion. Alexander Haycock, who had just been elected as MP for West Salford, opined that if the Liberals or Conservatives tried to remove Labour from government, Labour would return with a majority.⁴⁶ Working towards this end, the Salford Labour Party continued to search for new voters. It reached out to the rural voters and offered assistance to the recently affiliated local branch of the National Union of Agricultural Workers in developing propaganda.⁴⁷ Everything seemed to be running smoothly as the Salford Labour Party could now call upon three representatives in the House of Commons to speak on their behalf. However, the groundwork for the dissolution of the First Labour Government was already set.

As part of his goal to field a broad cabinet with people from all corners of Labour, MacDonald appointed Sir Patrick Hastings as the Attorney General. Despite having just joined the Labour Party after defecting from the Liberal Party, Hastings was given a top cabinet post by MacDonald. Beatrice Webb, one of the leading members of the

⁴⁶ "A Salford Demonstration," *Manchester Guardian*, May 5, 1924.

⁴⁷ SLPR, August 1, 1924.

Fabian Society along with her husband Sidney Webb, wrote in her diary that he was:

an unpleasant type of clever pleader and political *arriviste*, who jumped into the Labour Party just before the 1922 election, when it became clear the Labour Party was the alternative government and it had not a single lawyer of positions attached to it... an unsavory being: destitute of all the higher qualities of intellect and without any sincerely held public purpose.⁴⁸

In July 1924, the Director of Public Prosecutions directed Hastings' attention to an anonymous open letter written in the Communist newspaper *Workers' Weekly* that urged workers to not fire their weapons in war. Hastings then decided to prosecute the editor of the paper, J. R. Campbell, under the archaic Sedition to Mutiny Act of 1797. Given his inexperience within Labour's ranks, Hastings did not know the uproar that such a prosecution would face within the party itself. Salford was among the numerous local labor parties that condemned Hastings as "his action is likely to aggravate the feelings of

⁴⁸ Quoted from Keith Laybourn and John Shepard, *Britain's First Labour Government* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 163.

the Labour Party rank and file.”⁴⁹ The prosecution was quickly withdrawn due to the protestations of both local parties and leftist Members of Parliament, with approval from MacDonald. Both the Conservative and the Liberal Parties took this opportunity to pounce. They accused the Labour Party of collaborating with the Communists and, in light of MacDonald’s attempts to establish relations with the new Soviet Russian government, of working with Soviet Government.⁵⁰ When Parliament reconvened later that year, MacDonald, for unknown reasons, denied knowledge of the entire affair and thus ensnared himself in a web of lies. This blunder, along with the unclear relationship that MacDonald had established with the Soviets, led to a vote of no confidence against the Labour Party and the end of the First Labour Government on October 9.⁵¹

The general election that followed was a step backward for a party that had been expecting inevitable, albeit gradual, growth. With

⁴⁹ SLPR, September 10, 1924.

⁵⁰ “Mr. MacDonald on the Russian Treaties,” *Manchester Guardian*, September 29, 1924.

⁵¹ Laybourn, *Britain’s First Labour Government*, 161-184.

the Labour and Liberal Parties losing 40 and 118 seats, respectively, the Conservative Party regained their majority in the House of Commons with Stanley Baldwin back at the helm. Salford, which had finally won all three seats in 1923, saw all three fall to the Conservative Party.

While the vote of no confidence undoubtedly weighed on the election, it was further exacerbated by the forged Zinoviev letter published in the *Daily Mail* just four days before the polls opened. The letter was an allegedly from Grigory Zinoviev, the head of the Communist International, to the Communist Party of Great Britain stating that it hoped that the proletariat of the two nations would continue to work together and that it should continue working within the Labour Party to bring about a Socialist Revolution.⁵² These events loomed large over the Annual Conference of the Labour Party, and what should have been a celebration of Labour's first year in office turned into an analysis of what went wrong. Clearly, even eschewing socialist legislation was not

⁵² "An Electoral Bombshell," *Manchester Guardian*, October 25, 1924.

enough to prove Labour's moderation; the party had to disassociate itself from the radical elements completely to be palatable to the nation.

At the Annual Conference, the delegates voted on the recommendation of the Executive Council that the Communist Party of Great Britain's appeal for affiliation be rejected, that no member of the Communist Party be eligible for endorsement as a Labour candidate, and that no member of the Communist Party be eligible for membership in the Labour Party. Although the recommendation was framed by the executive council as a reflection of the conflicting means of establishing their shared goal of socialism, the rank and file did not mince words. The leading delegate from the Miners' Federation, Mr. G.A. Spencer, declared:

It was a well-known fact that the line of demarcation between the Communist Party and the Labour Party to-day was simply that the Labour Party believed in parliamentary action coupled with the activities of the Trade Union Movement, whereas the Communist Party believed the moment would come when they would be able to sue the organized forces of labour to force a revolution... There was not the least doubt that if the Labour Party to-day, in the face of an Election, passed a resolution accepting the Communist Party to affiliate, without any repudiation on their part of the idea of revolution

as against evolution in politics, it would mean, so far as the Labour Party was concerned, that they would forfeit the sympathy and confidence the electors... If they accepted it today, or at any other time, with the present mentality of the British electorate, it simply meant the death of the Labour Party.⁵³

With the landslide victory of the Conservative Party in 1924, and the uproar that the Zinoviev letter had caused, many in the party sought to disassociate themselves from the focal point of the controversy. After extended discussion, the first resolution was passed by 3 million votes, the second by 1.8 million, and the third by 0.3 million.⁵⁴ While this was not the first time that the Communist Party's application for affiliation had been denied, it was the first time that Labour took such a strong stance against its members.

In Salford, the question of including Communists within the Labour Party faced similar scrutiny and deliberation. There was considerable support for the Communist Party in Salford, but the

⁵³ Labour Party (Great Britain), *Report of the Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the Labour Party*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

leaders of the local parties recognized the need to conform to the national party's wishes. Several delegates filed a motion of protest against the President and Secretary of the Local Party against:

the high-handed action of the President and Secretary of the Salford Borough Labour Party, Councilor Corsey and Mr. J. Openshaw instructing the police to prevent the Communist Party carrying their banner on the occasion of the William Horrocks Demonstration, as we believe that every section of the movement should have been represented, in view of the fact that Horrocks was not a member of the Labour Party during his life, such a display of sectionalism was unwarranted. We therefore ask the Delegates to pass a vote of censure on the officials concerned in order to prevent a repetition at some future date.⁵⁵

The motion was voted down 30 to 15. Far from a unanimous vote, this motion revealed the range of opinions within the Labour Party. To those on the far left, the Communist Party of Great Britain were a part of the larger labor movement should be able to represent themselves alongside the Labour Party. On the other hand, those with more moderate views, or even socially conservative views, believed the association with the Communist Party to be a danger to what they were

⁵⁵ SLPR, February 7, 1924.

trying to accomplish and anathema to the ideals of the Labour Party. Although the Salford Labour Party had been willing to extend limited assistance and work with the Communist Party in the past, relations soured once the party understood the political implications of being associated with the Communists.

Even in 1928, Salford had not completely eradicated Communist influence, as it was discovered that South Salford had been under the influence of Communist Party members seeking to stoke a revolution from within the party. In an immediate rebuke, the Chairman and Secretary of the Salford Central Labour Party appealed to the National Labour Party for it to revoke the affiliation of the South Salford Labour Party. After an investigation by the Salford Central Labour Party, the South Salford Labour Party was disaffiliated from the National Labour Party and its delegates removed from any party business.⁵⁶ This was hardly a unique occurrence as numerous divisional parties were removed from the party in similar fashion after the

⁵⁶ SLPR, August 1, 1928.

dissolution of the First Labour Government.⁵⁷ Despite the *Labour and the New Social Order's* claim to support workers and a socialist program, it was clear by 1924 that its support would only be extended through moderate policies and existing political processes rather than revolution.

The losses at Salford in the election of 1924 were blamed directly on the Communists and the Conservative Party's willingness to attack the Labour Party on its rumored association with the revolutionary strand of leftists. Haycock declared to a crowd of Communist hecklers that "if some of you *Workers' Weekly* people had kept away from West Salford, I should not have lost so many votes."⁵⁸ He also cited the "character of the campaign waged against" him as a reason for the loss.⁵⁹ Tillett blamed the "reckless and wanton misrepresentation by both opposing parties. Neither of them having a programme has spared no effort at misrepresentation and calumny." On

⁵⁷ See *Report of the Annual Conference of the Labour Party (1925-1928)*.

⁵⁸ "A Labour Victory Demonstration," *Manchester Guardian*, November 3, 1924.

⁵⁹ "The Labour Defeats in Salford," *Manchester Guardian*, October 30, 1924.

the other hand, the Tory Lieutenant Commander Astbury, who won the West Salford seat from Haycock claimed that it was a “victory achieved by the votes of moderate men and women of all parties who united to crush out once and for all the pernicious doctrine of Socialism that is being preached.”⁶⁰ To the Labour politicians in Salford, there was no question where the fault lay in their defeat. The Communists named revolution as a primary goal of the party, and even though they were not affiliated, the Labour Party was dragged through the mud by the Conservative Party by association.

The Five-Year Plan

The dissolution of the first Labour Government after just nine months in office was both a blessing and a curse. By the end of the nine months, MacDonald was worn out both physically and mentally from the demands of the office, and Labour realistically could not have lived up to its election promises or party program as a minority government.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Furthermore, it was clear that Henderson's statement in the immediate aftermath of war, that "our platform is broad enough and our Movement big enough to take you all," needed to be revised. While this idea was serviceable, or even necessary, in the aftermath of the First World War, by the end of 1924, it had become a hindrance. The problem had shifted from one of convincing various leftist voters that Labour shared their interests to one of convincing the wider electorate that it had a cohesive message and program that would not plunge the nation into revolution.

Although most of the party remained loyal to MacDonald and his idea of gradualism, there was also a sense of urgency that arose out of the short stint in government. The discontent was especially strong amongst those in the far left of the party. While this was likely also a reaction to MacDonald pushing for the ban on all members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, many felt that MacDonald had sold out. Jimmy Maxton, MP for Glasgow, spoke out against MacDonald,

claiming that he had led the party “further from socialism.”⁶¹ Maxton was a prominent member of the Independent Labour Party, which at this point constituted the left-wing of the Labour Party and was more committed to traditional socialism than the trade unionists. In late December, Maxton even suggested that George Lansbury, another leftist Labour MP to run against MacDonald for party leadership. Similarly, Ernest Bevin proposed at the 1925 Annual Conference that the party decline any future invitation to form a government as a minority in the House of Commons. This measure received only 500,000 votes in favor to 2.5 million against it.⁶² There was a vocal minority that saw the need for a revolutionary shift in the character of the party, but for the most part, the Labour Party and its leaders attempted to simply weed out the components of the party that were losing them votes. Having taken the first steps by confirming the three

⁶¹ Quoted from Pugh, *Speak for Britain*, 184.

⁶² Labour Party (Great Britain), *Report of the Twenty-fifth Annual Conference of the Labour Party*.

resolutions at the Annual Conference, the Labour Party shifted its focus towards regaining the trust of the wider electorate.

The seeds for a new party program were planted in the 1925 Annual Conference, where the leaders sought to formally address the new way forward for Labour. Through the discussions of 1925, it was clear that the rift between the left and right wings of the Labour Party was not healing. The trade unions and party leaders were resolute in their conviction that, in order to grow, the party must shift towards moderation and center its program on more tangible ideas while those on the further left felt that any such movement would shift Labour away from its core tenets.⁶³ In early August, the National Executive Committee sent out a proposed agenda listing out the topics and resolutions that were to be voted on during the 1925 Annual Conference. The Labour Correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian* wrote that:

⁶³ PLP, February 11, 1925; PLP, March 31, 1925; and PLP, June 10, 1925. Also see *Report of the Twenty-fifth Annual Conference of the Labour Party*.

The resolutions were remarkable in two ways. They displayed the Imperialist tendency that had already been shown by a strong section of the parliamentary party, and they ignored or put in the background such cardinal articles of Labour faith as nationalization and the capital levy. This twist to the Right has not gone unchallenged, and the agenda for the Conference contains pages of amendments from affiliated bodies seeking to restore the party policy to its old purity and vigour.⁶⁴

In the year since the fall of the First Labour Government, the national leadership was hoping to redirect Labour policy, but there was still some pushback from affiliated bodies and local constituencies. Some of the leftist complaints were undoubtedly the Communists again hoping to permeate the Labour Party, but the majority of the opposition originated from the ILP.

Although it had begun as a working-class organization in the early twentieth century, the ILP was quickly drifting towards the middle class. Liberals looking to jump ship from a declining party found their home there as it espoused many of the traditional Nonconformist ideals. As a consequence of this shift, the ILP became

⁶⁴ “Labour Programme-Making,” *Manchester Guardian*, August 14, 1925.

the home to those who did not need to focus on improving the day-to-day life of the workplace. In other words, they were increasingly out of touch with the roots of the party.⁶⁵ These differences were highlighted during the ILP Annual Conference where the majority of the discussion centered around the theory of socialism and the transfer of wealth from private hands into public ownership. *The Manchester Guardian* assessed that “the trade unions accepted the gospel rather in the manner of the heathen who accept the teachings of missionaries. They can repeat the Socialist creed, but they are grafting it on to their old beliefs and practices rather than starting afresh with a new doctrine.”⁶⁶ To the *Guardian*, the ILP was infusing Labour with an air of respectability by underscoring its intellectual position of shifting Britain to a socialist society with public ownership, but the trade unionists inability to put aside their greed for more material goods and better wages had distorted that message. Despite ILP attempts to push Labour towards a

⁶⁵ Labour Correspondent, “I.L.P and its Annual Conference: The Party’s Failure to Win the Workmen: High-falutin’ v. Practical Common-sense,” *North – China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, May 23, 1925.

⁶⁶ “The Brains of the Labour Party,” *Manchester Guardian*, April 15, 1925.

more intellectual brand of socialism, the trade unionists and moderate leadership formed a majority within the party and were thus able to continually overrule them.

Cracks emerged in the alliance between trade unionists and moderate party leadership that threatened their majority within the party in 1926. After Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, reestablished the peg of the pound sterling to gold in an effort to return to pre-war stability in 1925, price levels faced downward pressure.⁶⁷ The coal industry, which was already declining in Britain due to disrupted trade patterns in the aftermath of the First World War as well as the growth of international competition, was hit especially hard. Mine owners argued in June 1925 that they could no longer afford to pay the workers according to the national wage agreements that had been established during the war. Predictably, the announcement was met with anger from the Miners' Federation, which

⁶⁷ Barry Eichengreen, *Golden Fetters: The Gold Standard and the Great Depression, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 162-167.

then appealed to the Trades Union Congress.⁶⁸ Although the coal industry was hit hardest by the effects of the re-peg of 1925, the Trades Union Congress understood that all wages and exports were at risk moving forward. Thus, they agreed to help support the miners through collective action.

After the Trades Unions Congress announced its willingness to engage in a general strike, local labor parties joined in, pledging their support and financial assistance. In Salford, the delegates voted overwhelmingly to “assist in any way deemed desirable by the strike committees.”⁶⁹ They did so with the belief that they had no other recourse since they were already living at the margins of subsistence. While mine owners might lose some of their profits, the miners argued that they simply could not survive on a reduction of that magnitude to their wages.⁷⁰ Although workers in other industries had not been affected as much as the miners, they recognized that, in the interwar

⁶⁸ Pugh, *Speak for Britain*, 190-191.

⁶⁹ SLPR, May 5, 1926.

⁷⁰ “Salford Resolution: Local Labour Men on the Crisis,” *Manchester Guardian*, May 3, 1926.

economic climate, the mining industry could just be the first of many to strike. In addition, as a matter of principle and precedent, workers in other industries were cognizant of the danger in simply standing aside and allowing mine owners to lower wages despite having a wage agreement in place. Even four months after the strike had ended, the support for the miners remained strong. The delegates voted to supplement the relief given to the miners under the Poor Law despite already having overspent their original budget by 50,000 pounds.⁷¹

Although the support for a general strike was strong within the rank and file of trade unions, the leaders of the Labour Party were hesitant to embrace a general strike. To them, industrial action on the scale of a general strike would be no different than allowing Communists to affiliate with the party. Both were radical actions that would alienate the wider electorate and hinder their shift towards becoming a national party. Given the recent experience of the Conservative and Liberal Parties joining forces to vote Labour out of

⁷¹ SLPR, September 1, 1926.

government on account of its radicalization and the attacks they launched at Labour candidates in the 1924 election, Labour leaders were hesitant to hand them more fodder.⁷² A. J. Cook, the secretary of the Miners' Federation, particularly drew the ire of MacDonald as he continually pushed the possibility of a general strike into a certainty. MacDonald fumed at the fact that a general strike could turn public opinion against the respectable, national party that he had tried so hard to build. Always one for hyperbole, MacDonald wrote in his diary that "the poor miner, facing as he does, a serious crisis in his industry, has [Cook] at their head utterly incompetent for his job and with enough vanity to go round the whole of our empire."⁷³ In a rare moment of agreement between the two men, Ben Tillett also opposed a general strike. Speaking to a crowd of workers, he tried to convince them that "the trade of the country itself would suffer in the most material and disastrous manner."⁷⁴ Other MPs such as Manchester's J. R. Clynes

⁷² PLP, May 12, 1926; PLP, May 4, 1926.

⁷³ Quoted from Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 145; *MacDonald Diary*, October 1, 1924.

⁷⁴ "Danger of Universal Strike," *Irish Times*, July 13, 1925.

claimed that attempting a general strike would simply come back to hurt the workers, and the nation, in the long run. The total lost wages and support from the trade unions, argued Clynes, could have made a much larger difference as a political donation to the Labour Party.⁷⁵ The actions of the rank and file left the National Executive Council scrambling to defend its belief in the Constitution to the rest of the nation. While it had purged those elements of the party that had been openly against the British crown, it now had to defend against the charges of the Conservative Party that the Labour Party was supporting seditious action.

After nearly a year of negotiation between the Trades Union Congress, Baldwin's Conservative Government, the Labour Party, and the coal mine owners, talks finally broke down and the General Strike began on May 3, 1926. Despite the long buildup, the strike was quickly over. Leaders of the party convinced the Trades Union Congress that a continued strike would do more harm than good for the working class

⁷⁵“The General Strike,” *Times*, May 25, 1926.

and asked people to return to work after just nine days. The Conservative Party hailed this as a victory and the leaders of the Labour Party tried to assure the rank and file that this was not a lost battle; however, both underestimated how influential the strike was.⁷⁶ Even though the coal workers did not receive any concessions from the Government and even had to take a pay cut upon returning, the General Strike did end up having a positive influence on the Labour Party in the long run. The brevity of the strike belied the impact it had on the direction of the Labour Party, and the Conservative Party's reaction to the strike engendered lasting unintended effects.

Although the trade unionists were initially upset at the Trades Union Congress and the party leadership for calling off the strike after just nine days without any concessions from the owners or the government, they soon turned their anger towards the Conservatives. In 1927, the Baldwin Government introduced—and passed—the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act, causing a swift backlash. Despite the

⁷⁶ “After the Strike Discussions,” *Manchester Guardian*, May 17, 1926. Also see “Why the Strike was Called Off,” *Manchester Guardian*, May 17, 1926.

Conservative insistence that they were not interested in class war and looked out for the interests of all Britons, this was a clear attack on one sector of society.⁷⁷ Furthermore, it was vindictive and obvious retaliation against the Labour Party for the strike. Not only did it outlaw strikes, but it would also restrict the ability of trade unions to donate and contribute to political parties. While this was meant to hamper Labour's ability to raise money through its affiliated trade unions, it also attacked trade unionists who were not politically involved, or even voting Conservative as it limited the options of the working class when it came to workplace disputes.⁷⁸

There was an outpouring of support for the Labour Party following the passage of the bill. Oswald Mosley, MP for Harrow, commented, "Large numbers of Tory and Liberal workingmen who understand little else, will understand how their rights are endangered when trade unions are placed under the heel of powerful employers."⁷⁹

⁷⁷ "Attack on Trade Disputes Bill," *Manchester Guardian*, April 11, 1927.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Quoted in Pugh, "The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism," 521-522.

Regardless of political affiliation, the labor movement in Britain was historically centered around the right to organize and participate in collective action. This bill threatened the very core of that movement. In Salford, they had been hosting propaganda meetings about the act since June, and apparently to some success as the Secretary gave a report noting the increase in membership to both the party and the meetings.⁸⁰ In addition, the Party wrote to the local trade union branches urging them to find alternative methods of paying for the affiliation fees now that the unions themselves could not pay the fees directly.⁸¹ Labour's efforts resulted in the capture of a plurality of seats on city council; by 1928 Labour controlled 23 of the 64 seats compared to 18 in 1924.⁸² By taking action against strikes, the Baldwin government swung even more of the working-class vote towards Labour. Even though the Conservatives had long attacked the Labour Party for being a sectoral party, in reality, the working-class vote was

⁸⁰ SLPR, June 1, 1927.

⁸¹ SLPR, June 29, 1928.

⁸² "Salford," *Manchester Guardian*, November 3, 1924; "Salford," *Manchester Guardian*, November 2, 1928.

often split between the Conservative and Labour Parties.⁸³

Of course, the Conservative Party did not mean for the backlash to be so great. To them, the act was an extension of the attack that they had led against Labour three years ago over the Communist question. Baldwin and other leaders believed that this bill would be welcomed by the moderate working class who felt compelled to strike or were forced to pay dues to a union that explicitly supported the Labour Party. The language of the two attacks were rather similar in that the Tories claimed a vocal minority had bent the rest of the party to its will. E. A. Radford, the newly elected Conservative MP for South Salford, “deemed it his duty to come among his constituents to explain [the Act],” and would not “apologise for the Act or... boast of what a wonderful thing it was.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, he claimed that it was “not the Government that defeated the general strike of last year, but the men

⁸³ Jay Winter, “Introduction: Labour History and Labour Historians,” in *The Working Class in Modern British History: Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vii. See also David Jarvis, “British Conservatism and Class Politics in the 1920s,” *English Historical Review* 111, no. 440 (February 1996): 59-84.

⁸⁴ “Trade Unions Act,” *Manchester Guardian*, September 20, 1927.

and women of England. Any section that engineered a general strike was up against the community as a whole, which, united, could not be intimidated by any section.”⁸⁵ The message that Radford was trying to send was that there was a small subset of agitated workers that put their own interests ahead of the nation.

The difference between 1924 and 1927 was that, through purging the radical elements from the party, the Labour Party had made itself more culturally amenable to the conservative working class. Thus, there were fewer impediments dissuading the conservative working class from voting Labour. While the General Strike did provide some political ammunition to the Conservatives claiming that the Labour Party was anti-Constitutionalist, it also rallied working-class voters who had up until this point been unconvinced of Labour’s appeal.⁸⁶ The General Strike was indeed a turning point in getting back into government as Labour won over more of the conservative working

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

class because of its commitment to moderation, but also because of the missteps of the Conservative Party.

The unexpected boon from the Conservative Party provided an opening for the Labour Party to begin planning their party program for the next election. At this point, it was clear that the four pillars of *Labour and the New Social Order* did not truly reflect the party and its direction. MacDonald asked Webb to write up a new party program for the 1929 election to match the new electoral landscape. Unlike the changes to the political alignment, the issues facing Britain largely remained the same. Unemployment and lack of housing were still the two largest domestic problems, but they were both the symptoms of the changing international economic order. Britain was no longer the leading economic power and was increasingly facing competition from the United States and other major exporters.⁸⁷

In contrast to *Labour and the New Social Order*, *Labour and the Nation* focused on goals that the party could actually deliver to its

⁸⁷ Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 115-120.

voter base if it were invited back into government. Of course, the Labour voter base in 1929 differed from the voter base in 1923. It was no longer a loose conglomeration of affiliated bodies, but a centralized organization with a streamlined message. It was going to improve worker's day-to-day lives while slowly shifting private industry into the hands of the public. Specifically, it promised to repeal the 1927 Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, implement the 48-hour work week, and extend the powers of the Trade Boards Act in order to ensure fair wages. It also promised growth in spending for education and social services, while working "without haste, but without rest" to achieve nationalization of major industries.⁸⁸ The proposals reflected the two main portions of the Labour electorate at this point: the working class who cared primarily about their working conditions and moderate voters who were vaguely supportive of the idea of a fairer society. It was described by one of its authors as "a glittering forest of Christmas trees, with presents for everyone."⁸⁹ The past five years had

⁸⁸ *Labour and the Nation*, 14-22, 24.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate*, 117.

seen the Labour Party shift towards the center and attempt to appeal to the wider national electorate rather than attempting to capture the vote of anyone with vaguely leftist interests. *Labour and the Nation* was a succinct summary of that goal.

Although it stated in its objectives that it aimed to “secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry... upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production,” most of the concrete policies throughout the program focused instead on the day-to-day needs of the working people throughout Britain. Furthermore, it explicitly rejected the “picturesque fairy tales,” and “fables regarding to-morrow,” for the “grave realities... [and] facts of to-day.”⁹⁰ It is unsurprising, then, that the program was called *Labour and the Nation*. It was an overture to the non-working class that there was a place in the Labour Party for them as well. But, instead of welcoming any and all leftists that support a more equitable society as it did in 1918, the new party program was directed at moderates

⁹⁰ *Labour and the Nation*, 6.

seeking to ensure economic growth for all. The Conservatives, appropriately, campaigned under the slogan: *Safety First*. Drawing from their experiences through the early 1920s, they believed that linking Labour to unpatriotic radicals would be enough to win them the election and sow discord amongst the working class.⁹¹

The fight for the general election in Salford and Manchester largely conformed to the national dialogue, in that the Conservatives warned about the radicalism and irrationality of Labour while Labour denounced the Conservatives for their record as government and their refusal to help the less fortunate. A particularly cynical editorial noted that in its election addresses, the Conservative Party was “looking to the past rather than to the future,” while the “Labour addresses show their writers at least to have an eye on the future, but it is a future with which Labour propaganda has made us tolerably familiar, and there are

⁹¹ Ross McKibbin, “Class and Conventional Wisdom: The Conservative Party and the ‘Public’ in Interwar Britain,” in *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1890-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 289-290.

no surprises.”⁹² Gerald Hurst, the incumbent MP for Moss Side Division in Manchester opined that “the dominating issue at the election will be whether the nation will again put its trust in Mr. Baldwin and his policy of peace and goodwill or in the Socialists with their projects of class warfare, high taxation, and industrial strife.”⁹³ On the other hand, Joseph Toole, who was the Labour candidate for MP in South Salford, denounced the Conservatives as an aristocratic party who had money to spend on a naval base in Singapore, but none when it came to supporting the unemployed.⁹⁴ In North Salford, Ben Tillet was running to return to Parliament against Conservative candidate Leslie Haden Guest, who had once been part of the Labour Party. Haden Guest himself admitted that “Conservatives had been out of touch with the Labour movement and had been unnecessarily hostile to it owing to a lack of understanding.”⁹⁵ Having been a part of the Labour Party until recently, he realized that the Conservatives tactics of

⁹² “Tory Election Addresses,” *Manchester Guardian*, May 17, 1929.

⁹³ “General Election Issues: Conservative and Labour Views,” *Manchester Guardian*, April 9, 1929.

⁹⁴ “A Debate in Salford,” *Manchester Guardian*, May 10, 1929.

⁹⁵ “Conservative Party and Labour,” *Times*, March 5, 1929.

fear-mongering were no longer viable in industrial areas such as Salford that had few radical Communists intent on inciting revolutions. Rather, the bulk of Salford Labour, as was the case across Britain, consisted of moderate socialists and everyday workingmen by 1929.

Conclusion

The electoral tactics of the Labour Party paid off on May 30, 1929, when it won a plurality of seats in Parliament. It gained 136 seats from the last election, largely from the Conservative Party, and ended up with 287 seats in the House of Commons. All three seats in the Borough of Salford were back under Labour control. Again, Labour faced the prospect of a minority government. Despite all that Labour had done to get back to this point, its second try at government did not result in success. Unemployment did not decrease, and the global Great Depression took its toll. Although the depths of the Depression were not as severe in Britain as they were in America or on the European continent, the weak economy reflected poorly on the Labour Party. By

1931, MacDonald and several other party leaders decided to dissolve the Labour Government and form a coalition government with the Conservatives. The ramifications were, of course, harsh. All the goodwill that the National Labour Party had established with the trade unions were severed as they viewed the willful dissolution of the Labour Government as a betrayal of the working class. When the dust settled after the 1931 general election, Labour controlled just fifty-two seats in Parliament and was devoid of the leadership that guided it into government as the largest party in Britain just two years earlier.

From 1924 to 1929, however, the Labour Party was the most cohesive it would be until it returned to government in the post-war Clement Atlee years. Through MacDonald's leadership and the missteps of the Conservative Party, the Labour Party was able to shift from a fringe party representing myriad—and sometimes conflicting—interests, to a national party with support across the socio-economic spectrum. By focusing on the interests of the working class and moderate socialists, Labour was able to deflect Conservative criticism about its ability to rule as well as protect itself from an attack by the far

left. The result was an outlier in interwar European politics. Across the continent, leftist parties faced strong opposition from the further left. In countries such as Germany and Hungary, Communist influence in leftist parties faced swift backlash and led to the toppling of democratic governments. In Britain, however, Labour successfully put down a Communist challenge and overtook the Tories as the largest party. Even with the fall of the Labour Government in 1931, Labour had established itself in this five-year period as a competent national party that would be the main opposition to the Conservative Party for years to come.

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